



St. Petersburg, Florida 33702-2211  
Tel: (727) 563-9070  
Fax: (727) 563-0207  
Email: [MRAG.Americas@mragamericas.com](mailto:MRAG.Americas@mragamericas.com)

President: Andrew A. Rosenberg, Ph.D.

## **Gulf of Maine Lobster MSC-F-30017**

### **Stakeholder Announcement**

**October 1, 2021**

MRAG Americas announces that the Gulf of Maine lobster fishery certificate has been reinstated effective September 01, 2021.

This fishery was suspended 31 August 2020 pending improvements to the management system pertaining to interactions between the lobster fishery and North Atlantic right whales. In order to lift the suspension, new management measures, in the final stages of development during the site visit for the present audit, needed to be in place to achieve SG60 for PI 2.3.2.

*The Final Rule on the Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Commercial Fishing Operations; Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Regulations; Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act Provisions; American Lobster Fishery* was published 31 August 2021. Upon review of the Final Rule, the assessment team concluded that the PI 2.3.2 now scores above 60, exceeding the minimum requirement for certification, and thus lifts the current suspension on this fishery's certificate. The effective date of the certificate reinstatement is 1 September 2021, corresponding with the publication of the Final Rule (i.e when the conforming management measures were put in place).

On September 7, 2021, MRAG submitted a variation request to the Marine Stewardship Council requesting the ability to back date the lifting of suspension date to September 1, 2021. On September 13, 2021 the MSC approved the request based on the following factors:

- New information shows that the recently published Final Rule will probably address the cause for suspension and the Final Rule was published on August 31, 2021, 1 day before the date to which the CAB is asking that the suspension be back-dated.

More information, including a detailed discussion of the fishery suspension, can be found in the reports here: <https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/gulf-of-maine-lobster-fishery/>. The surveillance audit report will be available for download from this website October 1, 2021.

If you have any questions regarding the change in certification status please contact:

MRAG Americas, Inc.  
8950 Martin Luther King Jr. Street North, Suite 202  
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

Ph: 1-206-669-0439  
Fax: 1-727-563-0207  
[certification@mrغامericas.com](mailto:certification@mrغامericas.com)

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