

**Whale Rules**  
**Final Rule Published June 27, 2014**

NOAA's Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a Final Rule amending the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (Plan). This rule revises the management measures for reducing the incidental mortality and serious injury to the North Atlantic right whale, humpback whale and fin whale in commercial trap fisheries to further the goals of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The measures identified in the Plan are also intended to benefit minke whales, which are not classified as strategic stocks under the MMPA, but are known to be taken incidentally in commercial fisheries.

Requirements were developed with input from the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team, which is a multi-stakeholder team that includes fishermen, state managers, gear specialists, non-government organizations and scientists. NMFS used input gathered from the public during the 16 public hearings and 60-day public comment period during the proposed rule phase.

For Maine, measures include status quo for the exempted waters, status quo for the pocket waters, new trawling up requirements, a new 6-mile line, additional gear marking, some island buffers and an implementation date of June 1, 2015.

- **Trawling Up Requirements** - There will be a minimum number of traps per trawl based on the different lobster zones and distance from shore to reduce the number of buoy lines in the water column. Exempted waters do not have a minimum and can fish any configuration, including singles. These new requirements achieve over a 37% reduction in co-occurrence of whales and gear.

**Zones A, B and C**

- Beach to the Exemption Line – status quo
- Exemption Line to 3-mile line – pairs min, no singles
- 3 to 6 miles – triples min
- 6 to 12 miles – 5's min
- 12+ miles – 15's min

**Zones D, E, F and G**

- Beach to the Exemption Line – status quo
- Exemption Line to 3-mile line – pairs min, no singles
- 3 to 6 miles – triples min
- 6 to 12 miles – 10's min
- 12+ miles\* – 15's min

**\*Zones F and G**

- Nov 1 to Feb 29 (seasonal)  
12+ miles – 20's min

**TRAWL LIMIT REGULATIONS**

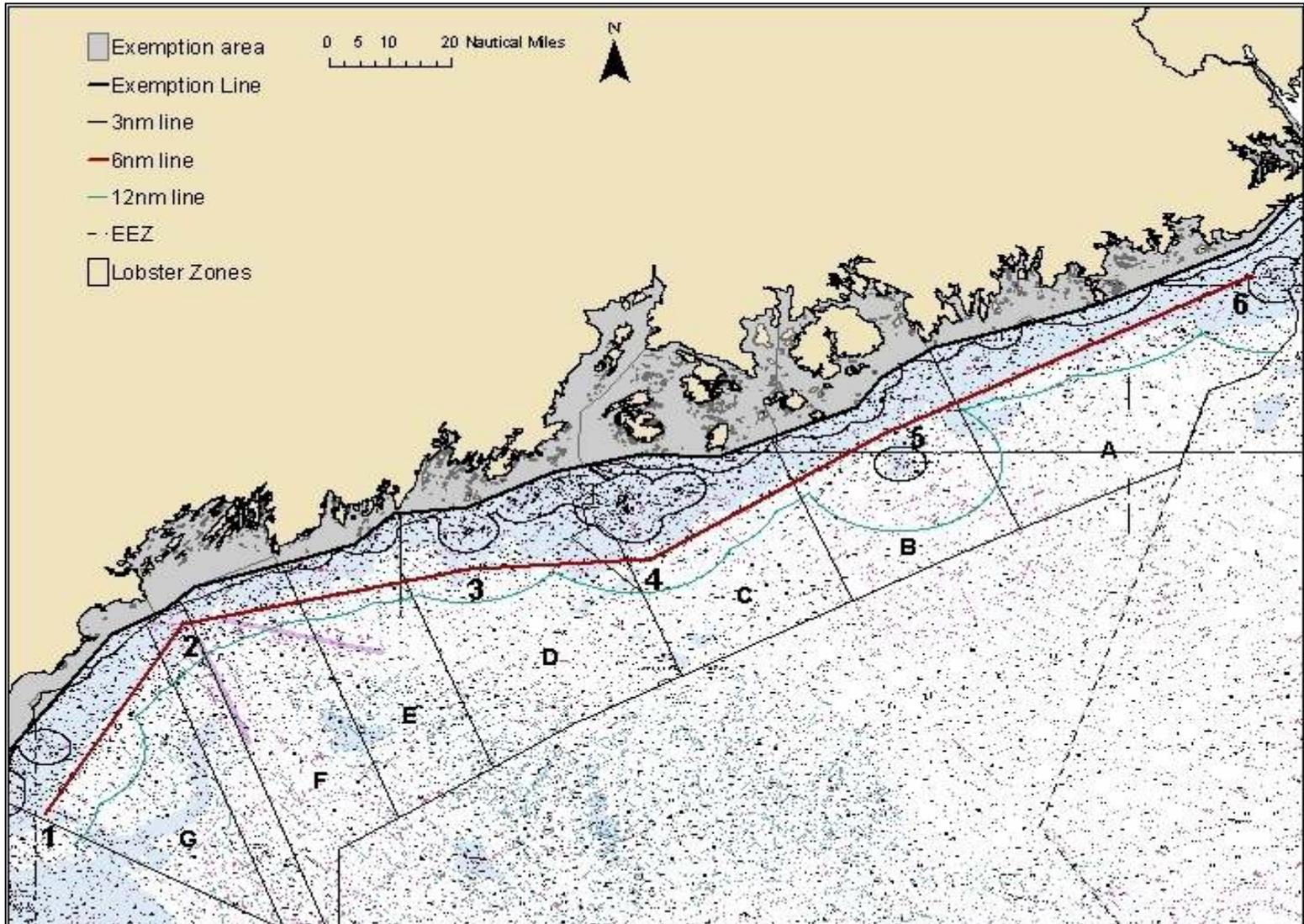
**Note:** Any Maine regulation imposing trawl limits that do not comply with the upcoming whale rules will be amended through Maine's rulemaking process in the coming months. The whale rule trawling up requirements will supersede and will replace Maine's existing trawl limit regulations.

- **New 6-mile Line** - Aligns with Maine's new trawling up requirements. See chart and coordinates on reverse side.
- **Gear Marking** - Buoy lines must now be marked three times (top, middle, bottom) with three 12" red marks (rather than the one 4" red mark) in regulated waters outside of the exemption line.

No gear marking in the exempted waters of Maine (inside the exemption line).

- **Pocket Waters** - The final rule allows for 'pocket waters' in Maine to fish a minimum of two traps per trawl instead of three. These waters will be treated the same as state waters outside the exemption line and allowed to fish pairs. See coordinates on reverse side.
- **Island Buffers** - The final rule creates a 1/4 mile buffer in waters surrounding the three inhabited islands of Monhegan, Matinicus, and Ragged Island (Criehaven). Boats fishing within this 1/4 mile buffer will be allowed to continue the current practice of fishing singles.
- **No Closures** - Parts of Jordan Basin and Jeffreys were originally identified as areas for potential seasonal closures for lobster fishing. Neither of these proposed closures are included in the final rule.
- **Implementation Date** - June 1, 2015 to align with Maine's annual lobster trap tag requirement date.

**Vertical Line Final Rule Trawling Up Requirements  
Effective June 1, 2015**



Maine's 6-mile line is a line connecting the following points (Machias Seal to Isle of Shoals).

**Maine's 6-Mile Line Coordinates**

- Machias Seal      44°31.98' N. lat., 67°9.72' W. long
- Mount Desert Island    44°3.42' N. lat., 68°10.26' W. long
- Matinicus      43°40.98' N. lat., 68°48.84' W. long
- Monhegan      43°39.24' N. lat., 69°18.54' W. long
- Casco Bay      43°29.4' N. lat., 70°5.88' W. long
- Isle of Shoals      42°55.38' N. lat., 70°28.68' W. long

**Maine's Pocket Waters Coordinates**

- West of Monhegan Island in the area north of the line 43°42.17' N. lat., 69°34.27' W. long and 43°42.25' N. lat., 69°19.3' W. long
- East of Monhegan Island in the area located north of the line 43°44' N. lat., 69°15.08' W. long and 43°48.17' N. lat., 69°8.02' W. long
- South of Vinalhaven Island in the area located west of the line 43°52.31' N. lat., 68°40' W. long and 43°58.12' N. lat., 68°32.95' W. long
- South of Bois Bubert Island in the area located northwest of the line 44°19.27' N. lat., 67°49.5' W. long and 44°23.67' N. lat., 67°40.5' W. long