



# 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

<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/>  
Date Issued: 4/5/2018

## **Omnibus Essential Fish Habitat Amendment** **Changes to Year-Round and Seasonal Closure Areas**

*Effective Date: April 9, 2018*  
*(Corrected Version)*

In January 2018, we approved the majority of the New England Fishery Management Council's Omnibus Essential Fish Habitat Amendment. The final rule implementing the approved changes to year-round and seasonal closure areas has published and is now effective.

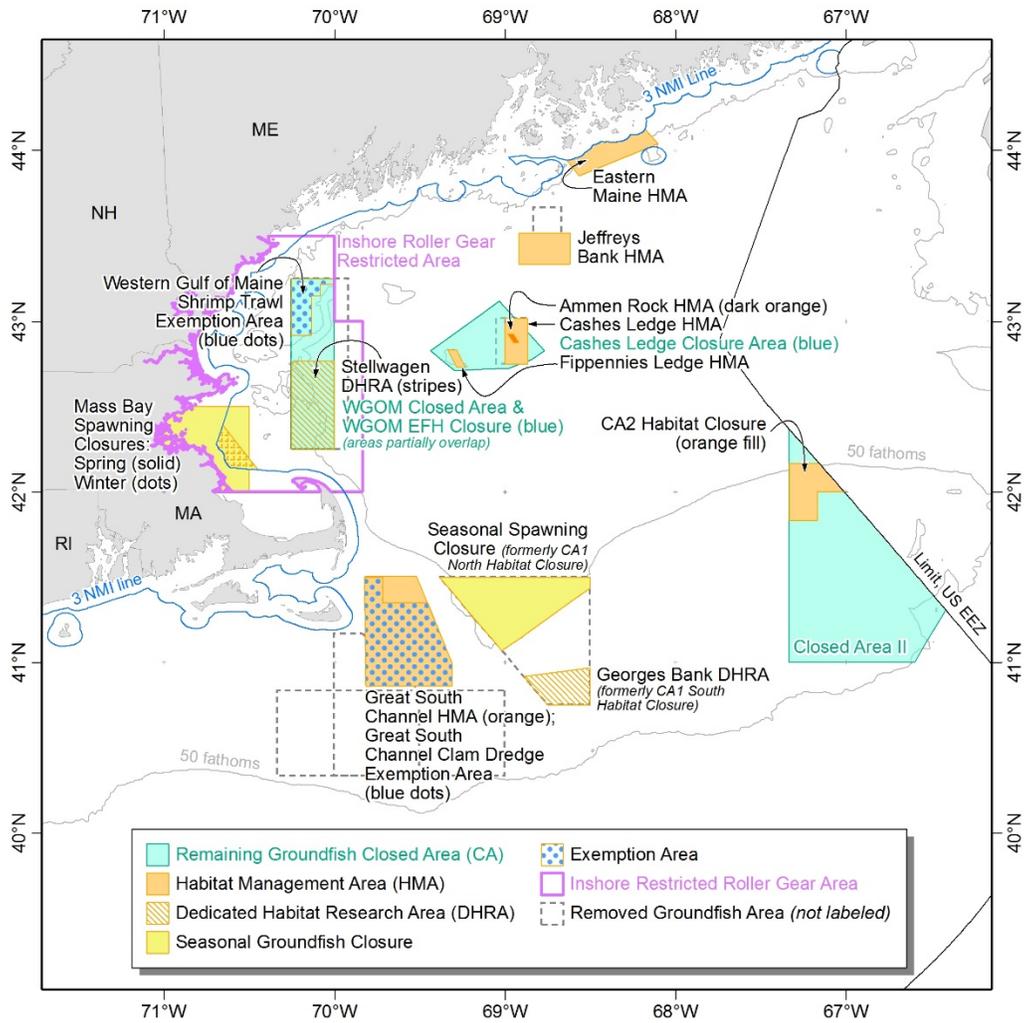
We approved the majority of the Council's recommendations for changes to year-round closure areas. However, we disapproved the Council's recommendations for eastern Georges Bank and Cox Ledge. As a result, the Closed Area II Closure Area and the Closed Area II Habitat Closure Area remain with the same footprint, restrictions, and exemptions. A thorough description of our rationale is provided in the final rule.

Among other changes, this rule implements the Council's recommendation to remove the Closed Area I Closure Area and to implement a seasonal closure in the Closed Area I North Area from February 1 through April 15. Because this action became effective upon publication, **Closed Area I North will remain closed through April 15**, under the restrictions and exemptions listed on page 4 of this bulletin. In addition, a new seasonal closure will go into effect on **April 15, 2018**, and will remain closed to certain gears through **April 30, 2018**. This measure, known as the "Spring Massachusetts Bay Spawning Closure Area," will close **Block 125** for spawning protection. See the table on page 4 for details.

A description of the full suite of year-round groundfish and habitat closures, as well as the new seasonal closures is provided on pages 3 and 4. Tables with the coordinates for these areas are provided as an attachment. Other closures may apply to your vessel, depending on your permits, target species, and gear.

**NOTE: The Closed Area I and the Nantucket Lightship Closure Areas remain closed to scallop vessels until allowed via a follow-on scallop action.** The Council has proposed new access areas for those areas in Framework Adjustment 29. Approval and implementation of those recommendations is pending.

We also approved the Council's recommendations for essential fish habitat designations, as well as Habitat Areas of Particular Concern designations. These designations do not have any implementing regulations.



## New, Revised, and Existing Year-Round Closures.

Legend: **Bold** = new management areas; Underlined = modified areas; *Italics* = unchanged existing areas.

Area Name	Measures
<b>(Small) Eastern Maine Habitat Management Area (HMA)</b>	Closed to mobile bottom-tending gear
<b>Fippennies Ledge HMA</b>	Closed to mobile bottom-tending gear
<b>Ammen Rock HMA</b>	Closed to all fishing, except lobster traps
<b>Shrimp Trawl Exemption Area</b>	Closed to mobile bottom-tending gear, except shrimp trawls
<b>Stellwagen Dedicated Habitat Research Area<sup>1</sup></b>	Same restrictions as Cashes Ledge [Groundfish] Closure Area
<b>Great South Channel HMA</b>	Closed to mobile bottom-tending gear
<b>Great South Channel HMA, clam dredges exempted<sup>2</sup></b>	Closed to mobile bottom-tending gear, except hydraulic clam dredges for 1 year
<u>Cashes Ledge HMA</u>	Closed to mobile bottom-tending gear
<u>Jeffreys Bank HMA</u>	Closed to mobile bottom-tending gear
<u>Western Gulf of Maine [Groundfish] Closure Area</u>	Same as Cashes Ledge [Groundfish] Closure Area
<u>Georges Bank Dedicated Habitat Research Area<sup>1</sup></u>	Closed to mobile bottom-tending gear
<i>Cashes Ledge [Groundfish] Closure Area</i>	Closed to all fishing vessels, except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charter and party vessels with a letter of authorization;</li> <li>• Vessels fishing with exempted gears: Pelagic hook and line, pelagic longline, spears, rakes, diving gear, cast nets, tongs, harpoons, weirs, dipnets, stop nets, pound nets, pelagic gillnets, pots and traps, shrimp trawls (with a properly configured grate as defined in the regulations), and surfclam and ocean quahog dredges;</li> <li>• Vessels participating in the mid-water trawl exempted fishery;</li> <li>• Vessels participating in the purse seine exempted fishery; and</li> <li>• Vessels that are transiting, provided that gear is properly stowed</li> </ul>
<i>Western Gulf of Maine Habitat Closure Area</i>	Closed to mobile bottom-tending gear
<i>Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank Roller Gear Restricted Area</i>	Trawls prohibited from using roller gear larger than 12 inches
<i>Closed Area II Habitat Closure Area</i>	Closed to mobile bottom-tending gear
<i>Closed Area II [Groundfish] Closure Area</i>	Closed to all fishing, except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pot gear for lobsters or hagfish;</li> <li>• Pelagic longline gear or pelagic hook-and-line gear, or harpoon gear;</li> <li>• Pelagic midwater trawl gear, with bycatch limits;</li> <li>• Fishing in a Special Access Program;</li> <li>• Tuna purse seine gear outside of the portion of Closed Area II Habitat Closure Area;</li> <li>• Fishing in the Closed Area II Yellowtail Flounder/Haddock Special Access Program or the Eastern U.S./Canada Haddock Special Access Program;</li> <li>• Transiting the area, provided the vessel's fishing gear is stowed and there is a compelling safety reason;</li> <li>• The vessel has declared into the Eastern U.S./Canada Area and is transiting Closed Area II;</li> <li>• Fishing for scallops within the Closed Area II Access Area; and</li> <li>• Vessels that are transiting, provided that gear is properly stowed.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Dedicated Habitat Research Areas are designated for 3 years, after which the Regional Administrator will consult with the Council and the public on whether to maintain the designation.

<sup>2</sup> Hydraulic clam dredges are exempted from the majority of the Great South Channel HMA for 1 year (i.e., until March 31, 2019), while the Council considers if a more discrete, longer-term exemption is appropriate and feasible.

**New Seasonal Closures** – These new seasonal closures are in addition to all other existing seasonal gear or area restriction currently in the regulations.

Area Name	Season	Measures
<p><b>Closed Area I North Seasonal Closure</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Closed Area II Seasonal Closure<sup>1</sup></b></p>	<p>February 1–April 15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vessels that are transiting;</li> <li>• Vessels fishing with exempted gears (spears, rakes, diving gear, cast nets, tongs, harpoons, weirs, dip nets, stop nets, pound nets, pots and traps, purse seines, surfclam/quahog dredge gear, pelagic hook and line, pelagic longlines, or single pelagic gillnets);</li> <li>• Vessels participating in the mid-water trawl exempted fishery; and</li> <li>• Vessels fishing with scallop dredges.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area</b></p>	<p>November 1–January 31</p>	<p>Closed all vessels, except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vessels that do not have a Federal Northeast multispecies permit and are fishing exclusively in state waters;</li> <li>• Vessels fishing with exempted gears (Pelagic hook and line, pelagic longline, spears, rakes, diving gear, cast nets, tongs, harpoons, weirs, dipnets, stop nets, pound nets, pelagic gillnets, pots and traps, shrimp trawls (with a properly configured grate), and surfclam and ocean quahog dredges);</li> <li>• Charter/party or recreational fishing vessels, provided that pelagic hook and line gear is used, and there is no retention of regulated species or ocean pout; and</li> <li>• Vessels that are transiting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Spring Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area</b></p>	<p>April 15–April 30</p>	<p>Closed to all vessels, except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The same exemptions noted above for the Winter Mass Bay spawning closure;</li> <li>• Vessels participating in the mid-water trawl exempted fishery;</li> <li>• Vessels participating in the purse seine exempted fishery;</li> <li>• Sea scallop dredge gear when under a scallop day-at-sea;</li> <li>• Vessels lawfully in a scallop dredge exemption area;</li> <li>• Charter and party vessels with a Letter of Authorization; and</li> <li>• Recreational vessels.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The year-round Closed Area II Closure Area is still effective and the restrictions for that measure take precedence.

## Groundfish Year-Round Closed Areas

### CASHES LEDGE CLOSURE AREA

Point	N. lat.	W. long.
CL1	43°07' N	69°02' W
CL2	42°49.5' N	68°46' W
CL3	42°46.5' N	68°50.5' W
CL4	42°43.5' N	68°58.5' W
CL5	42°42.5' N	69°17.5' W
CL6	42°49.5' N	69°26' W
CL1	43°07' N	69°02' W

### WESTERN GULF OF MAINE CLOSURE AREA

Point	N Latitude	W Longitude
WGM1	43° 15' N	70° 15' W
WGM2	42° 15' N	70° 15' W
WGM3	42° 15' N	70° 00' W
WGM4	43° 15' N	70° 15' W
WGM1	43° 15' N	70° 15' W

### CLOSED AREA II CLOSURE AREA

Point	N. lat.	W. long.	Note
CAII1	41°00'	67°20'	
CAII2	41°00'	66°35.8'	
CAII3	41°18.45'	(1)	(2)
CAII4	(3)	67°20'	(2)
CAII5	42°22'	67°20'	
CAII1	41°00'	67°20' <sup>1</sup>	

(1) The intersection of 41°18.45' N. lat. and the U.S.-Canada Maritime Boundary, approximately 41°18.45' N. lat. and 66°24.89' W. long.

(2) From Point CAII3 to Point CAII4 along the U.S.-Canada Maritime Boundary

(3) The intersection of 67°20' W. long. And the U.S.-Canada Maritime Boundary, approximately 42°22.06' N. lat. and 67°20' W. long.

## New Seasonal Groundfish Closure Areas

### WINTER MASSACHUSETTS BAY SPAWNING PROTECTION AREA

Point	N. Latitude	W. Longitude
WSPA1	42° 23.61'	70° 39.21'
WSPA2	42° 07.68'	70° 26.79'

### SPRING MASSACHUSETTS BAY SPAWNING PROTECTION AREA

Point	N. Latitude	W. Longitude	Note
SSPA1	42°30'	(1)	
SSPA2	42°30'	70°30'	
SSPA3	42°00'	70°30'	
SSPA4	42°00'	(2)	(3)
SSPA5	(4)	71°00'	(3)
SSPA6	(5)	71°00'	(6)
SSPA1	42°30'	(1)	(6)

(1) The intersection of 42°30' N. lat. and the coastline at Marblehead, MA

(2) The intersection of 42°00' N. lat. and the coastline at Kingston, MA

(3) From Point SSPA4 to Point SSPA5 following the coastline of Massachusetts

(4) The intersection of 71°00' W. long and the coastline at Quincy, MA

(5) The intersection of 71°00' W. long and the northernmost coastline at East Boston, Boston, MA

(6) From Point SSPA6 back to Point SSPA 1 following the coastline of Massachusetts

### CLOSED AREA I—NORTH

Point	N. lat.	W. long.
CIN1	41°30'	69°23'
CIN2	41°30'	68°30'
CIN3	41°26'	68°30'
CIN4	41°04'	69°01'
CIN1	41°30'	69°23'

### CLOSED AREA II CLOSURE AREA

Point	N. lat.	W. long.	Note
CAII1	41°00'	67°20'	
CAII2	41°00'	66°35.8'	
CAII3	41°18.45'	(1)	(2)
CAII4	(3)	67°20'	(2)
CAII5	42°22'	67°20'	
CAII1	41°00'	67°20' <sup>1</sup>	

(1) The intersection of 41°18.45' N. lat. and the U.S.-Canada Maritime Boundary, approximately 41°18.45' N. lat. and 66°24.89' W. long.

(2) From Point CAII3 to Point CAII4 along the U.S.-Canada Maritime Boundary

(3) The intersection of 67°20' W. long. And the U.S.-Canada Maritime Boundary, approximately 42°22.06' N. lat. and 67°20' W. long.

## Habitat Management Areas

### Eastern Maine HMA

Point	N Latitude	W Longitude
EMH1*	44°07.65' N	68°10.64' W
EMH2	44° 02.50' N	68° 06.10' W
EMH3	43° 51.00' N	68° 33.90' W
EMH4*	43° 56.62' N	68° 38.12' W

\* Points 1 and 4 are intended to fall along the outer limit of Maine state waters.

### Jeffreys Bank HMA

Point	N Latitude	W Longitude
JBH1	43° 31' N	68° 37' W
JBH2	43° 20' N	68° 37' W
JBH3	43° 20' N	68° 55' W
JBH4	43° 31' N	68° 55' W
JBH1	43° 31' N	68° 37' W

### Cashes Ledge HMA

Point	N Latitude	W Longitude
CLH1	43° 01.0' N	69° 00.0' W
CLH2	43° 01.0' N	68° 52.0' W
CLH3	42° 45.0' N	68° 52.0' W
CLH4	42° 45.0' N	69° 00.0' W
CLH1	43° 01.0' N	69° 00.0' W

### Fippennies Ledge HMA

Point	N Latitude	W Longitude
FLH1	42° 50.0' N	69° 17.0' W
FLH2	42° 44.0' N	69° 14.0' W
FLH3	42° 44.0' N	69° 18.0' W
FLH4	42° 50.0' N	69° 21.0' W
FLH1	42° 50.0' N	69° 17.0' W

### Ammen Rock HMA

Point	N Latitude	W Longitude
ARH1	42° 55.5' N	68° 57.0' W
ARH2	42° 52.5' N	68° 55.0' W
ARH3	42° 52.5' N	68° 57.0' W
ARH4	42° 55.5' N	68° 59.0' W
ARH1	42° 55.5' N	68° 57.0' W

**Western Gulf of Maine HMA**

<b>Point</b>	<b>N Latitude</b>	<b>W Longitude</b>
WGMH1	43° 15' N	70° 15' W
WGMH2	42° 15' N	70° 15' W
WGMH3	42° 15' N	70° 00' W
WGMH4	43° 15' N	70° 15' W
WGMH1	43° 15' N	70° 15' W

**Western Gulf of Maine Shrimp Exemption Area**

<b>Point</b>	<b>N Latitude</b>	<b>W Longitude</b>
SEA1	43° 15' N	70° W
SEA2	43° 13' N	70° W
SEA3	43° 13' N	70° 05' W
SEA4	43° 09' N	70° 05' W
SEA5	43° 09' N	70° 08' W
SEA6	42° 55' N	70° 08' W
SEA7	42° 55' N	70° 15' W
SEA8	43° 15' N	70° 15' W
SEA1	43° 15' N	70° W

**Closed Area II Habitat Closure Area**

<b>Point</b>	<b>N Latitude</b>	<b>W Longitude</b>	<b>Notes</b>
CIIH1	42° 10' N	67° 20' W	
CIIH 2	42° 10' N	67° 9.38' W	(1)(2)
CIIH 3	42° 00' N	67° 0.63' W	(2)(3)
CIIH 4	42° 00' N	67° 10' W	
CIIH 5	41° 50' N	67° 10' W	
CIIH 6	41° 50' N	67° 20' W	
CIIH1	42° 10' N	67° 20' W	

- (1) Point CIIH2 represents the intersection of 42°10' N. lat. and the U.S.-Canada Maritime Boundary
- (2) From Point CIIH2 to Point CIIH3 along the U.S.-Canada Maritime Boundary
- (3) Point CIIH3 represents the intersection of 42°00' N. lat. and the U.S.-Canada maritime Boundary

**Great South Channel HMA**

<b>Point</b>	<b>N Latitude</b>	<b>W Longitude</b>
GSCH1	41° 30.3' N	69° 31.0' W
GSCH 2	41° 0.00' N	69° 18.5' W
GSCH 3	40° 51.7' N	69° 18.5' W
GSCH 4	40° 51.6' N	69° 48.9' W
GSCH 5	41° 30.2' N	69° 49.3' W
GSCH1	41° 30.3' N	69° 31.0' W

### Great South Channel Mobile Bottom-Tending Gear Closure

The hydraulic clam dredge exemption does not apply in the area defined as the straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

Point	N Latitude	W Longitude
GSC 1	41° 30.3' N	69° 31.0' W
MBTG 2	41° 21.0' N	69° 27.2' W
MBTG 3	41° 21.0' N	69° 43.0' W
MBTG 4	41° 30.0' N	69° 43.0' W
GSC 1	41° 30.3' N	69° 31.0' W

### Dedicated Habitat Research Areas

#### Stellwagen DHRA

Point	N Latitude	W Longitude
SDHRA1	42° 15.0' N	70° 00.0' W
SDHRA2	42° 15.0' N	70° 15.0' W
SDHRA3	42° 45.2' N	70° 15.0' W
SDHRA4	42° 46.0' N	70° 13.0' W
SDHRA5	42° 46.0' N	70° 00.0' W
SDHRA1	42° 15.0' N	70° 00.0' W

#### Georges Bank DHRA

Point	Latitude	Longitude
GBDHRA1	40°54.95' N.	68°53.37' W.
GBDHRA2	40°58' N.	68°30' W.
GBDHRA3	40°45' N.	68°30' W.
GBDHRA4	40°45' N.	68°45' W.