

### § 300.223

### 50 CFR Ch. III (10–1–14 Edition)

(kk) Engage in net sharing except as specified under § 300.216(c).

(ll) Fail to submit, or ensure submission of, a transshipment report as required in § 300.218(b), except as specified under § 300.218(c).

(mm) Fail to submit, or ensure submission of, a transshipment notice as required in § 300.218(d).

(nn) Transship more than 24 nautical miles from the location indicated in the transshipment notice, in contravention of § 300.218(d)(3).

(oo) Fail to submit, or ensure submission of, a discard report as required in § 300.218(e).

(pp) Fail to submit, or ensure submission of, a net sharing report as required in § 300.218(f).

(qq) Fail to submit, or ensure submission of, an entry or exit notice for the Eastern High Seas Special Management Area as required in § 300.225.

[74 FR 38554, Aug. 4, 2009, as amended at 74 FR 64010, Dec. 7, 2009; 75 FR 3355, Jan. 21, 2010; 77 FR 51714, Aug. 27, 2012; 77 FR 71512, Dec. 3, 2012; 78 FR 30778, May 23, 2013]

#### § 300.223 Purse seine fishing restrictions.

None of the requirements of this section apply in the territorial seas or archipelagic waters of the United States or any other nation, as defined by the domestic laws and regulations of that nation and recognized by the United States. All dates used in this section are in Universal Coordinated Time, also known as UTC; for example: the year 2013 starts at 00:00 on January 1, 2013 UTC and ends at 24:00 on December 31, 2013 UTC; and July 1, 2013, begins at 00:00 UTC and ends at 24:00 UTC.

(a) *Fishing effort limits.* This paragraph establishes limits on the number of fishing days that fishing vessels of the United States equipped with purse seine gear may collectively spend in the ELAPS.

(1) For each of the calendar years 2013 and 2014 there is a limit of 2,588 fishing days.

(i) For each of the years 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 there is a limit of 3,882 fishing days.

(ii) For each of the two-year periods 2009–2010, 2010–2011, and 2011–2012, there is a limit of 6,470 fishing days.

(iii) For each of the three-year periods 2009–2011 and 2010–2012, there is a limit of 7,764 fishing days.

(2) NMFS will determine the number of fishing days spent in the ELAPS in each of the applicable time periods using data submitted in logbooks and other available information. After NMFS determines that the limit in any applicable time period is expected to be reached by a specific future date, and at least seven calendar days in advance of the closure date, NMFS will publish a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER announcing that the purse seine fishery in the ELAPS will be closed starting on that specific future date and will remain closed until the end of the applicable time period.

(3) Once a fishery closure is announced pursuant to paragraph (a)(2) of this section, fishing vessels of the United States equipped with purse seine gear may not be used to fish in the ELAPS during the period specified in the FEDERAL REGISTER notice.

(b) *Use of fish aggregating devices.* From July 1 through October 31, 2013, and from July 1 through October 31, 2014, owners, operators, and crew of fishing vessels of the United States shall not do any of the activities described below in the Convention Area in the area between 20° N. latitude and 20° S. latitude:

(1) Set a purse seine around a FAD or within one nautical mile of a FAD.

(2) Set a purse seine in a manner intended to capture fish that have aggregated in association with a FAD or a vessel, such as by setting the purse seine in an area from which a FAD or a vessel has been moved or removed within the previous eight hours, or setting the purse seine in an area in which a FAD has been inspected or handled within the previous eight hours, or setting the purse seine in an area into which fish were drawn by a vessel from the vicinity of a FAD or a vessel.

(3) Deploy a FAD into the water.

(4) Repair, clean, maintain, or otherwise service a FAD, including any electronic equipment used in association with a FAD, in the water or on a vessel while at sea, except that:

(i) A FAD may be inspected and handled as needed to identify the FAD,

## Int'l. Fishing and Related Activities

## § 300.223

identify and release incidentally captured animals, un-foul fishing gear, or prevent damage to property or risk to human safety; and

(ii) A FAD may be removed from the water and if removed may be cleaned, provided that it is not returned to the water.

(5) From a purse seine vessel or any associated skiffs, other watercraft or equipment, do any of the following, except in emergencies as needed to prevent human injury or the loss of human life, the loss of the purse seine vessel, skiffs, watercraft or aircraft, or environmental damage:

(i) Submerge lights under water;

(ii) Suspend or hang lights over the side of the purse seine vessel, skiff, watercraft or equipment, or;

(iii) Direct or use lights in a manner other than as needed to illuminate the deck of the purse seine vessel or associated skiffs, watercraft or equipment, to comply with navigational requirements, and to ensure the health and safety of the crew.

(c) [Reserved]

(d) *Catch retention.* (1) Based on its determination as to whether an adequate number of WCPFC observers is available for the purse seine vessels of all Members of the Commission as necessary to ensure compliance by such vessels with the catch retention requirements established by the Commission, NMFS will, through publication of a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER, announce the effective date of the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section. The effective date will be no earlier than January 1, 2010.

(2) If, after announcing the effective date of these requirements under paragraph (1) of this section, NMFS determines that there is no longer an adequate number of WCPFC observers available for the purse seine vessels of all Members of the Commission as necessary to ensure compliance by such vessels with the catch retention requirements established by the Commission, NMFS may, through publication of a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER, nullify any or all of the requirements specified in paragraph (d) of this section.

(3) An owner and operator of a fishing vessel of the United States equipped

with purse seine gear must ensure the retention on board at all times while at sea within the Convention Area any bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*), yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*), or skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*), except in the following circumstances and with the following conditions:

(i) Fish that are unfit for human consumption, including but not limited to fish that are spoiled, pulverized, severed, or partially consumed at the time they are brought on board, may be discarded.

(ii) If at the end of a fishing trip there is insufficient well space to accommodate all the fish captured in a given purse seine set, fish captured in that set may be discarded, provided that no additional purse seine sets are made during the fishing trip.

(iii) If a serious malfunction of equipment occurs that necessitates that fish be discarded.

(e) *Observer coverage.* (1) Until 24:00 UTC on December 31, 2014, a fishing vessel of the United States may not be used to fish with purse seine gear in the Convention Area without a WCPFC observer on board. This requirement does not apply to fishing trips that meet either of the following conditions:

(i) The portion of the fishing trip within the Convention Area takes place entirely within areas under jurisdiction of a single nation other than the United States.

(ii) No fishing takes place during the fishing trip in the Convention Area in the area between 20° N. latitude and 20° S. latitude.

(2) Owners, operators, and crew of fishing vessels subject to paragraph (e)(1) of this section must accommodate WCPFC observers in accordance with the provisions of §300.215(c).

(3) Meeting either of the conditions in paragraphs (e)(1)(i) and (e)(1)(ii) of this section does not exempt a fishing vessel from having to carry and accommodate a WCPFC observer pursuant to §300.215 or other applicable regulations.

(f) *Sea turtle take mitigation measures.* (1) Possession and use of required mitigation gear. Any owner or operator of a fishing vessel of the United States equipped with purse seine gear that is used to fish in the Convention Area

§ 300.223

50 CFR Ch. III (10–1–14 Edition)

must carry aboard the vessel the following gear:

(i) *Dip net.* A dip net is intended to facilitate safe handling of sea turtles and access to sea turtles for purposes of removing sea turtles from fishing gear, bringing sea turtles aboard the vessel when appropriate, and releasing sea turtles from the vessel. The minimum design standards for dip nets that meet the requirements of this section are:

(A) *An extended reach handle.* The dip net must have an extended reach handle with a minimum length of 150 percent of the freeboard height. The extended reach handle must be made of wood or other rigid material able to support a minimum of 100 lb (34.1 kg) without breaking or significant bending or distortion.

(B) *Size of dip net.* The dip net must have a net hoop of at least 31 inches (78.74 cm) inside diameter and a bag depth of at least 38 inches (96.52 cm). The bag mesh openings may be no more than 3 inches 3 inches (7.62 cm 7.62 cm) in size.

(ii) *Optional turtle hoist.* A turtle hoist is used for the same purpose as a dip net. It is not a required piece of gear, but a turtle hoist may be carried on board and used instead of the dip net to handle sea turtles as required in paragraph (f)(2) of this section. The minimum design standards for turtle hoists that are used instead of dip nets to meet the requirements of this section are:

(A) *Frame and net.* The turtle hoist must consist of one or more rigid frames to which a bag of mesh netting is securely attached. The frame or smallest of the frames must have a minimum opening (e.g., inside diameter, if circular in shape) of 31 inches (78.74 cm) and be capable of supporting a minimum of 100 lb (34.1 kg). The frame or frames may be hinged or otherwise designed so they can be folded for ease of storage, provided that they have no sharp edges and can be quickly reassembled. The bag mesh openings may be no more than 3 inches × 3 inches (7.62 cm × 7.62 cm) in size.

(B) *Lines.* Lines used to lower and raise the frame and net must be securely attached to the frame in mul-

iple places such that the frame remains stable when lowered and raised.

(2) *Handling requirements.* Any owner or operator of a fishing vessel of the United States equipped with purse seine gear that is used to fish in the Convention Area must, if a sea turtle is observed to be enclosed or entangled in a purse seine, a FAD, or other fishing gear, comply with these handling requirements, including using the required mitigation gear specified in paragraph (f)(1) of this section as prescribed in these handling requirements. Any captured or entangled sea turtle must be handled in a manner to minimize injury and promote survival.

(i) *Sea turtles enclosed in purse seines.* If the sea turtle is observed enclosed in a purse seine but not entangled, it must be released immediately from the purse seine with the dip net or turtle hoist.

(ii) *Sea turtles entangled in purse seines.* If the sea turtle is observed entangled in a purse seine, the net roll must be stopped as soon as the sea turtle comes out of the water, and must not start again until the turtle has been disentangled and released. The sea turtle must be handled and released in accordance with paragraphs (f)(2)(iv), (f)(2)(v), (f)(2)(vi), and (f)(2)(vii) of this section.

(iii) *Sea turtles entangled in FADs.* If the sea turtle is observed entangled in a FAD, it must be disentangled or the FAD must be cut immediately so as to remove the sea turtle. The sea turtle must be handled and released in accordance with paragraphs (f)(2)(iv), (f)(2)(v), (f)(2)(vi), and (f)(2)(vii) of this section.

(iv) *Disentangled sea turtles that cannot be brought aboard.* After disentanglement, if the sea turtle is not already on board the vessel and it is too large to be brought aboard or cannot be brought aboard without sustaining further injury, it shall be left where it is in the water, or gently moved, using the dip net or turtle hoist if necessary, to an area away from the fishing gear and away from the propeller.

(v) *Disentangled sea turtles that can be brought aboard.* After disentanglement, if the sea turtle is not too large to be brought aboard and can be brought

## Int'l. Fishing and Related Activities

## § 300.224

aboard without sustaining further injury, the following actions shall be taken:

(A) Using the dip net or a turtle hoist, the sea turtle must be brought aboard immediately; and

(B) The sea turtle must be handled in accordance with the procedures in paragraphs (f)(2)(vi) and (f)(2)(vii) of this section.

(vi) *Sea turtle resuscitation.* If a sea turtle brought aboard appears dead or comatose, the following actions must be taken:

(A) The sea turtle must be placed on its belly (on the bottom shell or plastron) so that it is right side up and its hindquarters elevated at least 6 inches (15.24 cm) for a period of no less than 4 hours and no more than 24 hours. The amount of the elevation varies with the size of the sea turtle; greater elevations are needed for larger sea turtles;

(B) A reflex test must be administered at least once every 3 hours. The test is to be performed by gently touching the eye and pinching the tail of a sea turtle to determine if the sea turtle is responsive;

(C) The sea turtle must be kept shaded and damp or moist (but under no circumstances place the sea turtle into a container holding water). A water-soaked towel placed over the eyes (not covering the nostrils), carapace and flippers is the most effective method of keeping a sea turtle moist; and

(D) If the sea turtle revives and becomes active, it must be returned to the sea in the manner described in paragraph (f)(2)(vii) of this section. Sea turtles that fail to revive within the 24-hour period must also be returned to the sea in the manner described in paragraph (f)(2)(vii) of this section, unless NMFS requests that the turtle or part thereof be kept on board and delivered to NMFS for research purposes.

(vii) *Sea turtle release.* After handling a sea turtle in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs (f)(2)(v) and (f)(2)(vi) of this section, the sea turtle must be returned to the ocean after identification unless NMFS requests the retention of a dead sea turtle for research. In releasing a sea turtle the vessel owner or operator must:

(A) Place the vessel engine in neutral gear so that the propeller is disengaged and the vessel is stopped;

(B) Using the dip net or a turtle hoist to release the sea turtle with little impact, gently release the sea turtle away from any deployed gear; and

(C) Observe that the turtle is safely away from the vessel before engaging the propeller and continuing operations.

(viii) *Other sea turtle requirements.* No sea turtle, including a dead turtle, may be consumed or sold. A sea turtle may be landed, offloaded, transshipped or kept below deck only if NMFS requests the retention of a dead sea turtle or a part thereof for research.

[74 FR 38554, Aug. 4, 2009, as amended at 76 FR 82183, Dec. 30, 2011; 77 FR 71513, Dec. 3, 2012; 78 FR 30778, May 23, 2013]

### § 300.224 Longline fishing restrictions.

(a) *Establishment of bigeye tuna catch limit.* There is a limit of 3,763 metric tons of bigeye tuna that may be captured in the Convention Area by longline gear and retained on board by fishing vessels of the United States during each of the calendar years 2013 and 2014.

(b) *Exception for bigeye tuna landed in territories.* Except as provided in paragraphs (c) and (d), bigeye tuna landed in American Samoa, Guam, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will be attributed to the longline fishery of the territory in which it is landed and will not be counted against the limit established under paragraph (a) of this section, provided that:

(1) The bigeye tuna were not caught in the portion of the EEZ surrounding the Hawaiian Archipelago; and

(2) The bigeye tuna were landed by a fishing vessel operated in compliance with a valid permit issued under § 660.707 or § 665.801 of this title.

(c) *Exception for bigeye tuna caught by vessels with American Samoa Longline Limited Access Permits.* Except as provided in paragraph (d), bigeye tuna caught by a vessel registered for use under a valid American Samoa Longline Limited Access Permit issued under § 665.801(c) of this title will be attributed to the longline fishery of