

§ 648.296

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given fishing trip, count as landings under the IFQ allocation permit.

(b) *In-season closure of the incidental fishery.* The Regional Administrator will monitor the harvest of the tilefish incidental TAL based on dealer reports and other available information, and shall determine the date when the incidental tilefish TAL has been landed. The Regional Administrator shall publish a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER notifying vessel and dealer permit holders that, effective upon a specific date, the incidental tilefish fishery is

closed for the remainder of the fishing year.

[76 FR 60647, Sept. 29, 2011]

§ 648.296 Tilefish recreational possession limit.

Any person fishing from a vessel that is not fishing under a tilefish vessel permit issued pursuant to § 648.4(a)(12), may land up to eight tilefish per trip. Anglers fishing onboard a charter/party vessel shall observe the recreational possession limit.

[76 FR 60647, Sept. 29, 2011]

§ 648.297 Tilefish gear restricted areas.

No vessel of the United States may fish with bottom-tending mobile gear within the areas bounded by the following coordinates:

Canyon	N. lat.			W. long.		
	Degrees	Min	Seconds	Degrees	Min	Seconds
Oceanographer	40.0	29.0	50.0	68.0	10.0	30.0
	40.0	29.0	30.0	68.0	8.0	34.8
	40.0	25.0	51.6	68.0	6.0	36.0
	40.0	22.0	22.8	68.0	6.0	50.4
	40.0	19.0	40.8	68.0	4.0	48.0
	40.0	19.0	5.0	68.0	2.0	19.0
	40.0	16.0	41.0	68.0	1.0	16.0
Lydonia	40.0	14.0	28.0	68.0	11.0	28.0
	40.0	31.0	55.2	67.0	43.0	1.2
	40.0	28.0	52.0	67.0	38.0	43.0
	40.0	21.0	39.6	67.0	37.0	4.8
	40.0	21.0	4.0	67.0	43.0	1.0
	40.0	26.0	32.0	67.0	40.0	57.0
Veatch	40.0	28.0	31.0	67.0	43.0	0.0
	40.0	0.0	40.0	69.0	37.0	8.0
	40.0	0.0	41.0	69.0	35.0	25.0
	39.0	54.0	43.0	69.0	33.0	54.0
Norfolk	39.0	54.0	43.0	69.0	40.0	52.0
	37.0	5.0	50.0	74.0	45.0	34.0
	37.0	6.0	58.0	74.0	40.0	48.0
	37.0	4.0	31.0	74.0	37.0	46.0
	37.0	4.0	1.0	74.0	33.0	50.0
	36.0	58.0	37.0	74.0	36.0	58.0
	37.0	4.0	26.0	74.0	41.0	2.0

[76 FR 60647, Sept. 29, 2011]

§ 648.298 [Reserved]

§ 648.299 Tilefish framework specifications.

(a) *Within-season management action.* The MAFMC may, at any time, initiate action to add or adjust management measures if it finds that action is necessary to meet or be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Tilefish FMP.

(1) *Specific management measures.* The following specific management measures may be adjusted at any time through the framework adjustment process:

- (i) Minimum fish size;
- (ii) Minimum hook size;
- (iii) Closed seasons;
- (iv) Closed areas;
- (v) Gear restrictions or prohibitions;
- (vi) Permitting restrictions;
- (vii) Gear limits;

- (viii) Trip limits;
- (ix) Adjustments within existing ABC control rule levels;
- (x) Adjustments to the existing MAFMC risk policy;
- (xi) Introduction of new AMs, including sub ACTs;
- (xii) Annual specification quota setting process;
- (xiii) Tilefish FMP Monitoring Committee composition and process;
- (xiv) Description and identification of EFH;
- (xv) Fishing gear management measures that impact EFH;
- (xvi) Habitat areas of particular concern;
- (xvii) Set-aside quotas for scientific research;
- (xviii) [Reserved]
- (xix) Recreational management measures, including the bag limit, minimum fish size limit, seasons, and gear restrictions or prohibitions; and
- (xx) IFQ program review components, including capacity reduction, safety at sea issues, transferability rules, ownership concentration caps, permit and reporting requirements, and fee and cost-recovery issues.
- (xxi) Measures that require significant departures from previously contemplated measures or that are otherwise introducing new concepts may require a formal amendment of the FMP instead of a framework adjustment.

(2) *Adjustment process.* If the MAFMC determines that an adjustment to management measures is necessary to meet the goals and objectives of the FMP, it will recommend, develop, and analyze appropriate management actions over the span of at least two MAFMC meetings. The MAFMC will provide the public with advance notice of the availability of the recommendation, appropriate justifications and economic and biological analyses, and opportunity to comment on the proposed adjustments prior to and at the second MAFMC meeting on that framework action.

(3) *MAFMC recommendation.* After developing management actions and receiving public testimony, the MAFMC will make a recommendation to the Regional Administrator. The MAFMC's recommendation must include supporting rationale and, if management measures are recommended, an anal-

ysis of impacts and a recommendation to the Regional Administrator on whether to issue the management measures as a final rule. If the MAFMC recommends that the management measures should be issued as a final rule, it must consider at least the following factors and provide support and analysis for each factor considered:

- (i) Whether the availability of data on which the recommended management measures are based allows for adequate time to publish a proposed rule, and whether regulations have to be in place for an entire harvest/fishing season;
- (ii) Whether there has been adequate notice and opportunity for participation by the public and members of the affected industry in the development of the MAFMC's recommended management measures;
- (iii) Whether there is an immediate need to protect the resource; and
- (iv) Whether there will be a continuing evaluation of management measures adopted following their implementation as a final rule.

(4) *Regional Administrator action.* If the MAFMC's recommendation includes adjustments or additions to management measures and, after reviewing the MAFMC's recommendation and supporting information:

- (i) If the Regional Administrator concurs with the MAFMC's recommended management measures and determines that the recommended management measures should be issued as a final rule based on the factors specified in paragraphs (a)(2) and (a)(3) of this section, the measures will be issued as a final rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER.
- (ii) If the Regional Administrator concurs with the MAFMC's recommendation and determines that the recommended management measures should be published first as a proposed rule, the measures will be published as a proposed rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER. After additional public comment, if the Regional Administrator concurs with the MAFMC's recommendation, the measures will be issued as a final rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(iii) If the Regional Administrator does not concur with the MAFMC's recommendation, the MAFMC will be notified in writing of the reasons for the non-concurrence.

(b) *Emergency action.* Nothing in this section is meant to derogate from the authority of the Secretary to take emergency action under section 305(e) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

[76 FR 60648, Sept. 29, 2011, as amended at 76 FR 81850, Dec. 29, 2011]

Subpart O—Management Measures for the NE Skate Complex Fisheries

SOURCE: 68 FR 49701, Aug. 19, 2003, unless otherwise noted.

§ 648.320 Skate FMP review and monitoring.

(a) *Annual review and specifications process.* The Council, its Skate Plan Development Team (PDT), and its Skate Advisory Panel shall monitor the status of the fishery and the skate resources.

(1) The Skate PDT shall meet at least annually to review the status of the species in the skate complex. At a minimum, this review shall include annual updates to survey indices, fishery landings and discards; a re-evaluation of stock status based on the updated survey indices and the FMP's overfishing definitions; and a determination of whether any of the accountability measures specified under § 648.323 were triggered. The review shall also include an analysis of changes to other FMPs (e.g., Northeast Multispecies, Monkfish, Atlantic Scallops, etc.) that may impact skate stocks, and describe the anticipated impacts of those changes on the skate fishery.

(2) If new and/or additional information becomes available, the Skate PDT shall consider it during this annual review. Based on this review, the Skate PDT shall provide guidance to the Skate Committee and the Council regarding the need to adjust measures in the Skate FMP to better achieve the FMP's objectives. After considering guidance, the Council may submit to NMFS its recommendations for

changes to management measures, as appropriate, through the specifications process described in this section, the framework process specified in § 648.321, or through an amendment to the FMP.

(3) For overfished skate species, the Skate PDT and the Council shall monitor the trawl survey index as a proxy for stock biomass. As long as the 3-year average of the appropriate weight per tow increases above the average for the previous 3 years, it is assumed that the stock is rebuilding to target levels. If the 3-year average of the appropriate survey mean weight per tow declines below the average for the previous 3 years, then the Council shall take management action to ensure that stock rebuilding will achieve target levels.

(4) Based on the annual review described above and/or the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report described in paragraph (b) of this section, recommendations for acceptable biological catch (ABC) from the Scientific and Statistical Committee, and any other relevant information, the Skate PDT shall recommend to the Skate Committee and Council the following annual specifications for harvest of skates: An annual catch limit (ACL) for the skate complex set less than or equal to ABC; an annual catch target (ACT) for the skate complex set less than or equal to 75 percent of the ACL; and total allowable landings (TAL) necessary to meet the objectives of the FMP in each fishing year (May 1–April 30), specified for a period of up to 2 fishing years.

(5) *Recommended measures.* The Skate PDT shall also recommend management measures to the Skate Committee and Council to assure that the specifications are not exceeded. Recommended measures should include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Possession limits in each fishery;
- (ii) In-season possession limit triggers for the wing and/or bait fisheries; and
- (iii) Required adjustments to in-season possession limit trigger percentages or the ACL-ACT buffer, based on the accountability measures specified at § 648.323.

(6) Taking into account the annual review and/or SAFE Report described