

### Redfish Exemption Program Revision Coordinators

Name	Organization	Position
David Leveille	Northeast Fishery Sectors II and VI	Manager
Hank Soule	Sustainable Harvest Sector III	Manager

*In FY2019, vessels enrolled in these sectors harvested most redfish catch.*

#### Objectives

- 1) Restore some flexibility lost to the fleet in the FY2020 contraction of the redfish exempt fishing zone.
- 2) Remove areas with little opportunity of substantial redfish catch from the exemption zone.
- 3) Reduce to the extent practicable bycatch of other groundfish stocks.

## **Redfish Exemption Program Revision Consultees** (\*\* Participant in original REDNET study)

Name	Organization			Position
Maggie Raymond **	Associated Fisheries of Maine **; FV Olympia **			Manager; owner
Gene Bergson	FV Allagash	FV Harmony	FV Teresa Marie III	Manager
	FV Blue Canyon	FV Morue	FV Teresa Marie IV	
	FV Carrabassett	FV Nobska		
Tory Bramante **	FV America **	FV Padre Pio	FV American Pride	Owner
Willie Viola **	FV Black Beauty **			Owner
Brian Jannelle	FV Blue Canyon			Operator
David Osier	FV Blue Water III	FV Paulo Marc	FV Tara Lynn	Owner
	FV Christina Carol			
Gus Sanfilippo	FV Capt. Dominic			Owner/Operator
Bart McNeel	FV Emmy Rose	FV Patriot	FV William Lynn	Owner
	FV Lynn & William	FV Sea Rambler		
Aldie Leeman	FV Francis Dawn			Operator
Busty Brancalone	FV Grace Marie			Owner/Operator
Terry Alexander **	FV Jocka **			Owner/Operator
Tom Simpson	FV Lynn & William			Operator
Tom Testaverde Jr.	FV Midnight Sun			Operator
Enzo Russo	FV Miss Trish			Owner/Operator
Clark Sandler	FV Sea Farmer II			Owner
Dick Kolseth	FV Teresa Marie III			Operator
Luke DeWildt	FV Teresa Marie III	FV Morue		Operator
Jerry Leeman	FV Teresa Marie IV			Operator
Robbie Roberge	FV Three Girls			Owner/Operator
Mike Walsh **	FV Boomer Too	FV Atlantic Prince	FV Guardian **	Owner
	FV American Heritage	FV Olympia		
Jackie Odell	Northeast Seafood Coalition			Manager
Libby Etrie	Northeast Sector Service Network			Manager

## **Background**

### **Redfish Exemption Program General Catch Performance Metrics**

1. At least 50% of the sector's (not any individual vessel's) monthly landings from exempted tows must be redfish.
  - If the threshold is not met, the sector is required to take corrective action to reacquire 50%. Missed thresholds are expected to occur at times when redfish occasionally/seasonally scatter, the sector is to address the issue.
2. If groundfish discards on observed trips exceed 5% of groundfish catch, the sector is expected to take corrective action.

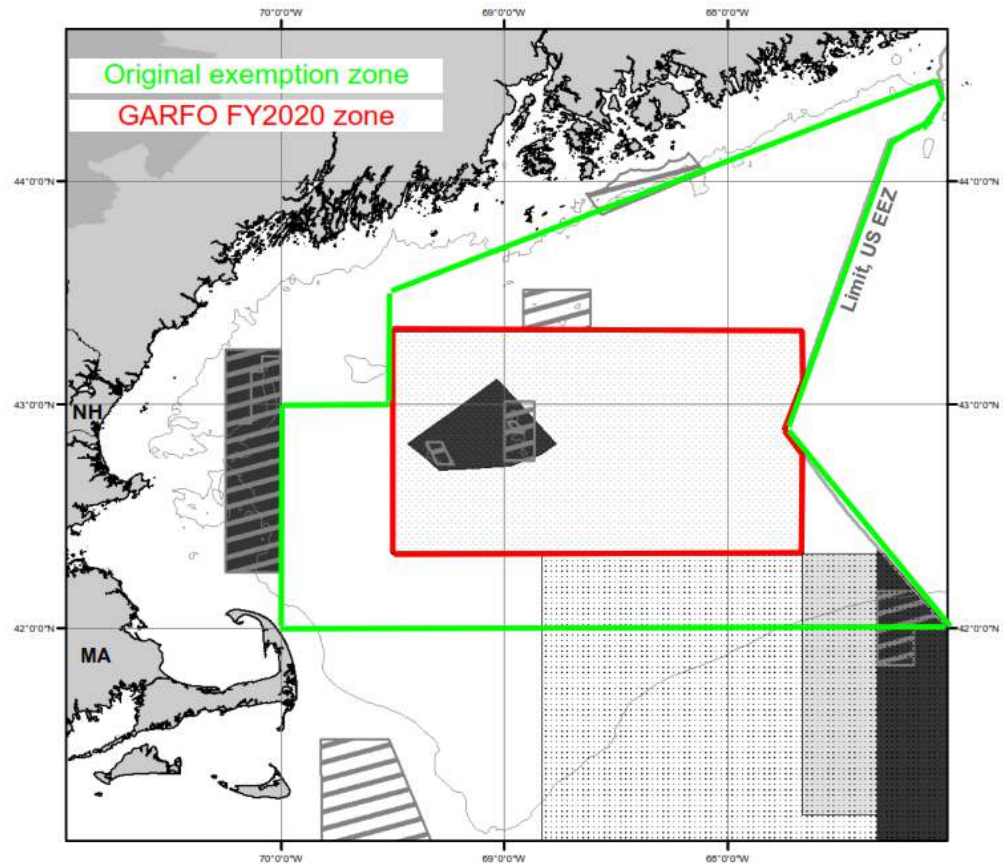
### **Recent Performance Metric Results**

1. In the last four years, the 50% thresholds has been missed, including a few cases of consecutive monthly shortfalls.
  - A shortfall can be just one trip conducted in a given month.
  - When this has occurred, sectors have taken corrective actions including restricting allowable exempt fishing time/thresholds, or barring vessels from participation.
2. Discards have not exceeded 5% in recent history.

## Background

### GARFO Area Modification

- On April 27, GARFO published its sector Interim Final Rule for FY 2020.
- GARFO contracted the redfish exemption zone based on its analysis of species catch abundance in various areas of the zone.
- GARFO did not cite a systemic failure of the exemption, noting “All of the sectors took steps to improve compliance with the thresholds and were able to restore compliance with the 50-percent threshold,”
- GARFO stated it wished to “reduce the risk of sectors falling out of compliance” with the exemption.



## **Background**

### **Consultees' areas of disagreement with GARFO**

1. No notice to fleet of exemption review, or that zone contraction was under consideration.
2. One-week notice to fleet of significant zone contraction.
3. Insufficient biological/programmatic justification for immediate unilateral action.
4. Supporting analysis included extraneous catch data.
5. Rigid zone contraction makes it harder at times to meet 50% threshold.

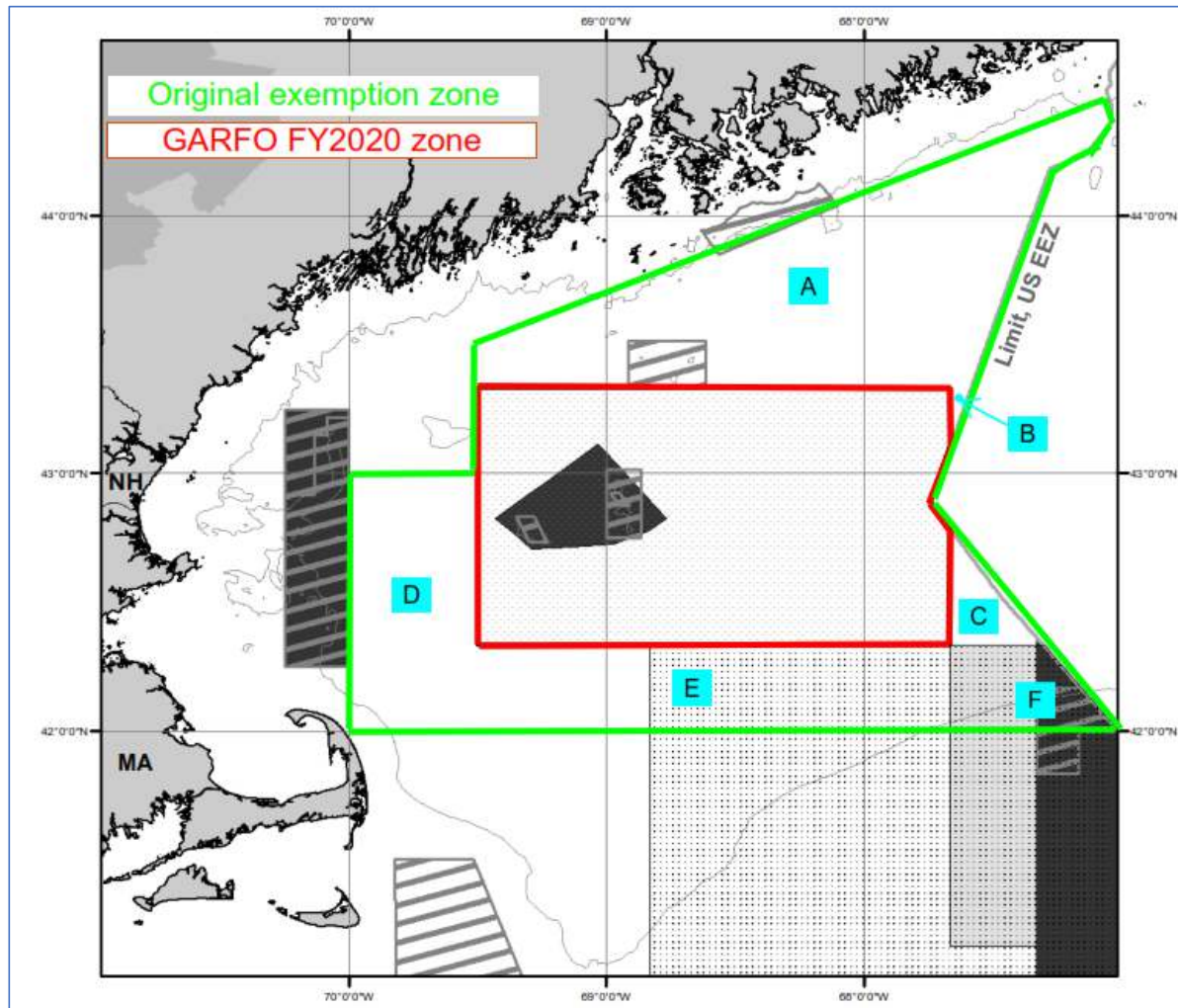
### **Consultees' areas of agreement with GARFO**

1. Some of the original zone contains no productive redfish grounds and can be removed.
2. Vessels which consistently do not meet thresholds undermine the intent of the program.
3. If the intent is to chiefly catch redfish, an annual threshold should be set above 50%.

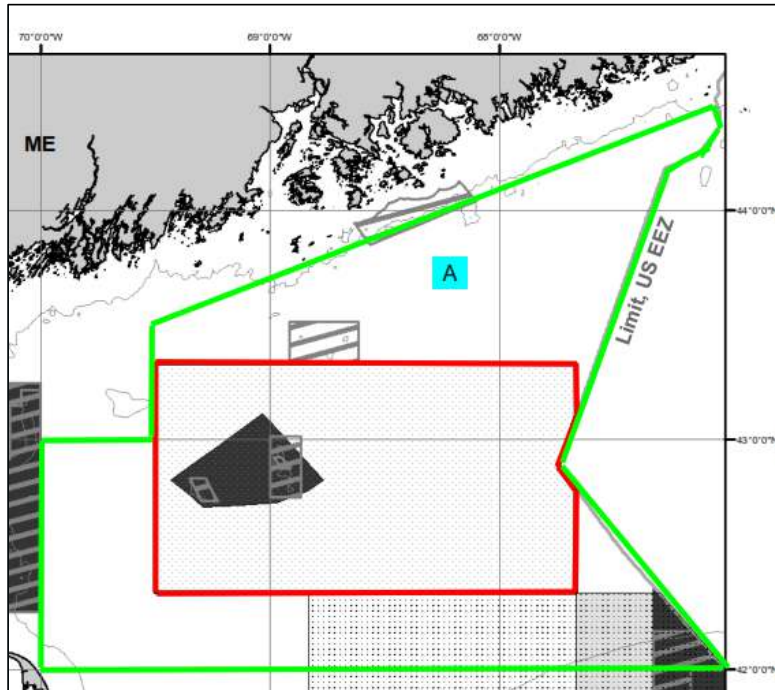
### **The Solution**

- Revised exemption zone more finely tuned for flexibility and reducing bycatch.
- Increased accountability measures and performance standards.

## Areas A - F

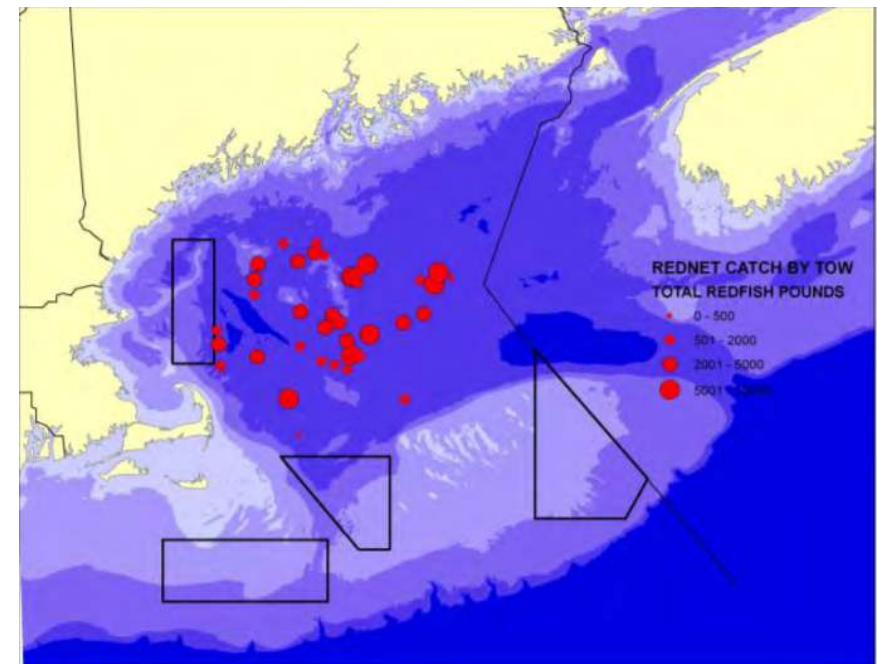


## Area A



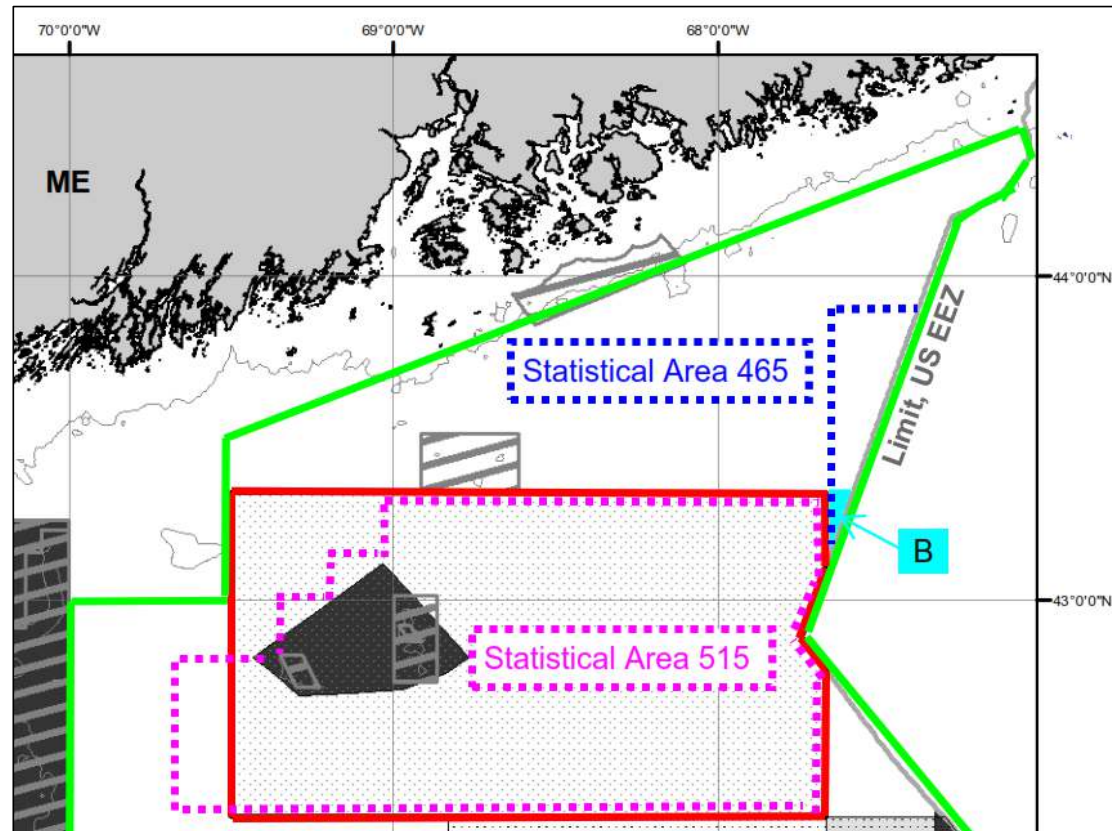
- Area “A” is largely mud bottom with little opportunity for significant redfish catch. No reason to retain the area in an exemption for this stock.
- Removal reduces potential catch of white hake.
- Strong consensus: **Remove** “A” from exemption.

## REDNET





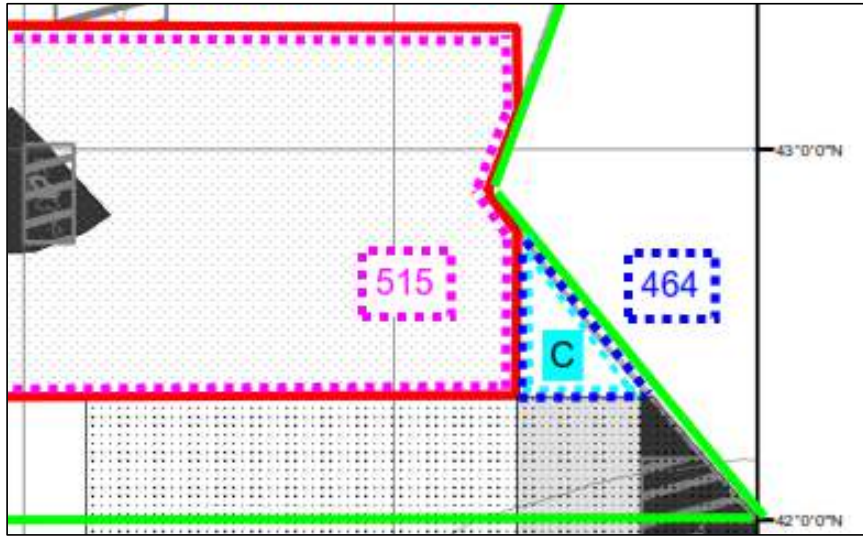
### Area B



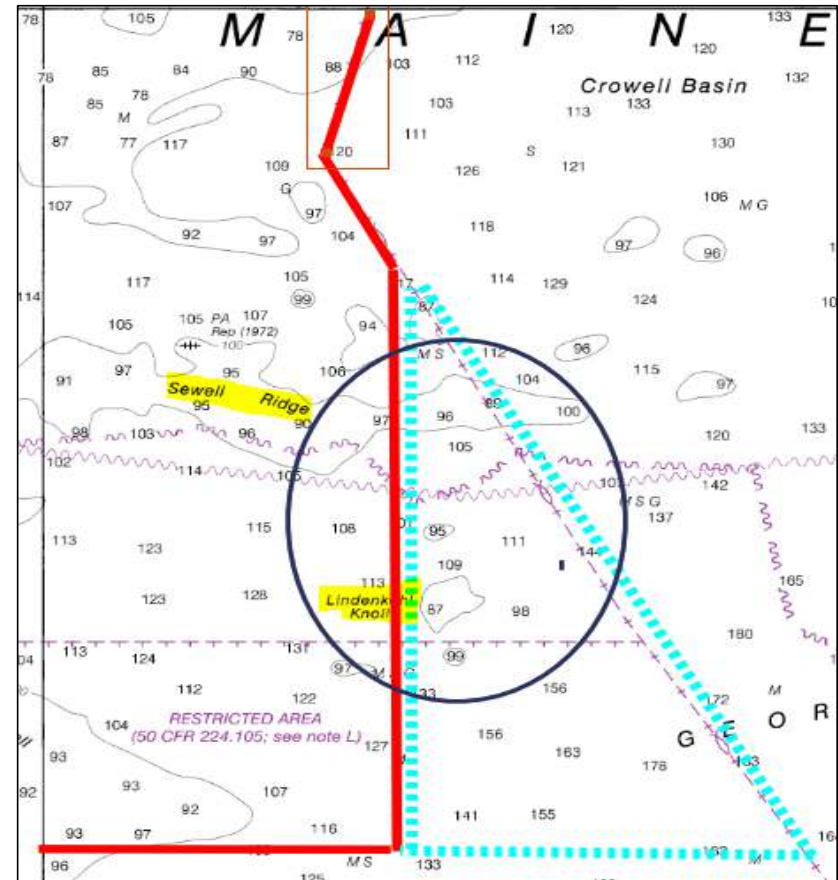
- Appears to be a “closure of convenience” to match upper-right boundary of statistical area 515.
- No particular reason to restrict vessels from fishing up to the EEZ limit, as they may do in the area immediately below “B.” Catches in “B” may be more representative of area 515 than all of 465.
- Consensus: **Restore “B”** to exemption.



## Area C

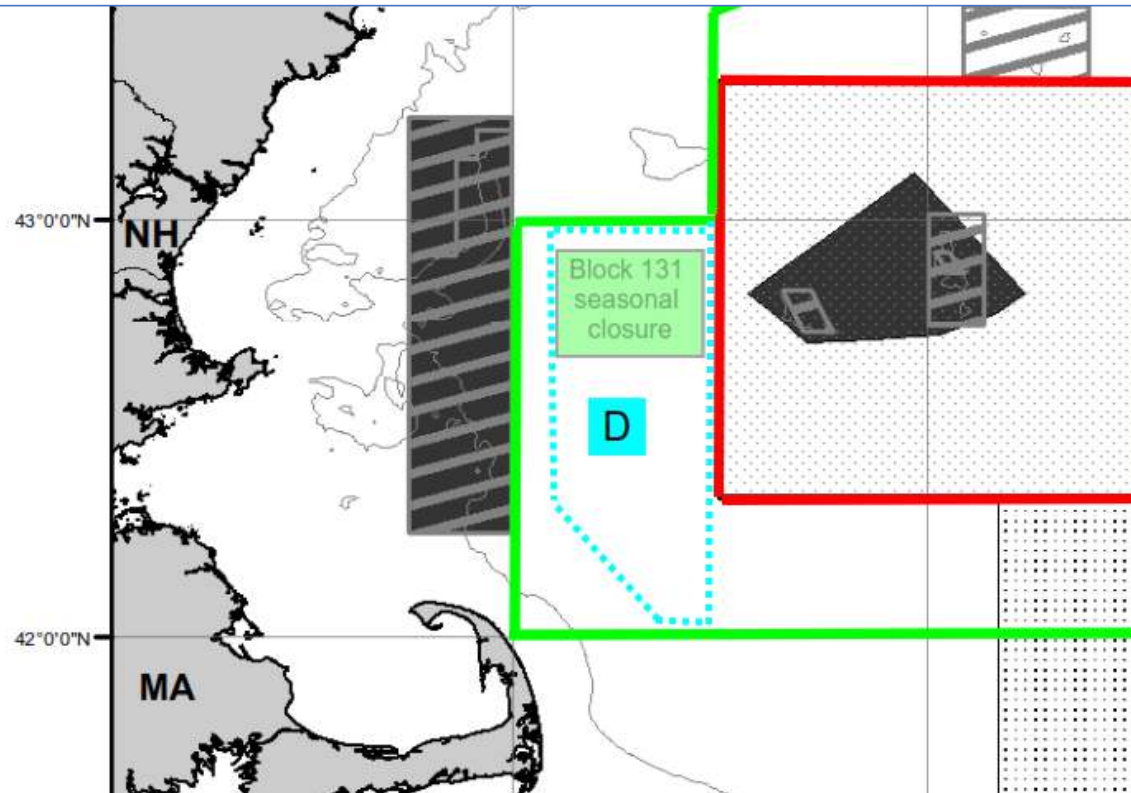


- Higher priority: Lindenkohl Knoll and east Sewell Ridge areas are productive locations for redfish catch.
- Can also have high concentrations of pollock catch in the last part of the calendar year; per Objective #4 fishermen recommend a closure to redfish exempted fishing during that time to minimize it.
- Consensus: **Partially restore “C”** to exemption, on a seasonal basis (January through August only).



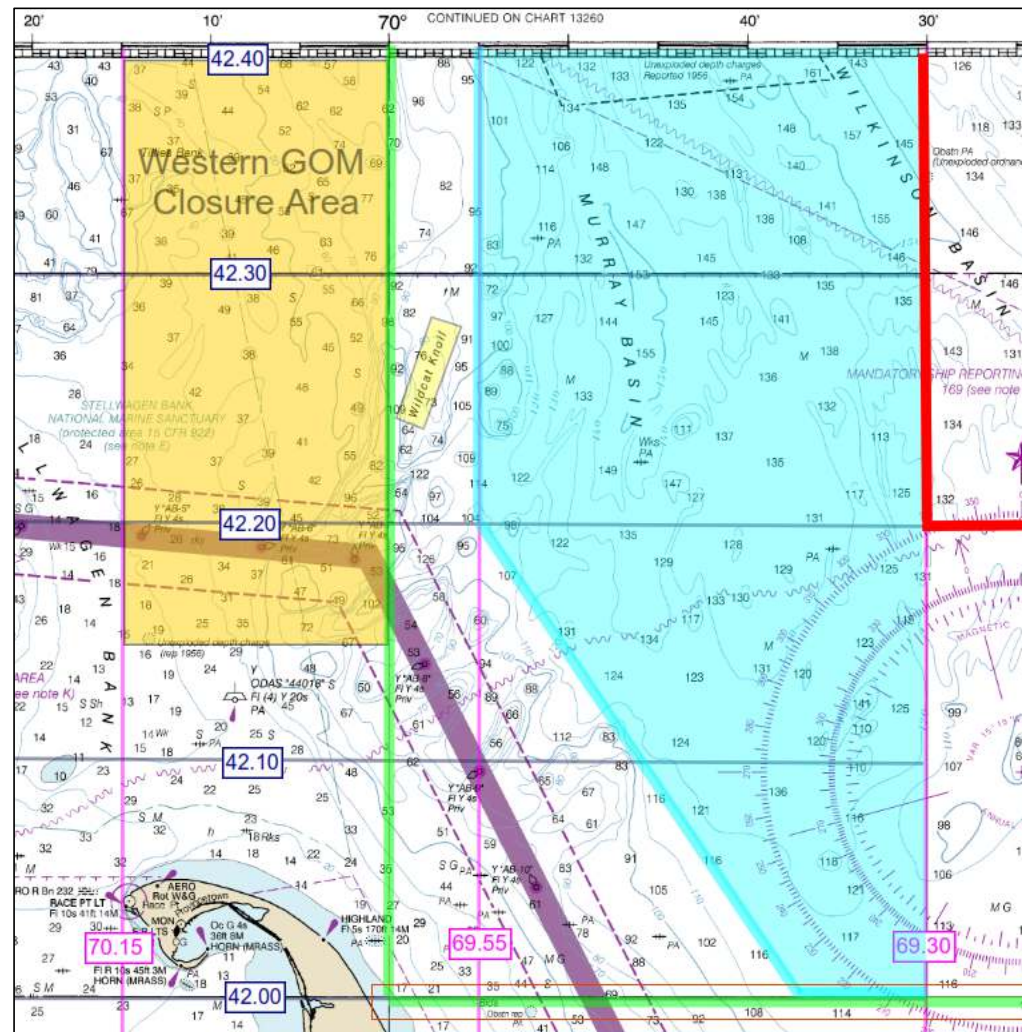
Area C: Open Jan – Aug, closed Sep - Dec

### Area D

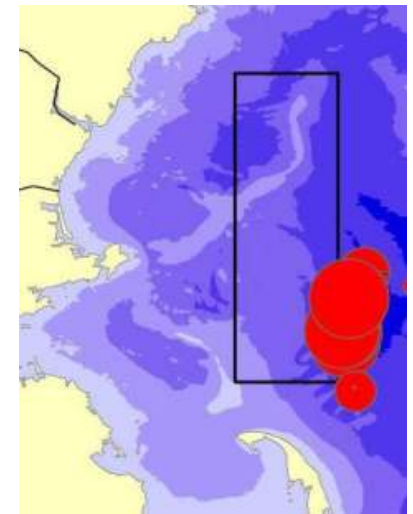


- Some concern about presence of cod, and concentrations of small pollock.
- Fishermen note concentrations of juvenile fish, including abundant but small redfish, on Wildcat Knoll and southward in more shoal water that should not be caught with small mesh.
- Consensus: **Partially restore “D”** to exemption, but be mindful of the boundary line’s longitude and depth to ensure adequate resource protection. Retain all existing cod conservation measures.

**Area D – Partially Restore To Exemption, with protection for juvenile fish in shallower waters**



**REDNET**



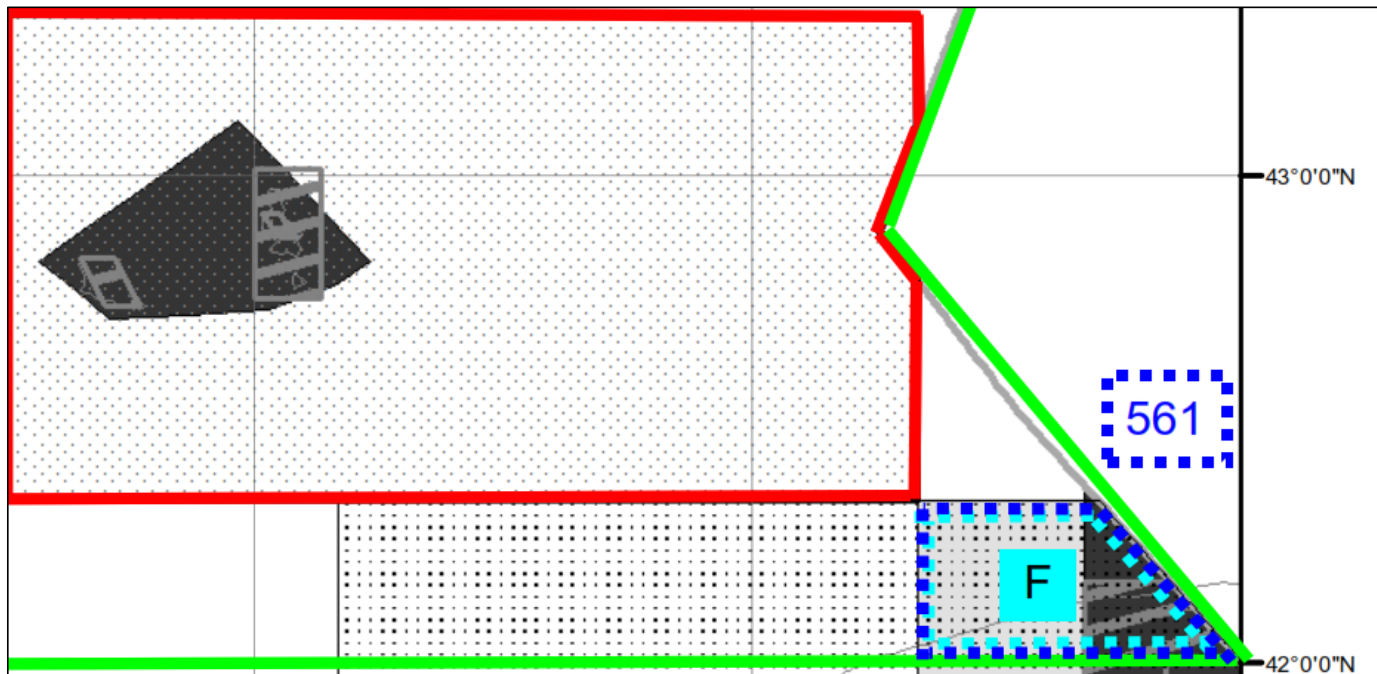


### Area E



- An important reopening to help the exempted fleet maintain high levels of redfish catch.
- Difficulties achieving the 50% threshold in October 2020 would have been eliminated if exempted fleet was allowed to fish further southward as they could before.
- Non-exempt trips fishing 6.5 inch gear earlier this year found abundant redfish in the area.
- Strong consensus: **Restore "E"** to its original exemption boundaries.

### Area F

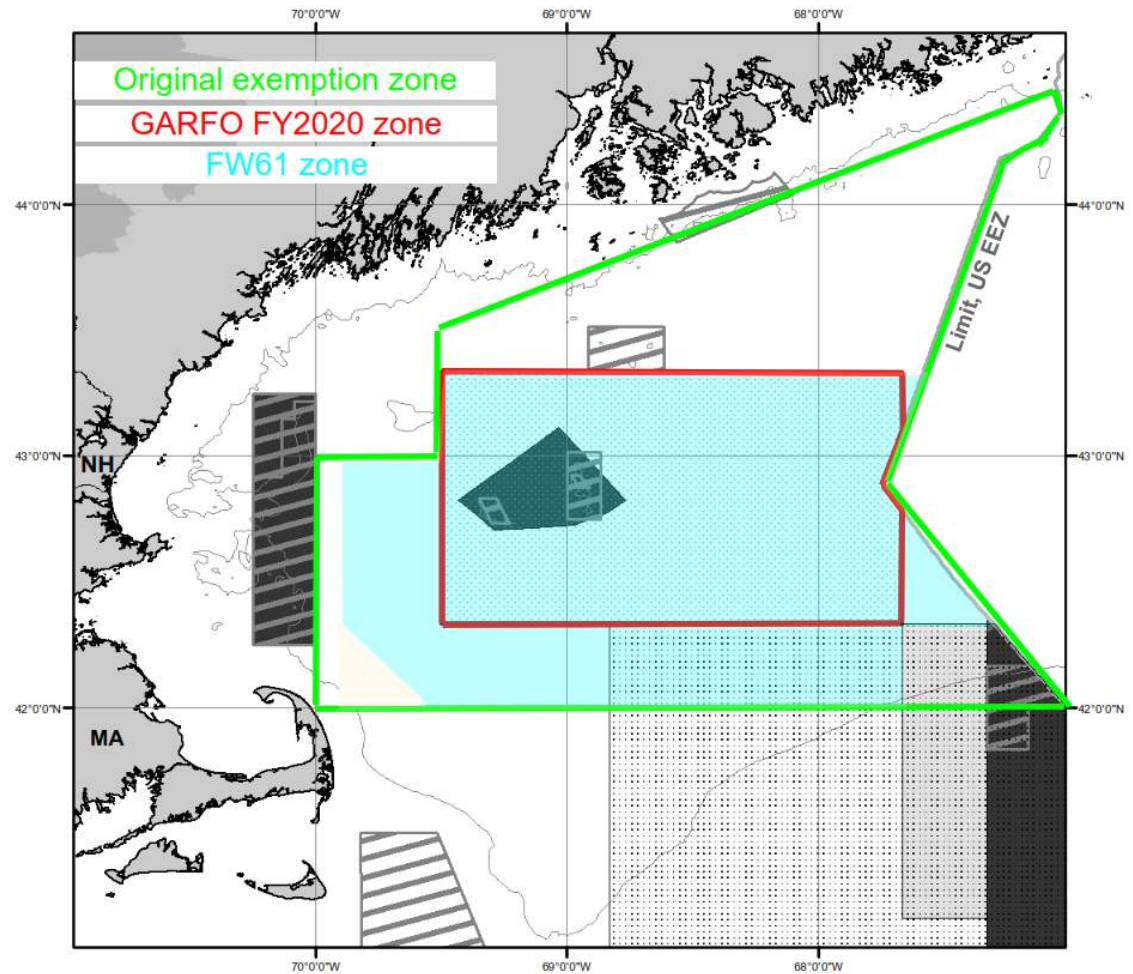


- Higher concentrations of cod and haddock make it difficult to achieve threshold.
- Also some mud bottom not productive for redfishing.
- Consensus: **Remove "F"** from exemption

## Summary of Area Changes

### Objectives

- 1) Restore some flexibility lost to the fleet in the FY2020 contraction of the redfish exempt fishing zone.
- 2) Remove areas with little opportunity of substantial redfish catch from the exemption zone.
- 3) Reduce to the extent practicable bycatch of other groundfish stocks.





### **Increased Accountability Measures**

- 1) New mandatory annual exempted redfish catch composition threshold of 55%. Intended to help ensure vessels are targeting redfish, while not setting the bar too high for new entrants.
- 2) Defined performance expectations for the monthly 50% threshold: A sector may not fail to achieve the monthly threshold more than 3 months per fishing year, or more than two consecutive months. If either limit is breached, the sector is suspended from participation in the redfish exemption program for the remainder of that fishing year.

The sector would then on a 'probation' in the next fishing year. If the sector again breaches either limit, the sector is suspended from participation in the exemption program for the remainder of the fishing year, plus all of the next fishing year.