

http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dmf/recreationalfishing/rec_index.htm

Go

MAY JUL SEP

27

2008 2009 2010



About this capture

603 captures

26 Jun 2003 - 7 Sep 2019

The Official Website of the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game

Department of Fish and Game

Commissioner Mary B. Griffin

DFG Mass.Gov Home State Agencies State Online Services



MASSACHUSETTS Division of Marine Fisheries

PAUL J. DIDDATI, DIRECTOR

QUICK LINKS

DMF Home

Commercial Fishing

- Quotas and Landings
- Regulations
- Permits
- Catch Reports

Recreational Fishing

- Regulations
- Permits
- Species Profiles
- eLogbook
- Salt Water Fishing Guide
- Salt Water Fishing Derby
- Public Access

Seafood & Bait Dealers

- Dealer Lookup
- Dealer Reporting
- Regulations

Facilities and Properties

Contact Information

Publications

- Newsletter
- Technical
- Informational

Marine Fisheries Notices

- Public Hearing Notices
- Advisories
- Job Opportunities

FAQs

Links

keyword search:

go!

Information

Programs & Projects

Site Map

Home

Recreational Fishing

Regulations

[Full text of Marine Fisheries Regulations \(322 CMR\)](#)

[Finfish](#)

[Shellfish](#)

[Lobster & Crabs](#)

[Definitions](#)

[Prohibitions](#)

[Permits](#)

[Recreational Fishing/Research Programs](#)

[Sportfish Biologists](#)

[Division of Law Enforcement](#)

[Regulation Summaries \(May 2009\)](#) PDF

[Abstracts of Marine Fisheries Regulations](#)

[Marine Fisheries Email Listserv](#)

*** [Tips for Fishing Responsibly](#) ***

Finfish Regulations

-- [top](#) ^

* This table is intended as a general summary of MA recreational fishing regulations. Please refer to [322 CMR](#) for the complete regulation details.

Recreational Finfish Regulations as of April 17, 2009			
Species	Season	Size Limit	Possession Limit
American Eel (1)	All Year	6 in	50 fish
Black Sea Bass (2)	All Year	12.5 in	20 fish
Blue Marlin (6)	All Year	86 in	1 fish
Bluefish	All Year	No Limit	10 fish
Cod (North of Cape Cod)	May 01 - Jun 30		Closed
Spring Cod Conservation Zone	Dec 01 - Jan 31		Closed
Winter Cod Conservation Zone	Apr 01 - Oct 31	24 in	10 fish
All Other Areas	Nov 01 - Mar 31	24 in	2 fish / person (75 lb / boat)

Last Updated:
July 22, 2009

Go

MAY JUL SEP

27

2008 2009 2010



About this capture

603 captures

26 Jun 2003 - 7 Sep 2019

Fluke	July 1 - Aug 13	18.5 in	5 fish
Gray Sole (Witch)	All Year	14 in	No Limit
Haddock (2)	All Year	18 in	No Limit
Halibut	All Year	36 in	1 fish
Monkfish	All Year	17 in	No Limit
Pollock	All Year	No Limit	No Limit
Redfish	All Year	9 in	No Limit
River Herring (5)	<i>Harvest, possession, sale and use are prohibited</i>		
Sailfish (6)	All Year	57 in	1 fish
Scup (3)	May 24 - Sep 26	10.5 in	10 fish
Shad	All Year	No Limit	6 fish
Sharks	<i>Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries</i>		
Smelt	Jun 16 - Mar 14	No Limit	No Limit
Striped Bass (4)	All Year	28 in	2 fish
Tautog	All Year	16 in	3 fish
Tunas	<i>Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries</i>		
Weakfish	All Year	16 in	6 fish
White Marlin (6)	All Year	62 in	1 fish
White Perch	All Year	8 in	25 fish
Windowpane	All Year	12 in	No Limit
Winter Flounder North of Cape Cod	All Year	12 in	8 fish
Winter Flounder South & East of Cape Cod	Apr 25 - May 24	12 in	4 fish
	Sep 26 - Oct 25	12 in	4 fish
Yellowtail Flounder	All Year	13 in	No Limit

Notes:

- 1) Subject to regulation by the Division and local community. Consult local 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) Maximum 50 scup per private vessel. Party/charter vessel patrons: 11" size limit, 45 fish May 15 - Jun 28, 10 fish Jun 29 - Sep 17.
- 4) Bass must be kept whole, with head, tail and body intact - no mutilation permitted (other than evisceration). The discard of dead, legal size striped bass is prohibited. To prohibit the practice of high-grading, recreational fishermen may not retain legal-sized striped bass and release said fish in favor of another larger legal-sized striped bass captured subsequently. It shall be unlawful to keep striped bass alive in the water by attaching a line or chain to the fish or placing the fish in a live well or holding car. Striped bass are measured from the tip of the snout or jaw (mouth closed) to the farthest extremity of the tail. Note: Permitted party/charter vessel operators may fillet striped bass for their customers. See 322 CMR 6.07 (4)(g) for details.
- 5) It is unlawful for any person to harvest, possess or sell river herring in the Commonwealth or in the waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth. These measures will expire on January 1, 2012.
- 6) Billfish are measured from the tip of the lower jaw to the tail fork
- 7) Federal rules apply beyond state waters. consult [NOAA Fisheries](#).

Shellfish Regulations-- [top](#) ^

MAY JUL SEP

27

2008 2009 2010

About this capture

[603 captures](#)

26 Jun 2003 - 7 Sep 2019

Bay Scallop	well defined growth ring	consult town regulations
Conch	2 ¾" shell width	consult town regulations
Oyster	3" shell diameter	consult town regulations
Quahog	1" shell thickness	consult town regulations
Sea Scallop	3 ½" shell height	daily limit of 1 bushel in shell, or 4 quarts of shucked meats
Softshell Clam	2" shell diameter	consult town regulations
Surf Clam	5" shell diameter	consult town regulations

Regulations are subject to change; contact the Division for details (617) 626-1520.

Lobster and Crab Regulations

[-- top ^](#)

A [Non-Commercial Lobster Permit](#) is required to fish for or take lobsters and crabs for personal use.

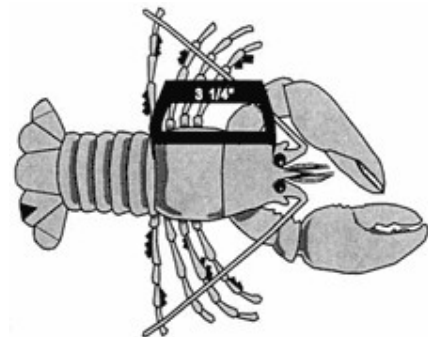
Egg-bearing and [V-Notched female lobsters](#) cannot be taken (see table below for V-Notch definitions).

Recreational Lobster Regulations			
	Gulf of Maine Recreational Lobster Area	Outer Cape Cod Recreational Lobster Area	Southern New England Recreational Lobster Area
Min Size	3 1/4"	3 3/8"	3 3/8"
Max Size	5 "	--	5 1/4"
V-Notch Definition	"Zero-Tolerance": V-shaped notch of any size with or without setal hairs	Notch or indentation in the base of the flipper at least 1/4" deep and tapering to a sharp point without setal hairs	Notch or indentation in the base of the flipper at least 1/8" deep and tapering to a sharp point with or without setal hairs
Trap Limit	10 Traps	10 Traps	10 Traps
Escape Vent	1 15/16" x 5 3/4" or two circular vents of 2 7/16"	2" x 5 3/4" or two circular vents of 2 1/2"	2" x 5 3/4" or two circular vents of 2 1/2"
Bag Limit	15 per day	15 per day	15 per day

[Map of Recreational Lobster Areas](#) [PDF](#)

How to Measure a Lobster

Carapace length measured from rear of eye socket parallel to the center line of the bodyshell to the rear of the bodyshell. All lobsters measuring less than the minimum legal carapace length must be returned to the waters from which taken. All lobsters must be measured immediately



Recreational Crab Regulations		
Species	Minimum Size	Other Restrictions

603 captures

26 Jun 2003 - 7 Sep 2019

Go

MAYJULSEP

◀27▶

200820092010

?

✕

f

t

About this capture

Other Edible Crabs (excludes green crabs)	none	same as for blue crab
--	------	-----------------------

Definitions

-- [top](#) ^

Anadromous Fish: Saltwater fish that return to fresh water systems to reproduce.

Angling: Fishing with handline or rod, with naturally or artificially baited hook.

Closed Season: The time when fish cannot be lawfully taken.

Fish: Any animal life inhabiting the ocean or connecting waters, including crustacea or marine fish, whether free swimming or free moving, any shellfish or sea worms, whether or not imbedded in the soil.

Coastal Waters Under the Jurisdiction of the Commonwealth: All the waters within the rise and fall of the tide extending out to three miles from an established coastal baseline and all the waters of Massachusetts Bay, Cape Cod Bay, and Nantucket Sound. It does not include the waters within or above any fishladder or dam, nor the waters above any tidal bound established by DEP in streams flowing to the sea.

Minimum Size Limits are measured as the greatest **straight** line (not curved over the body) length 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. For fish with forked tails, the upper and lower fork may be squeezed together to measure the tail extremity.

Sale of Fish: A commercial permit is required to sell fish.

Snagging or Snatching: The taking of fish not attracted by bait or artificial lure with hooks, gangs or lures whether baited or unbaited, in a manner as to pierce and hook a fish in any part of the body other than the mouth.

Prohibitions

-- [top](#) ^

Snagging, Snatching of Anadromous Fish: including shad, smelt, white perch, striped bass, trout, and salmon, but excluding alewives or river herring is prohibited.

The taking of striped bass by any other means other than hook and line is prohibited.

The discard of dead, legal size striped bass is prohibited.

The taking of billfish using other than a rod and reel is prohibited.

The taking of Atlantic Salmon, Sturgeon, all Marine Mammals, all sea turtles and the Diamond Back Terrapin from Massachusetts waters is prohibited.

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 is illegal.

To take crabs by pot without a permit is illegal.

DMF Recreational Fishing/Research Programs

-- [top](#) ^

Tagging - Periodically the Division conducts tagging studies of a particular finfish species to develop a better understanding of local movements, habitat preference, migration, growth, and general abundance. The angler plays a significant role in retrieving valuable data. Carefully examine your catch for tags. If found, record the tag number if returning fish to water, or snip off the tag if keeping fish. Contact the address printed on the tag and you will be briefed on the tagging study and may even receive a reward. Note: Recently, snapper bluefish, striped bass, winter flounder, and cunner have been tagged in our waters. The Division participates in federal tagging programs as well.

Saltwater Fishing Derby - Our Division sponsors an annual fishing derby. Contact our [New Bedford](#) office for details.

4 of 5






09/24/20, 20:33

Go

MAYJULSEP

27

200820092010



About this capture

603 captures

26 Jun 2003 - 7 Sep 2019

Division of Marine Fisheries Sportfish Biologists -- [top](#) ^

Sportfish Biologists

[Gloucester Office:](#) [Matt Ayer](#) - North Shore; Boston to Hull
[New Bedford Office:](#) [Paul Caruso](#) - Cape Cod; South Shore; Wareham to Westport
[Martha's Vineyard Office:](#) [Greg Skomal](#) - Islands

-- [top](#) ^

Division of Law Enforcement

Hewitts Cove	(617) 727 - 0082
Radio Room	(617) 727 - 6398
North Coastal Bureau	(978) 283 - 7764
Toll Free Number	(800) 632 - 8075

For more information see chapter 130 of the Massachusetts General Laws and Code of Massachusetts Regulations, Title 322.

The rules and regulations are subject to change without notice. Contact the Division of Marine Fisheries for current regulations.

-- [top](#) ^

Questions or comments

regarding this site should be sent to
marine.fish@state.ma.us

Division of Marine Fisheries
251 Causeway Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114
Tel: (617) 626-1520

[Email](#) [DFG](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Disclaimer](#)

[^ back to top ^](#)