



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
NORTHEAST REGION  
One Blackburn Drive  
Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

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## AMERICAN LOBSTER PROPOSED RULE – REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

Today, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published in the Federal Register a Proposed Rule regarding Federal American lobster management in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). NMFS announces that it is considering and seeking public comment on the implementation of further minimum carapace length (gauge) increases, an escape vent size increase, and trap reductions in the offshore American lobster fishery, consistent with recommendations for Federal action in the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (Commission) Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster (ISFMP).

This proposed rule considers the Commission's recommendations for action in Addenda II, III, IV and XI to Amendment 3 of the ISFMP which are relevant to broodstock protection and effort reduction in Area 3. This action, subsequent to an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking published in the Federal Register on December 18, 2006 (71 FR 75705), proposes new Federal American Lobster regulations for Area 3 that would:

### ***Increase lobster minimum carapace length (gauge) in Area 3***

- To protect lobster broodstock NMFS proposes to implement two additional gauge increases, one in 2007 and one in 2008, which would result in a 3 ½ inch (8.89 cm) minimum gauge size requirement for Area 3 by July 1, 2008;

### ***Increase lobster trap escape vent size for Area 3 in 2010***

- NMFS proposes a lobster trap escape vent size increase in Area 3 to 2 1/16 inches X 5 3/4 inches rectangular (5.24 X 14.61 cm) or two circular vents at 2 11/16 inches diameter (6.83 cm) by July 1, 2010;

### ***Area 3 Lobster Trap Reductions Through 2010***

- NMFS also is considering a suite of lobster trap reductions for all vessels eligible to fish for lobster with traps in Area 3 which consists of a 5% reduction for 2007, a 5% reduction in 2008, a 2.5% reduction in 2009 and, finally, a 2.5% reduction in 2010.

A complete copy of the Proposed Rule may be obtained from the NERO website at [www.nero.noaa.gov](http://www.nero.noaa.gov).

Written comments will be accepted until 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on or before AUG - 6 2007.

**Mail Comments to:** Harold C. Mears, Director  
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**E-mail comments to:** [Lob0607@noaa.gov](mailto:Lob0607@noaa.gov). Subject line "Lobster PR Comments"; or via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

**FAX Comments to:** (978) 281-9117

