

§ 648.126

forth in paragraph (a)(6) of this section, may be changed following the procedures in § 648.122.

(b) *Pot and trap gear restrictions.* Owners or operators of vessels subject to this part must fish with scup pots or traps that comply with the following:

(1) *Degradable hinges.* A scup pot or trap must have degradable hinges and fasteners made of one of the following degradable materials:

(i) Untreated hemp, jute, or cotton string of $\frac{3}{16}$ inches (4.8 mm) diameter or smaller;

(ii) Magnesium alloy, timed float releases (pop-up devices) or similar magnesium alloy fasteners; or

(iii) Ungalvanized or uncoated iron wire of 0.094 inches (2.4 mm) diameter or smaller.

(iv) The use of a single non-degradable retention device designed to prevent loss of the ghost panel after the degradable materials have failed is permitted provided the device does not impair the egress design function of the ghost panel by obstructing the opening or by preventing the panel from opening at such time that the degradable fasteners have completely deteriorated.

(2) *Escape vents.* (i) All scup pots or traps that have a circular escape vent with a minimum of 3.1 inches (7.9 cm) in diameter, or a square escape vent with a minimum of 2.25 inches (5.7 cm) for each side, or an equivalent rectangular escape vent.

(ii) The minimum escape vent size set forth in paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section may be revised following the procedures in § 648.122.

(3) *Pot and trap identification.* Pots or traps used in fishing for scup must be marked with a code of identification that may be the number assigned by the Regional Administrator and/or the identification marking as required by the vessel's home port state.

[76 FR 60634, Sept. 29, 2011]

§ 648.126 Scup minimum fish sizes.

(a) *Moratorium (commercially) permitted vessels.* The minimum size for scup is 9 inches (22.9 cm) TL for all vessels issued a moratorium permit under § 648.4(a)(6). If such a vessel is also issued a charter and party boat permit and is carrying passengers for hire, or

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carrying more than three crew members if a charter boat, or more than five crew members if a party boat, then the minimum size specified in paragraph (b) of this section applies.

(b) *Party/Charter permitted vessels and recreational fishery participants.* The minimum size for scup is 10.5 inches (26.67 cm) TL for all vessels that do not have a moratorium permit, or for party and charter vessels that are issued a moratorium permit but are fishing with passengers for hire, or carrying more than three crew members if a charter boat, or more than five crew members if a party boat.

(c) The minimum size applies to whole fish or any part of a fish found in possession, e.g., fillets. These minimum sizes may be adjusted pursuant to the procedures in § 648.122.

[76 FR 60635, Sept. 29, 2011]

§ 648.127 Scup recreational fishing season.

Fishermen and vessels that are not eligible for a moratorium permit under § 648.4(a)(6) may possess scup year-round, subject to the possession limit specified in § 648.128(a). The recreational fishing season may be adjusted pursuant to the procedures in § 648.122.

[77 FR 30431, May 23, 2012]

§ 648.128 Scup possession restrictions.

(a) *Party/Charter and recreational possession limits.* No person shall possess more than 20 scup in, or harvested from, the EEZ unless that person is the owner or operator of a fishing vessel issued a scup moratorium permit, or is issued a scup dealer permit. Persons aboard a commercial vessel that is not eligible for a scup moratorium permit are subject to this possession limit. The owner, operator, and crew of a charter or party boat issued a scup moratorium permit are subject to the possession limit when carrying passengers for hire or when carrying more than five crew members for a party boat, or more than three crew members for a charter boat. This possession limit may be adjusted pursuant to the procedures in § 648.122.