



Draft Addendum XXXII

Repealing Addendum XXVII Gauge and Vent Size Measures

May 5, 2025



Presentation Outline

1. Addendum Timeline
2. Addendum Objective
3. Background
4. Statement of the Problem
5. Proposed Management Options
6. Public Comment Summary
7. Board Action for Consideration

Addendum Timeline

Date	Action
February 2025	Board initiated Draft Addendum XXXII
March 2025	Board approved Draft Addendum XXXII for Public Comment
March-April 2025	Public hearing and comment period
May 2025	Board meeting to consider final approval of Draft Addendum XXXII

Addendum Objective

- February 2025 Board motion:

Move to initiate an Addendum to repeal all gauge and vent size changes in Addendum XXVII. The other sections of Addendum XXVII will remain in effect.

- Addendum XXVII (2023) for increasing protection of GOM/GBK spawning stock
 - established a trigger mechanism to implement a series of gauge and vent size changes when a trigger is reached
- Trigger = 35% decline in the trigger index from the reference period (2016-2018)
 - Trigger index declined by 39% with inclusion of 2022 data
- Board delayed implementation of Addendum XXVII measures to July 1, 2025
 - More time for industry to respond to changes and Canada to consider complementary measures

Statement of the Problem

- GOM industry concerns about economic impacts of LCMA 1 minimum gauge size increase
- Uncertainty surrounding implications for trade with Canada
- Consideration of alternative management measures warranted

Proposed Management Options

- **Option A: Status Quo**
 - Maintain the current implementation for Addendum XXVII schedule adopted under Addendum XXXI
- **Option B: Repeal Addendum XXVII Gauge and Vent Size Measures**

Implementation of Management Measures Under Option A

Area	LCMA 1	LCMA 3	OCC
Current Measures	Minimum gauge: 3 ¼" Maximum gauge: 5" Vent size: status quo	Minimum gauge: 3 ¹⁷ / ₃₂ " Maximum gauge: 6 ¾" Vent size: status quo	Minimum gauge: 3 ⅜" Maximum gauge: none / 6 ¾" Vent size: status quo
July 1, 2025	Minimum gauge size: 3 ⅝" (84 mm)	<i>Status quo</i>	Maximum gauge: 6 ¾" for all permit holders; V-notch possession definition: 1/8" w/ or w/o setal hairs
July 1, 2027	Minimum gauge size: 3 ⅜" (86 mm)	<i>Status quo</i>	<i>Status quo</i>
July 1, 2028	Vent size: 2 x 5 ¾" rectangular; 2 ⅝" circular	<i>Status quo</i>	<i>Status quo</i>
July 1, 2029	<i>Status quo</i>	Maximum gauge size: 6 ½"	Maximum gauge size: 6 ½"

- Under Option B, all changes to gauge and escape vent sizes established by Addendum XXVII would be repealed. These include:
 - Change to the maximum gauge size for state-waters only permit holders in OCC under under Section 3.1 of Addendum XXVII
 - Minimum and maximum gauge and vent size changes triggered under Section 3.2 of Addendum XXVII
- The following provisions of Addendum XXVII would be maintained:
 - Standardize v-notch possession definition for all permit holders in OCC to 1/8" with or without setal hairs. The implementation date for this measure would be July 1, 2025.
 - Implement regulations for LCMAs 1 and 3 to limit the issuance of trap tags to equal the harvester trap tag allocation. The implementation deadline for this measure was January 1, 2025.



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Public Comment Summary

- Public Hearing held April 10, 2025 via webinar
 - 82 public attendees
 - 35 comments
- Written Comments accepted until 11:59 PM, April 25, 2025
 - 157 total Comments
 - 5 letters
 - 152 individual

	A. Status Quo: Maintain Addendum XXVII Measures	B. Repeal Gauge and Vent Size Measures of Addendum XXVII
Public Hearing	1	26
Organization Letters	0	5
Written Comments	2	137

Support for Option A

- Lobster is a public resource and should be managed based on science. Those who ignore science or deny its accuracy are only protecting their self-interest.
- Harvesters will not go out of business. After a year, the weight of catch will increase.

Support for Option B

- The minimum gauge and vent size increases are unnecessary
- Maine (LCMA 1) already has strict conservation rules
- Fishermen in LCMA 1 are seeing an increase in juvenile lobsters
- Predation is driving declines in juvenile abundance
- Effort in LCMA 1 is declining
 - Harvesters leaving the fishery or choosing not to fish due to high cost
- Data used in Addendum XXVII were flawed or lacking
 - Wait until after 2025 benchmark assessment for any action

Support for Option B

- The gauge increase would cause significant economic harm
- US industry would be put at a severe disadvantage to Canada
- Uncertainty about effectiveness of gauge increase
 - Preferred measures mentioned include zero tolerance for v-notch everywhere, protecting large lobster, trap limit reductions
- Industry was not given opportunity to engage in developing Addendum XXVII measures

Other Comments – Outer Cape Cod

- 10 comments specific to Addendum XXVII measures for Outer Cape Cod LCMA
 - Oppose implementation of the measures
 - Frustration that OCC is the smallest fleet and contributes a small % of landings but is the only group forced to restrict measures
 - OCC already has stricter measures (min gauge, season, trap limits) than other areas
 - Only implementing OCC measures is discriminatory and will not have real conservation benefit

- The Board should look at impacts of other ocean uses on lobster fishery and ecosystem
 - E.g., offshore wind, energy cables, dredging, trawling
- Fishermen spend their lives on the water and are experts about what is happening with the lobster resource and fishery
- It is in harvesters' best interest to maintain a sustainable population, and their input on management measures should be considered and valued

Board Action for Consideration

- **Select Management Option**
- **Approve Final Addendum XXXII**

Questions?



Maine Lobster Industry Conversations March – April 2025



www.maine.gov/dmr

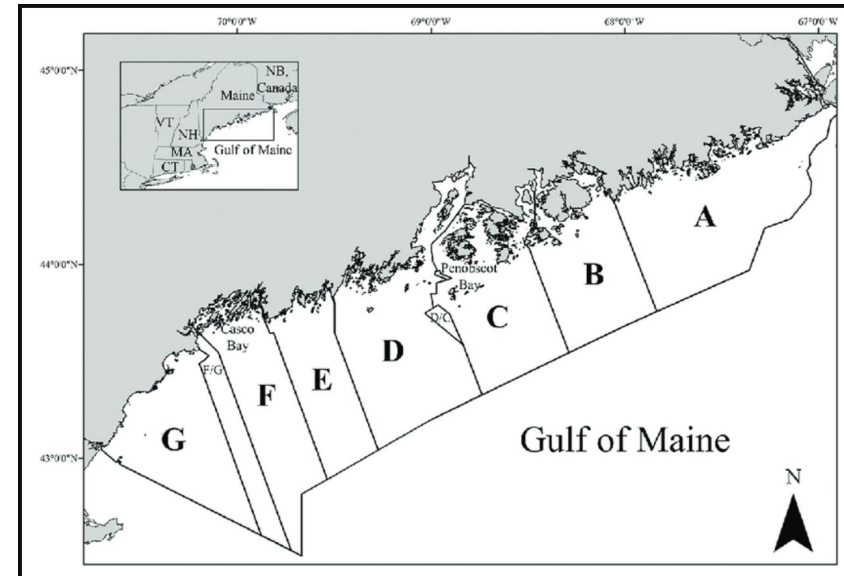
What We Did

▶ Meetings


- Lobster Advisory Council meeting x2
- Zone Council meetings x7
- Zone Council Chair meeting x1

▶ Discussion

- Status on gauge
- Overview of Feb and March Lobster Board meetings
- Reviewed preliminary effort and landings data through 2024



What We've Heard So Far

- ▶ Things are changing in the ocean
 - More eggers offshore
 - Seeing eggs on smaller lobsters
 - Fewer lobsters in bays
 - Prevalence of predators
 - ▶ The fishery is changing too
 - More consistent, year-round effort offshore
 - Some areas putting traps in water later, harder to make money in spring w/ Canada fishery
 - Folks are aging out of fishery
 - High overhead for young fishermen to enter fishery
 - Missing a year class of fishermen
- 

What We've Heard So Far

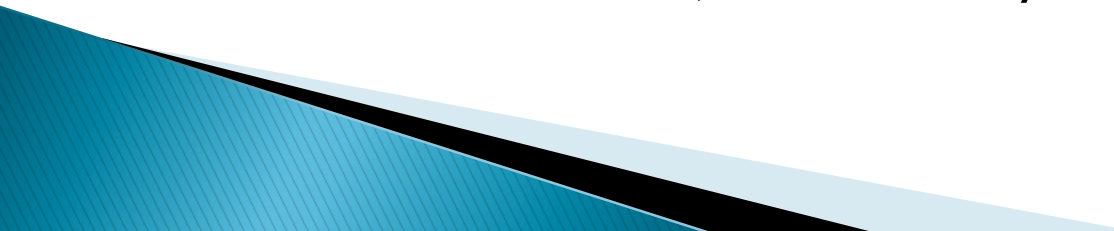
- ▶ While there was agreement that things are changing, different opinions on whether that warrants concern/action regarding future resource
- ▶ Those who did not express concern
 - Uptick in surveys the last two years
 - Seeing more shorts and eggars
 - Water temp down in 2024
 - Decline in landings tied to decline in effort, not resource
 - Survey not picking up spatial/temporal changes in resource
- ▶ Those who expressed concern
 - Concern about decline in landings, particularly in bays
 - Fishing on the run
 - Decline in number of selects
 - Data presented matches experience, esp. inflation

What We've Heard So Far

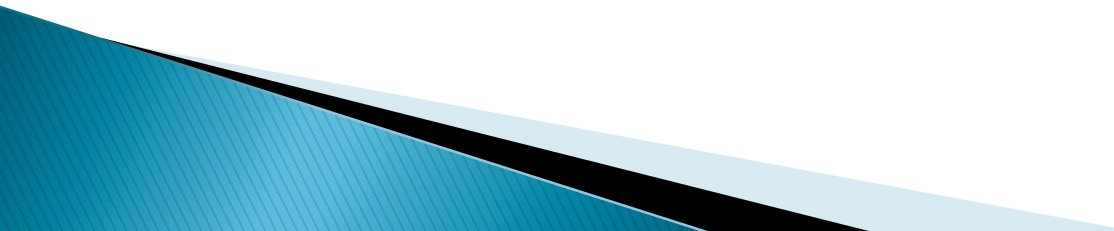
▶ On the gauge

- Some Zones still opposed
- Some Zones commented that if Canada had been onboard, it would have been fine
- Some individuals commented that the gauge increase helped in the 1980's
- Some discussion on 1/32nd increase, spreading out gauge increases more than 2 years apart
- Bring proactive vs. one-way action

▶ Other topics

- If we need to take action, do one that maximizes economic value of fishery
 - V-notching
 - Equity amongst LCMAs
 - If the focus is SSB, female only measures?
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What's Next

- ▶ Another round(s) of Zone Council Meetings
 - Science update with 2024 survey info
 - Respond to data requests we received
 - ▶ DMR considering an industry survey
 - Repeat of survey in 2008
 - Asking about perceptions on resource, fishery
 - ▶ DMR considering market analysis
 - A lot of comments about economic impact of gauge
 - Can we further investigate this
 - ▶ Convene ME portion of LCMT
- 



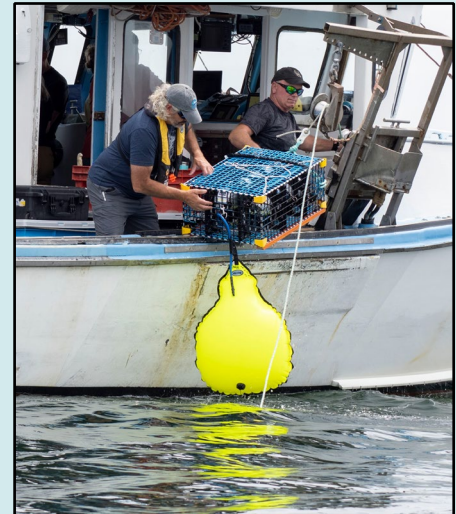
**NOAA
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Joint Mid-Atlantic & New England Council Omnibus Alternative Gear-Marking Framework Adjustment

ASMFC Lobster Board Update

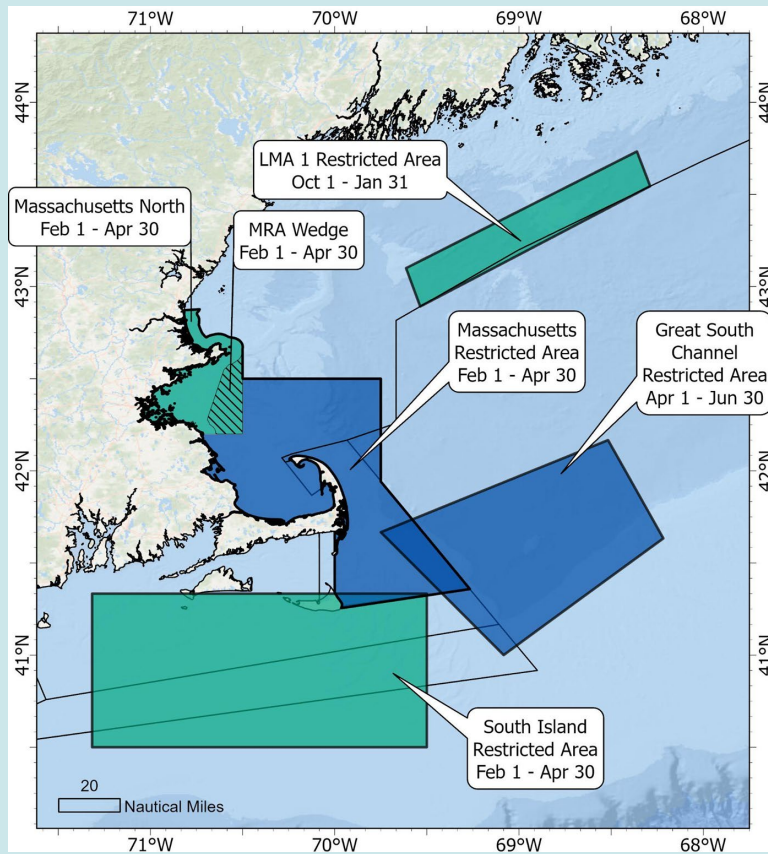
May 2025

Allison Murphy/Caroline Potter



Take Reduction Plan (TRP): Seasonal Closures to Buoy Lines

Current Trap/Pot Restricted Areas



In 2021, TRP closures were expanded and modified from seasonal fishing closures to persistent buoy line closures. In 2024, the MRA was expanded to include the MRA Wedge.

Exempted fishing permit required due to MSA and ACA FMP gear-marking regulations

Fisheries with Gear Marking Regulations

- Groundfish
- Prohibitions
- Black Sea Bass
- Scup
- Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab

ACA Fishery Gear-Marking Requirements

- Management Measures for **Lobster** fishery at 50 CFR 697.21(b):
In the areas of the EEZ described in paragraph (b)(4) of this section, lobster trap trawls are to be displayed and configured as follows:
 - (1) Lobster trap trawls of three or fewer traps deployed in the EEZ must be attached to and marked with **a single buoy**.
 - (2) With the exception of Maine permitted vessels fishing in Maine Lobster Management Zones that can fish up to ten lobster traps on a trawl with one **buoy line**, lobster trap trawls consisting of more than three traps must have a **radar reflector and a single flag or pennant** on the **westernmost end** (marking the half compass circle from magnetic south through west, to and including north), while the **easternmost end** (meaning the half compass circle from magnetic north through east, to and including south) of an American lobster trap trawl must be configured with a **radar reflector** only. Standard tetrahedral corner radar reflectors of at least 8 inches (20.32 cm) (both in height and width, and made from metal) must be employed....



April 2025 MAFMC & NEFMC Meeting Outcome

Presented information on the development of the action to provide alternative surface-marking provisions for fixed-gear fisheries in the Greater Atlantic Region. This would allow the use of fixed gear without a persistent buoy line

Councils initiated the Joint Framework Adjustment and **provided guidance** to PDT/FMAT on its development

Action Timeline

April 2025	MAFMC & NEFMC initiated action
May 2025	ASMFC receives updates
June 2025	NEFMC & MAFMC receive updates (tentative)
August 2025	ASMFC receives updates (tentative)
September 2025	NEFMC takes final action
October 2025	MAFMC takes final action; ASMFC receives updates on final action
November 2025	ALWTRT meeting: preliminary development of measures to reduce risk

Scope of Action

Inside Scope

- Allowance of alternative gear marking requirement
- Provide input on minimum requirements to use alternative gear marking
- Establish gear marking functions and functional equivalence

Beyond Scope

- Technical Gear Specifications and Technology to Operationalize:
 - Deployment/retrieval
 - Marking
 - Detection
 - Visualization
- Enforcement
- Gear conflict
- Data
 - Access
 - Storage
 - Security
 - Integrity
 - Standards
 - Integration
- Etc.



Alternative Set 1: Authorization of Approved Gear-Marking Alternatives

Alternative 1A: No Action. This alternative would not allow for alternative gear marking and would continue to require current surface markings (radar reflectors, highflyers, etc.).

Alternative 1B: Region-wide alternative gear marking. This alternative would allow the use of alternative gear marking in all Federal waters within the Greater Atlantic Region.

Alternative 1C: Limited alternative gear marking. This alternative would allow alternative gear marking but limit use to restricted areas (location and season) established by the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan.

Alternative 2A: No Action. This alternative would not require a person to demonstrate knowledge of any approved gear-marking alternatives.

Alternative 2B: Educational Requirement. This alternative would require a person to demonstrate knowledge of an approved gear-marking alternative.

April 28th PDT/FMAT Meeting Summary

- Added spatial alternative to consider allowing gear year-round (not just seasonally) in Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan restricted areas
- Revised need statement for ‘educational’ alternatives
- Brainstormed current gear-marking attributes to inform functional equivalence of alternatively marked gear
 - Retrievability
 - Set direction
 - Timing
 - Viewing distance

Questions?



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Stock Assessment Update

May 5, 2025



- Survey data and landings data have been finalized
- Base model runs, sensitivities, and preliminary projections have been completed
- In Progress (to be reviewed during upcoming SAS webinars):
 - Model-free indicators
 - Summarization of commercial sea sampling data
 - Update and review of environmental data time series
 - Socio-economic analyses (U. Maine)

- Assessment Workshop 2: February 11-13, 2025
- SAS weekly updates calls
- SAS webinars: March 5th and 7th, April 4th, May 2nd.
- SAS webinar: May 15, 2025
- TC assessment review/approval webinar: TBD June 2025
- Peer Review Workshop: late August / early Sept 2025
- Present Assessment and Peer Review Reports to the Board: October 2025

Questions?