



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

April 24, 2000

## American Lobster Trap Tag Requirement Delayed until June 1, 2000

Dear American Lobster Permit Holder:

*This is to inform you that the effective date of the Federal requirement to tag each lobster trap with a valid Federal American lobster trap tag has been delayed from May 1, 2000, until June 1, 2000.* This delay was necessary to provide Federal permit holders who fish with traps adequate time to order, receive by return mail, and attach lobster trap tags to each lobster trap. This requirement is among the measures specified in the American lobster final rule published December 6, 1999. The National Marine Fisheries Service, since the final rule was published, has entered into agreements with state fishery agencies from Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut regarding trap tags issued by either the federal government or those state fishery agencies. As negotiations for state-federal trap tag agreements proceeded earlier this year, Federal permit holders may have received conflicting information on the status of state-federal negotiations and the need to purchase federal trap tags, depending on the state in question. To clarify, these agreements avoid a requirement to affix both a state and federal trap tag on each trap fished by American lobster permit holders who also possess a state lobster license.

**Please note:** Regardless of any state-federal trap tag agreement with your state of residence, *all* Federal American lobster permit holders *fishing with lobster traps, or who have authorized gear code 800 on their Federal lobster permit,* must designate the lobster management area(s) in which they intend to fish during the 2000 fishing year in order to receive their American lobster fishing year 2000 vessel permit. The Lobster Management Area Designation & Trap Tag order form and instructions were mailed to all Federal American lobster permit holders on March 17, 2000.

A complete summary of the measures contained in the American lobster final rule, including the trap tag requirement delayed by this action, is available in a permit holder letter dated December 10, 1999. A copy of that letter and the entire American lobster regulations are available at the Northeast Regional Office website at <http://www.wh.who.edu/ro/doc/nero.html>. If you have additional questions on the new American lobster management measures, or need a copy of the Lobster Management Area Designation & Trap Tag order form and instructions, please call the NMFS information line at (978) 281-9278.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Kurkul  
Regional Administrator

