



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

July 3, 2003

SMALL ENTITY COMPLIANCE GUIDE

Dear Permit Holder:

Framework Adjustment 38 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan establishes an exempted whiting grate raised footrope trawl fishery in the inshore Gulf of Maine (GOM), effective Wednesday, July 9, 2003. The fishery occurs from July 1 through November 30 each year. The boundaries of the exemption area are provided in Attachment 1. The Federal regulations implementing Framework Adjustment 38 are summarized below.

Permit Requirements

Vessel owners wanting to participate in this fishery must carry on board a valid Northeast Multispecies limited access permit (Category A through G) or Category K open access permit.

Mesh Requirements and Possession Restrictions

(A) All nets must comply with a minimum mesh size of 2.5-inch square or diamond mesh, subject to the restrictions specified in paragraph (B) of this section. An owner or operator of a vessel participating in the GOM Grate Raised Footrope Trawl Exempted Whiting Fishery may not fish for, possess on board, or land any species of fish, other than whiting and offshore hake, subject to the applicable possession limits specified in paragraph (C) of this section, except for the following allowable incidental species: **Red hake; butterfish; herring; mackerel; squid; and alewife.**

(B) All nets must comply with the minimum mesh size specified in paragraph (A) of this section. Counting from the terminus of the net, the minimum mesh size is applied to the first 100 meshes (200 bars, in the case of square mesh) from the terminus of the net for vessels greater than 60 ft in length, and is applied to the first 50 meshes (100 bars, in the case of square mesh) from the terminus of the net for vessels less than or equal to 60 ft in length.

(C) An owner or operator of a vessel participating in the GOM Grate Raised Footrope Trawl Exempted Whiting Fishery may fish for, possess, and land combined silver hake and offshore hake only up to 7,500 lb, even if fishing with mesh larger than the minimum mesh size specified in paragraph (A) of this section.

Gear Specifications

(A) Eight-inch diameter floats must be attached to the entire length of the headrope, with a maximum spacing of 4 ft between floats.

(B) The ground gear must all be bare wire not larger than ½-inch for the top leg, not larger than 5/8-inch for the bottom leg, and not larger than 3/4-inch for the ground cables.



The top and bottom legs must be equal in length, with no extensions. The total length of ground cables and legs must not be greater than 40 fathoms from the doors to wing ends.

(C) The footrope must be longer than the length of the headrope, but not more than 20 ft longer than the length of the headrope. The footrope must be rigged so that it does not contact the ocean bottom while fishing.

(D) The raised footrope trawl must be used without a sweep of any kind (chain, roller frame, or rockhopper). The drop chains must be a maximum of 3/8-inch diameter bare chain and must be hung from the center of the footrope and each corner (the quarter, or the junction of the bottom wing to the belly at the footrope). Drop chains must be at least 42 inches in length and must be hung at intervals of 8 ft along the footrope from the corners to the wing ends.

(E) The raised footrope trawl net must have a rigid or semi-rigid grate consisting of parallel bars of not more than 50 mm spacing that excludes all fish and other objects, except those that are small enough to pass between its bars into the codend of the trawl. The grate must be secured in the trawl, forward of the codend, in such a manner that it precludes the passage of fish or other objects into the codend without the fish or objects having to first pass between the bars of the grate. The net must have an outlet or hole to allow fish or other objects that are too large to pass between the bars of the grate to exit the net. The aftermost edge of this outlet or hole must be at least as wide as the grate at the point of attachment. The outlet or hole must extend forward from the grate toward the mouth of the net. A funnel of net material is allowed in the lengthening piece of the net forward of the grate to direct catch towards the grate.

This letter is only a summary of the Federal regulations and is not considered a substitute for the actual regulations. To read the requirements in their entirety, you should request a complete copy of the regulations by calling the Sustainable Fisheries Division at 978-281-9344, or by accessing the Federal Register Online through our Internet home page at <http://www.nero.nmfs.gov/ro/doc/nero.html>.

Vessel owners without limited access permits in the NE multispecies fishery and wanting to participate in the GOM Grate Raised Footrope Trawl fishery may request a NE multispecies open access permit (Category K) from the Permits Office by calling 978-281-9370.

You may also receive permit holder letters, including closure notices, by e-mail by clicking on "What's New" on our website at <http://www.nero.noaa.gov>; or via fax by providing a fax number through a written request to the above address, or by faxing your request to 978-281-9135.

Sincerely,



for Patricia A. Kurkul
Regional Administrator

This small entity compliance guide complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996.

GOM GRATE RAISED FOOTROPE TRAWL WHITING FISHERY EXEMPTION AREA

(July 1 through November 30)

Point	N. Lat.	W. Long.
GRF1	43° 15'	70° 35.4'
GRF2	43° 15'	70° 00'
GRF3	43° 25.2'	70° 00'
GRF4	43° 41.8'	69° 20'
GRF5	43° 58.8'	69° 20'
