

Selected Massachusetts Gear Restrictions

322 CMR 4.02

- It is prohibited for any person to conduct commercial or recreational fishing within the buffer zone except the weir owner and those with the owner's consent to remove fish and squid from the bowls.
- It is unlawful to set or use any net inside any inshore water, any estuary, embayment, salt pond, tidal creek, river or other similar body of inshore water to take winter flounder between February 1 and May 31.
- The maximum distance between the anchor line buoys and the weir poles of the bowl shall be 150 feet. The maximum distance between the anchor line buoys and the weir poles of the leader shall be 200 feet.

322 CMR 4.10

- It is unlawful to possess a sea scallop dredge or a combination of dredges with an Effective Fishing Width greater than ten feet while fishing in state waters.
- It is unlawful to possess a sea scallop dredge with rings less than 4 inches.
- It is unlawful to possess a Twine Top with a net mesh of less than 10 inches square or diamond.
- It shall be unlawful to configure or construct a Twine Top in any manner that it obstructs the net mesh so that it is less than 10 inches square or diamond

322 CMR 4.13

- The end of a gillnet shall be marked with a high flyer and standard 12 inch tetrahedral corner radar reflector; the west end shall be marked with a high flyer with flag and standard 12 inch tetrahedral corner radar reflector.
- the buoy line shall be marked with a 4 inch green mark midway on the buoy line, except if the color of the rope is green a four inch white mark may be substituted for the required 4 inch green mark.
- All the buoys shall be permanently and visibly marked with the permit number; and
- the total continuous length of gillnets shall not exceed 2,400 feet from end to end of an entire net set in waters in the State.
- The total length of trap trawls set in waters in the State shall not exceed 2,500 feet from end to end.

322 CMR 4.14

- Surface gillnets must have a headrope sufficiently buoyant to float at the surface.
- It shall be unlawful to fish more than 300 linear feet of surface gillnets at any one time
- It shall be unlawful to fish with a surface gillnet with mesh opening larger than 3 ¾ inches or smaller than 1 inch.

322 CMR 5.05

--It is unlawful to fish for, have on board, land, transport, or have in possession shrimp on any vessel which is rigged for otter trawling with any net having a mesh opening of less than $1 \frac{3}{4}$ inches stretched mesh opening between knots

--It is unlawful to fish for, have on board, land, transport, or have in possession shrimp on any vessel which has on board any net, netting or portions thereof, having a mesh opening of less than $1 \frac{1}{34}$ inches stretched mesh opening between knots, except for the optional webbing funnel that may be constructed of one inch webbing.

-- An outer mesh may be used as a cod-end strengthener while fishing for shrimp. The outer mesh opening must be a minimum of six inches and at least three times larger than the size of the inner mesh. The mesh may be single or double twine and diamond or square in shape. The hanging ratio must be the same as the mesh size ratio. Hanging ratio shall mean the number of meshes in the circumference of the cod-end to the number of meshes in the circumference of the strengthener. The mesh size ratio shall mean the number of inner meshes to the number of outer meshes. The outer mesh may only cover the cod-end. No chafing gear may be used on a net with a cod-end strengthener.

--If the cod-end does not have a net strengthener, then it shall be lawful to attach chafing gear to the lower half of the circumference of the cod-end.

--It is unlawful for any vessel to fish for, have on board, land, transport or possess shrimp unless the vessel is equipped with a single or double Nordmore Grate System consisting of a properly installed rigid or semi-rigid grate, a fish outlet in the extension of the trawl forward of the cod end and an optional webbing funnel installed in front of the grate designed to direct the catch toward the grate to maximize retention of shrimp.

--Single Nordmore Grate System

-- The system shall be constructed and installed with; 1) parallel bars of the grate shall be oriented to facilitate the escapement of fish out of the outlet by pointing toward the outlet, 2) the grate shall be tilted at approximately a 45 degree angle from the vertical plane, 3) a Frame or perimeter of the grate shall be secured to the extension piece of the trawl to prevent passage of fish between the frame of the grate and the webbing of the extension into the codend, 4) the triangular base of the fish outlet shall be aligned with the apex of the opening forward and shall be attached to the rear portion of the tilted grate closest to the cod end so that no lip or protruding edge of webbing is present to impede the escape of finfish, 5) the base of the triangular opening shall not be less than 19 inches in length. The sides of the triangular outlet shall taper to a forward (toward the mouth of the trawl) apex and shall be cut "all bars" to achieve the triangular shaped opening. The fish outlet may be positioned at the top or bottom of the extension, optional webbing funnel shall be constructed of webbing or mesh not less than 1. inches and shall be located in the extension in front of the grate. The circumference of the front of the funnel shall match the circumference of the extension, and the outlet of the funnel shall be of sufficient diameter to allow the passage of fish captured by the trawl. The funnel shall be

secured to the grate in such a manner that the funnel mouth will be directed to the part of the grate furthest from the fish outlet to maximize the separation characteristics of the grate.

-- Double Nordmore Grate System

--A double Nordmore Grate is a second grate placed behind the single Nordmore Grate for the purposes of releasing small shrimp from the net while retaining larger shrimp and must have the following features: 1) A second grate must be positioned at least six feet but not more than ten feet behind the first grate, 2) The second grate must be hung at the same orientation as the first grate, 3) The space between the bars of the second grate shall be 7/16 inch, 4) the exit holes to the codend must be at the top and no more than 10% of the surface area, 5) a funnel in front of the second grate designed to direct catch toward the grate to maximize the retention of the shrimp may be used but may not have mesh less than 1 inch stretched mesh, 6) a one inch mesh panel behind the second grate 45 degrees down from the top of bars to the bottom of the codend, 7) an escape hole in the codend in front of the 1 inch panel.

-- It is unlawful for any vessel to fish for shrimp with a net having more than 90 feet between the trawl doors and trawl wings, including the ground cables, bridles, and legs and bottom legs of other than bare or uncovered wire or chain.

322 CMR 6.02

-- All lobster traps must have an unobstructed ghost panel located in the parlor sections on the sides or at the end, or on the top if the escape panel is placed directly over the head and meets the following specifications:

-- The opening covered by the panel or created by other approved mechanism shall be rectangular and measure at least 3 3/4 by 3 3/4 inches, shall be located in the outer parlor sections of the trap, and in a position which allows an unobstructed exit of lobsters from the trap.

--The panel shall be constructed of, or fastened to the trap with, one of the following materials: wood lath; cotton, hemp, sisal or jute twine not greater than 3/16 inch in diameter; or non-stainless, uncoated ferrous metal not greater than 3/32 inch in diameter.

-- The volume of any trap must not exceed 22,950 cubic inches.

322 CMR 6.08 (3)(b)

-- It is unlawful for any vessel to operate with any hydraulic dredge with an effective fishing width greater than 48 inches.

-- It is unlawful for any vessel to operate more than one dredge while harvesting surf clams

-- Dredges for surf clams must be equipped with a hydraulic dredge with a 16" or less effective fishing width and powered by a 3 inch or smaller pump with 300 GPM or less capacity at a 10 foot head.

322 CMR 6.08 (4)(b)

-- It is unlawful for any vessel to operate with any hydraulic dredge with an effective fishing width greater than 48 inches.

- It is unlawful for any vessel to operate more than one dredge while taking ocean quahogs.
- It is unlawful for any vessel rigged for the taking of ocean quahogs to possess or have on board surf clams

322 CMR 6.36 (5)

- It shall be unlawful for any person or vessel to dredge for quahogs in state waters using more than one dredge or a dredge with an effective fishing width greater than 48 inches.

322 CMR 6.12

- Any person fishing with pots for whelk shall only use conch pots.
- It shall be unlawful to use horseshoe crabs as bait in any pot other than a conch pot or an eel pot.
- It is unlawful for any person to take or attempt to take fish from waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth by use of pots without a panel or door with hinges and fasteners made of one of the following degradable materials:
 - untreated hump, jute, or cotton string of 3/16" (4.8 mm) diameter or smaller
 - Magnesium alloy, imed float releases (pop-up devices) or similar magnesium alloy fasteners;
 - ungalvanized or uncoated iron wire of 0.094" (2.4 mm) diameter or smaller
- It is unlawful for any person to take or attempt to take scup from waters in the State by use of pots without at least two unobstructed escape vents or openings in the parlor portion of the pot measuring at least 3 1/10 inches in diameter or 2 1/4 inches square.
- It is unlawful for any person to take or attempt to take scup from waters the State by use of pots without at least two unobstructed escape vents or openings in the parlor portion of the pot measuring at least 3 1/10 inches in diameter or 2 1/4 inches square.

322 CMR 6.22

- It is unlawful for any commercial fisherman during April 23 through June 9 to land or fish summer flounder caught with handlines or rod-and-reel.
- From June 10 through December 31, it is unlawful for any commercial fisherman to possess or land summer flounder on Fridays or Saturdays.

322 CMR 6.23

- It is unlawful for any person to fish for and retain smelt in any other manner than by hook-and-line.

322 CMR 6.24

- No person shall dredge for sea urchins in any area closed to mobile gear fishing unless a single dredge meeting the following specifications:
 - The effective fishing width of the dredge is 48 inches or less

- The frame or bale is constructed of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch or smaller stock with skids no longer than three feet in length
- The chain sweep section behind the bale shall be constructed of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or smaller chain in a single layer square mesh pattern no longer than 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet.
- The twine codend, measured from where the chain section ends shall be no longer than 5 feet in length
- Chafing gear to protect the codend shall be traditional twine chafing gear or a rubber mat five feet or less in length and 4 feet or less in width.
- The dredge specified for areas closed to mobile gear may only be towed with wire or cable of $\frac{3}{8}$ inch or smaller diameter or rope of $\frac{5}{8}$ inch or smaller diameter.

322 CMR 6.30

- During February 15 through June 15, it is unlawful for any person, in the coastal waters of or upon the banks of rivers and streams within coastal waters, to abandon, set, possess or have under his or her control any device capable of catching eels with openings or mesh measuring less than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in inside diameter. Devices include, but are not limited to, dip nets, set nets, fyke nets and traps adapted for the taking of juvenile eels.
- It is unlawful to abandon, set, possess or have under his or her control any eel pot that does not have a wire mesh of at least $\frac{1}{2}$ x $\frac{1}{2}$ inch inside area.
- During September 1 through December 31, it is unlawful to attempt to catch or to catch American eels with any gear except for rod and reel, eel pots, eel traps and spears.

322 CMR 6.37

- Recreational fishermen may take coastal sharks only by rod and reel or handline.
- Commercial fishermen may take coastal sharks by rod and reel, handlines, gillnets, trawl nets, pound nets, fish traps, and weirs. It shall be unlawful to fish for, possess on board, or land coastal sharks taken by a longline of any length.

322 CMR 6.39

- From June 10 to April 22, it is unlawful for any commercial fisherman to land or possess Loligo squid using small-mesh otter trawls.

322 CMR 8.04

- Vessels using nets may not conduct any fishing activity with disks, rollers or rockhoppers greater than 12 inches in diameter.

322 CMR 8.05

- Vessels greater than 90 feet registered length may not conduct fishing activities.

322 CMR 8.07

--Squid Trawlers

--From April 23 through June 9 commercial fisherman may fish trawl gear with a minimum mesh sizes less than 6 1/2 inches throughout the cod-end and six inches throughout the remainder of the net in the area.

--Mesh sizes are measured by a wedge-shaped gauge having a taper of two centimeters in eight centimeters and thickness of 3.2 millimeters, inserted into the meshes under a pressure or pull of five kilograms. The mesh size will be the average of the measurements of any series of 20 consecutive meshes. The mesh in the cod end will be measured at least ten meshes from the lacings beginning at the after-end and running parallel to the long axis.

--All netting in trawl nets not made on a braiding machine, whether of braided or twisted twine, whether machine made or hand made, shall use only one knot, the weavers knot or sheet bend or a knot by another name, which in *only* a weavers knot. The ends of the twine, called the bars, that exit the knot are constructed so their lay does not cross or twist. One splitting strap and one bull rope (if present) consisting of line or rope no more than two inches in diameter, may be used if such splitting strap and/or bull rope does not obstruct the meshes of the net or otherwise diminish the size of meshes of the net. Canvas, netting, or other material may be attached to the underside of the cod end to reduce wear and prevent damage provided that no more than 25% of the meshes are obstructed.

322 CMR 8.10

-- Sink gillnets and flatfish gillnets shall have mesh openings not less than 6 1/2 inches.

322 CMR 8.11

--It is unlawful for any vessel to conduct fishing activities with nets having disks, rollers, or rockhoppers greater than 12 inches in diameter.

--It is unlawful for any person to fish for sea bass, scup or conch by means of a pot without a special permit.

--It is unlawful for any person to conduct commercial fishing for sea herring without a special permit.

--It is unlawful for any person to conduct commercial fishing for any finfish between February 1 to May 31 of any year within the areas.

--It is unlawful for any person to line trawl for cod between February 1 to May 31 for any year within the area with hook sizes having a gape of less than 11/16 of an inch measured from the point of the hook to the inside of the shank or with circle hooks having a gape of less than 1/2 inch.

--It is unlawful for any person to fish for commercial purposes with trawls or shellfish dredges 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise from March 1 through October 31, or from 6 PM to 6 AM during November 1 through the last day of February, unless fishing with purse seines or mid-water trawls used to harvest sea herring.

322 CMR 8.14

--Minimum codend mesh size must be at least 2.5 inches. Minimum mesh size is measured by the inside stretch of the net. Nets can consist of either square or diamond mesh.

--Headrope must be rigged with floats that measure at least eight inches diameter and must be attached along the entire length of the headrope with a maximum spacing between each float of four feet.

--Groundgear must be all bare wire not larger than 1/2-inch in diameter for the top leg, not larger than 5/8-inch in diameter for the bottom leg, and not larger than 3/4-inch in diameter for the ground cables. The top legs must be at least as long as the bottom legs. The total length of the ground cables must not be greater than 40 fathoms from the doors to the wing ends.

--Footrope must be longer than the headrope, but not more than 20 feet longer than the headrope and rigged so that it does not contact the bottom while fishing.

--Drop Chains must be 42-inches in length or greater; maximum size drop chain stock when used with a sweep is 5/16-inch. Drop chains may be a maximum of 3/8-inch stock when no sweep is used. Only bare chain may be used; cookies or additional weights on the drop chains are prohibited. Drop chains must be hung from the center of the footrope and each corner (the quarter, or the junction of the bottom wing to the belly at the footrope). Drop chains must be hung at eight foot intervals along the footrope from the corners to the wing ends.

--Sweep Specifications. The raised footrope trawl may be used with a chain sweep or without a chain sweep. The sweep, if used, must be rigged in the following manner: The sweep must be bare chain the same length as the footrope. (Note: The required drop chains at the wing ends of the footrope effectively makes the sweep seven feet longer than the footrope.) The maximum size of the sweep is 5/16-inch stock chain. The sweep must be attached to the ends of the drop chains. The center of the sweep must be attached to the drop chain from the center of the footrope. The attachment points of each drop chain on the sweep and the footrope must be the same distance from the center drop chain attachments. The ends of the sweep must be attached to the drop chains at the end of the footrope.