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MAY JUL MAR

18

2007 2008 2009



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

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MASSACHUSETTS
Division of Marine Fisheries
PAUL J. DIDDATI, DIRECTOR

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Finfish

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* 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 4, 2008			
Species	Season Open - Close	Size Limit	Possession Limit
American Eel (1)	All Year	6 in	50 fish
Black Sea Bass (2)	All Year	12 in	20 fish
Blue Marlin (Z)	All Year	86 in	1 fish
Bluefish	All Year	none	10 fish
Cod Cod Conservation Zone	Apr 01 - Oct 31	24 in	10 fish
	Nov 01 - Nov 30	24 in	2 fish / person (75 lb / boat)
	Dec 01 - Feb 28		Closed
	Feb 29 - Mar 31	24 in	2 fish / person (75 lb / boat)
Cod North of Cape Cod	Apr 01 - Oct 31	24 in	10 fish
	Nov 01 - Mar 31	24 in	2 fish / person (75 lb / boat)
Cod South and East of Cape Cod	All Year	22 in	10 fish

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Gray Sole (Witch)	All Year	14 in	none
Haddock (8)	All Year	19 in	none
Halibut	All Year	36 in	1 fish
Monkfish	All Year	17 in	none
Pollock	All Year	none	none
Redfish	All Year	9 in	none
River Herring (6)	<i>Harvest, possession, sale and use are prohibited</i>		
Sailfish (7)	All Year	57 in	1 fish
Scup (3)	May 24 - Sep 26	10.5 in	10 fish
Shad	All Year	none	6 fish
Sharks	<i>Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries</i>		
Smelt	Jun 16 - Mar 14	none	none
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	10 fish
White Marlin (7)	All Year	62 in	1 fish
White Perch	All Year	8 in	25 fish
Windowpane	All Year	12 in	none
Winter Flounder (5) north of Cape Cod	All Year	12 in	8 fish
Winter Flounder (5) south & east of Cape Cod	Apr 26 - May 25	12 in	4 fish
	Sep 27 - Oct 26	12 in	4 fish
Yellowtail Flounder	All Year	13 in	none

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.
- 5) Winter flounder may not be taken from Mount Hope Bay and its tributaries except recreational fishermen may take 4 fish between Apr 13 and May 19 and between Sep 28 and Oct 28
- 6) 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, 2009.
- 7) Billfish are measured from the tip of the lower jaw to the tail fork
- 8) Federal rules apply beyond state waters. consult [NOAA Fisheries](#).

Shellfish-- [top](#) ^

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About this capture

Blue Crab	4 1/8" shell width (spine to spine)	egg bearers cannot be taken; 50 crabs/day; no permit required unless using traps; closed season is 1/1 - 4/30, inclusive
Other Edible Crabs (excludes green crabs)	none	same as for blue crab
Lobster	3 1/4" carapace length 5" carapace maximum length on lobster taken from the Gulf of Maine (includes Cape Cod Bay)	egg bearers cannot be taken; v-notched female lobster cannot be taken; state license required
Bay Scallop	well defined growth ring	Closed 4/1 - 10/1 consult town regulations
Conch	2 3/4" shell width	consult town regulations
Oyster	3" shell diameter	consult town regulations
Quahog	1" shell thickness	consult town regulations
Sea Scallop	3 1/2" 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

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	<u>Gulf of Maine</u> <u>Recreational Lobster Area</u>	<u>Southeastern</u> <u>Recreational Lobster Area</u>
Minimum Size	3 1/4"	3 3/8"
Maximum Size	5 "	N/A
V-notching	Zero-Tolerance definition: (V-shaped notch of any size with or without setal hairs)	ASFMC definition: (1/4" to 1/2" straight-sized triangular cut without setal hairs)
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"
Bag Limit	15 per day	15 per day




[Map of Recreational Lobster Areas PDF](#)

Definitions

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- 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.

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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

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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.

Permits

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Presently, there is no license requirement for recreational saltwater angling, however, a commercial permit is required when any fish are sold.

Non Commercial Lobster Permits are required to fish for or take lobsters for personal use, using a maximum of 10 pots. This authorizes the holder and members of the holder's immediate family, residing in the same residence, to fish for and take lobsters. The immediate family is defined as the spouse, parents, children, grandparents, sisters and brothers of the permit holder. This permit may be endorsed for **diving** by only the permit holder. Other family members may purchase additional permits for diving only.

> [Renew your Non-Commercial Lobster Permit online](#)

Recreational Shellfishing is permitted in designated clean areas and regulated by the individual Towns. Contact your Town department of Natural Resources for local regulations and permit acquisition.

Note: A person may, without a special permit, use a small net of **no more than 200 square feet** inside those inshore waters listed in 322 CMR 4.02(2) or inside any estuary, embayment, salt pond, tidal creek, river, or an other similar body of inshore water for the sole purpose of obtaining bait fish for personal use.

DMF Recreational Fishing/Research Programs

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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.



Catch & Release - The Division encourages the proper handling of fish that are to be released. Catch and release practitioners should follow accepted handling conventions such as reduced play time, minimizing exposure to air, and minimizing physical damage from

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Sportfish Biologists

[Gloucester Office:](#) [Matt Ayer](#) - North Shore

[New Bedford Office:](#) [Paul Caruso](#) - Cape Cod; South Shore; Wareham to Westport

[Martha's Vineyard Office:](#) [Greg Skomal](#) - Islands

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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.

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Questions or comments

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

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