



Northeast Fishery Bulletin

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Northeast Sink Gillnet Fisheries Reminder Coastal Gulf of Maine Closure Area *Effective Date: February 1, 2013*

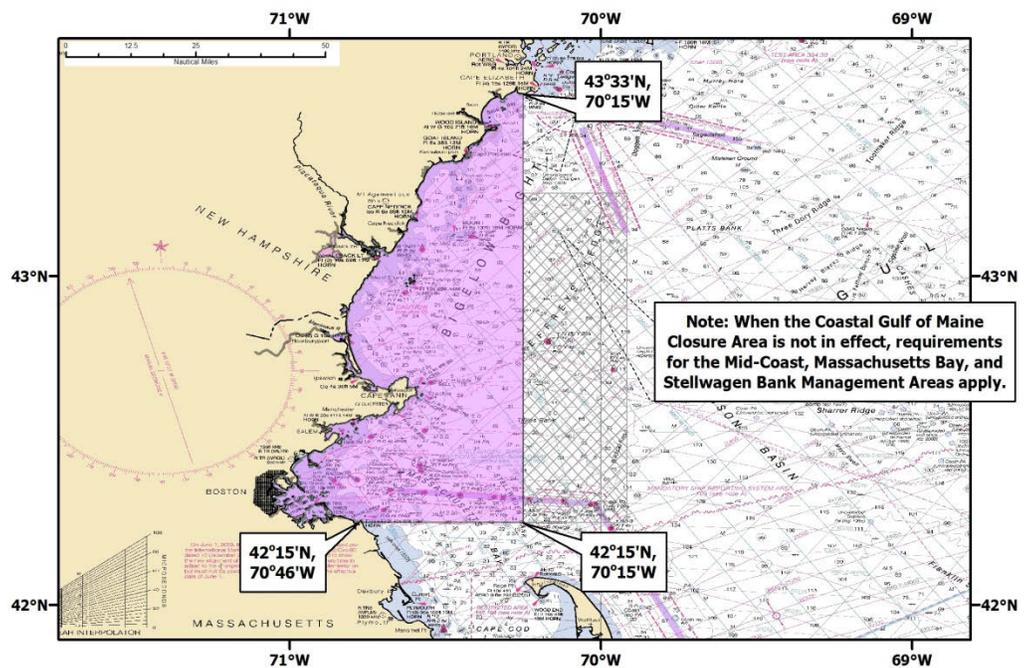
In April 2012 we issued a notice announcing the implementation of the Coastal Gulf of Maine Closure Area beginning October 1, 2012, under the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan regulations. After reviewing a request to analyze updated harbor porpoise bycatch and fishing information, the closure area was temporarily shifted, for one year. **The Coastal Gulf of Maine Closure Area is in effect beginning February 1 and ending March 31.**

The two-year average bycatch rate in the Southern New England Management Area **has not exceeded** the target rate. Therefore, the Eastern Cape Cod and Cape Cod South Expansion Consequence Closure Areas will not be closed at this time. We will continue to monitor bycatch rates in these areas.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where is the Coastal Gulf of Maine Closure Area located?

The Coastal Gulf of Maine Closure Area extends along the coast from southern Maine to northern Massachusetts. The graphic below displays the area and its coordinate boundaries.



<p>When is the Coastal Gulf of Maine Closure Area in effect?</p>	<p>Gillnet gear is prohibited in the area during the months of February and March during 2013 only. It will then revert to being closed during October and November, pending the implementation of revised conservation measures that result from the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Team’s deliberations.</p>								
<p>What happens when the area is not closed?</p>	<p>When the area is not closed, the seasonal pinger requirements of the three overlapping management areas (Mid-Coast, Massachusetts Bay, and Stellwagen Bank Management Areas) will remain in effect, as will the March gillnet closure in the Massachusetts Bay Management Area.</p>								
<p>What were the monitoring seasons used to calculate the observed bycatch rates?</p>	<p>The first two monitoring seasons occurred from September 15, 2010 through May 31, 2011 (year 1), and from September 15, 2011 through May 31, 2012 (year 2).</p>								
<p>What were the target and observed bycatch rates for the Coastal Gulf of Maine Closure Area?</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Two Year Target Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)</th> <th>Year One Final Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)</th> <th>Year Two Final Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)</th> <th>Two-Year Average Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0.031</td> <td>0.078</td> <td>0.043</td> <td>0.057</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Two Year Target Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)	Year One Final Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)	Year Two Final Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)	Two-Year Average Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)	0.031	0.078	0.043	0.057
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<p>Why was the Coastal Gulf of Maine Closure Area’s target rate exceeded?</p>	<p>Low compliance with the pinger requirements is the primary cause of high bycatch rates. We urge you to comply with pinger requirements to prevent the implementation of additional closure areas, which would be required if harbor porpoise bycatch remains too high.</p>								
<p>What were the target and observed bycatch rates for the Cape Cod South Expansion and Eastern Cape Cod Consequence Closure Areas?</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Two Year Target Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)</th> <th>Year One Final Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)</th> <th>Year Two Final Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)</th> <th>Two-Year Average Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0.023</td> <td>0.012</td> <td>0.029</td> <td>0.020</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Two Year Target Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)	Year One Final Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)	Year Two Final Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)	Two-Year Average Bycatch Rate (takes/mtons)	0.023	0.012	0.029	0.020
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<p>Once implemented, how long will the consequence closure areas remain in effect?</p>	<p>Once triggered, the consequence closure areas would remain in effect until bycatch levels are reduced to an insignificant level approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate, or until we work with the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Team to develop and implement new conservation measures.</p>								
<p>Where can I get more information about this notification, the consequence closure areas, or HPTRP in general?</p>	<p>If you have questions, please contact the NOAA Fisheries Service Northeast Regional Office Protected Resources Division at 978-281-9328, or visit the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan website (www.nero.noaa.gov/hptrp).</p>								