

has been published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, any interested person may file with the Assistant Administrator any written comments on the recommended decision. All comments, including recommendations from or consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission, must be submitted during the 20-day period to the Assistant Administrator at the previously mentioned address.

§ 228.21 Assistant Administrator's decision.

(a) Upon receipt of the recommended decision and transcript and after the 20-day period for receiving written comments on the recommended decision has passed, the Assistant Administrator shall make a final decision on the proposed regulations and waiver, where applicable. The Assistant Administrator's decision may affirm, modify, or set aside, in whole or in part, the recommended findings, conclusions and decision of the presiding officer. The Assistant Administrator may also remand the hearing record to the presiding officer for a fuller development of the record.

(b) The Assistant Administrator's decision shall include:

- (1) A statement containing a description of the history of the proceeding;
- (2) Findings on the issues of fact with the reasons therefor; and
- (3) Rulings on issues of law.

(4) The Assistant Administrator's decision shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER. If the waiver is approved, the final adopted regulations shall be promulgated with the decision.

PART 229—AUTHORIZATION FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERIES UNDER THE MARINE MAMMAL PROTECTION ACT OF 1972

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FIGURE 1 TO PART 229—DRIFT GILLNET PINGER CONFIGURATION AND EXTENDER REQUIREMENTS

AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*; § 229.32(f) also issued under 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

SOURCE: 60 FR 45100, Aug. 30, 1995, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General Provisions

§ 229.1 Purpose and scope.

(a) The regulations in this part implement sections 101(a)(5)(E) and 118 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(5)(E) and 1387) that provide for exceptions for the taking of marine mammals incidental to certain commercial fishing operations from the Act's general moratorium on the taking of marine mammals.

(b) Section 118 of the Act, rather than sections 103 and 104, governs the incidental taking of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations by persons using vessels of the United States, other than vessels fishing for yellowfin tuna in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean purse seine fishery, and vessels that have valid fishing permits issued in accordance with section 204(b) of the Magnuson Fishery

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Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1824(b)).

(c) The regulations of Subpart B also govern the incidental taking by commercial fishers of marine mammals from species or stocks designated under the Act as depleted on the basis of their listing as threatened species or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

(d) The regulations of this part do not apply to the incidental taking of California sea otters or to Northwest treaty Indian tribal members exercising treaty fishing rights.

(e) Authorizations under subpart A of this part are exemptions only from the taking prohibitions under the Act and not those under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. To be exempt from the taking prohibitions under the Endangered Species Act, specific authorization under subpart B of this part is required.

(f) Authorizations under this part do not apply to the intentional lethal taking of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations except as provided for under §§ 229.4(k) and 229.5(f).

(g) The purposes of the regulations in this part are to:

(1) Reduce the incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals occurring in the course of commercial fishing operations below the potential biological removal level for a particular stock, and

(2) Reduce the incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals occurring in the course of commercial fishing operations to insignificant levels approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate by the statutory deadline of April 30, 2001.

[60 FR 45100, Aug. 30, 1995, as amended at 64 FR 9086, Feb. 24, 1999]

§ 229.2 Definitions.

In addition to the definitions contained in the Act and § 216.3 of this chapter, and unless otherwise defined in this chapter, the terms in this chapter have the following meaning:

Act or *MMPA* means the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*).

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American lobster or lobster means *Homarus americanus*.

Anchored gillnet means any gillnet gear, including a sink gillnet or stab net, that is set anywhere in the water column and which is anchored, secured or weighted to the bottom of the sea. Also called a set gillnet.

Assistant Administrator means the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Authorization Certificate means a document issued by the Assistant Administrator, or designee, under the authority of section 118 of the Act that authorizes the incidental, but not intentional, taking of marine mammals in Category I or II fisheries.

Breaking strength means the highest tensile force which an object can withstand before breaking.

Bridle means the lines connecting a gillnet to an anchor or buoy line.

Buoy line means a line connecting fishing gear in the water to a buoy at the surface of the water.

Category I fishery means a commercial fishery determined by the Assistant Administrator to have frequent incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals. A commercial fishery that frequently causes mortality or serious injury of marine mammals is one that is by itself responsible for the annual removal of 50 percent or more of any stock's potential biological removal level.

Category II fishery means a commercial fishery determined by the Assistant Administrator to have occasional incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals. A commercial fishery that occasionally causes mortality or serious injury of marine mammals is one that, collectively with other fisheries, is responsible for the annual removal of more than 10 percent of any marine mammal stock's potential biological removal level and that is by itself responsible for the annual removal of between 1 and 50 percent, exclusive, of any stock's potential biological removal level. In the absence of reliable information indicating the frequency of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals by a commercial fishery, the

Assistant Administrator will determine whether the incidental serious injury or mortality is “occasional” by evaluating other factors such as fishing techniques, gear used, methods used to deter marine mammals, target species, seasons and areas fished, qualitative data from logbooks or fisher reports, stranding data, and the species and distribution of marine mammals in the area, or at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator. Eligible commercial fisheries not specifically identified in the list of fisheries are deemed to be Category II fisheries until the next list of fisheries is published.

Category III fishery means a commercial fishery determined by the Assistant Administrator to have a remote likelihood of, or no known incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals. A commercial fishery that has a remote likelihood of causing incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals is one that collectively with other fisheries is responsible for the annual removal of:

(1) Ten percent or less of any marine mammal stock’s potential biological removal level, or

(2) More than 10 percent of any marine mammal stock’s potential biological removal level, yet that fishery by itself is responsible for the annual removal of 1 percent or less of that stock’s potential biological removal level. In the absence of reliable information indicating the frequency of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals by a commercial fishery, the Assistant Administrator will determine whether the incidental serious injury or mortality is “remote” by evaluating other factors such as fishing techniques, gear used, methods used to deter marine mammals, target species, seasons and areas fished, qualitative data from logbooks or fisher reports, stranding data, and the species and distribution of marine mammals in the area or at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator.

Commercial fishing operation means the catching, taking, or harvesting of fish from the marine environment (or other areas where marine mammals occur) that results in the sale or barter of all or part of the fish harvested. The term includes licensed commercial pas-

senger fishing vessel (as defined in §216.3 of this chapter) activities and aquaculture activities.

Depleted species means any species or population that has been designated as depleted under the Act and is listed in §216.15 of this chapter or part 18, subpart E of this title, or any endangered or threatened species of marine mammal.

Driftnet, drift gillnet, or drift entanglement gear means a gillnet or gillnets that is/are unattached to the ocean bottom and not anchored, secured or weighted to the bottom, regardless of whether attached to a vessel.

Fisher or fisherman means the vessel owner or operator, or the owner or operator of gear in a nonvessel fishery.

Fishery has the same meaning as in section 3 of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1802).

Fishing or to fish means any commercial fishing operation activity that involves:

(1) The catching, taking, or harvesting of fish;

(2) The attempted catching, taking, or harvesting of fish;

(3) Any other activity that can reasonably be expected to result in the catching, taking, or harvesting of fish; or

(4) Any operations at sea in support of, or in preparation for, any activity described in paragraphs (1), (2), or (3) of this definition.

Fishing trip means any time spent away from port actively engaged in commercial fishing operations. The end of a fishing trip will be the time of a fishing vessel’s return to port or the return of a fisher from tending gear in a nonvessel fishery.

Fishing vessel or vessel means any vessel, boat, ship, or other craft that is used for, equipped to be used for, or of a type normally used for, fishing.

Float-line means the rope at the top of a gillnet from which the mesh portion of the net is hung.

Gillnet means fishing gear consisting of a wall of webbing (meshes) or nets, designed or configured so that the webbing (meshes) or nets are placed in the water column, usually held approximately vertically, and are designed to capture fish by entanglement, gilling,

or wedging. The term “gillnet” includes gillnets of all types, including but not limited to sink gillnets, other anchored gillnets (e.g. stab and set nets), and drift gillnets. Gillnets may or may not be attached to a vessel.

Groundline, with reference to lobster trap gear, means a line connecting lobster traps in a lobster trap trawl, and, with reference to gillnet gear, means a line connecting a gillnet or gillnet bridle to an anchor or buoy line.

Incidental means, with respect to an act, a non-intentional or accidental act that results from, but is not the purpose of, carrying out an otherwise lawful action.

Injury means a wound or other physical harm. Signs of injury to a marine mammal include, but are not limited to, visible blood flow, loss of or damage to an appendage or jaw, inability to use one or more appendages, asymmetry in the shape of the body or body position, noticeable swelling or hemorrhage, laceration, puncture or rupture of eyeball, listless appearance or inability to defend itself, inability to swim or dive upon release from fishing gear, or signs of equilibrium imbalance. Any animal that ingests fishing gear, or any animal that is released with fishing gear entangling, trailing or perforating any part of the body will be considered injured regardless of the absence of any wound or other evidence of an injury.

Insignificance threshold means the upper limit of annual incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammal stocks by commercial fisheries that can be considered insignificant levels approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate. An insignificance threshold is estimated as 10 percent of the Potential Biological Removal level for a stock of marine mammals. If certain parameters (e.g., maximum net productivity rate or the recovery factor in the calculation of the stock's potential biological removal level) can be estimated or otherwise modified from default values, the Assistant Administrator may use a modification of the number calculated from the simple formula for the insignificance threshold. The Assistant Administrator may also use a modification of the simple formula when information is insufficient to estimate the level of

mortality and serious injury that would have an insignificant effect on the affected population stock and provide a rationale for using the modification.

Interaction means coming in contact with fishing gear or catch. An interaction may be characterized by a marine mammal entangled, hooked, or otherwise trapped in fishing gear, regardless of whether injury or mortality occurs, or situations where marine mammals are preying on catch. Catch means fish or shellfish that has been hooked, entangled, snagged, trapped or otherwise captured by commercial fishing gear.

Large mesh gillnet means a gillnet constructed with a mesh size of 7 inches (17.78 cm) to 18 inches (45.72 cm).

Lead-line means the rope, weighted or otherwise, to which the bottom edge of a gillnet is attached.

List of Fisheries means the most recent final list of commercial fisheries published in the FEDERAL REGISTER by the Assistant Administrator, categorized according to the likelihood of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals during commercial fishing operations.

Lobster trap means any trap, pot or other similar type of enclosure that is placed on the ocean bottom and is designed to or is capable of catching lobsters. This definition includes but is not limited to lobster pots, black sea bass pots and scup pots.

Lobster trap trawl means two or more lobster traps attached to a single groundline.

Mesh size means the distance between inside knot to inside knot. Mesh size is measured as described in § 648.80(f)(1) of this title.

Mid-Atlantic coastal waters means waters bounded by the line defined by the following points: The southern shoreline of Long Island, New York at 72°30'W, then due south to 33°51'N lat., thence west to the North Carolina/South Carolina border.

Minimum population estimate means an estimate of the number of animals in a stock that:

(1) Is based on the best available scientific information on abundance, incorporating the precision and variability associated with such information; and

(2) Provides reasonable assurance that the stock size is equal to or greater than the estimate.

Mudhole means waters off New Jersey bounded as follows: From the point 40°30' N. latitude where it intersects with the shoreline of New Jersey east to its intersection with 73°20' W. longitude, then south to its intersection with 40°05' N. latitude, then west to its intersection with the shoreline of New Jersey.

Negligible impact has the same meaning as in §216.103 of this chapter.

Net productivity rate means the annual per capita rate of increase in a stock resulting from additions due to reproduction, less losses due to mortality.

Neutrally buoyant line means line with a specific gravity near that of sea water, so that the line neither sinks to the ocean floor nor floats at the surface, but remains close to the bottom.

Night means any time between one half hour before sunset and one half hour after sunrise.

NMFS means the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Nonvessel fishery means a commercial fishing operation that uses fixed or other gear without a vessel, such as gear used in set gillnet, trap, beach seine, weir, ranch, and pen fisheries.

Observer means an individual authorized by NMFS, or a designated contractor, to record information on marine mammal interactions, fishing operations, marine mammal life history information, and other scientific data, and collect biological specimens during commercial fishing activities.

Operator, with respect to any vessel, means the master, captain, or other individual in charge of that vessel.

Potential biological removal level means the maximum number of animals, not including natural mortalities, that may be removed from a marine mammal stock while allowing that stock to reach or maintain its optimum sustainable population. The potential biological removal level is the product of the following factors:

(1) The minimum population estimate of the stock;

(2) One-half the maximum theoretical or estimated net productivity rate of the stock at a small population size; and

(3) A recovery factor of between 0.1 and 1.0.

Qualified individual means an individual ascertained by NMFS to be reasonably able, through training or experience, to identify a right whale. Such individuals include, but are not limited to, NMFS staff, U.S. Coast Guard and Navy personnel trained in whale identification, scientific research survey personnel, whale watch operators and naturalists, and mariners trained in whale species identification through disentanglement training or some other training program deemed adequate by NMFS.

Regional Fishery Management Council means a regional fishery management council established under section 302 of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

Reliable report means a credible right whale sighting report based upon which a DAM zone would be triggered.

Seine means a net that fishes vertically in the water, is pulled by hand or by power, and captures fish by encirclement and confining fish within itself or against another net, the shore or bank as a result of net design, construction, mesh size, webbing diameter, or method in which it is used. In some regions, the net is typically constructed with a capture bag in the center of the net which concentrates the fish as the net is closed.

Serious injury means any injury that will likely result in mortality.

Sink gillnet or *stab net* means any gillnet, anchored or otherwise, that is designed to be, or is fished on or near the bottom in the lower third of the water column.

Sinking line means rope that sinks and does not float at any point in the water column. Polypropylene rope is not sinking line unless it contains a lead core.

Small mesh gillnet means a gillnet constructed with a mesh size of greater than 5 inches (12.7 cm) to less than 7 inches (17.78 cm).

Southern Mid-Atlantic waters means all state and Federal waters off the States of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, bounded on the north by a line extending eastward from the northern shoreline of Delaware at 38°47' N. latitude (the latitude that corresponds with Cape Henlopen, DE), east to its intersection with 72°30' W. longitude, south to the 33°51' N. latitude (the latitude that corresponds with the North Carolina/South Carolina border), and then west to its intersection with the shoreline of the North Carolina/South Carolina border.

Spotter plane means a plane that is deployed for the purpose of locating schools of target fish for a fishing vessel that intends to set fishing gear on them.

Stowed means nets that are unavailable for use and that are stored in accordance with the regulations found in §648.81(e) of this title.

Strategic stock means a marine mammal stock:

- (1) For which the level of direct human-caused mortality exceeds the potential biological removal level;
- (2) Which, based on the best available scientific information, is declining and is likely to be listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 within the foreseeable future;
- (3) Which is listed as a threatened species or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973; or
- (4) Which is designated as depleted under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended.

Sunrise means the time of sunrise as determined for the date and location in The Nautical Almanac, prepared by the U.S. Naval Observatory.

Sunset means the time of sunset as determined for the date and location in The Nautical Almanac, prepared by the U.S. Naval Observatory.

Take Reduction Plan means a plan developed to reduce the incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals during commercial fishing operations in accordance with section 118 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended.

Take Reduction Team means a team established to recommend methods of reducing the incidental mortality and

serious injury of marine mammals due to commercial fishing operations, in accordance with section 118 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended.

Tended gear or tend means fishing gear that is physically attached to a vessel in a way that is capable of harvesting fish, or to fish with gear attached to the vessel.

Tie-down refers to twine used between the floatline and the lead line as a way to create a pocket or bag of netting to trap fish alive.

U.S. waters means both state and Federal waters to the outer boundaries of the U.S. exclusive economic zone along the east coast of the United States from the Canadian/U.S. border southward to a line extending eastward from the southernmost tip of Florida on the Florida shore.

Vessel owner or operator means the owner or operator of:

- (1) A fishing vessel that engages in a commercial fishing operation; or
- (2) Fixed or other commercial fishing gear that is used in a nonvessel fishery.

Vessel of the United States has the same meaning as in section 3 of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1802).

Waters off New Jersey means all state and Federal waters off New Jersey, bounded on the north by a line extending eastward from the southern shoreline of Long Island, NY at 40°40' N. latitude, on the south by a line extending eastward from the northern shoreline of Delaware at 38°47' N. latitude (the latitude that corresponds with Cape Henlopen, DE), and on the east by the 72°30' W. longitude. This area includes the Mudhole.

Weak link means a breakable component of gear that will part when subject to a certain tension load.

[60 FR 45100, Aug. 30, 1995, as amended at 62 FR 39183, July 22, 1997; 63 FR 66487, Dec. 2, 1998; 64 FR 7551, Feb. 16, 1999; 64 FR 9086, Feb. 24, 1999; 65 FR 80377, Dec. 21, 2000; 67 FR 1141, Jan. 9, 2002; 67 FR 1313, Jan. 10, 2002; 69 FR 6584, Feb. 11, 2004; 69 FR 43345, July 20, 2004; 71 FR 24796, Apr. 26, 2006; 72 FR 34642, June 25, 2007]

§ 229.3 Prohibitions.

- (a) It is prohibited to take any marine mammal incidental to commercial fishing operations except as otherwise

provided in part 216 of this chapter or in this part 229.

(b) It is prohibited to assault, harm, harass (including sexually harass), oppose, impede, intimidate, impair, or in any way influence or interfere with an observer, or attempt the same. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, any action that interferes with an observer's responsibilities, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

(c) It is prohibited to provide false information when registering for an Authorization Certificate, applying for renewal of the Authorization Certificate, reporting the injury or mortality of any marine mammal, or providing information to any observer.

(d) It is prohibited to tamper with or destroy observer equipment in any way.

(e) It is prohibited to retain any marine mammal incidentally taken in commercial fishing operations unless authorized by NMFS personnel, by designated contractors or an official observer, or by a scientific research permit that is in the possession of the vessel operator.

(f) It is prohibited to intentionally lethally take any marine mammal in the course of commercial fishing operations unless imminently necessary in self-defense or to save the life of a person in immediate danger, and such taking is reported in accordance with the requirements of § 229.6.

(g) It is prohibited to violate any regulation in this part or any provision of section 118 of the Act.

(h) It is prohibited to fish with lobster trap gear in the areas and for the times specified in § 229.32 (b)(2) and (c)(2) through (c)(8) unless the lobster trap gear complies with the closures, marking requirements, modifications, and restrictions specified in § 229.32 (b)(3)(i), (b)(3)(ii), and (c)(1) through (c)(9).

(i) It is prohibited to fish with anchored gillnet gear in the areas and for the times specified in § 229.32(b)(2) and (d)(2) through (d)(7) unless that gillnet gear complies with the closures, marking requirements, modifications, and restrictions specified in § 229.32(b)(3)(i), (b)(3)(ii), and (d)(1) through (d)(8).

(j) It is prohibited to fish with drift gillnet gear in the areas and for the times specified in § 229.32 (d)(7) and (e)(1) unless the drift gillnet gear complies with the restrictions specified in § 229.32 (e)(1).

(k) It is prohibited to fish with gillnet gear in the areas and for the times specified in § 229.32(f)(1) through (f)(4), unless the gear or the person with gillnet gear complies with the gear marking requirements specified in § 229.32(f)(2), the requirements for observer coverage as specified in § 229.32(f)(3), and the closures, requirements, and other restrictions as specified in § 229.32(f)(4).

(l) It is prohibited to fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove sink gillnet gear or gillnet gear capable of catching multispecies, from the areas and for the times specified in § 229.33 (a)(1) through (a)(6), except with the use of pingers as provided in § 229.33 (d)(1) through (d)(4). This prohibition does not apply to the use of a single pelagic gillnet (as described and used as set forth in § 648.81(f)(2)(ii) of this title).

(m) It is prohibited to fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove any gillnet gear from the areas and for the times as specified in § 229.34 (b)(1) (ii) or (iii) or (b)(2)(ii).

(n) It is prohibited to fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove any large mesh or small mesh gillnet gear from the areas and for the times specified in § 229.34 (c)(1) through (c)(4) unless the gear complies with the specified gear restrictions set forth in those provisions.

(o) Beginning on January 1, 1999, it is prohibited to fish with, set, or haul back sink gillnets or gillnet gear, or leave such gear in closed areas where pingers are required, as specified under § 229.33 (c)(1) through (c)(4), unless a person on board the vessel during fishing operations possesses a valid pinger certification training certificate issued by NMFS.

(p) Beginning on January 1, 2000, it is prohibited to fish with, set, haul back, or possess any large mesh or small mesh gillnet gear in Mid-Atlantic waters in the areas and during the times

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specified under § 229.34(d), unless the gear is properly tagged in compliance with that provision and unless a net tag certificate is on board the vessel. It is prohibited to refuse to produce a net tag certificate or net tags upon the request of an authorized officer.

(q) *Net tag requirement.* Beginning on January 1, 2000, all gillnets fished, hauled, possessed, or deployed during the times and areas specified below must have one tag per net, with one tag secured to every other bridle of every net and with one tag secured to every other bridle of every net within a string of nets. This applies to small mesh and large mesh gillnet gear in New Jersey waters from January 1 through April 30 or in southern Mid-Atlantic waters from February 1 through April 30. The owner or operator of fishing vessels must indicate to NMFS the number of gillnet tags that they are requesting up to the maximum number of nets allowed in those paragraphs and must include a check for the cost of the tags. Vessel owners and operators will be given notice with instructions informing them of the costs associated with this tagging requirement and directions for obtaining tags. Tag numbers will be unique for each vessel and recorded on a certificate. The vessel operator must produce the certificate and all net tags upon request by an authorized officer.

(r) It is prohibited to fish with, or possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove, any gillnet gear from the areas specified in § 229.35(c) unless the gear complies with the specified restrictions set forth in § 229.35(d).

[60 FR 45100, Aug. 30, 1995, as amended at 62 FR 39184, July 22, 1997; 63 FR 66487, Dec. 2, 1998; 64 FR 7552, Feb. 16, 1999; 64 FR 9086, Feb. 24, 1999; 65 FR 80377, Dec. 21, 2000; 67 FR 1313, Jan. 10, 2002; 67 FR 59477, Sept. 23, 2002; 71 FR 24796, Apr. 26, 2006]

§ 229.4 Requirements for Category I and II fisheries.

(a) *General.* (1) For a vessel owner or crew members to lawfully incidentally take marine mammals in the course of a commercial fishing operation in a Category I or II fishery, the owner or authorized representative of a fishing vessel or nonvessel fishing gear must

have in possession a valid Certificate of Authorization. The owner of a fishing vessel or nonvessel fishing gear is responsible for obtaining a Certificate of Authorization.

(2) The granting and administration of Authorization Certificates under this part will be integrated and coordinated with existing fishery license, registration, or permit systems and related programs wherever possible. These programs may include, but are not limited to, state or interjurisdictional fisheries programs. If the administration of Authorization Certificates is integrated into a program, NMFS will publish a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER announcing the integrated program and summarizing how an owner or authorized representative of a fishing vessel or non-fishing gear may register under that program or how registration will be achieved if no action is required on the part of the affected fisher. NMFS will make additional efforts to contact participants in the affected fishery via other appropriate means of notification.

(b) *Registration.* (1) The owner of a vessel, or for nonvessel gear fisheries, the owner of gear, who participates in a Category I or II fishery is required to be registered for a Certificate of Authorization.

(2) Unless a notice is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER announcing an integrated registration program, the owner of a vessel, or for nonvessel fishery, the owner of the gear must register for and receive an Authorization Certificate. To register, owners must submit the following information using the format specified by NMFS:

(i) Name, address, and phone number of owner.

(ii) Name, address, and phone number of operator, if different from owner, unless the name of the operator is not known or has not been established at the time the registration is submitted.

(iii) For a vessel fishery, vessel name, length, home port; U.S. Coast Guard documentation number or state registration number, and if applicable; state commercial vessel license number and for a nonvessel fishery, a description of the gear and state commercial license number, if applicable.

(iv) A list of all Category I and II fisheries in which the fisher may actively engage during the calendar year.

(v) A certification signed and dated by the owner of an authorized representative of the owner as follows: "I hereby certify that I am the owner of the vessel, that I have reviewed all information contained on this document, and that it is true and complete to the best of my knowledge."

(vi) A check or money order made payable to NMFS in the amount specified in the notice of the final List of Fisheries must accompany each registration submitted to NMFS. The amount of this fee will be based on recovering the administrative costs incurred in granting an authorization. The Assistant Administrator may waive the fee requirement for good cause upon the recommendation of the Regional Director.

(3) If a notice is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER announcing an integrated registration program, the owner of a vessel, or for nonvessel fishery, the owner of the gear may register by following the directions provided in that notice. If a person receives a registration to which he or she is not entitled or if the registration contains incorrect, inaccurate or incomplete information, the person shall notify NMFS within 10 days following receipt. If a fisher participating in a Category I or II fishery who expects to receive automatic registration does not receive that registration within the time specified in the notice announcing the integrated registration program, the person shall notify NMFS as directed in the notice or may apply for registration by submitting the information required under paragraph (b)(1)(i) through (b)(1)(vi) of this section.

(c) *Address.* Unless the granting and administration of authorizations under this part 229 is integrated and coordinated with existing fishery licenses, registrations, or related programs pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, requests for registration forms and completed registration and renewal forms should be sent to the NMFS Regional Offices as follows:

(1) Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, 709 West 9th Street, Juneau, AK 99802; telephone: 907-586-7235;

(2) Northwest Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE., Seattle, WA 98115-0070; telephone: 206-526-4353;

(3) Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213; telephone: 562-980-4001;

(4) Northeast Region, NMFS, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930; telephone: 978-281-9254; or

(5) Southeast Region, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive North, St. Petersburg, FL 33702; telephone: 727-570-5312.

(d) *Issuance.* (1) For integrated fisheries, an Authorization Certificate or other proof of registration will be issued annually to each fisher registered for that fishery.

(2) For all other fisheries (i.e., non-integrated fisheries), NMFS will issue an Authorization Certificate and, if necessary, a decal to an owner or authorized representative who:

(i) Submits a completed registration form and the required fee.

(ii) Has complied with the requirements of this section and §§229.6 and 229.7

(iii) Has submitted updated registration or renewal registration which includes a statement (yes/no) whether any marine mammals were killed or injured during the current or previous calendar year.

(3) If a person receives a renewed Authorization Certificate or a decal to which he or she is not entitled, the person shall notify NMFS within 10 days following receipt.

(e) *Authorization Certificate and decal requirements.* (1) If a decal has been issued under the conditions specified in paragraph (e)(2) of this section, the decal must be attached to the vessel on the port side of the cabin or, in the absence of a cabin, on the forward port side of the hull, and must be free of obstruction and in good condition. The decal must be attached to the Authorization Certificate for nonvessel fisheries.

(2) The Authorization Certificate, or a copy, must be on board the vessel while it is operating in a Category I or II fishery, or, in the case of nonvessel fisheries, the Authorization Certificate with decal attached, or copy must be in the possession of the person in charge

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of the fishing operation. The Authorization Certificate, or copy, must be made available upon request to any state or Federal enforcement agent authorized to enforce the Act, any designated agent of NMFS, or any contractor providing observer services to NMFS.

(3) Authorization Certificates and decals are not transferable. In the event of the sale or change in ownership of the vessel, the Authorization Certificate is void and the new owner must register for an Authorization Certificate and decal.

(4) An Authorization Certificate holder must notify the issuing office in writing:

(i) If the vessel or nonvessel fishing gear will engage in any Category I or II fishery not listed on the initial registration form at least 30 days prior to engaging in that fishery; and,

(ii) If there are any changes in the mailing address or vessel ownership within 30 days of such change.

(f) *Reporting.* Any Authorization Certificate holders must comply with the reporting requirements specified under § 229.6.

(g) *Disposition of marine mammals.* Any marine mammal incidentally taken must be immediately returned to the sea with a minimum of further injury, unless directed otherwise by NMFS personnel, a designated contractor or an official observer, or authorized otherwise by a scientific research permit that is in the possession of the operator.

(h) *Monitoring.* Authorization Certificate holders must comply with the observer or other monitoring requirements specified under § 229.7.

(i) *Deterrence.* When necessary to deter a marine mammal from damaging fishing gear, catch, or other private property, or from endangering personal safety, vessel owners and crew members engaged in a Category I or II fishery must comply with all deterrence provisions set forth in the Act and all guidelines and prohibitions published thereunder.

(j) *Self defense.* When imminently necessary in self-defense or to save the life of a person in immediate danger, a marine mammal may be lethally taken if such taking is reported to NMFS in ac-

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cordance with the requirements of § 229.6.

(k) *Take reduction plans and emergency regulations.* Authorization Certificate holders must comply with any applicable take reduction plans and emergency regulations.

(l) *Expiration.* Authorization Certificates expire at the end of each calendar year.

[60 FR 45100, Aug. 30, 1995, as amended at 62 FR 46, Jan. 2, 1997; 64 FR 9086, Feb. 24, 1999]

§ 229.5 Requirements for Category III fisheries.

(a) *General.* Vessel owners and crew members of such vessels engaged only in Category III fisheries may incidentally take marine mammals without registering for or receiving an Authorization Certificate.

(b) *Reporting.* Vessel owners engaged in a Category III fishery must comply with the reporting requirements specified in § 229.6.

(c) *Disposition of marine mammals.* Any marine mammal incidentally taken must be immediately returned to the sea with a minimum of further injury unless directed otherwise by NMFS personnel, a designated contractor, or an official observer, or authorized otherwise by a scientific research permit in the possession of the operator.

(d) *Monitoring.* Vessel owners engaged in a Category III fishery must comply with the observer requirements specified under § 229.7(d).

(e) *Deterrence.* When necessary to deter a marine mammal from damaging fishing gear, catch, or other private property, or from endangering personal safety, vessel owners and crew members engaged in commercial fishing operations must comply with all deterrence provisions set forth in the Act and all guidelines and prohibitions published thereunder.

(f) *Self-defense.* When imminently necessary in self-defense or to save the life of a person in immediate danger, a marine mammal may be lethally taken if such taking is reported to NMFS in accordance with the requirements of § 229.6.

(g) *Emergency regulations.* Vessel owners engaged in a Category III fishery

must comply with any applicable emergency regulations.

[60 FR 45100, Aug. 30, 1995, as amended at 64 FR 9087, Feb. 24, 1999]

§ 229.6 Reporting requirements.

(a) Vessel owners or operators engaged in any commercial fishery must report all incidental mortality and injury of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations to the Assistant Administrator, or appropriate Regional Office, by mail or other means, such as fax or overnight mail specified by the Assistant Administrator. Reports must be sent within 48 hours after the end of each fishing trip during which the incidental mortality or injury occurred, or, for nonvessel fisheries, within 48 hours of an occurrence of an incidental mortality or injury. Reports must be submitted on a standard postage-paid form as provided by the Assistant Administrator. The vessel owner or operator must provide the following information on this form:

(1) The vessel name, and Federal, state, or tribal registration numbers of the registered vessel;

(2) The name and address of the vessel owner or operator;

(3) The name and description of the fishery, including gear type and target species; and

(4) The species and number of each marine mammal incidentally killed or injured, and the date, time, and approximate geographic location of such occurrence. A description of the animal(s) killed or injured must be provided if the species is unknown.

(b) Participants in nonvessel fisheries must provide all of the information in paragraphs (a)(1) through (a)(4) of this section except, instead of providing the vessel name and vessel registration number, participants in nonvessel fisheries must provide the gear permit number.

[60 FR 45100, Aug. 30, 1995, as amended at 64 FR 9087, Feb. 24, 1999]

§ 229.7 Monitoring of incidental mortalities and serious injuries.

(a) *Purpose.* The Assistant Administrator will establish a program to monitor incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals during the

course of commercial fishing operations in order to:

(1) Obtain statistically reliable estimates of incidental mortality and serious injury;

(2) Determine the reliability of reports of incidental mortality and injury under § 229.6; and

(3) Identify changes in fishing methods or technology that may increase or decrease incidental mortality and serious injury.

(b) *Observer program.* Pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, the Assistant Administrator may observe Category I and II vessels as necessary. Observers may, among other tasks:

(1) Record incidental mortality and injury, and bycatch of other nontarget species;

(2) Record numbers of marine mammals sighted; and

(3) Perform other scientific investigations, which may include, but are not limited to, sampling and photographing incidental mortalities and serious injuries.

(c) *Observer requirements for participants in Category I and II fisheries.* (1) If requested by NMFS or by a designated contractor providing observer services to NMFS, a vessel owner/operator must take aboard an observer to accompany the vessel on fishing trips.

(2) After being notified by NMFS, or by a designated contractor providing observer services to NMFS, that the vessel is required to carry an observer, the vessel owner/operator must comply with the notification by providing information requested within the specified time on scheduled or anticipated fishing trips.

(3) NMFS, or a designated contractor providing observer services to NMFS, may waive the observer requirement based on a finding that the facilities for housing the observer or for carrying out observer functions are so inadequate or unsafe that the health or safety of the observer or the safe operation of the vessel would be jeopardized.

(4) The vessel owner/operator and crew must cooperate with the observer in the performance of the observer's duties including:

(i) Providing, at no cost to the observer, the United States government,

or the designated observer provider, food, toilet, bathing, sleeping accommodations, and other amenities that are equivalent to those provided to the crew, unless other arrangements are approved in advance by the Regional Administrator;

(ii) Allowing for the embarking and debarking of the observer as specified by NMFS personnel or designated contractors. The operator of a vessel must ensure that transfers of observers at sea are accomplished in a safe manner, via small boat or raft, during daylight hours if feasible, as weather and sea conditions allow, and with the agreement of the observer involved;

(iii) Allowing the observer access to all areas of the vessel necessary to conduct observer duties;

(iv) Allowing the observer access to communications equipment and navigation equipment, when available on the vessel, as necessary to perform observer duties;

(v) Providing true vessel locations by latitude and longitude, accurate to the minute, or by loran coordinates, upon request by the observer;

(vi) Sampling, retaining, and storing of marine mammal specimens, other protected species specimens, or target or non-target catch specimens, upon request by NMFS personnel, designated contractors, or the observer, if adequate facilities are available and if feasible;

(vii) Notifying the observer in a timely fashion of when all commercial fishing operations are to begin and end;

(viii) Not impairing or in any way interfering with the research or observations being carried out; and

(ix) Complying with other guidelines or regulations that NMFS may develop to ensure the effective deployment and use of observers.

(5) Marine mammals or other specimens identified in paragraph (c)(4)(vi) of this section, which are readily accessible to crew members, must be brought on board the vessel and retained for the purposes of scientific research if feasible and requested by NMFS personnel, designated contractors, or the observer. Specimens so collected and retained must, upon request by NMFS personnel, designated contractors, or the observer, be retained in

cold storage on board the vessel, if feasible, until removed at the request of NMFS personnel, designated contractors, or the observer, retrieved by authorized personnel of NMFS, or released by the observer for return to the ocean. These biological specimens may be transported on board the vessel during the fishing trip and back to port under this authorization.

(d) *Observer requirements for participants in Category III fisheries.* (1) The Assistant Administrator may place observers on Category III vessels if the Assistant Administrator:

(i) Believes that the incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals from such fishery may be contributing to the immediate and significant adverse impact on a species or stock listed as a threatened species or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*); and

(ii) Has complied with § 229.9(a)(3)(i) and (ii); or

(iii) Has the consent of the vessel owner.

(2) If an observer is placed on a Category III vessel, the vessel owner and/or operator must comply with the requirements of § 229.7(c).

(e) *Alternative observer program.* The Assistant Administrator may establish an alternative observer program to provide statistically reliable information on the species and number of marine mammals incidentally taken in the course of commercial fishing operations. The alternative observer program may include direct observation of fishing activities from vessels, airplanes, or points on shore.

[60 FR 45100, Aug. 30, 1995, as amended at 64 FR 9087, Feb. 24, 1999]

§ 229.8 Publication of List of Fisheries.

(a) The Assistant Administrator will publish in the FEDERAL REGISTER a proposed revised List of Fisheries on or about July 1 of each year for the purpose of receiving public comment. Each year, on or about October 1, the Assistant Administrator will publish a final revised List of Fisheries, which will become effective January 1 of the next calendar year.

(b) The proposed and final revised List of Fisheries will:

(1) Categorize each commercial fishery based on the definitions of Category I, II, and III fisheries set forth in § 229.2; and

(2) List the marine mammals that have been incidentally injured or killed by commercial fishing operations and the estimated number of vessels or persons involved in each commercial fishery.

(c) The Assistant Administrator may publish a revised List of Fisheries at other times, after notification and opportunity for public comment.

(d) The revised final List of Fisheries will become effective no sooner than 30 days after publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

[60 FR 45100, Aug. 30, 1995, as amended at 64 FR 9087, Feb. 24, 1999]

§ 229.9 Emergency regulations.

(a) If the Assistant Administrator finds that the incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals from commercial fisheries is having, or is likely to have, an immediate and significant adverse impact on a stock or species, the Assistant Administrator will:

(1) In the case of a stock or species for which a take reduction plan is in effect—

(i) Prescribe emergency regulations that, consistent with such plan to the maximum extent practicable, reduce incidental mortality and serious injury in that fishery; and

(ii) Approve and implement on an expedited basis, any amendments to such plan that are recommended by the Take Reduction Team to address such adverse impact;

(2) In the case of a stock or species for which a take reduction plan is being developed—

(i) Prescribe emergency regulations to reduce such incidental mortality and serious injury in that fishery; and

(ii) Approve and implement, on an expedited basis, such plan, which will provide methods to address such adverse impact if still necessary;

(3) In the case of a stock or species for which a take reduction plan does not exist and is not being developed, or in the case of a Category III fishery that the Assistant Administrator be-

lieves may be contributing to such adverse impact,

(i) Prescribe emergency regulations to reduce such incidental mortality and serious injury in that fishery, to the extent necessary to mitigate such adverse impact;

(ii) Immediately review the stock assessment for such stock or species and the classification of such commercial fishery under this section to determine if a take reduction team should be established and if recategorization of the fishery is warranted; and

(iii) Where necessary to address such adverse impact on a species or stock listed as a threatened species or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), place observers on vessels in a Category III fishery if the Assistant Administrator has reason to believe such vessels may be causing the incidental mortality and serious injury to marine mammals from such stock.

(b) Prior to taking any action under § 229.9(a)(1) through (3), the Assistant Administrator will consult with the Marine Mammal Commission, all appropriate Regional Fishery Management Councils, state fishery managers, and the appropriate take reduction team, if established.

(c) Any emergency regulations issued under this section:

(1) Shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER and will remain in effect for no more than 180 days or until the end of the applicable commercial fishing season, whichever is earlier, except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section; and

(2) May be terminated by notification in the FEDERAL REGISTER at an earlier date if the Assistant Administrator determines that the reasons for the emergency regulations no longer exist.

(d) If the Assistant Administrator finds that incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in a commercial fishery is continuing to have an immediate and significant adverse impact on a stock or species, the Assistant Administrator may extend the emergency regulations for an additional period of not more than 90 days

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or until reasons for the emergency regulations no longer exist, whichever is earlier.

[60 FR 45100, Aug. 30, 1995, as amended at 64 FR 9087, Feb. 24, 1999]

§ 229.10 Penalties.

(a) Except as provided for in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, any person who violates any regulation under this part or any provision of section 118 of the MMPA shall be subject to all penalties set forth in the Act.

(b) The owner or master of a vessel that fails to comply with a take reduction plan shall be subject to the penalties of sections 105 and 107 of the Act, and may be subject to the penalties of section 106 of the Act.

(c) The owner of a vessel engaged in a Category I or II fishery who fails to ensure that a decal, or other physical evidence of such authorization issued by NMFS, is displayed on the vessel or is in possession of the operator of the vessel shall be subject to a penalty of not more than \$100.

(d) Failure to comply with take reduction plans or emergency regulations issued under this part may result in suspension or revocation of an Authorization Certificate, and failure to comply with a take reduction plan or emergency regulation is also subject to the penalties of sections 105 and 107 of the Act, and may be subject to the penalties of section 106 of the Act.

(e) For fishers operating in Category I or II fisheries, failure to report all incidental injuries and mortalities within 48 hours of the end of each fishing trip, or failure to comply with requirements to carry an observer, will subject such persons to the penalties of sections 105 and 107 and may subject them to the penalties of section 106 of the Act, which will result in suspension, revocation, or denial of an Authorization Certificate until such requirements have been fulfilled.

(f) For fishers operating in Category III fisheries, failure to report all incidental injuries and mortalities within 48 hours of the end of each fishing trip will subject such persons to the penalties of sections 105 and 107, and may subject them to section 106, of the Act.

(g) *Suspension, revocation or denial of Authorization Certificates.* (1) Until the

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Authorization Certificate holder complies with the regulations under this part, the Assistant Administrator shall suspend or revoke an Authorization Certificate or deny an annual renewal of an Authorization Certificate in accordance with the provisions in 15 CFR part 904 if the Authorization Certificate holder fails to report all incidental mortality and injury of marine mammals as required under § 229.6; or fails to take aboard an observer if requested by NMFS or its designated contractors.

(2) The Assistant Administrator may suspend or revoke an Authorization Certificate or deny an annual renewal of an Authorization Certificate in accordance with the provisions in 15 CFR part 904 if the Authorization Certificate holder fails to comply with any applicable take reduction plan, take reduction regulations, or emergency regulations developed under this subpart or subparts B and C of this part or if the Authorization Certificate holder fails to comply with other requirements of these regulations;

(3) A suspended Authorization Certificate may be reinstated at any time at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator provided the Assistant Administrator has determined that the reasons for the suspension no longer apply or corrective actions have been taken.

[60 FR 45100, Aug. 30, 1995, as amended at 64 FR 9088, Feb. 24, 1999]

§ 229.11 Confidential fisheries data.

(a) Proprietary information collected under this part is confidential and includes information, the unauthorized disclosure of which could be prejudicial or harmful, such as information or data that are identifiable with an individual fisher. Proprietary information obtained under part 229 will not be disclosed, in accordance with NOAA Administrative Order 216-100, except:

(1) To Federal employees whose duties require access to such information;

(2) To state employees under an agreement with NMFS that prevents public disclosure of the identity or business of any person;

(3) When required by court order; or

(4) In the case of scientific information involving fisheries, to employees

of Regional Fishery Management Councils who are responsible for fishery management plan development and monitoring.

(5) To other individuals or organizations authorized by the Assistant Administrator to analyze this information, so long as the confidentiality of individual fishers is not revealed.

(b) Information will be made available to the public in aggregate, summary, or other such form that does not disclose the identity or business of any person in accordance with NOAA Administrative Order 216-100. Aggregate or summary form means data structured so that the identity of the submitter cannot be determined either from the present release of the data or in combination with other releases.

[60 FR 45100, Aug. 30, 1995, as amended at 64 FR 9088, Feb. 24, 1999]

§ 229.12 Consultation with the Secretary of the Interior.

The Assistant Administrator will consult with the Secretary of the Interior prior to taking actions or making determinations under this part that affect or relate to species or population stocks of marine mammals for which the Secretary of the Interior is responsible under the Act.

Subpart B—Takes of Endangered and Threatened Marine Mammals

§ 229.20 Issuance of permits.

(a) *Determinations.* During a period of up to 3 consecutive years, NMFS will allow the incidental, but not the intentional, taking by persons using vessels of the United States or foreign vessels that have valid fishing permits issued by the Assistant Administrator in accordance with section 204(b) of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1824(b)), while engaging in commercial fishing operations, of marine mammals from a species or stock designated as depleted because of its listing as an endangered species or threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 if the Assistant Administrator determines that:

(1) The incidental mortality and serious injury from commercial fisheries

will have a negligible impact on such species or stock;

(2) A recovery plan has been developed or is being developed for such species or stock pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973; and

(3) Where required under regulations in subpart A of this part:

(i) A monitoring program has been established under § 229.7;

(ii) Vessels engaged in such fisheries are registered in accordance with § 229.4; and

(iii) A take reduction plan has been developed or is being developed for such species or stock in accordance with regulations at subpart C of this part.

(b) *Procedures for making determinations.* In making any of the determinations listed in paragraph (a) of this section, the Assistant Administrator will publish an announcement in the FEDERAL REGISTER of fisheries having takes of marine mammals listed under the Endangered Species Act, including a summary of available information regarding the fisheries interactions with listed species. Any interested party may, within 45 days of such publication, submit to the Assistant Administrator written data or views with respect to the listed fisheries. As soon as practicable after the end of the 45 days following publication, NMFS will publish in the FEDERAL REGISTER a list of the fisheries for which the determinations listed in paragraph (a) of this section have been made. This publication will set forth a summary of the information used to make the determinations.

(c) *Issuance of authorization.* The Assistant Administrator will issue appropriate permits for vessels in fisheries that are required to register under § 229.4 and for which determinations under the procedures of paragraph (b) of this section can be made.

(d) *Category III fisheries.* Vessel owners engaged only in Category III fisheries for which determinations are made under the procedures of paragraph (b) of this section will not be subject to the penalties of this Act for the incidental taking of marine mammals to which this subpart applies, as long as the vessel owner or operator of

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such vessel reports any incidental mortality or injury of such marine mammals in accordance with the requirements of § 229.6.

(e) *Emergency authority.* During the course of the commercial fishing season, if the Assistant Administrator determines that the level of incidental mortality or serious injury from commercial fisheries for which such a determination was made under this section has resulted or is likely to result in an impact that is more than negligible on the endangered or threatened species or stock, the Assistant Administrator will use the emergency authority of § 229.9 to protect such species or stock, and may modify any permit granted under this paragraph as necessary.

(f) *Suspension, revocation, modification and amendment.* The Assistant Administrator may, pursuant to the provisions of 15 CFR part 904, suspend or revoke a permit granted under this section if the Assistant Administrator determines that the conditions or limitations set forth in such permit are not being complied with. The Assistant Administrator may amend or modify, after notification and opportunity for public comment, the list of fisheries published in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section whenever the Assistant Administrator determines there has been a significant change in the information or conditions used to determine such a list.

(g) *Southern sea otters.* This subpart does not apply to the taking of Southern (California) sea otters.

[60 FR 45100, Aug. 30, 1995, as amended at 64 FR 9088, Feb. 24, 1999]

Subpart C—Take Reduction Plan Regulations and Emergency Regulations

§ 229.30 Basis.

Section 118(f)(9) of the Act authorizes the Director, NMFS, to impose regulations governing commercial fishing operations, when necessary, to implement a take reduction plan in order to protect or restore a marine mammal stock or species covered by such a plan.

[64 FR 9088, Feb. 24, 1999]

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§ 229.31 Pacific Offshore Cetacean Take Reduction Plan.

(a) *Purpose and scope.* The purpose of this section is to implement the Pacific Offshore Cetacean Take Reduction Plan. Paragraphs (b) through (d) of this section apply to all U.S. drift gillnet fishing vessels operating in waters seaward of the coast of California or Oregon, including adjacent high seas waters. For purposes of this section, the fishing season is defined as beginning May 1 and ending on January 31 of the following year.

(b) *Extenders.* An *extender* is a line that attaches a buoy (float) to a drift gillnet's floatline. The floatline is attached to the top of the drift gillnet. All extenders (buoy lines) must be at least 6 fathoms (36 ft; 10.9 m) in length during all sets. Accordingly, all floatlines must be fished at a minimum of 36 feet (10.9 m) below the surface of the water.

(c) *Pingers.* (1) For the purposes of this paragraph (c), a pinger is an acoustic deterrent device which, when immersed in water, broadcasts a 10 kHz (± 2 kHz) sound at 132 dB (± 4 dB) re 1 micropascal at 1 m, lasting 300 milliseconds (± 15 milliseconds), and repeating every 4 seconds ($\pm .2$ seconds); and remains operational to a water depth of at least 100 fathoms (600 ft or 182.88 m).

(2) While at sea, operators of drift gillnet vessels with gillnets onboard must carry enough pingers on the vessel to meet the requirements set forth under paragraphs (c)(3) through (6) of this section.

(3) *Floatline.* Pingers shall be attached within 30 ft (9.14 m) of the floatline and spaced no more than 300 ft (91.44 m) apart.

(4) *Leadline.* Pingers shall be attached within 36 ft (10.97 m) of the leadline and spaced no more than 300 ft (91.44 m) apart.

(5) *Staggered Configuration.* Pingers attached within 30 ft (9.14 m) of the floatline and within 36 ft (10.97 m) of the leadline shall be staggered such that the horizontal distance between them is no more than 150 ft (45.5 m).

(6) Any materials used to weight pingers must not change its specifications set forth under paragraph (c)(1) of this section.

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(7) The pingers must be operational and functioning at all times during deployment.

(8) If requested, NMFS may authorize the use of pingers with specifications or pinger configurations differing from those set forth in paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(3) of this section for limited, experimental purposes within a single fishing season.

(d) Skipper education workshops. After notification from NMFS, vessel operators must attend a skipper education workshop before commencing fishing each fishing season. For the 1997/1998 fishing season, all vessel operators must have attended one skipper education workshop by October 30, 1997. NMFS may waive the requirement to attend these workshops by notice to all vessel operators.

[62 FR 51813, Oct. 3, 1997, as amended at 63 FR 27861, May 21, 1998; 64 FR 3432, Jan. 22, 1999]

§ 229.32 Atlantic large whale take reduction plan regulations.

(a)(1) Regulated waters. The regulations in this section apply to all U.S. waters in the Atlantic except for the areas exempted in paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

(2) Exempted waters. The regulations in this section do not apply to waters landward of the first bridge over any embayment, harbor, or inlet and to waters landward of the following lines:

Rhode Island

- 41°27.99' N 71°11.75' W TO 41°28.49' N 71°14.63' W (Sakonnet River)
41°26.96' N 71°21.34' W TO 41°26.96' 71°25.92' W (Narragansett Bay)
41°22.41' N 71°30.80' W TO 41°22.41' N 71°30.85' W (Pt. Judith Pond Inlet)
41°21.31' 71°38.30' W TO 41°21.30' N 71°38.33' W (Ninigret Pond Inlet)
41°19.90' N 71°43.08' W TO 41°19.90' N 71°43.10' W (Quonochontaug Pond Inlet)
41°19.66' N 71°45.75' W TO 41°19.66' N 71°45.78' W (Weekapaug Pond Inlet)

New York

- West of the line from the Northern fork of the eastern end of Long Island, NY (Orient Pt.) to Plum Island to Fisher's Island to Watch Hill, RI. (Long Island Sound)
41°11.40' N 72°09.70' W TO 41°04.50' N 71°51.60;min; W (Gardiners Bay)
40°50.30' 72°28.50' W TO 40°50.36' N 72°28.67' W (Shinnecock Bay Inlet)

- 40°45.70' N 72°45.15' W TO 40°45.72' N 72°45.30' W (Moriches Bay Inlet)
40°37.32' N 73°18.40' W TO 40°38.00' N 73°18.56' W (Fire Island Inlet)
40°34.40' N 73°34.55' W TO 40°35.08' N 73°35.22' W (Jones Inlet)

New Jersey

- 39°45.90' N 74°05.90' W TO 39°45.15' N 74°06.20' W (Barnegat Inlet)
39°30.70' N 74°16.70' W TO 39°26.30' N 74°19.75' W (Beach Haven to Brigantine Inlet)
38°56.20' N 74°51.70' W TO 38°56.20' N 74°51.90' W (Cape May Inlet)
39°16.70' N 75°14.60' W TO 39°11.25' N 75°23.90' W (Delaware Bay)

Maryland/Virginia

- 38°19.48' N 75°05.10' W TO 38°19.35' N 75°05.25' W (Ocean City Inlet)
37°52.50' N 75°24.30' W TO 37°11.90' N 75°48.30' W (Chincoteague to Ship Shoal Inlet)
37°11.10' N 75°49.30' W TO 37°10.65' N 75°49.60' W (Little Inlet)
37°07.00' N 75°53.75' W TO 37°05.30' N 75°56.50' W (Smith Island Inlet)

North Carolina to Florida

All marine and tidal waters landward of the 72 COLREGS demarcation line (International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972), as depicted or noted on nautical charts published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Coast Charts 1:80,000 scale), and as described in 33 CFR part 80.

(b) Gear marking requirements. (1) Specified gear consists of lobster trap gear and gillnet gear set in specified areas.

(2) Specified areas. The following areas are specified for gear marking purposes: CCB Restricted Area, Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area, Northern Nearshore Lobster Waters Area, GSC Restricted Lobster Area, GSC Restricted Gillnet Area, GSC Sliver Restricted Area, Southern Nearshore Lobster Waters Area, Offshore Lobster Waters Area, Other Northeast Gillnet Waters Area, and Southeast U.S. Observer Area.

(3) Requirements for Southeast U.S. Observer Area. Any person who owns or fishes with specified fishing gear in the Southeast U.S. Observer Area must mark that gear in accordance with (b)(3)(i) and (b)(3)(ii) of this section, unless otherwise required by the Assistant Administrator under paragraph (g) of this section.

(i) *Color code.* Specified gear in the Southeast U.S. Observer Area must be marked with the appropriate color code to designate gear types and areas as follows:

(A) *Gear type code—Gillnet gear.* Gillnet gear must be marked with a green marking.

(B) *Area code.* Gear set in the Southeast U.S. Observer Area must be marked with a blue marking.

(ii) *Markings.* All specified gear in specified areas must be marked with two color codes, one designating the gear type, the other indicating the area where the gear is set. Each color of the two-color code must be permanently marked on or along the line or lines specified under (f)(2) of this section. Each color mark of the color codes must be clearly visible when the gear is hauled or removed from the water. Each mark must be at least 4 inches (10.2 cm) long. The two color marks must be placed within 6 inches (15.2 cm) of each other. If the color of the rope is the same as or similar to a color code, a white mark may be substituted for that color code. In marking or affixing the color code, the line may be dyed, painted, or marked with thin colored whipping line, thin colored plastic, or heat-shrink tubing, or other material; or a thin line may be woven into or through the line; or the line may be marked as approved in writing by the Assistant Administrator (AA).

(4) *Requirements for other specified areas.* Any person who owns or fishes with specified gear in the other specified areas must mark that gear in accordance with (b)(4)(i) and (b)(4)(ii) of this section, unless otherwise required by the Assistant Administrator under paragraph (g) of this section. For the purposes of the following gear marking requirements only, lobster trap gear set in the CCB Restricted Area during the winter restricted period, the Federal-water portion of the CCB Restricted Area during the off-peak period, and the Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area shall comply with the requirements for the Northern Nearshore Lobster Waters Area. Lobster gear set in the GSC Restricted Lobster Area shall comply with the requirements for the Offshore Lobster Waters Area. Similarly, anchored

gillnet gear set in the CCB Restricted area, Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area, GSC Restricted Gillnet Area, and GSC Silver Restricted Area shall comply with the requirements for gillnet gear in the Other Northeast Gillnet Waters Area.

(i) *Color code.* Specified gear must be marked with the appropriate colors to designate gear-types and areas as follows:

(A) Lobster trap gear in the Northern Nearshore Lobster Waters Area must be marked with a red marking.

(B) Lobster trap gear in the Southern Nearshore Lobster Waters Area must be marked with an orange marking.

(C) Lobster trap gear in the Offshore Lobster Waters Area must be marked with a black marking.

(D) Gillnet gear in the Other Northeast Gillnet Waters Area must be marked with a green marking.

(ii) *Markings.* All specified gear in specified areas must be marked with one color code (see paragraph (4)(i) of this section) which indicates the gear type and general area where the gear is set. Each color code must be permanently affixed on or along the line or lines. Each color code must be clearly visible when the gear is hauled or removed from the water. Each mark must be at least 4 inches (10.2 cm) long. The mark must be placed along the buoy line midway in the water column.

(5) *Changes to requirements.* If the Assistant Administrator revises the gear marking requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section, the gear must be marked in compliance with those requirements.

(c) *Restrictions applicable to lobster trap gear in regulated waters—(1) Universal lobster trap gear requirements.* In addition to the area-specific measures listed in (c)(2) through (c)(8) of this section, all lobster trap gear in regulated waters, including the Northern Inshore

State Lobster Waters Area, must comply with the universal gear requirements listed here¹. The Assistant Administrator may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(i) *No line floating at the surface.* No person may fish with lobster trap gear that has any portion of the buoy line that is directly connected to the gear at the ocean bottom floating at the surface at any time. If more than one buoy is attached to a single buoy line or if a high flyer and a buoy are used together on a single buoy line, floating line may be used between these objects.

(ii) *No wet storage of gear.* Lobster traps must be hauled out of the water at least once every 30 days.

(2) *Cape Cod Bay Restricted Area—(i) Area.* The CCB restricted area consists of the CCB right whale critical habitat area specified under 50 CFR 226.203(b) unless the Assistant Administrator changes that area in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(ii) *Area-specific gear requirements during the winter restricted period.* No person may fish with lobster trap gear in the CCB Restricted Area during the winter restricted period unless that person's gear complies with the gear marking requirements in paragraph (b) of this section, the universal lobster trap gear requirements in (c)(1) of this section, and the area-specific requirements listed below for the winter restricted period. The Assistant Administrator may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(A) *Winter restricted period.* The winter restricted period for the CCB Restricted Area is from January 1 through May 15 of each year unless the Assistant Administrator changes that area in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(B) *Weak links.* All buoy lines shall be attached to the main buoy with a weak link meeting the following specifications:

(1) The breaking strength of the weak link must not exceed 500 lb (226.7 kg).

¹Fishers are also encouraged to maintain their buoy lines to be as knot-free as possible. Splices are not considered to be an entanglement threat and are thus preferable to knots.

(2) The weak link must be chosen from the following list of combinations approved by the NMFS gear research program: swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate diameter, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or other materials or devices approved in writing by the Assistant Administrator.

(C) *Single traps and multiple-trap trawls.* Single traps and three-trap trawls are prohibited. All traps must be set in either a two-trap string or in a trawl of four or more traps. A two-trap string must have no more than one buoy line.

(D) *Sinking buoy lines.* All buoy lines must be comprised of sinking line except the bottom portion of the line, which may be a section of floating line not to exceed one-third the overall length of the buoy line.

(E) *Sinking ground line.* All ground lines must be comprised entirely of sinking line.

(iii) *Area-specific gear requirements during the other restricted period.* No person may fish with lobster trap gear in the CCB Restricted Area during the other restricted period unless that person's gear complies with the gear marking requirements in paragraph (b) of this section and the universal lobster trap gear requirements in (c)(1) of this section as well as the area-specific requirements listed below for the other restricted period. The Assistant Administrator may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(A) *Other restricted period.* The other restricted period for the CCB Restricted Area is from May 16 through December 31 of each year unless the Assistant Administrator revises that period in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(B) *Gear requirements—(1) State-water portion.* No person may fish with lobster trap gear in the state-water portion of the CCB Restricted Area during the other restricted period unless that person's gear complies with the requirements for the Northern Inshore State Lobster Waters Area listed in (c)(6) of this section. The Assistant Administrator may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(2) *Federal-water portion.* No person may fish with lobster trap gear in the federal-water portion of the CCB Restricted Area during the other restricted period unless that person's gear complies with the requirements for the Northern Nearshore Lobster Waters Area in (c)(7) of this section. The Assistant Administrator may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(3) *Great South Channel Restricted Lobster Area—(i) Area.* The GSC Restricted Lobster Area consists of the GSC right whale critical habitat area specified under 50 CFR 226.203(a) unless the Assistant Administrator changes that area in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(ii) *Closure during the spring restricted period—(A) Spring restricted period.* The spring restricted period for the GSC Restricted Lobster Area is from April 1 through June 30 of each year unless the Assistant Administrator revises this period in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(B) *Closure.* During the spring restricted period, no person may fish with or set lobster trap gear in this Area unless the Assistant Administrator specifies gear modifications or alternative fishing practices in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section and the gear or practices comply with those specifications.

(iii) *Area-specific gear requirements for the other restricted period.* No person may fish with lobster trap gear in the GSC Restricted Lobster Area unless that person's gear complies with the gear marking requirements in paragraph (b) of this section, the universal lobster trap gear requirements in (c)(1) of this section, and the area-specific requirements listed here for the other restricted period. The Assistant Administrator may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(A) *Other restricted period.* The other restricted period for the GSC Restricted Lobster Area is July 1 through March 31, unless the Assistant Administrator revises the timing in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(B) *Weak links.* All buoy lines must be attached to the main buoy with a weak link meeting the specifications listed

in subparagraph (c)(5)(ii)(A) below for the Offshore Lobster Waters Area.

(4) *Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area—(i) Area.* The Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area includes all federal waters of the Gulf of Maine, except those designated as right whale critical habitat under 50 CFR 226.203(b), that lie south of 43°15' N. lat. and west of 70° W long. The Assistant Administrator may change that area in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(ii) *Area-specific gear requirements.* No person may fish with lobster trap gear in the Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area unless that person's gear complies with the gear marking requirements in paragraph (b) of this section, the universal lobster trap gear requirements in (c)(1) of this section, and the requirements listed for the Northern Nearshore Lobster Waters Area in (c)(7) of this section. The Assistant Administrator may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(5) *Offshore Lobster Waters Area—(i) Area.* The Offshore Lobster Waters Area includes all waters bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated (including the area known as the Area 2/3 Overlap in the American Lobster Fishery regulations at 50 CFR 697.18 but not including the GSC Restricted Lobster Area):

Point	Latitude (°N)	Longitude (°W)
A	43°58'	67°22'
B	43°41'	68°00'
C	43°12'	69°00'
D	42°49'	69°40'
E	42°15.5'	69°40'
F	42°10'	69°56'
K	41°10'	69°6.5'
N	40°45.5'	71°34'
M	40°27.5'	72°14'
U	40°12.5'	72°48.5'
V	39°50'	73°01'
X	38°39.5'	73°40'
Y	38°12'	73°55'
Z	37°12'	74°44'
ZA	35°34'	74°51'
ZB	35°14.5'	75°31' ¹

¹ From Point ZB east to the EEZ boundary, thence along the seaward EEZ boundary to Point A.

(ii) *Area-specific gear requirements.* No person may fish with lobster trap gear in the Offshore Lobster Waters Area unless that person's gear complies with the gear marking requirements in

paragraph (b) of this section, the universal lobster trap gear requirements in (c)(1) of this section, and the gear requirements listed here. The Assistant Administrator may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(A) *Weak links on all buoy lines.* All buoy lines must be attached to the main buoy with a weak link meeting the following specifications:

(1) The weak link must be chosen from the following list of combinations approved by the NMFS gear research program: swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate diameter, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or other materials or devices approved in writing by the Assistant Administrator.

(2) The breaking strength of these weak links may not exceed 2,000 lb (906.9 kg).

(3) Weak links must be designed such that the bitter end of the buoy line is clean and free of any knots when the link breaks. Splices are not considered to be knots for the purposes of this provision.

(B) [Reserved]

(6) *Northern Inshore State Lobster Waters Area—(i) Area.* The Northern Inshore State Lobster Waters Area includes the state waters of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine but does not include waters exempted under (a)(2) of this section.

(ii) *Area-specific gear requirements.* No person may fish with lobster trap gear in the Northern Inshore State Lobster Waters Area unless that person's gear complies with the universal lobster trap gear requirements in (c)(1) of this section and at least one of the options on the Lobster Take Reduction Technology List in (c)(9) of this section. The Assistant Administrator may revise this requirement in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(7) *Northern Nearshore Lobster Waters Area—(i) Area.* The Northern Nearshore Lobster Waters Area includes all Federal waters of EEZ Nearshore Management Area 1, Area 2, and the Outer Cape Lobster Management Area as defined in the American Lobster Fishery regulations at 50 CFR 697.18, with the exception of the CCB Restricted Area

and the Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area.

(ii) *Area-specific gear requirements.* No person may fish with lobster trap gear in the Northern Nearshore Lobster Waters Area unless that person's gear complies with the gear marking requirements in paragraph (b) of this section, the universal lobster trap gear requirements in (c)(1) of this section, and the gear requirements listed below for this area. The Assistant Administrator may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(A) *Weak Links.* All buoy lines must be attached to the main buoy with a weak link meeting the following specifications:

(1) The weak link must be chosen from the following list of combinations approved by the NMFS gear research program: swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate diameter, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or other materials or devices approved in writing by the Assistant Administrator.

(2) The breaking strength of these weak links must not exceed 600 lb (272.4 kg).

(3) Weak links must be designed such that the bitter end of the buoy line is clean and free of any knots when the link breaks. Splices are not considered to be knots for the purposes of this provision.

(B) *Single traps and multiple-trap trawls.* Single traps are prohibited. All traps must be set in trawls of two or more traps. All trawls up to and including five traps must have no more than one buoy line.

(8) *Southern Nearshore Lobster Waters Area—(i) Area.* The Southern Nearshore Lobster Waters Area includes all state and federal waters which fall within EEZ Nearshore Management Area 4 and EEZ Nearshore Management Area 5 as described in the American Lobster Fishery regulations in 50 CFR 697.18.

(ii) *Area-specific gear requirements for the restricted period—(A) Restricted period.* The restricted period for Southern Nearshore Lobster Waters is year round unless the Assistant Administrator revises this period in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(B) *Gear requirements.* No person may fish with lobster trap gear in the Southern Nearshore Lobster Waters Area during the restricted period unless that person's gear complies with the gear marking requirements specified in paragraph (b) of this section, the universal lobster trap gear requirements in paragraph (c)(1) of this section, and the following gear requirements for this area, which the Assistant Administrator may revise in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section:

(1) *Buoy Line Weak Links.* All buoy lines must be attached to the main buoy with a weak link placed as close to each individual buoy as operationally feasible that meets the following specifications:

(i) The weak link must be chosen from the following list of combinations approved by the NMFS gear research program: swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate diameter, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or other materials or devices approved in writing by the Assistant Administrator.

(ii) The breaking strength of this weak link may not exceed 600 lb (272.4 kg).

(iii) Weak links must be designed such that the bitter end of the buoy line is clean and free of knots when the link breaks. Splices are not considered to be knots for the purpose of this provision.

(2) [Reserved]

(9) *Lobster Take Reduction Technology List.* The following gear modification options comprise the Lobster Take Reduction Technology List:

(i) Through December 31, 2002, all buoy lines must be 7/16 inches (1.11 cm) or less in diameter.

(ii) All buoys must be attached to the buoy line with a weak link meeting the following specifications:

(A) The weak link must be chosen from the following list of combinations approved by the NMFS gear research program: swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate diameter, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or other materials or devices approved in writing by the Assistant Administrator.

(B) The breaking strength of these weak links must not exceed 600 lb (272.4 kg).

(C) Weak links must be designed such that the bitter end of the buoy line is clean and free of any knots when the link breaks. Splices are not considered to be knots for the purposes of this provision.

(iii) All buoy lines must be comprised entirely of sinking and/or neutrally buoyant line.

(iv) All ground lines must be comprised entirely of sinking and/or neutrally buoyant line.

(d) *Restrictions applicable to anchored gillnet gear—(1) Universal anchored gillnet gear requirements.* In addition to the area-specific measures listed in (d)(2) through (d)(7) of this section, all anchored gillnet gear in regulated waters must comply with the universal gear requirements listed here². The AA may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(i) *No line floating at the surface.* No person may fish with anchored gillnet gear that has any portion of the buoy line that is directly connected to the gear on the ocean bottom floating at the surface at any time. If more than one buoy is attached to a single buoy line or if a high flyer and a buoy are used together on a single buoy line, floating line may be used between these objects.

(ii) *No wet storage of gear.* Anchored gillnet gear must be hauled out of the water at least once every 30 days.

(2) *Cape Cod Bay Restricted Area—(i) Area.* The CCB Restricted Area consists of the CCB right whale critical habitat area specified under 50 CFR 226.203(b), unless the AA changes the boundaries in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(ii) *Closure during the winter restricted period—(A) Winter restricted period.* The winter restricted period for this area is from January 1 through May 15 of each year, unless the AA revises the timing in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

²Fishers are also encouraged to maintain their buoy lines to be as knot-free as possible. Splices are not considered to be an entanglement threat and are thus preferable to knots.

(B) *Closure.* During the winter restricted period, no person may fish with anchored gillnet gear in the CCB Restricted Area unless the AA specifies gear restrictions or alternative fishing practices in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section and the gear or practices comply with those specifications. The AA may waive this closure for the remaining portion of the winter restricted period in any year through a notification in the Federal Register if NMFS determines that right whales have left the critical habitat and are unlikely to return for the remainder of the season.

(iii) *Area-specific gear requirements for the other restricted period—(A) Other restricted period.* The other restricted period for the CCB Restricted Area is from May 16 through December 31 of each year unless the AA revises that period in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(B) No person may fish with anchored gillnet gear in the CCB Restricted Area during the other restricted period unless that person's gear complies with the gear marking requirements specified in paragraph (b) of this section, the universal anchored gillnet gear requirements specified in (d)(1) of this section, and the area-specific requirements listed in (d)(6)(ii) of this section for the Other Northeast Gillnet Waters Area. The AA may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(3) *Great South Channel Restricted Gillnet Area—(i) Area.* The GSC Restricted Gillnet Area consists of the area bounded by lines connecting the following four points: 41°02.2' N/69°02' W, 41°43.5' N/69°36.3' W, 42°10' N/68°31' W, and 41°38' N/68°13' W. This area includes most of the GSC right whale critical habitat area specified under 50 CFR 226.203(a), with the exception of the sliver along the western boundary described in (d)(4)(i) here. The AA may revise these boundaries in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(ii) *Closure during the spring restricted period—(A) Spring restricted period.* The spring restricted period for the GSC Restricted Gillnet Area is from April 1 through June 30 of each year unless the AA revises that period in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(B) *Closure.* During the spring restricted period, no person may set or fish with anchored gillnet gear in the GSC Restricted Gillnet Area unless the AA specifies gear restrictions or alternative fishing practices in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section and the gear or practices comply with those specifications.

(iii) *Area-specific gear requirements for the other restricted period—(A) Other restricted period.* The other restricted period for the GSC Restricted Gillnet Area is from July 1 through March 31 of each year unless the AA revises that period in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(B) During the other restricted period, no person may fish with anchored gillnet gear in the GSC Restricted Gillnet Area unless that person's gear complies with the gear marking requirements specified in paragraph (b) of this section, the universal anchored gillnet gear requirements specified in (d)(1) of this section, and the area-specific requirements listed in (d)(6)(ii) of this section for the Other Northeast Gillnet Waters Area. The AA may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(4) *Great South Channel Sliver Restricted Area—(i) Area.* The GSC Sliver Restricted Area consists of the area bounded by lines connecting the following points: 41°02.2' N/69°02' W, 41°43.5' N/69°36.3' W, 41°40' N/69°45' W, and 41°00' N/69°05' W. The AA may revise these boundaries in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(ii) *Area-specific gear requirements.* No person may fish with anchored gillnet gear in the GSC Sliver Restricted Area unless that gear complies with the gear marking requirements specified in paragraph (b) of this section, the universal anchored gillnet gear requirements specified in (d)(1) of this section, and the area-specific requirements listed in subparagraph (d)(6)(ii) of this section for the Other Northeast Gillnet Waters Area. The AA may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(5) *Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area—(i) Area.* The Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area includes all Federal waters of the Gulf of Maine, except those designated as

right whale critical habitat under 50 CFR 226.203(b), that lie south of 43°15' N. lat. and west of 70° W long. The AA may change these boundaries in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(ii) *Area-specific gear requirements.* No person may fish with anchored gillnet gear in the Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area unless that gear complies with the gear marking requirements specified in paragraph (b) of this section, the universal anchored gillnet gear requirements specified in (d)(1) of this section, and the area-specific requirements listed in (d)(6)(ii) of this section for the Other Northeast Gillnet Waters Area. The AA may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(6) *Other Northeast Gillnet Waters Area—(i) Area.* The Other Northeast Gillnet Waters Area consists of all U.S. waters west of the U.S./Canada border and north of a line extending due east from the Virginia/North Carolina border with the exception of the CCB Restricted Area, Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area, GSC Restricted Gillnet Area, GSC Sliver Restricted Area, Mid-Atlantic Coastal Waters Area, and exempted waters listed in (a)(2) of this section.

(ii) *Area-specific gear requirements.* No person may fish with anchored gillnet gear in the Other Northeast Gillnet Waters Area unless that person's gear complies with the gear marking requirements specified in paragraph (b) of this section, the universal anchored gillnet gear requirements specified in (d)(1) of this section, and the area-specific requirements listed below. The AA may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(A) *Buoy line weak links.* All buoy lines must be attached to the main buoy with a weak link meeting the following specifications:

(1) The weak link must be chosen from the following list of combinations approved by the NMFS gear research program: swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate diameter, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or other materials or devices approved in writing by the AA.

(2) The breaking strength of these weak links must not exceed 1100 lb (498.8 kg).

(3) Weak links must be designed such that the bitter end of the buoy line is clean and free of any knots when the link breaks. Splices are not considered to be knots for the purposes of this provision.

(B) *Net panel weak links.* All net panels must contain weak links meeting the following specifications:

(1) Weak links must be inserted in the center of the floatline (headrope) of each net panel in a net string.

(2) The breaking strength of these weak links must not exceed 1100 lb (498.8 kg).

(C) *Anchoring System.* All anchored gillnet strings containing 20 or fewer net panels must be securely anchored with one of the following anchoring systems:

(1) Anchors with the holding power of at least a 22 lb (10.0 kg) Danforth-style anchor at each end of the net string,

(2) Dead weights weighing at least 50 lb (22.7 kg) at each end of the net string, or

(3) A lead line weighing at least 100 lb (45.4 kg) per 300 ft (91.4 m) for each net panel in the net string.

(7) *Mid-Atlantic Coastal Waters Area—(i) Area.* The Mid-Atlantic Coastal Waters Area consists of all U.S. waters bounded by the line defined by the following points: The southern shore of Long Island, NY, at 72°30' W. long., then due south to 33°51' N. lat., thence west to the North Carolina-South Carolina border, as defined in § 229.2.

(ii) *Area-specific gear requirements.* From December 1 through March 31, no person may fish with anchored gillnet gear in the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Waters Area unless that person's gear complies with the gear marking requirements specified in paragraph (b) of this section, the universal anchored gillnet gear requirements specified in paragraph (d)(1) of this section, and the following area-specific requirements, which the Assistant Administrator may revise in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section:

(A) *Buoy line weak links.* All buoy lines must be attached to the main buoy with a weak link placed as close

to each individual buoy as operationally feasible that meets the following specifications:

(1) The weak link must be chosen from the following list of combinations approved by the NMFS gear research program: Swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate breaking strength, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or other materials or devices approved in writing by the Assistant Administrator.

(2) The breaking strength of these weak links may not exceed 1,100 lb (498.8 kg).

(3) Weak links must be designed such that the bitter end of the buoy line is clean and free of any knots when the link breaks. Splices are not considered to be knots for the purposes of this provision.

(B) *Net panel weak links.* All net panels must contain weak links that meet the following specifications:

(1) Weak links must be inserted in the center of the floatline of each 50-fathom (300-ft or 91.4-m) net panel in a net string or every 25 fathoms for longer panels.

(2) The breaking strength of these weak links may not exceed 1,100 lb (498.8 kg).

(C) *Tending/anchoring.* All gillnets must return to port with the vessel or be anchored at each end with an anchor capable of the holding power of at least a 22-lb (10.0-kg) Danforth-style anchor.

(8) *Gillnet Take Reduction Technology List.* The following gear characteristics comprise the Gillnet Take Reduction Technology List:

(i) All buoy lines are attached to the buoy line with a weak link having a maximum breaking strength of up to 1,100 lb (498.8 kg). Weak links may include swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate diameter, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or other materials or devices approved in writing by the Assistant Administrator.

(ii) Weak links with a breaking strength of up to 1,100 lb (498.8 kg) must be inserted in the center of the floatline (headrope) of each 50 fathom net panel or every 25 fathoms for longer panels.

(iii) All buoy lines must be comprised entirely of sinking and/or neutrally buoyant line.

(e) *Restrictions applicable to mid-Atlantic driftnet gear—(1) Restrictions.* From December 1 through March 31 of the following year, no person may fish with driftnet gear at night in the mid-Atlantic coastal waters area unless that gear is tended. During that time, all driftnet gear set by that vessel in the mid-Atlantic coastal waters area must be removed from the water and stowed on board the vessel before a vessel returns to port. The Assistant Administrator may revise these requirements in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(f) *Restrictions applicable to the southeast U.S. restricted area and the southeast U.S. observer area—(1) Management areas—(i) Southeast U.S. Restricted Area.* The Southeast U.S. Restricted Area consists of the area bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated from south to north, unless the Assistant Administrator changes that area in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section:

Point	N. Lat.	W. Long.
SERA1	27°51'	(¹)
SERA2	27°51'	80°00'
SERA3	32°00'	80°00'
SERA4	32°36'	78°52'
SERA5	32°51'	78°36'
SERA6	33°15'	78°24'
SERA7	33°27'	78°04'
SERA8	(²)	78°33.9'

¹Florida shoreline.

²South Carolina shoreline.

(A) *Southeast U.S. Restricted Area N.* The Southeast U.S. Restricted Area N consists of the Southeast U.S. Restricted Area from 29°00' N. lat. northward.

(B) *Southeast U.S. Restricted Area S.* The Southeast U.S. Restricted Area S consists of the Southeast U.S. Restricted Area southward of 29°00' N. lat.

(ii) *Southeast U.S. observer area.* The southeast U.S. observer area consists of the southeast U.S. restricted area and an additional area along the coast south to 26°46.5' N lat. (near West Palm Beach, FL) and extending from the shore eastward out to 80°00' W long., unless the Assistant Administrator changes that area in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(2) *Gear marking requirements.* From November 15 through March 31 of the following year, no person may fish with

gillnet gear in the southeast U.S. observer area unless that gear is marked according to the gear marking code specified under paragraph (b) of this section. All buoy lines must be marked within 2 ft (0.6 m) of the top of the buoy line and midway along the length of the buoy line. From November 15, 1999, each net panel must be marked along both the float line and the lead line at least once every 100 yards (92.4 m).

(3) *Observer requirement.* No person may fish for shark with gillnet with webbing of 5 inches (12.7 cm) or greater stretched mesh in the southeast U.S. observer area from December 1 through March 31 south of 29°00' N. lat. unless the operator of the vessel calls the Southeast Fisheries Science Center Panama City Laboratory in Panama City, FL, not less than 48 hours prior to departing on any fishing trip in order to arrange for observer coverage. If the Panama City Laboratory requests that an observer be taken on board a vessel during a fishing trip at any time from December 1 through March 31 south of 29°00' N. lat., no person may fish with such gillnet aboard that vessel in the southeast U.S. observer area unless an observer is on board that vessel during the trip.

(4) *Restricted periods, closure, and exemptions—(i) Restricted periods.* The restricted period for the Southeast U.S. Restricted Area N is from November 15 through April 15, and the restricted period for the Southeast U.S. Restricted Area S is from December 1 through March 31, unless the Assistant Administrator revises the restricted period in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(ii) *Closure for gillnets.* (A) Except as provided under paragraph (f)(4)(v) of this section, fishing with or possessing gillnet in the Southeast U.S. Restricted Area N during the restricted period is prohibited.

(B) Except as provided under paragraph (f)(4)(iii) of this section and (f)(4)(iv) of this section, fishing with gillnet in the Southeast U.S. Restricted Area S during the restricted period is prohibited.

(iii) *Exemption for Southeastern U.S. Atlantic shark gillnet fishery.* Fishing with gillnet for sharks with webbing of

5 inches (12.7 cm) or greater stretched mesh is exempt from the restrictions under paragraph (f)(4)(ii)(B) if:

(A) The gillnet is deployed so that it encloses an area of water;

(B) A valid commercial directed shark limited access permit has been issued to the vessel in accordance with 50 CFR § 635.4(e) and is on board;

(C) No net is set at night or when visibility is less than 500 yards (1,500 ft, 460 m);

(D) The gillnet is removed from the water before night or immediately if visibility decreases below 500 yards (1,500 ft, 460 m);

(E) Each set is made under the observation of a spotter plane;

(F) No gillnet is set within 3 nautical miles (5.6 km) of a right, humpback, or fin whale; and

(G) The gillnet is removed immediately from the water if a right, humpback, or fin whale moves within 3 nautical miles (5.6 km) of the set gear.

(iv) *Exemption for Spanish Mackerel component of Southeast Atlantic gillnet fishery.* Fishing with gillnet for Spanish mackerel is exempt from the restrictions under paragraph (f)(4)(ii)(B) from December 1 through December 31, and from March 1 through March 31 if:

(A) Gillnet mesh size is between 3.5 inches (8.9 cm) and 4 7/8 inches (12.4 cm) stretched mesh;

(B) A valid commercial vessel permit for Spanish mackerel has been issued to the vessel in accordance with 50 CFR § 622.4(a)(2)(iv) and is on board;

(C) No person may fish with, set, place in the water, or have on board a vessel a gillnet with a float line longer than 800 yards (2,400 ft, 732 m);

(D) No person may fish with, set, or place in the water more than one gillnet at any time;

(E) No more than two gillnets, including any net in use, may be possessed at any one time; provided, however, that if two gillnets, including any net in use, are possessed at any one time, they must have stretched mesh sizes (as allowed under the regulations) that differ by at least .25 inch (.64 cm);

(F) No person may soak a gillnet for more than 1 hour. The soak period begins when the first mesh is placed in the water and ends either when the first mesh is retrieved back on board

the vessel or the gathering of the gillnet is begun to facilitate retrieval on board the vessel, whichever occurs first; providing that, once the first mesh is retrieved or the gathering is begun, the retrieval is continuous until the gillnet is completely removed from the water;

(G) No net is set at night or when visibility is less than 500 yards (1,500 ft, 460 m);

(H) The gillnet is removed from the water before night or immediately if visibility decreases below 500 yards (1,500 ft, 460 m);

(I) No net is set within 3 nautical miles (5.6 km) of a right, humpback, or fin whale; and

(J) Gillnet is removed immediately from the water if a right, humpback, or fin whale moves within 3 nautical miles (5.6 km) of the set gear.

(v) *Exemption for vessels in transit with gillnet aboard.* Possession of gillnet aboard a vessel in transit is exempt from the restrictions under paragraph (f)(4)(ii)(A) of this section if: All nets are covered with canvas or other similar material and lashed or otherwise securely fastened to the deck, rail, or drum; and all buoys, high flyers, and anchors are disconnected from all gillnets. No fish may be possessed aboard such a vessel in transit.

(g) *Other provisions.* In addition to any other emergency authority under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, or other appropriate authority, the Assistant administrator may take action under this section in the following situations:

(1) *Entanglements in critical habitat or restricted areas.* If a serious injury or mortality of a right whale occurs in the Cape Cod Bay critical habitat from January 1 through May 15, the Great South Channel Restricted Area from April 1 through June 30, the Southeast U.S. Restricted Area N from November 15 through April 15, or the Southeast U.S. Restricted Area S from December 1 through March 31 as the result of an entanglement by lobster or gillnet gear allowed to be used in those areas and times, the Assistant Administrator shall close that area to that gear type (i.e., lobster trap or gillnet) for the rest

of that time period and for that same time period in each subsequent year, unless the Assistant Administrator revises the restricted period in accordance with paragraph (g)(2) of this section or unless other measures are implemented under paragraph (g)(2) of this section.

(2) *Other special measures.* The Assistant Administrator may revise the requirements of this section through a publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER if:

(i) NMFS verifies that certain gear characteristics are both operationally effective and reduce serious injuries and mortalities of endangered whales;

(ii) New gear technology is developed and determined to be appropriate;

(iii) Revised breaking strengths are determined to be appropriate;

(iv) New marking systems are developed and determined to be appropriate;

(v) NMFS determines that right whales are remaining longer than expected in a closed area or have left earlier than expected;

(vi) NMFS determines that the boundaries of a closed area are not appropriate;

(vii) Gear testing operations are considered appropriate; or

(viii) Similar situations occur.

(3) For the purpose of reducing the risk of fishery interactions with right whales, NMFS may establish a temporary Dynamic Area Management (DAM) zone in the following manner:

(i) *Trigger.* Upon receipt of a single reliable report from a qualified individual of three or more right whales within an area NMFS will plot each individual sighting (event) and draw a circle with a 2.8 nm (5.2 km) radius around it, which will be adjusted for the number of right whales sighted such that a density of at least 0.04 right whales per nm² (1.85 km²) is maintained within the circle. If any circle or group of contiguous circles includes 3 or more right whales, NMFS would consider this core area and its surrounding waters a candidate DAM zone.

(ii) *DAM zone.* Areas for consideration for DAM zones are limited to areas north of 40° N latitude. Having identified any circle or group of contiguous circles including 3 or more right

whales as candidates for protection, as identified in paragraph (g)(3)(i) of this section, NMFS will determine the extent of the DAM zone as follows:

(A) A larger circular zone will be drawn to extend 15 nm (27.8 km) from the perimeter of a circle around each core area.

(B) The DAM zone will then be defined by a polygon drawn outside but tangential to the circular buffer zone(s). The latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates of the corners of the polygon will then be identified.

(iii) *Requirements and prohibitions within DAM zones.* Notice of specific area restrictions will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER and will become effective 2 days after publication. Gear not in compliance with the imposed restrictions may not be set in the DAM zone after the effective date. NMFS may:

(A) Require owners of gillnet and lobster gear set within the DAM zone to remove all such gear within 2 days after notice is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER,

(B) Allow fishing within a DAM zone with anchored gillnet and lobster trap gear, provided such gear satisfies the requirements specified in paragraphs (g)(4)(i)(B)(1) and (g)(4)(i)(B)(2) of this section, except that a second buoy line and a section of floating line in the bottom portion of each line not to exceed one-third the overall length of the buoy line are allowed within a DAM zone. These requirements are in addition to requirements found in § 229.32 (b) through (d) but supersede them when the requirements in paragraphs (g)(4)(i)(B)(1) and (g)(4)(i)(B)(2) of this section, with the exception that a second buoy line and a section of floating line in the bottom portion of each line not to exceed one-third the overall length of the buoy line are allowed within a DAM zone, are more restrictive than those in § 229.32 (b) through (d). Requirements for anchored gillnet gear in Other Northeast Gillnet Waters are as specified in paragraphs (g)(4)(i)(B)(1) of this section, except that a second buoy line and a section of floating line in the bottom portion of each line not to exceed one-third the overall length of the buoy line are allowed within a DAM zone. Require-

ments for lobster trap gear in Offshore Lobster Waters, Northern Nearshore Lobster Waters and Northern Inshore State Lobster Waters are as specified in paragraph (g)(4)(i)(B)(2) of this section, except that a second buoy line and a section of floating line in the bottom portion of each line not to exceed one-third the overall length of the buoy line are allowed within a DAM zone. Requirements for anchored gillnet gear in Cape Cod Bay Restricted Area (May 16 through December 31), Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area, Great South Channel Restricted Gillnet Area (July 1 through March 31), Great South Channel Sliver Restricted Area (July 1 through March 31), and Mid-Atlantic Coastal Waters are the same as requirements for Other Northeast Gillnet Waters. Requirements for lobster trap gear in Southern Nearshore Lobster Waters, Cape Cod Bay Restricted Area (May 16 through December 31) and Stellwagen Bank/Jeffreys Ledge Restricted Area are the same as requirements for Northern Nearshore Lobster Waters and Northern Inshore State Lobster Waters. Requirements for lobster trap gear in the Great South Channel Restricted Lobster Area (July 1 through March 31) are the same as requirements for Offshore Lobster Waters.

(C) Issue an alert to fishermen using appropriate media to inform them of the fact that right whale density in a certain area has triggered a DAM zone. In the alert, NMFS will provide detailed information on the location of the DAM zone and the number of animals sighted within it. Furthermore, NMFS will request that fishermen voluntarily remove lobster trap and anchored gillnet gear from the DAM zone and ask that no additional gear be set inside it for 15 days or until NMFS rescinds the alert.

(D) The determination of whether restrictions will be imposed within a DAM zone would be based on NMFS' review of a variety of factors, including but not limited to: the location of the DAM zone with respect to other fishery closure areas, weather conditions as they relate to the safety of human life at sea, the type and amount of gear already present in the area, and a review

of recent right whale entanglement and mortality data.

(iv) *Restricted period.* Any DAM zone will remain in effect for a minimum period of 15 days. At the conclusion of the 15-day period, the DAM zone will expire automatically unless it is extended by subsequent publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(v) *Extensions of the restricted period.* Any 15-day period may be extended if NMFS determines that the trigger established in paragraph (g)(3)(i) of this section continues to be met.

(vi) *Reopening of restricted zone.* NMFS may remove any gear restriction or prohibition and reopen the DAM zone prior to its automatic expiration if there are no confirmed sightings of right whales for at least 1 week, or other credible evidence indicates that right whales have left the DAM zone. NMFS will notify the public of the reopening of a DAM zone prior to the expiration of the 15-day period by issuing a document in the FEDERAL REGISTER and through other appropriate media.

(4) *Seasonal Area Management (SAM) Program.* In addition to existing requirements for vessels deploying anchored gillnet or lobster trap gear in the Other Northeast Gillnet Waters, Northern Inshore State Lobster Waters, Northern Nearshore Lobster Waters, and Offshore Lobster Waters found at § 229.32 (b) - (d), a vessel may fish in the SAM Areas as described in paragraphs (g)(4)(i)(A) and (g)(4)(ii)(A) of this section, which overlay the previously mentioned areas, provided the vessel complies with the gear requirements specified in paragraphs (g)(4)(i)(B) and (g)(4)(ii)(B) of this section during the times specified in those paragraphs. The gear requirements in (g)(4)(i)(B) and (g)(4)(ii)(B) supercede requirements found at § 229.32 (b) - (d) when the former are more restrictive than the latter. Copies of a chart depicting these areas are available from the Regional Administrator upon request.

(i) *SAM West.* (A) *Area.* SAM West consists of all waters bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

SAM WEST

Point	N. Lat.	W. Long.
SAM1	42°04.8'	70°10'
SAM2	42°12'	70°15'
SAM3	42°30'	70°15'
SAM4	42°30'	69°24'
SAM5	41°48.9'	69°24'
SAM6	41°45'	69°33'
SAM7	41°45'	69°55.8'

(B) *Gear requirements.* Unless otherwise authorized by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, in accordance with paragraph (g)(2) of this section, from March 1 through April 30, no person may fish with anchored gillnet or lobster trap gear in SAM West unless that person's gear complies with the following gear characteristics:

(1) *Anchored gillnet gear.* (i) Ground lines and Buoy lines—All ground lines and buoy lines must be made entirely of sinking or neutrally buoyant line. Floating ground lines and buoy lines are prohibited.

(ii) Buoy weak links—All buoy lines are attached to the buoy with a weak link having a maximum breaking strength of up to 1,100 lb (498.9 kg). Weak links may include swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate diameter, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or other materials or devices approved in writing by the Assistant Administrator.

(iii) Net panel weak link—Each net panel must have a total of five weak links. The breaking strength of each of these weak links must not exceed 1,100 lb (498.9 kg). The weak link requirements apply to all variations in panel size. Three of the five weak links must be located on the floatline. One floatline weak link must be placed at the center of the net panel, and two weak links must be placed as close as possible to each of the bridle ends of the net panel. The remaining two of the five weak links must be placed in the center of each of the up and down lines at either end of each panel.

(iv) Buoy line—No more than one buoy line per net string may be used, and it must be deployed at the northern or western end of the gillnet string depending on the direction of the set.

(v) Gillnet anchor—All anchored gillnets, regardless of the number of net panels, must be securely anchored

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with a holding power of at least a 22 lb (9.9 kg) Danforth-style anchor at each end of the net string.

(2) *Lobster Trap gear.* (i) Ground lines and Buoy lines—All ground lines and buoy lines must be made entirely of sinking or neutrally buoyant line. Floating ground lines and buoy lines are prohibited.

(ii) Northern Inshore State Lobster Waters and Northern Nearshore Lobster Waters Areas buoy weak links—All buoy lines must be attached to the buoy with a weak link having a maximum breaking strength of up to 600-lb (272.4-kg). Weak links may include swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate diameter, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or other materials or devices approved in writing by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries.

(iii) Offshore Lobster Waters Area buoy weak links—All buoy lines must be attached to the buoy with a weak link having a maximum breaking strength of up to 1,500 lb (680.4 kg). Weak links may include swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate diameter, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or other materials or devices approved in writing by the Assistant Administrator.

(iv) Buoy line—No more than one buoy line per trawl is allowed. The buoy line must be attached to the northern or western end of the trawl string depending on the direction of the set. These requirements supersede the requirements found at §697.21, which require one radar reflector at each end of a trawl with more than three traps.

(ii) *SAM East.* (A) *Area.* SAM East consists of all waters bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

SAM EAST

Point	N. Lat.	W. Long.
SAM5	41°48.9'	69°24'
SAM4	42°30'	69°24'
SAM8	42°30'	67°26'
SAM9	41°45'	66°50'
SAM10	41°45'	68°17'
SAM11	42°10'	68°31'

(B) *Gear requirements.* Unless otherwise authorized by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, in accordance with paragraph (g)(2) of this

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section, from May 1 through July 31, no person may fish with anchored gillnet or lobster trap gear in SAM East unless that person's gear complies with the gear characteristics found at paragraph (g)(4)(i)(B) of this section.

NOTE TO §229.32: Additional regulations that affect fishing with lobster trap gear have also been issued under authority of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act in part 697 of this title.

[64 FR 7552, Feb. 16, 1999, as amended at 65 FR 70317, Nov. 22, 2000; 65 FR 80377, Dec. 21, 2000; 67 FR 1141, 1159, Jan. 9, 2002; 67 FR 1313, Jan. 10, 2002; 67 FR 15494, Apr. 2, 2002; 67 FR 59477, Sept. 23, 2002; 67 FR 65727, Oct. 28, 2002; 68 FR 19465, Apr. 21, 2003; 68 FR 51200, Aug. 26, 2003; 72 FR 34642, June 25, 2007]

§ 229.33 Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan Implementing Regulations—Gulf of Maine.

(a) *Restrictions—*(1) *Northeast Closure Area.* From August 15 through September 13 of each fishing year, it is prohibited to fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove sink gillnet gear or gillnet gear capable of catching multispecies, from Northeast Closure Area. This prohibition does not apply to a single pelagic gillnet (as described and used as set forth in §648.81(f)(2)(ii) of this title). The Northeast Closure Area is the area bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

NORTHEAST CLOSURE AREA

Point	N. Lat.	W. Long.
NE1	(¹)	68°55.0'
NE2	43°29.6'	68°55.0'
NE3	44°04.4'	67°48.7'
NE4	44°06.9'	67°52.8'
NE5	44°31.2'	67°02.7'
NE6	(¹)	67°02.7'

¹ Maine shoreline.

(2) *Mid-coast Closure Area.* From September 15 through May 31, it is prohibited to fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove sink gillnet gear or gillnet gear capable of catching multispecies. This prohibition does not apply to a single pelagic gillnet (as described and used as set forth in §648.81(f)(2)(ii) of this title). The Mid-Coast Closure Area is the area bounded by straight

lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

MID-COAST CLOSURE AREA

Point	N. Lat.	W. Long.
MC1	42°30'	(1)
MC2	42°30'	70°15'
MC3	42°40'	70°15'
MC4	42°40'	70°00'
MC5	43°00'	70°00'
MC6	43°00'	69°30'
MC7	43°30'	69°30'
MC8	43°30'	69°00'
MC9	(2)	69°00'

¹ Massachusetts shoreline.

² Maine shoreline.

(3) *Massachusetts Bay Closure Area.* From December 1 through May 31, it is prohibited to fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove sink gillnet gear or gillnet gear capable of catching multispecies from the Massachusetts Bay Closure Area, except with the use of pingers as provided in paragraph (d)(2) of this section. This prohibition does not apply to a single pelagic gillnet (as described in §648.81(f)(2)(ii) of this title). The Massachusetts Bay Closure Area is the area bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

MASSACHUSETTS BAY CLOSURE AREA

Point	N. Lat.	W. Long.
MB1	42°30'	(1)
MB2	42°30'	70°30'
MB3	42°12'	70°30'
MB4	42°12'	70°00'
MB5	(2)	70°00'
MB6	42°00'	(2)
MC7	42°00'	(1)

¹ Massachusetts shoreline.

² Cape Cod shoreline.

(4) *Cape Cod South Closure Area.* From December 1 through May 31, it is prohibited to fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove sink gillnet gear or gillnet gear capable of catching multispecies from Cape Cod South Closure Area, except with the use of pingers as provided in paragraph (d)(3) of this section. This prohibition does not apply to a single pelagic gillnet (as described in §648.81(f)(2)(ii) of this title). The Cape Cod South Closure Area is the area bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

CAPE COD SOUTH CLOSURE AREA

Point	N. Lat.	W. Long.
CCS1	(1)	71°45'
CCS2	40°40'	71°45'
CCS3	40°40'	70°30'
CCS4	(2)	70°30'

¹ Rhode Island shoreline.

² Massachusetts shoreline.

(5) *Offshore Closure Area.* From November 1 through May 31, it is prohibited to fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove sink gillnet gear or gillnet gear capable of catching multispecies from Offshore Closure Area, except for the use of pingers as provided in §229.33(d)(4). This prohibition does not apply to a single pelagic gillnet (as described in §648.81(f)(2)(ii) of this title). The Offshore Closure Area is the area bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

OFFSHORE CLOSURE AREA

Point	N. Lat.	W. Long.
OFS1	42°50'	69°30'
OFS2	43°10'	69°10'
OFS3	43°10'	67°40'
OFS4	42°10'	67°40'
OFS5	42°10'	69°30'
OFS6	42°50'	69°30'

(6) *Cashes Ledge Closure Area.* For the month of February of each fishing year, it is prohibited to fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove sink gillnet gear or gillnet gear capable of catching multispecies from the Cashes Ledge Closure Area. This prohibition does not apply to a single pelagic gillnet (as described in §648.81(f)(2)(ii) of this title). The Cashes Ledge Closure Area is the area bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

CASHES LEDGE CLOSURE AREA

Point	N. Lat.	W. Long.
CL1	42°30'	69°00'
CL2	42°30'	68°30'
CL3	43°00'	68°30'
CL4	43°00'	69°00'
CL5	42°30'	69°00'

(b) Pingers—(1) *Pinger specifications.* For the purposes of this subpart, a pinger is an acoustic deterrent device

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which, when immersed in water, broadcasts a 10 kHz (±2 kHz) sound at 132 dB (±4 dB) re 1 micropascal at 1 m, lasting 300 milliseconds (±15 milliseconds), and repeating every 4 seconds (±.2 seconds).

(2) *Pinger attachment.* An operating and functional pinger must be attached at the end of each string of the gillnets and at the bridle of every net within a string of nets.

(c) *Pinger training and certification.* Beginning on January 1, 1999, the operator of a vessel may not fish with, set or haul back sink gillnets or gillnet gear, or allow such gear to be in closed areas where pingers are required as specified under paragraph (b) of this section, unless the operator has satisfactorily completed the pinger certification training program and possesses on board the vessel a valid pinger training certificate issued by NMFS. Notice will be given announcing the times and locations of pinger certification training programs.

(d) *Use of pingers in closed areas—*(1) Vessels, subject to the restrictions and regulations specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section, may fish in the Mid-coast Closure Area from September 15 through May 31 of each fishing year, provided that pingers are used in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs (b) (1) and (2) of this section.

(2) Vessels, subject to the restrictions and regulations specified in paragraph (a)(3) of this section, may fish in the Massachusetts Bay Closure Area from December 1 through the last day of February and from April 1 through May 31 of each fishing year, provided that pingers are used in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs (b) (1) and (2) of this section.

(3) Vessels, subject to the restrictions and regulations specified in paragraph (a)(4) of this section, may fish in the Cape Cod South Closure Area from December 1 through the last day of February and from April 1 through May 31 of each fishing year, provided that pingers are used in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs (b) (1) and (2) of this section.

(4) Vessels, subject to the restrictions and regulations specified in paragraph (a)(5) of this section, may fish in the Offshore Closure Area from November 1

through May 31 of each fishing year, with the exception of the Cashes Ledge Closure Area. From February 1 through the end of February, the area within the Offshore Closure Area defined as “Cashes Ledge” is closed to all fishing with sink gillnets. Vessels subject to the restrictions and regulation specified in paragraph (a)(5) of this section may fish in the Offshore Closure Area outside the Cashes Ledge Area from February 1 through the end of February provided that pingers are used in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs (b) (1) and (2) of this section.

(e) *Other special measures.* The Assistant Administrator may revise the requirements of this section through notification published in the FEDERAL REGISTER if:

(1) After plan implementation, NMFS determines that pinger operating effectiveness in the commercial fishery is inadequate to reduce bycatch to the PBR level with the current plan.

(2) NMFS determines that the boundary or timing of a closed area is inappropriate, or that gear modifications (including pingers) are not reducing bycatch to below the PBR level.

[63 FR 66487, Dec. 2, 1998; 63 FR 71042, Dec. 23, 1998]

§ 229.34 Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan—Mid-Atlantic.

(a)(1) *Regulated waters.* The regulations in this section apply to all waters in the Mid-Atlantic bounded on the east by 72°30' W. longitude and on the south by the North Carolina/South Carolina border (33°51' N. latitude), except for the areas exempted in paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

(2) *Exempted waters.* All waters landward of the first bridge over any embayment, harbor, or inlet will be exempted. The regulations in this section do not apply to waters landward of the following lines:

New York

- 40°45.70' N 72°45.15' W TO 40°45.72' N 72°45.30' W (Moriches Bay Inlet)
- 40°37.32' N 73°18.40' W TO 40°38.00' N 73°18.56' W (Fire Island Inlet)
- 40°34.40' N 73°34.55' W TO 40°35.08' N 73°35.22' W (Jones Inlet)

New Jersey/Delaware

39°45.90' N 74°05.90' W TO 39°45.15' N 74°06.20' W
(Barnegat Inlet)

39°30.70' N 74°16.70' W TO 39°26.30' N 74°19.75' W
(Beach Haven to Brigantine Inlet)

38°56.20' N 74°51.70' W TO 38°56.20' N 74°51.90' W
(Cape May Inlet)

All marine and tidal waters landward of the 72 COLREGS demarcation line (International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972), as depicted or noted on nautical charts published by NOAA (Coast Charts 1:80,000 scale), and as described in 33 CFR part 80. (Delaware Bay)

Maryland/Virginia

38°19.48' N 75°05.10' W TO 38°19.35' N 75°05.25' W
(Ocean City Inlet)

37°52.7' N 75°24.30' W TO 37°11.90' N 75°48.30' W
(Chincoteague to Ship Shoal Inlet)

37°11.10' N 75°49.30' W TO 37°10.65' N 75°49.60' W
(Little Inlet)

37°07.00' N 75°53.75' W TO 37°05.30' N 75°56.7' W
(Smith Island Inlet)

North Carolina

All marine and tidal waters landward of the 72 COLREGS demarcation line (International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972), as depicted or noted on nautical charts published by NOAA (Coast Charts 1:80,000 scale), and as described in 33 CFR part 80.

(b) *Closures*—(1) *New Jersey waters*. From April 1 through April 20, it is prohibited to fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove any large mesh gillnet gear from the waters off New Jersey.

(2) *Mudhole*. From February 15 through March 15, it is prohibited to fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove any large mesh or small mesh gillnet gear from the waters off New Jersey known as the Mudhole.

(3) *Southern Mid-Atlantic waters*. From February 15 through March 15, it is prohibited to fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove any large mesh gillnet gear from the southern Mid-Atlantic waters.

(c) *Gear requirements and limitations*—(1) *Waters off New Jersey—large mesh gear requirements and limitations*. From January 1 through April 30 of each year, no person may fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove any large mesh gillnet gear in waters off

New Jersey, unless the gear complies with the specified gear characteristics. During this period, no person who owns or operates the vessel may allow the vessel to enter or remain in waters off New Jersey with large mesh gillnet gear on board, unless the gear complies with the specified gear characteristics or unless the gear is stowed. In order to comply with these specified gear characteristics, the gear must have all the following characteristics:

(i) *Floatline length*. The floatline is no longer than 4,800 ft (1,463.0 m), and, if the gear is used in the Mudhole, the floatline is no longer than 3,900 ft (1,188.7 m).

(ii) *Twine size*. The twine is at least 0.04 inches (0.090 cm) in diameter.

(iii) *Size of nets*. Individual nets or net panels are not more than 300 ft (91.44 m, or 50 fathoms), in length.

(iv) *Number of nets*. The total number of individual nets or net panels for a vessel, including all nets on board the vessel, hauled by the vessel or deployed by the vessel, does not exceed 80.

(v) *Tie-down system*. The gillnet is equipped with tie-downs spaced not more than 15 ft (4.6 m) apart along the floatline, and each tie-down is not more than 48 inches (18.90 cm) in length from the point where it connects to the floatline to the point where it connects to the lead line.

(vi) *Tagging requirements*. Beginning January 1, 2000, the gillnet is equipped with one tag per net, with one tag secured to each bridle of every net within a string of nets.

(2) *Waters off New Jersey—small mesh gillnet gear requirements and limitations*. From January 1 through April 30 of each year, no person may fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove any small mesh gillnet gear in waters off New Jersey, unless the gear complies with the specified gear characteristics. During this period, no person who owns or operates the vessel may allow the vessel to enter or remain in waters off New Jersey with small mesh gillnet gear on board, unless the gear complies with the specified gear characteristics or unless the gear is stowed. In order to comply with these specified gear characteristics, the gear must have all the following characteristics:

(i) *Floatline length.* The floatline is less than 3,000 ft (914.4 m).

(ii) *Twine size.* The twine is at least 0.031 inches (0.081 cm) in diameter.

(iii) *Size of nets.* Individual nets or net panels are not more than 300 ft (91.4 m or 50 fathoms) in length.

(iv) *Number of nets.* The total number of individual nets or net panels for a vessel, including all nets on board the vessel, hauled by the vessel or deployed by the vessel, does not exceed 45.

(v) *Tie-down system.* Tie-downs are prohibited.

(vi) *Tagging requirements.* Beginning January 1, 2000, the gillnet is equipped with one tag per net, with one tag secured to each bridle of every net within a string of nets.

(3) *Southern Mid-Atlantic waters—large mesh gear requirements and limitations.* From February 1 through April 30 of each year, no person may fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove any large mesh gillnet gear in Southern Mid-Atlantic waters, unless the gear complies with the specified gear characteristics. During this period, no person who owns or operates the vessel may allow the vessel to enter or remain in Southern Mid-Atlantic waters with large mesh sink gillnet gear on board, unless the gear complies with the specified gear characteristics or unless the gear is stowed. In order to comply with these specified gear characteristics, the gear must have all the following characteristics:

(i) *Floatline length.* The floatline is no longer than 3,900 ft (1,188.7 m).

(ii) *Twine size.* The twine is at least 0.04 inches (0.090 cm) in diameter.

(iii) *Size of nets.* Individual nets or net panels are not more than 300 ft (91.4 m or 50 fathoms) in length.

(iv) *Number of nets.* The total number of individual nets or net panels for a vessel, including all nets on board the vessel, hauled by the vessel or deployed by the vessel, does not exceed 80.

(v) *Tie-down system.* The gillnet is equipped with tie-downs spaced not more than 15 ft (4.6 m) apart along the floatline, and each tie-down is not more than 48 inches (18.90 cm) in length from the point where it connects to the floatline to the point where it connects to the lead line.

(vi) *Tagging requirements.* Beginning January 1, 2000, the gillnet is equipped with one tag per net, with one tag secured to each bridle of every net within a string of nets.

(4) *Southern Mid-Atlantic waters—small mesh gillnet gear requirements and limitations.* From February 1 through April 30 of each year, no person may fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove any small mesh gillnet gear in waters off New Jersey, unless the gear complies with the specified gear characteristics. During this period, no person who owns or operates the vessel may allow the vessel to enter or remain in Southern Mid-Atlantic waters with small mesh gillnet gear on board, unless the gear complies with the specified gear characteristics or unless the gear is stowed. In order to comply with these specified gear characteristics, the gear must have all the following characteristics:

(i) *Floatline length.* The floatline is no longer than 2118 ft (645.6 m).

(ii) *Twine size.* The twine is at least 0.03 inches (0.080 cm) in diameter.

(iii) *Size of nets.* Individual nets or net panels are not more than 300 ft (91.4 m or 50 fathoms) in length.

(iv) *Number of nets.* The total number of individual nets or net panels for a vessel, including all nets on board the vessel, hauled by the vessel or deployed by the vessel, does not exceed 45.

(v) *Tie-down system.* Tie-downs are prohibited.

(vi) *Tagging requirements.* Beginning January 1, 2000, the gillnet is equipped with one tag per net, with one tag secured to each bridle of every net within a string of nets.

(d) *Other special measures.* The Assistant Administrator may revise the requirements of this section through notification published in the FEDERAL REGISTER if:

(1) After plan implementation, NMFS determines that pinger operating effectiveness in the commercial fishery is inadequate to reduce bycatch to the PBR level with the current plan.

(2) NMFS determines that the boundary or timing of a closed area is inappropriate, or that gear modifications

(including pingers) are not reducing by-catch to below the PBR level.

[63 FR 66489, Dec. 2, 1998, as amended at 66 FR 2338, Jan. 11, 2001]

§ 229.35 Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan.

(a) *Purpose and scope.* The purpose of this section is to implement the Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan to reduce incidental mortality and serious injury of the western North Atlantic coastal bottlenose dolphin stock in specific Category I and Category II commercial fisheries from New Jersey through Florida. Specific Category I and II commercial fisheries within the scope of the BDTRP are identified and updated in the annual List of Fisheries. Gear restricted by this section includes small, medium, and large mesh gillnets. The geographic scope of the BDTRP is all tidal and marine waters within 6.5 nautical miles (12 km) of shore from the New York-New Jersey border southward to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and within 14.6 nautical miles (27 km) of shore from Cape Hatteras southward to, and including, the east coast of Florida down to the fishery management council demarcation line between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico (as described in § 600.105 of this title).

(b) *Definitions.* In addition to the definitions contained in the Act, § 216.3 and § 229.2 of this chapter, the terms defined in this section shall have the following definitions, even if a contrary definition exists in the Act, § 216.3, or § 229.2:

Beach means landward of and including the mean low water line.

Beach/water interface means the mean low water line.

Large mesh gillnet means a gillnet constructed with a mesh size greater than or equal to 7-inches (17.8 cm) stretched mesh.

Medium mesh gillnet means a gillnet constructed with a mesh size of greater than 5-inches (12.7 cm) to less than 7-inches (17.8 cm) stretched mesh.

New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland State waters means the area consisting of all marine and tidal waters, within 3 nautical miles (5.56 km) of shore, bounded on the north by 40° 30' N. (New York/New Jersey border at the coast)

and on the south by 38° 01.6' N. (Maryland/Virginia border at the coast).

Night means any time between one hour after sunset and one hour prior to sunrise.

Northern North Carolina State waters means the area consisting of all marine and tidal waters, within 3 nautical miles (5.56 km) of shore, bounded on the north by 36° 33' N. (Virginia/North Carolina border at the coast) and on the south by 34° 35.4' N. (Cape Lookout, North Carolina).

Northern Virginia State waters means the area consisting of all marine and tidal waters, within 3 nautical miles (5.56 km) of shore, bounded on the north by 38° 01.6' N. (Virginia/Maryland border at the coast) and on the south by 37° 07.23' N. (Cape Charles Light on Smith Island in the Chesapeake Bay mouth).

Small mesh gillnet means a gillnet constructed with a mesh size of less than or equal to 5-inches (12.7 cm) stretched mesh.

South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida waters means the area consisting of all marine and tidal waters, within 14.6 nautical miles (27 km) of shore, between 33° 52' N. (North Carolina/South Carolina border at the coast) and the fishery management council demarcation line between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico (as described in § 600.105 of this title).

Southern North Carolina State waters means the area consisting of all marine and tidal waters, within 3 nautical miles (5.56 km) of shore, bounded on the north by 34° 35.4' N. (Cape Lookout, North Carolina) and on the south by 33° 52' N. (North Carolina/South Carolina border at the coast).

Southern Virginia State waters means the area consisting of all marine and tidal waters, within 3 nautical miles (5.56 km) of shore, bounded on the north by 37° 07.23' N. (Cape Charles Light on Smith Island in the Chesapeake Bay mouth) and on the south by 36° 33' N. (Virginia/North Carolina border at the coast).

(c) *Regulated waters.* The regulations in this section apply to New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland State waters; Northern North Carolina State waters; Northern Virginia State waters; South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida waters;

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Southern North Carolina State waters; and Southern Virginia State waters as defined in § 229.35(b), except for the waters identified in § 229.34(a)(2), with the following modification and addition. From Chincoteague to Ship Shoal Inlet in Virginia (37° 52' N. 75° 24.30' W. to 37° 11.90' N. 75° 48.30' W) and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida waters, those waters landward of the 72 COLREGS demarcation line (International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972), as depicted or noted on nautical charts published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Coast Charts 1:80,000 scale), and as described in 33 CFR part 80 are excluded from the regulations.

(d) *Regional management measures*—(1) *New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland State waters*—(i) *Medium and large mesh*. From June 1 through October 31, in New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland State waters, no person may fish with any medium or large mesh anchored gillnet gear at night unless such person remains within 0.5 nautical mile (0.93 km) of the closest portion of each gillnet and removes all such gear from the water and stows it on board the vessel before the vessel returns to port.

(ii) [Reserved]

(2) *Virginia state waters*—(i) *Medium and large mesh*. From June 1 through October 31, in Southern Virginia State waters and Northern Virginia State waters, no person may fish with any medium or large mesh anchored gillnet gear at night unless such person remains within 0.5 nautical mile (0.93 km) of the closest portion of each gillnet and removes all such gear from the water and stows it on board the vessel before the vessel returns to port.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) *Southern Virginia State waters*—(i) *Large mesh gillnets*. From November 1 through December 31, in Southern Virginia State waters, no person may fish with, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove from the water, any large mesh gillnet gear at night.

(ii) [Reserved]

(4) *Northern North Carolina State waters*—(i) *Small mesh gillnets*. From May 1 through October 31, in Northern North Carolina State waters, no person may fish with any small mesh gillnet gear longer than 1,000 feet (304.8 m).

(ii) *Medium mesh gillnets*. From November 1 through April 30 of the following year, in Northern North Carolina State waters, no person may fish with any medium mesh gillnet at night. This provision expires on May 26, 2009.

(iii) *Large mesh gillnets*. (A) From April 15 through December 15, in Northern North Carolina State waters, no person may fish with any large mesh gillnet.

(B) From December 16 through April 14 of the following year, in Northern North Carolina State waters, no person may fish with any large mesh gillnet without tie-downs at night.

(5) *Southern North Carolina State waters*—(i) *Medium mesh gillnets*. From November 1 through April 30 of the following year, in Southern North Carolina State waters, no person may fish with any medium mesh gillnet at night. This provision expires on May 26, 2009.

(ii) *Large mesh gillnets*. (A) From April 15 through December 15, in Southern North Carolina State waters, no person may fish with any large mesh gillnet.

(B) From December 16 through April 14 of the following year, in Southern North Carolina State waters, no person may fish, possess on board unless stowed, or fail to remove from the water, any large mesh gillnet at night.

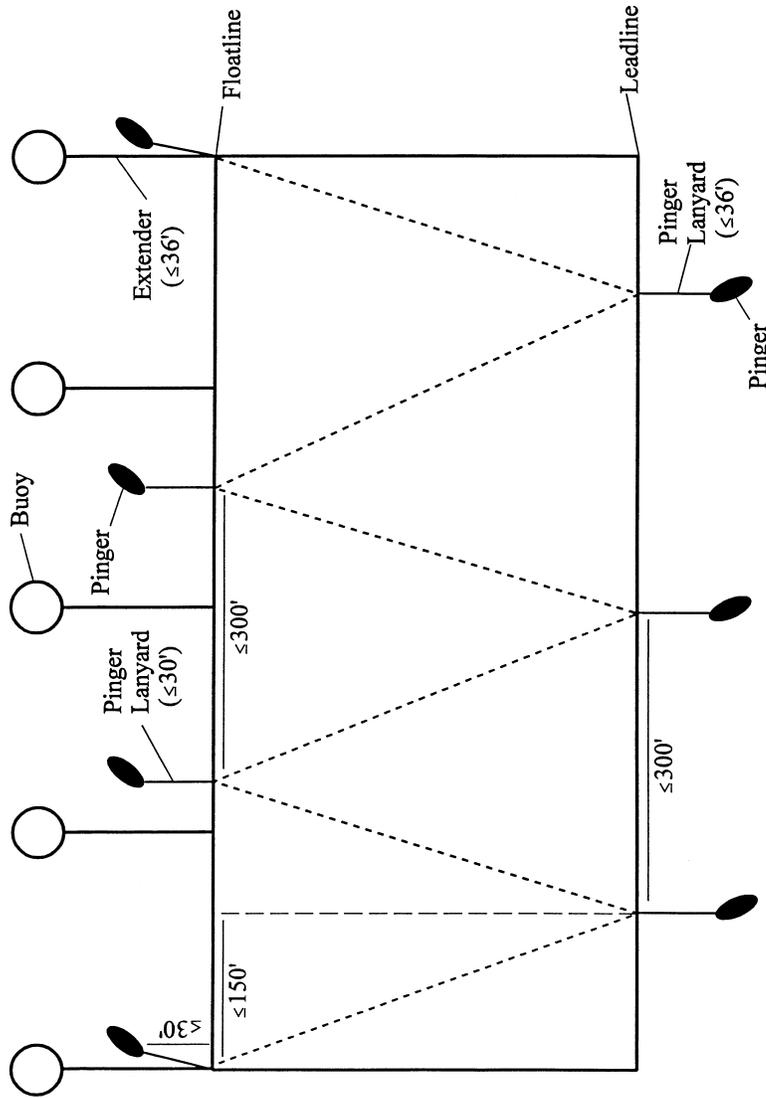
(6) *South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida waters*—(i) *Gillnets*. Year-round, in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida waters, no person may fish with any gillnet gear unless such person remains within 0.25 nautical miles (0.46 km) of the closest portion of the gillnet. Gear shall be removed from the water and stowed on board the vessel before the vessel returns to port.

(ii) [Reserved]

[71 FR 24796, Apr. 26, 2006]

FIGURE 1 TO PART 229—DRIFT GILLNET PINGER CONFIGURATION AND EXTENDER REQUIREMENTS

Figure 1. Drift Gillnet Pinger Configuration and Extender Requirements



[64 FR 3434, Jan. 22, 1999]