

2021 Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Scoping Ideas

- Between August 10 and October 21, 2021, NMFS hosted 7 virtual scoping meetings to collect public comments on entanglement risk reduction measures coastwide for gillnet and trap/pot fisheries under the ALWTRP.
- A summary of the scoping comments was presented to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team on January 18, 2022. A recording of that webinar is available by following the [registration link](#).
- For more information on current regulations and information on 2021 and 2022 scoping periods, visit the [ALWTRP website](#).



Ideas Heard to Reduce Lines

- Cap all vertical lines in U.S. fisheries
- Quantifiable minimum 50% reduction in vertical lines with new data reporting requirements
- Offshore gear should be ropeless, either hybrid (i.e. one end, other fully weak) or fully ropeless year round
- Require all fixed gear fisheries to use one endline
- Cap latent effort in all Category I & II fisheries



Ideas Heard to Reduce Traps/Trawl

- Minimum of 8 fish traps per trawl reasonable in areas there are already existing minimum trawl requirements for lobster/Jonah crab (LMA 2)
- 1 line per 5 pots (increase max in RI/MA)
- Implement minimum traps/trawl in some areas with no min
- MA: 2 pot minimum traps/trawl in fish and whelk
- Trawl up similar to what lobster does
- No trawls in SE to protect neonates
- Apply Phase I to other trap/pot fisheries in NE



Ideas Heard to Configure Gillnets

- Consider different number of nets per string (e.g. Federal monkfish: minimum of 15 panels of 300' long per set is reasonable)
- Tie downs can reduce efficiency for some species and height change is only 6 ft
- Limit net quantity/length
- Increase/minimum nets per string large mesh by distance from shore
- Maximum length of net string



Ideas Heard About Reducing Effort

- Soak time restrictions of anchored gillnet (current 30 day restriction)
 - Reduce soak times (e.g. use minimum soak times needed, 24-48 hrs for some, 3-5 days for others)
 - Restrict night fishing (though important for some fisheries)
- Tending requirements for anchored sink gillnets
- Reduce effort in nearshore, state waters where effort has increased
- Consider forthcoming offshore trap/pot trap caps
- Reduce trap/pot limits
- Reduce Trap limits for oceanside blue crab in SE (100 for GA & 200 for FL)
- Reduce trap limit in whelk fishery to 150 or 100 (from 200)



Ideas Heard About Seasonal Closures

- Expand or extend existing areas based on co-occurrence
 - E.g. SERA N/S, GSCRA, SIRA, MRA, CCB
- Southern New England: year long closure or Nov - May
- Align gillnet and trap/pot timing and areas
- Establish other year long closures, pending ropeless
- Prohibit gillnet from new SIRA or keep Nantucket/Closed Area I
- Closures along migratory route (e.g. rolling closures in mid-Atlantic)
- Reconsider closures not implemented in Phase I
- Extend CCB closure similar to MA State, extend MA state water closure to gillnets
- Allow ropeless gear in existing closures (including BSB in Southeast U.S. waters during the calving season)



Ideas Heard About Weak Line or Inserts

- Cap line diameter (e.g. 3/8", 7/16" caps, 1/2 to distinguish from Canada)
- Modify gillnet anchor requirements to accommodate weaker links
- Maximum head rope size 3/8" line
- Require frequent inserts (every 40 or 60 feet) or fully formed weak line
- Adopt MA state water weak line regs everywhere (regular inserts or full weak line in top portion of the line)
- Require full weak line for gillnet buoy lines
- Where possible, use weaker inserts (possibly 1100 lb) with a smaller anchor (8 lb)
- Use weakest line possible with single trap/pots



Ideas Heard About Gear Marking

- Target gear marking in areas with entanglement problems
- Expand gear marking to all U.S. fixed-gear fisheries, including exempted areas
- Create marking specific to fisheries and/or regions
- Support for marks observable from afar
- Consider requiring printed state or fishery specific internal ribbons in buoy lines