



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

MAR - 5 2009

Dear Commercial Trap/Pot and Gillnet Fishermen:

This letter is to remind you of two changes to the regulations implementing the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) that were published in the *Federal Register* on September 2, 2008 (73 FR 51228).

Beginning on April 5, 2009, the Dynamic Area Management [DAM] program will be eliminated and replaced with the broad-based sinking groundline requirement for all Atlantic trap/pot fisheries.

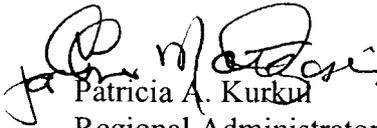
These changes are in conjunction with previously published amendments to the ALWTRP on October 1, 2007 (72 FR 57104) and April 9, 2008 (73 FR 19171). NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) sent permit letters summarizing these modifications and highlighted the effective dates shortly after publication in the *Federal Register*.

This letter also reminds you of several other measures that are currently effective. Among other measures, the following are currently in effect:

1. Expansion of additional trap/pot and gillnet fisheries (Northeast anchored float gillnet, Northeast drift gillnet, Atlantic blue crab, and Atlantic mixed species trap/pot fisheries 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) regulated under the ALWTRP;
2. Broad-based gear modifications and marking (e.g., sinking groundline, expanded weak links on buoy lines and in gillnet panels, gillnet anchoring, surface buoy and buoy line marking) in specific times and areas;
3. Elimination of the Seasonal Area Management [SAM] program;
4. Expansion of exempted waters; and
5. Regulatory changes for the purposes of clarification and consistency (e.g. where sinking line is required for groundlines, attachment of flotation devices is prohibited).

If you have any questions or need additional information on your trap/pot or gillnet requirements (e.g. ALWTRP regulations, outreach documents on the ALWTRP), please contact the ALWTRP coordinator, Diane Borggaard (978-282-8453), or visit the ALWTRP webpage (<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp/>). You may also contact the industry liaison for your area: John Higgins (207-677-2316) in New England or Glenn Salvador (757-414-0128) in the Mid and South Atlantic.

Sincerely,


Patricia A. Kurkul
Regional Administrator

