



# Northeast Region Bulletin

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## NORTHEAST MULTISPECIES FISHERY (GROUND FISH)

### Council Considering a Process for Allowing sectors to Access Year-round Groundfish Closed Areas in Fishing Year 2013

The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is developing Framework Adjustment 48 (FW 48) to the New England Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for May 1, 2013. Current regulations under the FMP list categories of exemptions that cannot be requested or considered, including access to year-round closed areas. FW 48 includes a draft option that would allow sectors to request exemptions in their operations plans to fish in portions of the year-round groundfish mortality closure areas. This bulletin is a reminder to carefully weigh your decision to join a sector or remain in the common pool for fishing year 2013.

<i>FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS</i>	
When will we know whether or not the closed areas are being opened?	The Council will decide in November whether to allow sectors to request exemptions to fish in the closed areas. If the Council approves allowing access to closed areas, we will make the final decision about opening portions of closed areas next year, in response to sector exemption requests.
What parts of closed areas would be open to fishing?	Habitat areas within the mortality closure areas would remain closed. Any possible opening of the remaining mortality closure will be determined based on specific sector requests and consideration of impacts to groundfish spawning, other managed fisheries, protected species, etc.
Who would be allowed to fish in the closed areas?	Only members of sectors would be allowed to fish in the closed areas. Common pool vessels will not be able to fish in the closed areas.
Whom do I contact to join a sector?	Please visit the following website for sector contact information: <a href="http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd/sectordocs/SectorContacts.pdf">http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd/sectordocs/SectorContacts.pdf</a> . You may also call the NMFS Sector Team at 978-281-9315 if you have questions about this announcement.
What is the deadline to join a sector?	Sector rosters are due March 29, 2013. If you wish to join a sector, you will need to contact the sector before this deadline.

*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.*