

Options for minimizing adverse effects from fishing on fish habitat

Note: all of these Options have high interaction effects and would need to be packaged into discrete Alternatives for analysis. This is a decision-making structure for creating Alternatives and not a list of the Alternatives themselves.

Various areas discussed in the options list below are shown on the chart on the last page of this document.

1. Options for minimizing the use of otter trawl gears on vulnerable habitats

(gear modification options)

- a. No action – current gear requirements remain unchanged
- b. Restrictions within portions of all LISA cluster areas
 - i. Roller gear restrictions
 1. Size 1 (ex: 12 inches)
 2. Size 2 (ex: 20 inches)
 3. Size 3 (ex: 28 inches)
 - ii. Ground cable restrictions
 1. Max length 1 (ex: ?? meters)
 2. Max length 2 (ex: ?? meters)
- c. Restrictions within the Gulf of Maine RMA
 - i. Roller gear restrictions
 1. Size 1 (ex: 12 inches)
 2. Size 2 (ex: 20 inches)
 3. Size 3 (ex: 28 inches)
 - ii. Ground cable restrictions
 1. Max length 1 (ex: ?? meters)
 2. Max length 2 (ex: ?? meters)
- d. Domain-wide restrictions
 - i. Roller gear restrictions
 1. Size 1 (ex: 12 inches)
 2. Size 2 (ex: 20 inches)
 3. Size 3 (ex: 28 inches)
 - ii. Ground cable restrictions
 1. Max length 1 (ex: ?? meters)
 2. Max length 2 (ex: ?? meters)

2. Options for restricting fishing in highly vulnerable habitats (*area closure options*)

- a. No action – current Habitat Closed Areas remain unchanged¹
- b. Modify some or all of the current Habitat Closed Areas², including: NLCA Habitat Closed Area, CAI N Habitat Closed Area, CAI S Habitat Closed Area, CAII Habitat Closed Area, WGOM Habitat Closed Area, CL Habitat Closed Area, JB Habitat Closed Area
 - i. Eliminate area entirely
 - ii. Change current gear restrictions in area
- c. Restrictions only within portions of LISA cluster areas
 - i. GOM cluster areas (areas 1, 2, 3, 4 on Map)
 1. Closed to all bottom-tending gear (trawls, dredges, fixed gears)
 2. Closed to all mobile bottom-tending gear (trawls, dredges)
 3. Closed to selected mobile bottom-tending gears
 - ii. GB/SNE cluster areas (areas 5, 6, 7 on Map)
 1. Closed to all bottom-tending gear (trawls, dredges, fixed gears)
 2. Closed to all mobile bottom-tending gear (trawls, dredges)
 3. Closed to selected mobile bottom-tending gears
- d. Restrictions only within potentially vulnerable areas not identified by modeling
 - i. Areas in and around SBNMS
 1. Closed to all bottom-tending gear
 2. Closed to all mobile bottom-tending gear
 3. Closed to selected mobile bottom-tending gears
 - ii. Nantucket Shoals areas
 1. Closed to all bottom-tending gear
 2. Closed to all mobile bottom-tending gear
 3. Closed to selected mobile bottom-tending gears
 - iii. Shelf-break and canyon areas
 1. Closed to all bottom-tending gear
 2. Closed to all mobile bottom-tending gear
 3. Closed to selected mobile bottom-tending gears

¹ This option assumes that the boundaries of Habitat Closed Areas in scallop plan will be modified to be the same as those in the Multispecies Plan (recommended Scallop A15 alternative)

² As above, this option assumes that the boundaries of Habitat Closed Areas in scallop plan will be modified to be the same as those in the Multispecies Plan (recommended Scallop A15 alternative)

3. Options for reducing adverse fishing effects on habitat due to fishing effort displacement (*area closure removal options*)

- a. No action – all current groundfish rebuilding closure areas (WGOM, CAI, CAII, NLCA) remain closed
- b. Open non-spawning areas within all groundfish rebuilding closures year-round
- c. Open all current groundfish rebuilding closures year-round with specific seasonal spawning closures
- d. Open all current groundfish rebuilding closures year-round

4. Options for Dedicated Habitat Research Areas (*options to include areas both open and closed to fishing across contiguous, comparable habitats*)

- a. SBNMS
- b. Cashes Ledge
- c. Northern Edge HAPC

