

MASSACHUSETTS

# Saltwater

2019

RECREATIONAL FISHING GUIDE

## Tautog Hook-and-Line Study page 12



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- ▶ Commonly Caught Species

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### On the Cover:

Angler and researcher Dr. Jeff Kneebone displays a healthy tautog caught in Buzzards Bay.

Photo Courtesy Dr. Jeff Kneebone



Image courtesy Brian O'Connor

## Go Fish!

This recreational fishing guide is produced to provide information for a variety of angler interests and skills helping everyone enjoy the Commonwealth's saltwater fishing experiences to the fullest! Recreational saltwater fishing in Massachusetts is a sport people in the hundreds of thousands enjoy each year. With some of the best angling in the country, DMF is dedicated to conducting cutting-edge research designed to protect and preserve our unique marine biodiversity and recreational activity.

Each year, DMF biologists conduct research on many of our key sportfish species, including striped bass, tautog, black sea bass, cod, and haddock (to name just a few!). This research feeds directly into improved and more effective management practices for these important species. For example, take the release-mortality research work completed in recent years on both Gulf of Maine cod and haddock. By studying the survival of fish released back to the ocean after a catch, researchers have been able to make more better-informed recommendations for size and bag limits, as well as utilizing the findings in the upcoming stock assessments.

In addition to questions about research programs and projects managed here at DMF, another popular question we receive is, "Where does the money from my fishing permit go?" One hundred percent (100%) of those funds goes directly into the Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Fund to be used only for the benefit of recreational saltwater fishing. Some of the activities supported by the fund include: improving public access for saltwater fishing opportunities; development of saltwater angler education programs; artificial reef development and monitoring; and much more!

With one-third of these funds supporting improvement projects for public access, past years have been quite busy with completion of several projects repairing fishing piers, total pier rebuilds, and new construction. In 2019 DMF will break ground on the construction of a brand-new recreational fishing pier on Deer Island in Winthrop. This pier will allow anglers to access a rich fishing area in Boston Harbor from a safe and well-lit location, as well as the opportunity for new angler education and retention clinics!

There will be growth of the Saltwater Angler Education Program with the addition of adult-targeted clinics in 2019. With the success of our kids' saltwater clinics, DMF's Outreach and Education staff will offer opportunities to learn surfcasting techniques and saltwater fly-fishing. Improved access to loaner gear and more group-event planning is also underway, so stay tuned in the New Year for additional information and dates.

No matter what type of angler you are from a novice to expert, you'll find our guide will help you have a better day on the water. So, "Go fish!" – not the card game, but our command for your on-the-saltwater enjoyment.



David E. Pierce, Ph.D.  
Director

## Your Permit Dollars at Work

### Public Access

- Develops and maintains three large fishing piers – Yarmouth, Oak Bluffs, Newburyport
- Funds small projects improving or repairing existing access sites – Rockport, Marblehead, Gloucester, Manchester, Beverly, Weymouth, Quincy, Marshfield, Duxbury, Fall River, Swansea, Yarmouth and more!
- Funds the deployment of dedicated recreational artificial reefs – Harwich Reef

### Angler Education

- Provides free clinics for young anglers
- Develops online resources for classroom educators

### Improved Recreational Catch Data

- Increases the sampling size for the Marine Recreational Information Program and the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey

### Research and Conservation

- River herring population management and restoration work
- Striped bass migratory patterns and genetics

For more information see our website  
[www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries)

**Marine Fisheries**  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



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Dr. David E. Pierce  
Director



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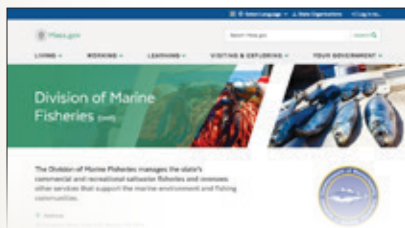


## The Division of Marine Fisheries

The Department of Fish and Game's Division of Marine Fisheries is responsible for the management of the Commonwealth's living marine resources. The Division promotes and develops commercial and recreational fisheries through research, technical assistance, and the collection of statistics. Biologists are assigned to regions of the state and interact with many federal, interstate, state, and local management agencies as well as private fisheries organizations. For further information contact your local Recreational Fisheries Biologists.

### Visit our Home Page at [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries)

To get up to date fishery information join the DMF Listserv. This is a notification list only, where you will receive timely news from the Division regarding fishery openings and closings, regulation changes, and public hearing notices. We use this Listserv to keep our constituents more informed and reduce our reliance on paper mail. Please encourage other interested parties to join this list.



#### The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries website has:

- Commercial and recreational regulations
- Saltwater Fishing Derby standings
- Permit applications
- DMF publications and much more!

To join the list,  
send e-mail with nothing in the subject or body to:  
[join-marinefisheries@listserv.state.ma.us](mailto:join-marinefisheries@listserv.state.ma.us)

To be removed,  
send e-mail to:  
[leave-marinefisheries@listserv.state.ma.us](mailto:leave-marinefisheries@listserv.state.ma.us)

## Recreational Fisheries Program Biologists

### South Shore Office:

836 South Rodney  
French Boulevard  
New Bedford, MA 02744  
(508) 990-2860  
FAX: (508) 990-0449

**John Boardman**  
*South Shore/South Coast*

### Annisquam River Marine Fisheries Station:

30 Emerson Avenue  
Gloucester, MA 01930  
(978) 282-0308  
FAX: (617) 727-3337

**Matt Ayer**  
*North Shore/Metro Boston*

### Boston Office:

251 Causeway St.,  
Suite 400  
Boston, MA 02114  
(617) 626-1520  
FAX: (617) 626-1509



## Office of Law Enforcement

Environmental Police Officers are responsible for enforcing Massachusetts fish and game laws including the commercial and recreational harvest of living marine resources. In addition they also enforce the Commonwealth's boating and recreational vehicle laws and regulations. Fishing violations can be reported to the following number:

**Toll-Free Number:**  
**1-800-632-8075**

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## About This Guide

This high-quality guide is offered to you by the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries through its unique partnership with J.F. Griffin Publishing, LLC.

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## ATTENTION ANGLERS: REWARD

### *Acoustic Tagging Research*

DMF is conducting three tagging studies to investigate the coastal movements of striped bass. Fish have been both internally and externally tagged with acoustic transmitters.



Acoustic receiver



Acoustic transmitter



Acoustically tagged striped bass

#### **If you recapture a tagged fish:**

Record the:

**Date caught, location, length, weight, and tag number.**

**If the fish is being harvested, retain the internal tag.**

#### **To claim your reward contact:**

**MA Division of Marine Fisheries**

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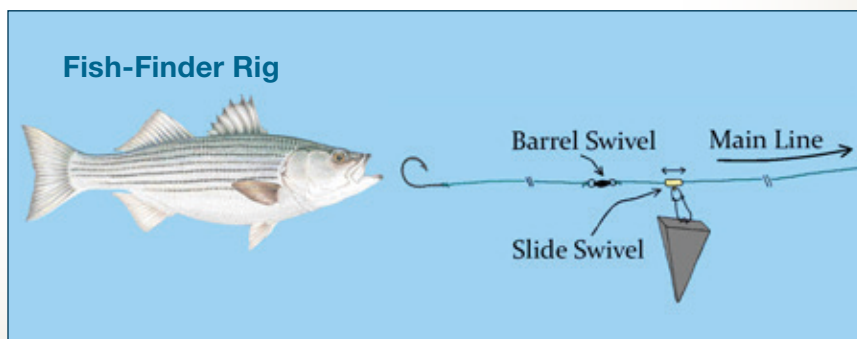
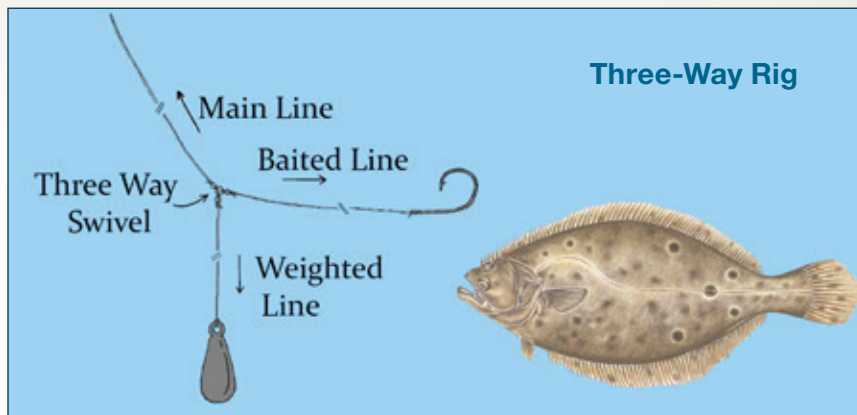
[bill.hoffman@mass.gov](mailto:bill.hoffman@mass.gov)



## Common Rigs Used for Bait Fishing

**Three-Way Rig:** Gets its name from using a three-way swivel and is useful for catching striped bass, tautog, winter flounder, and just about any other bottom-dwelling species. Various lengths (6-24 inches) can be used for the weighed leader which carries the bait down in the water column. The baited leader (12-36 inches) presents live or dead bait when stationary or drifting and can be used to slow-troll plugs or other lures.

**Fish-Finder Rig:** A simple rig to set-up and tie that can be used when fishing for multiple species from shore. This rig allows for large pieces of bait to be presented and allows for the fish to ingest the bait before setting the hook. The weight on the slide swivel holds the line down but allows for the bait to be dropped back to fish such as striped bass, fluke, and many others.

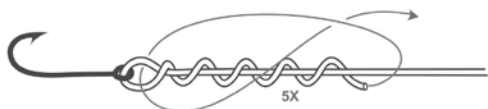


These and more fishing knots are available on waterproof plastic cards at [www.proknot.com](http://www.proknot.com)

## Improved Clinch Knot

The improved clinch knot has become one of the most popular knots for tying terminal tackle connections. It is quick and easy to tie and is strong and reliable.

The knot can be difficult to tie in lines in excess of 30 lb test. Five+ turns around the standing line is generally recommended, four can be used in heavy line. This knot is not recommended with braided lines.



1. Thread end of the line through the eye of the hook, swivel or lure. Double back and make five or more turns around the standing line. Bring the end of the line through the first loop formed behind the eye, then through the big loop.



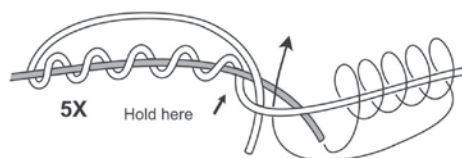
2. Wet knot and pull slightly on the tag end to draw up coils. Pull on the standing line to form knot with coils pressed neatly together.



3. Slide tight against eye and clip tag end.

## Blood Knot

Use this knot to join sections of leader or line together. It works best with line of approximately equal diameter.



1. Overlap ends of lines to be joined. Twist one around the other making 5 turns. Bring tag end back between the two lines. Repeat with other end, wrapping in opposite direction the same number of turns.



2. Slowly pull lines or leaders in opposite directions. Turns will wrap and gather.



3. Pull tight and clip ends closely.



# 2019 Saltwater Fishing Permit

## Get Your **2019** Saltwater Fishing Permit Today!

### Who Needs a Permit?

All anglers age 16 or older that wish to engage in the recreational activity of finfishing, with the following exceptions:

- Anglers who regardless of their age otherwise meet the definition of a disabled person in M.G.L. c. 19C
- Anglers fishing on permitted for-hire vessels (charter/head boat)

### Reciprocity

- All permitted MA residents may fish in the three neighboring coastal states (NH, RI, CT)
- Permitted anglers from these three neighboring coastal states may also fish in MA waters

### Permit Fee

- The fee for an individual angler (resident or non-resident) is \$10
- No charge for anglers age 60 or over

### How Will the Permit Fee Money be Used?

All money from permit fees are deposited into a dedicated account and can only be used for implementing projects that will enhance recreational saltwater fishing including:

- Improvement of public access for recreational saltwater anglers
- Development and implementation of education materials for the public
- Other marine recreational fishing programs approved by the recreational fishing development panel

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## To Obtain a 2019 Massachusetts Recreational Saltwater Fishing Permit:

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Call toll-free from 5am-5pm:

**1-866-703-1925**

For a list of permit vendor locations and to view frequently asked questions, please visit our website at:

**[www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries)**

For questions, please email:

**[marine.fish@mass.gov](mailto:marine.fish@mass.gov)**

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# Have You Fished Today?

## Here's What You Could Be Catching!





# Know How To Handle Your Fish —Both On The Line and Off

### Use circle hooks.

Circle hooks, along with barbless hooks, greatly reduce the chance of lethally wounding a fish. Make sure that the point is in line with the shank and not offset (often sold as octopus circle hooks); this is especially important in catch and release.

### Have a fair fight.

Use appropriate tackle for the size and species of fish you're trying to catch. Stay focused when reeling in fish as higher stress levels and often higher mortality rates are associated with longer fight times.

### Stay wet.

When the fish gets close, be sure to handle it with wet hands. Using a dry cloth or gloves can remove both slime and scales, both needed for the fish's health.

### Keep it in the water.

If you aren't going to keep or measure the fish, try to remove the hook with the fish in the water. This will keep the fish happier and both you and your boat cleaner!

### Support the fish.

When removing a fish from the water, be sure to support the full body weight. Place your hand under the belly of the fish as you lift it out of the water. Don't ever grab the fish by the gills or eyes and never hold the fish up by only its jaw.

### Get that hook out.

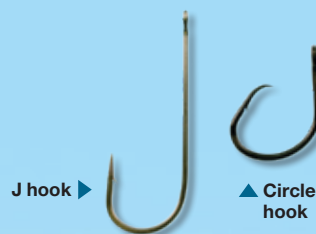
Hopefully you're using a circle hook, but whatever hook it is, get it out quickly. Use a dehooker if you don't need to pull the fish out of the water or pliers if necessary to remove a stubborn hook. If the hook is deep in the mouth or gut, simply cut the line as close to the hook as possible before releasing the fish.

### Reduce time out of the water.

The longer the fish stays out of the water, the greater the chance of mortality. Get a quick photo or measurement and get it back into the water. Be sure to know the regulations before you start fishing so there is no question as to what the size limit is.

### Don't just toss it back.

Remember, a fish out of water is holding its breath! Help it take a "deep breath" by releasing it head-first. If necessary, hold onto the fish and move it back and forth in the water to increase flow of oxygen-rich water over its gills before letting it go.



**DMF strongly recommends the use of circle hooks for their proven ability to reduce mortality of released fish.**

Photo courtesy Capt. Corey Pietraszek



# Circle Hooks Save Fish!

Did you know...



- Recreational anglers in Massachusetts catch and release over 13 million fish each year!
- Sometimes fish die from their hook wounds after they are released back into the ocean.
- Circle hooks can help lower the number of these kinds of deaths by 50%!

## Using Circle Hooks



- 1 When using **live bait**, turn the hook through soft flesh or bridle the bait to the hook.
- 2 For **cut-bait**, rotate the piece completely onto the hook to ensure it doesn't fall off.
- 3 When the fish takes the bait, **be patient and don't set the hook**.
- 4 Calmly reel the line tight and the **hook will do all the work**.

## What species benefit from Circle Hooks?

Fish that eat by inhaling their food are good candidates for circle hooks.  
Examples include:



- Striped Bass  
hook size: 6/0, 7/0, 8/0



- Black Sea Bass  
hook size: 4/0, 5/0, 6/0

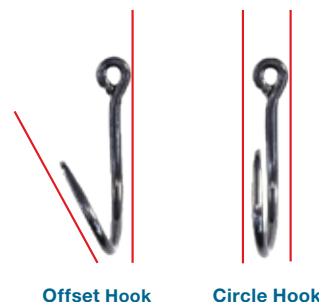


- Tuna Species  
be sure the gap on the hook you select is large enough to fit around the lip of your target fish



### Why don't circle hooks snag?

Circle hooks are designed so that the point is turned back towards the shank at a 90° angle. This causes the hook to catch on the lip or mouth instead of the gut or gills.



### Avoid offset hooks

Offset hooks are NOT true circle hooks! The offset shape makes it easy to "foul-hook" a fish.





A person is fishing on a boat, holding a fishing rod with a yellow reel. The background shows a sunset over the ocean with a large fish jumping out of the water. The text "Big catch." is written in a white script font, and "BIG SAVINGS" is written in a large, bold, black sans-serif font.

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Photo courtesy Capt. Mel True

# Using Rod and Reel to Monitor Trends in Tautog Populations

Tautog, a popular species to target along the coast in the spring and fall, supports a lively and valuable recreational fishery in Massachusetts. Their habit of living among the rocky structures that provide them with food and shelter, creates a number of challenges for researchers interested in studying the tautog population's status and trends.

Since 1978, DMF has used our inshore trawl survey to get information on the relative abundance of these fish in our waters, a strategy which may not represent the true trends in the population. Since bottom trawls are limited to sampling areas with few features along the bottom, the known rocky grounds of tautog are often inaccessible to this type of gear. To address this issue, a pilot study was designed to test the value of using a rod and reel survey to monitor tautog populations. These data could be used in combination with the trawl survey, or eventually prove to be the best method for population monitoring.

This grant-funded pilot study kicked off in the fall of 2016 and focused on the rocky and structured ("complex") habitats of Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound. The 96 pre-selected complex habitats were studied using rod and reel during spring and fall months. In each sampling month, 48 of the 96 locations were targeted by conducting two fishing trips per week. On each trip, either a DMF vessel or a local charter boat was used with three to five anglers aboard. Using side-scan sonar, structured bottom was identified within the sampling area and the boat was then anchored on that structure. Angling was conducted for 45 minutes at each station using standardized fishing gear and green crabs for bait. All fish caught were identified by species, counted, and measured for length, and largely released alive. Additional data on tautog sex and maturity were collected on a subsample of individuals through otolith (inner ear bone) removal while others were released live after a pelvic fin spine sample was collected for aging purposes.

In addition to collecting individual fish data, several other variables that could influence catch rates were recorded at each location, including environmental conditions (water temperature, fishing depth, wave height, salinity and tidal phase), angler information, and fishing time. Using these data, statistical models were then created to determine the influence each factor had on the catch rates for tautog.





Results from the models showed that the factors most important for standardizing catch rates were the time of year fishing was conducted, the fishing depth, vessel type, bottom water temperature, tidal phase, and angler skill level. Temperature was indicated as an important influence on tautog presence or absence at a given location. Specifically, zero catch was predicted when the water was below 50° F.

In addition to modeling the catch rates of this pilot rod and reel study, comparison with the traditional trawl survey method was needed. Analysis of the rod and reel study indicated that it had a greater chance of detecting population changes than the trawl survey (estimated to be 20-40% chance of detecting a 20% change to the population using rod and reel vs. a less than 10% chance of detecting a 50% change to the population with the trawl gear).

These results suggest that rod and reel shows promise as a useful tautog population monitoring tool, but it is not without challenges. Appropriate standardization is one of the primary challenges to using a rod and reel survey as an index of abundance. Trawl gears are effective survey tools because they can be easily repeated. Standardizing rod and reel gear can be more challenging because it's difficult to accurately report effective fishing time (due to hang ups, rig replacement, retrieval speed, etc.) and involves different angler skill levels and strategy. Additionally, in areas with lots of fish (where each hook could potentially catch a fish) an upper limit on the number of fish that we can study is created. Known as "hook saturation", this is another important consideration to take into account when reviewing the data.

Despite the limitations, the use of rod and reel has promise for fishery-independent monitoring of tautog in Massachusetts waters. The development of a survey to sample the preferred, complex habitat of tautog is needed given all of the uncertainties and limitations of the trawl survey. Multiple years of data are also needed to fully

examine the benefits of a rod and reel survey and to further compare how abundance numbers generated by the rod and reel and trawl surveys differ. A better understanding of the factors that affect tautog populations will help ensure management actions are appropriate and supportive of both the species wellbeing and the continued enjoyment by the recreational angler community of Massachusetts.



Photo courtesy Capt. Mel True



Photo courtesy Capt. Jeff Viamari

# Species Profile: Tautog



## Tautog

"Tog", "white chin" and "black fish" are all common nicknames for this fish. Tautog are very slow growing compared to most fish and do not migrate far from where they originate but move inshore in the spring and offshore in the winter.

**Location:** Whole coast, rocky bottoms inshore, bays, harbors, jetties, breakwaters.

**Season:** April–November

**Baits and Lures:** Crabs, clams, all shellfish.

**Methods and Tackle:** Still-fishing from boat or shore, medium action spinning or conventional rod, 20–30 lb test line.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** 8 lb.

Whether you call it tog, blackfish, or white chin, tautog are a really fun fish to target and catch in Massachusetts waters. There are few fish that will fight with as much vigor as a tautog, and if you are able to hook into one on your local rock-pile you will feel their power and strength before you can get them to the boat!

Ranging from Canada to South Carolina, tautog are largely targeted by recreational anglers from Massachusetts to North Carolina. Historically, the recreational catch of tautog was the vast majority of the total annual catch, but the commercial fishery for tautog has increased with the rising demand for live fish in certain markets.

Tautog are members of the wrasse (Labridae) family. The coloration of individuals varies widely and is usually dictated by their juvenile habitat (growing to closely match their surroundings). Body colors range from gray to olive green and also brown and black, and juveniles may also have banding bars of varying color. As mature fish, the colors are most often brown to black with little to no patterns, with the largest fish exhibiting white chins. Tautog differ in shape from their much smaller relative, the cunner, in that their body is more stout and the head is highly

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arched, as opposed to the more pointed head of the cunner.

Tautogs are slow growing and in Massachusetts can live to around 20 years. Males and females are sexually mature at three to four years of age but often don't reach recreationally legal size until around seven years. The growth rates for tautog vary greatly in Massachusetts waters, with a wide range of ages represented in many different size classes of fish.

During spring, as the water warms, tautog migrate inshore to spawn in nearshore coastal waters. They may remain inshore throughout the summer, then move to deeper (80- 150 feet) offshore wintering areas as fall approaches and water temperatures drop below 52° F. Toward the southern end of their range, some adults may remain offshore throughout the year.

Tautog are voracious feeders, preferring shellfish and other invertebrates as adults. They are often grouped around structures such as rock piles and boulders and are quite territorial. Evidence suggests that they remain close to a singular "home" site for prolonged periods but may move short distances away to feed if necessary.



If you are lucky enough to find a group of tautog, you can often catch a lot of fish in a small area in a short amount of time. The bait of choice for many Massachusetts anglers is green crabs but they can be caught on other crab species as well. With a firm white flesh and delicate flavor, tautog filets are delicious when baked or grilled and also hold up well in chowders. When combined with its sporty catch behavior and proximity to inshore waters, tautog is sure to become one of your favorite fish to catch and eat for years to come!



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## BAIT • TACKLE • LICENSES

## Approximately one-half of all saltwater recreational fishing trips take place from shore.

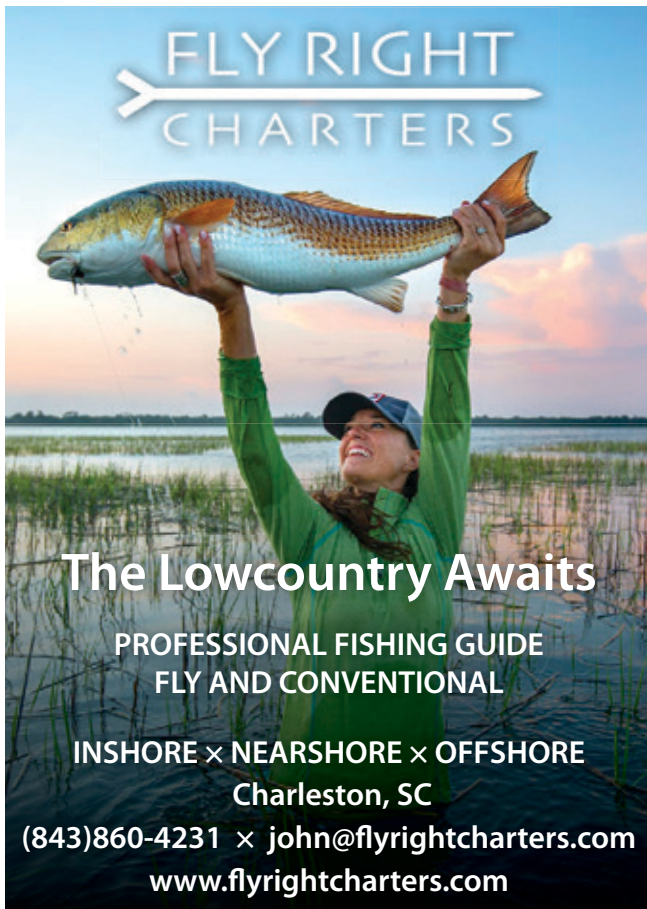
Unfortunately, this highly popular method of fishing is being threatened by the rapidly accelerating loss of public access to coastal waters. Much of this loss is the direct result of acquisition and development of coastal properties by private parties who then post their holdings against public access. In Massachusetts, colonial law granted private ownership to the intertidal zone (the wet sand), but reserved the public rights of fishing, fowling, and navigation. Although the public rights were reserved for certain uses of the intertidal zone, it is often not possible to enjoy those rights because access across private property to the intertidal zone was never reserved.

To guarantee that the public has access to shore based fishing opportunities, the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and the Department's Office of Fishing and Boating Access (FBA) with help from federal aid in Sport Fish Restoration funds and funds generated from the sale of recreational fishing permits, have made it a priority to find, acquire, and provide access by way of land acquisition of easements and/or tidal property.

Currently there are twelve *Marine Fisheries* properties and/or FBA properties or facilities providing anglers with access to shore fishing locations:

- Wareham River Fish Pier, Wareham
- Craven's Landing at Scortons Creek, Sandwich
- Popponesset Beach Shorefishing Area, Mashpee
- Parker River Fishing Pier, Yarmouth
- Bass River Fishing Pier, Yarmouth (South Street)
- Bass River Fishing Pier, Yarmouth (High Bank Rd)
- Dogfish Bar, Aquinnah
- Great Rock Bight Shorefishing Area, Chilmark
- Leland Beach, Edgartown
- Fore River Shorefishing Area, Quincy
- Broad Cove Shorefishing Area, Somerset
- Cashman Park Fishing Pier, Newburyport
- Oak Bluffs Fishing Pier, Martha's Vineyard

For a full listing of access sites, see pages 29-32.



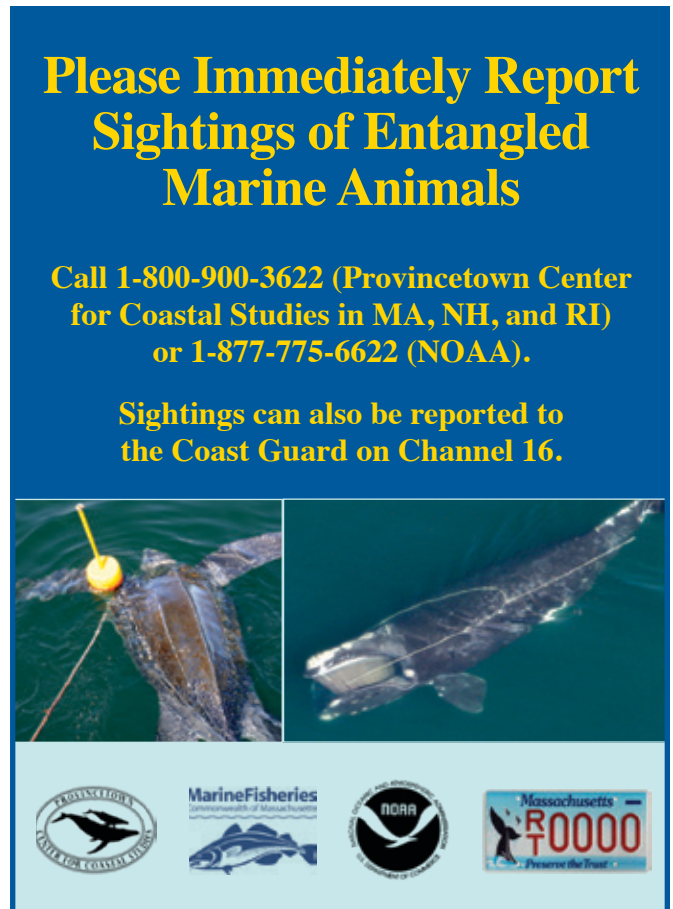
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Marine Animals**

Call 1-800-900-3622 (Provincetown Center  
for Coastal Studies in MA, NH, and RI)  
or 1-877-775-6622 (NOAA).

Sightings can also be reported to  
the Coast Guard on Channel 16.





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- How to cast
- Catch and release fishing tips
- Educational and art activities
- **AND MUCH MORE!**

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[www.mass.gov/service-details/saltwater-angler-education-program](http://www.mass.gov/service-details/saltwater-angler-education-program)

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













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# Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations

Regulations listed below are subject to change during the 2019 season.

SPECIES	NOTE	MIN. SIZE	OPEN PERIODS	POSSESSION LIMITS
American Eel	(1)	9"	All Year	25 fish
American Shad	(2)	Catch and release only, with exceptions.		
Black Sea Bass	(3,7)	15"	May 18 – Sept. 8	5 fish
Blue Marlin		Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.		
Bluefish		None	All Year	10 fish
Cod (North of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	See <a href="http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries">www.mass.gov/marinefisheries</a> for current regulations		
Cod (South & East of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	See <a href="http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries">www.mass.gov/marinefisheries</a> for current regulations		
Dab (Plaice)	(4,5)	14"	All Year	No limit
Fluke (Summer Flounder)		5 fish	May 23 – Oct. 9	17"
Gray Sole (Witch)	(4,5)	14"	All Year	No limit
Haddock (North of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	See <a href="http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries">www.mass.gov/marinefisheries</a> for current regulations		
Halibut	(4,5)	41"	All Year	1 fish
Monkfish	(4,5)	None	All Year	No limit
Pollock	(4,5)	None	All Year	No limit
Redfish	(4,5)	None	All Year	No limit
River Herring		Harvest, possession, sale and use are prohibited.		
Sailfish		Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.		
Scup, Private Vessel & Shore	(7)	9"	Apr. 13 – Dec. 31	30 fish (150 fish/vessel maximum)
Scup, For-Hire Vessels		9"	Apr. 13 – Apr. 30	30 fish
			May 1–June 30	50 fish
			July 1 – Dec. 31	30 fish
Sharks (excludes spiny dogfish)		See <a href="http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries">www.mass.gov/marinefisheries</a> for current regulations.		
Smelt		None	Jun. 16 – Mar. 14	50 fish
Spiny Dogfish		None	All year	No limit
Striped Bass	(6)	28"	All year	1 fish
Tautog (10 fish maximum per private/rental vessel, year-round)	(8)	16"	Apr. 1 – May 31	3 fish
			Jun. 1 – Jul. 31	1 fish
			Aug. 1 – Oct. 14	3 fish
			Oct. 15 – Dec. 31	5 fish
Tunas		Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.		
Weakfish		16"	All year	1 fish
White Marlin		Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.		
White Perch		8"	All year	25 fish
Windowpane Flounder	(4,5)	Prohibited		
Winter Flounder (North of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	12"	All year	8 fish
Winter Flounder (South & East of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	12"	Mar. 1 – Dec. 31	2 fish
Wolffish	(4,5)	Prohibited		
Yellowtail Flounder	(4,5)	13"	All year	No limit

## Prohibitions

**Snagging, snatching of anadromous fish:** including shad, smelt, white perch, striped bass, trout, and salmon, but excluding alewives or blueback herring.

**The taking of striped bass by any means other than hook-and-line.**

**To "high-grade" striped bass,** i.e. the discard of dead, legal size striped bass.

**To retain live striped bass** in the water by attaching to a stringer or placing in a live well or holding car.

**The taking of billfish using gear other than a rod and reel.**

**The taking of Atlantic salmon, sturgeon, all marine mammals, all sea turtles, and the diamond back terrapin** from Massachusetts waters.

**For anyone, except the owner, to handle, destroy, or molest any lobster or crab pot or other fishing gear,** including any gear swept up on the shore, beaches or flats whether public or private, or to take fish there from.

**To sell, barter, or exchange fish or shellfish without a commercial permit.**

### Notes:

- 1) Subject to regulation by the Division and the municipality. Please consult municipal regulations.
- 2) American shad is a catch and release fishery, except for on the Merrimack and Connecticut Rivers where anglers may retain up to 3 fish per day, with no minimum size limit.
- 3) Black sea bass are measured from the tip of the snout or jaw (mouth closed) to the farthest extremity of the tail, not including the tail filament.
- 4) Federal rules apply beyond state waters. Consult NOAA Fisheries for permitting requirements and regulations.
- 5) It is unlawful to fish with hook and line gear in the Winter Cod Conservation Closure from November 15 through January 31. It is unlawful to take cod from the Spring Cod Conservation Closure from April 16 through July 21.
- 6) Striped bass must be kept whole, meaning the head, tail, and body remain intact. Only evisceration is allowed. Permitted for-hire vessels may fillet striped bass for their customers.
- 7) Black sea bass and scup may be filleted but not skinned while at-sea. No more than two fillets per allowed fish may be possessed.
- 8) When the tautog fishery is open, private anglers are subject to 10-fish maximum tautog limit for the vessel. The most restrictive limit of the per angler bag limit or per vessel maximum limit applies.

\* Possession limits are per person per day unless otherwise noted.



# Massachusetts Saltwater Fish Records

SPECIES	WEIGHT	LOCATION	DATE	ANGLER
Albacore	65 lb.	Canyons	8/23/03	Tommy Good
Bigeye Tuna*	319 lb. 5 oz.	Welker Canyon	8/11/18	Daniel Bliss
Black Sea Bass	8 lb. 15 oz.	Buzzards Bay	5/12/07	Aaron Costa
Bluefish	27 lb. 4 oz.	Graves Light	9/11/82	Louis Gordon
Bluefin Tuna	1228 lb.	Cape Cod Bay	9/23/84	Marlene Goldstein
Blue Marlin	873 lb.	Canyons	8/21/15	Dr. Ralph DeLaTorre
Blue Shark	458 lb. 2 oz.	Jeffreys Ledge	8/9/11	Ethan Lynch
Bonito	13 lb. 8 oz.	New Bedford Dike	9/23/02	Eddie Gomez
Cod	92 lb.	Jeffreys Ledge	7/5/87	Robert Radzik
Coho Salmon	18 lb. 8 oz.	North River	1/21/86	James Lewis
Cusk	34 lb. 4 oz.	Stellwagen Bank	7/15/90	Gabe Silvestrone
Dolphinfish	61 lb. 3 oz.	Veatch Canyon	8/8/09	Ty Warren
False Albacore	19 lb. 5 oz.	Edgartown	9/27/90	Donald MacGillivray
Fluke	21 lb. 8 oz.	Nomans Island	9/25/80	Joseph Czapiga
Haddock	20 lb.	Stellwagen Bank	1972	Don Rehnstrom
	20 lb.	Boston Lightship	8/3/74	Joseph Gelsomini
Halibut	321 lb.	Massachusetts Bay	7/21/65	Norman Cournoyer
King Mackerel*	9 lb. 9 oz.	Hedge Fence	10/13/18	Zak Potter
Mackerel	3 lb. 8 oz.	Hampton Shoal	10/9/94	Steve Ostrander
Mako Shark	1324 lb.	Massachusetts Bay	7/27/99	Kevin Scola
Pollock	48 lb. 2 oz.	Cashes Ledge	9/14/92	Sal Mocerino
Porbeagle	495 lb.	Offshore	7/22/11	Jesse Siegel
Scup	5 lb. 14 oz.	Nomans Island	10/17/83	Robert Pimental
Spanish Mackerel	8 lb.	Vineyard Sound	10/8/11	Joe Canha
Striped Bass	73 lb.	Quicks Hole	1913	Charles Church
	73 lb.	Sow and Pigs	1967	Charles Cinto
	73 lb.	Nauset Beach	11/3/81	Anton Stetzko
Swordfish	646 lb.	Nomans Island	1972	Albert Little
Tautog	22 lb. 9 oz.	Gay Head	6/29/78	Michael Horsely
Thresher	630 lb.	Offshore	7/23/11	Timothy Delude
Wahoo	182 lb. 12 oz.	Offshore	2016	Derek Wittkamper
Weakfish	18 lb. 12 oz.	Buzzards Bay	8/19/84	George Mahoney
White Marlin	131 lb.	Nantucket	7/30/82	Ted Nfatzger
Winter Flounder	8 lb. 2 oz.	Georges Bank	7/12/96	Tom Hillebrand
Wolffish	55 lb.	Cape Cod Bay	6/19/00	Andrew Glovsky
Yellowfin Tuna	187 lb.	Nantucket	8/5/90	Mark Boujoukos

\* Indicates a new state record

## How to Measure Your Catch



For Massachusetts marine waters minimum fish sizes are measured as **total length**. This is the greatest straight line length (not curved over the body) in inches as measured on a fish with its mouth closed from the anterior tip of the jaw or snout to the farthest extremity of the tail. Fish should be firmly grasped with both hands for proper measuring. Care should be taken so that the head of the fish firmly contacts the zero mark on rulers and tapes simultaneously with the tail extremity.

### Exceptions:



Tunas are measured using curved fork length. This is in a line, tracing the contour of the body from the tip of the upper jaw to the fork of the tail.



Sharks are measured from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail.



Swordfish, sailfish and marlin are measured from the tip of the lower jaw to the tail fork.



Black sea bass are measured from the tip of the snout or jaw (mouth closed) to the farthest extremity of the tail, not including the tail filament.



**Divisions:** The saltwater fishing derby is divided into three major divisions—Inshore, Groundfish, and Pelagic.

Each division features:

- A Weigh-In category and a Catch and Release category (unless otherwise noted),
- Adult Awards given to the top Male and Female for each species in the Weigh-In category,
- Junior Awards given to anglers age 15 and under, and
- Pins given to ALL eligible entries collected during the Derby. (Anglers may submit multiple entries, but will receive only one pin per species per year for their qualifying catch.)

**Weigh-In Derby:** fish being entered in the weigh-in portion of the Derby should be brought to one of our many certified weigh stations scattered along the coast for verification.

**Catch and Release Derby:** fish being entered in the catch and release portion should be measured to the nearest half inch and a clear photo taken of both the measuring device and the fish, indicating total or fork length is needed for verification.

**Entry forms and photos:** Derby entry forms are available on our website and at most bait and tackle shops. Derby entry forms and photos should be sent to the address provided below, attn. John Boardman. Photos can also be shared with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram by tagging: #MAsaltwaterderby

**Website:** full derby rules, downloadable entry forms, official Derby weigh station locations, and leader boards can be found on our website: [www.mass.gov/saltwater-fishing-derby](http://www.mass.gov/saltwater-fishing-derby)

**Time Frame:** The Derby runs January 1 through November 30.

**Mailing Address:**  
Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries  
836 S. Rodney French Blvd.  
New Bedford, MA 02744  
[John.boardman@mass.gov](mailto:John.boardman@mass.gov)

## Inshore Derby

SPECIES	WEIGH-IN (LB.)		CATCH AND RELEASE (IN.)	
	ADULT	JUNIOR	ADULT	JUNIOR
Atlantic Bonito	5	4	24	22
Atlantic Mackerel	2	1	16	15
Black Sea Bass	4	2	20	15
Bluefish	12	6	32	26
Dolphinfish	15	5	30	24
False Albacore	10	7	25	23
Fluke	7	3	22	18
King Mackerel	6	4	30	28
Scup	2	1	15	12
Spanish Mackerel	4	3	24	22
Striped Bass	35	15	40	32
Tautog	8	4	20	18
Weakfish	8	4	22	18
Winter Flounder	3	2	17	14

## Groundfish Derby\*

SPECIES	WEIGH-IN (LB.)	CATCH AND RELEASE (IN.)
Atlantic Cod	30	30
Atlantic Halibut	50	50
Cusk	20	25
Haddock	8	20
Pollock	12	30

## Large Pelagic Derby\*

SPECIES	WEIGH-IN (LB.)	CATCH AND RELEASE (IN.)
Albacore	30	30
Atlantic Sailfish	40	63
Bigeye Tuna	100	30
Blue Marlin	350	99
Blue Shark	300	60
Bluefin Tuna	500	30
Porbeagle Shark	150	60
Shortfin Mako	150	60
Swordfish	150	55
Thresher Shark	200	65
Wahoo	30	40
White Marlin	60	66
Yellowfin Tuna	50	30

\* Junior entries in this category must meet the listed criteria



# Prizes and Recognition

In addition to the pin, winners will receive a plaque and certificate commemorating their catch at our annual awards celebration.

- Ceremony takes place during the New England Boat and RV Show
- **FREE** entry to the New England Boat and RV Show for the winning angler and their guest(s)
- Entry to a private Mass DMF, family-friendly reception directly following the ceremony

Special awards are also given out to the two anglers (adult and junior) who have the most Derby-winning fish: weigh-in and Catch and Release, or combined. Awards for "Top Shop" (the tackle shop that weighs in the most derby eligible fish) and "Skillful Skipper" will receive free advertising in our 2019 saltwater sportfish guide.

# 2018 Catch and Release Derby Winners

SPECIES	DIVISION	LENGHT (INCHES)	ANGLER
Black Sea Bass	Adult	23.5"	Justin Charos
	Junior	21.5"	John Clark
Bluefish	Adult	36"	Peter Gawne
	Junior	27"	John Clark
Blue Shark	Adult	78"	Paula Silva
	Junior	95"	Ethan Swenson
Cod	Adult	33"	Cole Hicks
False Albacore	Adult	25"	J.R. MaGee
Fluke	Junior	18"	John Clark
Haddock	Adult	22.5"	Justin Wirrell
Mackerel	Adult	18.5"	Corbin Martin
Mako Shark	Adult	80"	Paula Silva
Scup	Adult	17"	Mike Batta
	Junior	16.5"	James W. Oldershaw
Striped Bass	Adult	49"	Frank Mazzulli
	Junior	33"	Ryker Wilson
Tautog	Adult	24"	Ron Powers
Winter Flounder	Adult	19"	Eric Hromada
	Junior	14.5"	Amy Herrick

# 2018 Derby Winners

SPECIES	DIVISION	WEIGHT	ANGLER
Albacore	Men's	56 lb. 11 oz.	Peter Shepardson
Bigeye Tuna	Men's	319 lb. 5 oz.	Daniel Bliss
Black Sea Bass	Men's	5 lb. 13 oz.	Anthony DeiCicchi
	Women's	4 lb. 12 oz.	Mimi DiMauro
	Junior's	5 lb. 7 oz.	Gardner Stock
Bluefish	Men's	17 lb. 6 oz.	Dave Henderson
	Women's	16 lb. 6 oz.	Richelle O'Neil
	Junior's	10 lb. 12 oz.	Ronan Robinson
Bonito	Men's	9 lb. 10 oz.	Sam Nicholson
	Women's	6 lb. 6 oz.	Anna Guica
	Junior's	10 lb. 10 oz.	Mason Warburton
Dolphin	Men's	18 lb. 8 oz.	Peter Shepardson
	Junior's	21 lb. 9 oz.	John Clark
False Albacore	Men's	15 lb. 12 oz.	Gary Look
	Junior's	7 lb.	Calidore Robinson
Fluke	Men's	15 lb. 6 oz.	Jaroslav Grodski
	Women's	13 lb. 5 oz.	Marcy Rossi
	Junior's	11 lb. 11 oz.	Michael Sullo
Halibut	Men's	82 lb.	John Cebulski
King Mackerel	Men's	7 lb. 6 oz.	Joseph Tormay
	Junior's	9 lb. 9 oz.	Zak Potter
Scup	Men's	4 lb. 6 oz.	Daso Sideropoulos
	Women's	2 lb. 8 oz.	Judy Jennings
	Junior's	2 lb. 10 oz.	Nate True
Striped Bass	Men's	54 lb. 4 oz.	Scott Carpenter
	Women's	36 lb.	Mimi DiMauro
	Junior's	38 lb. 1 oz.	Tyler Fico
Tautog	Men's	9 lb. 13 oz.	Joshua Treadwell
	Junior's	5 lb. 8 oz.	Lexi True
	Junior's	5 lb. 8 oz.	Connor Polochick
Wahoo	Men's	71 lb. 13 oz.	Kenneth Whiting
Winter Flounder	Women's	3 lb.	Jenna Gomez
	Junior's	2 lb. 2 oz.	Matthew Calvo
Yellowfin Tuna	Men's	78 lb.	Gregory Lee

# 2018 Anglers of the Year

DIVISION	ANGLER
Adult	Mimi DiMauro
Junior	John Clark

# 2018 Top Shop and Skillful Skipper Awards

At the conclusion of the fishing derby each year, a Top Shop award is given to the bait and tackle shop that weighs in the most derby eligible fish. The Skillful Skipper award is also given to those captains that have entered three or more winning fish caught from his or her boat. 2018 was a great year from the derby and here are the winners:



The most up-to-date regulations online.



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Every time you purchase a fishing license or register your boat, a portion of the proceeds go toward preserving our nation's coastlines, lakes, rivers and streams. Protecting our memories on the water for generations to come.

Learn more at [TakeMeFishing.org/Conservation](https://TakeMeFishing.org/Conservation)



**TAKEMEFISHING.org**



# Saltwater Fish Availability Calendar

	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEP.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
Atlantic Cod												
Black Sea Bass												
Bluefin Tuna												
Bluefish												
Bonito												
Cusk												
False Albacore												
Haddock												
Mackerel												
Pollock												
Scup												
Smelt												
Striped Bass												
Summer Flounder												
Tautog												
Winter Flounder												

 Poor

 Good

 Best

Use this saltwater fishing calendar as a general reference to the availability of the commonly targeted recreational finfish of Massachusetts. Please consult current regulations to ensure species are in season.

## Wanted!

Boaters to Report Sightings  
Of Sea Turtles



If you see a turtle:

Please note date, time, location  
(be as specific as possible),  
approximate size, and anything else  
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## Striped Bass

Striped bass is our most sought-after species, providing great sport through catch and release fishing and great eating when you catch a "keeper". Striped bass is one of the largest fish available to the nearshore angler. Fish range from 1 pound to over 60 pounds.

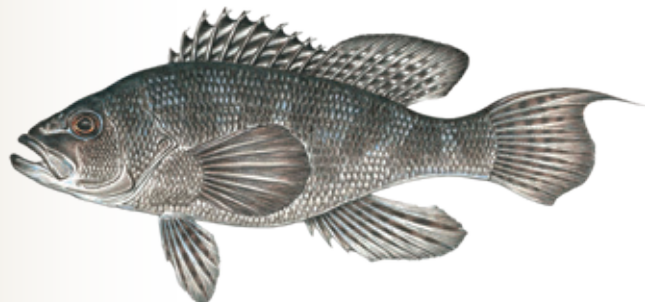
**Location:** Whole coast surf, inshore bars, reefs, tide-rips, bays, and estuaries.

**Season:** Mid April-October

**Baits and Lures:** Seaworms, eels, squid, herring; jigs, plugs, spinners, spoons.

**Methods and Tackle:** Casting from shore, boat-trolling; light to heavy tackle.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** 35 lb.



## Black Sea Bass

The migratory black sea bass is a tasty fish arriving in our near shore waters in the late spring. These fish also have a peculiar life cycle—the majority begin life as females and then change to males at around three years of age.

**Location:** South side of Cape Cod, Buzzards Bay to Rhode Island border and a few are found in Cape Cod Bay. Fish for them around bottom structure such as reefs, rocks, and wrecks.

**Season:** May-September

**Baits and Lures:** Cut squid, clams, green crabs.

**Methods and Tackle:** Bottom fish from a boat.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** 4 lb.



## Tautog

"Tog", "white chin" and "black fish" are all common nicknames for this fish. Tautog are very slow growing compared to most fish and do not migrate far from where they originate but move inshore in the spring and offshore in the winter.

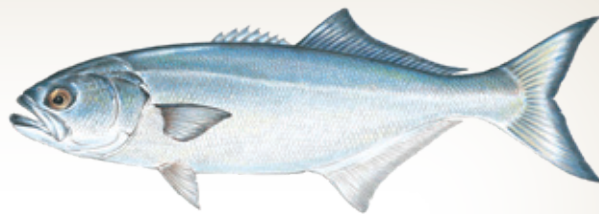
**Location:** Whole coast, rocky bottoms inshore, bays, harbors, jetties, breakwaters.

**Season:** April-November

**Baits and Lures:** Crabs, clams, all shellfish.

**Methods and Tackle:** Still-fishing from boat or shore, medium action spinning or conventional rod, 20-30 lb test line.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** 8 lb.



## Bluefish

Bluefish are usually ravenous and will strike at just about anything you give them. Watch out for those teeth! They average around 3-7 pounds along the coast and tend to be larger just offshore in the rips. The juveniles, referred to as "snappers," can be found in the estuaries and are fun to catch with light tackle. In all cases, they put up an excellent fight all the way to your boat or shore.

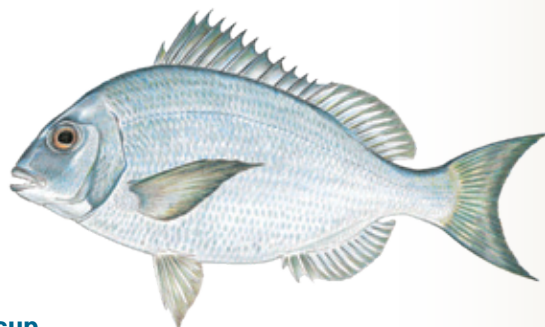
**Location:** Whole coast surf, inshore bars, tide rips, bays, and estuaries.

**Season:** June-mid October

**Baits and Lures:** All small bait fish, jigs, spoons, plugs, spinners, flies.

**Methods and Tackle:** Casting from shore or boat (you may want to use a wire leader) with spin and fly fishing gear, trolling.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** 12 lb.



## Scup

A party boat staple, scup are easy and fun to catch. Scup are very good eating though be careful of the many bones.

**Location:** South side of Cape Cod and along coast to Rhode Island

**Season:** May-October

**Baits and Lures:** Clams, strips of squid, seaworms.

**Methods and Tackle:** Light- to medium-weight tackle, drift-fishing, jetties, piers, bridges.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weights:** 2 lb.



## Weakfish (Squeteague)

The weakfish looks like a large trout and is found in Massachusetts waters during the summer months. Often found feeding alongside striped bass.

**Location:** Southern Massachusetts sandbars, deep water drop offs, channels, bays and estuaries

**Season:** Late June-September

**Baits and Lures:** Shrimp, seaworms, tinker mackerel, eels, strips of squid; artificial lures (bright plastic shrimp, worms, bucktails, tubes, jigs, sand eel imitations)

**Methods and Tackle:** Still-fishing, drifting, chumming, casting from shore or boat, trolling; light to medium tackle.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** 8 lb.



## Winter Flounder

The winter flounder (black back) provides good fishing during the cold weather months. They are very accessible and provide the angler with thick fillets to take home.

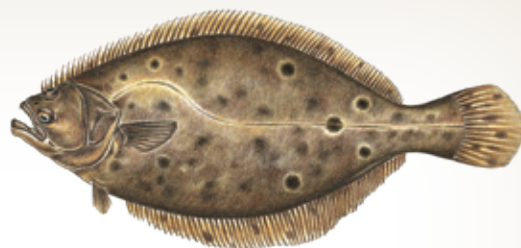
**Location:** Whole coast, tidal streams, shallow bays, estuaries.

**Season:** May-February

**Baits and Lures:** Sandworms, bloodworms, clams, strips of squid.

**Methods and Tackle:** Chum pot (crushed clams), still-fishing from boats, piers, jetties, bridges, breakwaters; light tackle

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** 3 lb.



## Summer Flounder (Fluke)

Fighting ability and fine flavor highlight this flatfish. The upper surface of the summer flounder head faces left. They also have prominent teeth to assist with their aggressive predatory behavior. Larger fluke are referred to as "doormats". Target sandy or muddy bottom along with fast moving rips that contain debris and bait fish.

**Location:** South side of Cape Cod, Islands, Cape Cod Bay, Buzzards Bay.

**Season:** May-September

**Baits and Lures:** Minnows, squid strips, clams, shrimp; spinners, jigs.

**Methods and Tackle:** Drift-fishing, troll, chum, still fish, casting.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** 7 lb.



## Mackerel

Mackerel are fast swimmers and voracious feeders, which offers the angler many options for catching them. They are also an important food fish for many other species of fish and marine mammals.

**Location:** Whole coast, deep water to shallow bays, beaches, jetties, canal, bridges.

**Season:** May-September

**Baits and Lures:** Small bait fish, crab, clams, seaworms, squid strips, jigs, spoons, flies.

**Methods and Tackle:** Trolling, jigging, casting from shore or boat: light tackle.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** 2 lb.



## Tunas: Bluefin (top) and Yellowfin (below)

All the tunas are very swift swimmers, provide a thrilling and sometimes backbreaking fight and are literally hot blooded. The giant bluefin tuna is the biggest and most lucrative of the tunas in our waters and thus creates much competition amongst fishermen. Yellowfin are commonly caught in near offshore waters as are albacore.

**Location:** Offshore east of North Shore, Cape Cod Bay, East of Cape Cod, South of Islands, offshore in Canyons

**Season:** Late June-October

**Baits and Lures:** Bait fish used with chum slick; plastic squids, multi-squid rigs, daisy chains, jigs, artificial lures

**Methods and Tackle:** Trolling, chunk baits with chum; medium to heavy tackle

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** Yellowfin tuna 50 lb., bluefin tuna 500 lb.



## Bonito

Sharpen your reflexes because these small tunas are fast and fun to catch. Watch for feeding schools where there will be jumpers. For a quick identification, look for dark bands running the length of the fish above the lateral line and a silvery belly.

**Location:** Southern Cape Cod and the Islands, rarely north of Cape Cod.

**Season:** Late July-October

**Baits and Lures:** Strip baits, squid, small jigs, spoons, plugs, flies.

**Methods and Tackle:** Spinning gear, bait casting, light boat rods, trolling, fly fishing.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** 5 lb.



## False Albacore (Little Tunny)

False albacore are very similar to bonito - fast, fun and sometimes a bit tricky to catch. However, unlike bonito, they make poor table fare.

**Location:** Mostly warmer waters of the south side of Cape Cod and the Islands.

**Season:** Late July-October

**Baits and Lures:** Same as for bonito

**Methods and Tackle:** Same as for bonito

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** 10 lb.





### Cod

Cod are the deepwater treasures of Massachusetts.

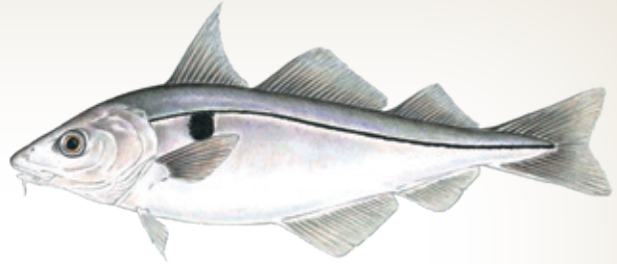
**Location:** Whole coast, deepwater, inshore while water is cold.

**Season:** Year round.

**Baits and Lures:** Sea worms, clams, mackerel, strips of all fish, crabs, jigs.

**Methods and Tackle:** Bait-fishing from shore and boats, fishing from boats using medium to stiff boat rod, conventional reel and at least 50 lb. test line.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** 30 lb.



### Haddock

Haddock is a member of the cod family and is a delicious fish for the dinner table. The black lateral line distinguishes it from the cod and pollock.

**Location:** Whole coast, cool waters, prefer depths of 140-450 ft., also prefers shell/sand, smooth rock, or gravel bottom.

**Season:** May-November

**Baits and Lures:** Seaworms, clams

**Methods and Tackle:** Still-fishing from a boat, medium action rod

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weights:** 8 lb.



### Pollock

The pollock is more available to the angler than its codfish relative. These aggressive fighters offer the thrills of a bluefish and the flesh of a cod.

**Location:** Whole coast with more north of Plymouth. Inshore (breakwaters and other structures) and offshore depending on the water temperatures. Inshore, pollock tend to be smaller than those offshore.

**Season:** May-October with the best runs in May, October

**Baits and Lures:** Same as cod, plus metal lures with a strip of squid.

**Methods and Tackle:** Still-fishing, casting, trolling. For deep water use same set up as for cod. Lighter spinning gear can be used for inshore fishing.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weights:** 12 lb.



### Cusk

Like the cod, the cusk is a cool water fish and is found on hard, rough bottom habitat. Look for the continuous dorsal fin to assist with identification.

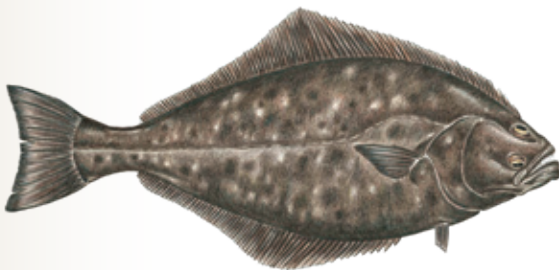
**Location:** Rocky ledges/hard bottom, moderately deep waters (more than 75 feet).

**Season:** Year round.

**Baits and Lures:** Same as cod.

**Methods and Tackle:** Same as cod.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** 20 lb.



### Halibut

This is the largest of the Atlantic flatfishes, which if you do happen to hook one, can be very challenging to reel up from deep water.

**Location:** Whole coast, cool and deep waters, preferred bottom type is sand, gravel or clay not soft mud or rock.

**Season:** Year round

**Baits and Lures:** Seaworms, clams, strips of fish, sandlance, jigs.

**Methods and Tackle:** Fishing from a boat with medium to stiff rod.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight:** 50 lb.



### Wolffish (Ocean Catfish)

Wolffish are distinguished by their large size, pronounced molar and canine teeth, and the lack of ventral fins. They do not school and prefer hard bottom, not mud, in deep waters.

**Location:** Whole coast, deep water, incidental to cod fishing.

**Possession Prohibited**



## Rainbow Smelt

This small anadromous fish is a seasonal favorite along the coast. They're accessible prior to the spawning runs up coastal streams during the late winter and early spring.

**Location:** Whole coast, estuaries, the mouths of coastal rivers, and within coastal rivers.

**Season:** September-February

**Baits and Lures:** Blood worms, sand worms, grass shrimp, small local bait fish

**Methods and tackle:** Ice fishing, shore fishing—keep bait moving slowly up and down within the school; light tackle, hand line.

**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weights:** Not an eligible species.



## Sharks: Shortfin Mako (top) and Blue (bottom)

Blue and mako sharks are common to our offshore waters and are sought after by recreational anglers. Makos are the more aggressive of the two fish and will put up an exciting fight. Venture with an experienced shark angler to prevent unexpected surprises and make sure you bleed and ice the shark flesh immediately. Anglers are encouraged to release sharks not intended for consumption.

**Location:** South of the Islands, East of Cape Cod, off North shore including Cape Cod Bay.

**Season:** June-October

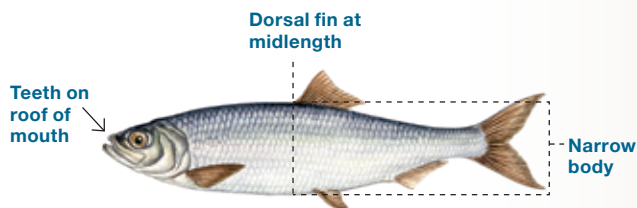
**Baits and Lures:** Chumming and baited hooks (preferably oily fish)

**Methods and Tackle:** Trolling, drifting; medium to heavy tackle, wire leader.

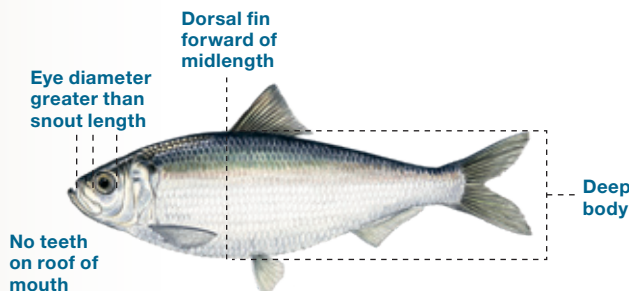
**Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weights:** Blue shark 300 lb.; Mako shark 150 lb.

## Herring of Massachusetts

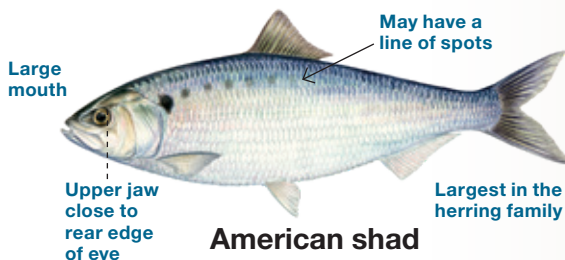
A variety of herring frequent MA coastal and estuarine waters and can be confusing to identify. River herring (alewife and blueback herring) and American shad are generally seen during spring spawning runs. Menhaden and Atlantic herring may appear in our estuaries during coastal migration in the summer or early fall.



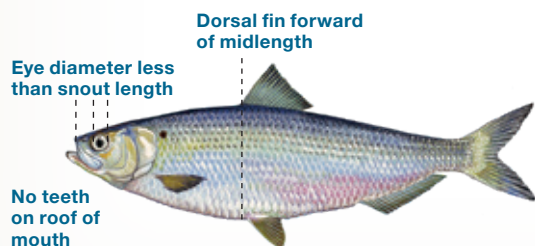
Atlantic herring



Alewife



American shad



Blueback herring



Atlantic menhaden

**Note:** The harvest and possession of river herring (alewife and blueback) is prohibited in Massachusetts.



## Note:

Use of some ramps requires a fee or a parking sticker that may be purchased in advance. Some town parking facilities are limited to town residents only (RO) and noted where applicable. Fish and Game Office of Fishing and Boating Access (FBA) current or future facilities are italicized. \* indicates a shore fishing area. For more information visit the FBA website at: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/fba/>

LOCATION	JETTIES	PIERS	RAMP	SITE CONDITION	USABLE TIDE
<b>NORTH SHORE:</b>					
<b>Salisbury</b>					
<i>State Beach</i>	3		•	Paved	All
<b>Amesbury</b>					
Town Landing Merrimac St. (RO)			•	Paved	All
<b>Newbury</b>					
Newbury Town Landing (RO)			•	Paved	All
<b>Newburyport</b>					
<i>Cashman Park</i>		•	•	Paved	All
Merri-Mar Yacht Basin			•	Paved	All
Ferry Landing			•	Paved	All
<i>Water Street</i>			•	Cartop	½
<b>Rowley</b>					
Perley's Marina			•	Paved	All
<b>Ipswich</b>					
<i>Town Landing, East Street</i>			•	Paved	All
<i>Water Street</i>		1	•	Paved	All
<b>Essex</b>					
Essex Marina, Dodge Street			•	Paved	All
Pike's Marina, Main Street			•	Paved	All
<b>Rockport</b>					
Granite Pier		1	•	Paved	All
<b>Gloucester</b>					
<i>Dunfugin Landing</i>			•	Paved	All
<i>Corliss Landing</i>			•	Paved	½
<i>Lanes Cove</i>			•	Paved	½
<i>Long Wharf</i>			•	Paved	All
<b>Manchester</b>					
Town Hall			•	Paved	All
<b>Beverly</b>					
River Street			•	Paved	All
Water Street			•	Paved	All
<b>Danvers</b>					
<i>Popes Landing</i>			•	Paved	All
<b>Salem</b>					
<i>Kernwood Bridge</i>			•	Paved	All
<i>Winter Island</i>			•	Paved	All
Willows		1			
<b>Marblehead</b>					
Causeway			•	Paved	½
<i>Riverhead Beach</i>			•	Paved	½
<b>Lynn</b>					
DCR Pier/Route 1A		1			
Lynn Municipal Ramp			•	Paved	All
Blossom St.					
<i>DCR Playground</i>			•	Paved	All
Seaport Landing Marina		1			

LOCATION	JETTIES	PIERS	RAMP	SITE CONDITION	USABLE TIDE
<b>Nahant</b>					
Town Wharf			•	Paved	All
<b>Saugus</b>					
Fishermen's Outlet			•	Paved	All
<b>Winthrop</b>					
<i>Shirley Street</i>			•	Paved	All
<b>Boston</b>					
Castle Island	1	1			
Charlestown Navy Yd. at Pier 4		1			
Puopolo Park					
Charles River Res.					
Commercial Street		1			
<b>Dorchester</b>					
Rainbow Park, Commercial St.					
<b>SOUTH SHORE:</b>					
<b>Quincy</b>					
Town River Marine			•	Paved	All
666 Southern Artery					
Bay's Water Marine			•	Paved	½
128 Bayview Avenue					
<i>Sea Avenue</i>			•	Paved	½
<i>Fore River, Doane St.*</i>					
<b>Weymouth</b>					
<i>Back River</i>			•	Paved	All
<b>Hingham</b>					
<i>Iron Horse Station, Route 3A</i>			•	Paved	All
<b>Hull</b>					
"A" St. Marine		1	•	Paved	All
Goulds Boat Shop			•	Paved	All
Pemberton Point		1	•	Paved	All
Priscilla Sails			•	Paved	All
<b>Cohasset</b>					
Parker Avenue			•	Paved	½
<b>Scituate</b>					
Cole Parkway			•	Paved	All
Driftway Recreation Area			•	Gravel	All
North River Marine			•	Paved	All
<i>Scituate Harbor</i>	1	3	•	Paved	All
<b>Marshfield</b>					
Brick Kiln Road (canoe only)			•	Gravel	All
Green Harbor Marina			•	Paved	All
Humarock, Ferry Street (RO)			•	Gravel	All
Humarock Marine			•	Paved	All
Mary's Livery			•	Paved	All
<i>Town Pier, Green Harbor</i>			•	Paved	All
Union Street (canoe only)			•	Gravel	All

LOCATION	JETTIES	PIERS	RAMP	SITE CONDITION	USABLE TIDE
<b>Duxbury</b>					
Bay Marine Corp.			•	Paved	All
Mattakeeset Ct.		2	•	Paved	All
<b>Kingston</b>					
Town Landing, River Street			•	Paved	½
<b>Plymouth</b>					
Taylor Avenue (4-WD only)			•	Sand	All
Town Wharf	1	1	•	Paved	All
<b>Wareham</b>					
Fishing Pier, Route 6		2			
East Boulevard, Onset			•	Paved	All
Maco's, Rt. 6-28			•	Paved	All
Oak St., Tempest Knob			•	Paved	All
Route 195 Eastbound rest area			•	Paved	½
<b>Mattapoisett</b>					
Short Wharf, Water Street		2	•	Paved	All
Town Landing			•	Gravel	½
Matt Neck Road					
<b>Fairhaven</b>					
Pease Park, Middle Street			•	Paved	All
Hoppy's Landing			•	Paved	All
Seaview Avenue			•	Paved	All
Sconticut Neck					
<b>New Bedford</b>					
East Rodney French					
Boulevard, H Street	2	1	•	Paved	All
West Rodney French					
Boulevard	4		•	Paved	All
<b>Dartmouth</b>					
Padanaram			•	Paved	All
<b>Westport</b>					
Gooseberry Island			•	Paved	½
Rte. 88 Bridge			•	Paved	All
<b>Fall River</b>					
Brownell Street	1		•	Paved	All
<b>Freetown</b>					
Water Street, Assonet			•	Paved	½
<b>Swansea</b>					
Cole River, Ocean Grove Ave.			•	Paved	All
<b>Somerset</b>					
Brayton Point Rd.			•	Paved	½
Broad Cove, Pleasant Street*			•	Car top	½
Somerset Village					
Waterfront Park, Main St.			•	Paved	All

LOCATION	JETTIES	PIERS	RAMP	SITE CONDITION	USABLE TIDE
<b>CAPE COD:</b>					
<b>Bourne</b>					
Barlow's Landing			•	Paved	All
Bourne Marina			•	Paved	All
Canal at Electric Avenue (RO)			•	Paved	All
Hen Cove			•	Paved	All
Monument Beach			•	Paved	All
Red Brook Harbor			•	Paved	All
<b>Falmouth</b>					
Childs River, Off Rte. 28			•	Paved	All
Falmouth Inner Harbor	1		•	Paved	All
Great Pond, Harrington St.	1		•	Paved	All
Green Pond			•	Paved	All
Menauhant Road					
Megansett Harbor			•	Paved	All
County Road					
Waquoit Bay, Seapit Road			•	Paved	All
West Falmouth Harbor			•	Paved	All
Old Dock Road					
Wild Harbor, Old Silver Beach			•	Paved	All
Great Harbor, Woods Hole	1	1	•	Paved	All
<b>Sandwich</b>					
Canal Basin			•	Paved	All
Canal-East End	2				
Craven's Landing				Sand	½
Scusset Beach State Park		1			
<b>Mashpee</b>					
Daniels Island Rd.			•	Paved	All
Great Neck Road, Ockway Bay			•	Paved	All
Mashpee Neck Road			•	Paved	All
Poponneset Beach, Wading Place Rd.*					
South Cape Beach	1				
<b>Barnstable</b>					
Barnstable Harbor, Blish Point			•	Paved	All
Barnstable Harbor (RO)			•	Paved	All
Bay Street Osterville (RO)			•	Paved	¾
Bridge Street, Osterville (RO)			•	Sand	½
East Bay Road Osterville (RO)			•	Paved	½
Haywood Rd. (RO)			•	Paved	All
Lewis Bay Road Hyannis			•	Paved	All
Ocean View Ave Cotuit (RO)			•	Sand	All
Old Shore Road			•	Sand	½
Ropes Beach (RO)					
Prince Cove (RO)			•	Paved	All
Scudder Lane (RO)			•	Sand	½
Iyanough Rd., Hyannisport (RO)	1		•	Sand	½

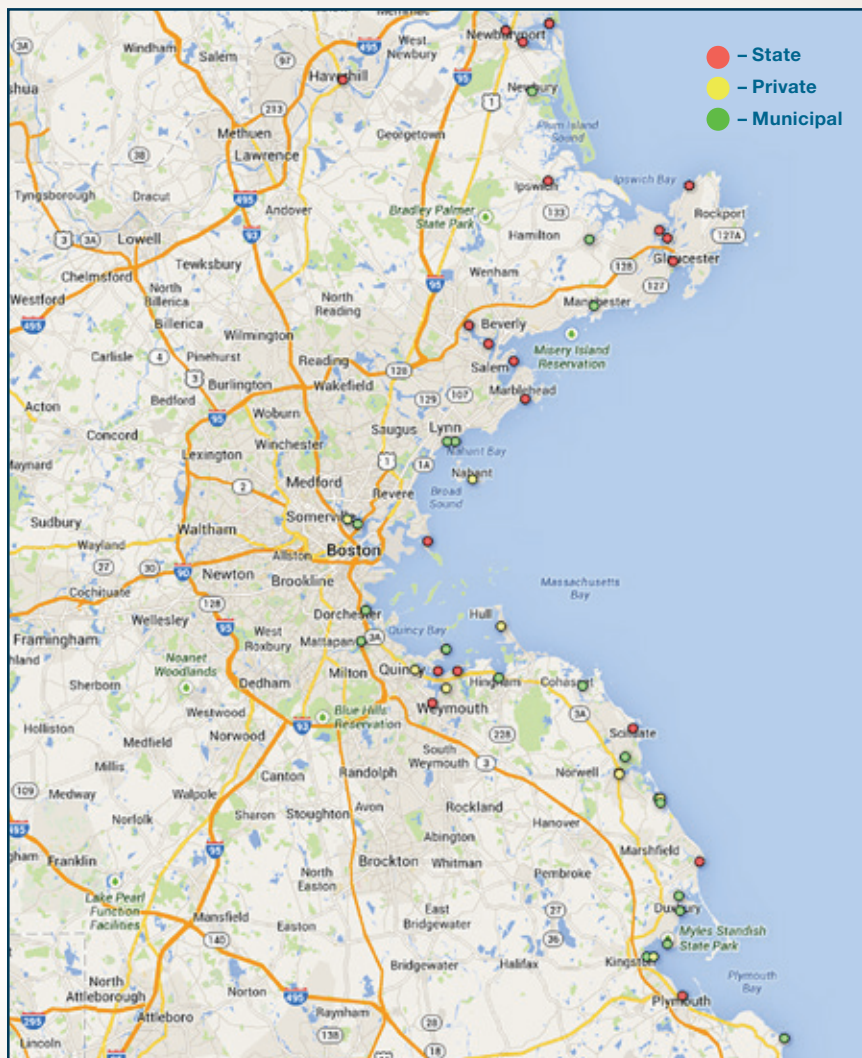


# Massachusetts Coastal Water Access

Salisbury to Marshfield



Access Map  
Courtesy of Google Maps



Find the most up-to-date regulations online too!



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101 Cranberry Highway, Sagamore, MA  
508-833-2996  
[www.canalbaitandtackle.com](http://www.canalbaitandtackle.com)

LOCATION	JETTIES	PIERS	RAMP	SITE CONDITION	USABLE TIDE
<b>Yarmouth</b>					
Bay View Street			•	Paved	½
Centre Street, Bass Hole			•	Paved	½
Follins Pond Road			•	Sand	½
<i>High Bank Road*</i>		1	•	Paved	All
<i>Lewis Bay Berry Ave.</i>			•	Paved	All
<i>New Hampshire Ave.</i>			•	Paved	¾
Pleasant St. Beach			•	Paved	½
Sea Gull Beach			•	Paved	All
<i>Parkers River, Rt. 28</i>		1			
<i>Smugglers Beach</i>	1	1	•	Paved	All
<i>South Street</i>					
<b>Dennis</b>					
<i>Cold Storage Rd.</i>	1		•	Paved	All
Follins Pond			•	Paved	All
<i>Horsefoot Cove</i>			•	Paved	All
Sesuit Neck Road			•	Paved	All
<i>Uncle Freeman's Way</i>			•	Paved	All
<b>Harwich</b>					
<i>Allens Harbor</i>	1		•	Paved	All
Herring River			•	Paved	All
Round Cove			•	Paved	All
<i>Saquatucket Harbor</i>			•	Paved	All
<b>Chatham</b>					
Barn Hill Rd.			•	Paved	All
Bridge Street			•	Paved	¾
Crows Pond			•	Paved	¾
Mitchell River Bridge					
Oyster River			•	Sand	All
Ryder's Cove			•	Paved	All
<b>Orleans</b>					
Arey's Pond			•	Paved	All
Cove Road			•	Paved	All
Goose Hummock Shop			•	Paved	All
Herring Brook Way			•	Paved	All
Meeting House Pond			•	Paved	All
River Road (RO)					
Mill Pond			•	Paved	All
Paw Wah Pond			•	Paved	All
Quanset Road			•	Paved	All
Rock Harbor	1		•	Paved	All
<b>Eastham</b>					
<i>Rock Harbor</i>	1		•	Paved	½
Hemenway Road			•	Paved	½
Rt. 6 Town Cove			•	Paved	½
<b>Wellfleet</b>					
<i>Town Pier</i>	1		•	Paved	All
<b>Truro</b>					
<i>Pamet Harbor</i>			•	Paved	All

LOCATION	JETTIES	PIERS	RAMP	SITE CONDITION	USABLE TIDE
<b>Provincetown</b>					
West End Parking Lot			•	Paved	½
Commercial Street					
<b>MARTHA'S VINEYARD:</b>					
<b>Chilmark</b>					
<i>Great Rock Bight, North Road*</i>					
Nashaquitsa Pond, South Road			•	Paved	All
Menemsha	1	1			
<b>Edgartown</b>					
<i>East Beach, Cape Poge*</i>	1		•	Cartop	All
State Road	1				
Memorial Wharf		1			
Edgartown Great Pond			•	Sand	All
Wilson Landing					
<i>Katama Bay</i>			•	Paved	¾
<i>Edgartown Bay Road</i>					
Eel Pond			•	Paved	All
Pease's Point Way					
<b>Aquinnah</b>					
Menemsha Creek	1		•	Paved	All
Lobsterville Beach					
<i>Dogfish Bar*</i>					
<b>Oak Bluffs</b>					
<i>State Road</i>	3		•	Paved	All
<i>Seaview Ave.</i>		1			
Beach Road	1				
Harbor, East Chop Drive			•	Paved	All
<i>Pecoy Point, Pulpit Rock Road</i>			•	Cartop	All
<b>Tisbury</b>					
<i>Lagoon Pond, Beach Road</i>			•	Paved	All
<i>Tashmoo Pond, Lake Avenue</i>	1		•	Paved	All
<b>NANTUCKET:</b>					
<i>Jackson Point</i>			•	Paved	All
<i>Madaket Harbor, H Street</i>			•	Paved	All
Nantucket Harbor			•	Paved	All

## Do you want to know where to go fishing or boating?

Public Access to the Waters of Massachusetts is now available. This 146 page map booklet will show and tell you information about current public sites. Send \$8.00, payable by check to:

**Office of Fishing & Boating Access**  
Department of Fish and Game  
1 Rabbit Hill Road  
Westborough, MA 01581

**For more information call: (508) 389-7810**

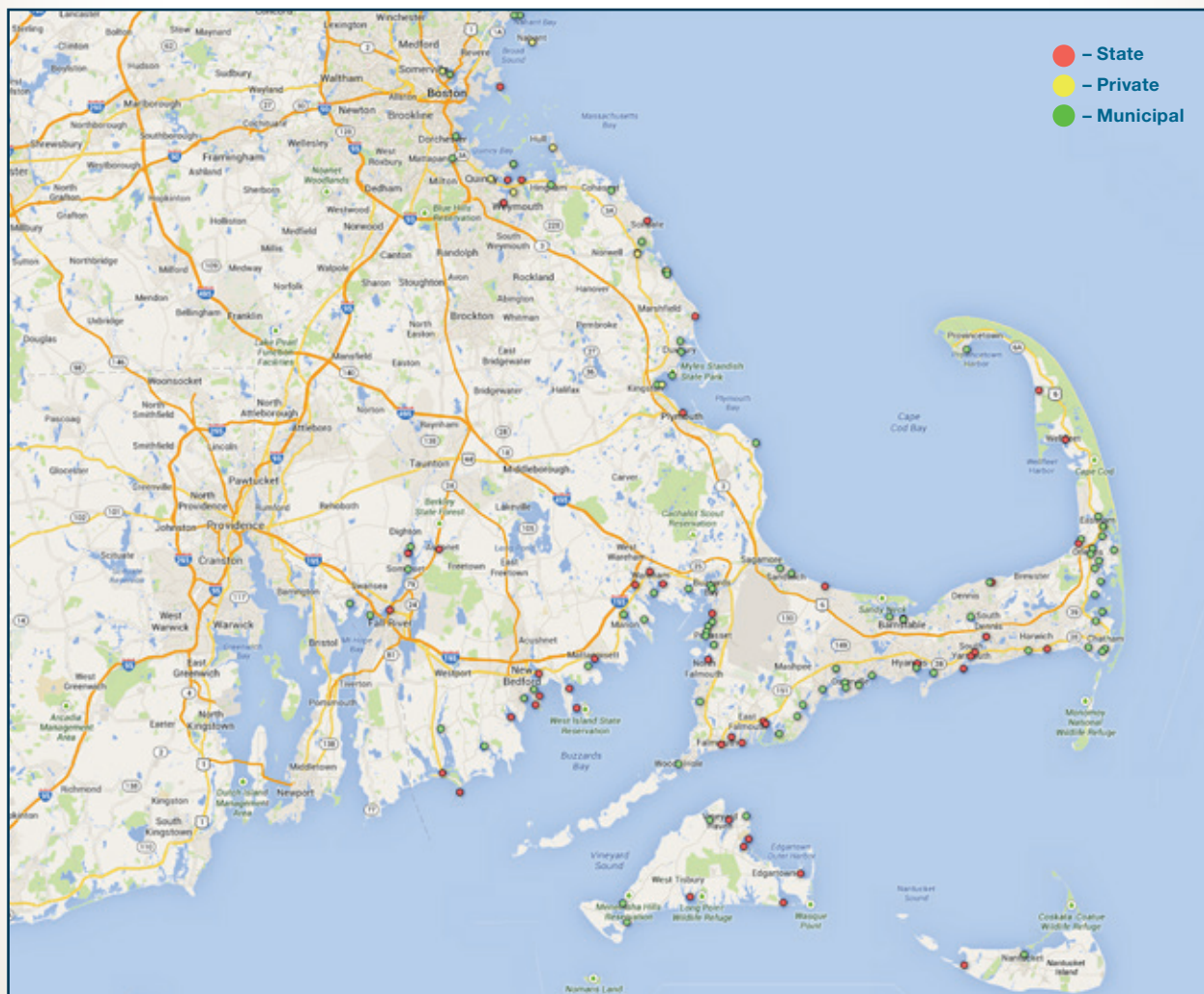




# Massachusetts Coastal Water Access

## Marshfield to Seekonk

Access Map Courtesy of Google Maps



## Recreational Lobster and Crabbing Permit

### What does a recreational lobster and crabbing permit allow me to do?

The permit allows you to fish, retain and land lobsters in Massachusetts. This may be done with traps or by diving. The permit also allows you to fish for, retain and land edible crabs (e.g., blue crabs) by any six-sided trap or other contrivance that is not actively fished. The permit is not needed to fish for, retain or land edible crabs by hand, handline or dipnet, or by any star trap, open collapsible trap or open top trap that is being actively tended to.

### Who can get a permit?

Any Massachusetts resident can obtain a permit. Non-residents may also obtain a permit, but they must temporarily reside in any coastal Massachusetts municipality and own more than \$5,000 in real estate in the Commonwealth as determined by tax records. Non-US citizens, whether resident or non-resident, must provide their alien registration card as issued by the US Dept. of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service.

### What does a permit cost and where can I get one?

The permit fees are \$55 for residents and \$75 for non-residents. Permits are available at all DMF offices. Additionally, residents may purchase/renew their permit online at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dmf/recreational-fishing/recreational-saltwater-permits.html>.

### What is my permit number?

Each permit has a unique identification number that is located on the upper right hand corner of the permit. You are required to mark your traps and dive gear with this permit number (pages 37 and 38).

### May I sell, barter or trade the lobsters and edible crabs that I take under my permit?

No, you may only take lobsters and edible crabs for personal use. You are not allowed to sell, barter or trade any of your recreational lobster and edible crab catch. In order to engage in these activities, you are required, by law, to have a commercial lobster permit.

### Does this permit allow me to take lobsters and crabs with traps and lobsters by diving?

Yes, when applying for or renewing your permit you must specify if you wish to fish with traps, diving or both. There are no additional costs for each endorsement.

### Do I have to fish in a certain geographical area?

When you apply for your permit, we do ask that you check off a geographical area where you intend to fish. However, you are not limited by this selection and may fish throughout Massachusetts. Note that you may not set buoyed traps in the Cape Cod Canal and the taking of lobsters is prohibited in New Bedford Harbor north of an imaginary line drawn from Ricketson's Point (Dartmouth) to Wilbur Point (Fairhaven). Also, different recreational lobster areas may have different recreational lobster management regulations (page 35).

### Who can use this permit?

This depends on whether you are fishing traps or diving. A permit with a trap endorsement allows the permit holder, as well as members of the permit holder's immediate family, to haul your traps. Immediate family includes the spouse, parents, children, grandparents, brothers and sisters. No more than one permit endorsed for trap fishing is allowed per household. A permit with dive endorsement is for the permit holder only and does not cover other persons. Additional permits endorsed for diving must be purchased to cover each diver.

### Is reporting required?

Yes, annual catch reports are required of all permit holders. These forms are provided by DMF at the time of renewal. License renewals will not be issued until a catch report has been filed.

### Do I need the permit for green crabs?

The permit is not needed to take, retain or land green crabs as they are an inedible invasive species. However, state law requires individuals hold an authorization from DMF in order to harvest green crabs. To obtain this free authorization, please contact Kerry Allard for an LOA or more information at (617) 626-1633 or [kerry.allard@state.ma.us](mailto:kerry.allard@state.ma.us).



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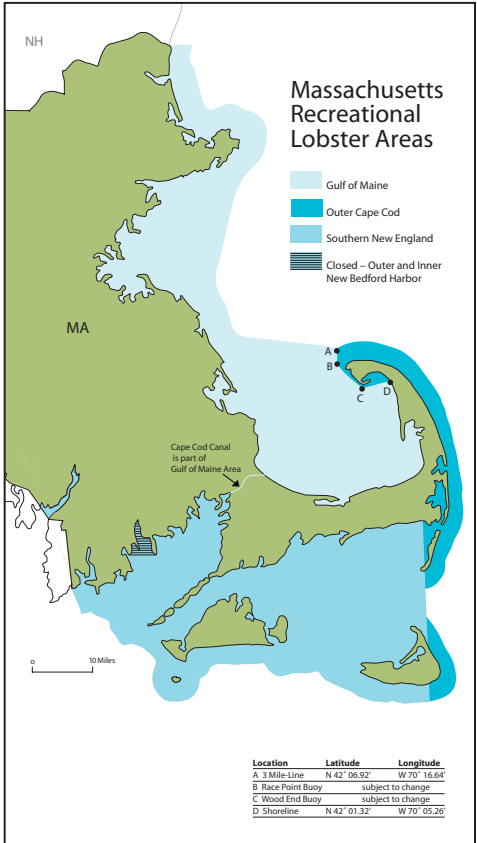
**781.545.6984**





# Recreational Regulations

RECREATIONAL LOBSTER REGULATIONS	
ALL AREAS	
Trap Limit	With trap endorsement, may fish 10 traps per household.
Bag Limit	15 lobsters per day. Lobsters may be stored and retrieved in excess of this limit, provided fishing activity is not occurring.
Night fishing	No trap fishing ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise.
Egg Bearing Females	It is unlawful to possess or land any lobster that is egg bearing, from which eggs have been forcibly removed, or that has come in contact with any substance capable of removing eggs.
V-Notch	It is unlawful to possess or land any female lobster that bears a v-shaped notch or indentation on the base of the tail flipper to the right of the center flipper that is ⅛" or deeper with or without setal hairs.
Prohibited Gears	It is unlawful to possess or land any lobster taken by spear gun, pole spear, or other device that pierces the shell as means of harvest; by dipping or dipnet; by star trap or any trap that is fished in an open configuration until retrieved; by dragging or the use of any hauled nets or dredges; or snaring and poles with loops.
GULF OF MAINE RECREATIONAL LOBSTER AREA	
Minimum Size	3¼"
Maximum Size	5"
Escape Vent	One rectangular vent 1⅝" x 5¾" or two circular vents of 2⅞" in diameter
OUTER CAPE COD RECREATIONAL LOBSTER AREA	
Minimum Size	3⅜"
Maximum Size	—
Escape Vent	One rectangular vent 2" x 5¾" or two circular vents of 2½" in diameter
SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND RECREATIONAL LOBSTER AREA	
Minimum Size	3⅜"
Maximum Size	5¼"
Escape Vent	One rectangular vent 2" x 5¾" or two circular vents of 2½" in diameter



RECREATIONAL CRAB REGULATIONS					
SPECIES	MINIMUM SIZE	POSSESSION LIMIT	CLOSED SEASON	EGG BEARING	NIGHT FISHING
Blue Crabs	5" shell width	25 crabs	January 1 – April 30	Prohibited	No tending or hauling traps ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise. Use of non-trap gears is allowed at night.
Other Edible Crabs (not including green crabs)	No size requirement	50 edible crabs combined and not to exceed 25 blue crabs.	January 1 – April 30	Prohibited	No tending or hauling traps ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise. Use of non-trap gears is allowed at night.

## Crab Identification



## How to Measure a Lobster

### The Rules

Lobsters must be measured with a special gauge to make sure that they are *keepers*. Carapace length is measured from the rear of the eye socket to the rear of the carapace on a line parallel to the center line of the body shell. Make sure the gauge is at the extreme rear of the eye socket below the rostrum or horn. A common error is to measure from the horn located forward of the eye socket, which results in an improper measurement.

All lobsters measuring less than the minimum legal carapace length, or larger than the maximum legal carapace length, must be immediately returned to the waters from which taken.

All lobsters must be measured immediately.

### Mutilation

It shall be unlawful to possess any lobster, or part thereof, which is mutilated in a manner which makes accurate measurement impossible.



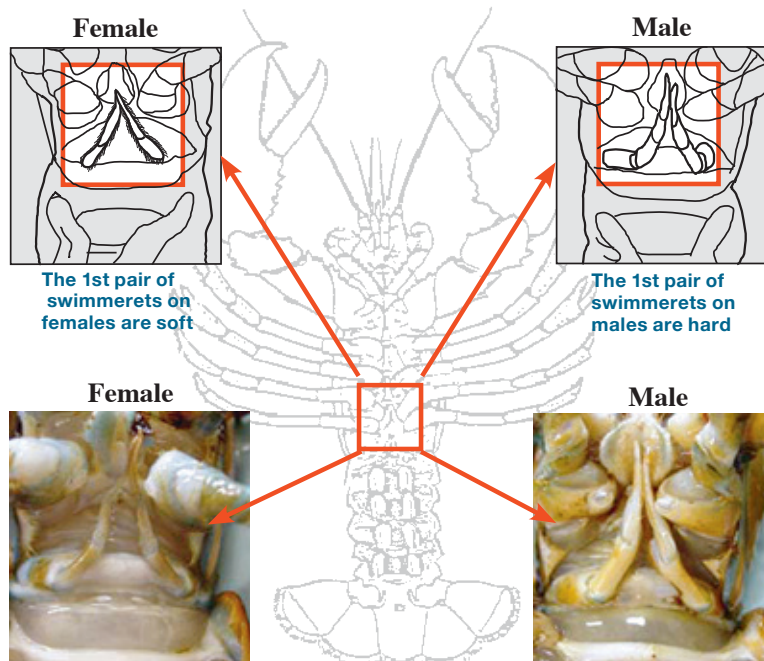
Correct lobster measurement



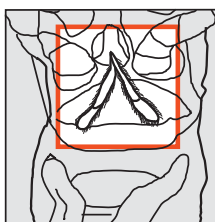
The gauge is placed in the rear of the eye socket

## Is it Male or Female?

In order to determine the sex of a lobster, you must look at the first pair of appendages under the tail, called swimmerets. They are positioned near the base of the last pair of walking legs. The first pair of swimmerets are hard in the male, and soft and feathery in the female.

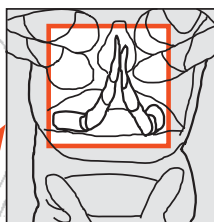


Female



The 1st pair of swimmerets on females are soft

Male

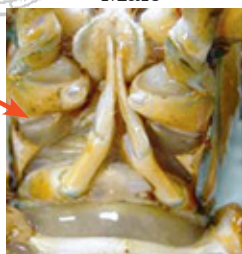


The 1st pair of swimmerets on males are hard

Female



Male



## All About Lobster

### What are they?

Lobsters are ten-legged (decapod) crustaceans. The American lobster is the only species of clawed lobster in the Northwestern Atlantic region.

### Where are they?

The American lobster is distributed throughout the Northwest Atlantic from the Straights of Bell Isle, Newfoundland to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina.

They are most abundant in coastal zones at depths of less than 150 ft. (~50 m). The greatest abundance of lobster occurs within the Gulf of Maine — from mid-coast Maine to southwest Nova Scotia.

### Growth

American lobster is a long-lived species known to reach more than 40 lb. (18 kg).

Age is unknown because all hard parts are shed and replaced at molting (shedding), leaving no accreting material for age determination. In Massachusetts, shedding typically occurs between June and October.

Lobsters at minimum legal size are generally considered to be between 5 and 7 years of age based on hatchery observations. Maximum age is generally considered to be between 30 and 40 years.

### Biology

Fertilized eggs are carried on the female abdomen for a 9 to 12 month period of development prior to hatching.

Female lobsters carry between 1,000 and >100,000 eggs depending on the size of the female.

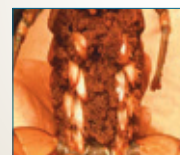
Hatching typically occurs over a 4 month period from May through September. In Massachusetts we typically see peak hatching from late-June through early-July.

### Egg-bearing Females

It is unlawful for any fisherman to take or possess any egg-bearing female lobster or female lobster with the egg mass forcibly removed, at any time.



When eggs are extruded they are dark green and the female is called a green egger.



As eggs develop and approach hatching time they turn brown to reddish brown and the female is called a brown egger.



# V-Notching Regulations

## What is a V-Notch?

A *v-notch* is a mark on the tail flipper of a female lobster that was put there by a commercial lobsterman as a means to identify and protect a known breeder in the population from harvest.

Commercial lobstermen make a v-notch in the tail flippers of egg-bearing female lobsters they encounter while fishing. The v-notch remains in the female's flipper after she has hatched her eggs which protects her from harvest through additional molts. If you choose to voluntarily v-notch egg-bearing female lobsters, we strongly encourage you to purchase a v-notching tool; this tool is available at marine supply stores.

## V-Notching History

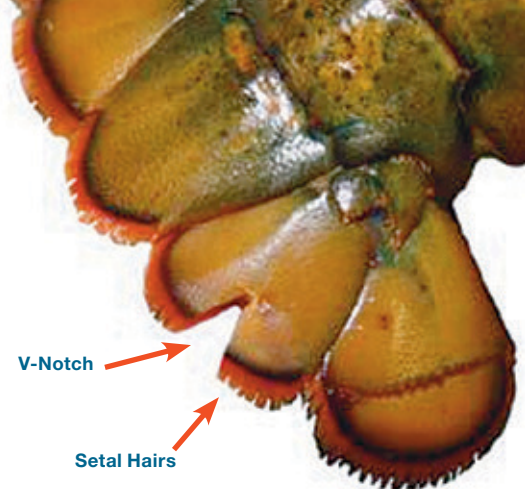
The practice of v-notching, as a means of protecting local broodstock, originated in Maine and dates back to the early 1900s.

## Which Flipper is Notched?

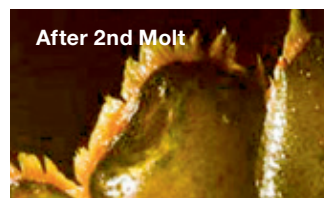
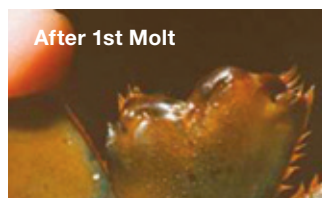
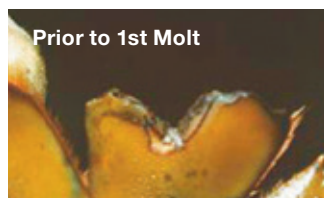
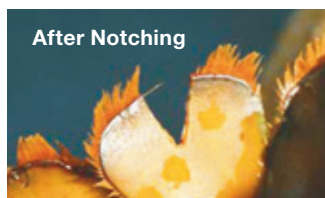
The tail flipper immediately to the right of the middle flipper, when the lobster is examined with the underside of the lobster down and its tail is toward the person making the determination.

## Mutilation

It is illegal to possess any female lobster in which the v-notch flipper is mutilated in a manner which could hide, obscure, or obliterate such a mark.



**Below: Newly v-notched lobster and additional pictures of the v-notched lobster before and after it underwent two successive molts. Note that changes occurred even before the lobster molted**



# SCUBA Regulations for Recreational Lobster and Edible Crabbing



## Permitting

To recreationally dive for lobsters in Massachusetts, all divers must hold a Recreational Lobster/Crabbing Permit endorsed for diving. A permit endorsed for diving only covers the individual and does not cover the immediate family. Each individual diver must hold their own permit endorsed for diving. This permit must be carried on the vessel at all times when fishing for lobsters. No permit is required for the taking of edible crabs by diving. The taking of edible crabs is subject to recreational crab regulations (page 35).

## Gear and Marking Requirements

**Dive Flag** – MA law requires each diver or group of divers, while swimming or below the surface, to display a dive flag. The dive flag must be at least 12" x 15" in area with a red background and white diagonal stripe. The flag must be displayed on the vessel or on a surface float and must extend at least 3 feet from the surface of the water. Divers are required to stay within 100 feet of the displayed flag while at or near the surface. Divers may display their permit numbers of their dive flag.

**Dive Marker** – If the permit number for all divers is not displayed on the dive flag, a dive marker must be used. The dive marker must be a 12" x 12" floating panel with a white background. The permit number for each diver must be displayed on each side of the marker in numerals measuring 3" in height by ½" in width. **Dive Tank** – The permit number must be marked on your dive tank in numerals that measure 3" in height by ½" in width.

## Methods of Taking Lobsters

Divers may take lobsters by hand. They may also utilize a *tickle stick*, which is a straight or slightly bent stick used to agitate a lobster to come out of its hole. The use of spears, snares and dipnets is prohibited (page 35).

## Catch Limits

There is a limit of **15 lobsters** per day per permit, and all lobsters must meet the legal requirements. Divers are required to measure all lobsters in possession prior to surfacing.

Taking of blue crabs and other edible crabs is prohibited from January 1 through April 30.

There is a limit of **25 blue crabs** per day. There is a combined limit of **50 edible crabs** (e.g., blue and Jonah) per day.





# All About Gear

## Permit Requirements

To recreationally fish for lobsters and crabs with traps you must hold a Recreational Lobster/ Crabbing Permit endorsed for trap fishing. This endorsement allows you to fish up to 10 traps. Any member of your immediate family may fish your traps for you. No household may hold more than one permit endorsed for traps, nor fish more than 10 traps. This permit must be carried on the vessel at all times when fishing for lobsters or edible crabs. This permit allows up to 15 lobsters to be kept per day.

## Surface Identification

### Buoy Colors

All traps and cars must be buoyed at the surface. Each permit holder must have a unique buoy color combination of up to three colors. This color combination is provided by the applicant on the application. Each buoy must be marked with this color scheme, typically by painting the buoys. The color scheme must also be visibly displayed on the vessel. This is commonly done by displaying a buoy on the vessel or painting the color scheme on the side of the vessel. You should look to see what combinations recreational and commercial trap fishermen are using in your area and try to pick a unique color combination.

### Buoy Marking

All buoys must be permanently marked with permit holder information in a specific

alphanumeric sequence. This begins with the letter "N"; then the permit number; followed by a dash (-); then a single digit from 0 to 9, indicating the sequential pot number in the series that the permit holder is fishing. Each letter and number must be 1" in height by ½" in width. Common techniques include permanent marker, painting or burning.

### Single Pots vs Trawls

Most recreational fishermen prefer to fish single buoyed pots rather than trawls, which are a series of pots tied together at one or both ends. However, they may fish either. Each style of trap configuration requires a unique surface identification.

Single traps shall be marked with a single 7" x 7" or 5" x 11" buoy. The use of buoy sticks is optional, but if a stick is used a flag shall not be attached.

Trawls shall be marked on the east end with a double buoy consisting of any combination of two 7" x 7" or 5" x 11" buoys and one or more three foot sticks (so the two buoys can be side-by-side or stacked). Then the west end of the trawl shall be marked with a single 7" x 7" or 5" x 11" buoy with a 3 foot stick and flag. Trawls of two or three traps shall only be marked on one end, whereas trawls of four or more traps must be marked on both.

## Gear Identification

All traps and cars must be permanently marked with permit holder information in the same alphanumeric sequence as the buoy number. This alphanumeric sequence shall be permanently secured into the inside of the trap through the use of a synthetic plate or by being burned or cut by a wooden lath.





# Lobster/Crab Trap Requirements

## Maximum Size

It is unlawful for any trap to exceed a volume of 22,950 cubic inches.

## Escape Vents

Escape vents are required in order to allow sub-legal sized lobsters and other non-targeted species to leave the trap. Escape vents must be unobstructed. Circular vents are preferred for retaining crabs.

One or more rectangular escape vent or two or more circular escape vents shall be placed on a side of the parlor section of the trap and are typically affixed with hog rings. While a particular orientation is not mandated, certain orientations enhance escapement (see Escape Vent and Ghost Panel Placement).

If your trap has two parlors, both areas must be vented.

Escape vent sizes and frequency are specific to the Recreational Lobster/Crab Area (p 30) where the traps are set and hauled:

- **Gulf of Maine Recreational Lobster/Crab Area.** Rectangular escape vents must measure at least 1  $\frac{1}{8}$ " by 5  $\frac{3}{4}$ " or two circular vents must measure 2  $\frac{7}{8}$ " diameter.
- **Outer Cape Cod or Southern New England Recreational Lobster/Crab Area.** Rectangular escape vents must measure 2" by 5  $\frac{3}{4}$ " or two circular vents must measure at least 2  $\frac{5}{8}$ " diameter.

## Anatomy of a Lobster Trap

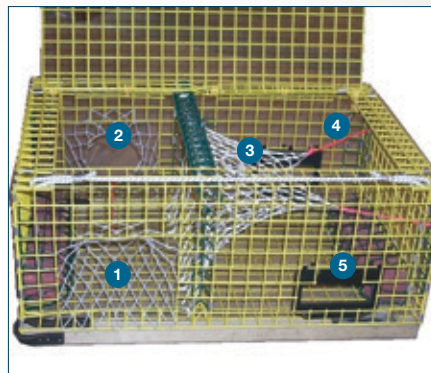
**1. Entrance Head:** Mesh opening where lobsters enter the trap.

**2. Kitchen:** This is where the bait bag is placed to attract lobsters into the trap.

**3. Parlor Head or Funnel:** Lobsters use this mesh netting as a means out of the kitchen, assuming it's a way out of the trap.

**4. Parlor:** Area where the lobsters end up after leaving the kitchen and traveling up the funnel. Most of the catch will be found in this part of the trap.

**5. Escape Vent/Ghost Panel:** Opening of designated size that allows sub-legal lobsters to escape the trap. The biodegradable materials used to attach the escape vent panel will allow the "ghost panel" to open if the trap has been lost or abandoned. This prevents the trap from continuing to fish after it has been lost or abandoned.



## Ghost Panels

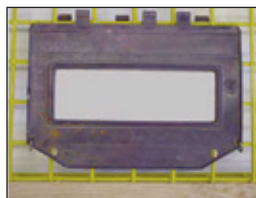
Ghost panels are designed to create an opening to allow the escapement of lobsters and incidental catch within 12 months after a trap has been lost or abandoned.

- **Panel size.** The panel must be rectangular and measure at least 3  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 3  $\frac{3}{4}$ ". The panel may be your escape vent or trap door.
- **Panel location.** The panel must be located in the outer parlor section of the trap and in a position which allows unobstructed exit of lobsters. The panel should not be located on the bottom of the trap.

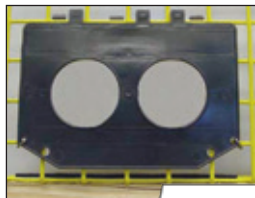
- **Panel fasteners.** The panel - or the trap door or escape vent if being used as a panel - must be fastened to the trap with one of the following materials: cotton; hemp; sisal or jute twine not greater than 3/16" diameter; or non-stainless, uncoated ferrous metal not greater than 3/32" in diameter.
- **Wooden traps.** Traps constructed entirely or partially of wood shall be considered in compliance if constructed with wooden lath to the extent that deterioration of the wooden component(s) will result in an unobstructed opening of at least 3  $\frac{3}{32}$ " by 3  $\frac{3}{32}$ ".

## Escape Vent and Ghost Panel Placement

- **Note:** These examples are meant to be used as suggestions for escape vent and ghost panel placement in lobster traps. It is NOT required that escape vents and ghost panels be positioned in any way, except to provide an "unobstructed" means for escape by sub-legal lobsters.

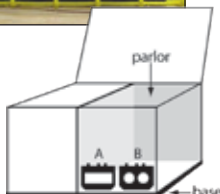


A

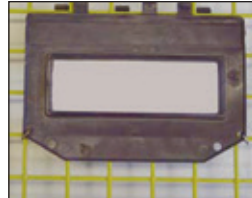


B

**More Effective Placement In Allowing Escapement of Sublegal Lobsters**



C

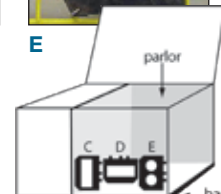


D



E

**Less Effective Placement In Allowing Escapement of Sublegal Lobsters**



- Less effective locations for escape vent panels include the inside of a trap and the upper panel and door.

## Line Configuration Requirements

Your buoy lines are the lines that connect your pots to their surface buoy. While swimming through the water column large whales, porpoises and sea turtles may become entangled in these lines. As Massachusetts provides important waters for these species, your buoy lines are subject to certain requirements to reduce injury and mortality associated with entanglements and to identify entangling gear.

## Sinking Buoy Lines

The top 2/3 of all buoy lines must be comprised of sinking line. The bottom 1/3 of the line which may be floating line, if so desired. Sinking line has a specific gravity that is greater than or equal to that of seawater (1.03) and does not float in the water column.

## Buoy Line Marking

By marking the rope, that gear can be identified to a certain area and fishery, if it is taken off an entangled whale.



## Buoy Line Diameter

All buoy lines must have a diameter that does not exceed 3/8".

## Weak Links

On the top of the buoy line before the buoy, all lines must have a breakable section (weak link) that will part when subjected to 600 pounds of pull pressure and after parting will result in a knot-less end, not thicker than the diameter of the line (see image).

## Weak Links

Weak links allow the buoy to part away from the buoy line in the event that a whale encounters your gear.

Swivel Weak Links



## Buoy Line Marking

Mid-way on the buoy line there must be a 4" red mark. If the buoy line is red, then a white mark may be used instead. Common marking tools include tape and paint (see image).

## Ground Line

If fishing trawls, the groundline that connects each pot must be sinking line (see image).



Images: NOAA Fisheries Service

Hog Ring Weak Link

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# Whale Gear Restrictions and Closures

## Abandoned Gear

All traps must be hauled at least once every 30 days, or the gear is considered to be abandoned. It is unlawful to abandon gear in Massachusetts waters. If you believe your gear is lost and may become abandoned, please contact the Massachusetts Environmental Police or the Division of Marine Fisheries and inform them of when and where the gear was last hauled and set.

## Single Traps Closure

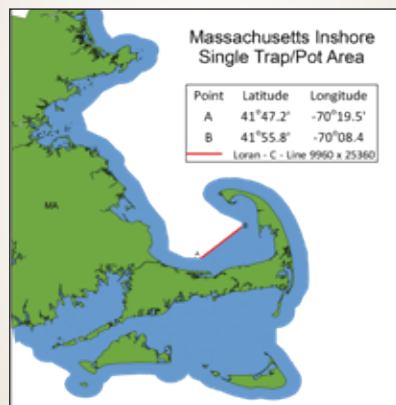
The use of single traps is prohibited in state-waters north of Cape Cod that are seaward of 3-miles from shore, with an exception for an area off Billingsgate Shoal. This area includes those waters that are shoreward of the Loran-C Line 9960-X-25360, as it runs from Barnstable to Wellfleet (see map for coordinates).

## Trap Gear Haul Out Period

All traps must be removed from and may not be set in the Large Whale Seasonal Trap Gear Closure Area from February 1 through April 30 (see map for coordinates).

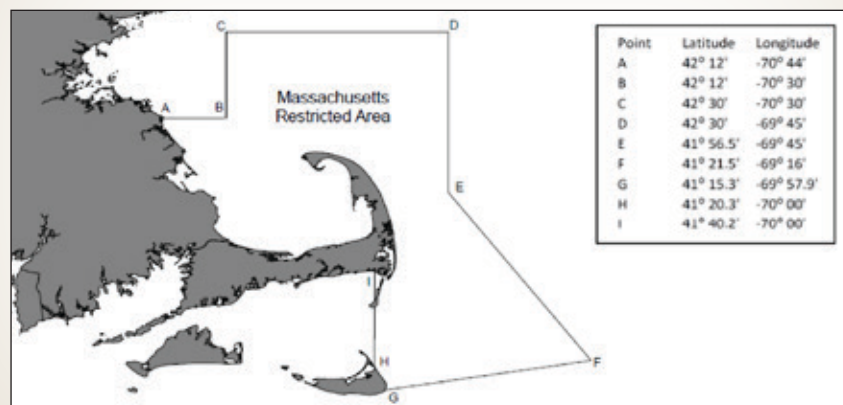
### Single Trap Area

Single traps may be set in the shaded areas depicted in the map below.



### Large Whale Seasonal Trap/Pot Gear Closure Area

From February 1 – April 30, traps must be removed from and not be set in the area defined in the map below.



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# Directory – Bait & Tackle Shops

**\* Denotes official DMF Saltwater Fishing Derby Weigh Station.**

If you would like to become an official weigh station please contact DMF Biologist John Boardman (508) 742-9739, john.boardman@mass.gov

## North Shore

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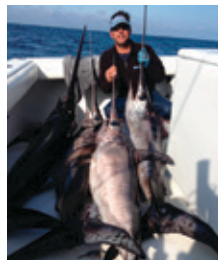


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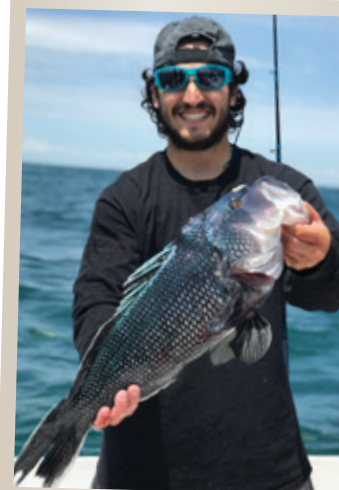
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<b>NO NAME (STAPELFRD) (27')</b> ERIC STAPELFELD.....	(617) 755-1847
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