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MASSACHUSETTS

Division of Marine Fisheries

PAUL J. DIDDATI, DIRECTOR

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Saltwater Permit FAQ

National Saltwater Angler Registry

Register

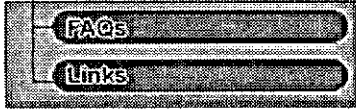
2010

A new federal law requires most Massachusetts saltwater fishermen to sign up with the National Saltwater Angler Registry. Registration is quick, easy and FREE in 2010.

Learn more and register at countryfish.noaa.gov or 888-MRIP-411

Recreational Saltwater Fishing Permit

Recreational Saltwater Permit Comes to Massachusetts - Register federally in



Last Updated:
January 5, 2010

2010, but purchase state permit in 2011.

New federal law [Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization of 2006, Saltwater Angler Registry Final Rule - NOAA Fisheries] requires most saltwater recreational fishermen to be documented in 2010. Massachusetts fishermen will be required to register with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). However, recently enacted state law, "An Act Instituting Saltwater Fishing Licenses", enables *Marine Fisheries* to build and implement a permitting program for 2011 and beyond that will exempt the Commonwealth's saltwater recreational anglers from the federal registry. The new state law triggers a transition from the federal registry in 2010 to the state's marine recreational fishing permit program in 2011.



Governor Patrick signed the state's Permit Act into law on November 23rd after it passed unanimously through the Legislature. Support for the act was driven by a large group of recreational stakeholders seeking a state permitting program that would exempt anglers from a higher cost federal permit in 2011 and ensure permit revenues went to local user benefits. Representatives of the recreational fishery advocated strongly for a state program that will include services to enhance public access for saltwater sportsmen and improved fisheries management. Stakeholders insisted that the new state law establish a dedicated saltwater

recreational fishing fund and that 1/3 of annual appropriated permit funds will be devoted to public access projects. They determined that a \$10 individual permit fee for resident and non-resident anglers alike would be substantially lower than the fee proposed by the federal government for 2011 yet high enough to add benefits for the Commonwealth's recreational fisheries and fishermen.

Marine Fisheries will work during the next year to develop fully the state's permitting program and will provide public updates via its website, www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.

Meanwhile, *Marine Fisheries* will be working with NMFS to assist anglers with federal registration during the 2010 calendar year. Massachusetts anglers who fish in federal waters, or target or catch anadromous species (saltwater fish that spawn in freshwater) like shad, striped bass or smelt in any tidal or salt waters must register beginning January 2, 2010. Some individuals are exempt from this registration requirement, including, anglers who are under 16; only fish on permitted charter, party or guide boats hold a Highly Migratory Species Angling permit; are fishing commercially under a valid permit; or are already registered through an exempted state. Federal registration is free in 2010 and starting January 1, 2010, you could register online at www.countmyfish.noaa.gov or by calling 888.MRIP.411 (888.674.7411).



We expect some confusion regarding the switch from the federal registry to the state permitting program so here is the simple summary:

2010 - Massachusetts saltwater anglers must register for free with the federal

government;

2011 – Massachusetts saltwater anglers must buy a permit from the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries.



Beginning January 1, 2011, Massachusetts anglers must purchase a state Recreational Saltwater Permit exempting anglers from the Federal Registry.

To learn more visit:

www.mass.gov/marinefisheries

- [Newsletter Article](#) ~~for~~ about the size of the MA saltwater recreational fishery *Marine Fisheries*
- [Fish Responsibly Page](#)

Frequently Asked Questions about the Massachusetts Recreational Saltwater Permit Program

Q1. I plan to fish recreationally in saltwater in 2010, would I need to register with the federal government or would I be required to get a Massachusetts fishing permit?

A1. In 2010 anglers must register with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the federal fisheries agency. Register beginning January 1, 2010 online via www.countryfish.noaa.gov or by calling 888.MRIP.411 (888.674.7411).

Q2. How about in 2011?

A2. In 2011 and beyond anglers will be required to apply for a recreational fishing permit issued by the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries. Stay tuned to our website (www.mass.gov/marinefisheries) for updates on the permit program.

Q3. Will there be a fee for any of this?

A3. There will be no federal fee for registering in 2010, but anglers who fish in non-exempted states in 2011 will be charged up to \$25 for the federal registration.

Q4. What is a non-exempted state?

A4. A non-exempted state is one that has not implemented a saltwater recreational registry or permit of their own that fulfills all requirements of federal law.

Q5. Is Massachusetts exempted or non-exempted?

A5. Since Massachusetts has not yet implemented a permit program, it will be non-exempted in 2010, so the federal registration is required. But it will implement a federal compliant permit program in 2011 and then it will become exempt from the federal registry.

Q6. How much will the state permit cost in 2011?

A6. The proposed state permit fee is \$10 for residents and non-residents alike.

Q7. How would I get a state permit in 2011?

A7. In 2011 the Massachusetts permit will be available on-line, through some retail outlets like bait and tackle stores, by mail, and in person at Division of Marine Fisheries offices in Gloucester, Boston, and New Bedford.

Q8. Does every person in a family need to register or just the owner of the boat?

A8. Everyone 16 years and older will need to register in 2010 and procure a state permit in 2011; there is no private boat or family permit category that covers a group of individuals.

Q9. Who is exempt from paying fees or exempt from registering/permitting?

A9. Anglers who are younger than 16, or disabled, or who fish only on permitted for-hire vessels like charters boats or head-boats, do not have to register in 2010 or obtain a state permit in 2011. Anglers that are 60 years and older will need to obtain a state permit in 2011 but there will be no fee.

Q10. Tell me how the law applies to people fishing on charter or head-boats.

A10. Only the charter or head-boat operator will be required to register in 2010 and purchase a permit in 2011. Anglers fishing on a properly permitted for-hire vessel will not be required to register in 2010 or obtain a state permit in 2011.

Q11. Is the 2010 deadline to register to fish January 1st, or can you register anytime prior to fishing?

A11. You can register at any time during the year, as long as you have registered before you go fishing.

Q12. What if you do not register with the federal government this year and wait until next year to purchase a state permit; would you still have to register with the federal government first?

A12. No, state permitting will be independent and in place of the federal registry.

Q13. If you have a federal tuna permit and only fish for tuna or only fish in federal waters, do you still need a state fishing permit in 2011?

A13. Yes. If you land in Massachusetts, regardless of where the fish was caught, then you'll need the state permit even if you possess a federal permit.

Q14. Who enforces the law?

A14. The Massachusetts Environmental Police and US Coast Guard will have enforcement powers.

Q15. I already have a Massachusetts commercial striped bass permit. Does that cover me if I am recreationally fishing?

A15. No. If you are fishing under regulations that apply to recreational fishermen, then you will be required to register federally in 2010 and have a state recreational fishing permit in 2011.

Q16. I am not a Massachusetts resident, but I often come to Massachusetts to fish for saltwater species. I have a recreational saltwater permit from my home state. Do I need another permit from Massachusetts?

A16. That depends. If the state you reside in recognizes the Massachusetts permit as a valid permit for recreational fishing in their waters, then Massachusetts would afford the same privileges to properly permitted individuals from that state. However, if your state of residence does not accept a valid Massachusetts permit for recreational fishing in their waters, then you would be required to purchase a Massachusetts permit to recreationally fish/land in Massachusetts.

Q17. Why is the government creating this recreational registry?

A17. The reason for the registry is so we can get better data on recreational fishing.

Managers need good data to make the best decisions possible on bag limits, seasons and sizes. The current data collection system is very inefficient and imprecise because there isn't a "phonebook" of active anglers on which to base surveys.

Q18. So if you are looking to get better data, will I need to file a catch report?A18. No. The registry will give us an up to date list of recreational fishermen. Several times during each year a random subset of this list will be surveyed by phone and asked to provide information on their fishing trips and catch.