



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

NOAA Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

For Information Contact:
Sustainable Fisheries Division
(978) 281 – 9315

www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/
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American Lobster Permit Holders

Changes to the Regulations for Lobster Management Areas 2, 3, 4, and 5

Effective Date: May 1, 2015, and April 30, 2016

NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service has approved a final rule that implements conservation measures for the Southern New England stock of American lobster, as recommended by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in Addenda XVII and XVIII to Amendment 3 of the Commission’s Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster.

We will implement the following conservation measures beginning in the 2015 fishing year, (May 1, 2015):

- Area 2: Mandatory v-notching of egg-bearing female lobsters;
- Area 3: Minimum carapace size increase to 3 17/32 inches;
- Area 4: Mandatory v-notching of egg-bearing female lobsters, and an annual seasonal closure from February 1 through March 31 (beginning in 2016); and
- Area 5: Mandatory v-notching of egg-bearing female lobsters, and an annual seasonal closure from February 1 through March 31 (beginning in 2016).

In addition, we will implement a series of annual trap reductions for Areas 2 and 3, beginning with fishing year 2016. The first reduction will take effect on April 30, 2016, just prior to the start of fishing year 2016, and every year after following the schedule below.

Effective Year (Date of Trap Reduction)	Area 2 Reductions	Area 3 Reductions
Fishing Years 2014 and 2015	None	None
Fishing Year 2016 (April 30, 2016)	25%	5%
Fishing Year 2017 (April 30, 2017)	5%	5%
Fishing Year 2018 (April 30, 2018)	5%	5%
Fishing Year 2019 (April 30, 2019)	5%	5%
Fishing Year 2020 (April 30, 2020)	5%	5%
Fishing Year 2021 (April 30, 2021)	5%	None

In the next several weeks, we will inform each permit holder of their reduced 2016 allocation based on the first round of trap reductions, and will provide instructions on how and when to transfer traps later in 2015. The reduced allocation will be the amount available for transfer. Revised allocations based on the first year of trap reductions and subsequent transfers made during 2015 will take effect on May 1, 2016.

For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Greater Atlantic Region.