



New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

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To all American eel harvesters:

Currently all eel traps and pots must be constructed with mesh at least ½ inch throughout *with the exception that from January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2016 the mesh may be smaller than ½ inch but only if the trap or pot has an escape panel at least 4 inch by 4 inch in size made of material with a mesh that is ½ inch or greater.* The ½ inch minimum mesh is a compliance criterion for the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Plan for American Eel and is a mesh size designed to allow escapement of eels less than the 9 inch minimum size limit. The Plan included the provision to allow the use of eel pots or traps with mesh less than ½ inch with an escape panel during the first three years after the Plan implementation to give eel harvesters a 3-year period in which to transition their existing equipment to pots or traps with mesh that is ½ inch or larger throughout.

As you prepare to set traps or pots in 2016, please keep in mind that this is the last year you will be able to harvest eels using pots and traps with mesh smaller than ½ inch with the escape panel. **Beginning January 1, 2017 you will be required to use eel pots or traps with mesh that is ½ inch throughout.** Please plan any equipment purchases in 2016 accordingly.

Regards,

Cheri Patterson
Chief of Marine Fisheries

Cc: Lt. Delayne Brown, District 6 Chief

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