



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

JAN 16 2007

Dear Federal and/or State Commercial Fishing Permit Holder:

You are receiving this letter and enclosures for the purpose of complying with the requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (Act). By virtue of holding a current/valid state or federal permit for a fishery that falls under one or more of the Category I/II fisheries listed on the reverse of the enclosed Certificate, you have been registered automatically in NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP). Only those Category I/II commercial fishery participants registered under the MMAP are exempted from the Act's general prohibition on the taking of non-endangered/threatened marine mammals incidental to their fishing operations.¹ No takes of endangered or threatened marine mammals are authorized in the Atlantic.

If you plan to participate in one or more of the Category I/II fisheries identified on the reverse side of the enclosed Certificate, **you must:**

- Maintain the enclosed MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a copy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the Certificate. In the case of non-vessel fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a copy, must be in the possession of the person in charge of the operation. This Certificate, in combination with a current/valid state or federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered/threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the Mortality/Injury Reporting Form found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy. You may also obtain a reporting form by contacting NMFS at the number specified below.
- Take an observer aboard your vessel if so requested.

With this letter we would also like to provide you with contact information on the current and upcoming marine mammal take reduction plans as described on the reverse.

Please review the Terms and Conditions listed on the enclosed Authorization Certificate. This Certificate may be suspended or revoked by NMFS for failure to comply with any of these Terms and Conditions. If you would like a reporting form or have any questions regarding MMAP registration or general questions about the MMAP and/or List of Fisheries, please contact Allison Rosner at (978) 281-9300, ext. 6512. For additional information, you can visit the NMFS MMAP web page at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/mmap/>.

Sincerely,

Mary A. Colligan
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Protected Resources

Enclosures



¹ Due to the way in which the list for this mailing was generated, it is possible that recreational (i.e., non-commercial) state license holders will receive this letter. If you are a recreational fisherman, please disregard this letter, as the above MMAP requirements currently do not apply to recreational operations.

MMAP Registration Requirements

- In the Northeast Region, NMFS automatically registers those fishermen who hold current state or federal permits. However, those fishermen who engage in a fishery for which no state or federal fishing permit is required must register in the MMAP via U.S. Mail using the appropriate forms obtained from NMFS. This form, as well as further information, can be obtained by contacting the Allison Rosner at (978) 281-9300 ext. 6512.
- Fishermen participating in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the MMAP by January 1, 2007.

Other Requirements

- **Observers.** Fishermen participating in Category I or II fisheries must accommodate observers upon request from NMFS.
- **Submitting Reports.** All vessel owners participating in Category I, II, or III fisheries must report all incidental injuries or mortalities of marine mammals that occur during commercial fishing operations within 48 hours of returning from the trip in which the injury/mortality occurred, by completing and submitting the report form found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf.
- **Take Reduction Plans and Emergency Regulations.** Fishermen participating in Category I or II fisheries must comply with applicable Take Reduction Plans and emergency regulations.

Take Reduction Plans for Atlantic Fisheries

Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP)

ALWTRP regulations are intended to reduce the risk of serious injury and mortality of large whales in commercial fishing gear, including American lobster trap/pot and gillnet gear. An upcoming modification to the ALWTRP is expected to publish in early 2007, and a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) which analyzes the impacts of these modifications is now available. Amongst other measures, NMFS is considering regulating other trap/pot fisheries including, but not limited to, those targeting conch/whelk, hagfish, red crab, scup, black sea bass, tautog, and Jonah crab. NMFS is also considering additional requirements for lobster trap/pot and gillnet gear.

For further information about the current ALWTRP, as well as the upcoming modification to the ALWTRP, contact the ALWTRP Coordinator, Diane Borggaard, at 978-281-9300, ext. 6503 or visit the ALWTRP web page at <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp>. If you have questions about specific gear modifications, please contact the industry liaison for your area: John Higgins (207-677-2316) in New England or Glenn Salvador (757-414-0128) in the Mid-Atlantic.

Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan (HPTRP)

The Gulf of Maine and Mid-Atlantic components of the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan remain in effect from Maine through North Carolina for Northeast sink gillnet and Mid-Atlantic gillnet fisheries. NMFS recently launched a HPTRP Outreach and Education effort to remind gillnetters of the HPTRP requirements, provide pinger certification training and/or pinger refresher course for New England gillnetters, and update gillnetters on the status of the HPTRP. For further information, contact Amanda Johnson at (978) 281-9300, ext. 6513 or visit the HPTRP web page at http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/porptrp/. You can also contact the industry liaison for your area (above under ALWTRP) with specific questions about gear requirements.

Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan (BDTRP)

NMFS convened a take reduction team in 2001 to address the serious injury and mortality of the Western North Atlantic coastal bottlenose dolphin stock incidental to nine Category I and II fisheries from New Jersey through the east coast of Florida. The final BDTRP was published on April 26, 2006 (71 FR 24776), with an effective date of May 26, 2006. For further information, contact the Southeast Region Fishery Liaison, David Hilton (252-928-9092); Stacy Carlson at (727) 824-5312; or visit the BDTRP web page at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/trt/bdtrp.htm>.

Atlantic Trawl Gear Take Reduction Plan (ATGTRP)

In September 2006, NMFS convened a take reduction team to develop consensus recommendations for a take reduction plan to reduce the serious injury and mortality of pilot whales, common dolphins, and Atlantic white-sided dolphins from interactions with trawl fisheries. For further information, contact Mark Minton at (978) 281-9300, ext. 6534 or visit the ATGTRP web page at http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/atgtrp.

Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Plan (PLTRP)

In June 2006, NMFS convened a take reduction team to develop consensus recommendations on a plan to reduce the serious injury and mortality of short-finned pilot whales, long-finned pilot whales, and Risso's dolphins in interactions with the Mid-Atlantic portion of the Atlantic pelagic longline fishery to insignificant levels. For further information, contact Laura Engleby: (727) 824-5312 or Kristy Long: (301) 713-2322, or visit the PLTRP web page at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/trt/pl-trt.htm>.