



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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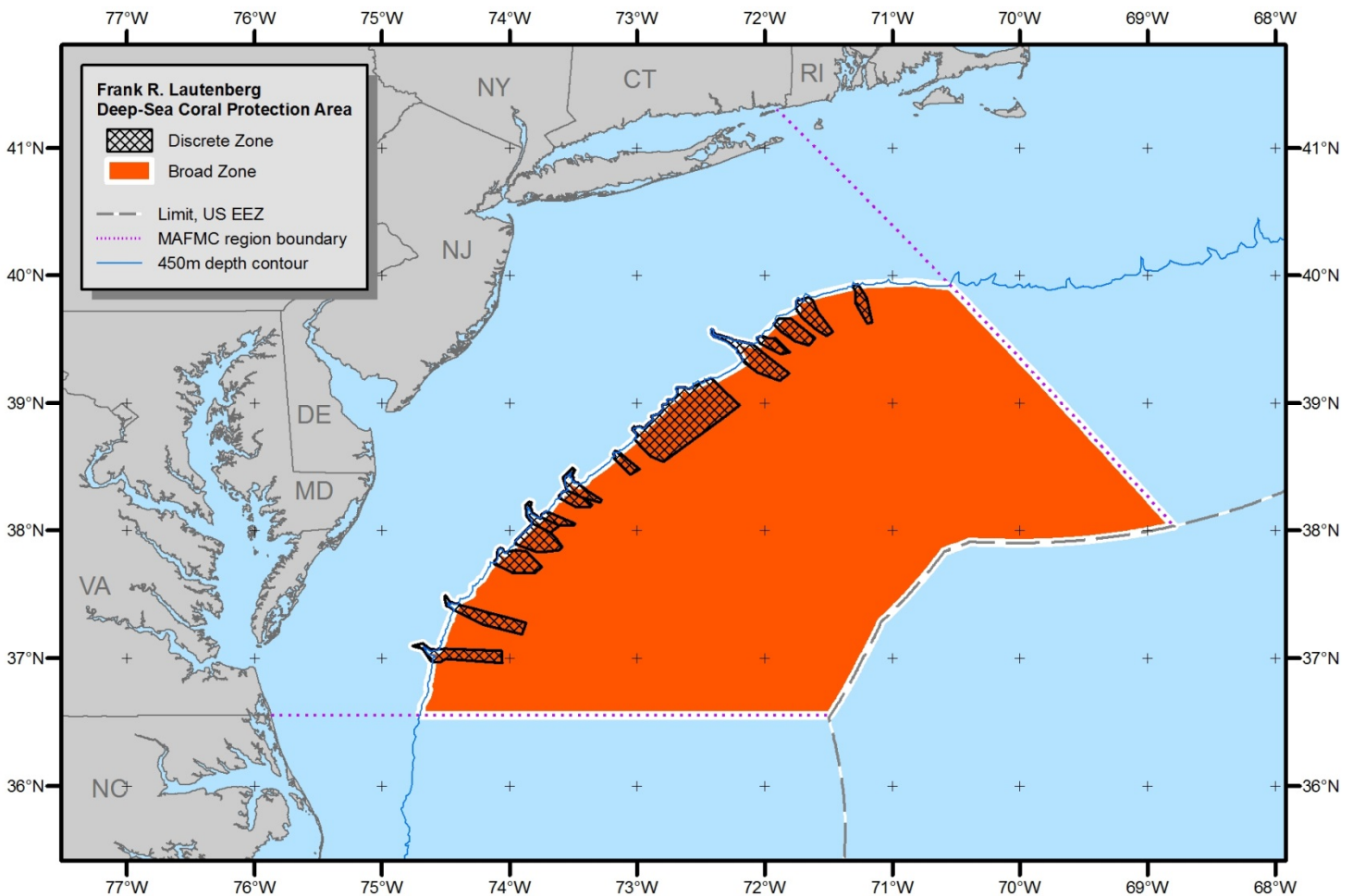
<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov>
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New Deep-Sea Coral Protection Area

Designation of the Frank R. Lautenberg Deep-Sea Coral Protection Area

Effective Date: January 13, 2017

Beginning January 13, 2017, the use of the following bottom-tending commercial fishing gear is **PROHIBITED** within the Frank R. Lautenberg Deep-Sea Coral Protection Area (see below): Otter trawls; beam trawls; hydraulic dredges; non-hydraulic dredges; seines; longlines; pots and traps; and sink gill nets. The prohibition does not apply to the American lobster fishery or the deep-sea red crab pot fishery. Please see *Frequently Asked Questions* on the back of this letter for additional requirements, restrictions, and information on this action.



For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region.

<i>Frequently Asked Questions</i>	
Does the amendment do anything else?	Yes, it requires that vessels issued an <i>Illex</i> squid moratorium permit have a vessel monitoring system (VMS) installed, and operators of these vessels have to declare <i>Illex</i> squid trips on which 10,000 lb or more of <i>Illex</i> squid would be harvested. Also, it adds framework provisions to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP for future modifications to the deep-sea coral protection measures.
How can I declare an <i>Illex</i> trip?	We are developing specifications for our next VMS software change. Until we implement that change you do not need to declare an <i>Illex</i> trip. We will notify you once you are required to declare an <i>Illex</i> trip.
Why is this area closing?	NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service approved Amendment 16 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). This amendment establishes management measures to protect deep-sea corals from the effects of commercial fishing gear in the Mid-Atlantic.
What does this amendment do?	It designates a deep-sea coral zone, consisting of a broad zone, starting at a depth contour of approximately 450 m, and encompasses 15 discrete zones. It prohibits the use of bottom-tending commercial fishing gear in the designated deep-sea coral zone. Prohibited gear includes bottom tending otter trawls, beam trawls, hydraulic dredges, non-hydraulic dredges, seines, longlines, pots and traps, and sink or gill nets.
Who does this apply to?	These measures apply to all federally permitted vessels intending to fish in the deep-sea coral zone.
Is anyone exempt from these restrictions?	This prohibition does not apply to the American lobster fishery. This action also includes an exemption for the deep-sea red crab pot fishery.
Why is this specific to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP?	Bottom trawls have been consistently identified as the gear type with the greatest potential to negatively affect deep-sea corals. Among the Council's management plans, the FMP that directly governs major offshore trawl fisheries operating in these areas is the Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP. However, through this FMP, the action implements equal restrictions on all bottom-tending gear, with the exception of red crab and lobster pot and trap gear.
Can I transit the area?	Yes, you can transit through the deep-sea coral protection area provided you bring bottom-tending fishing gear onboard the vessel and reel bottom-tending trawl gear onto the net reel.
Where can I find the coordinates for these areas?	The coordinates for these areas are available on our Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish webpage, under the commercial and areas tabs: https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/msb If your onboard navigation system is capable of reading ESRI shapefile boundaries you can download the shape files from the Greater Atlantic Fisheries Regional Office GIS Data Download site here under the Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish tab: https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/educational_resources/gis/data
Where can I get more information?	If you fish in this area and/or would like more information please contact the Sustainable Fisheries Division at 978-281-9315 or visit our website at: https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/