



# Northeast Region Bulletin

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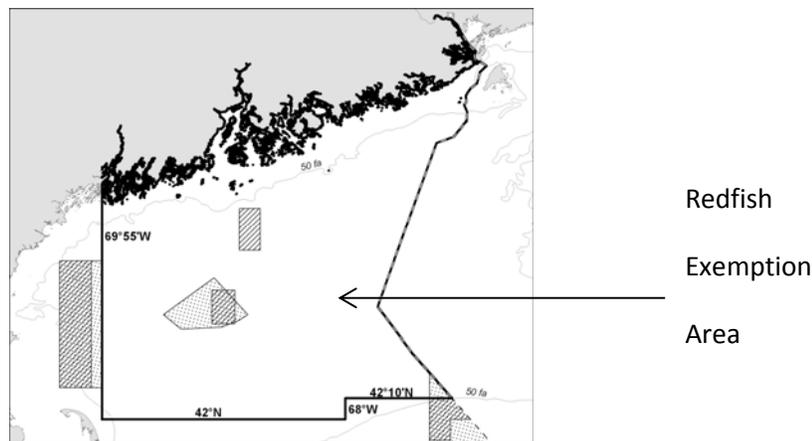
<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/>  
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## GROUNDFISH SECTOR TRAWL VESSELS

NOAA Fisheries Approves Exemption to Target Redfish with 4.5" codend mesh  
*Effective Date: February 28, 2013*

Starting February 28, 2013, trawl vessels can fish for redfish with codend mesh as small as 4.5 inches if their sector requests an exemption from NOAA Fisheries. This exemption is valid for the remainder of the 2012 fishing year. Sector vessels can only target redfish with smaller mesh if they:

- Have a valid Letter of Authorization (LOA) listing this exemption
- Call into the Pre-Trip Notification System (PTNS) 48 hr in advance of departure
- Carry an observer or at-sea monitor on board and have a majority of the redfish trawls monitored
- Remain in the redfish area shown in the chart below when fishing with small mesh
- Declare a redfish trip by coding "R1" into the VMS Trip Start Hail "Comment" field



Please note that this exemption replaces the previously approved exemption that allowed vessels to target redfish with mesh as small as 6 inches. While fishing for redfish with small mesh, at least 80% of the catch must be redfish, and groundfish discards (including redfish) cannot exceed 5% of groundfish catch. Sectors that exceed these thresholds may have their exemption revoked. Vessels may fish for other groundfish stocks with regulated nets on the same trip. For additional important information about this exemption, contact your sector manager or see

<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/regs/2013/march/13redfishfr.pdf>

Vessels not enrolled in an approved industry-funded at-sea monitoring program must wait to be randomly selected for an observer or at-sea monitor to fish for redfish with small mesh. Sectors interested in additional at-sea monitoring coverage can submit an industry-funded at-sea monitoring plan to NMFS for approval. Sectors interested in submitting an industry-funded plan should contact the Sustainable Fisheries Division at 978-281-9315. Any vessel participating in a sector with an approved industry-funded at-sea monitoring plan is required to pay for an at-sea monitor on all trips targeting redfish.

*For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin 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.*