

# Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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## **Federal Lobster Permit Holders**

Change to the Regulations for Electing Area 2 and Outer Cape Area,  
and a Trap Transfer Program in the American Lobster Fishery  
*Effective Date: May 7, 2014*

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has approved a final rule on April 7, 2014, which implements: (1) A limited entry program in Lobster Management Area (Area) 2 and in the Outer Cape Lobster Management Area (Outer Cape Area); and (2) a trap transfer program for Areas 2, 3, and the Outer Cape Area, in response to the recommendations for Federal action in the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American lobster. **More details on the qualification criteria and acceptable forms of documentary proof will be sent to all Federal lobster permit holders, along with an application form, in a few weeks.**

<b>Frequently Asked Questions</b>	
What does the final rule do?	It makes changes to the Federal lobster regulations by establishing a limited entry program for two lobster trap fishing areas: Area 2 and the Outer Cape Area. Any Federal lobster permit holder who wishes to fish with traps in either of these two areas must apply for eligibility. NMFS will review the applications. Those who are approved will maintain eligibility to fish with traps at a specified, history-based trap allocation. The final rule also establishes a Trap Transfer Program for Area 2, the Outer Cape Area, and Area 3. We will send out more information soon on the timing of the Trap Transfer Program.
How do I apply for the Area 2 and/or Outer Cape Area limited entry program?	All Federal lobster permit holders will receive a letter and application packet within the next few weeks, including an application form and detailed instructions on how to apply.
What is the Trap Transfer Program?	The Trap Transfer Program will allow lobster permit holders with eligible trap allocations for Areas 2, 3, and/or Outer Cape Area to buy and sell traps with any Federal lobster permit holder. NMFS will notify Federal lobster permit holders later in the year of the timing of the Trap Transfer Program.
How do I get a copy of the final rule?	The final rule and final environmental impact statement are available on our website at <a href="http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/lobster/">www.nero.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/lobster/</a> .
What is the deadline to apply for the Area 2 and Outer Cape Area limited entry program?	In the next few weeks we will send application packets to all Federal lobster permit holders with detailed instructions on how to apply. The deadline to apply is <b>November 3, 2014</b> . Applications for Area 2 and the Outer Cape Area will be processed during the 2014 calendar year and final decisions will become effective on May 1, 2015. Any Federal lobster permit holder may elect Area 2 and or the Outer Cape Area on the Federal lobster permit renewal application for the 2014 fishing year, which begins on May 1, 2014.

*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, Greater Atlantic Region.*