



Northeast Region Bulletin

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<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/>
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Area 3 American Lobster Fishery

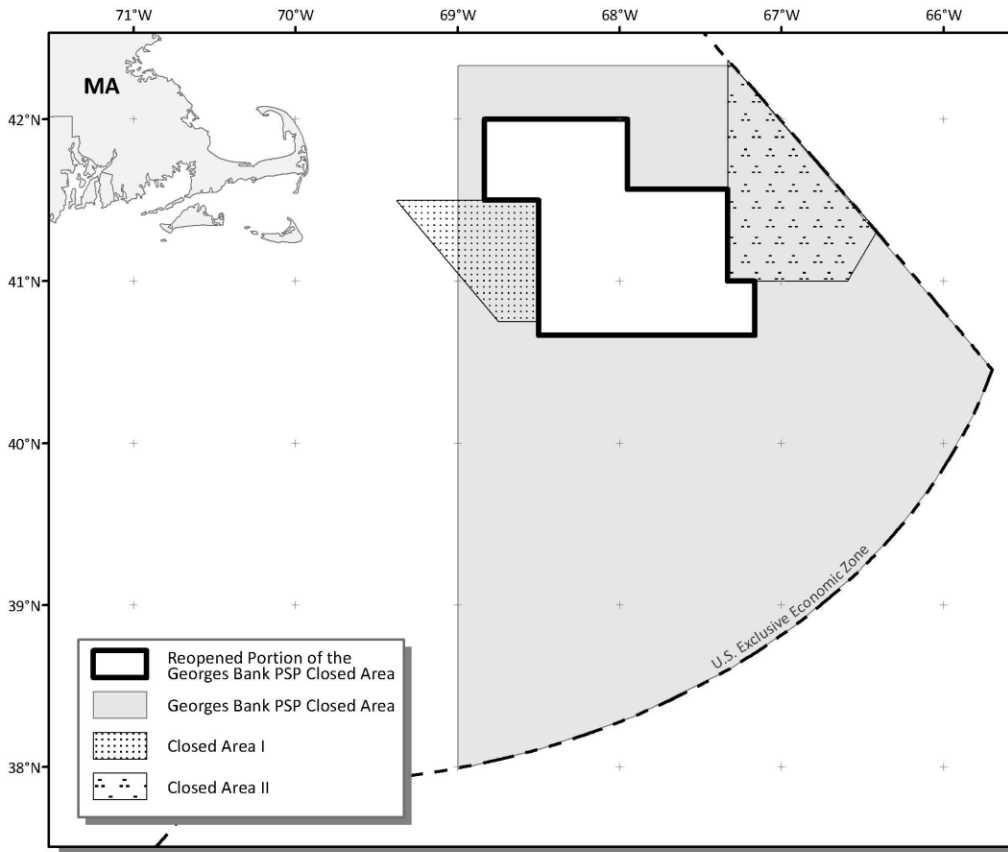
Effective Date: January 1, 2013

Effective January 1, 2013, a portion of the Georges Bank Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning Closed Area that has been closed to the harvest of Atlantic surfclams and ocean quahogs since 1990 will be reopened for Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog harvesting. To help prevent any resulting gear conflicts between hydraulic clam dredge gear and lobster gear, we wanted to make sure you were aware of this reopening. A map of the area and the coordinates are provided in the attachment.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is the area being reopened for other fisheries?	No, the area is being reopened only for Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog harvesting. Other types of bottom-tending mobile gear, including scallop and otter trawl gear, are already permitted to be used in this area.
How many surfclam/ocean quahog vessels should I expect to see fishing in the area?	The surfclam/ocean quahog fleet is relatively small, with only about 47 operating. However, due to the nature of the fishery and because the area being reopened is offshore, it is likely that only a small number of the active vessels will fish within the reopened area. Further, to harvest surfclams or ocean quahogs from the area, vessels must adhere to a paralytic shellfish poisoning testing protocol. The protocol is complex and labor intensive to comply with, so, it is unlikely the entire fleet will fish in the reopened area.
In what part of this area should I expect surfclam/ocean quahog fishing activity?	Effort will likely be focused on the northern portion of the area, in the area known as the Cultivator Shoals. The surfclam/ocean quahog industry has informed us that most of the southern portion of this area is too deep to operate hydraulic clam dredge gear in, so it is unlikely harvesting will take place in the southern portion of the reopened area.
Whom do I contact with gear conflict issues?	If necessary, our Office of Law Enforcement is available to work with you and can be reached at (978) 281-9213.

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.



Coordinates of the Reopened Portion of the Georges Bank PSP Closed Area:

Point	N. Latitude	W. Longitude
ROA1	42°00'	68°50'
ROA2	42°00'	67°57'
ROA3	41°34'	67°57'
ROA4	41°34'	67°20'
ROA5	41°00'	67°20'
ROA6	41°00'	67°10'
ROA7	40°40'	67°10'
ROA8	40°40'	68°30'
ROA9	41°30'	68°30'
ROA10	41°30'	68°50'