



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
NORTHEAST REGION  
55 Great Republic Drive  
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**Red Crab Commercial Fishery**  
Changes to Regulations  
Amendment 3  
*Effective Date 09/29/2011*

Amendment 3 to the Red Crab Fishery Management Plan (FMP) has been partially approved by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Amendment 3 sets an annual catch limit and accountability measures for the red crab fishery and establishes specifications through fishing year (FY) 2013. Modifications to some management measures were also approved to increase flexibility for the red crab fleet. Days-at-sea (DAS) and the limited access trip limits were removed and replaced with a total landing limit, in-season closure authority, and pound-for-pound payback of overages. Two measures that were proposed in Amendment 3 were disapproved (depth-based trap restrictions and removing the prohibition on landing female red crabs). Details of the new measures are described below.

**New Measures**

**1. Eliminate DAS and Target TAC**

The limited access red crab fishery will no longer be managed under a DAS system. Limited access red crab vessels no longer have to notify NMFS prior to and at the end of each fishing trip.

Operators of vessels with limited access red crab permits also no longer have to report via the Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system, unless required to do so for other purposes (for example, as a requirement of an exempted fishing permit).

**2. Quotas and Fishing Specifications (FY 2011–2013)**

The commercial limited access red crab fishery will now operate under a “hard” quota that will be monitored through dealer-reported data. Pending any adjustments necessary to account for overages in landings, the quota for the next 3 fishing years is **3.91 million lb**.

Because Amendment 3 is being implemented several months after the start of the 2011 fishing year, which began on March 1, 2011, all red crab landings thus far in this fishing year will be counted against this year's 3.91 million lb quota.

Once the quota is projected to be harvested, all directed red crab fishing will be required to stop. If the quota is exceeded in any fishing year, a pound-for-pound payback of the overage will be taken from the next year's quota. The adjusted quota will be announced as soon as practicable. If the reduced quota is not exceeded in the second year, the quota will revert to the original level



for the third year. For example, if the fishing year 2011 landings exceed the quota by 100,000 lb, the fishing year 2012 quota would be 3.81 million lb. If landings in fishing year 2012 are less than 3.81 million lb, the fishing year 2013 quota would revert to 3.91 million lb.

### **3. Trip Limits**

The limited access red crab trip limits of 75,000 and 125,000 lb per trip have been removed.

The open access/incidental red crab possession limit remains 500 lb per trip.

**IMPORTANT:** No other management measures affecting the red crab fishery have changed. Therefore, landing of female red crabs is still prohibited (up to the allowed incidental level of one standard U.S. tote), and all gear requirements, including the trap limit of 600 traps/pots, remain effective.

### **Additional Questions You May Have**

#### **1. When are the measures in this letter effective?**

All measures are effective on September 29, 2011.

#### **2. Are there other details that you have not described in this letter?**

We have summarized the new measures that are essential to your day-to-day fishing operations for the remainder of FY 2011 through FY 2013. If you want to learn more about the details of Amendment 3, please read the final rule available at our website:  
<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd/sfdredcrab.html>.

#### **3. Whom can I call if I have a question about any of the measures?**

Please call our Sustainable Fisheries Division staff at (978) 281-9315. They can answer your questions or direct you to other Northeast Regional Office staff who can.

*This small entity compliance guide 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, Northeast Region.*