



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

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Director

NOTICE OF FISHERY CLOSURE

2023 COMMERCIAL HORSESHOE CRAB BAIT FISHERY

Pursuant to the notice and public comment requirements of G.L. c. 30A § 3 and under the authority of G.L. c. 130 §§ 17A, 21 and 80 and 322 CMR §§ 6.34(4), 6.41(2)(c) and 7.01(7), the Commonwealth's 140,000 horseshoe crab bait quota for 2023, as established at 322 CMR § 6.34(4), is projected to be taken on Sunday, August 6. Accordingly, the commercial horseshoe crab bait fishery in Massachusetts will be closed effective Monday, August 7, 2023 and will remain closed until it reopens in 2024.

Pursuant to 322 CMR §6.34(4), it shall be unlawful for a commercial fisher to retain, possess, land, or sell horseshoe crabs. Additionally, pursuant to 322 CMR 7.07(5)(b), it shall be unlawful for seafood and bait dealers, permitted in accordance with G.L. c. 130 § 80 and 322 CMR §7.01(3) to purchase or receive horseshoe crabs directly from commercial fishers for bait purposes. Exempt from this closure are commercial fishers, dealers, and biomedical firms authorized to participate in the biomedical horseshoe crab fishery pursuant to 322 CMR 6.34(5). Additionally, in accordance with 322 CMR 6.34(4), pot fishers may possess dead horseshoe crabs for bait purposes, provided they have documentation that the source of the crabs is a wholesale dealer or a bait dealer.

Dated: August 4, 2023

By: _____

Daniel J. McKiernan, Director