



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

JUN 16 2003

ATTENTION
Holders of Federal Lobster Permits
and Permits in Confirmation of Permit History

Dear Permit Holder
and Confirmation of Permit History (CPH) Owner:

This letter serves as a reminder that Federal lobster permits with a Lobster Management Area (Area) 3, 4 and /or 5 trap gear designation for the 2003 fishing year will expire on August 31, 2003, unless a historical participation eligibility application (application) is received by NOAA Fisheries by July 31, 2003. All applicants must have a valid 2003 Federal lobster permit when the application is received.

Permit holders who submit an application by July 31, 2003 will be issued an interim permit to allow the vessel to continue fishing with traps in Areas 3, 4 and/or 5 beyond August 31, 2003 until NOAA Fisheries makes a determination on the permit's eligibility. Those who do not submit an application for Area 3, 4 and/or 5 eligibility before July 31, 2003 will not be allowed to fish for lobster with trap gear in those areas for the remainder of the fishing year. However, applications may still be submitted until December 31, 2003. If an application received between August 1 and December 31, 2003 is deemed eligible for the lobster trap fishery in one or more of Areas 3, 4 or 5, the eligibility will not become effective until the start of the 2004 fishing year on May 1, 2004.

NOAA Fisheries published a Final Rule in the Federal Register on March 27, 2003 that modified the Federal lobster regulations, in part, by implementing a limited access program in the Area 3, 4 and 5 lobster trap fishery based on historical participation. An application package and instructions were mailed to all Federal lobster permit holders and holders of Federal lobster permits in Confirmation of Permit History on April 3, 2003.

If you have any questions concerning this program please contact the NOAA Fisheries Information Line at (978)-281-9278, or visit the Northeast Regional Office web site at www.nero.noaa.gov - click on News Releases, and scroll down to April 3, 2003.

Sincerely,

Harold C. Mears, Director
State, Federal and Constituent
Programs Office

