NOAA FISHERIES Southeast

Black Sea Bass Fisherman's Guide to Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Requirements off South Carolina and Georgia

This document is a summary of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan's (Plan) commercial Mid-Atlantic trap/pot fishing regulations off South Carolina (SC) and Georgia (GA). Additional regulations apply outside of the areas considered by this guide. Because regulations may change, **it is your responsibility as a fisherman** to become familiar with the latest regulatory updates and to comply with the current official regulations. Consult 50 CFR 229.32 for actual Plan regulations.

Trap/Pot Requirements

SPECIFIC AREA	DATES	AREA REQUIREMENTS	ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
SERA N OFF SC AND GA	Nov 1 – Apr 15	• Buoy lines must be marked with 12" mark in 3 places: top, middle, and bottom of line. Colors are contingent on area fished. State waters: 6" BLUE & 6" ORANGE; Federal waters: 6" GREEN & 6" ORANGE • All buoys, flotation devices and/or weights must be attached to the buoy line with a weak link with ≤ 600 lbs breaking strength • Breaking (tensile) strength of vertical/buoy lines must be 2,200 lbs or less	Buoy lines • Must be made of sinking line • No portion may float at the surface • Weak links may be swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate breaking strength, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, etc. and must be approved by NMFS • Weak links must break cleanly leaving a bitter end of the line that is free from knots • Knotless lines are preferred Other • Gear must be hauled out of the water at least once every 30 days • Groundlines must be made of sinking line, and no buoys, toggles, or other flotations devices may be attached to it • Only 1 buoy line allowed for trawls with 5 or fewer traps
OFFSHORE TRAP/POT WATERS OFF GA AND SC	North of 32° N: Sep 1 – May 31 South of 32° N: Nov 15 – Apr 15	• Buoy lines must be marked with a BLACK 12" mark in 3 places: top, middle, and bottom of line • All buoys, flotation devices and/or weights must be attached to the buoy line with a weak link with ≤ 1,500 lbs breaking strength	

The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (Plan)

The purpose of this Plan is to reduce the risk of serious injury and death of large whales caused by accidental entanglement in U.S. commercial trap/pot and gillnet fishing gear. The Plan is a requirement of the Marine Mammal Protection Act and was developed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team. The Team consists of fishing industry representatives, environmentalists, state and federal officials, and other interested parties. To learn more about the plan visit: www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov.

Plan Requirements off South Carolina and Georgia

Hog rings can be used to form an eye in the end of a line that will function as a weak link. Up to 7 may be used to create a 600 pound weak link. Hog rings can be distributed (from 6" to 12") without significantly affecting the strength.

Examples of gear marking methods.

THREE 12 inch (30.48 cm) colored marks:
one at the top of the buoy line,
one midway along the buoy line, and
one at the bottom of the buoy line.

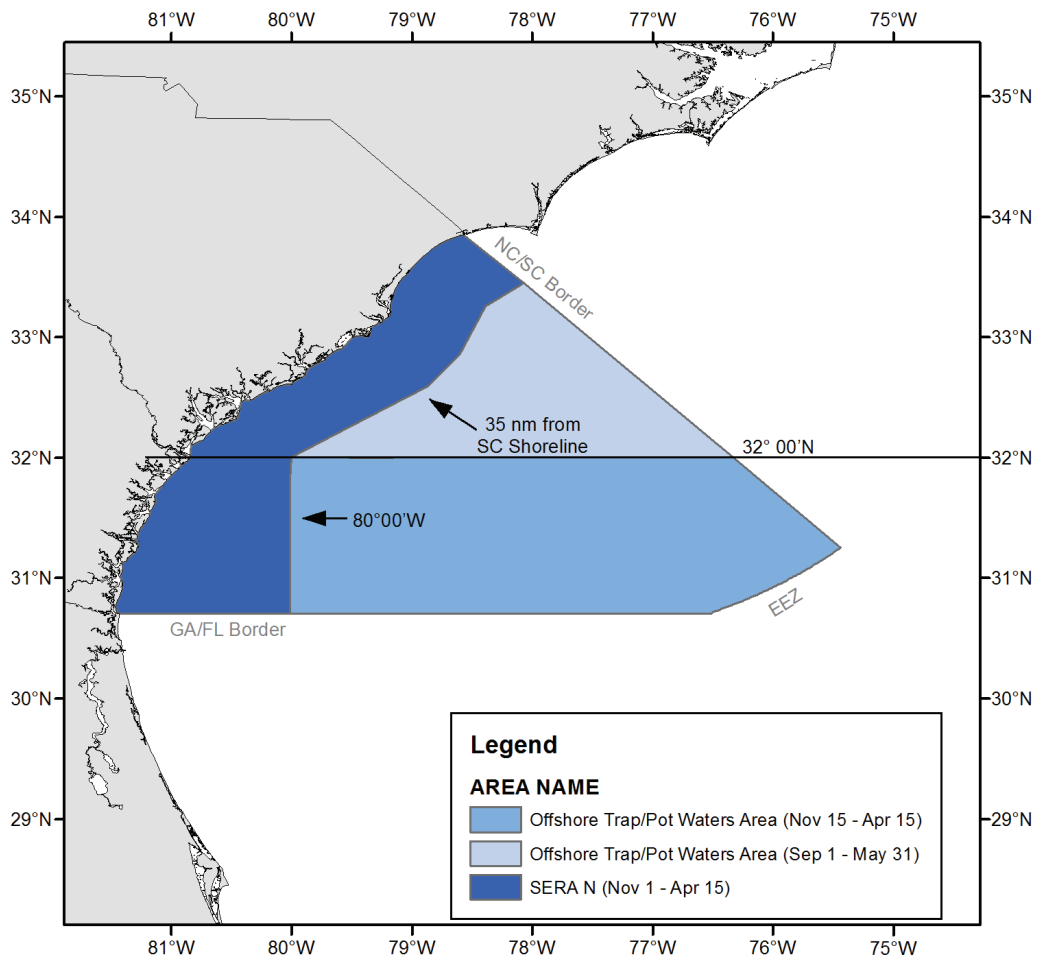
Each color code must be permanently affixed on or along the line and each color code must be clearly visible when the gear is hauled or removed from the water.

Location Description

Southeast Restricted Area North (SERA N) —off South Carolina and Georgia includes all state and Federal waters off Georgia from the shoreline eastward to 80°00'W and off South Carolina within 35 nautical miles of the shoreline. Little River Inlet, SC, is not located in SERA N.

Offshore Trap/Pot Waters Area—off South Carolina and Georgia includes all Federal waters of the EEZ offshore of the SERA N.

For complete regulatory area definitions, please see the Atlantic Large Whale Plan at 50 CFR 229.32.



Report sightings of sightings of live, dead, injured, or entangled right whales to:
1-877-WHALE HELP or U.S. Coast Guard Channel 16.