

NORTHERN GEAR RESTRICTED AREA I

Point	N. Lat.	W. Long.
NGA1	41°00'	71°00'
NGA2	41°00'	71°30'
NGA3	40°00'	72°40'
NGA4	40°00'	72°05'
NGA1	41°00'	71°00'

* * * * *

(d) *Gear Restricted Area Access*

Program—Vessels that are subject to the provisions of the Southern and Northern Gear Restricted Areas, as specified in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, respectively, may fish for, or possess, non-exempt species using trawl nets having a minimum mesh size less than that specified in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, provided that:

(1) The vessel possesses on board all valid required Federal fishery permits and a Scup GRA Access Program Authorization issued by the Regional Administrator, Northeast Region, and is in compliance with all conditions and restrictions specified in the Scup GRA Access Program Authorization;

(2) The vessel carries a NMFS-approved scup GRA monitor on board if any portion of the trip will be, or is, in a GRA;

(3) The vessel has installed on board an operational VMS unit that meets the requirements specified in § 648.9;

(4) In addition to the above advance notice for accessing a GRA, a vessel owner or operator must notify NMFS of his/her intention to fish in the GRA at least 5 working days prior to the date he/she intends to depart on each trip into a GRA. For each of these reports, a vessel owner or operator must submit the following information: Vessel name and permit number; owner and operator's names; owner and operator's phone numbers; date and time of departure; port of departure; and the specific GRA to be fished;

(5) On the day that the vessel leaves port to fish under the GRA Access Program, the vessel owner or operator must declare the vessel into the GRA Access Program, in accordance with instructions to be provided by the Regional Administrator prior to the vessel leaving port;

(6) The owner or operator of a vessel with a GRA Access Authorization submit reports through the VMS, in accordance with instructions to be provided by the Regional Administrator, for each day fished when declared into the GRA Access Program. The reports must be submitted in 24-hour intervals,

for each day beginning at 0000 hours and ending at 2400 hours. The reports must be submitted by 0900 hours of the following day and must include the following information:

(i) Total pounds/kilograms of scup discarded.

(ii) [Reserved]

(7) A vessel which does not have a valid Coast Guard Inspection Sticker is deemed inadequate or unsafe for purposes of carrying a NMFS-approved GRA monitor and will be prohibited from participating in the GRA Access Program until the vessel is inspected by the Coast Guard and receives its inspection sticker;

(8) The vessel owner will be responsible for paying the cost of the GRA monitor; and

(9) The GRA Access Program for each GRA will end when the discard of scup is projected to be 50,000 lb (22.68 mt) for the Northern GRA and 70,000 lb (31.75 mt) for the Southern GRA. Termination of the GRA Access Program for each area will be made through notification in the **Federal Register** and notification of vessel operators by fax.

[FR Doc. 03-29598 Filed 11-26-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P