



Northeast Region Bulletin

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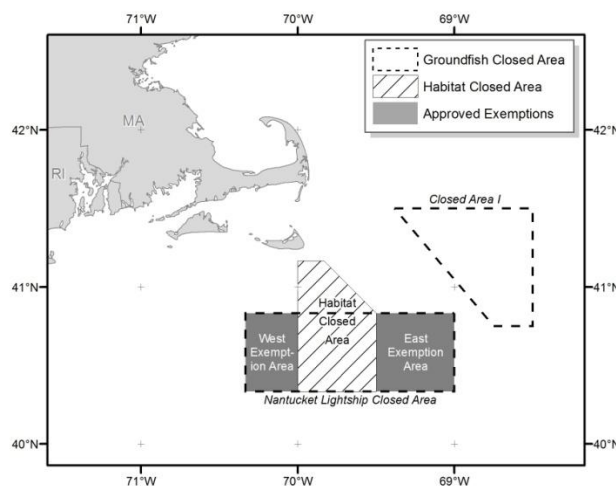
GROUNDFISH SECTOR VESSELS

NOAA Fisheries Approves Exemption Allowing Vessels into Portions of the Nantucket Lightship Year-Round Closed Area

Effective Date: December 31, 2013

Starting December 31, 2013, sector vessels can fish in the Eastern and Western Exemption Areas of the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area under standard at-sea monitoring requirements. Sectors with vessels interested in utilizing this exemption must notify NOAA Fisheries. Prior to fishing in these areas, vessels will need a revised Letter of Authorization (LOA) from their sector manager. Vessels can only fish in these areas if they have a valid LOA on board that includes this exemption. Vessels must call into the Pre-Trip Notification System (PTNS) 48 hours in advance of departure. Vessels that intend to fish in the Eastern or Western Exemption Areas must indicate their intent by writing "N4" in the "Comments" field of their trip start hail and submit the trip start hail prior to departure for each trip into these areas. Vessels with Thrane VMS units must send a free text message to NMFS.OLE.NE@NOAA.GOV with "N4" in the subject line. This exemption is valid for the remainder of the 2013 fishing year.

When fishing in the Eastern or Western Exemption Areas, gillnet vessels must fish with extra-large mesh gillnets (10" or greater). Pingers must be attached to gillnets when fishing in the Western Exemption Area. Trawl vessels must fish with selective trawl gear, such as the Ruhle or haddock separator trawl. Standard otter trawls and flounder nets are prohibited in these areas.



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.