



Letters of Authorization Information Sheet

May 1, 2012



This is a description of the Letters of Authorization (LOA) that are currently available from the Northeast Region Permit Office. For further information about these LOAs, please contact the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Sustainable Fisheries Division at (978) 281-9315. To request one of these LOAs, contact the Permit Office at (978) 282-8438.

The following is only a summary of the regulations and requirements for each LOA program under the respective Fishery Management Plan (FMP). These requirements and the list of current LOAs are subject to change. Please contact the Sustainable Fisheries Division at (978) 281-9315 if you have any questions about any regulatory requirements or changes to an LOA program.

To participate in the exempted fishery program, vessels are required to carry the LOA on board for the entire participation period specified on the LOA.

ATLANTIC HERRING FMP

Herring Carrier

This LOA authorizes a vessel issued a valid Federal herring permit to receive, transport, and transfer Atlantic herring (herring) caught by another herring vessel. There is no possession limit for vessels operating under this authorization.

When operating under this LOA, the vessel:

- May only possess, transfer, or land herring transferred from vessels with a transfer at sea LOA. The catcher vessel may not transfer more than their possession limit allows
- May only possess or land Northeast (NE) multispecies transferred by vessels issued either an All Areas Limited Access Herring Permit (Category A) and/or an Areas 2 and 3 Limited Access Herring Permit (Category B) regardless of gear or area fished, or a vessel issued a Limited Access Incidental Catch Herring Permit and/or an Open Access Herring Permit that fished with midwater trawl gear in Herring Management Areas 1A, 1B, or 3 consistent with the vessels possession limits. Those possession limits are unlimited for haddock and 100 lb, combined, of other regulated Northeast multispecies (Atlantic cod, witch flounder, American plaice, yellowtail flounder, pollock, winter flounder, windowpane flounder, redfish, white hake, Atlantic halibut, and Atlantic wolffish);
- May not conduct fishing activities or possess any fishing gear on board the vessel; and
- Must act as a herring carrier vessel for the duration of the participation period specified in the LOA (currently 7 days minimum).
- The owner/operator of the vessel should report 'zero catch' and the VTR serial number of the vessel that caught the herring on its Fishing Vessel Trip Report (VTR).

Gulf of Maine (GOM)/Georges Bank (GB) Midwater Trawl

This LOA authorizes a vessel to fish with midwater trawl gear in the GOM/GB Regulated Mesh Area (RMA), including Closed Area I, Closed Area II, the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area, and other areas closed for NE multispecies conservation under 50 CFR 648.81, with nets of less than the minimum mesh size specified in the NE multispecies regulations at 50 CFR 648.80(a)(3)(ii).

Midwater trawl gear is defined as trawl gear designed to fish for pelagic species, no portion of which is designed to be or is operated in contact with the bottom at any time. The gear may not include discs, bobbins, or rollers on its footrope, or chafing gear as part of the net. No other gear capable of catching multispecies may be on board the vessel.

When fishing north of 42°20' N. Latitude, the vessel may not fish for, possess, or land any other species of fish except for, blueback herring, or Atlantic mackerel. When fishing south of 42°20' N. Latitude, the vessel may not fish for, possess, or land any other species of fish except for, blueback herring, Atlantic mackerel, or squid. Appropriate Federal permits are required to retain Atlantic mackerel or squid.

GOM/GB Purse Seine

This LOA authorizes a vessel to fish with purse seine gear in the GOM/GB RMA with nets of less than the minimum size specified at 50 CFR 648.80(a)(3)(ii).

A purse seine is defined as an encircling net with floats on the top edge, weights and a purse line on the

bottom edge, and associated gear, or any net designed to be, or capable of being used in such fashion.

No other gear capable of catching multispecies may be on board the vessel. The vessel may not fish for, possess, or land any other species of fish except for Atlantic mackerel, blueback herring, or menhaden. Appropriate Federal permits are required to retain Atlantic mackerel.

The Mid-water trawl and Purse Seine LOAs have the following additional requirements:

If the vessel has a Category A or B permit, fishing on a declared herring trip with midwater trawl gear, or a Category C and/or D permit fishing with midwater trawl gear in Management Areas 1A, 1B, and/or 3, it must provide notice to NMFS of the vessel name, contact information, and the date, time, and port of departure, at least 72 hr prior to beginning any trip into these areas, for the purposes of coordinating observer deployment, and must notify NMFS Office of Law Enforcement through their vessel monitoring system (VMS) of the time and place of offloading at least 6-hours prior to crossing the VMS demarcation line on its return trip to port, or, if it has not fished seaward of the VMS demarcation line, at least 6-hours prior to landing.

The minimum enrollment period for these LOAs is 7 calendar days from the first day of the enrollment period.

Vessels issued an All Areas Limited Access Herring Permit or an Areas 2 and 3 Limited Access Herring Permit fishing on a declared herring trip, regardless of gear or area fished, or a vessel issued a Limited Access Incidental Catch Herring Permit and/or an Open Access Herring Permit and fishing with midwater trawl gear, may possess and land haddock or other regulated NE multispecies (Atlantic cod, witch flounder, American plaice, yellowtail flounder, pollock, winter flounder, windowpane flounder, redfish, white hake, Atlantic halibut, and Atlantic wolffish) consistent with the bycatch caps and catch allowances (which are specified in §648.86(a)(3)). Haddock or other regulated NE multispecies may not be sold, purchased, received, traded, bartered, or transferred for human consumption.

Herring Transfer and Receive at Sea

This LOA authorizes a vessel issued a valid Federal herring permit to transfer or receive herring at sea to/from another herring vessel, a herring at-sea processor, and/or herring carrier vessel. No vessel may transfer to, or receive from, any vessel, herring in excess of the possession limits specified in § 648.204.

In addition, the operator of a vessel that is not issued a herring permit may purchase and/or receive herring at sea for personal use as bait, provided the vessel transferring the herring has this

LOA and the vessel receiving the transfer does not have gear capable of catching fish on board.

When transferring Atlantic herring at sea, the owner/operator of the above named vessel must report on its Fishing Vessel Trip Report (VTR) and via the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) or Interactive Voice Response System (IVR) consistent with the guidance provided on pages 11-14 in the attached September 28, 2011, Atlantic Herring Permit Holder Letter.

MONKFISH FMP

Monkfish Southern Fishery Management Area (SFMA) Landing Limit Exemption

A current limited access monkfish permit holder may fish exclusively under the less restrictive landing regulations for the Northern Fishery Management Area (NFMA) through this exemption. A vessel without an operational VMS unit fishing exclusively in the NFMA for monkfish must request this LOA in order to be exempt from the more restrictive management measures of the SFMA. This LOA can be issued anytime during the fishing year (from May 1 through April 30). The minimum enrollment period for this LOA is 7 calendar days from the first day of the enrollment period. A vessel that has declared into the NFMA may transit the SFMA, providing that it complies with the transiting and gear storage provision described § 648.94(e), and provided that it does not fish for or catch monkfish, or any other fish, in the SFMA.

NORTHEAST MULTISPECIES FMP

GOM Cod Landing Limit Exemption

A NE multispecies day at sea (DAS) permit holder, authorized to use the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system to declare NE multispecies DAS, and fishing exclusively south of the GOM RMA, may receive an LOA that exempts the vessel from the more restrictive GOM cod landing limit. If the vessel declares through VMS, the GOM Cod Trip Limit Exemption form should be sent, via VMS, prior to leaving the dock for each trip, instead of using this LOA. A vessel declared into the U.S./Canada Management Area is exempt from the requirement to declare exemption from the GOM cod landing limit. The vessel must meet the following requirements under this LOA:

- The vessel must have a NE multispecies DAS permit and be authorized to use the IVR system

for declaring into the NE multispecies DAS program.

- The LOA has a minimum 7-day participation period.
- The vessel may not fish in the GOM RMA under a NE multispecies DAS for the during the participation period. The vessel may transit the GOM RMA while under a NE multispecies DAS, provided all fishing gear is stowed and not available for immediate use.

Cultivator Shoals Whiting Fishery (June 1-October 31)

A vessel must be issued a NE multispecies limited access (Category A-F) or open access (Category K) permit to participate in this exempted fishery. A participating vessel is limited to 30,000 lb of silver hake (whiting) and offshore hake combined per trip. Incidental catch allowed may consist of herring, longhorn sculpin, squid, butterfish, Atlantic mackerel, spiny dogfish, red hake, monkfish and monkfish parts (up to 10 percent, by weight, of all other species on board or up to 50 lb tail-weight/146 lb whole-weight of monkfish per trip, whichever is less), and American lobster (up to 10 percent by weight, of all other species on board or 200 lobsters, whichever is less, unless otherwise restricted by landing limits specified in § 697.17).

There is a minimum mesh size requirement of 3-inch square or diamond mesh to participate in this exemption fishery. A vessel participating in both this exemption and the raised footrope trawl whiting fishery is subject to the more restrictive measures of the two programs (e.g., the use of a minimum 3-inch square or diamond mesh and the use of the raised footrope trawl). More information, including the coordinates of this Area, is available in the NE Multispecies Small Mesh Fishery Exemptions Information Sheet available online at: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov>.

Raised Footrope Trawl Whiting Fishery (September 1–December 31)

A holder of a Federal NE multispecies permit may elect to receive, from the Regional Administrator, an exemption from NE multispecies minimum mesh size restrictions when fishing for whiting or offshore hake in the Raised Footrope Trawl Whiting Fishery Exemption Area (Figure 1). Regulations for the Raised Footrope Trawl Exempted Whiting Fishery may be found at § 648.80(a)(15). A vessel participating in this exemption program must comply with the following requirements:

- A minimum enrollment period of 7 days;
- A minimum mesh size of 2.5-inch square or diamond mesh; and
- Use of a raised footrope trawl.

An enrolled vessel may not fish for, possess, or land any species other than whiting and offshore hake, except for the

following allowable incidental species: Red hake, butterfish, spiny dogfish, Atlantic herring, Atlantic mackerel, scup, and squid. The vessel must adhere to the applicable small-mesh multispecies possession limits while fishing in the exemption area.

Codend Mesh Size	Possession Limit (whiting and offshore hake combined)
Less than 2.5 in	3,500 lb
Greater than 2.5 in but less than 3.0 in	7,500 lb
Equal to or greater than 3.0 in	30,000 lb

The exemption program **does not** apply to the Cashes Ledge Closure Areas or the Western GOM Closed Area. A vessel participating in the Raised Footrope Trawl Whiting Fishery may participate in other small-mesh exemption areas, provided the vessel adheres to the more restrictive gear, possession limit, and other requirements for the entire participation period specified on the vessel's LOA.

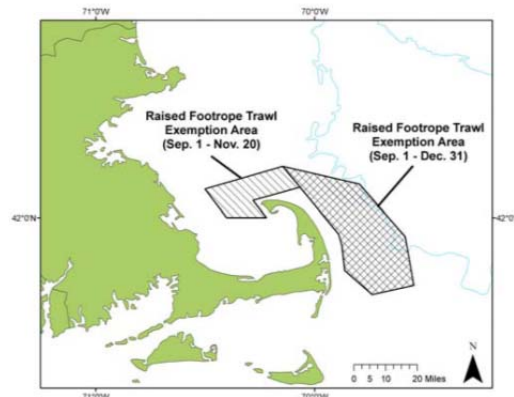


Figure 1. Raised Footrope Trawl Whiting Fishery Exemption Area

Nantucket Lightship Closed Area Charter/Party

In order to be exempted from the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area (CA), a charter/party vessel must have an LOA issued by the NE Regional Administrator. Fish managed by either the New England Fishery Management Council or the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council that are harvested or possessed by the vessel may not be sold, bartered or traded or intended for sale, barter or trade, regardless of where caught. Species such as tuna and striped bass may be landed for sale provided the vessel has the proper permits; and the vessel may have no gear other than rod and reel or handline gear on board. A participating vessel issued this authorization is subject to its requirements and

conditions for a minimum of 7 days from the letter's start date.

NANTUCKET LIGHTSHIP CA CHARTER/PARTY LOA DECISION TREE

1. Do you have a current limited access NE multispecies permit or open access NE multispecies charter/party permit?	
Answer: <u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Continue to #2	LOA does not apply

2. Will you possess aboard, or use, fishing gear other than rod and reel or handline gear?	
Answer: <u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
LOA does not apply	Continue to #3

3. Do you plan to sell, barter or trade any fish managed by either the New England Fishery Management Council or the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council?	
Answer: <u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
LOA does not apply	Continue to #4

4. Are you aware that the vessel cannot commercially fish outside the Nantucket Lightship CA for the entire participation period for Regulated NE multispecies? Do you agree to these terms?	
Answer: <u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Nantucket Lightship Closed Area Charter/Party LOA needed	LOA does not apply

1. Do you have a current limited access NE multispecies permit or open access NE multispecies charter/party permit?	
Answer: <u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Continue to #2	LOA does not apply

2. Will you possess aboard, or use, fishing gear other than rod and reel or handline gear?	
Answer: <u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
LOA does not apply	Continue to #3

3. Do you plan to sell, barter or trade any fish managed by either the New England Fishery Management Council or the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council?	
Answer: <u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
LOA does not apply	Continue to #4

4. For any NE multispecies vessel, do you intend to use a NE multispecies days-at-sea, fish on a sector trip, or fish under the provisions of a Handgear A, Handgear B or Small Vessel (Category C) permit during the period of participation specified as part of the specific LOA?	
Answer: <u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
LOA does not apply	Western GOM and Cashes Ledge CA LOA needed
5. Are you aware that the vessel cannot commercially fish outside the exemption area for the entire participation period for Regulated NE multispecies? Do you agree to these terms?	
Answer: <u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Western GOM and Cashes Ledge CA charter/party LOA needed	LOA does not apply

Western GOM and Cashes Ledge CA Charter/Party

In order to be exempted from the Western GOM and Cashes Ledge CA, a charter/party vessel must have an LOA issued by the NE Regional Administrator. Fish managed by either the New England Fishery Management Council or the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council that are harvested or possessed by the vessel may not be sold, bartered or traded or intended for sale, barter or trade, regardless of where caught. Species such as tuna and striped bass may be landed for sale provided the vessel has the proper permits; and the vessel may have no gear other than rod and reel or handline gear on board. The vessel may not use a NE multispecies DAS, fish on a sector trip, or fish under the provisions of a Handgear A, Handgear B, or Small Vessel (Category C) permit during the entire period for which the LOA is valid. A participating vessel issued this authorization is subject to its requirements and conditions from the letter's start date through the end of the fishing year (i.e. there is no withdrawal certificate associated with this LOA).

WESTERN GOM AND CASHES LEDGE CA CHARTER/PARTY LOA DECISION TREE

GOM Rolling CA Charter/Party

In order to be exempted from the GOM Rolling CA for charter/party fishing, a charter/party vessel must have an LOA issued by the Regional Administrator. Fish managed by either the New England Fishery Management Council or the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council that are harvested or possessed by the vessel may not be sold, bartered or traded or intended for sale, barter or trade, regardless of where caught. Species such as tuna and striped bass may be landed for sale provided the vessel has the proper permits; and the vessel may have no gear other than rod and reel or handline gear on board. The vessel may not use a NE multispecies DAS, fish on a sector trip, or fish under the provisions of a Handgear A, Handgear B, or Small Vessel (Category C) permit during the entire period for which the LOA is valid. A participating vessel issued this authorization is subject to its requirements and conditions from the letter's start date for a minimum of 90 days.

GOM ROLLING CA CHARTER/PARTY EXEMPTION

1. Do you have a current limited access NE multispecies permit or open access NE multispecies charter/party permit?

Answer: YES NO

Continue to #2 LOA does not apply

2. Will you possess aboard, or use, fishing gear other than rod and reel or handline gear?

Answer: YES NO

LOA does not apply Continue to #3

3. Do you plan to sell, barter or trade any fish managed by either the New England Fishery Management Council or the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council?

Answer: YES NO

LOA does not apply Continue to #4

4. For any NE multispecies vessel, do you intend to use a NE multispecies days-at-sea, fish on a sector trip, or fish under the provisions of a Handgear A, Handgear B or Small Vessel (Category C) permit during the period of participation specified as part of the specific LOA?

Answer: YES NO

LOA does not apply GOM Rolling CA LOA needed

5. Are you aware that the vessel cannot commercially fish outside the exemption area for the entire participation period for Regulated NE multispecies? Do you agree to these terms?

Answer: YES NO

GOM Rolling CA LOA needed LOA does not apply

Transit Exemptions for GOM/GB RMAs

A vessel subject to the minimum mesh size restrictions may transit through the GOM and GB RMAs with nets on board with a mesh size smaller than the minimum mesh size specified and with small mesh exempted species on board.

This exemption program requires the following:

- All nets with a mesh size smaller than the minimum mesh size are stowed.
- A vessel may not fish for, possess on board, or land any fish, except when fishing in specified areas.

TRANSIT EXEMPTION FOR GOM/GB RMAs DECISION TREE

1. Do you have any of the following onboard; trawl gear with less than 6 inch diamond mesh or 6.5 inch square mesh or a gillnet with less than 6.5 inch mesh?

Answer: YES NO

Continue to #2 LOA does not apply

2. Will you be in possession of any small mesh exempt species?

Answer: YES NO

Continue to #3 LOA does not apply

3. Will you be fishing exclusively in state waters?

Answer: YES NO

LOA does not apply Continue to #4

4. Do you have either the Cultivator Shoals Whiting Fishery LOA, the Nantucket Shoals Dogfish Fishery LOA, or the Raised Footrope Trawl Whiting Fishery LOA?

Answer: YES NO

This exemption is permitted with these LOAs. Continue to #5

5. Will you be fishing outside of the GOM RMA and the GB RMA?

Answer: YES NO

Transit Exemption LOA needed LOA does not apply

SNE Little Tunny Gillnet Exempted Fishery

A vessel holding this LOA may fish with gillnet gear in the SNE Little Tunny Gillnet Exemption Area (Figure 3) when not operating under a NE multispecies DAS with mesh size smaller than the minimum required in the SNE RMA. All gillnets must have a minimum mesh size of 5.5-inch (14.0-cm) diamond mesh throughout the net. All nets with a mesh size smaller than 5.5 inches diamond mesh must be stowed and unavailable for immediate use. Fishing is confined to **September 1 through October 31**. The NE Regional Administrator shall conduct periodic sea sampling to evaluate the likelihood of gear interactions with protected resources. The vessel may fish only for, possess on board, or land little tunny, as well as bonito, as an allowable incidental species. Vessels fishing under this LOA may also retain:

- Butterfish, spiny dogfish (trawl), Atlantic herring, Atlantic mackerel, ocean pout, scup, shrimp, squid, summer flounder, weakfish, conger eels, searobins, black sea bass, tautog (blackfish), blowfish, cunner, John Dory, mullet, bluefish, tilefish, longhorn sculpin, fourspot flounder, alewife, hickory shad, American shad, blueback herring, sea ravens, Atlantic croaker, spot, swordfish.

- Monkfish and monkfish parts up to 10 percent by weight of all other species on board, or 50 lb tail-weight (146 lb whole weight), whichever is less.
- American lobster up to 10 percent by weight of all other species on board, up to 100 lobsters for trips of 24 hours or less, or 200 lobsters for trips longer than 24 hours, whichever is less.
- Skate and skate parts up to 10 percent, by weight, of all other species on board

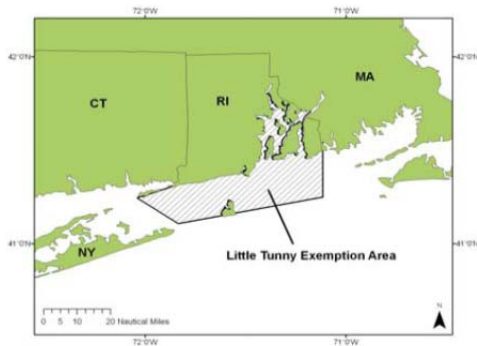


Figure 2. Southern New England Little Tunny Exemption Area

Authorization to Transfer Whiting and Red Hake at Sea

A vessel issued a Federal NE multispecies permit may transfer from one vessel to another, for use as bait, up to 500 lb of whiting and unlimited amounts of red hake, per trip, provided:

- The transferring vessel possesses a Federal NE multispecies permit;
- The receiving vessel possesses a written receipt for any small-mesh multispecies purchased at sea.

The combined whiting and offshore hake possession limit is automatically reduced by 500 lb for every trip made by the vessel during the participation period, regardless of whether a transfer of small-mesh multispecies at sea occurred or whether the actual amount that was transferred was less than 500 lb.

A separate authorization must be obtained to transfer Atlantic herring, *Illex* squid, longfin squid, or butterfish.

Multispecies Permit Exemption for Vessels Fishing in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) Regulatory Area

A vessel issued a valid High Seas Fishing Compliance permit under 50 CFR part 300 is exempt from:

- NE multispecies and monkfish permit, mesh size, effort-control, and possession limit restrictions while

transiting the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) with NE multispecies or monkfish on board the vessel;

- Landing NE multispecies or monkfish in U.S. ports that were caught while fishing in the NAFO Regulatory Area.

The vessel must fish exclusively in the NAFO Regulatory Area and must also have all gear properly stowed while transiting the EEZ. The vessel must comply with the High Seas Fishing Compliance permit, all NAFO conservation and enforcement measures, and must notify the agency through its vessel monitoring system (VMS) that it will be embarking on a NAFO trip.

SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP, AND BLACK SEA BASS FMP

Summer Flounder Small-Mesh Exemption Area (November 1-April 30)

A holder of a Federal summer flounder moratorium permit may elect to receive, from the NE Regional Administrator, an exemption from summer flounder minimum mesh size restrictions when fishing in the Summer Flounder Small-Mesh Exemption Area from November 1 through April 30 (Figure 4). A vessel must be enrolled in the exemption program for a minimum period of 7 days.

This exemption program **does not** exempt a vessel from minimum fish size requirements. A vessel participating in the exemption program may not fish west of the line that follows 72°30.0' W longitude, and if transiting the area west or south of the line, must stow fishing gear in a manner so that it is not available for immediate use. The Summer Flounder Small-Mesh Exemption Area does not exempt the vessel from any possession limits imposed by any state. If a participating vessel also possesses a NE multispecies permit, there are additional small-mesh restrictions in this small mesh exempted area.

A vessel fishing in the Summer Flounder Small-Mesh Exemption Area may not possess or land more than 200 lb of summer flounder when fishing with mesh smaller than the minimum mesh size requirement of 5.5-in diamond or 6.0-in square from November 1-April 30.

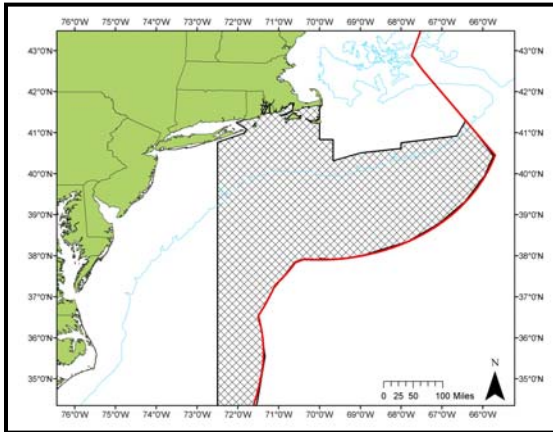


Figure 3. Summer Flounder Small-Mesh Exemption Area (area east of the line that follows 72°30.0' W longitude until it intersects the outer boundary of the EEZ).

SKATE FMP

A holder of a Federal skate permit may request and receive, from the NE Regional Administrator, an exemption from the skate wing possession limit restrictions to land whole skates for use as bait. A vessel participating in the skate bait exemption program must comply with the following requirements:

- The vessel must be enrolled for a minimum period of 7 days;
- The vessel may **only** possess and land whole skates **less than 23 inches** total length, up to 20,000 lb per trip;
- The vessel may only fish for, possess, and land (or transfer at sea) whole skates for use as bait; and
- Vessels that possess or land skate wings during the LOA participation period must comply with the applicable possession limit restrictions for all skates or skate parts on board. For skate wing fishery possession limit restrictions, see the Northeast Skate Fishery Information Sheet at: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/regs/infodocs/NESkatInfoSheet.pdf>.

The Skate Bait LOA **does not** exempt the participating vessel from any DAS requirements of the NE multispecies, monkfish, or scallop fisheries. Therefore, unless a skate bait vessel is fishing in a skate exemption area or is fishing with exempted gear (as defined in the NE multispecies regulations), it must still fish on a NE multispecies, monkfish, or scallop DAS.

SPINY DOGFISH FMP

Nantucket Shoals Dogfish Fishery Exemption June 1 – October 15

This LOA is required to fish for spiny dogfish in the Nantucket Shoals Dogfish Exemption Area (Figure 5). A vessel issued this LOA may use gillnet or trawl mesh smaller than required by the GOM /GB RMA (6.5 in. square or diamond trawl codend mesh; 6.5 in. throughout the entire gillnet) to catch spiny dogfish. Trawl gear is not permitted in the portion of the exemption area that overlaps with the Nantucket Lightship Habitat Closure Area (shown in chart below). When transiting the GOM or GB RMAs any nets with a mesh size smaller than the RMA minimum mesh size must be stowed and unavailable for immediate use.

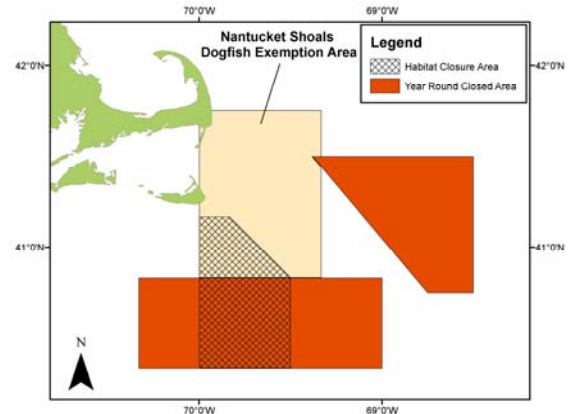


Figure 4. Nantucket Shoals Dogfish Exemption Area

A vessel issued this LOA may not fish for, possess on board, or land species other than spiny dogfish, except the following: Longhorn sculpin; silver hake—up to 200 lb; monkfish and monkfish parts—up to 10 percent, by weight, of all other species on board or up to 50 lb tail weight/166 lb whole-weight of monkfish per trip, whichever is less; American lobster—up to 10 percent, by weight, of all other species on board or 200 lobsters, whichever is less; skate or skate parts—up to 10 percent, by weight, of all other species on board provided the vessel is issued the appropriate Federal permits.

SQUID, MACKEREL, BUTTERFISH FMP

Authorization to Transfer Longfin Squid, *Illex* Squid, or Butterfish at Sea

A vessel with a valid longfin squid, *Illex* squid, and/or butterfish permit must apply for an LOA to transfer and receive longfin squid, *Illex* squid, and/or butterfish at sea.

If the vessel has been issued this LOA and has a valid longfin/butterfish or *Illex* moratorium permit, it may both transfer and receive these species at sea.

If the vessel has been issued a valid incidental squid and butterfish permit, it may transfer these species at sea, consistent with the applicable possession limits, but may not receive them. Current possession limits are: 2,500 lb of longfin per trip, 10,000 lb of *Illex* per trip, and 600 lb of butterfish per trip, unless the directed butterfish fishery closes prior to October 1; then the butterfish possession limit is 250 lb per trip.

GOM/GB Midwater Trawl

In order to use midwater trawl gear to fish for Atlantic mackerel or squid in the GOM/GB RMAs, including Closed Area I, Closed Area II, the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area, and other areas closed for NE multispecies conservation under 50 CFR 648.81, with nets of less than the minimum mesh size specified in the NE multispecies regulations at 50 CFR 648.80(a)(3)(ii), a vessel must be issued this LOA in addition to the appropriate Federal fishing permits.

Midwater trawl gear is defined as trawl gear designed to fish for pelagic species, no portion of which is designed to be or is operated in contact with the bottom at any time. The gear may not include discs, bobbins, or rollers on its footrope, or chafing gear as part of the net. No other gear capable of catching multispecies may be on board the vessel.

When fishing north of 42°20' N. Latitude, the vessel may not fish for, possess, or land any other species of fish except for Atlantic herring, blueback herring, or Atlantic mackerel. When fishing south of 42°20' N. Latitude, the vessel may not fish for, possess, or land any other species of fish except for Atlantic herring, blueback herring, Atlantic mackerel, or squid.

GOM/GB Purse Seine

In order to fish for Atlantic mackerel with purse seine gear in the GOM/GB RMA with nets of less than the minimum size specified at 50 CFR 648.80(a)(3)(ii), a vessel must be issued this LOA in addition to the appropriate Federal fishing permits.

A purse seine is defined as an encircling net with floats on the top edge, weights and a purse line on the bottom edge, and associated gear, or any net designed to be, or capable of being used in such fashion.

The vessel may not fish for, possess, or land any other species of fish except for Atlantic mackerel, Atlantic herring, blueback herring, or menhaden. Appropriate Federal permits are required for these species, with the exception of blueback herring and menhaden.

The Mid-water trawl and Purse Seine LOAs have the following additional requirements:

There is a minimum enrollment period of 7 calendar days for each LOA. The vessel will not be officially withdrawn from the exemption program until it requests and receives a Withdrawal Notice issued by NMFS.

A vessel fishing under these authorizations is not allowed to fish for, possess, or land NE multispecies, unless it has been issued an All Areas Limited Access Herring Permit (Category A) and/or an Areas 2 and 3 Limited Access Herring Permit (Category B) regardless of gear or area fished, or a vessel issued a Limited Access Incidental Catch Herring Permit and/or an Open Access Herring Permit that fished with midwater trawl gear in Herring Management Areas 1A, 1B, or 3 consistent with the vessels possession limits. Those possession limits are unlimited for haddock and 100 lb, combined, of other regulated Northeast multispecies (Atlantic cod, witch flounder, American plaice, yellowtail flounder, pollock, winter flounder, windowpane flounder, redfish, white hake, Atlantic halibut, and Atlantic wolffish).