

NEW SPRING COD CLOSURE AREA
OUTREACH MEETING APRIL 20, 2011, IN PORTSMOUTH

DURHAM, N.H. -- An area off the coast of New Hampshire will be closed to the use of recreational and commercial gear capable of catching cod in May and June of 2011. Starting in 2012, the closure will be effective from April through June.

The area south of the Isles of Shoals, known as "Whaleback," is being closed to protect large spawning aggregations of cod that gather there each year, as documented by University of New Hampshire researchers. The measure results from a recent management plan adjustment approved by the New England Fishery Management Council.

The National Marine Fisheries Service will hold an outreach meeting to inform the public about the new cod spawning protection area and other management measures in Framework 45 to the groundfish fishery management plan on April 20, 2011 from 6-8 PM at the Urban Forestry Center in Portsmouth. (A framework is an adjustment to the management measures in a federal fishery management plan.)

The closed area is shown in the map posted at http://www.fishnh.com/Newsroom/News_2011/News_2011_Q2/cod_closure.html .

It is defined by straight lines connecting the following coordinates:

GOM COD SPAWNING PROTECTION AREA

Point	N. latitude	W. longitude
CSPA1	42° 50.952	70° 32.222
CSPA2	42° 47.652	70° 35.642
CSPA3	42° 54.912	70° 41.882
CSPA4	42° 58.272	70° 38.642
CSPA1	42° 50.952	70° 32.222

The proposed federal rules affecting the closure area state that recreational fishing will only be allowed "with handline or rod and reel gear that is designed to fish for, or that is being used to fish for, pelagic species no portion of which is designed to be or is operated in contact with the bottom at any time." (Pelagic species are fish generally found in the upper part of the water column.). In addition, the catch or possession of any groundfish species (cod, haddock, flounders, etc.) while in this area will be prohibited during the closure. However, a boat may transit through the area with groundfish caught outside the area, provided all bait and hooks are removed from the fishing rods or handlines.

For questions about the cod spawning protection area or other measures in Framework 45, call Doug Christel of the National Marine Fisheries

Service (978-281-9141) or the Sustainable Fisheries Division's general line (978-281-9315).