

Fishery Conservation and Management

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PART 697—ATLANTIC COASTAL FISHERIES COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT

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AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 1851 note; 16 U.S.C. 5101 *et seq.*

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Subpart A—General Provisions

§ 697.1 Purpose and scope.

The regulations in this part are issued under the authority of section 804(b) of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 5101 *et seq.*, and section 6 of the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act Appropriations Authorization, 16 U.S.C. 1851 note, and govern fishing in the EEZ on the Atlantic Coast for species covered by those acts.

§ 697.2 Definitions.

(a) In addition to the definitions in the Magnuson-Stevens Act and in

§§ 600.10 and 648.2 of this chapter, for the purposes of this part, the following terms have the following meanings:

American lobster or lobster means *Homarus americanus*.

Approved TED means any approved TED as defined at § 217.12 of this title.

Atlantic striped bass means members of stocks or populations of the species *Morone saxatilis* found in the waters of the Atlantic Ocean north of Key West, FL.

Atlantic sturgeon means members of stocks or populations of the species *Acipenser oxyrinchus*.

Berried female means a female American lobster bearing eggs attached to the abdominal appendages.

Block Island Southeast Light means the aid to navigation light located at Southeast Point, Block Island, RI, and defined as follows: Located at 40°09.2' N. lat., 71°33.1' W. long; is 201 ft (61.3 m) above the water; and is shown from a brick octagonal tower 67 ft (20.4 m) high attached to a dwelling on the southeast point of Block Island, RI.

BRD means bycatch reduction device.

Carapace length is the straight line measurement from the rear of the eye socket parallel to the center line of the carapace to the posterior edge of the carapace. The carapace is the unsegmented body shell of the American lobster.

Certified BRD means any BRD, as defined in part 622, Appendix D of this chapter: Specifications for Certified BRDs.

Charter or head boat means any vessel carrying fishing persons or parties for a per capita fee, for a charter fee, or any other type of fee.

Commercial dive vessel means any vessel carrying divers for a per capita fee, a charter fee, or any other type of fee.

Commercial purposes means for the purpose of selling, trading, transferring, or bartering all or part of the fish harvested.

Commission means the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission established under the interstate compact consented to and approved by Congress in Pub. L. 77-539 and Pub. L. 81-721.

Continuous transit means that a vessel does not have fishing gear in the

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water and remains continuously underway.

CPH means Confirmation of Permit History.

Crab trawl means any trawl net that is rigged for fishing and has a mesh size of 3.0 inches (7.62 cm), as measured between the centers of opposite knots when pulled taut.

Cull American lobster means a whole American lobster that is missing one or both claws.

Dealer means any person who receives, for a commercial purpose (other than solely for transport on land), any species of fish, the harvest of which is managed by this part, from the owner or operator of a vessel issued a valid permit under this part, or any person who receives, for a commercial purpose (other than solely for transport on land), any species of fish managed under this part.

De minimis state means any state where the landings are so low that the Commission's Fisheries Management Board has exempted that state from some of its regulatory responsibilities under an Interstate Fishery Management Plan.

Dredge means a gear consisting of a mouth frame attached to a holding bag constructed of metal rings or mesh.

Egg Production Rebuilding Schedule means the schedule identified in section 2.5 of Amendment 3 to the Commission's ISFMP.

Escape vent means an opening in a lobster trap designed to allow lobster smaller than the legal minimum size to escape from the trap.

Fishing trip or trip means a period of time during which fishing is conducted, beginning when the vessel leaves port and ending when the vessel returns to port.

Fishing year means, for the American lobster fishery, from May 1 through April 30 of the following year.

Flynet means any trawl net, except shrimp trawl nets containing certified BRDs and approved TEDs, when required under § 227.72(e)(2) of this title, and except trawl nets that comply with the gear restrictions specified at § 648.104 of this chapter for the summer flounder fishery and contain an approved TED, when required under § 227.72 (e)(2) of this title.

Ghost panel means a panel, or other mechanism, designed to allow for the escapement of lobster after a period of time if the trap has been abandoned or lost.

Horseshoe crab means members of stocks or populations of the species *Limulus polyphemus*.

ISFMP means the Commission's Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster, as amended.

Land means to begin offloading fish, to offload fish, or to enter port with fish.

Lobster day-at-sea with respect to the American lobster fishery means each 24-hour period of time during which a fishing vessel is absent from port in which the vessel intends to fish for, possess, or land, or fishes for, possesses, or lands American lobster.

Lobster permit means a Federal limited access American lobster permit.

Lobster trap means any structure or other device, other than a net, that is placed, or designed to be placed, on the ocean bottom and is designed for or is capable of, catching lobsters. Red crab fishing gear, fished deeper than 200 fathoms (365.8 m), and fishing gear fished by a vessel not issued a limited access lobster permit under § 697.4(a), are gear deemed not to be lobster traps for the purpose of this part, and are not subject to the provisions of this part.

Lobster trap trawl means 2 or more lobster traps, all attached to a single ground line.

Management area means each of the geographical areas identified in this part for management purposes under the lobster ISFMP.

Montauk light means the aid to navigation light located at Montauk Point, NY, and defined as follows: Located at 41°04.3' N. lat., 71°51.5' W. long.; is shown from an octagonal, pyramidal tower, 108 ft (32.9 m) high; and has a covered way to a dwelling.

Natural Atlantic sturgeon means any Atlantic sturgeon that is not the result of a commercial aquaculture operation, and includes any naturally occurring Atlantic sturgeon (those Atlantic sturgeon naturally spawned and grown in rivers and ocean waters of the Atlantic Coast).

Parts thereof means any part of an American lobster. A part of a lobster counts as one lobster.

Point Judith Light means the aid to navigation light located at Point Judith, RI, and defined as follows: Located at 41°21.7' N. lat., 71°28.9' W. long.; is 65 ft (19.8 m) above the water; and is shown from an octagonal tower 51 ft (15.5 m) high.

Recreational fishing means fishing that is not intended to, nor results in the barter, trade, or sale of fish.

Recreational fishing vessel means any vessel from which no fishing other than recreational fishing is conducted. Charter and head boats and commercial dive vessels are not considered recreational fishing vessels.

Regional Administrator means the Regional Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS, or a designee.

Retain means to fail to return any species specified under §697.7 of this chapter to the sea immediately after the hook has been removed or after the species has otherwise been released from the capture gear.

Sea sampler/observer means any person required or authorized to be carried on a vessel for conservation and management purposes by regulations or permits.

Shrimp trawl net means any trawl net that is rigged for fishing and has a mesh size less than 2.50 inches (6.35 cm), as measured between the centers of opposite knots when pulled taut, and each try net, as defined in §622.2 of this chapter, that is rigged for fishing and has a headrope length longer than 16 ft (4.9 m).

Stocked Atlantic sturgeon means any Atlantic sturgeon cultured in a hatchery that is placed in rivers and ocean waters of the Atlantic Coast to enhance the Atlantic sturgeon spawning stocks.

TED means Turtle Excluder Device, which is a device designed to be installed in a trawl net forward of the codend for the purpose of excluding sea turtles from the net.

Trawl means a cone or funnel-shaped net that is towed through the water, and can include a pair trawl that is towed simultaneously by two boats.

V-notched American lobster means any female American lobster bearing a V-

shaped notch in the flipper next to and to the right of the center flipper as viewed from the rear of the lobster (underside of the lobster down and tail toward the viewer), or any female American lobster that is mutilated in a manner that could hide or obliterate such a mark.

V-shaped notch means a straight-sided triangular cut, without setal hairs, at least ¼ inch (0.64 cm) in depth and tapering to a point.

Weakfish means members of the stock or population of the species *Cynoscion regalis*, found along the Atlantic Coast from southern Florida to Massachusetts Bay.

Whole American lobster means a lobster with an intact and measurable body (tail and carapace). An American lobster with an intact and measurable body that is missing one or both claws, i.e., a cull lobster, is considered to be a whole American lobster.

(b) [Reserved]

[64 FR 68248, Dec. 6, 1999, as amended at 66 FR 8911, Feb. 5, 2001; 66 FR 14501, Mar. 13, 2001]

§ 697.3 Relation to other Federal and state laws.

(a) The provisions of sections 307 through 311 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, as amended, regarding prohibited acts, civil penalties, criminal offenses, civil forfeitures, and enforcement apply with respect to the regulations in this part, as if the regulations in this part were issued under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

(b) The relation of this part to other laws is set forth in §600.705 of this chapter.

(c) The regulations in this part do not preempt more restrictive state laws, or state enforcement of more restrictive state laws, with respect to weakfish fishing and American lobster fishing. If a requirement of this part and a management measure required by state or local law differ, any vessel owner permitted to fish in the EEZ must comply with the more restrictive requirement or measure.

§ 697.4 Vessel permits and trap tags.

(a) *Limited access American lobster permit*. Any vessel of the United States that fishes for, possesses, or lands