

**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan

**Northeast
Trap/Pot Fisheries
Requirements and
Management Areas**

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Reduction Website**

www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/whaletrp/

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The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan applies to the following fisheries:

Gillnets

- Northeast sink gillnet;
- Northeast anchored float gillnet;
- Northeast drift gillnet;
- Mid-Atlantic gillnet;
- Southeastern US Atlantic shark gillnet; and
- Southeast Atlantic gillnet.

Trap/Pots

- Northeast/Mid-Atlantic American lobster trap/pot;
- Atlantic blue crab trap/pot;
- Atlantic mixed species trap/pot which includes, but is not limited to: crab (red, Jonah, and rock), hagfish, finfish (black sea bass, scup, tautog, cod, haddock, pollock, redfish (ocean perch), and white hake), conch/whelk, and shrimp.

The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan

The Atlantic Large whale Take Reduction Plan (Plan) is a program to reduce the risk of serious injury and death of large whales caused by accidental entanglement in U.S. commercial trap/pot and gillnet fishing gear. The Plan is required by the Marine Mammal Protection Act and has been developed by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

The Plan focuses on reducing entanglements of endangered right, humpback, and fin whales. Non-endangered minke whales also benefit from the Plan. Under the Endangered Species Act, Federal agencies are required to ensure that permitted activities (such as fishing) do not cause harm to, or jeopardize, the continued existence of any endangered species. Since the Plan measures are intended to reduce entanglements of right, humpback, and fin whales in fishing gear, these measures also help to avoid the likelihood that Federally permitted fishing activities will jeopardize the continued existence of these whales.

The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team; which consists of fishing industry representatives, environmentalists, state and federal officials, and other interested parties; helped develop the Plan. Information about the process and the team is available on the Plan website (www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/whaletrp/).

The Plan evolves and changes as NMFS and the team learn more about whale entanglements and how fishing practices might be modified to reduce the risk of entanglement. The first Plan went into effect in 1997. The regulations contained in that rule have been updated several times, with the most recent updates occurring in the summer of 2014 (see pages 6-8 for a summary of the most recent Northeast trap/pot updates).

The current Plan includes restrictions on where and how gear can be set, including closures and gear modifications such as use of sinking groundline and weak links, trap minimums, and gear markings. Other components of the Plan include research on whale populations, whale behavior, and fishing gear interactions; outreach to inform and collaborate with fishermen; and a disentanglement program.

This document is a summary of the Plan's commercial **Northeast trap/pot fishing regulations**.

Note: This guide includes Federal requirements only for state and Federal waters; contact your state fishery office for any additional requirements within state waters. Should any regulations overlap with the Plan regulations, the more restrictive regulations apply.

2014 Northeast Trap/Pot Management Changes

In 2014, the Plan was modified to include the following new requirements and definitions:.
Modifications for Mid-Atlantic and Southeast fisheries can be found in the corresponding guides:

Gear Markings

Gear marking colors remain the same and are defined under each individual management area, however the frequency and size of the markings have changed. Now all buoy lines must be marked with three 12 inch (30.48 cm), colored marks: one at the top of the buoy line, one midway along the buoy line, and one at the bottom of the buoy line.

New Management Area and Trap/Pot Closure

The “Cape Cod Bay Restricted Area” has been expanded into the new “Massachusetts Restricted Area”. This management area includes a new closure for trap/pot gear from February 1-April 30th. See “Massachusetts Restricted Area” on page 16 for more details.

Minimum Number of Traps Per Trawl Requirements

Many of the management areas now require a minimum number of traps per trawl based on area fished and distance from shore. See each individual management area for locations and details on these requirements. Additionally, trawls including 5 traps or fewer, must only have 1 buoy line.

Minimum Number of Traps Per Trawl Requirement Exemptions

New Hampshire state waters are exempt from the new minimum trap per trawl requirements.

Waters within 1/4 mile of Mohegan Island, Maine; Matinicus Island, Maine; and Ragged Island, Maine are exempt from the new minimum trap per trawl requirements.

New Definitions

Maine Six Mile Line waters and Maine Pocket Waters were defined for minimum number of trap per trawl requirements (see pages 7-8 for maps of these new areas).

2014 Northeast Trap/Pot Management Changes (Continued)

New Definitions (Continued)

Maine Six Mile Line Waters

The six-mile line is a line connecting the following points (Machias Seal to Isle of Shoals)

44°31.98' N. lat., 67°9.72' W. long (Machias Seal)

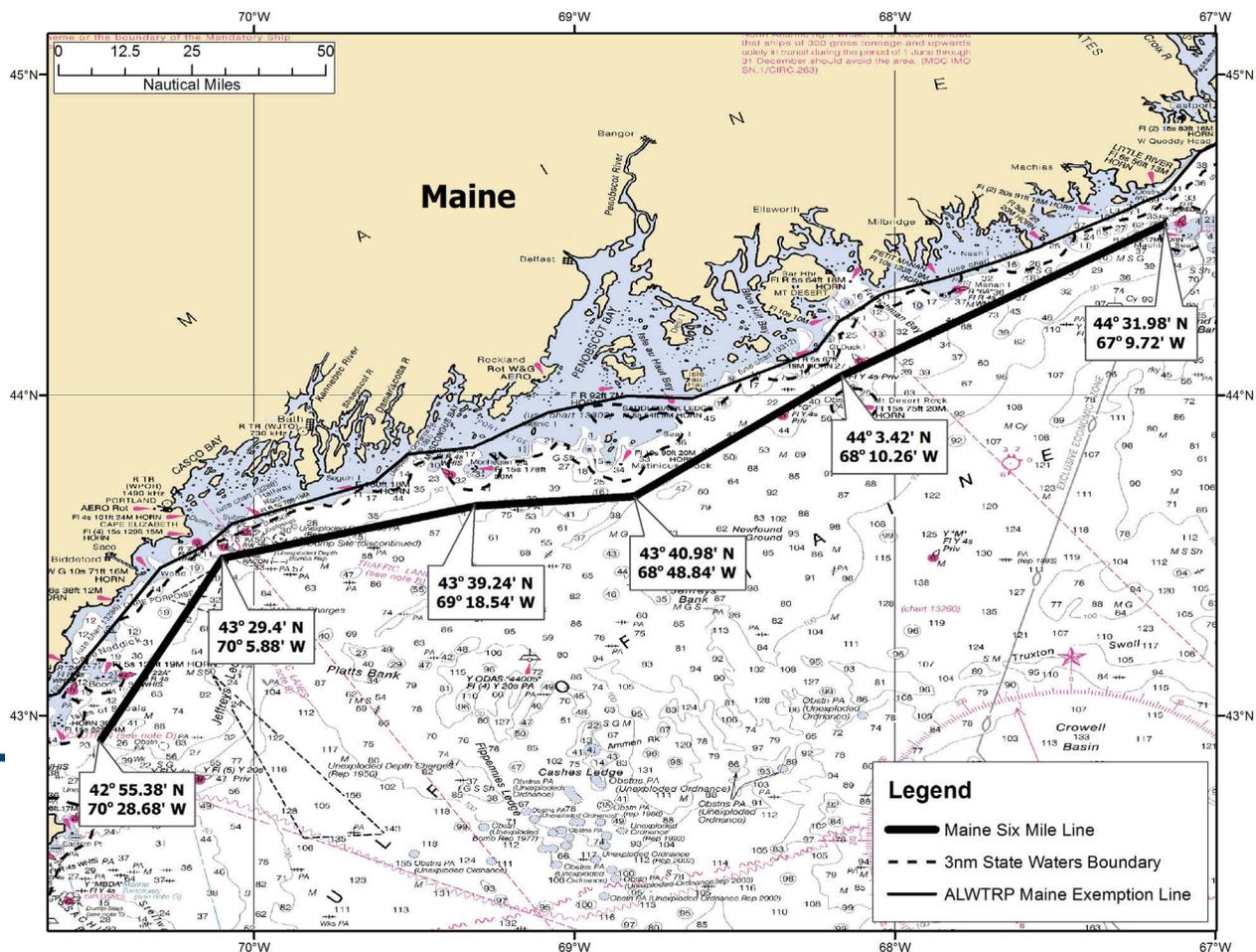
44°3.42' N. lat., 68°10.26' W. long (Mount Desert Island)

43°40.98' N. lat., 68°48.84' W. long (Matinicus)

43°39.24' N. lat., 69°18.54' W. long (Monhegan)

43°29.4' N. lat., 70°5.88' W. long (Casco Bay)

42°55.38' N. lat., 70°28.68' W. long (Isle of Shoals)



2014 Northeast Trap/Pot Management Changes (Continued)

New Definitions (Continued)

Maine Pocket Waters

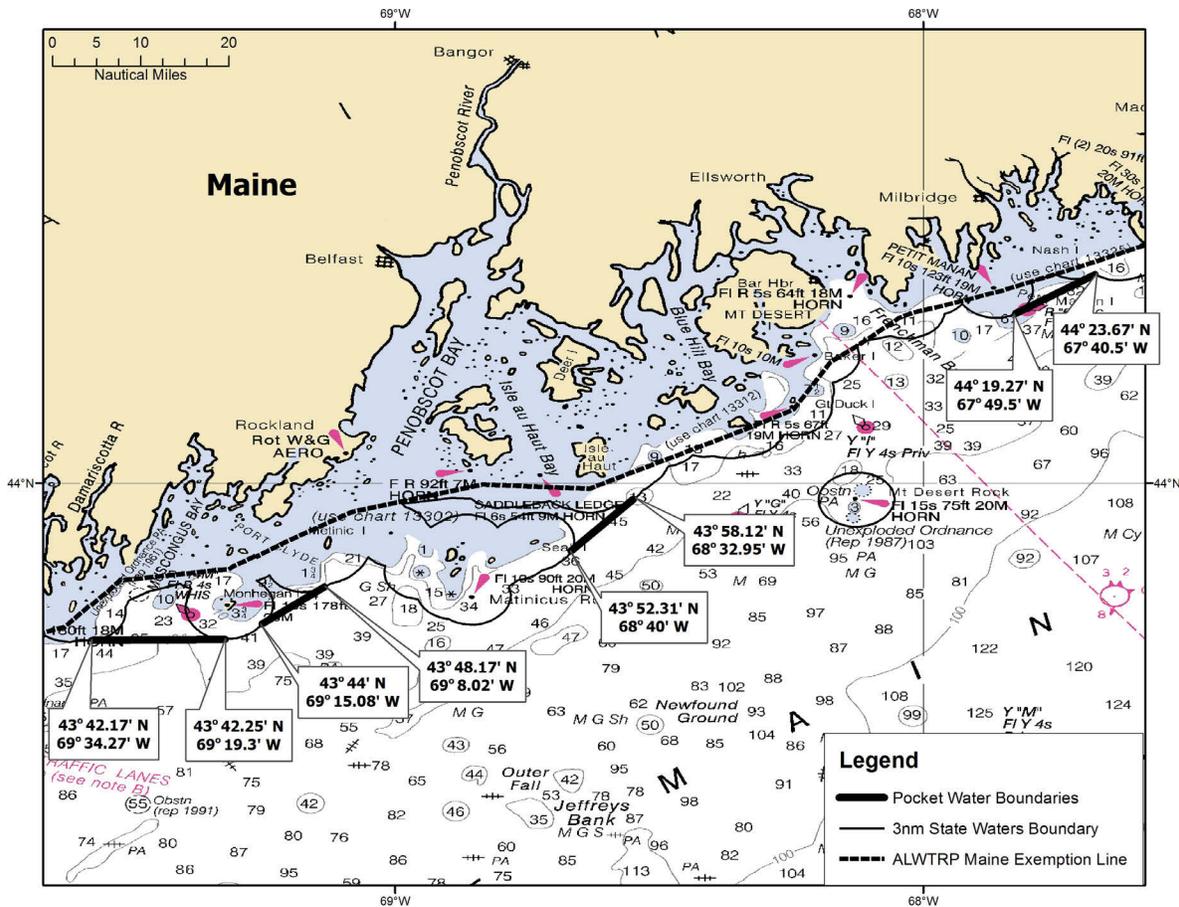
The pocket waters are defined as follows:

West of Monhegan Island in the area north of the line $43^{\circ}42.17' \text{ N. lat.}, 69^{\circ}34.27' \text{ W. long}$ and $43^{\circ}42.25' \text{ N. lat.}, 69^{\circ}19.3' \text{ W. long}$

East of Monhegan Island in the area located north of the line $43^{\circ}44' \text{ N. lat.}, 69^{\circ}15.08' \text{ W. long}$ and $43^{\circ}48.17' \text{ N. lat.}, 69^{\circ}8.02' \text{ W. long}$

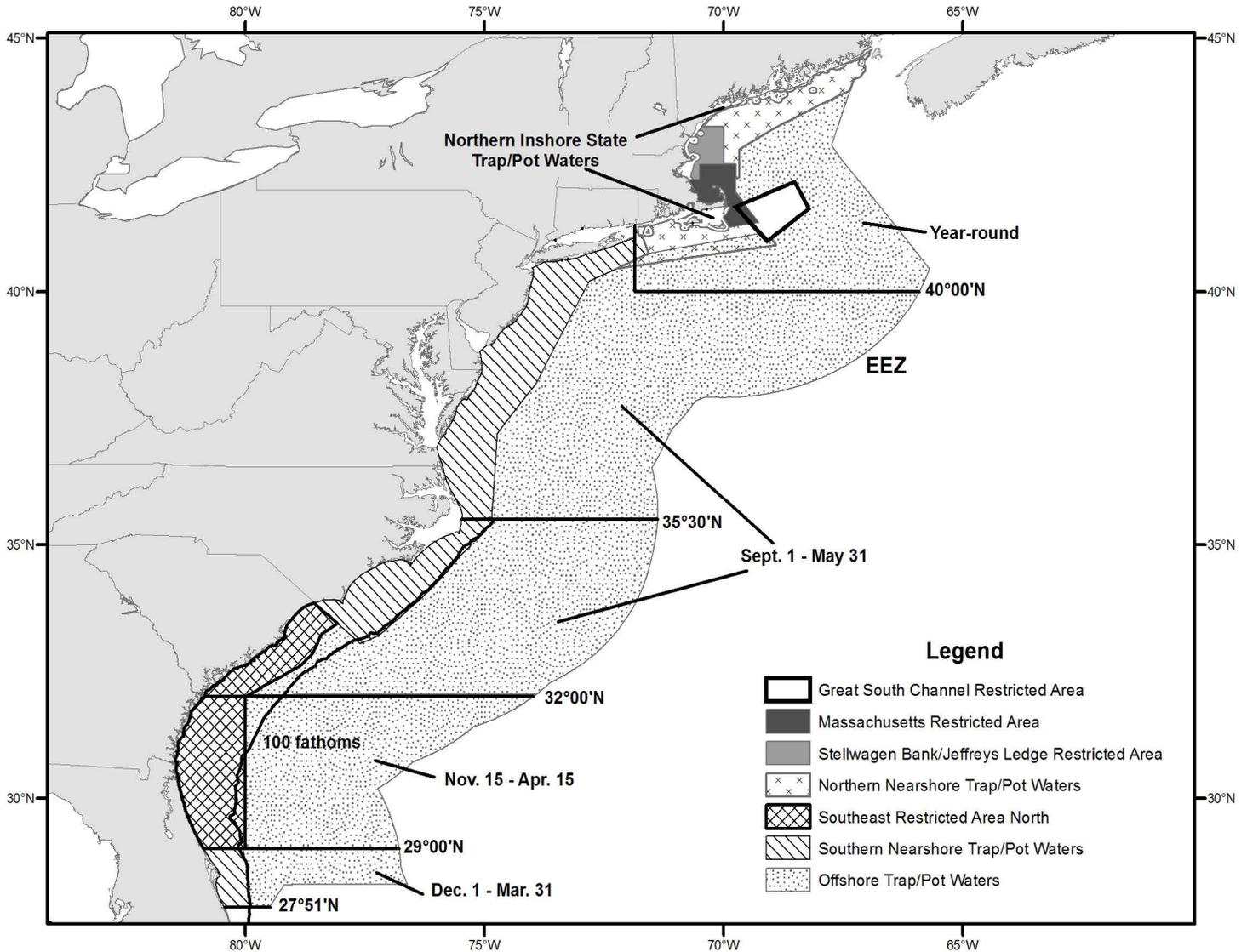
South of Vinalhaven Island in the area located west of the line $43^{\circ}52.31' \text{ N. lat.}, 68^{\circ}40' \text{ W. long}$ and $43^{\circ}58.12' \text{ N. lat.}, 68^{\circ}32.95' \text{ W. long}$

South of Bois Bubert Island in the area located northwest of the line $44^{\circ}19.27' \text{ N. lat.}, 67^{\circ}49.5' \text{ W. long}$ and $44^{\circ}23.67' \text{ N. lat.}, 67^{\circ}40.5' \text{ W. long}$



Trap/Pot Management Area Summary

Trap/pot gear requirements vary by geographic area. The Plan currently recognizes eight trap/pot areas along the entire Atlantic coast: Massachusetts Restricted Area, Great South Channel Restricted Area, Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area, Northern Inshore State Trap/Pot Waters, Northern Nearshore Trap/Pot Waters, Southern Nearshore Trap/Pot Waters, Offshore Trap/Pot Waters, and the Southeast Restricted Area North.



Many of these areas overlap the Lobster Management Areas (LMA) described in the Federal American lobster regulations found at 50 CFR Part 697 Subpart B.

Northeast Trap/Pot Requirements

Trap/Pot Universal Requirements

- No buoy line floating at the surface.
- No wet storage of gear (all gear must be hauled out of the water at least once every 30 days).
- Fishermen are encouraged, but not required, to maintain knot-free buoy lines.
- All groundlines must be made of sinking line.
- Trawls with less than or equal to 5 traps may only possess 1 buoy line.

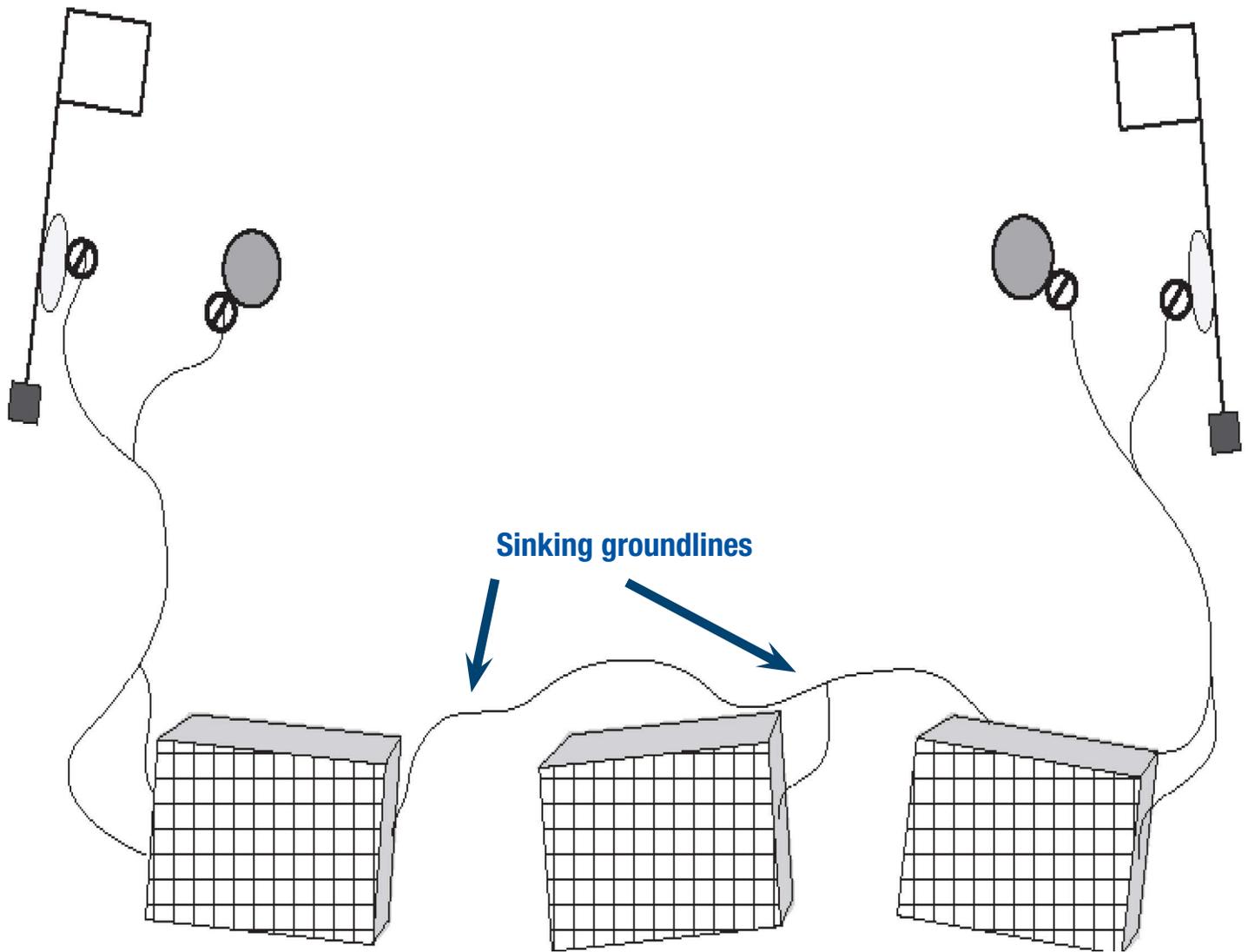
Trap/Pot Weak Link Requirements

- All buoys, flotation devices and/or weights must be attached to the buoy line with a weak link having a certain breaking strength as defined for each management area on the following pages.
- Weak links must be chosen from the list of NMFS approved gear, which includes: off the shelf weak links, rope of appropriate breaking strength, hog rings, and other materials or devices approved in writing. Weak links must be designed in such a way that the bitter end of the buoy line is clean and free of any knots when the weak link breaks.
- See Supplement B- Weak Links and Anchoring Techniques for more details on achieving appropriate weak links strengths.

Trap/Pot Gear Marking Requirements

- Trap/pot surface buoys to be marked to identify the vessel or fishery with one of the following: the owner's motorboat registration number and/or U.S. vessel documentation number; the federal commercial fishing permit number; or whatever positive identification marking is required by the vessel's home-port state.
- When marking is not already required by state or federal regulations, the letters and numbers to mark gear must be at least 1 inch (2.5 cm) in height, block letters or Arabic numbers, in a color that contrasts with the color of the buoy.
- Buoy lines are to be marked with **three 12 inch (30.48 cm), colored marks: one at the top of the buoy line, one midway along the buoy line, and one at the bottom of the buoy line.** Color requirements are defined for each individual management area as described in each management area description that follows.
- See page 12 and Supplement C- Gear Marking for more information on gear marking.

Northeast Trap/Pot Diagram



Buoy line weak link- please refer to individual management areas for specific breaking strength requirements



Buoy



High flyer or buoy

Note: This graphic depicts a general trap/pot gear configuration. Please see individual Management Areas for information regarding specific weak link, gear marking and/or any other requirements.

Trap/Pot Gear Marking



Surface Buoy Marking:

Markings on trap/pot surface buoys need to identify the associated vessel or fishery with one of the following:

- The owner's motorboat registration number and/or U.S. vessel documentation number;
- The federal commercial fishing permit number; or
- Whatever positive identification marking is required by the vessel's home-port state.

When marking is not already required by state or federal regulations, the letters and numbers to mark gear must be at least 1 inch (2.5 cm) in height, block letters or Arabic numbers, in a color that contrasts with the color of the buoy.

Buoy Line Marking:

Buoy lines are to be marked with three 12 inch (30.48 cm), colored marks: one at the top of the buoy line, one midway along the buoy line, and one at the bottom of the buoy line. Each color code must be permanently affixed on or along the line and each color code must be clearly visible when the gear is hauled or removed from the water.

Note: If the color of the rope is the same as or similar to a color code listed above, a white mark may be substituted for that color code.



Gear Marking Color	Applicable Trap/Pot Management Area
RED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massachusetts Restricted Area • Northern Nearshore Trap/Pot Waters • Northern Inshore State Trap/Pot Waters • Stellwagen Bank Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area • Great South Channel Restricted Area overlapping Lobster Management Area (LMA) 2 and/or the Outer Cape (OC) LMA.
ORANGE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern Nearshore Trap/Pot Waters.
BLACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offshore Trap/Pot Waters; Great South Channel Restricted Area overlapping with the LMA 2/3 Overlap and/or LMA 3
BLUE & ORANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southeast Restricted Area North- state waters
GREEN & ORANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southeast Restricted Area North- Federal waters

Additional information on gear marking techniques can be found in Supplement C- Gear Marking.

Northeast Trap/Pot Management Areas

- Northern Inshore State Trap/Pot Waters 14
- Massachusetts Restricted Area (formerly Cape Cod Bay Restricted Area) 16
- Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area 18
- Great South Channel Restricted Trap/Pot Area 20
- Northern Nearshore Trap/Pot Waters 22
- Southern Nearshore Trap/Pot Waters 24
- Offshore Trap/Pot Waters 26

Northeast Trap/Pot Management Areas

Northern Inshore State Trap/Pot Waters

MANAGEMENT AREA DESCRIPTION

Includes the state waters of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine, with the exception of the Massachusetts Restricted Area and the exempted waters (see Supplement A-Exempted Areas).

DATES

RESTRICTIONS/REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

Year-round

- Universal requirements
- Gear marking- **RED**
- Weak links \leq 600 lbs breaking strength
- Sinking groundline
- Minimum number of traps per trawl restrictions (see below)

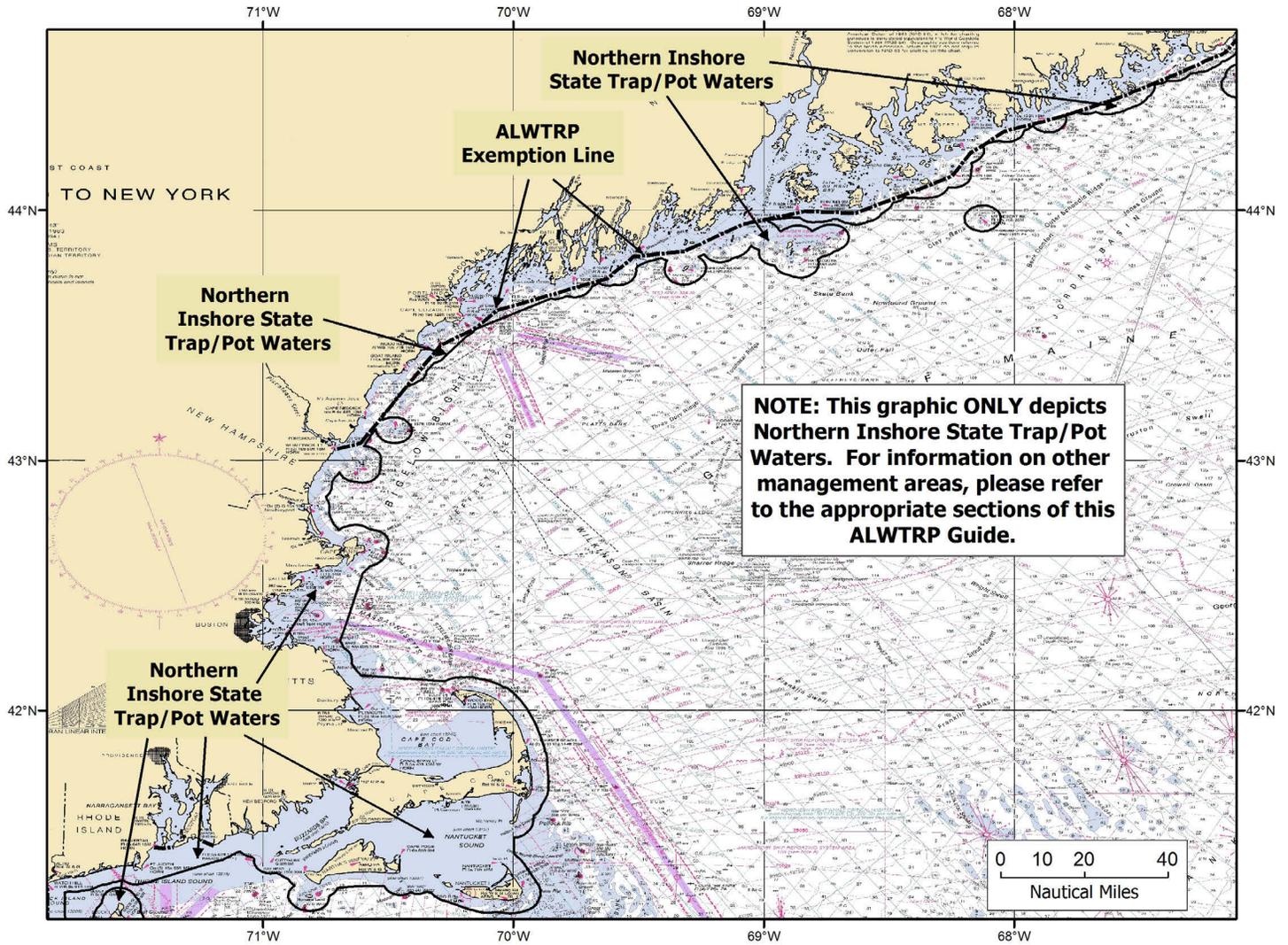
TRAP RESTRICTIONS

Area	Minimum Number of Traps Per Trawl
ME State and Pocket Waters*	2
MA State Waters	2
NH State Waters	no minimum
LMA1/Outer Cape Overlap (0-3 miles)	2
Outer Cape (0-3 miles)	2
Rhode Island State Waters	2

* *The pocket waters as defined on page 8.*

Northeast Trap/Pot Management Areas

Northern Inshore State Trap/Pot Waters



Northeast Trap/Pot Management Areas Massachusetts Restricted Area

LOCATION DESCRIPTION

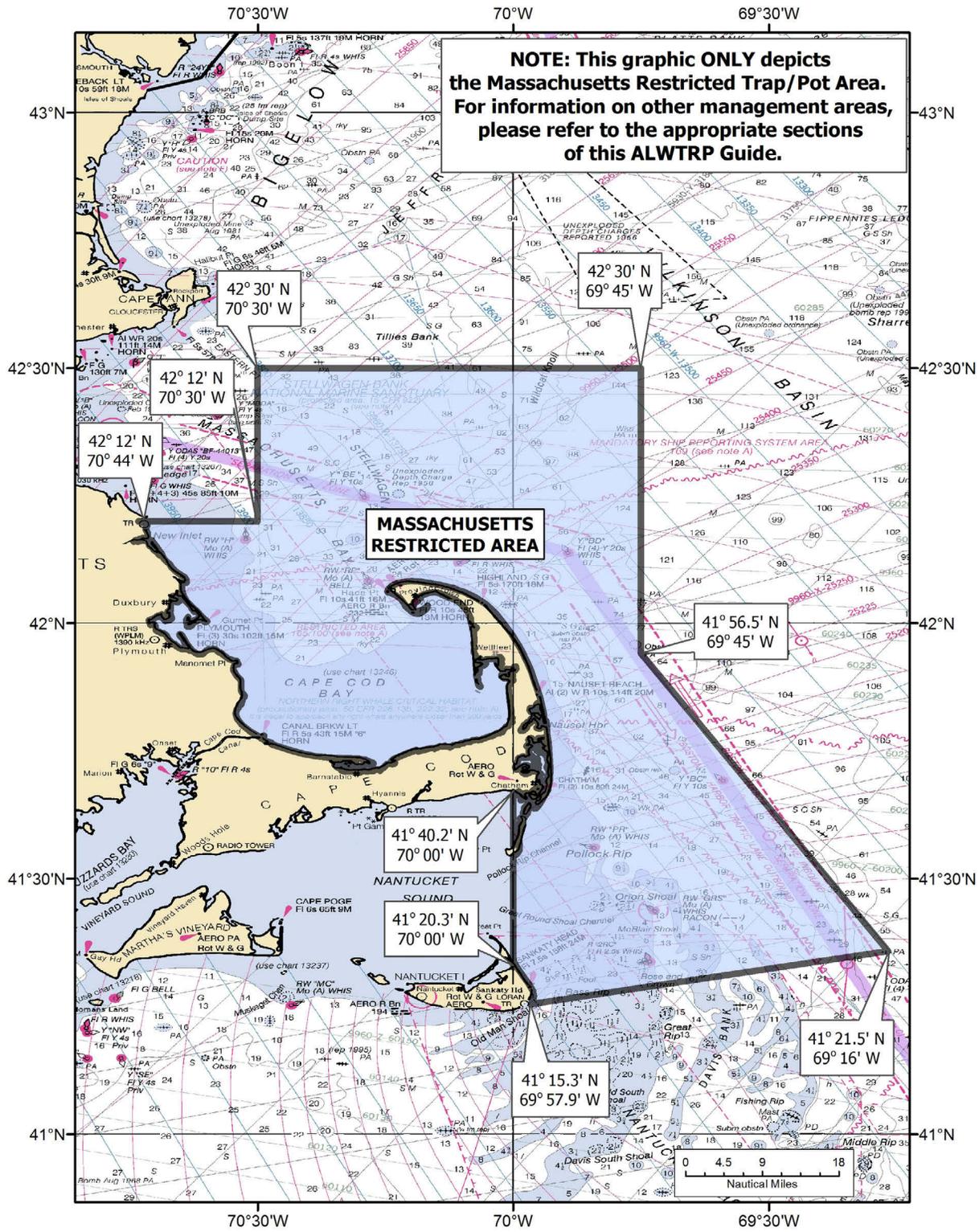
An expanded version of the former Cape Cod Bay Restricted Area, the Massachusetts Restricted Area is bounded by the following point surrounding the shoreline of Cape Cod, Massachusetts: 42°12'/70°44', 42°12'/70°30', 42°30'/70°30', 42°30'/69°45', 41°56.5'/69°45', 41°21.5'/69°16', 41°15.3'/69°57.9', 41°20.3'/70°00', 41°40.2'/70°00'.

DATES	RESTRICTIONS/REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY
February 1 to April 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLOSED to ALL trap/pot fishing
May 1 to December 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal requirements • Gear marking- RED • Weak links ≤ 600 lbs breaking strength • Sinking groundline • Minimum number of traps per trawl restrictions (see below)

TRAP RESTRICTIONS

Area	Minimum Number of Traps Per Trawl
MA State Waters	2
LMA 1 (3-12 miles)	10
LMA1/Outer Cape Overlap (0-3 miles)	2
Outer Cape (0-3 miles)	2
Outer Cape (3-12 miles)	10

Northeast Trap/Pot Management Areas Massachusetts Restricted Area



Northeast Trap/Pot Management Areas

Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area

LOCATION DESCRIPTION

The Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area includes all federal waters of the Gulf of Maine (except those designated as the Massachusetts Restricted Area) that lie south of 43°15'N and west of 70°00'W.

DATES

RESTRICTIONS/REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

Year-round

- Universal requirements
- Gear marking- **RED**
- Weak links ≤ 600 lbs breaking strength
- Sinking groundline
- Minimum number of traps per trawl restrictions (see below)

TRAP RESTRICTIONS

Area

Minimum Number of Traps Per Trawl

LMA 1 (3-12 miles)

10

Northeast Trap/Pot Management Areas

Great South Channel Restricted Area

LOCATION DESCRIPTION

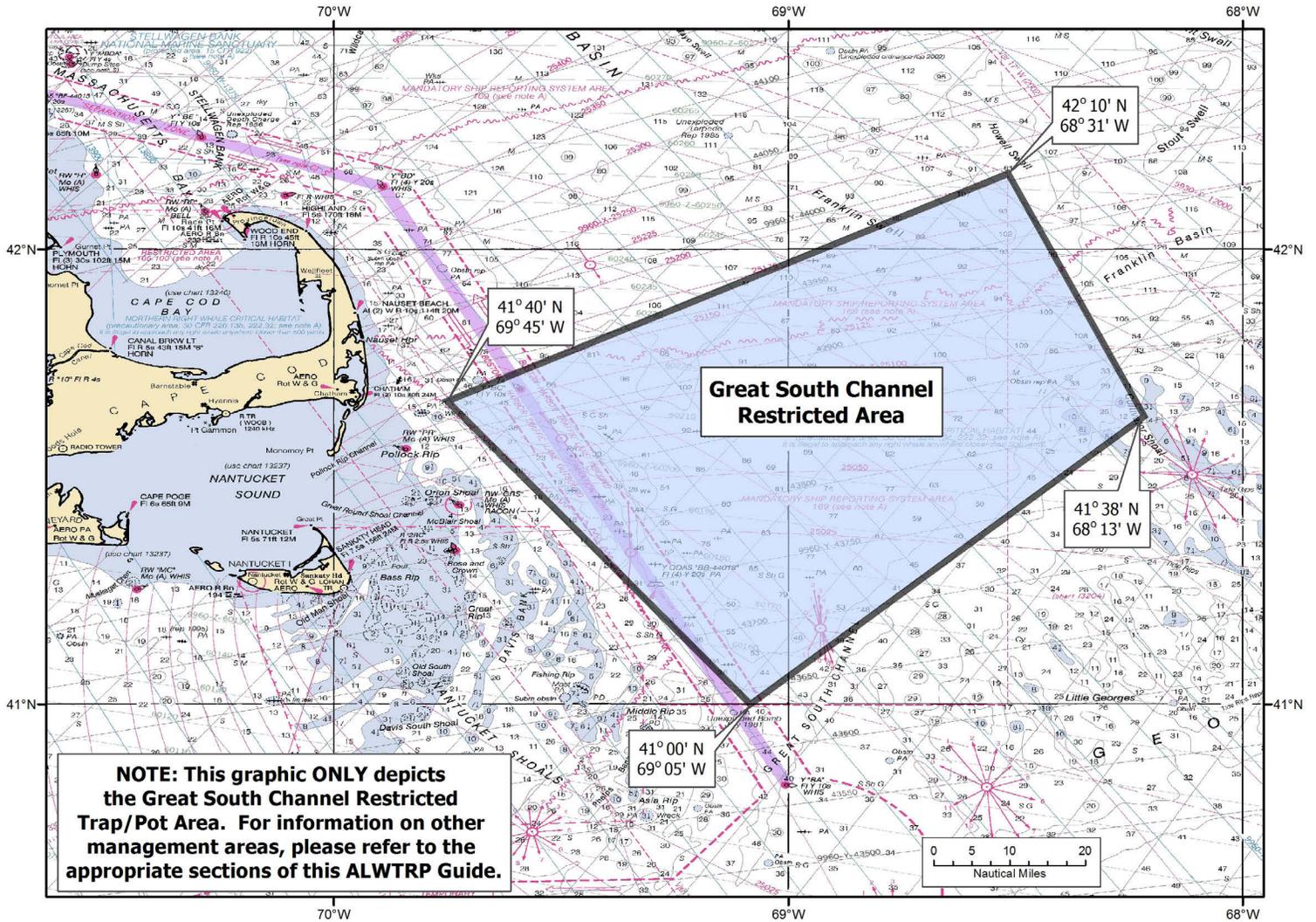
The Great South Channel Restricted Trap/Pot Area includes the area bounded by: 41°40'N/ 69°45'W; 41°00'N / 69°05'W; 41°38'N / 68°13'W; and 42°10'N / 68°31'W.

DATES	RESTRICTIONS/REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY
April 1-June 30	CLOSED to ALL trap/pot fishing
July 1- March 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal requirements • Gear Marking- RED (areas overlapping LMA 2 and/or Outer Cape LMA), BLACK (areas overlapping LMA 2/3 Overlap and/or LMA3) • Weak links no greater than 600 lb in area overlap with LMA2 and/or OC, and no greater than 1,500 lb. in areas that overlap with LMA 2/3 and/or LMA3 • Sinking groundline • Minimum number of traps per trawl restrictions (see below)

TRAP REQUIREMENTS

Area	Minimum Number of Traps Per Trawl
Outer Cape (12+ miles)	20
LMA 2 (12 + miles)	15
LMA 2/3 Overlap (12+ miles)	20
LMA 3 (12+ miles)	20

Northeast Trap/Pot Management Areas Great South Channel Restricted Area



Northeast Trap/Pot Management Areas

Northern Nearshore Waters (Northeast)

LOCATION DESCRIPTION

Northern Nearshore Lobster Waters includes all Federal waters of EEZ Nearshore Management Area 1, Area 2, and the Outer Cape Lobster Management Area (as defined in the American Lobster Fishery regulations at 50 CFR 697.18), with the exception of the Great South Channel Restricted Trap/Pot Area, Massachusetts Bay Restricted Area, Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area, and exempted waters (see Supplement A-Exempted Areas).

DATES

RESTRICTIONS/REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

Year-round

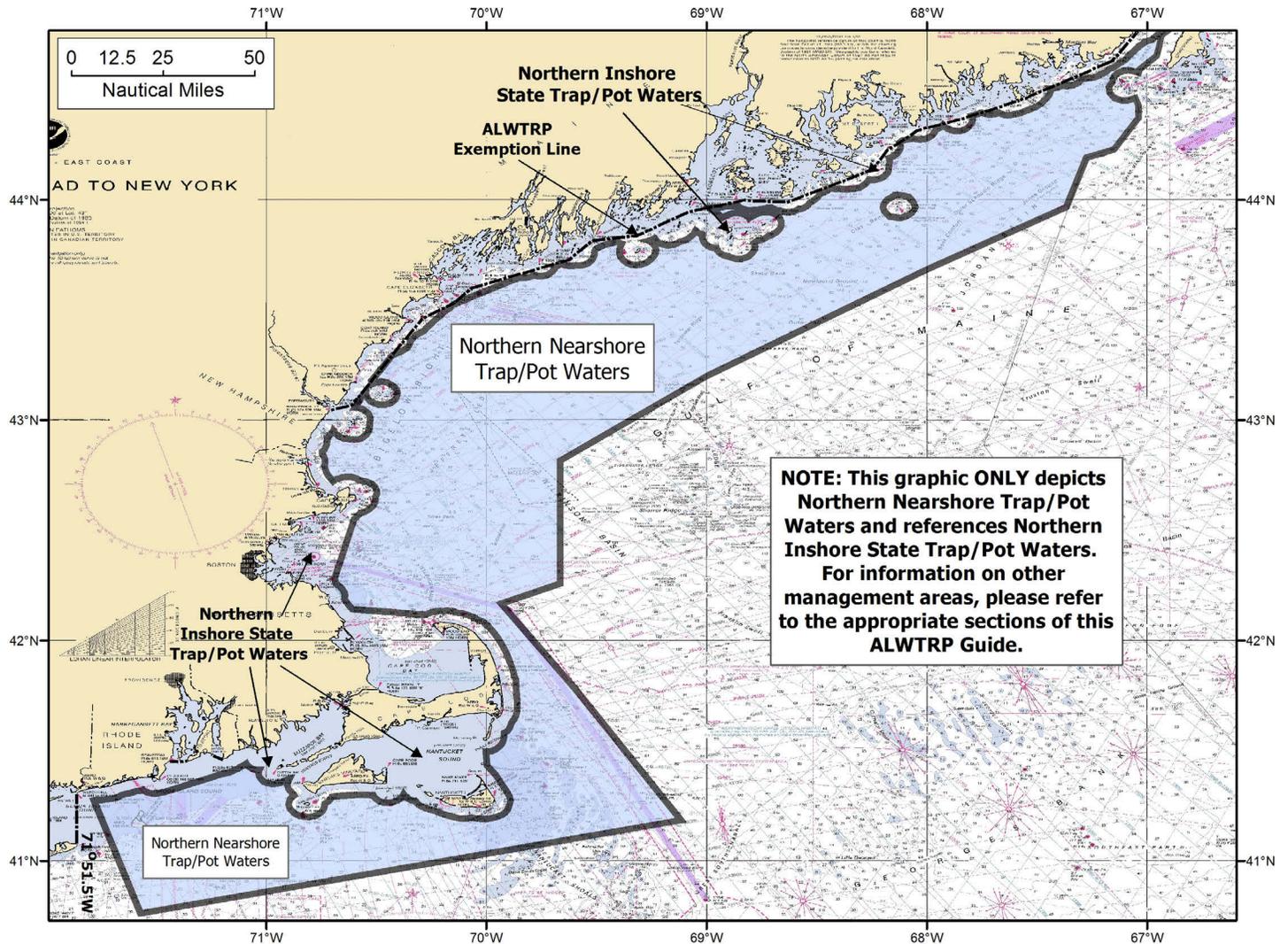
- Universal requirements
- Gear marking- **RED**
- Weak links \leq 600lbs breaking strength
- Sinking groundline
- Minimum number of traps per trawl restrictions (see below)

TRAP RESTRICTIONS

Area	Minimum Number of Traps Per Trawl
ME Zones A-G (3-6 miles)*	3
ME Zones A-C (6-12 miles)*	5
ME Zones D-G (6-12 miles)*	10
ME Zones A-E (12+ miles)	15
ME Zones F-G (12+ miles)	15 (Mar 1-Oct 31)
	20 (Nov 1-Feb 28/29)
LMA 1 (3-12 miles)	10
LMA 1 (12+ miles)	20
Outer Cape (3-12 miles)	10
Outer Cape (12+ miles)	20
LMA 2 (3-12 miles)	10
LMA 2 (12 + miles)	15

* *The pocket waters and 6-mile line as defined on pages 7-8.*

Northeast Trap/Pot Management Areas Northern Nearshore Waters (Northeast)



Northeast Trap/Pot Management Areas Southern Nearshore Waters (Northeast)

LOCATION DESCRIPTION

Southern Nearshore Trap/Pot Waters includes all state and Federal waters which fall within EEZ Nearshore Management Area 4, EEZ Nearshore Management Area 5, and EEZ Nearshore Management Area 6 (as defined in the American Lobster Fishery regulations in 50 CFR 697.18), and inside the 100 fathom contour line from 35°30' N. lat. south to 27°51' N. lat. and extending inshore to the shoreline or exemption line, with the exception of the exempted waters (see Supplement A-Exempted Areas).

A small portion of these waters includes portions of LMA 6 (near the mouth of Long Island Sound), and hence, have year-round requirements, as noted here.

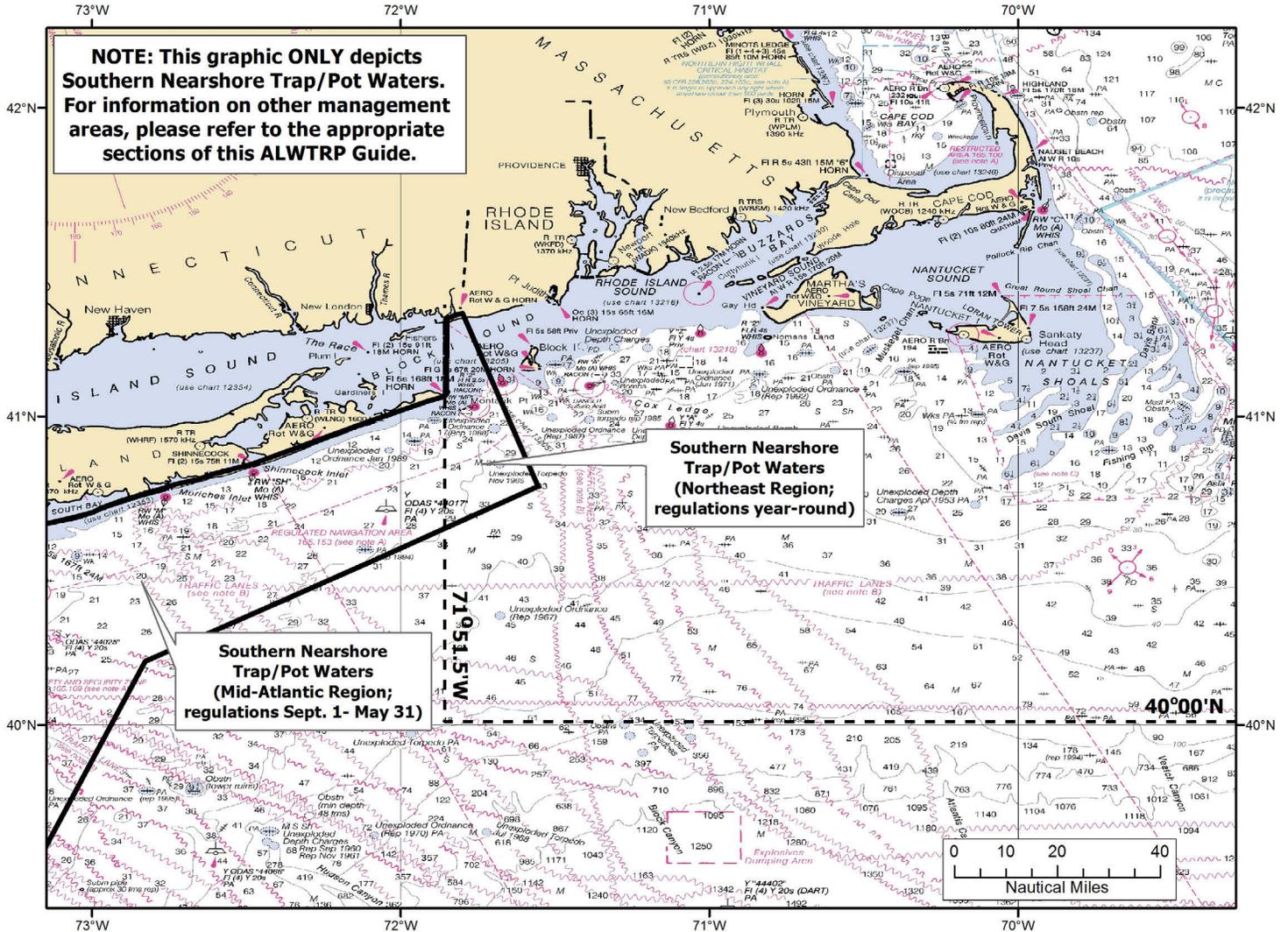
The remaining waters of the Southern Nearshore Trap/Pot Waters management area will have seasonal requirements as noted in the “Mid-Atlantic” and “Southeast Region Trap/Pot Regulations” Trap/Pot Guides (available on www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp).

DATES	RESTRICTIONS/REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY
Year-round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal requirements • Gear marking- ORANGE • Weak links ≤ 600 lbs breaking strength • Sinking groundlines • Minimum number of traps per trawl restrictions (see below) • Please note: The remaining waters of the Southern Nearshore Trap/Pot Waters management area will have seasonal requirements as noted in the “Mid-Atlantic” and “Southeast Region Trap/Pot Management Areas” descriptions to follow.

TRAP RESTRICTIONS

Area	Minimum Number of Traps Per Trawl
LMA 4,5,6	no minimum

Northeast Trap/Pot Management Areas Southern Nearshore Waters (Northeast)



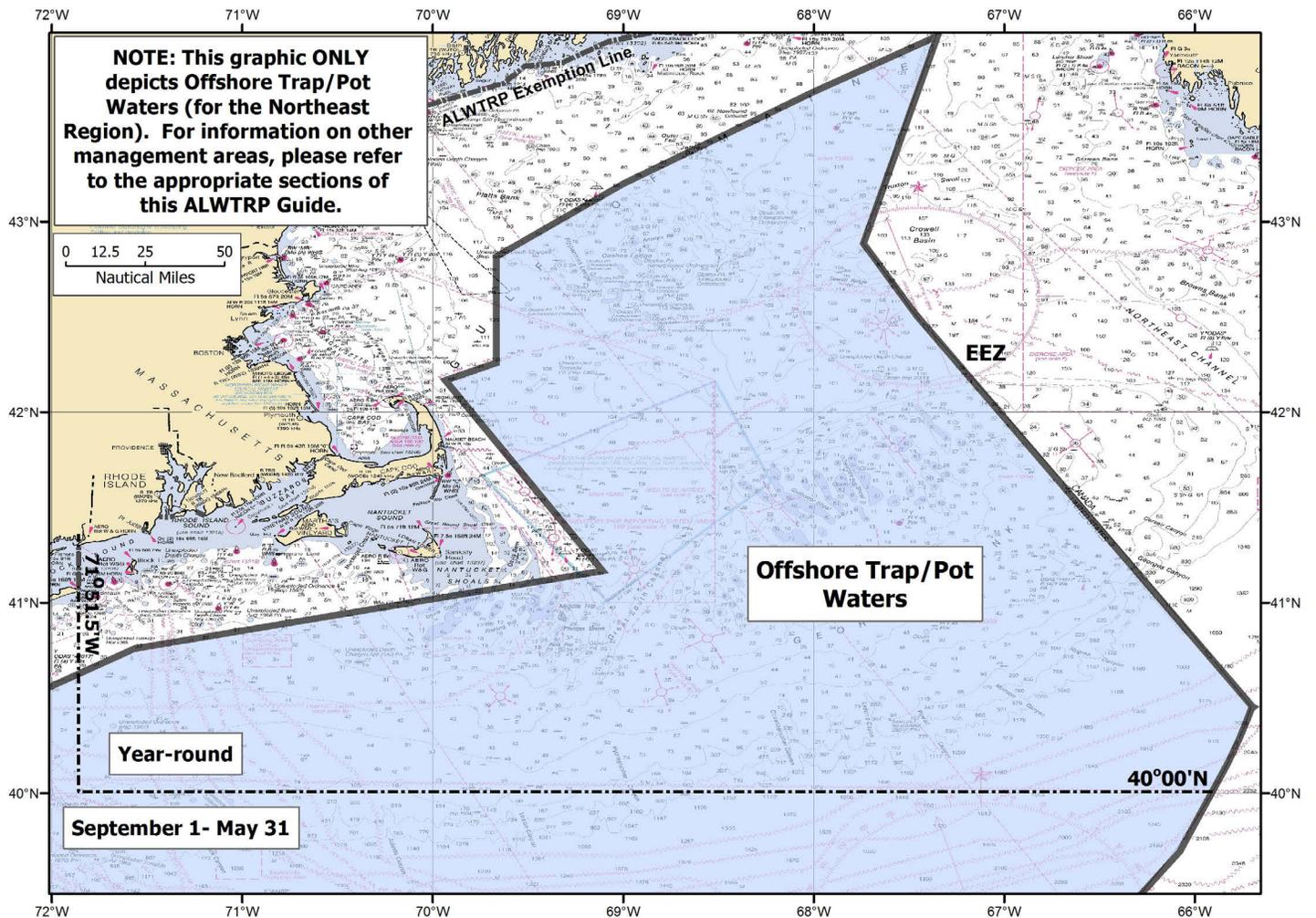
Northeast Trap/Pot Management Areas Offshore Waters (Northeast)

LOCATION DESCRIPTION
Offshore Trap/Pot Waters includes all Federal waters of the EEZ Offshore Management Area 3 (including the areas known as the Area 2/3 Overlap and 3/5 Overlap, as defined in the American Lobster Fishery regulations found at 50 CFR 697.18), with the exception of the Great South Channel Restricted Trap/Pot Area, and extending south along the 100fa contour line from 35°30' N. lat. south to 27°51' N. lat., and east to the eastern edge of the EEZ.

DATES	RESTRICTIONS/REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY
Year-round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal requirements • Gear marking- BLACK • Weak links ≤ 1500 lbs in offshore, 2,000 lbs if red crab trap/pot • Sinking groundline • Minimum number of traps per trawl restrictions (see below)

TRAP RESTRICTIONS	
Area	Minimum Number of Traps Per Trawl
ME Zones A-E (12+ miles)	15
ME Zones F-G (12+ miles)	15 (Mar 1-Oct 31)
	20 (Nov 1-Feb 28/29)
LMA 2/3 Overlap (12+ miles)	20
LMA 3 (12+ miles)- North of 40°	20

Northeast Trap/Pot Management Areas Offshore Waters (Northeast)





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December 2014

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