



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2296

SEP 24 2001

Dear Federal American Lobster Permit Holder:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) recently published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on Federal lobster management in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The EIS will evaluate the implementation of American lobster management measures recommended by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission), as well as alternative measures.

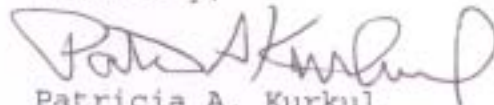
On February 1, 2001, the Commission approved Addendum II to Amendment 3 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster and subsequently recommended that NMFS implement compatible regulations in Federal waters. Addendum II revises the Amendment 3 egg production schedule in each of seven lobster conservation management areas (LCMAs) to end overfishing of American lobster stocks by the end of 2008. The management measures defined in Addendum II to meet the egg production targets include a series of minimum gauge size increases (increases in the minimum allowable harvest size of American lobster) in five of the seven LCMAs, lobster trap gear modifications, a 4-year lobster trap reduction schedule for LCMA 3, and a requirement that vessels fishing in LCMA 3 maintain a logbook to record lobster harvest. Gauge increases have not been recommended for either LCMA 1 (Gulf of Maine) or LCMA 6 (Long Island Sound).

NMFS is seeking public comment on management alternatives for analysis in the EIS. Written comments will be accepted until 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on **October 24, 2001**, and should be sent to: Harold C. Mears, Director, State, Federal, and Constituent Programs Office, Northeast Region, NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. You may also submit comments via fax to (978) 281-9117. Comments cannot be accepted via e-mail or Internet.



To receive a complete copy of the NOI, please contact NMFS at (978) 281-9278, or access the document via the Northeast Regional Office web site at: "<http://www.nero.nmfs.gov/ro/doc/nr.htm>".

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia A. Kurkul". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "K".

Patricia A. Kurkul
Regional Administrator