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**New Smart Phone App utilizes mobile crowdsourcing to track fish mortality in Buzzards Bay**

Falmouth, Mass. -- A team of scientific and educational organizations led by Woods Hole Group has developed a smart phone app to study fish deaths in Buzzards Bay. The "Buzzards Bay Fish Mortality" app utilizes mobile crowdsourcing to collect data from citizens who encounter dead fish on the beaches and waters of Buzzards Bay. The goal is to collect enough data to verify reports of large numbers of fish mortality in the area.

The fish mortality app utilizes "mCrowd" - a crowdsourcing platform developed by the University of Massachusetts Amherst. It is available for free in the iTunes App Store at <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/mcrowd/id397316483?mt=8>. It will soon be available for Android users.

Once downloaded, a user who comes across dead fish can easily send the information and photos to Woods Hole Group through a user-friendly platform. Drop down and multiple choice menus allow the user to input the date and time they encountered the fish, the approximate number of dead fish observed, the species and the location. Users can also upload photos and leave additional comments. The information flows to a database at Woods Hole Group where a team of scientists will compile it, analyze it over time and try to understand whether the deaths are natural or indicative of stressors in the waters.

"This is an excellent tool for collecting large amounts of data over a distributed network of citizen scientists," said Joe Famely, an Environmental Scientist at Woods Hole Group who led the development of the app. "It's remarkable in that it engages the community in the scientific process and natural resource management. It's a real collaboration between the scientists and the community and it works extremely well."

The impetus came after a Woods Hole Group field team came across a mass of nearly 1,000 dead fish in Buzzards Bay in 2009. That discovery has been followed by several other subsequent reports of mortality, leading scientists to quantify and corroborate these accounts.

“It’s mobile crowdsourcing at its best,” said Dennis Aubrey, President of Woods Hole Group. “The opportunity to engage mobile phone users for scientific advancement that has real benefits to the natural environment is a big step forward. The implications for using this technology for other similar uses is very exciting.”

The app is currently available for iPhone and iPad users. An Android version is expected to be rolled out this summer.

Woods Hole Group also has set up text (SMS text 774-521-4508) and email reporting (fishkill@whgrp.com). Citizen scientists using text or email should report (1) number of fish, (2) location and time of encounter, (3) species and size of dead fish found, and (4) if a specimen was preserved on ice.

#### *About Woods Hole Group:*

*Woods Hole Group is an international, environmental, scientific, and engineering consulting organization headquartered in Falmouth, Massachusetts. With its breadth of vision and emphasis on a sustainable future global environment, Woods Hole Group provides premier integrated solutions to meet the challenge of environmental problems worldwide. As a leader in environmental sciences and engineering, Woods Hole Group’s expertise includes environmental impact and risk assessment, measurement systems for real-time operational guidance, oceanography, and coastal sciences, engineering and planning. Woods Hole Group celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011. For more information, visit [www.woodsholegroup.com](http://www.woodsholegroup.com).*

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