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**NOAA Proposes New Rules to Protect Adult Lobsters
and Improve Lobster Management**

NOAA today proposed measures to improve data collection and to better protect large lobsters which are important contributors to a healthy lobster resource. The proposed measures would also improve consistency between state and federal regulations.

The proposed measures include a new mandatory electronic reporting requirement for federal lobster dealers and changes to the lobster maximum carapace length and v-notch requirements in federal waters. The maximum size restrictions vary depending on where the lobster are caught, but would be consistent with state regulations in lobster management areas within southern New England, the Mid-Atlantic, and offshore waters. A maximum size requirement is also proposed for lobster harvested in the Outer Cape Management Area where there is currently no maximum size limit. The proposed v-notch requirement would permit any lobster bearing a v-notch less than 1/8 inch to be harvested, allowing female lobster an additional molt prior to harvest. This would also apply to the Outer Cape Management Area.

A copy of the proposed rule and the associated draft environmental assessment may be obtained from the Northeast Regional Office web site at www.nero.noaa.gov. Electronic submission of comments on the proposed rule can be made via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov. All comments will be accepted until 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on or before November 20, 2008.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.