

AMENDMENT 2 TO THE GEORGES BANK COD FIXED GEAR SECTOR OPERATIONS PLAN

APPROVED BY NOAA'S NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE MAY 1, 2016

EFFECTIVE MAY 1, 2016, THROUGH APRIL 30, 2017

This amendment modifies the approved exemptions for Georges Bank Cod Fixed Gear Sector by adding a new exemption.

Exemption from Requirement to Fish Exclusively with 10-inch, or Larger, mesh gillnets to Target Dogfish on Groundfish Trips Excluded from At-Sea Monitoring (ASM) Coverage

Sector trips fishing with extra-large mesh gillnets (10 inches or greater) exclusively in the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic and Inshore GB Broad Stock Areas are not subject to ASM. This exemption allows a sector vessel on these non-ASM sector groundfish trips to also target dogfish using 6.5-inch mesh gillnet gear within the footprint and season of either the Nantucket Shoals Dogfish Exemption Area (June 1 through October 15), the Eastern Area of the Cape Cod Spiny Dogfish Exemption Area (June 1 through December 31), or the Southern New England Dogfish Gillnet Exemption Area (May 1 through October 31). The vessel must submit a vessel trip report (VTR) to document catch on the extra-large mesh portion of the trip, and a separate VTR for the portion of the trip in which the vessel deploys 6.5-inch mesh gillnet gear within the footprint and season of the existing dogfish exempted areas. The following requirements apply:

1. The vessel must declare its trip into the Pre-Trip Notification System consistent with current requirements.
2. The vessel must declare its trip in the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) consistent with current requirements, including the intention to use gillnet gear and fish entirely within the SNE/MA and/or Inshore GB BSAs.
3. The vessel may only fish with gillnets with meshes that are 10 inches or greater during the first portion of the trip, and must complete a VTR for that portion of the trip before deploying 6.5 inch mesh gillnet gear.
4. After the vessel completes a VTR for the extra-large mesh portion of the trip, the vessel may deploy 6.5-inch mesh gillnet gear exclusively within the footprint and season of the existing dogfish exempted areas (listed above).
5. The vessel must submit VTRs to NMFS for the first and second portion of the trip in accordance with current requirements. The vessel must also submit the required Multispecies Catch Report and a Trip End Hail for total catch on the trip via VMS once it stops fishing and begins its return to port.