

The Bottom Line Project (Maine Poly Groundline Exchange Program)

The Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation (GOMLF) received funding from Congress to conduct the Maine Poly Groundline Exchange Program (Bottom Line Project). This is a voluntary program to provide economic assistance to lobstermen who want to convert from floating to sinking groundlines in order to reduce the likelihood of entanglement for large whales, such as the highly endangered North Atlantic Right Whale.

The first phase of the Bottom Line Project will target federal permit holders and inshore lobstermen from southern Maine who have already been impacted by DAM closures as a result of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan regulations. DAM closures occur when an aggregation of three or more Right Whales is sighted, and require lobstermen to temporarily remove their gear from the area unless they are fishing with sinking groundline, in addition to complying with other gear requirements.

Industry response to a state-wide survey and availability of additional funding will determine the extent of the program along the entire coast. All interested Maine lobstermen will be invited to participate.

Lobstermen will be invited to turn in their floating groundlines and receive a voucher to be used toward the purchase of sinking groundline. All floating line collected from this program will be recycled.

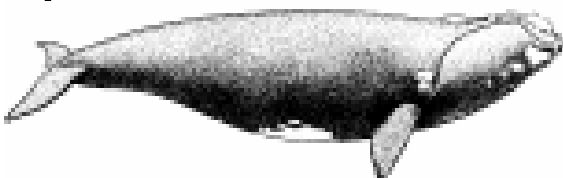


FALL 2006

- Consult with an Industry Advisory Panel of lobstermen from all seven zones
- Design an Industry Survey to assess the volume of participation
 - ⇒ Mail to all Maine lobster license holders
 - ⇒ Determine the level of interest in exchanging floating groundline for sinking groundline

SPRING 2007

- Conduct Maine Poly Groundline Exchange Program
 - ⇒ Begin collection of floating line (up to 1 million lbs)
 - ⇒ Issue vouchers to lobstermen in exchange for their floating line
 - ⇒ Vouchers used toward the purchase of sinking rope at participating dealers



For more information, please contact:

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GULF OF MAINE LOBSTER FOUNDATION



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