

# Blue Crab Fisherman's Guide to Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Requirements in the Southeast Restricted Area North

Dates Applicable: November 15 through April 15

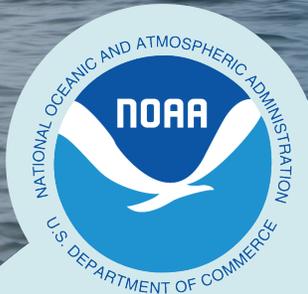
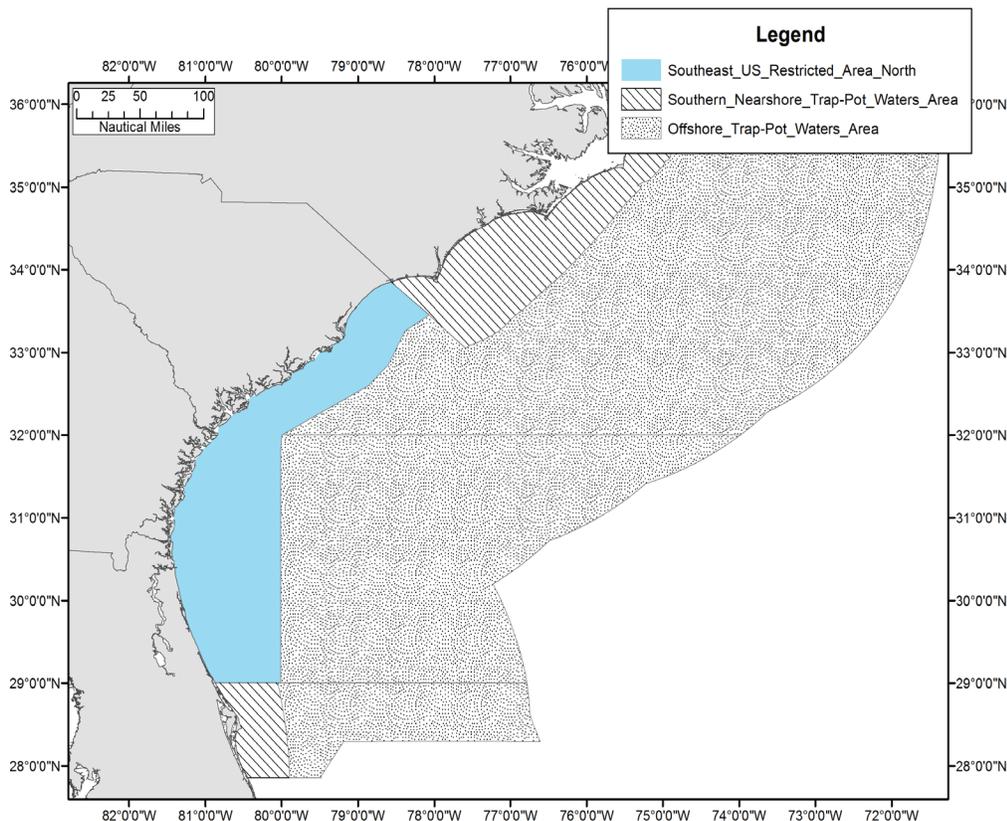
This document is a summary of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan's (Plan) commercial Southeast trap/pot fishing regulations within the Southeast Restricted Area North (50 CFR 229.32).

## The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (Plan)

The purpose of this Plan is to reduce the risk of serious injury and death of large whales caused by accidental entanglement in U.S. commercial trap/pot and gillnet fishing gear. The Plan is a requirement of the Marine Mammal Protection Act and was developed by NOAA Fisheries and the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team. The Team consists of fishing industry representatives, environmentalists, state and federal officials, and other interested parties.

## Location Description

The Southeast U.S. Restricted Area North includes waters north of 29°00' N (near Ponce de Leon Inlet, FL) to 32°00' N (near the GA/SC border) from the shoreline eastward to 80°00' W, as well as off South Carolina, within 35 nautical miles of the shoreline. Little River Inlet, SC, is not located in the Southeast U.S. Restricted Area North.



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3 hog rings, in a side-by-side configuration, qualifies as a 200 lb. weak link.



Example of gear markings.

*Note: This guide includes only Federal requirements for state and Federal waters; contact your state fishery office for any additional requirements within state waters. Should any regulations overlap with the Plan regulations, the more restrictive regulations apply.*

For more information about the Plan, the development process and the team, visit:  
<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/protected/whaletrp/>

## Restrictions/Requirements

DATES	AREA	REQUIREMENTS (50 CFR 229.32)
November 15- April 15	Southeast Restricted Area North (SERA N)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buoy lines must be made of sinking line</li> <li>Gear markings –SEE COLOR AND GEAR REQUIREMENTS BELOW</li> <li>Maximum of one trap per vertical line</li> <li>Entire buoy line (from trap/pot to buoy) must be the same diameter and free of objects (e.g., weights, floats, etc.) except where it attaches to the buoy and trap/pot.</li> <li>Gear must be hauled out of the water at least once every 30 days</li> <li>All buoys, flotation devices and/or weights must be attached to the buoy line with a weak link having the required breaking strength –SEE BELOW</li> <li>Weak links must be chosen from the list of approved gear*</li> <li>Vertical lines must also have the required breaking strength –SEE BELOW</li> </ul>
	FL State Waters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SERA N requirements –SEE ABOVE</li> <li>Weak links ≤ 200 lbs breaking strength</li> <li>Vertical line breaking strength ≤ 1,500 lbs</li> <li>Gear marking –BLUE &amp; ORANGE</li> </ul>
	SC/GA State Waters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SERA N requirements –SEE ABOVE</li> <li>Weak links ≤ 600 lbs breaking strength</li> <li>Vertical line breaking strength ≤ 2,200 lbs</li> <li>Gear marking –BLUE &amp; ORANGE</li> </ul>
	Federal Waters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SERA N requirements –SEE ABOVE</li> <li>Weak links ≤ 600 lbs breaking strength</li> <li>Vertical line breaking strength ≤ 2,200 lbs</li> <li>Gear marking –GREEN &amp; ORANGE</li> <li>Trap/pot gear must be brought back to shore at the conclusion of each trip</li> </ul>

## Additional Information on Trap/Pot Weak Link Requirements

Weak links must be chosen from the list of approved gear\*, which includes: off the shelf weak links, rope of appropriate breaking strength, hog rings, and other materials or devices approved in writing by NOAA Fisheries. Weak links must be designed in such a way that the bitter end of the buoy line is clean and free of any knots when the weak link breaks.

## Additional Information on Gear Marking Requirements

- Buoy lines are to be marked at three places on the line: at the top of the buoy line, midway along the buoy line, and at the bottom of the buoy line.
- Each mark must total 12 inches in length. If a mark consists of two colors then each color mark must be 6 inches, so the total mark is 12 inches.
- Color marks must be permanently affixed on or along the line and each must be clearly visible when the gear is hauled or removed from the water.
- If the color of the rope is the same as or similar to a required color mark, a white mark may be substituted for that color.
- Multiple methods for marking lines (e.g., paint, tape, rope, etc.) may be used.

\* For a list of approved gear, contact David Hilton - email: [coastalfishconcepts13@gmail.com](mailto:coastalfishconcepts13@gmail.com), phone: 252-921-0142