



Fw: Bill to Ban Horseshoe Crabs as Bait

From Barber, Christine - Rep. (HOU) <Christine.Barber@mahouse.gov>

Date Wed 10/15/2025 5:19 PM

To Joint-Committee On Environment (LEG) <Joint-Committee.Environment@malegislature.gov>

Christine Barber

State Representative, 34th Middlesex District

Somerville and Medford

Chair, Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From: John Nelson <jnelson@northshore.edu>

Sent: Wednesday, October 15, 2025 5:13 PM

To: Barber, Christine - Rep. (HOU) <Christine.Barber@mahouse.gov>; Newman, Jacob (HOU) <Jacob.Newman@mahouse.gov>

Subject: Bill to Ban Horseshoe Crabs as Bait

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Dear Representative Barber,

I am writing on behalf of the Association of Massachusetts Bird Clubs, which represents over 7000 birders in 24 clubs across the state, and the Brookline Bird Club, the state's largest bird club. Our members unequivocally support legislation that would ban the use of horseshoe crabs as bait. In a cost-benefit analysis, the value of horseshoe crabs for bait is negligible, while their use as bait is both wasteful and harmful to many shorebird species, such as red knots, that are in decline and rely on horseshoe crab eggs as a food source. Many of our members have attended presentations by author Deborah Cramer, a renowned expert on horseshoe crabs and shorebirds who has thoroughly documented the harm of using horseshoe crabs as bait. Last year, on behalf of our clubs, I testified at a Division of Marine Fisheries meeting in Gloucester to support proposed new regulations, eventually approved, that limited harvesting of horseshoe crabs. In a letter included in the August 2025 report for the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission, a bait dealer expresses concern about the "economic inefficiency, unnecessary mortality, and biological waste" of using horseshoe crabs for bait. Our club

members, along with many thousands of other birders in Massachusetts, urge the Joint Committee to support a ban on horseshoe crabs as bait.

Thank you for your consideration,

John R. Nelson

Chair, Association of Mass Bird Clubs

Chair, Brookline Bird Club Conservation & Education Committee