



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

July 14, 2008

Small Entity Compliance Guide

Dear Limited Access Northeast (NE) Multispecies Permit Holder:

At the request of the New England Fishery Management Council, the National Marine Fisheries Service recently approved the haddock rope trawl (previously called the “eliminator trawl”) for use in the following two Special Management Programs: The Regular B Days-at-Sea (DAS) Program and the Eastern U.S./Canada Haddock Special Access Program (SAP). Authorization to use this trawl gear in either of these programs will be effective on August 13, 2008.

Therefore, as of August 13, 2008, a vessel fishing with trawl gear and participating in either the Regular B DAS Program or the Eastern U.S./Canada Haddock SAP may choose to use either the newly approved haddock rope trawl or the haddock separator trawl (previously approved), as specified in the regulations. The required net specifications of the haddock rope trawl and a diagram of the net are in the attachment to this letter. Gear other than the haddock rope trawl may be on board the vessel, provided the gear is stowed when the vessel is fishing in the Special Management Program.

Note, the current possession limits apply to vessels electing to fish with either the haddock rope trawl or the haddock separator trawl **under a Regular B DAS** in either Special Management Program and are as follows: 100 lb per DAS, or any part of a DAS, up to a maximum of 1,000 lb per trip, of each of the following species:

Cod	Southern windowpane flounder (sand dab)
American plaice (dab)	Ocean pout
White hake	Georges Bank winter flounder (blackback)
Witch flounder (grey sole)	and Southern New England winter flounder
Georges Bank yellowtail flounder	(blackback)

In addition, vessels may not land more than 25 lb per DAS, or any part of a DAS, up to a maximum of 250 lb per trip, of Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic or Cape Cod/Gulf of Maine yellowtail flounder. Vessels fishing with these gears are also restricted to 500 lb of all flatfish species combined, 500 lb of monkfish (whole weight), 500 lb of skates (whole weight), and zero possession of lobsters.

This notice is authorized by the Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region.



Haddock Rope Trawl

The haddock rope trawl is a four-seam bottom groundfish trawl designed to reduce the bycatch of cod while retaining or increasing the catch of haddock, when compared to traditional groundfish trawls. A haddock rope trawl must be constructed in accordance with the standards described below:

NET COMPONENTS

The net must be constructed with four seams (i.e., a net with a top and bottom panel and two side panels), and include at least the following net sections as depicted in the diagram on page 3 of this attachment: Top jib, bottom jib, jib side panels (x 2), top wing, bottom wing, wing side panels (x 2), square, bunt, square side panels (x 2), first top belly, first bottom belly, first belly side panels (x 2), second top belly, second bottom belly, second belly side panels (x 2), and third bottom belly.

LARGE MESH COMPONENTS

The first bottom belly, bunt, the top and bottom wings, and the top and bottom jibs, jib side panels, and wing side panels (the first bottom belly and all portions of the net in front of the first bottom belly, with the exception of the square and the square side panels) must be at least two meshes long in the fore and aft direction. For these net sections the stretched length of any single mesh must be at least 7.9 ft (240 cm), measured in a straight line from knot to knot. Stretched mesh, with respect to the NE multispecies haddock rope trawl, means mesh that is pulled so that slack in the mesh is eliminated and the mesh opening is closed.

MESH SIZE REQUIREMENTS

Mesh size in all other sections must be consistent with mesh size requirements specified in the NE Multispecies regulations and meet the following minimum specifications: Each mesh in the square, square side panels, and second bottom belly must be 31.5 inches (80 cm); each mesh in the first and second top belly, the first belly side panels, and the third bottom belly must be at least 7.9 inches (20 cm); and 6 inches or larger in sections following the second top belly and third bottom belly sections, all the way to the codend. The mesh size requirements of the top sections apply to the side panel sections.

MEASUREMENT OF MESH SIZE

The mesh size of a particular section of the haddock rope trawl is the average of the measurements of 20 consecutive adjacent meshes, running parallel to the long axis of the net, unless insufficient numbers of mesh exist, in which case the maximum total number of meshes in the section will be measured (between two and twenty meshes).

FISHING CIRCLE REQUIREMENT

The trawl must have a fishing circle of at least 398 ft (121.4 m). Fishing circle, with respect to the NE multispecies limited access fishery, means the calculated circumference of a bottom trawl based on the number of meshes and stretched mesh length at the narrow, aft end of the square of the net. This number is calculated by separately counting the number of meshes for each section of the net at the wide, fore end of the first bottom belly, and then calculating a stretched length as follows: For each section of the net (first bottom belly, two belly side panels and first top belly) multiply the number of meshes times the length of each stretched mesh to get the stretched mesh length for that section, and then add the sections together. For example, if the wide, fore end of the bottom belly of the haddock rope trawl is 22 meshes (and the mesh is at least 7.9 ft (240 cm)), the stretched mesh length for that section of the net is derived by multiplying 22 times 7.9 ft (240 cm) and equals 173.2 ft (52.8 m). The top and sides (x 2) of the net at this point in the trawl are 343 meshes (221 + 61 + 61, respectively) (each 7.9 inches (20 cm)), which equals 225.1 ft (68.6 m) stretched length. The stretched lengths for the different sections of mesh are added together (173.2 ft + 225.1 ft (52.8 + 68.6 m)) and result in the length of the fishing circle, in this case 398.3 ft (121.4 m).

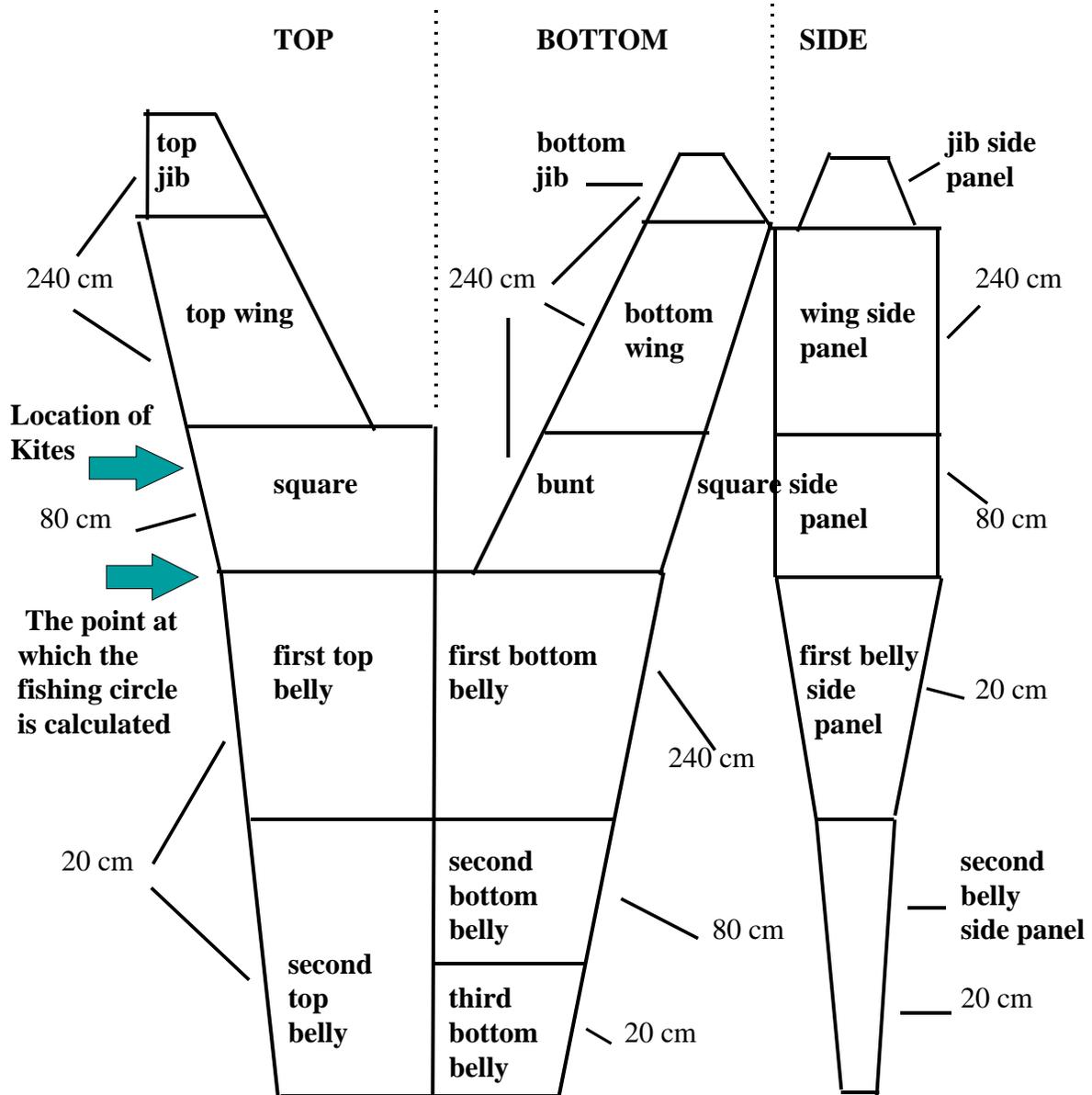
KITE PANEL REQUIREMENT

The trawl must have a single or multiple kite panels with a total surface area of at least 29.1 square feet (2.7 meters square) on the forward end of the square to help maximize headrope height, for the purpose of capturing rising fish. A kite panel is a flat structure, usually semi-flexible used to modify the shape of trawl and mesh openings by providing lift when a trawl is moving through the water.

SWEEP REQUIREMENT

The sweep must include rockhoppers of various sizes, which are arranged along the sweep in size order, graduated from 16-inch (40-cm) diameter in the sweep center down to 12-inch (30-cm) diameter at the wing ends. There must be six or fewer 12 to 16-inch (30 to 40-cm) rockhopper discs over any 10-ft (3.0 m) length of the sweep. The 12 to 16 inch (30 to 40-cm) discs (minimum size) must be spaced evenly, with one disc placed approximately every 2 ft (60 cm) along the sweep. The 12 to 16-inch (30 to 40-cm) discs must be separated by smaller discs, no larger than 3.5 inches (8.8 cm) in diameter. Sweep, with respect to the NE multispecies limited access fishery, means the part of a bottom trawl that, during normal use, is in contact with the sea floor along the outer edges of the lower webbing of the net.

**DIAGRAM OF HADDOCK ROPE TRAWL
MINIMUM MESH SIZE BY SECTION**



20 cm = 7.9 inches;
 80 cm = 31.5 inches;
 240 cm = 7.9 ft