



Process for Considering Exemptions under the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP)

September 2010

The below represents information needed to help the Atlantic Large Whale Reduction Team (ALWTRT) and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) evaluate any requests for exemptions to the requirements under the ALWTRP. Information gained through the questions below will help the ALWTRT and NMFS assess and respond to any requests for exemptions that may be considered under the ALWTRP. See NMFS' Process for Evaluating Exemption Requests (attached).

1. If you are requesting exemptions from certain ALWTRP management areas or seasonal requirements:
 - What are the areas/times where potential exemptions should be considered?
 - What is the rationale for choosing these areas/times?
 - When would the exemption occur (e.g., specific length or period within the seasonal window of the management area; throughout the duration of the seasonal window)?
2. If you are requesting exemptions from specific ALWTRP gear requirements:
 - What gear requirement is the exemption request focusing on?
 - In what management area(s) is the gear exemption being requested?
 - What particular gear is requested for exemption (e.g., large mesh; small mesh; trap/pot)?
 - What is the rationale for exempting gear from this requirement?
3. Rationale
 - What is the basis/justification for the exemption(s) requested in numbers 1 and 2 above?
4. What are reasonable trade-off options for the areas or gear requirements being considered (e.g., use of gear modifications)?
5. Gear Marking
 - How will gear deployed in the proposed exemption be marked?
6. What are the expected/forecasted conservation benefits (to large whales or other marine species) of the potential exemptions?
7. Implementation
 - What is the requested/expected timetable for implementation?
8. What strategic monitoring is needed (e.g., additional observer coverage)?
9. What is the contingency/fallback plan should an entanglement occur in the identified exemption area or in exempted gear?
 - Is there a trigger requirement for the fallback measure (e.g., consequence closure area; other measure)?
 - Is there an evaluation procedure for determining serious injury/mortality of the entanglement?
10. What strategic research is needed (e.g., gear research; effects of exempted gear on other species)?

How to Send Information on your Proposal to NMFS and the ALWTRT

Please respond to the questions above and send this information to:
Kate Swails, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office,
55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930; Kate.Swails@noaa.gov.

For more information, contact: Kate Swails (978-282-8481); the NMFS Northeast Fisheries Liaison, John Higgins (207-677-2316); or the NMFS Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Liaison, Glenn Salvador (757-414-0128).

NMFS' Process for Evaluating Exemption Requests

