

Northeast/Mid-Atlantic American Lobster Trap/Pot Fishery

Fishing gear type: Trap/pot

Current category: Category I*

Basis for current classification on the LOF: The annual level of serious injury and mortality of North Atlantic right whales (Western North Atlantic [WNA] stock), humpback whales (Gulf of Maine stock), and minke whales (Canadian East Coast stock) in this fishery exceeds 50% of each stocks' Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level.

Current list of marine mammal species/stocks injured/killed (a ⁽¹⁾ indicates those stocks driving the fishery's classification): Harbor seal, WNA; Humpback whale, Gulf of Maine; Minke whale, Canadian East Coast; North Atlantic right whale, WNA⁽¹⁾.

Estimated number of current participants: 11,767

Take Reduction Teams/Plans that affect this fishery: Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP), 50 CFR 229.32.

Year added to the LOF: Added as current name in 2001 and added as current categorization in 1997, though fishery has been listed on the LOF under different names and categorizations since 1989 (see Past Names).

Category when originally listed under current fishery name: Category I

Basis for original classification on the LOF: The current fishery was created by combining the Category III "Gulf of Maine, U.S. Mid-Atlantic Lobster Offshore Trap/Pot" and "Gulf of Maine, U.S. Mid-Atlantic Lobster Inshore Trap/Pot" fisheries into the "Gulf of Maine, U.S. Mid-Atlantic Lobster Trap/Pot" and immediately elevating this combined fishery to a Category I based on mortality and serious injury of North Atlantic right whales exceeding 50% of the stock's PBR. NMFS received opportunistic reports from 1990-1994 (therefore, all information represents the *minimum* number of interactions) of free-swimming or stranding entangled animals. Reports included: 2 North Atlantic right whales, or 0.4 animals/year (100% of the PBR of 0.4); 7 minke whales, or 1.4 animals/year (7% of the PBR of 21); and 11 humpback whales, or 1.8 animals/year (19% of the PBR of 9.7). NMFS also had records of 25 other entanglements not used in analysis due to insufficient information on gear type, but some were likely due to lobster gear.

Estimated number of participants when originally listed: 13,000

Past names, if any: "Gulf of Maine, U.S. Mid-Atlantic Lobster Trap/Pot" until 1997-2001; "Gulf of Maine, U.S. Mid-Atlantic Lobster Offshore Trap/Pot" and "Gulf of Maine, U.S. Mid-Atlantic Lobster Inshore Trap/Pot" 1992-1997; "Gulf of Maine, Southern Atlantic Inshore Lobster Trap/Pot" and "Gulf of Maine, Southern Atlantic Offshore Lobster Trap/Pot" 1991-1992; "Gulf of Maine, Southern New England Inshore Lobster Trap/Pot" and "Gulf of Maine, Southern New England Offshore Lobster Trap/Pot" 1989-1991.

Gear description/method for fishing: This fishery operates primarily with traps, while 2-3% of the target species are taken by mobile gear (trawls and dredges).

Target species: American lobster.

* The fishery is classified based on mortalities and serious injuries of a marine mammal stock greater than 50% (Category I) of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level.

Spatial/temporal distribution of effort: The fishery operates in inshore and offshore waters from Maine to New Jersey and may extend as far south as Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. Approximately 80% of American lobsters are harvested from state waters.

Levels of observer coverage each year[†]: There has not been observer coverage in this fishery.

Management and regulations: The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has a primary regulatory role for this fishery because the majority of the harvest is taken from state waters. The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) portion of the fishery operates under regulations from the Federal American Lobster Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Both the EEZ and state fishery are operating under Federal regulations from the ALWTRP.

History of Changes on the LOF

2012 LOF: Estimated number of participants updated from 12,489 to 11,767.

2011 LOF: Estimated number of participants updated from 13,000 to 12,489.

2010 LOF:

- Removed fin whale (WNA) from the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery. Fin whales were added in 1997 based on an animal that was thought to have been entangled in lobster gear. Subsequent analysis revealed the interaction was with hagfish pot gear and the LOF was never updated to reflect this analysis. A fin whale has never been reported killed or injured in this fishery.
- Removed superscript "1" after humpback whale (Gulf of Maine) and minke whale (Canadian east coast) because these stocks are not driving the Category I classification of the fishery. Annual mortality and serious injury of humpback whales in all lobster fisheries is 0.2 animals (PBR=1.1), or 18% of PBR; minke whales in all lobster fisheries is 0.4 animals (PBR=19), or 2% of PBR. The annual mortality and serious injury of humpback and minke whales in this fishery is unknown, but is likely less than 50% of the stocks' PBRs.
- Retained the superscript "1" after North Atlantic right whale (WNA) because annual mortality and serious injury in all lobster fisheries is 0.2 (PBR=0), and take in this fishery is likely more than 50% of the stock's PBR.

2008 LOF: Changed the name of the stock of humpback whales interacting with this fishery from "WNA" to "Gulf of Maine" to reflect the interactions taking place between this fishery and the Gulf of Maine feeding stock of humpback whales. The Gulf of Maine stock was classified as a separate feeding stock and reported as such in the 2000 Stock Assessment Report (SAR).

2006 LOF: Added a superscript "1" in Table 2 after humpback whale (WNA), minke whale (Canadian East Coast), and North Atlantic right whale (WNA), indicating that these stocks are driving the categorization of this fishery.

2001 LOF:

- White-sided dolphin (WNA) deleted from list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery based on a lack of observed interactions in recent years.
- Renamed from the "Gulf of Maine, U.S. Mid-Atlantic lobster trap/pot fishery" to the "Northeast/Mid-Atlantic American lobster trap/pot fishery" to reflect the distinction between the American lobster fishery and the spiny lobster fishery, and to clarify that fishing occurs in other areas of the Northeast.

[†] Observer coverage levels include the latest information reported in the most current final Stock Assessment Report (SAR).