



Northeast Region Bulletin

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Northeast Sink Gillnet Fisheries

Notification

Implementation of the Coastal Gulf of Maine Consequence Closure Area

Effective Date: October 1, 2012

We have completed the final analyses of observed harbor porpoise bycatch from September 2010 through May 2011. We have determined that the bycatch rate for the Coastal Gulf of Maine Consequence Closure Area **has exceeded** the target rate. The bycatch rate for the Eastern Cape Cod and Cape Cod South Expansion Consequence Closure Areas **has not exceeded** the target rate. As a result, the Coastal Gulf of Maine Closure Area (see Figure 1) **will be implemented beginning October 1, 2012.**

Two consequence closure target rates were developed by the fishing industry, conservation organizations, and scientists on the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Team and established in 2010:

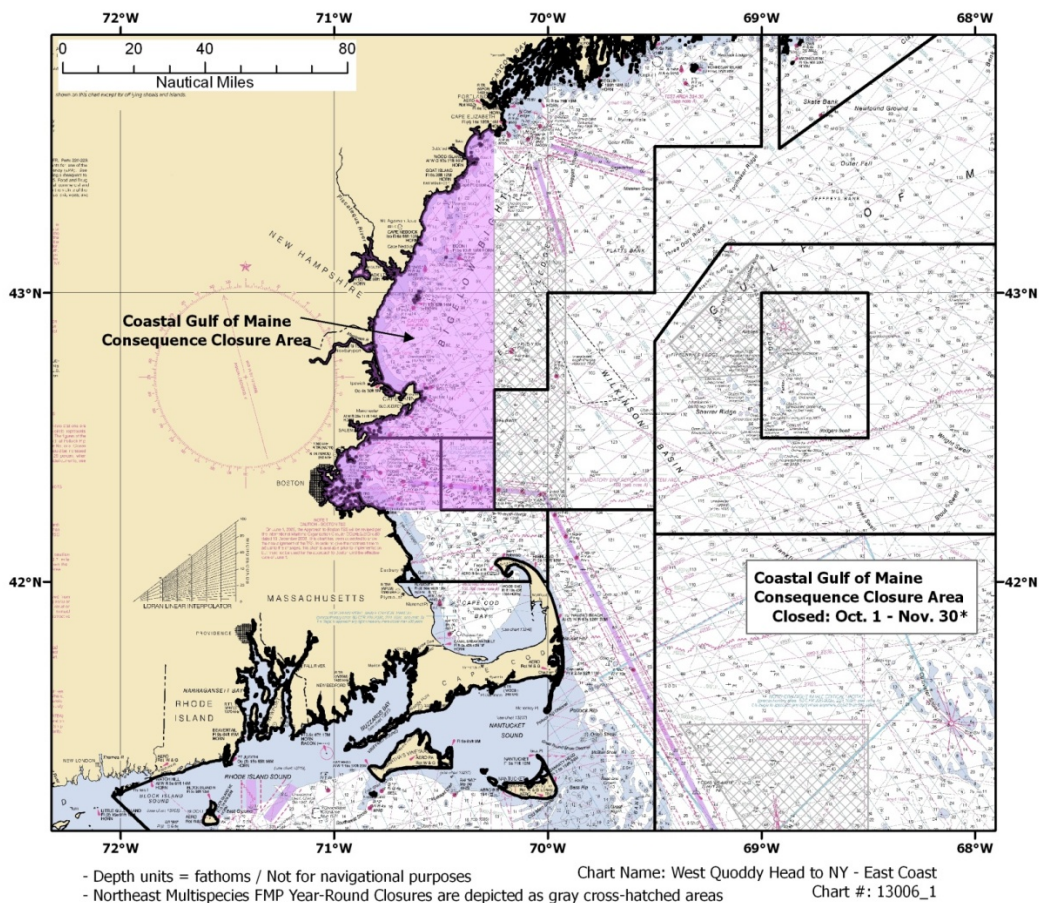
1. If the target average bycatch rate for the Coastal Gulf of Maine Consequence Closure Area exceeds 0.031 harbor porpoises per metric tons (equivalent to 1 harbor porpoise per 71,117 lbs) landed after two consecutive management seasons, it will be closed to gillnets each year during the months of October and November.
The first management season is complete, and this target bycatch rate HAS been exceeded. The September 2010 through May 2011 bycatch rate for the Coastal Gulf of Maine Consequence Closure area was so high that the two-year average (combining the September 2010 through May 2011 season with the September 2011 through May 2012 season) cannot be reduced below the target bycatch rate for this area, even if no harbor porpoises are observed being caught.
2. If the target bycatch rate for the Cape Cod South Expansion Consequence Closure Area and the Eastern Cape Cod Consequence Closure Area exceeds 0.023 harbor porpoises per metric tons (equivalent to 1 harbor porpoise per 95,853 lbs) landed after two consecutive management seasons, these areas will be closed to gillnets each year from February through April.
The first management season is complete, and this target bycatch rate HAS NOT been exceeded. We will continue monitoring harbor porpoise bycatch in these areas to determine if additional action is necessary.

For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region.

| <i>Consequence Closure Area</i> | <i>Two Year Target Bycatch Rate (porpoises/metric tons of fish landed)</i> | <i>Year One Final Bycatch Rate (porpoises/metric tons of fish landed)</i> | <i>Pinger Requirement Compliance Rate</i> |
|--|--|---|---|
| Coastal Gulf of Maine | 0.031 | 0.078 | 41% |
| Eastern Cape Cod; Cape Cod South Expansion | 0.023 | 0.012 | 65% |

Low compliance with pinger requirements is the primary cause of high bycatch rates. We urge you to comply with pinger requirements to prevent the implementation of additional closure areas, which would be required if harbor porpoise bycatch remains too high.

Figure 1: Coastal Gulf of Maine Consequence Closure Area



Please Note: This figure depicts the location of Coastal Gulf of Maine Consequence Closure Area. This closure area will be implemented **beginning October 1, 2012**.

If you have any questions regarding this notification, please contact the NOAA Fisheries Service Northeast Regional Office Protected Resources Division at 978-281-9328.