

MASSACHUSETTS

Saltwater

2024 RECREATIONAL FISHING GUIDE

Striped Bass Current Status

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- ▶ Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations
- ▶ Get Your 2024 Saltwater Recreational Permit

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- ▶ Commonly Caught Species

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- ▶ Bait & Tackle Shops
- ▶ Charter & Head Boats

DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

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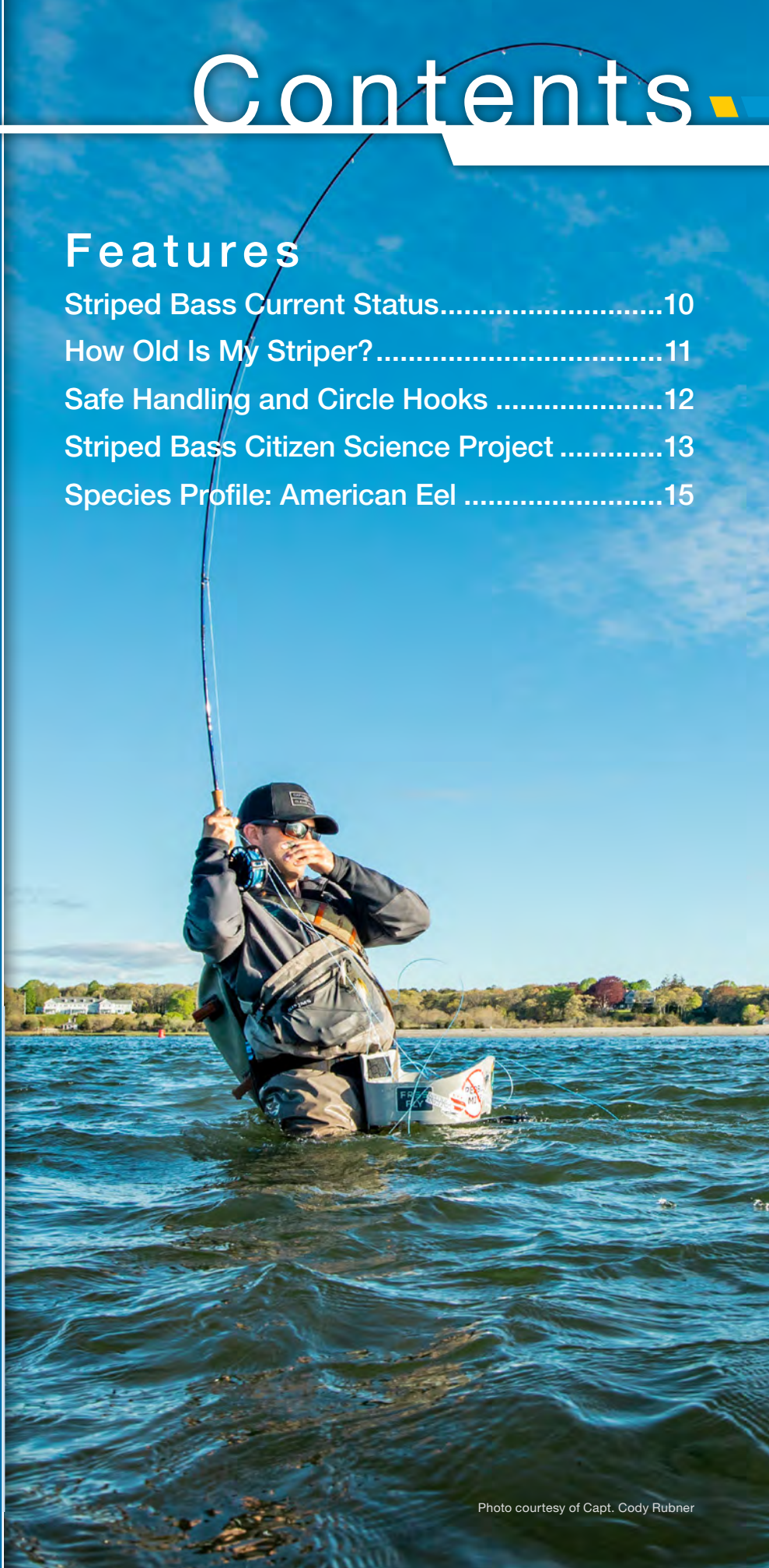
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On the Cover:

Capt. Matt Zimmermann of Back Eddy Charters carefully releases a large striped bass boatside. Photo courtesy of Capt. Matt Zimmermann



Massachusetts Fisheries Are Great Help Us Make Them Better

For saltwater anglers, Massachusetts is an amazing place to live, vacation, or visit. We have access to colder-water species of the Gulf of Maine such as haddock and cod and the warmer-water species that visit our shores in the summer and fall, such as black sea bass, scup, bonito, and false albacore. Because of this diversity, Massachusetts likely has the best fishing opportunities in all the Northeast.

Fish populations and fishing opportunities are constantly changing, and temperatures seem to be a big driver. Our winters aren't as cold as they used to be and it's rare when our harbors ice in. Our average summer temperatures are getting warmer, driving increases in fish that have been more common in the mid-Atlantic states. Even species such as scup, black sea bass, and fluke that have always been common in waters south of Cape Cod are now seen with regularity north of the Cape. DMF biologists increasingly get inquiries from anglers about fish they are catching but had not seen before. In our southern waters this list includes northern kingfish and lizardfish — and let's not forget the story of the tarpon caught from shore in Mashpee last summer that had everyone talking.

DMF's biologists work diligently with their interstate and federal partners to assess the status of fish stocks and fine tune our management approaches to ensure you as anglers have access to these fish and the sport of saltwater fishing. Across many species, the hottest topic in management is now release mortality: taking care of the fish you release to ensure its survival. Our team has done some amazing research on cusk, haddock, and cod to identify the factors that might contribute to helping those fish survive. Our focus has now shifted to striped bass, an iconic sportfish that is prized by anglers throughout Massachusetts and the east coast.

After being at a high population level for decades, striped bass have recently taken a turn for the worse, with five consecutive years of poor spawning success in the Chesapeake Bay. Despite the poor spawning, fishing for larger bass in Massachusetts remains good; so good that scientists estimate that more adult striped bass are currently killed by catch-and release fishing than are harvested and taken home. In response to this emerging issue, DMF started a large-scale research project. Enlisting the help of citizen scientists, our team of dedicated biologists is zeroing in on what anglers can do to improve post-release survival of stripers, including using fewer treble hooks on lures and limiting handling time, especially during the warmer months. With striped bass in danger of a collapse, the onus is on all of us as recreational anglers to take care of these fish. Stripers need our help and conservation will be critical to the well-being of the population and the fishery that it supports. Inside this guide you will find more information about DMF's efforts and research. Please take the time to learn what we are doing and consider participating as a citizen scientist.

To all our anglers, we wish you calm seas, tight lines, and great days on the water with friends and family. Cheers!



Daniel J. McKiernan
Director

Marine Fisheries
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Panel

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For more information see our website
mass.gov/marinefisheries



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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 local fishing groups. For further information, contact your local Recreational Fisheries Biologist.

Find Us Online and on Social Media

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-  @massmarinefisheries
-  @MassDMF
-  @massmarinefisheries



mass.gov/marinefisheries | marine.fish@mass.gov

Recreational Fisheries Program Biologists

South Shore Office:

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

John Boardman

South Shore/South Coast
john.boardman@mass.gov

Annisquam River Marine Fisheries Station:

30 Emerson Avenue
Gloucester, MA 01930
(978) 282-0308

Matt Ayer

North Shore/Metro Boston
matt.ayer@mass.gov



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

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, limited English proficiency, disability, veteran's status, or background. If you believe you have been discriminated against in a program or activity or need more information, contact Melixza G. Esenyie, ADA and Diversity Manager, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, 100 Cambridge Street, Boston MA 02114, Melixza.Esenyie2@mass.gov, (617) 872-3270.

EST. 2004
J.F. GRIFFIN
PUBLISHING

Williamstown, MA | Birmingham, AL

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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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Graphic Design:

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This guide is also available online at

eRegulations.com

Please Immediately Report Sightings of Entangled Marine Animals

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

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1271 Main St., Tewksbury, MA (978) 851-9024

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Get Your **2024 Saltwater Fishing Permit** Today!



Love to fish?

If you're 16 or older, you need a recreational saltwater fishing permit in Massachusetts. Whether you print your permit or have it stored on your mobile device, you must always have a version of your current fishing permit with you when saltwater fishing in Massachusetts. The process for getting your permit is the same for new, returning, and 60+ anglers. Permits expire each year on December 31.

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)

Permit Fee

- The fee for an individual angler (resident or non-resident) is \$10
- Although there is no fee to anglers 60 years and older, you must still get a permit

Reciprocity

Massachusetts has reciprocity agreements with:

- New Hampshire: MA to NH and NH to MA
- Rhode Island: MA to RI and RI to MA
- Connecticut: MA to CT and CT to MA
- Maine: MA to ME only

These agreements allow MA recreational saltwater permit holders to recreationally fish in NH, RI, CT, and ME. Read each agreement for specific details. Be aware that regulations vary from state to state.

How to Get Your 2024 Massachusetts Recreational Saltwater Fishing Permit:

You can get your Massachusetts recreational saltwater fishing permit online, by mail, or in person. Here's how:

Online

You can buy your saltwater fishing permit online at massfishhunt.mass.gov. MassFishHunt will walk you through getting your permit. Online permits will include a small additional administrative fee.

By Mail

Visit our Recreational Saltwater Fishing Permit webpage at mass.gov/marinefisheries and download and print the paper application for recreational saltwater fishing permits.

In Person

You can get your permit in person at our Gloucester or New Bedford offices. Those offices are open from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday through Friday and only accept checks or money orders.

Permits can also be bought at one of our approved vendor locations. Visit mass.gov/info-details/massfishhunt-license-agent-map to find a location near you.

Gloucester Office

30 Emerson Avenue,
Gloucester, MA 01930
(978) 282-0308

New Bedford Office

836 S Rodney French Blvd,
New Bedford, MA 02744
(508) 990-2860

For questions, please email:

marine.fish@mass.gov or call one of our offices.

Your Permit Dollars at Work

Recreational saltwater permit fees are dedicated to improving your angling experience. Here are a few of the ways:

Public Access

- Develops and maintains large fishing piers
- Funds small projects improving or repairing existing access sites
- Funds the deployment of dedicated recreational artificial reefs

Angler Education

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

Improved Recreational Catch Data

- Increases the sample size for the Marine Recreational Information Program's Access Point Angler Intercept Survey

Research and Conservation

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

Learn more about how to get your 2024 saltwater recreational fishing permit at mass.gov/how-to/get-a-recreational-saltwater-fishing-permit



Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations

Regulations listed below are subject to change during the 2024 season. Check our website for current regulations at mass.gov/saltwater-regulations



SPECIES	SIZE LIMIT	SEASON	POSSESSION LIMIT
American eel (1)	Min: 9"	Year Round	25 fish
American Shad (Merrimack and Connecticut Rivers)	No Limit	Year Round	3 fish
American Shad (Other Waters)	No Limit	Year Round	Prohibited. Catch and release only.
Black Sea Bass (2,6)	Min: 16.5"	May 18 - Sep 3	4 fish
Bluefish	No Limit	Year Round	3 fish (shore & private) 5 fish (for-hire)
Cod* (3,4) (Gulf of Maine)	See mass.gov/saltwater-regulations		
Cod* (3,4) (Southern New England)	See mass.gov/saltwater-regulations		
Dab (plaice) (3,4)	Min: 14"	Year Round	No Limit
Grey Sole (3,4)	Min: 14"	Year Round	No Limit
Haddock* (3,4) (Gulf of Maine)	See mass.gov/saltwater-regulations		
Haddock (3) (Southern New England)	Min: 18"	Year Round	No Limit
Halibut (3,4)	Min: 41"	Year Round	1 fish
Mackerel (5)	No Limit	Year Round	20 fish
Monkfish (3,4)	No Limit	Year Round	No Limit
Ocean Pout (3,4)	No Limit	Closed	Prohibited
Pollock (3,4)	No Limit	Year Round	No Limit
Redfish (3,4)	No Limit	Year Round	No Limit
River Herring	No Limit	Closed	Prohibited
Scup (Private Vessel)	Min: 11"	May 1 - Dec 31	30 fish (150 fish/vessel maximum)
Scup (Shore Based)	Min: 9.5"	May 1 - Dec 31	30 fish
Scup (For Hire)	Min: 11"	May 1 - Jun 30	40 fish
	Min: 11"	Jul 1 - Dec 31	30 fish
Smelt	No Limit	Jan 1 - Mar 14	50 fish
		Jun 16 - Dec 31	50 fish
Summer Flounder (Fluke) (Shore)	Min: 16.5"	May 24 - Sep 23	5 fish
Summer Flounder (Fluke) (Private and For-hire Vessel)	Min: 17.5"	May 24 - Sep 23	5 fish
Spiny Dogfish	No Limit	Year Round	No Limit
Striped Bass (7)	28" to less than 31"	Year Round	1 fish
Tautog (8)	Min: 16" Only one fish may exceed 21"	Apr 1 - May 31	3 fish
		Jun 1 - Jul 31	1 fish
		Aug 1 - Oct 14	3 fish
		Oct 15 - Dec 31	5 fish
Weakfish	Min: 16"	Year Round	1 fish
White Perch	Min: 8"	Year Round	25 fish
Windowpane Flounder	No Limit	Closed	Prohibited
Winter Flounder (Gulf of Maine)	Min: 12"	Year Round	8 fish
Winter Flounder (Southern New England)	Min: 12"	Mar 1 - Dec 31	2 fish
Wolfish	No Limit	Closed	Prohibited
Yellowtail Flounder	Min: 13"	Year Round	No Limit

Notes:

* **Regulatory limits may be subject to change for May 1, 2024**

Gulf of Maine refers to all waters north of Cape Cod, including Cape Cod Bay, and those waters east of Cape Cod that are north of 42°00'N latitude.

Southern New England refers to all waters south and west of Cape Cod, including Nantucket Sound, Vineyard Sound, Buzzards Bay and Mount Hope Bay, and all waters east of Cape Cod that are south of 42°00'N latitude including Nauset Harbor and Pleasant Bay.

Tunas, billfish, and swordfish are managed by NOAA's Highly Migratory Species Office. Please consult NOAA Fisheries for permitting requirements and regulations.

1) Subject to regulation by the Division and the municipality. Please consult municipal regulations.

2) 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.

3) Federal rules apply beyond state waters. Consult NOAA Fisheries for regulations.

4) 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. See maps in 322 CMR 8.07 for more details.

5) The mackerel limit applies as a daily per angler harvest limit and a per angler possession limit while fishing. It does not apply to holding mackerel in a freezer, fish car, holding car, or shore-based bait well.

6) 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.

7) Striped bass are measured from the tip of the snout or jaw (mouth closed) to the farthest extremity of the tail. The discard of dead legal sized striped bass is unlawful. The practice of high-grading, whereby legal sized striped bass are released in favor of larger fish caught subsequently is unlawful. Accordingly, it is also unlawful to keep a striped bass alive in water by attaching a line or chain to the fish (stringer), or placing it in a live well or holding car. 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. All recreational anglers are required to use inline circle hooks when fishing for striped bass with whole or cut natural baits, except when fishing with a natural bait attached to an artificial lure (e.g., tube and worm). The use of non-lethal devices to remove striped bass from the water is required; gaffing striped bass is prohibited.

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. During any open season an angler may retain, possess, and land one trophy fish exceeding the 21" maximum size per calendar day.

Possession prohibited outside of date ranges listed above.

Have You Fished Today?

Here's What You Could Be Catching!

Weakfish



Photo courtesy of Capt. Mel True

Sea Raven



Photo courtesy of Capt. Mel True

Dolphinfish



Photo courtesy of Chris Gonyer

Bluefish



Photo courtesy of Chris Gonyer

Striped Bass



Photo courtesy of Jonathan Foley

Atlantic Cod



Photo courtesy of Capt. Mel True

Yellowfin Tuna



Photo courtesy of BJ White

Tautog



Photo courtesy of Capt. Mel True

Striped Bass

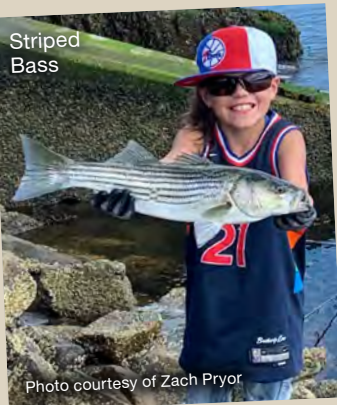


Photo courtesy of Zach Pryor



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Acoustic Tagging Research

DMF is conducting multiple tagging studies to investigate the movements of striped bass, Atlantic cod, and winter flounder. 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 (with DMF on the tag):

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**

Bill Hoffman

(978) 491-6248

bill.hoffman@mass.gov



What's Next For Striped Bass in Massachusetts?

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries adopted new regulations for the recreational striped bass fishery in 2023 to reduce fishing mortality. Following action by the ASMFC Striped Bass Management Board this January, the recreational harvest limit of one fish at 28 inches to less than 31 inches in length will continue to apply throughout 2024. The commercial fishery will also have a reduced harvest quota beginning this year.

The next stock assessment for striped bass is underway and will inform measures for 2025.

Why did DMF change striped bass regulations in 2023?

In 2023, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Striped Bass Management Board voted to reduce the slot size to help protect the mature breeders of the important 2015 year-class who will help rebuild the striped bass stock.

Did a narrow slot work?

The preliminary catch estimates for 2023 indicate that under the revised regulations, recreational fishery removals (harvest plus dead discards) were about 20% lower than 2022 on a coastwide basis.

What happens next?

A Stock Assessment Update in the fall of 2024 will indicate if the stock is likely to be rebuilt by the 2029 deadline. If needed, the Striped Bass Management Board may take actions to reduce fishing mortality. It is our hope that the appropriately cautious harvest regulations—in combination with responsible catch and release practices—will be enough to stave off additional restrictions in the near-term.

Coastwide Striped Bass Removals

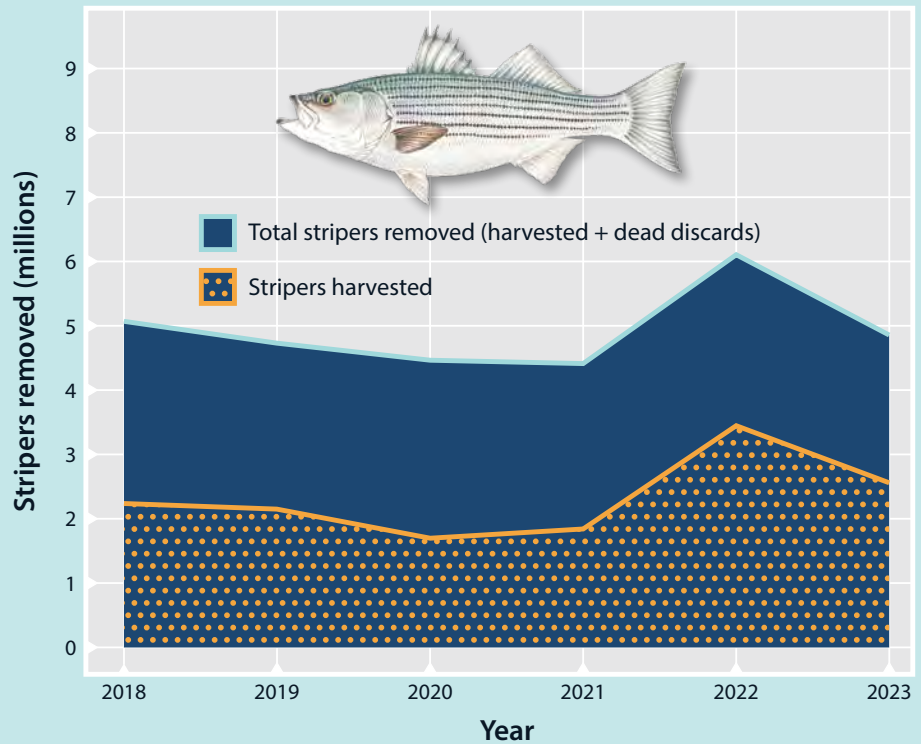
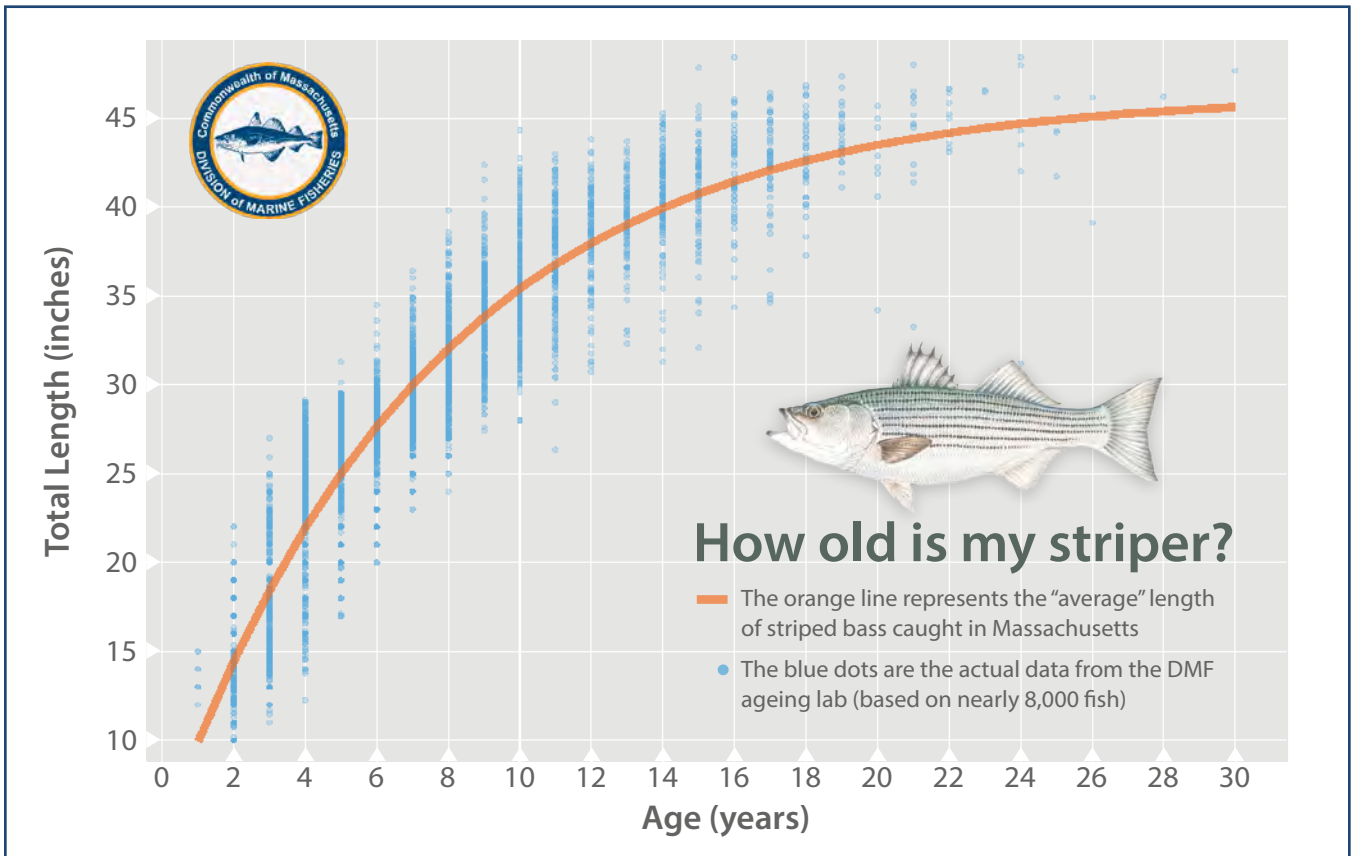


Figure: Recent changes in striped bass mortality have been driven by harvest.



Learn more at mass.gov/striped-bass-faq

Our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page provides answers to common questions about the recent actions taken by the ASMFC Striped Bass Management Board. Visit the FAQ for more information and future updates.



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 1-888-SEA-TURT (1-888-732-8878)

Know How To Handle Your Fish — Both on the Line and Off

Have a fair fight

Use the right tackle for the size and species of fish you're trying to catch and stay focused when reeling in fish to reduce longer fight times.

Stay wet

Handle your fish with wet hands. Using a dry cloth or gloves can remove both slime and scales, both needed for the fish's health!

Support the fish

Support the full body weight of the fish when lifting a fish from the water. Don't ever grab a fish by the gills or eyes and never hold the fish up by only its jaw.

Get that hook out

Remove the hook quickly. Use a dehooker if you can keep the fish in the water, or pliers for stubborn hooks. Simply cut the line close to the hook if it is deep in the mouth or gut.

Reduce time out of the water

Be quick! Get that photo or measurement and get that fish back in the water. The longer the fish stays out of the water, the greater the chance of mortality.

Don't just toss it back

Release your catch 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.

Circle Hooks

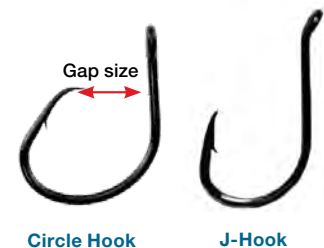
Did you know...



- Recreational anglers in Massachusetts catch and release millions of 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 deaths by 50%!

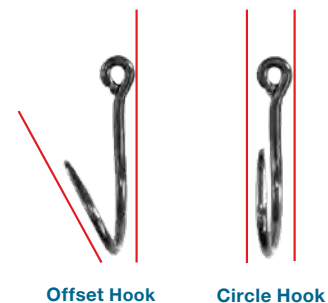
Using Circle Hooks

- 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.**



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.



STRIPED BASS CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECT



Join the Team!

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Open to anglers in all states

GO FISHING

Collect data while you fish

EXPLORE DATA

Check out what's been reported

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Submit reports to enter our raffles



Learn more at mass.gov/striper

About the Project

Due to regulations and conservation-minded anglers, most striped bass are released back to the water after they are caught. Even though most of these fish survive, recreational releases still account for a major source of mortality for striped bass. We're conducting research to determine what influences the survival of striped bass after they are released.

We launched the Striped Bass Citizen Science Project in 2023 and started asking volunteer anglers to collect information when they go striped bass fishing. We're using those data to better understand why striped bass die after they are released.

Our Partners

This project is made possible by citizen scientists and our many wonderful partners who provide support and collaboration. Special thanks to the following:

- GotOne App
- On The Water
- Hogy Lures
- Salty Cape
- Penn Fishing
- Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Surfland Bait and Tackle
- Costa Sunglasses
- American Saltwater Guides Association

LEGENDARY FISHING AWAITS!

SALMON RIVER, PULASKI NEW YORK

It only takes one light tackle hook-up for you to understand why they are called Steelhead.

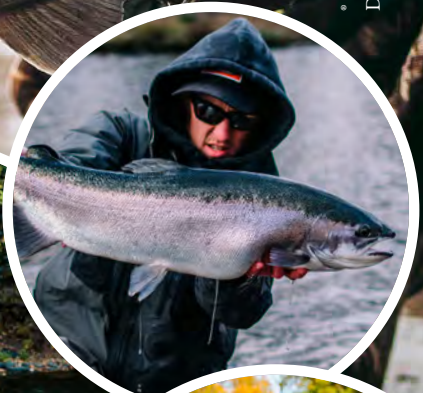
Anglers from around the world will tell you that these underwater lightning bolts do more than steal your bait. By the time they have had their way with you, they'll have stolen your heart and soul. Whether heading upstream for a fall feeding frenzy or dropping back to Lake Ontario in the spring, these 5-10 lb. "chromers" will give you the freshwater fight that brings you back for more.

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Photo courtesy Kayt Jonsson.

American Eel

The American eel, a popular baitfish used by striped bass anglers, can be hard to appreciate at first glance. It's snakelike in how it looks and moves. It's a bit slimy and hard to handle. Despite appearances, the American eel is a truly remarkable fish with a life cycle like no other in our waters.

The only catadromous fish species in Massachusetts, this eel spends the majority of its long life (upwards of 20 years) in fresh or brackish water before it finally spawns in the ocean. With the ability to slither over wet patches of earth and grass, eels are widespread and can be found in almost every freshwater body in Massachusetts. They spend their freshwater cycle as opportunistic feeders, eating everything from small fish, frogs, insects, crustaceans, and dead organisms. They grow slowly as "yellow" eels until they finally reach maturity. At this point they transform into "silver" eels ranging in length from 2 to 5 feet, and head downstream to the ocean to make the impressive migration to the Sargasso Sea, an area around the island of Bermuda. Once there, they spawn and their leaf-like leptocephalus larvae are carried along the Gulf Stream current back to the Atlantic coast of North America. During their journey they metamorphose into small, clear ribbon-shaped fish, known as glass-eels, that can move upstream in freshwater rivers and streams to begin the long process once more.

Massachusetts Sportsmen's Council



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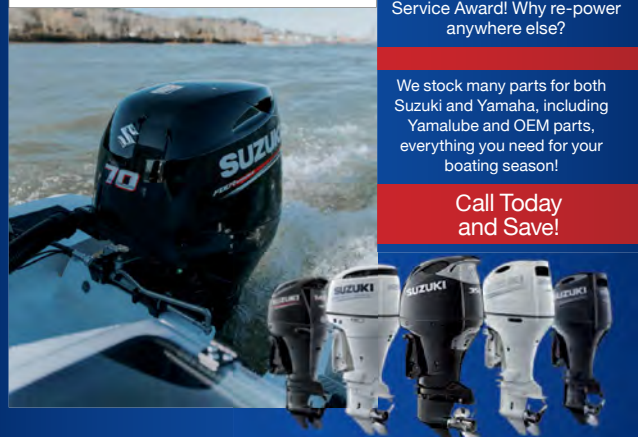


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Approximately one-half of all saltwater recreational fishing trips take place from shore.

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 fourteen DMF 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 Shore Fishing Area, Mashpee
- Parker's 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 Shore Fishing Area, Chilmark
- Leland Beach, Edgartown
- Fore River Shore Fishing Area, Quincy
- Broad Cove Shore Fishing Area, Somerset
- Cashman Park Fishing Pier, Newburyport
- Oak Bluffs Fishing Pier, Martha's Vineyard
- Deer Island Fishing Pier, Boston

For a full listing of access sites, see pages 27-29.

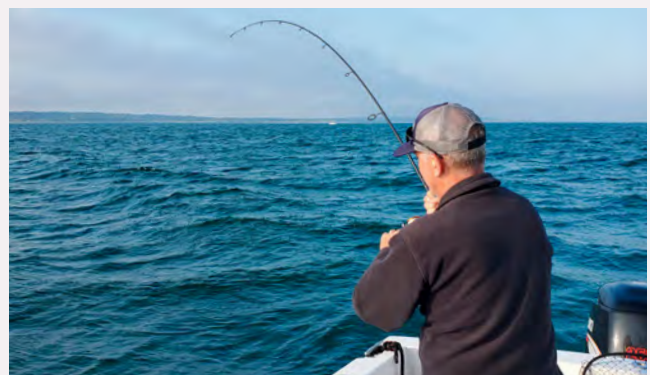
Your Fishing Counts!

When you share information about your saltwater fishing trip, you play a key role in supporting sustainable fisheries.

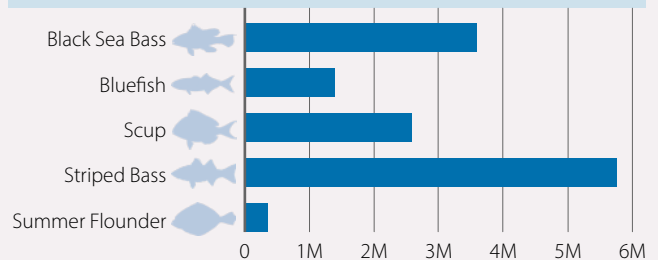
In partnership with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, NOAA Fisheries collects recreational fishing data through the **Marine Recreational Information Program**.

This state-regional-federal partnership develops, implements, and continually improves a national network of recreational fishing surveys to provide estimates of recreational catch and effort. The large-scale surveys provide one of the only sources of regionally consistent recreational catch and effort data and long-term trend information covering many species. **Your participation in the survey makes this possible, and is greatly appreciated.**

Learn more at:
countmyfish.noaa.gov



What Massachusetts Anglers Are Catching



Estimates of fish caught by recreational anglers in 2022. Source: NOAA Fisheries

LET'S GO SALTWATER FISHING!

This summer, children and their families can learn how to fish in one of our saltwater angler education programs.

Join us in our **FREE** saltwater fishing clinics to learn:

- Knot tying
- How to cast
- Catch and release tips
- Common saltwater species
- **AND MUCH MORE!**

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CLINICS!**



Photo courtesy of Vania Arroyo for Boston Harbor Now

Can't come to a fishing clinic?

It's still easy to learn! All you need to get started is some simple gear and a little practice. Check out our Saltwater Fishing Field Guide and watch the partnering video tutorials to learn how to setup saltwater fishing gear, tie fishing knots, cast, and successfully catch and release your first fish!



Clinic dates and registration are available on our website:
mass.gov/saltwater-angler-education



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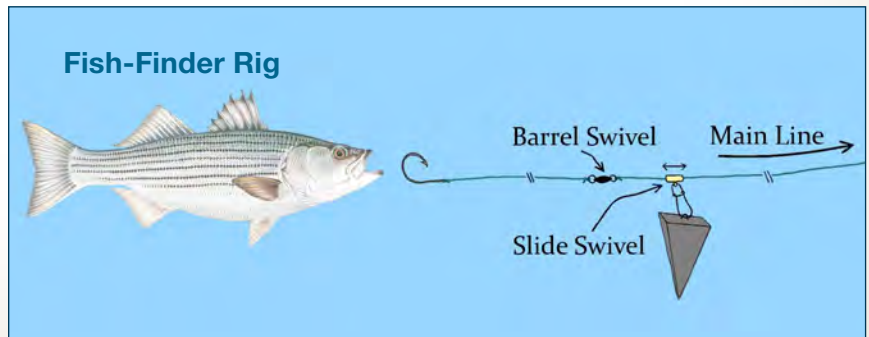
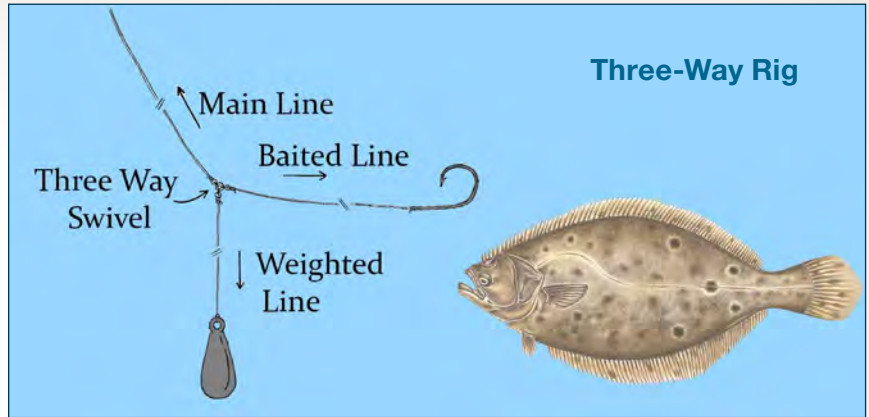
316 Lincoln St. (RT 3A), Hingham, MA 02043
781-749-3250



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 weighted 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.

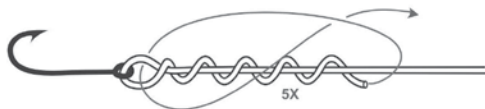


These and more fishing knots are available on waterproof plastic cards at www.proknot.com

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.



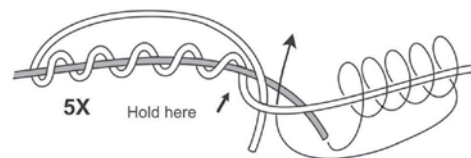
2. Wet knot and pull slightly on the tag end to draw up coils. Pull on the standing line to form knot with coils pressed neatly together.



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.

Massachusetts Saltwater Fish Records

SPECIES	WEIGHT	LOCATION	DATE	ANGLER
Albacore	65 lb. 6 oz.	Atlantis Canyon	10/4/20	Sean Ready
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

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.

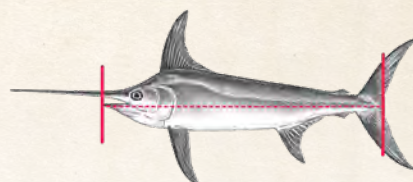
Exceptions:



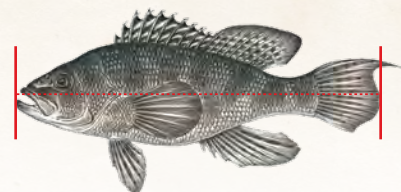
Tunas are measured using curved fork length. This is in a line, tracing the contour of the body from the tip of the upper jaw to the fork of the tail.



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.



Angler Armindo Ramos holds up his derby winning scup.

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	NA	NA	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	5	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	100	30
Porbeagle Shark	150	60
Shortfin Mako	250	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

Divisions: The saltwater fishing derby is divided into three major divisions — Inshore, Groundfish, and Large 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; 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

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

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 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" (any for-hire captain that submits at least three winning entries) receive free advertising in the following year's saltwater guide.

2023 Catch and Release Derby Winners

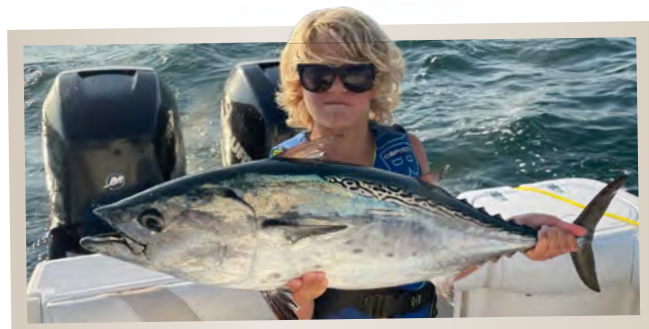
SPECIES	DIVISION	LENGTH (INCHES)	ANGLER
Black Sea Bass	Adult	21.5"	Anthony Lopopolo
	Adult	21.5"	David Brown
	Junior	19"	Joseph M. Sena II
Bluefish	Adult	39"	Mike Pieropan
	Junior	36"	Gerhardt Hoover
Blue Shark	Junior	76"	Nora Connaughton
Bluefin Tuna	Junior	82"	John Clark
Bonito	Adult	29"	Brian Majczak
False Albacore	Adult	29.5"	Sam Brandt
	Junior	27"	John Clark
Porbeagle Shark	Junior	108"	Lola Crisp
Saifish	Junior	74"	Lola Crisp
Scup	Adult	16.5"	Armando Ramos
	Junior	14.5"	Elliot Blaylock
Striped Bass	Adult	47"	Frank Mazzulli
	Adult	47"	Graham Stephens
	Junior	45"	Andrew Drake
Tautog	Adult	22.5"	Tom Moynihan
	Junior	23"	Lola Crisp
Weakfish	Adult	25.5"	Tom Moynihan

2023 Derby Winners

SPECIES	DIVISION	WEIGHT	ANGLER
Atlantic Mackerel	Junior	2 lbs 5 oz	Lola Crisp
Big Eye Tuna	Men	137 lbs	Donald Gaiter
	Junior	202 lbs	John Clark
Black Sea Bass	Junior	4 lbs 11 oz	Lola Crisp
Bluefin Tuna	Junior	376 lbs 3oz	Lola Crisp
Bluefish	Men	12 lbs 15 oz	Steve Hamblin
	Women	13 lbs 8 oz	Amy Vickers
	Junior	13 lbs 8 oz	Thomas Merlan
Bonito	Men	11 lbs 8 oz	Luke Hage
False Albacore	Men	19 lbs 3 oz	Bill Potter
	Junior	14 lbs 2 oz	James Chatti
Fluke	Men	13 lbs 8 oz	Curtis Briggi
	Junior	5 lbs 15 oz	Bryce Calvano
Mahi	Junior	16 lbs 2 oz	John Clark
Scup	Men	2 lbs 8 oz	Daniel Smith
	Junior	2 lbs 10 oz	Lola Crisp
Tautog	Men	12 lbs 3 oz	Jeff Gray
	Junior	5 lbs 13 oz	Lola Crisp
Yellowfin Tuna	Men	97 lbs	Robert Sergi Jr.
	Junior	134 lbs 2 oz	Lola Crisp

2023 Anglers of the Year

DIVISION	ANGLER
Adult	Tom Moynihan
Junior	Lola Crisp



Junior angler James Chatti caught the heaviest false albacore.



Junior angler Andrew Drake reeled in a 45-inch striped bass!

Saltwater Fish Availability Calendar

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

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.

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.

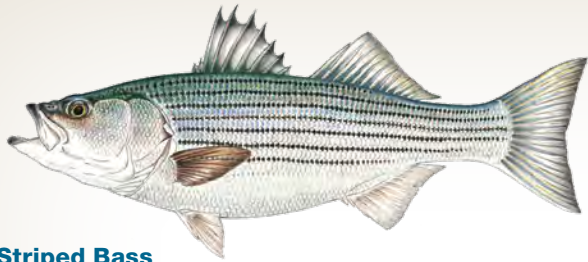
To sell, barter, or exchange fish or shellfish without a commercial permit.

For any recreational fisherman to use any type of hook other than a circle hook when fishing for striped bass with bait: any marine or aquatic organism, live or dead, whole or parts thereof. This shall not apply to any artificial lure.

2023 Top Shop Award

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.





Striped Bass

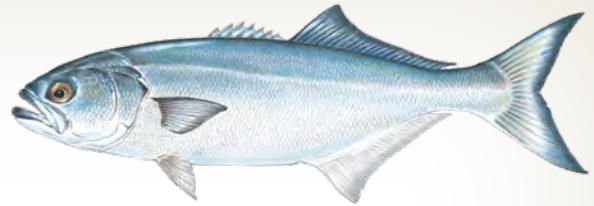
Striped bass is our most sought-after species, providing great sport through catch and release fishing and great eating when you catch a “keeper”. Striped bass is one of the largest fish available to the near-shore angler. Fish range from 1 pound to over 60 pounds.

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.



Bluefish

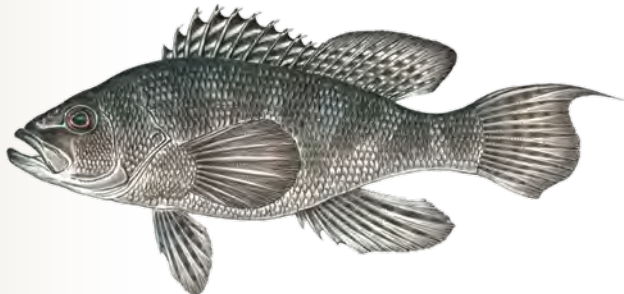
Bluefish are usually ravenous and will strike at just about anything you give them. Watch out for those teeth! They average around 3-7 pounds along the coast and tend to be larger just offshore in the rips. The juveniles, referred to as “snappers,” can be found in the estuaries and are fun to catch with 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.



Black Sea Bass

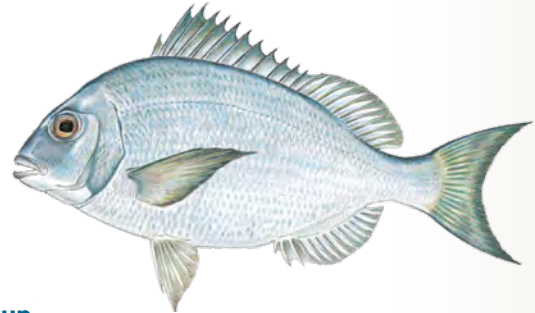
The migratory black sea bass is a tasty fish arriving in our near shore waters in the late spring. These fish also have a peculiar life cycle — the majority begin life as females and then change to males at around three years of age.

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.



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.



Tautog

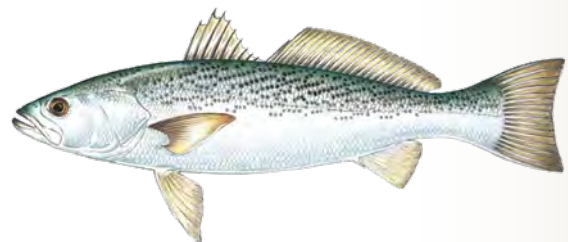
“Tog”, “white chin” and “black fish” are all common nicknames for this fish. Tautog are very slow growing compared to most fish and do not migrate far from where they originate but move inshore in the spring and offshore in the winter.

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.



Weakfish (Squeteague)

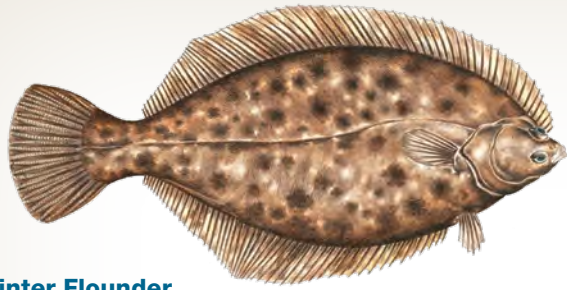
The weakfish looks like a large trout and is found in Massachusetts waters during the summer months. Often found feeding alongside striped bass.

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.



Winter Flounder

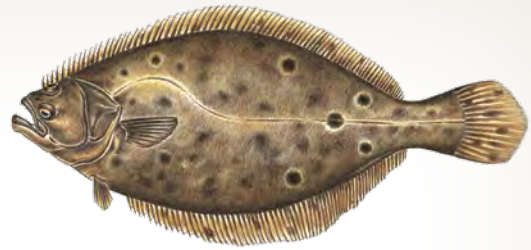
The winter flounder (black back) provides good fishing during the cold weather months. They are very accessible and provide the angler with thick fillets to take home.

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



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.



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.



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



Bonito

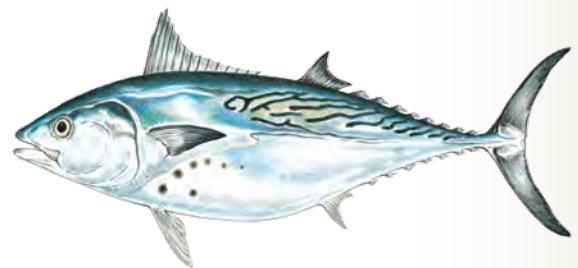
Sharpen your reflexes because these small tunas are fast and fun to catch. Watch for feeding schools where there will be jumpers. For a quick identification, look for dark bands running the length of the fish above the lateral line and a silvery belly.

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.



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



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.



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



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.



Cusk

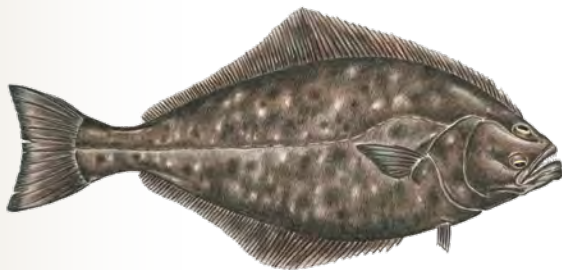
Like the cod, the cusk is a cool water fish and is found on hard, rough bottom habitat. Look for the continuous dorsal fin to assist with identification.

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.



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.



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

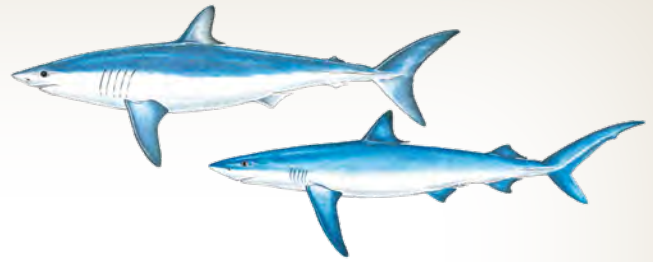
This small anadromous fish is a seasonal favorite along the coast. They're accessible prior to the spawning runs up coastal streams during the late winter and early spring.

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.



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.

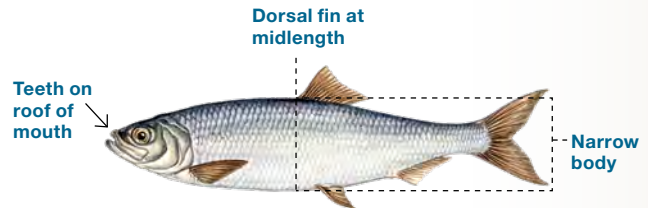
Season: June-October

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

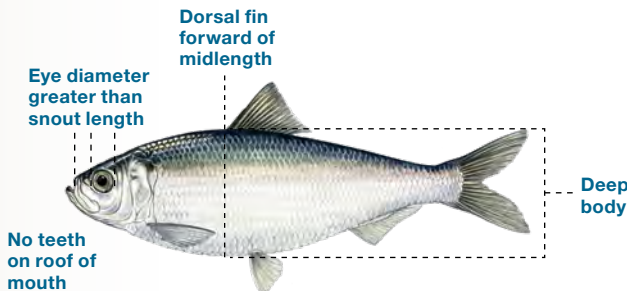
Methods and Tackle: Trolling, drifting; medium to heavy tackle, wire leader.

Herring of Massachusetts

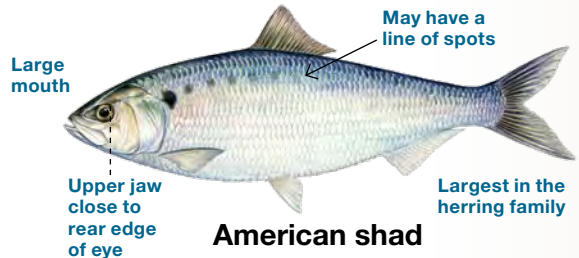
A variety of herring frequent MA coastal and estuarine waters and can be confusing to identify. River herring (alewife and blueback herring) and American shad are generally seen during spring spawning runs. Menhaden and Atlantic herring may appear in our estuaries during coastal migration in the summer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



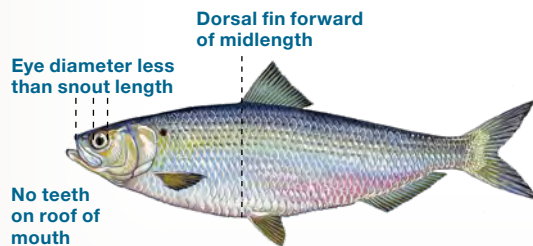
Atlantic herring



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 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
NORTH SHORE:					
Salisbury					
<i>State Beach</i>	3		•	Paved	All
Amesbury					
Town Landing Merrimac St. (RO)			•	Paved	All
Newbury					
Newbury Town Landing (RO)			•	Paved	All
Newburyport					
<i>Cashman Park</i>		•	•	Paved	All
Merri-Mar Yacht Basin			•	Paved	All
Ferry Landing			•	Paved	All
<i>Water Street</i>			•	Cartop	½
Rowley					
Perley's Marina			•	Paved	All
Ipswich					
<i>Town Landing, East Street</i>			•	Paved	All
Water Street		1	•	Paved	All
Essex					
Essex Marina, Dodge Street			•	Paved	All
Pike's Marina, Main Street			•	Paved	All
Rockport					
Granite Pier		1	•	Paved	All
Gloucester					
<i>Dunfugin Landing</i>			•	Paved	All
<i>Corliss Landing</i>			•	Paved	½
<i>Lanes Cove</i>			•	Paved	½
<i>Long Wharf</i>			•	Paved	All
Manchester					
Town Hall			•	Paved	All
Beverly					
River Street			•	Paved	All
Water Street			•	Paved	All
Danvers					
<i>Popes Landing</i>			•	Paved	All
Salem					
<i>Kernwood Bridge</i>			•	Paved	All
<i>Winter Island</i>			•	Paved	All
Willows		1			
Marblehead					
Causeway			•	Paved	½
<i>Riverhead Beach</i>			•	Paved	½
Lynn					
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
Nahant					
Town Wharf			•	Paved	All
Saugus					
Fishermen's Outlet			•	Paved	All
Winthrop					
<i>Shirley Street</i>			•	Paved	All
Boston					
Castle Island	1	1			
Charlestown Navy Yd. at Pier 4		1			
Deer Island Pier		1			
Puopolo Park					
Charles River Res.					
Commercial Street		1			
Dorchester					
Rainbow Park, Commercial St.					
SOUTH SHORE:					
Quincy					
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>					
Weymouth					
<i>Back River</i>			•	Paved	All
Hingham					
<i>Iron Horse Station, Route 3A</i>			•	Paved	All
Hull					
"A" St. Marine		1	•	Paved	All
Goulds Boat Shop			•	Paved	All
Pemberton Point		1	•	Paved	All
Priscilla Sails			•	Paved	All
Cohasset					
Parker Avenue			•	Paved	½
Scituate					
Cole Parkway			•	Paved	All
Driftway Recreation Area			•	Gravel	All
North River Marine			•	Paved	All
<i>Scituate Harbor</i>	1	3	•	Paved	All
Marshfield					
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
Duxbury					
Bay Marine Corp.			•	Paved	All
Mattakeeset Ct.		2	•	Paved	All
Kingston					
Town Landing, River Street			•	Paved	½
Plymouth					
Taylor Avenue (4-WD only)			•	Sand	All
Town Wharf	1	1	•	Paved	All
Wareham					
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
Mattapoisett					
Short Wharf, Water Street		2	•	Paved	All
Town Landing			•	Gravel	½
Matt Neck Road					
Fairhaven					
Pease Park, Middle Street			•	Paved	All
Hoppy's Landing			•	Paved	All
Seaview Avenue			•	Paved	All
New Bedford					
East Rodney French					
Boulevard, H Street	2	1	•	Paved	All
West Rodney French			•	Paved	All
Boulevard	4		•	Paved	All
Dartmouth					
Padanaram			•	Paved	All
Westport					
Gooseberry Island			•	Paved	½
Rte. 88 Bridge			•	Paved	All
Fall River					
Brownell Street	1		•	Paved	All
Freetown					
Water Street, Assonet			•	Paved	½
Swansea					
Cole River, Ocean Grove Ave.			•	Paved	All
Somerset					
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
CAPE COD:					
Bourne					
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
Falmouth					
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
Sandwich					
Canal Basin			•	Paved	All
Canal-East End	2				
Craven's Landing				Sand	½
Scusset Beach State Park		1			
Mashpee					
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				
Barnstable					
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

LOCATION	JETTIES	PIERS	RAMP	SITE CONDITION	USABLE TIDE
Yarmouth					
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
Dennis					
<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
Harwich					
<i>Allens Harbor</i>	1		•	Paved	All
Herring River			•	Paved	All
Round Cove			•	Paved	All
<i>Saquatucket Harbor</i>			•	Paved	All
Chatham					
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
Orleans					
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
Eastham					
<i>Rock Harbor</i>	1		•	Paved	½
Hemenway Road			•	Paved	½
Rt. 6 Town Cove			•	Paved	½
Wellfleet					
<i>Town Pier</i>	1		•	Paved	All

LOCATION	JETTIES	PIERS	RAMP	SITE CONDITION	USABLE TIDE
Truro					
<i>Pamet Harbor</i>			•	Paved	All
Provincetown					
West End Parking Lot			•	Paved	½
Commercial Street					
MARTHA'S VINEYARD:					
Chilmark					
<i>Great Rock Bight, North Road*</i>					
Nashaquitsa Pond, South Road			•	Paved	All
Menemsha	1	1			
Edgartown					
<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					
Aquinnah					
Menemsha Creek	1		•	Paved	All
Lobsterville Beach					
<i>Dogfish Bar*</i>					
Oak Bluffs					
<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
Tisbury					
<i>Lagoon Pond, Beach Road</i>			•	Paved	All
<i>Tashmoo Pond, Lake Avenue</i>	1		•	Paved	All
NANTUCKET:					
<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 info call: (508) 389-7810

Recreational Lobster and Crabbing Permit

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

The permit allows you to fish for, 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 (excluding 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 (including blue crabs) by hand, handline, or dipnet, or by any star trap, open collapsible trap, or open top trap that is actively tended.

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 most DMF offices. Additionally, residents may purchase/renew their permit online at <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/buy-a-recreational-lobster-permit>.

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 34-36).

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 31).

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 their immediate family, to fish their 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 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 George Davis for an LOA or more information at (978) 491-6256 or george.davis@mass.gov.



**Working to maintain
a sustainable resource
in the marine
ecosystem**



**Individuals can help with this
cause by joining today as an
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lobstermen.com
8 Otis Place, Scituate, MA 02066
781.545.6984



Recreational Regulations

RECREATIONAL LOBSTER REGULATIONS

ALL AREAS

Season Open	May 16 - October 31. DMF may extend closure past May 16 or rescind after May 1 based on presence/absence of whales. Note: Seasonal restrictions are for traps only. Diving for lobsters is open year round.
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	Hauling trap gear or taking lobsters is prohibited from 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 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-notch or other indentation in the base of the flipper immediately to the right of the center tail flipper.
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.
Buoy Line	Maximum 5/16" diameter

GULF OF MAINE RECREATIONAL LOBSTER AREA

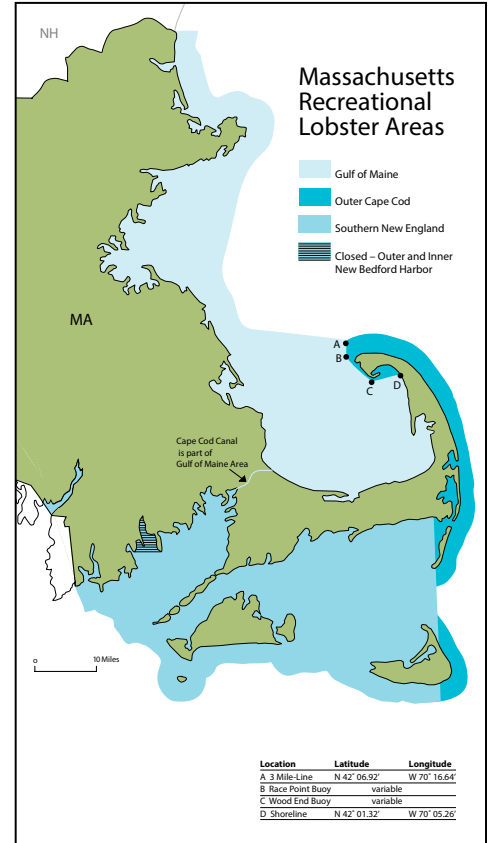
Minimum Size	3¼"
Maximum Size	5"
Escape Vent	One rectangular vent 1½" x 5¼" or two circular vents of 2⅞" in diameter

OUTER CAPE COD RECREATIONAL LOBSTER AREA

Minimum Size	3⅞"
Maximum Size	—
Escape Vent	One rectangular vent 2" x 5¼" or two circular vents of 2½" in diameter

SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND RECREATIONAL LOBSTER AREA

Minimum Size	3⅞"
Maximum Size	5¼"
Escape Vent	One rectangular vent 2" x 5¼" or two circular vents of 2½" in diameter



RECREATIONAL CRAB REGULATIONS

SPECIES	MINIMUM SIZE	POSSESSION LIMIT	EGG BEARING	NOTES
Blue Crabs	5" shell width	25 crabs	Prohibited	Fishing for blue crabs with trap gear or retaining blue crabs taken by traps is prohibited
Cancer Crabs (Rock and Jonah)	No size requirement	50 cancer crabs combined	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.



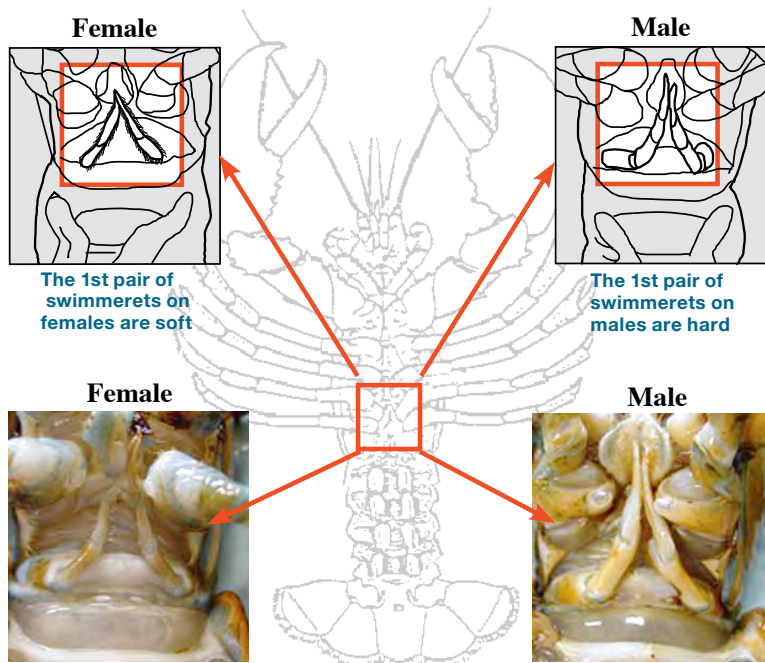
Correct lobster measurement



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

Male

The 1st pair of swimmerets on females are soft

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

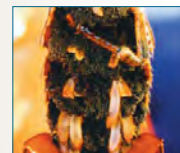
Fertilized eggs are carried on the female abdomen for a 9 to 12 month period of development prior to hatching.

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

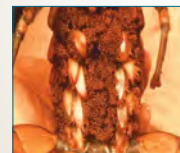
Hatching typically occurs over a 4 month period from May through September. In Massachusetts we typically see peak hatching from late-June through early-July.

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

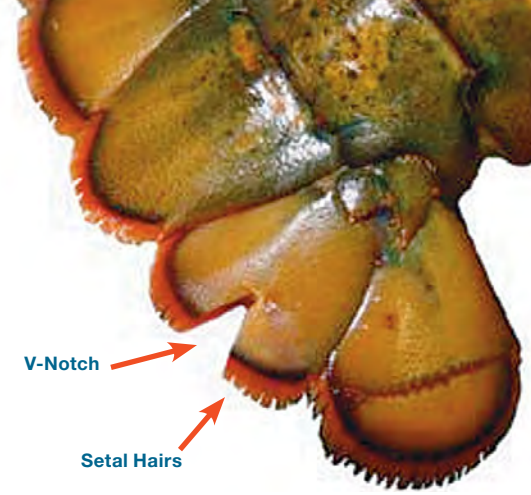
The practice of v-notching as a means of protecting local broodstock originated in Maine and dates back to the early 1900s.

Which Flipper is Notched?

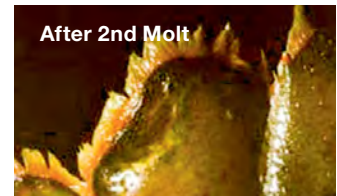
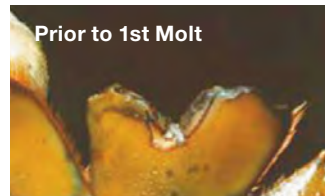
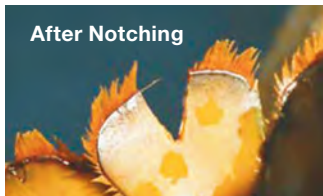
The tail flipper immediately to the right of the middle flipper, when the lobster is examined with the underside of the lobster down and its tail is toward the person making the determination.

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.



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 31).

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 on 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 31).

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, and a limit of **50 Cancer crabs** per day.



All About Gear

Permit Requirements

To recreationally fish for lobsters or Cancer crabs excluding blue crabs 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 storage cars must be buoyed at the surface. Each permit holder must have a 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 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 1/2"

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 wood lathe.



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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. 33) where the traps are set and hauled:

- **Gulf of Maine Recreational Lobster/Crab Area.** Rectangular escape vents must measure at least 1 ¹⁵/₁₆" by 5 ³/₄" or two circular vents must measure 2 ⁷/₁₆" diameter.
- **Outer Cape Cod or Southern New England Recreational Lobster/Crab Area.** Rectangular escape vents must measure 2" by 5 ³/₄" or two circular vents must measure at least 2 ⁵/₈" diameter.

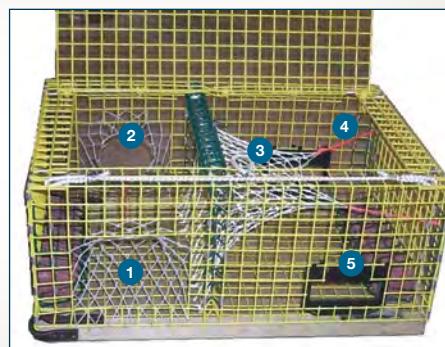
Ghost Panels

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 ³/₄" x 3 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 1/32" 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 ³/₂" by 3 ³/₂".

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 if lost or abandoned.

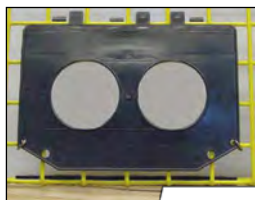


Escape Vent and Ghost Panel Placement

- **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.

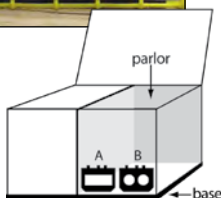


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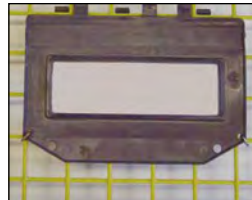


B

More Effective Placement In Allowing Escapement of Sublegal Lobsters



C

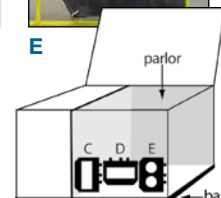


D



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 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 Diameter

All buoy lines must have a diameter that does not exceed $\frac{5}{16}$ ".

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).

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.



Closures and Whale Gear Restrictions

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.

Trap Gear Closure

All buoyed traps must be removed from and may not be set in waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth from November 1 - May 15. This closure may be extended past May 15 or rescinded after May 1 based on presence or absence of right whales.

Blue Crab Trap Prohibition

The use of traps to take blue crabs and the retention of blue crabs caught by traps is prohibited.



Photo courtesy of Center for Coastal Studies, NOAA Permit 25740-01

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