



NOAA
FISHERIES

Requirements to Borrow from NEFSC Gear Library

To reduce the risk of marine mammal entanglements in fisheries regulated by the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP), the loan of on-demand gear to appropriately permitted participants will be prioritized to greater New England fixed gear fisheries. Fishermen in other regions will be considered depending on availability of gear and instructional resources. The purpose of the loan is to assess the efficacy and safety of on-demand fishing.

*In addition to the above, the following criteria are the **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS** that participants and vessels must possess to borrow gear from the gear library:*

1. An active/valid commercial fishing permit – state or federal (but not a recreational or a seasonal permit).
2. A 3 year landings history in the past 5 years (as verified by a dealer).
3. Access to a vessel 24/7 in order to move and retrieve gear, and the ability to grapple if necessary. Reasonable effort should be made to find lost gear.
4. A written plan to mitigate potential gear conflict.
5. Rudimentary computer skills necessary to operate the tablet and software required.
6. Willingness to coordinate with the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) on gear modifications, as necessary.
7. Willingness to allow observers/engineers on the vessel when practical.
8. Willingness to attain training and support or to demonstrate knowledge of the system.
9. A commitment to return the gear in the same shape it was loaned, understanding that there will be normal wear and tear.
10. A commitment to return the gear to the Science Center upon completion of research and within three months of the loan, unless an extension is expressly granted.
11. LIABILITY - User will assume liability for themselves or the crew regarding any personal risk or property damage associated with use of the on-demand gear.
12. An expectation that data gathered may be shared at the completion of testing, consistent with Item 4 under **DATA**, below.

*Additionally, vessels must possess the following **SAFETY STANDARDS** to participate in this research:*

1. The vessel shall be sound, seaworthy, and capable of operating out to the planned research location.
2. A current fishing vessel safety decal issued by the USCG is required for vessels operating in federal waters.
3. The vessels shall meet all safety, firefighting and lifesaving equipment requirements as found in applicable sections of Title 46 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 28.
4. The vessels shall be outfitted with personal floatation devices and survival craft of sufficient number and capacity to accommodate all on board including visiting scientific party and of the type required for a vessel of its size, class, and service in accordance with 46 CFR.
5. A navigational watch shall be maintained at all times while the vessel is at sea.
6. Have an emergency source of electrical power capable of supplying connected emergency loads continuously for at least 3 hours and must be located in a space or locker other than the engine room. Batteries of sufficient size and capacity may serve as an adequate source of emergency power.

In selecting participants and vessels, NEFSC maintains broad discretion to consider other factors, including but not limited to factors such as communications, prior experience with research projects, cooperation, and collegiality. Fishermen with federal or state permit violations will probably be precluded from participating in this project.

Finally, regarding **DATA**, a requirement for borrowing the on-demand gear is an agreement that:

1. Data will be collected on each haul that on-demand fishing is occurring.
2. Data must be collected on NMFS approved data sheets.
3. Data must be provided to NMFS within 30 days of system use.
4. Data on the operation of the on-demand system shall be considered to be public information. Specific information like the name of the fishermen, vessel name, and fishing location will be redacted to the extent required by law, though general location (eg., statistical area, offshore vs. inshore, etc.) is likely to be shared to the extent required or authorized by law.

To express interest in borrowing gear from the NEFSC Gear Library, please contact us at nec.gearlibrary@noaa.gov, or submit an [expression of interest form](#) online.