



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

NOAA Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Regional Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

For Information Contact:
Protected Resources Division
(978)281-9328

<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/>
Date Issued: 3/19/2015

NOAA Fisheries Publishes 2015 Sea Turtle Observer Requirement *Effective Date: April 18, 2015*

We have identified 14 commercial fisheries (see reverse side) operating within state and Federal waters in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Pacific Ocean that will be required to take observers so we can learn more about sea turtle interactions in these fisheries in our effort to minimize or prevent take from occurring. We identify fisheries annually, based on the extent to which: (1) a fishery operates in the same waters and at the same time as sea turtles are present; (2) a fishery operates at the same time or prior to elevated sea turtle strandings; and (3) a fishery uses a gear or technique that is known to take sea turtles. All participants in identified fisheries are required to carry observers, if requested, during a period of five years beginning April 18, 2015 (80 FR 14319, March 19, 2015). If a fishery does not have an existing observer program, a program will be designed.

The *Federal Register* notice, including a complete list of fisheries included in the 2015 Sea Turtle Observer Requirement, is available on our website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/observers.htm>. One copy of this bulletin is being sent to each address. Additional copies of this bulletin may be obtained by contacting the Protected Resources Division.

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.

State and Federal Commercial Fisheries included in the 2015 Sea Turtle Observer Requirement

Fishery	Years Eligible to Carry Observers
<u>Trawl Fisheries</u>	
Southeastern U.S. Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico shrimp trawl	2015-2019
Gulf of Mexico mixed species fish trawl	2015-2019
<u>Gillnet Fisheries</u>	
California halibut, white seabass and other species set gillnet (>3.5 in mesh)	2015-2019
California yellowtail, barracuda, and white seabass drift gillnet (mesh size >3.5 in. and <14 in.)	2015-2019
Chesapeake Bay inshore gillnet	2015-2019
Long Island inshore gillnet	2015-2019
North Carolina inshore gillnet	2015-2019
Gulf of Mexico gillnet	2015-2019
<u>Trap/pot Fisheries</u>	
Atlantic blue crab trap/pot	2015-2019
Atlantic mixed species trap/pot	2015-2019
Northeast/Mid-Atlantic American lobster trap/pot	2015-2019
<u>Pound Net/Weir/Seine Fisheries</u>	
Mid-Atlantic haul/beach seine	2015-2019
Mid-Atlantic menhaden purse seine	2015-2019
Rhode Island floating trap	2015-2019