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EEA Home > Agencies > Department of Fish & Game > Marine Fisheries > Marine Fisheries Notices > Emergency Action for Lobster Management Area 3

12/31/12 Emergency Action To Increase Minimum Carapace Size For Lobsters Taken From Lobster Management Area 3

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The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) has amended 322 CMR 6.01(1) and increased the minimum carapace size for lobsters taken from Lobster Management Area 3 (LMA3) from 3 ½ inch to 3 17/32 inch. Effectively immediately, all offshore lobster permit holders landing lobsters taken from LMA 3 must ensure that their catch conforms to this new minimum size standard.

Over the past decade the Southern New England lobster stock has experienced poor recruitment and low levels of abundance, resulting in stock depletion. To address the stock's depleted condition, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved Addendum XVII to the lobster management plan. This Addendum requires states to adopt area-specific management measures that are designed to reduce fishing exploitation of the Southern New England lobster stock by 10% beginning in 2013. To comply with this Addendum, in June 2012, *Marine Fisheries* implemented new v-notching rules for LMA2 and is now enacting a minimum size increase for LMA3.

To permanently codify this minimum size increase at 322 CMR 6.01(1), *Marine Fisheries* will be holding a public hearing in February 2013. More details on this public hearing, including the date and time, are forthcoming.

If you wish to review the new regulatory language affecting lobster minimum sizes you may visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries or contact Jared Silva (jared.silva@state.ma.us) for a copy of the regulatory language.



Figure 2. Chart showing Lobster Conservation Management Area (LCMA) designated by the ADMFC



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