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Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

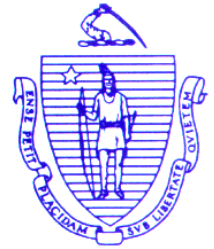
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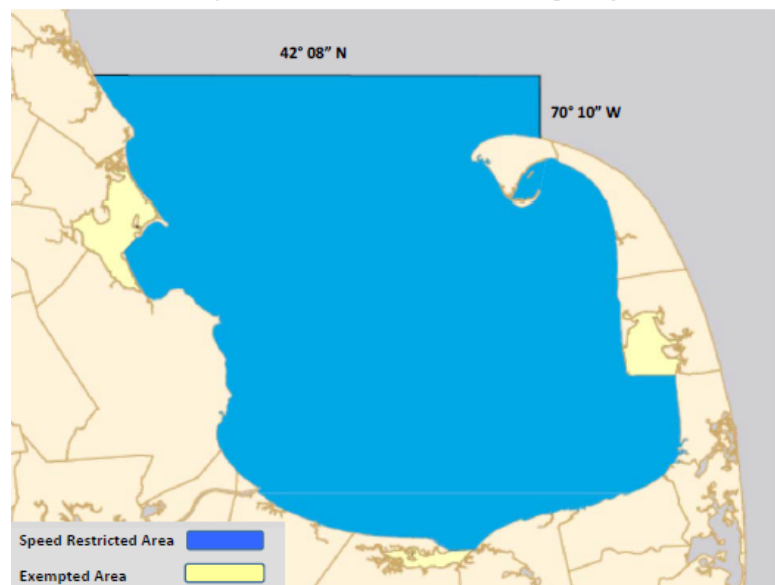
May 6, 2019

Marine Fisheries Advisory

SEASONAL SPEED LIMIT RESTRICTION EXTENDED THROUGH MAY 14TH

Due to the continued presence of endangered right whales in the waters off Cape Cod, the Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries is extending the seasonal speed limit restrictions through May 14, 2019 ([Notice of Declaration](#)). All vessels with an overall length of less than 65' ("small vessels") operating within those waters of Cape Cod Bay south of 42° 08" north latitude and north and east of Cape Cod west of 70° 10' west longitude may not travel at a speed of greater than 10 knots (see map). Vessels with an overall length of 65' or greater are subject to a federal 10 knot speed limit rule in this area through May 15th ([federal rule](#)).

Small Vessel Speed Restricted Area Extended through May 14, 2019



Exempt from this are law enforcement and emergency personnel operating within their course of authorized duties, including federal whale disentanglement personnel responding to an entangled whale, as well as any small vessel operating in the inshore waters of Plymouth, Kingston, Duxbury, Barnstable and Wellfleet harbors.

Recent aerial surveys by the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies demonstrate right whales remain in the waters off Cape Cod feeding at or near the surface. Additionally, *Calanus* plankton counts indicate that the whales are likely to remain aggregated in the area to feed. DMF will continue to closely monitor the presence of whales off Cape Cod and the duration of this speed limit restriction may be shortened or extended in response. DMF will update the public regarding any such adjustments.

Right whales are critically endangered species and their population has been decreasing since 2010 due to continued mortality and low birth rates. These whales seasonally migrate into Massachusetts waters and aggregate in Cape Cod Bay to feed on zooplankton. In recent years, more than 50% of the known right whale population were observed in our waters during late winter and early spring. The extension of this speed limit restriction will protect these endangered whales from ship strikes, which are a major source of mortality for these animals.

For more information about the management of protected species in Massachusetts, contact DMF at 617-626-1520 or visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.