



New England Fishery Management Council

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 11, 2013
TO: Groundfish and Habitat Oversight Committees
FROM: Andrew Applegate, CATT chair
SUBJECT: Gear exemptions from spawning areas

Definitions of exempted gears in rolling closures and other groundfish areas differ, either because of special circumstances, differences in areas, or other characteristics. Since the Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2 would change the purpose of these areas and seasonal adjustments may be considered, it is worth examining data to determine whether the exempted or prohibited gear definitions warrant modification.

Using 2010-2012 sea sampling and at sea monitoring data, Council staffer Dave Thomas summarized the catches of large mesh groundfish as a percent of total catch by gear type in the months that spawning areas could apply for Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2 alternatives (see table below). Catch observations for some gears is lacking (blank cells) because either the gear is prohibited by current regulations or the gear is sampled at a relatively low level and there are no samples for that gear during the analyzed period.

Nonetheless the highest large mesh groundfish catch rate for exempted gears (colored cells in the table below) is 1.2% and there is nothing that indicates that different gear exemptions would be needed for the new spawning area alternatives.

Table 1. Large-mesh groundfish catch as a percent of total catch of all species during selected months of 2010-2012.



Commercial Gear Type	Observed Trips within all Rolling Closures					Only trips within... Closed Area 1 Closed Area 2	
	February	March	April	May	June	Feb-Apr	Feb-Apr
Hand Line/Rod & Reel							
Longline, Bottom	85.32%	89.51%	87.69%	54.69%	53.72%		
Gill Net, Drift-Sink, Fish			73.84%		42.37%		
Bottom Trawl, Fish	83.00%	84.03%	73.31%	78.65%	81.09%		
Gill Net, Fixed or Anchored, Sink, Other/NK Species	81.53%	66.43%	67.79%	40.99%	28.49%		
Dredge, Scallop							
Bottom Trawl, Shrimp	0.91%	0.91%					
Pair Trawl, Midwater						1.16%	
Pot, Lobster							
Otter Trawl, Midwater							
Otter Trawl, Haddock Separator						11.41%	
Otter Trawl, Ruhle							93.62%
Pot, Eel							

*empty cells indicate that gear had no hauls that caught Large-Mesh Groundfish in that month

** gear types with no represented percentages only caught Large-Mesh Groundfish outside of the specified range of months

All gears exempt from GOM Rolling Closures

Spears, Rakes, Diving Gear, Cast Nets, Tongs
 Harpoons, Weirs, Dip Nets, Stop Nets, Pound Nets
 Pots and Traps, Purse Seines, Surf Clam/Quahog Dredge Gear
 Pelagic Hook and Line, Pelagic Longlines, Single Pelagic Gillnets
 Shrimp Trawls (with properly configured grates)

 Gear exempt from GOM Rolling Closures
 Gear exempt from Closed Area(s) 1 and 2

All gears exempt from Closed Area 1 and 2

Pot Gear for Lobsters and Hagfish, Pelagic Hook and Line
 Pelagic Longline Gear, Harpoon Gear, Tuna Purse Seine
 Pelagic Mid-Water Trawl Gear, Tuna Purse Seine Gear