Proposal for an exemption area around Matinicus and Criehaven islands (Maine lobster Zone C-9)

These proposals are based on the Co-occurrence maps published by NOAA and other agencies:

1) An exemption area to include both islands' traditional fishing area as described in the accompanying documents but perhaps extended out to the three mile line to simplify discussions.

2) We will only fish pairs or triples (individual fisherman's choice) from the 10 fathom curve to the three mile line. This will give us some credit for vertical line reduction, as for inside the 10 fathom curve I doubt that there are many whale sightings in less than 10 fathoms especially since the State already has an inshore exemption area.

3) Since we have one of the Co-occurrence blocks that just comes inside the three mile line in July-September we also would offer no fishing in federal waters from June 15th to Sept. 15th every year.

4) An offer to do monthly reporting of general areas fished and gear configuration (singles, pairs, triples) by 50-75% of all M-C fishermen. We would offer 100% reporting but there will always be some who can't/won't follow up so we feel that 50-75% is a good compromise and certainly an attainable goal.

In return we would ask for:

No additional restrictions on gear, we would keep the breakaway links and other measures already in place but nothing new such as increasing the number of traps fished per buoy.

We are convinced that requiring more than 3 traps per buoy would greatly adversely affect safety and would result in the loss of large amounts of fishing gear (resulting in greater numbers of so called "ghost gear") due to the nature of the fishing bottom that surrounds the two islands, i.e., deep narrow trenches and steep sided shoals that if were fished with long trawls would result in large gear entanglements that no lobster boat has the power to lift and clear, especially in deeper water.

The chart showing the 10 fathom curve around Matinicus and Criehaven does not show any such marking around Matinicus Rock, Wooden Ball Island, Eastern Black Ledge or Tuckanuck because I do not believe anyone currently fishes singles around any of those island/ledges; we would accept a total ban on singles in those areas as part of our proposal.

(1) Describe the location of the affected areas (choose from the co-occurrence layer agreed upon by the ALWTRT). **See Attached charts and Loran C/Lat-Long lists**

a. What fisheries are affected by your proposal? **Lobster/ Crab.**

(2) Describe the baseline of your chosen area(s). Use the baseline resulting from the NMFS Co-occurrence model.

a. How many vessels currently fish in the area? Please provide descriptions of vessel types (size, gear type, etc.) **40 +/- lobster, 30-44 feet**

b. How many vertical lines are currently in the area? How was this count of vertical lines established? **12000 +/-, personal knowledge and WAG**

c. What's the current effort relative to latent effort? **Approx. 70/30**

(3) Describe your proposed management approach

a. How many vertical lines are to be removed?

b. How many vertical lines will remain in the area?

c. Are your measures year-round or seasonal?

d. What is your method for allocating vertical lines?

i. Who is in your allocation pool?

ii. How did you decide who gets vertical lines?

1. Lottery?
2. Other?

iii. What tool did you use for tracking the number of vertical lines in your area?

1. Tags?
2. Permits?
3. Other**?** **See (2) b.**

e. What is your strategy for addressing latent effort? **Most latent effort is fishermen who are retiring or otherwise not increasing effort but are ordering the max number of tags 'just in case'**

f. Are you using a new gear technology to address vertical line reduction? No If yes, please address the following points:

i. What is the product/modification (material, size, etc.)?

ii. Describe how the product/modification works. (What it does, how it does it, how is it applied/attached to the gear, etc.).

1. Attach a photo and illustration.

iii. What fishery(s) is the product designed for?

iv. What is the cost of the product? How does that compare with what is currently used?

v. Is the product operationally safe?

vi. What is the lifespan/durability of the product? How does that compare with what is currently used/other alternatives on the market?

vii. What limitations are there on its utility (depth, current, etc.)?

viii. Please describe the laboratory testing that this product has gone through (hours, conditions, etc.)?
ix. Please describe the field/at-sea testing that this product has gone through (hours, conditions, fisheries, etc.)?
x. Please describe any changes in fishing practices that would be necessary to accommodate the use of this product/modification.

(4) Describe how you will assure your proposal will fulfill the ALWTRT's goal of reducing vertical line risk. **See proposal for reporting requirements**

a. How will you measure the effectiveness of your proposal? Log books
   i. What data will you collect? At what frequency? To be decided in conjunction with NMFS
   ii. Who will collect the data?
   iii. Will there be mandatory logbook reporting? Yes
   iv. Will you use observer coverage? No

b. Describe your monitoring plan.
   i. What tools will you use to monitor**? Log books, checks by MDMR MPO's. Gear marking? TBD**

c. Describe your enforcement plan
   i. Who will enforce your proposal? **Maine DMR MPO's through JEA**
   ii. What are the penalties for non-compliance? To be decided

(5) How does the proposal/gear modification reduce the risk the gear poses to whales? **Based on the Co-occurrence charts we have a very low risk of entanglements already but we are offering no fishing outside the three mile line from June 15-Sept 15 which is the only time that there is any Co-occurrence in area designated by the attached sets of co-ordinates and charts.**

a. Does it make the gear less available to whales *(e.g.* reduce volume in the water column)?
b. Does it reduce the likelihood that an entanglement will result in serious injury or mortality, and if so, how *(e.g.* break, disintegrate)?
c. Will this proposal/gear modification reduce risk for different species of large whales across different age groups? If not, which species and age groups would it benefit?