



Paul J. Diodati
Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Marine Fisheries

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Fred Jennings
Massachusetts State Chairman
Stripers Forever
P.O. Box 2781
South Portland, ME 04116

Dear Mr. Jennings:

Fred

I have received your request to restrict fishermen from rigging natural baits with metal weights and other objects.

These weighted baits are typically used to target striped bass and other predatory species by vertically jiggging the bait off the ocean bottom, a fishing technique commonly known as "yo-yoing." Since the weights are usually inserted into the bait and not affixed to the fishing line or terminal tackle, weighted baits can come free of the line and then ingested by other fish. Accumulation of hardware in a fish's stomach, especially lead weights, likely has a deleterious effect on its health.

Marine Fisheries advocates for responsible fishing practices in all fisheries. We believe that most informed fishermen will take responsibility for conducting their fishing activity in ways that benefit resource conservation. Accordingly, the Division will conduct an educational initiative to encourage responsible fishing during 2008. We will examine regulations of other coastal states with regard to rigging natural baits, discuss with environmental police possible regulatory effectiveness as a deterrent of the practice, and consider possible rule-making to restrict this activity later next year.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Regards,

P. Diodati

Paul J. Diodati
Director

Cc: Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission

