

Rhode Island Exemption Request and proposal to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan



Specific Request

- The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Division of Marine Fisheries is applying for an exemption to the final rule (50 CFR Part 229.32) to the “trawling up” requirement for lobster and fish pot gear types, which implements a prohibition on the setting of single pots.

Affected Pot Fisheries

- Scup – Seasonal - 50 pot limit
- Black Sea Bass – Seasonal - 50 lbs. possession limit
- Lobster – Seasonal - small number of participants
- Whelk, Blue Crab and Eel – take place in exempted waters

RI State Catch and Effort Logbook Traps Reported Fished

2011 - 36927

2012 - 32036

2013 - 24294

2014 - 10484

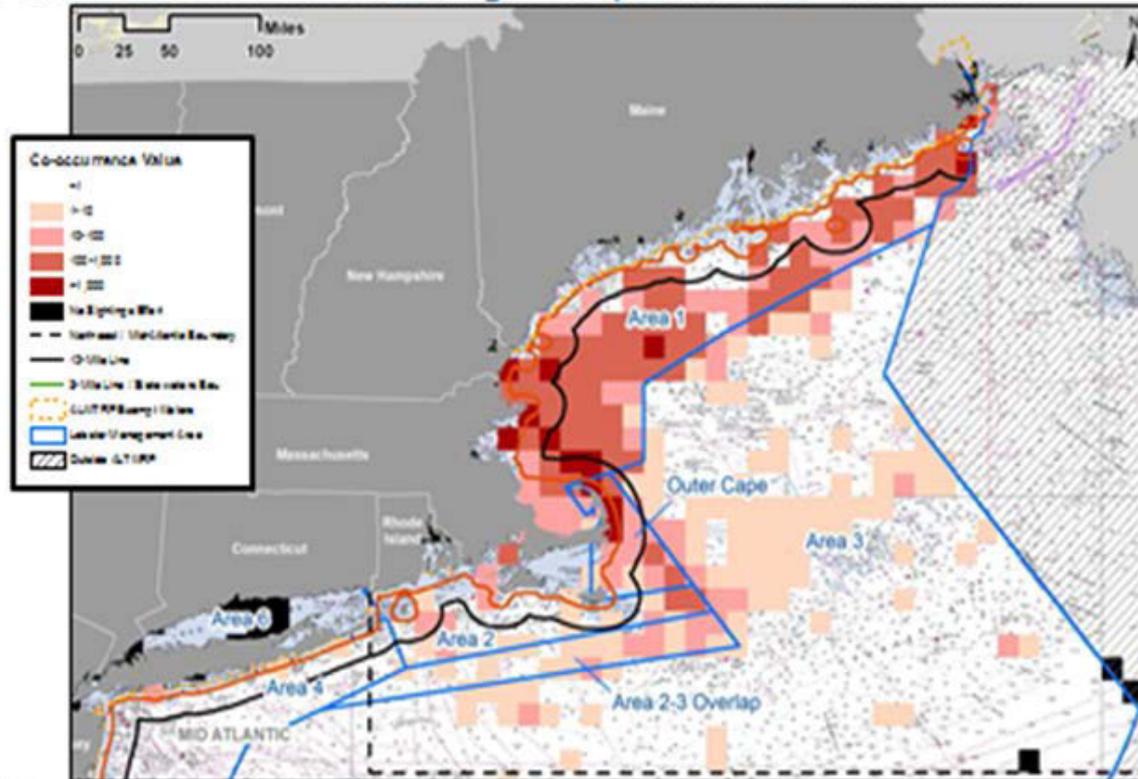
- **Rationale:** Seasonality of fisheries, Safety issues and co-occurrence model support exemption. ASMFC Addendum XVIII Area 2 and 3 trap reductions of 50% and 25% respectively. Safety issues have been repeated throughout TRT rulemaking by industry and the state(s). The RI inshore lobster/pot fisheries abut similar Massachusetts fisheries which have also requested an exemption on the prohibition of single pots. Both requests have identical concerns and justification for such requests.
- **Reasonable trade off options:** none
- **Gear Marking:** Remains the same as the final rule, no exemption or special markings are requested
- **Expected Conservation benefits:** Conservation neutral, RI state waters are not a high risk area, given the low number of large whales observed in the area during the months of highest fishing pressure.
- **Implementation:** June 2015 restrictions to be lifted
- **Strategic Monitoring:** No additional observer coverage proposed. RI has had a dedicated lobster sea sampling program in Narragansett Bay and the RI/BIS area for 24 years which was utilized to characterize the resource and fishing operations.

Co-occurrence

Updated Baseline Results

2009/2010 Northeast Baseline (Average)

Co-occurrence of Vertical Lines & Right/Humpback Whales ~ All Fisheries



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Exemption Request

