



Maine Guide to Regulations for Northeast Lobster and Jonah Crab Trap/Pot Fisheries

This guide contains the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan regulations for lobster and Jonah crab trap/pot fisheries. If your principal port is in Maine, the following regulations apply to you.

REMINDER: GENERAL TRAP/POT REQUIREMENTS

- No buoy line floating at the surface.
- No wet storage of gear (all gear must be hauled out of the water at least once every 30 days).
- All groundlines must be made of sinking line.



To see these regulations and updates on our website, please scan the QR code with your phone's camera >>

NOTE: Refer to Maine DMR Chapter 75 for requirements in Exempt Waters.

MINIMUM TRAPS PER TRAWL IN MAINE ZONES

EFFECTIVE MAY 1, 2022

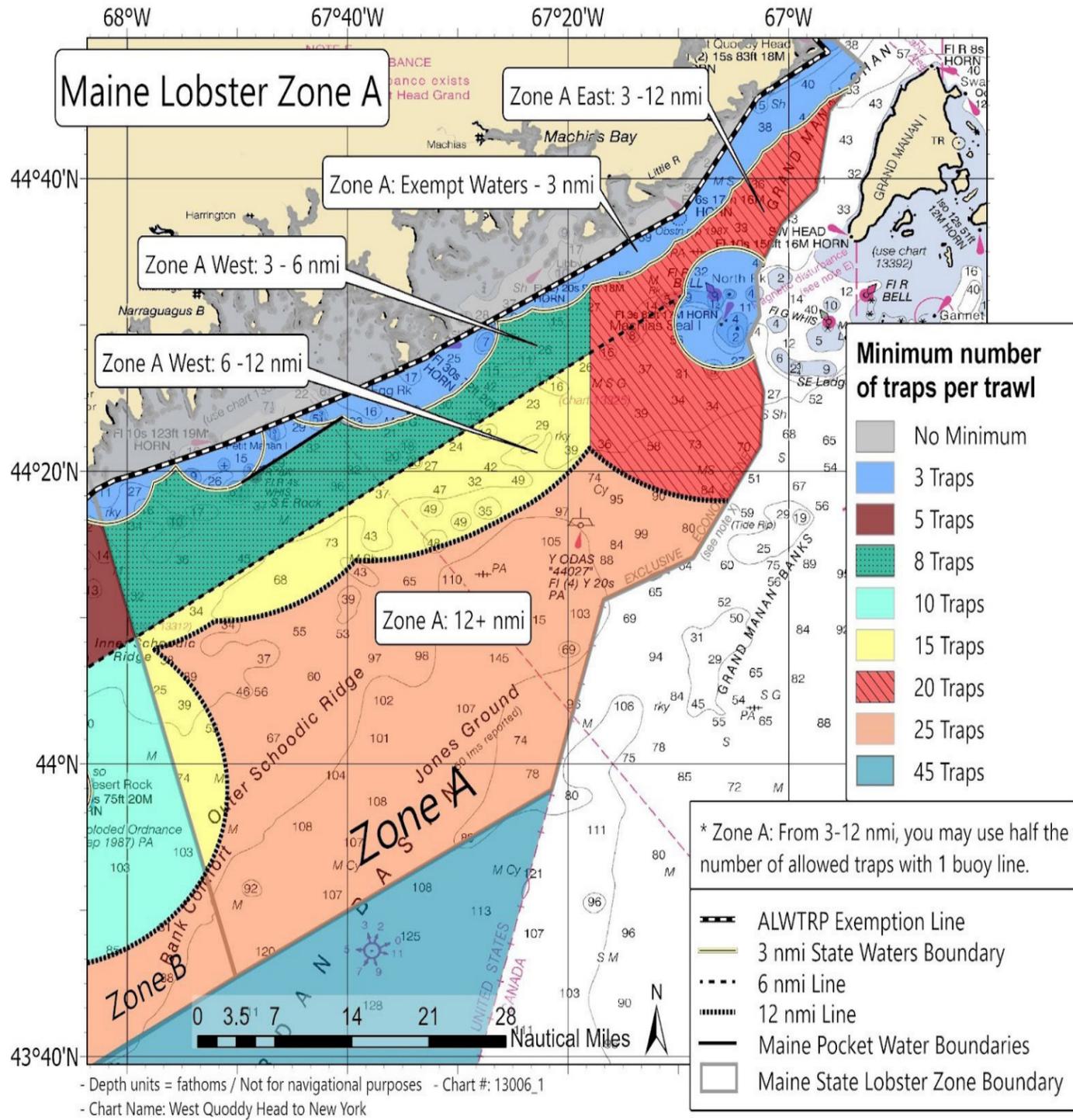
The following trap per trawl limits apply to Maine Zones in Lobster Management Area 1. Please note that there are no minimum trap per trawl requirements for Maine Exempt Waters.

ZONE	EXEMPT WATERS TO 3 NM	3 TO 6* NM	6* TO 12 NM	BEYOND 12 NM
Zone A East	3 for 1 line	10 for 1 line 20 for 2 lines	10 for 1 line 20 for 2 lines	25 for 2 lines
Zone A West	3 for 1 line	4 for 1 line 8 for 2 lines	8 for 1 line 15 for 2 lines	25 for 2 lines
Zone B	3 for 1 line	5 for 1 line	5 for 1 line 10 for 2 lines	25 for 2 lines
Zone C	2 for 1 line 4 for 2 lines	5 for 1 line 10 for 2 lines	10 for 1 line 20 for 2 lines	25 for 2 lines
Zone D	2 for 1 line 4 for 2 lines	5 for 1 line 10 for 2 lines	5 for 1 line 10 for 2 lines	25 for 2 lines
Zone E	2 for 1 line 4 for 2 lines	5 for 1 line 10 for 2 lines	5 for 1 line 10 for 2 lines	25 for 2 lines
Zone F	3 for 1 line	5 for 1 line 10 for 2 lines	5 for 1 line 10 for 2 lines	25 for 2 lines
Zone G	3 for 1 line	5 for 1 line 10 for 2 lines	10 for 1 line 20 for 2 lines	25 for 2 lines

*Note that the 6 nm line refers to an approximation, described in 50 CFR 229.32 (a)(2)(ii).

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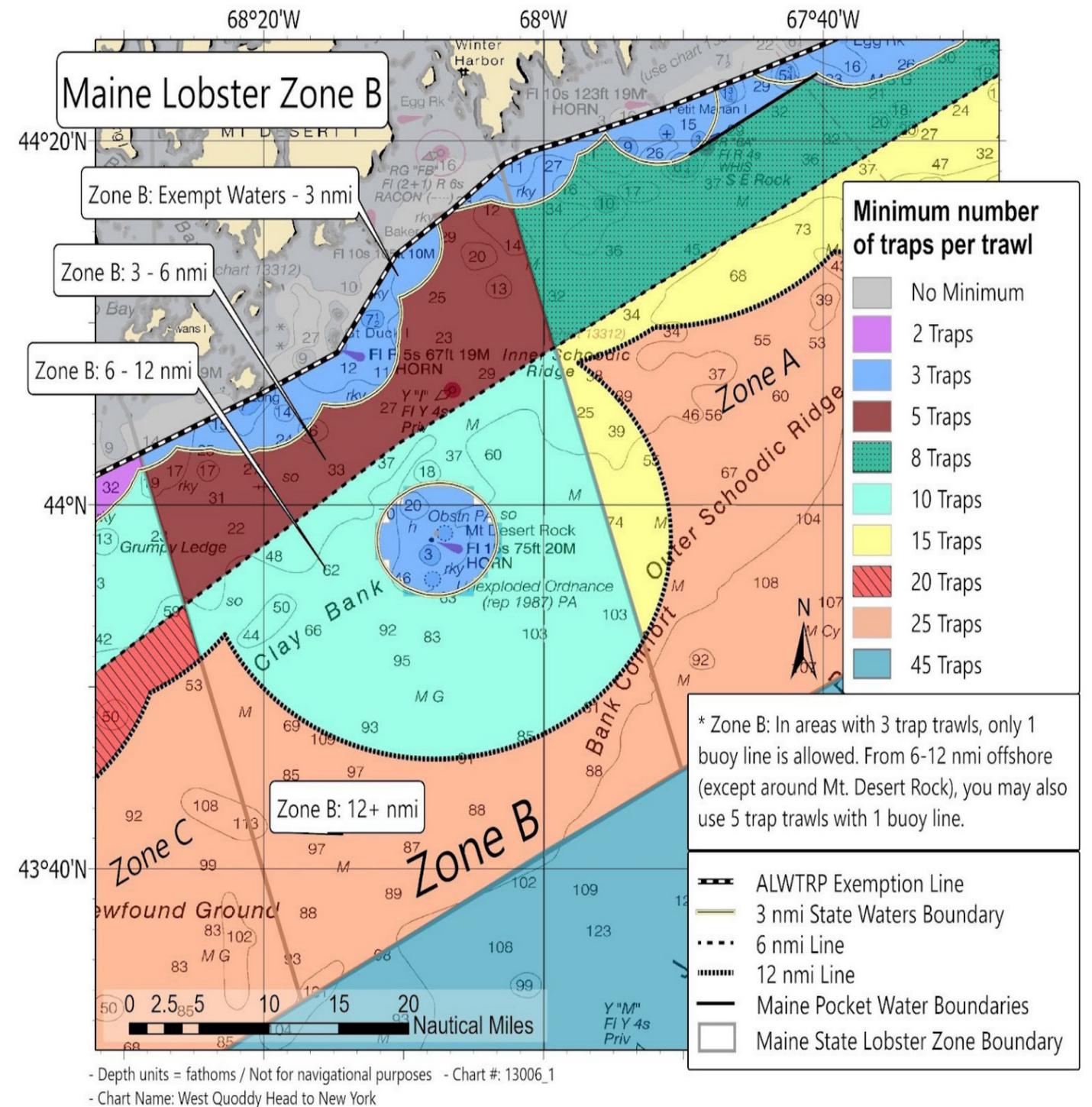
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WWW.FISHERIES.NOAA.GOV/ALWTRP

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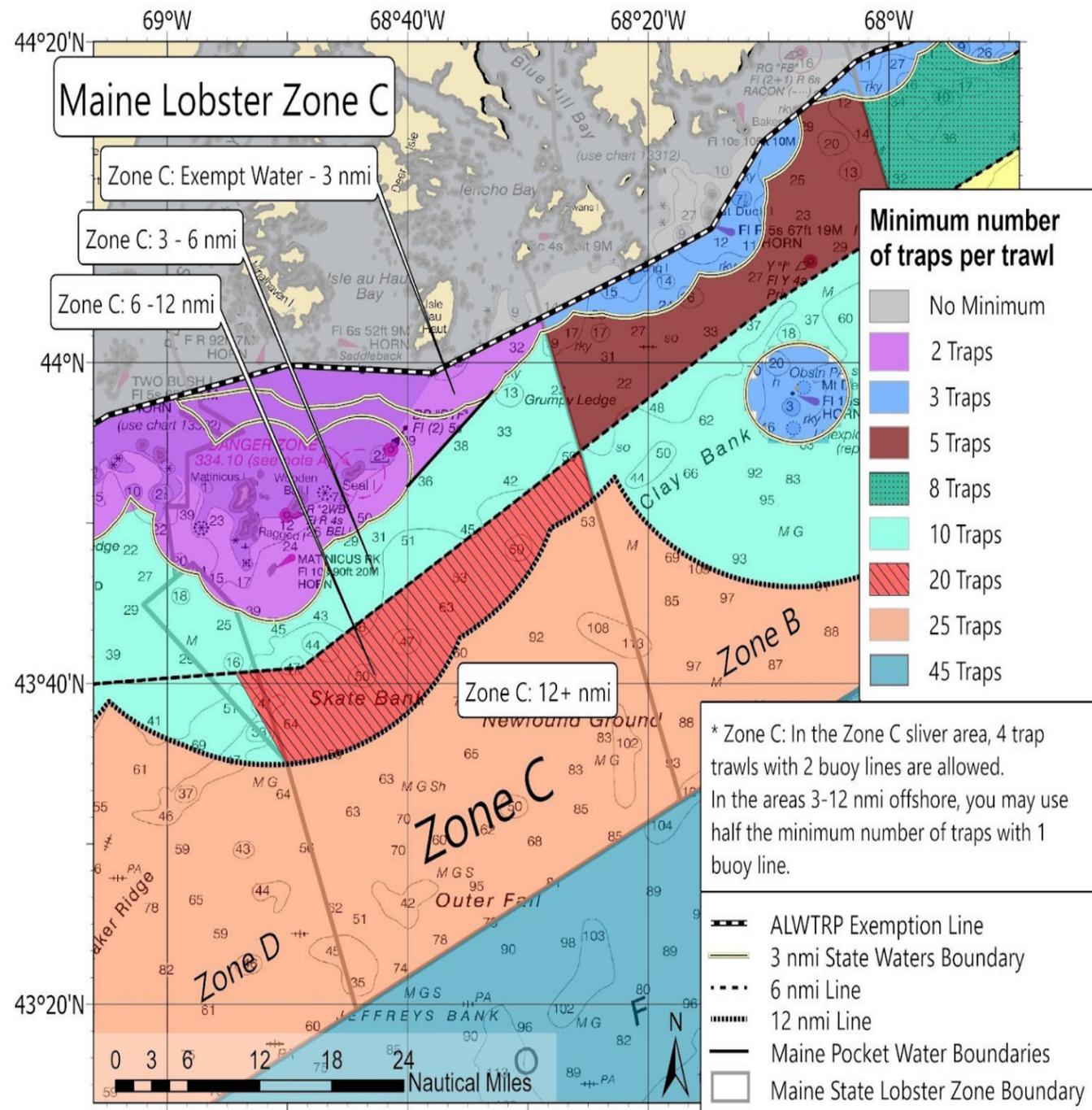
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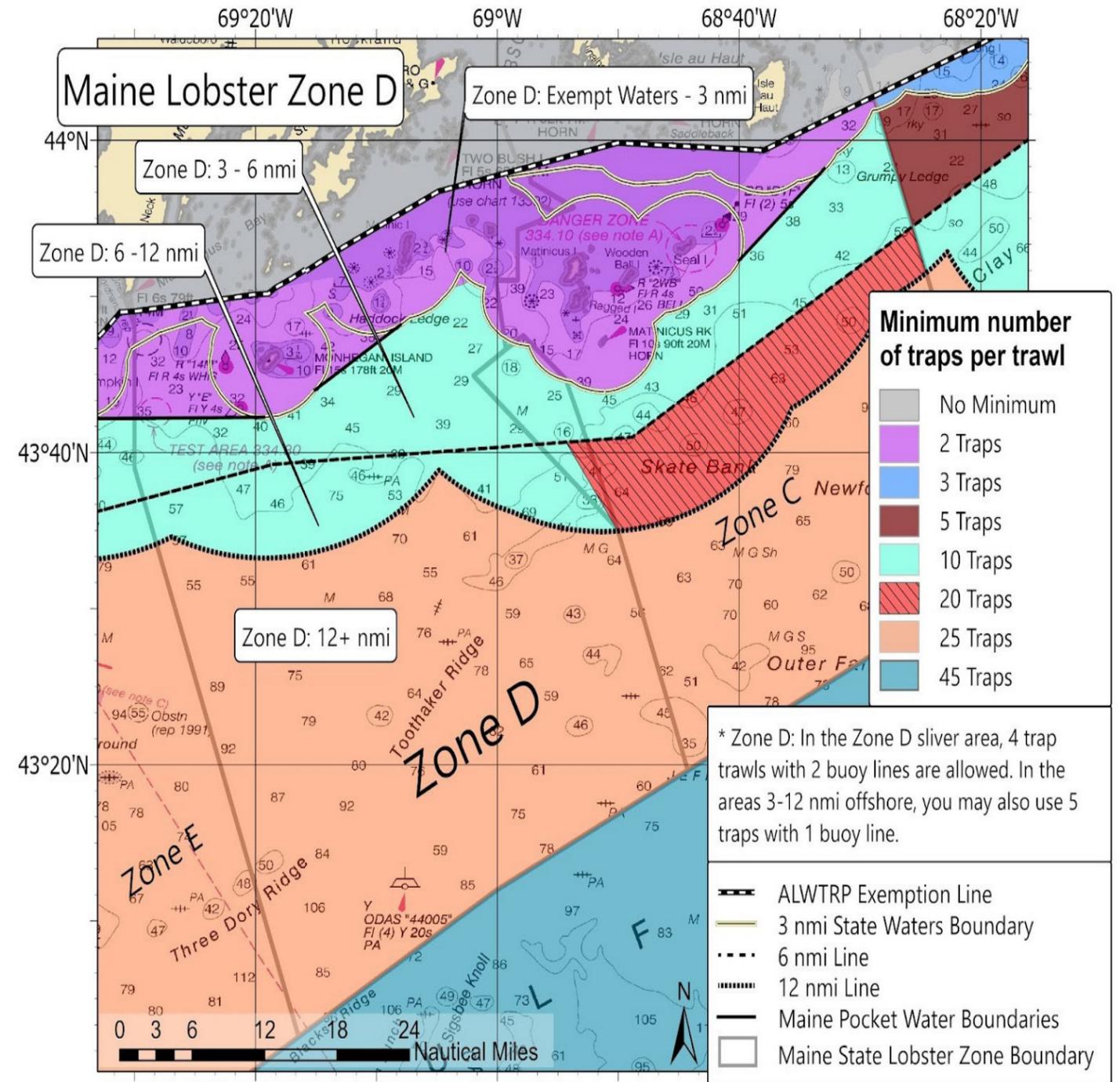
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- Depth units = fathoms / Not for navigational purposes - Chart #: 13006_1
 - Chart Name: West Quoddy Head to New York

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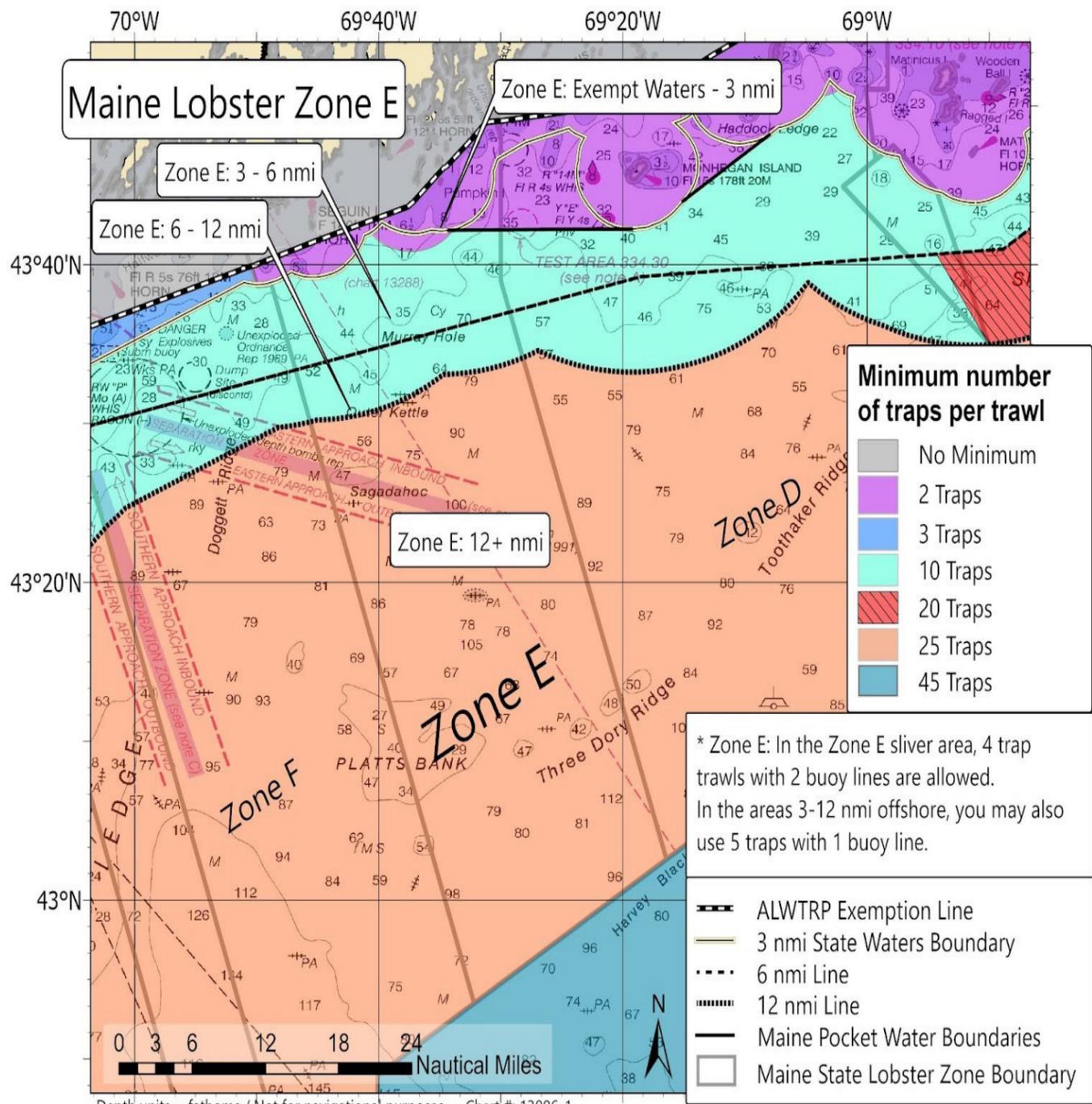
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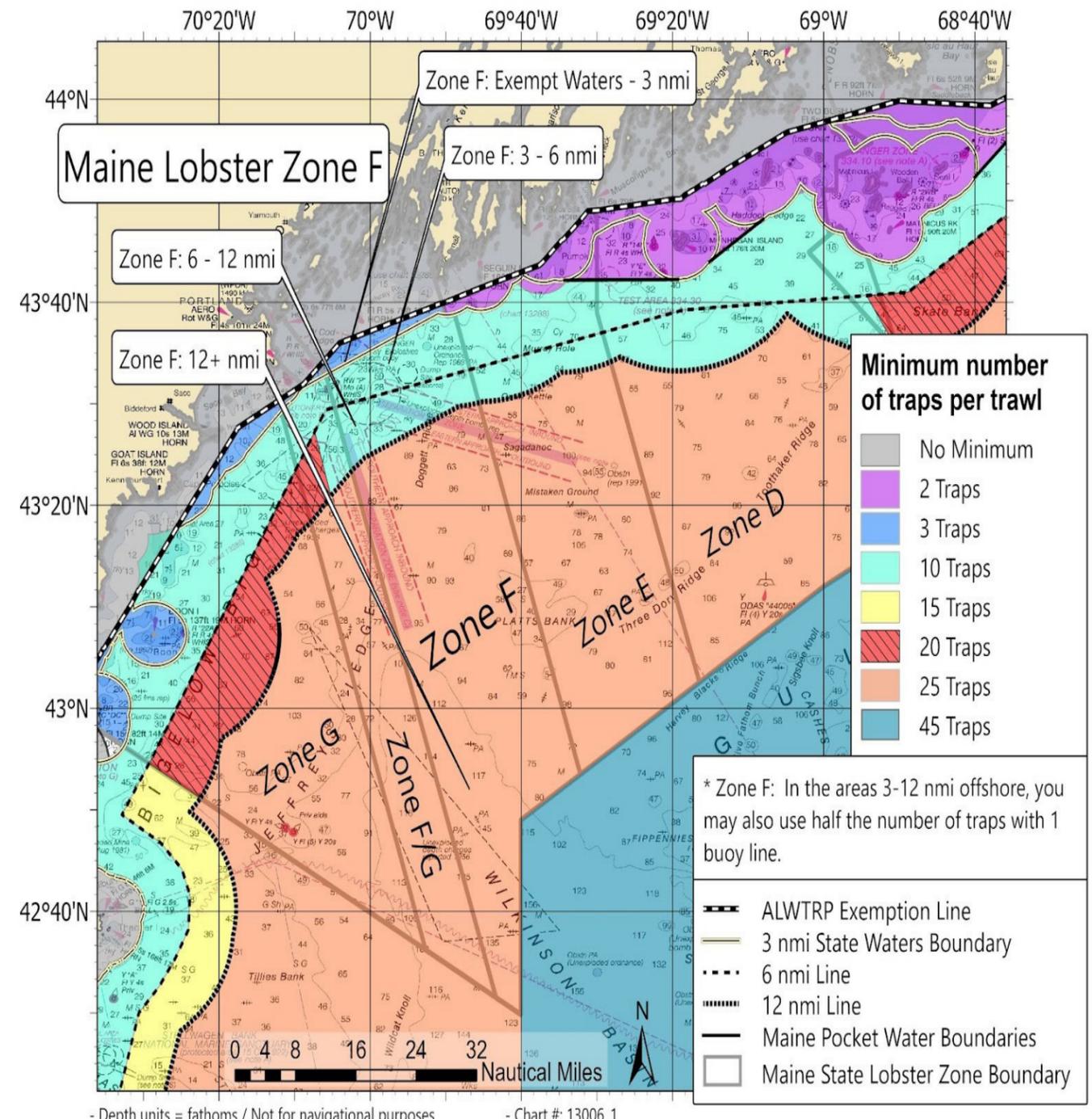
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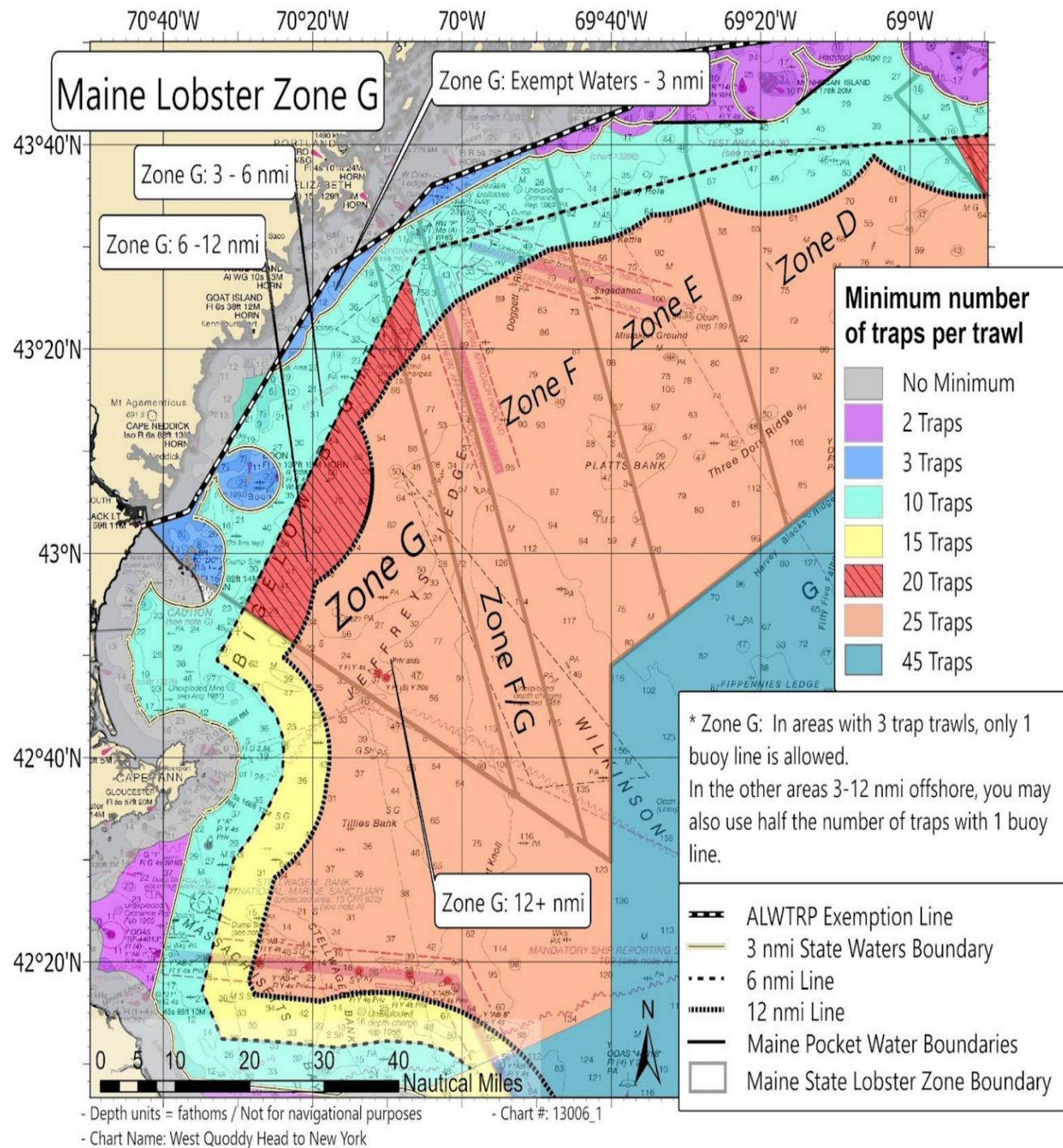
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GEAR MARKING IN MAINE EXEMPT WATERS

Contact Lobster.DMR@maine.gov for questions about gear marking regulations in Maine Exempt Waters.

UNIVERSAL SURFACE SYSTEM MARKING

A surface system is the collection of buoys, radar reflectors, and high flyers that identify the presence of stationary bottom fishing gear. The following rules apply in state and federal waters.

When buoy marking is not already required by state or federal regulations, the letters and numbers to mark gear must be at least 1 inch (2.5 cm) in height, block letters or Arabic numbers, in a color that contrasts with the color of the buoy.

Trap/pot surface buoys must be marked to identify the vessel or fishery with one of the following:

- The owner's motorboat registration number and/or U.S. vessel documentation number
- The federal commercial fishing permit number; or
- Positive identification marking required by the vessel's home-port state.

LOBSTER/JONAH CRAB GEAR MARKING

STATE WATERS

You must have at least 3 **PURPLE** marks.

- One of the marks must be a 3-foot long **SOLID PURPLE** mark within the top 2 fathoms of the surface buoy or within 2 fathoms of the highfliers and buoys at the surface; and
- The other two **PURPLE** marks must each be 12 inches long and placed in the top 50% and bottom 50% of the line.

Please refer to Maine DMR Chapter 75 for state-specific regulations.

FEDERAL WATERS (Effective May 1, 2022)

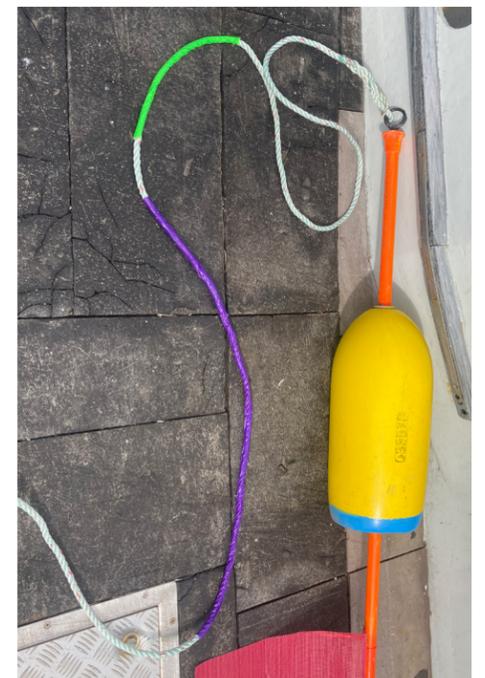
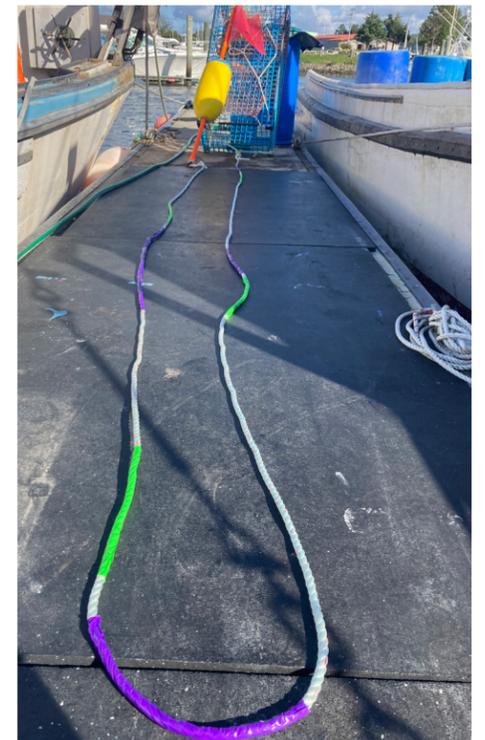
You must have at least 4 sets (**PURPLE** and **GREEN**) of marks.

- One set must be a 3-foot long **SOLID PURPLE** mark within the top 2 fathoms of the surface buoy or within 2 fathoms of the highfliers and buoys at the surface, along with one 12-inch **SOLID GREEN** mark within 6 inches of the **SOLID PURPLE** mark.
- The other three sets must one 12-inch **PURPLE** mark and one 12-inch **GREEN** mark within 6 inches of each other. The sets of **PURPLE** and **GREEN** marks must be spaced in the top, middle, and bottom of the buoy line.

A **solid PURPLE rope** may be used for state-specific gear marks, including the 3-foot solid surface mark. The solid 3-foot marks may be applied with dye, paint, tape, heat-shrink tubing, insertion of a colored rope or braided sleeve, or the line may be marked as approved in writing by the Greater Atlantic Regional Administrator.

Rope with a distinctive PURPLE colored strand throughout or PURPLE and WHITE Candy Cane rope may be used instead of the state specific gear marks in the body of the buoy line. The 12-inch marks below the surface system may be added using dye, paint, tape, heat-shrink tubing, zip ties; spliced in insertion of a colored rope or braided sleeve or other material, or a thin line may be woven into or through the line; or the line may be marked as approved in writing by the Greater Atlantic Regional Administrator.

EXAMPLES OF FEDERAL BUOY LINE MARKING REQUIREMENTS (MAINE)



1700-POUND INSERT AND LINE REQUIREMENTS BY LOCATION

- **ME Exempt State Waters:** See state regulations
- **ME Exempt Line—3 nm:** 1 weak insert 50% down the line OR top 50% of buoy line weak rope
- **ME Zone A West, B, C, D, E; Federal Waters 3–12 nm:** 2 weak inserts at 25% and 50% down the line OR top 50% of buoy line weak rope
- **ME Zone A East, F, and G; Federal Waters 3–12 nm:** 1 weak insert 33% down the line
- **Beyond 12 nm:** 1 weak insert 33% down the line

1700-POUND WEAK INSERTIONS OR LINE

For non-exempt state and all federal waters, the following apply. For Maine exempt waters, please contact Maine DMR.

- Weak inserts and line must be chosen from the list of NMFS-approved gear. To see the most updated list of approved weak line and inserts, please visit the fisheries.noaa.gov/NE-approved-weak web page.
- Weak inserts 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 insert breaks.
- Weak rope can also be used on any buoy line down to the lowest point where a weak insert is required.

Approved Weak Rope

To be approved, the average breaking strength must be within 10 percent of 1,700 lbs.

Currently the fully formed weak ropes approved for use are:

- Rocky Mount (3/8”), Candy Cane (3/8”), and Candy Cane v01/22 (3/8”) (available in purple/white)
- Neocorp 3/8” polyester rope (1021)
- Seaway 5/16” #10 Braid

The approved three-strand ropes may be spliced into traditional buoy ropes to create inserts, or they can be used to replace standard rope as weak rope.

The approved braided ropes can be used as full weak rope (but not inserts) connected to your regular line using a knot at the depth required for your fishing area (the depth of your lowest required weak insertion or the proportion of your rope required to be weak).

Approved Weak Inserts

Weak Rope Inserts (not allowed for braided ropes)

All weak rope (1700-pound breaking strength) inserts must be at least 3 feet in length, must be connected on each end with a tuck or splice, and must be a contrasting color. Approved splices are on our website.



South Shore (Novabraid) Sleeve

Sleeves must be at least 3 feet long and of a contrasting color.



In-line Manufactured Links

All in-line manufactured weak links must be stamped with the breaking strength, must be a contrasting color, and must be connected to the regular-strength rope with a tuck or splice.



Check fisheries.noaa.gov/NE-Approved-Weak for more approved weak ropes, inserts, and rigging methods.

CHANGES TO CLOSURE AREAS

All new and existing closures are modified from restricting all trap/pot fishing to only restricting trap/pot fishing that uses persistent (traditional) buoy lines, except for federal waters in the Outer Cape Lobster Management Area (LMA), which remains closed consistent with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) American lobster Interstate Fishery Management Plan. Gear that does not use persistent buoy lines, such as “ropeless” gear that retrieves trap/pot trawls when the vessel is on-site, is allowed in these areas for research purposes with appropriate state and federal permits (see below).

NEW RESTRICTED AREA AFFECTING MAINE FISHERMEN

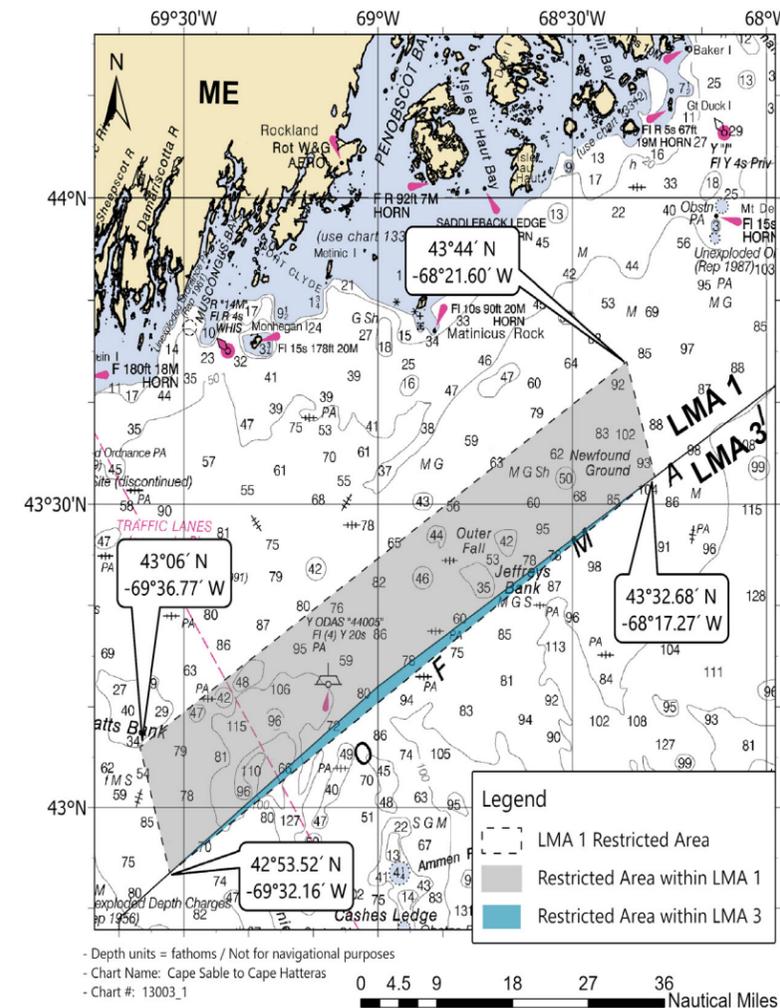
LMA1 RESTRICTED AREA, OFFSHORE MAINE LMA1 ZONES C/D/E:

Closed to buoy lines October 1-January 31 annually.

Longitude	Latitude
-69° 36.77' W	43° 06.00' N
-68° 21.60' W	43° 44.00' N
-68° 17.27' W	43° 32.68' N
-69° 32.16' W	42° 53.52' N
-69° 36.77' W	43° 06.00' N

EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS

Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs) are issued for activities in support of fisheries-related research. There are studies underway to develop fishing methods that do not use buoy lines to retrieve gear and alert other fishermen to the presence of gear on the bottom. Results of this work would enable the fishing industry to operate in areas where persistent buoy lines are prohibited. To participate in this research, federally permitted vessels must operate under EFPs. Fishing without the use of vertical lines also requires a special permit from Maine DMR. If you are interested in testing ropeless gear or have another idea for research on fishing without persistent buoy lines, please contact your NOAA Fisheries regional office (978-281-9315 or nmfs.gar.researchpermit@noaa.gov) and Maine DMR (Lobster.DMR@maine.gov).



QUESTIONS?

For questions about Maine state regulations, contact Lobster.DMR@maine.gov.

For questions about federal regulations, contact:
 Marisa Trego, Take Reduction Team Coordinator: (978) 282-8484, marisa.trego@noaa.gov
 John Higgins, Northeast Fisheries Liaison: (207) 610-3282, john.higgins@noaa.gov
 Rob Martin, Northeast Gear Specialist: (617) 710-6322, robert.martin@noaa.gov
WWW.FISHERIES.NOAA.GOV/ALWTRP