§ 648.145 Black sea bass possession limit.

(a) During the recreational fishing season specified at §648.146, no person shall possess more than 15 black sea bass in, or harvested from, the EEZ unless that person is the owner or operator of a fishing vessel issued a black sea moratorium permit, or is issued a black sea bass dealer permit. Persons aboard a commercial vessel that is not eligible for a black sea moratorium permit may not retain more than 15 black sea bass during the recreational fishing season specified at §648.146. The owner, operator, and crew of a charter or party boat issued a black sea 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 §648.142.

(b) If while whole black sea bass are processed into fillets, an authorized officer will convert the number of fillets to whole black sea bass at the place of landing by dividing fillet number by two. If black sea bass are filleted into a single (butterfly) fillet, such fillet shall be deemed to be from one whole black sea bass.

(c) Black sea bass harvested by vessels subject to the possession limit with more than one person aboard may be pooled in one or more containers. Compliance with the daily possession limit will be determined by dividing the number of black sea bass on board by the number of persons aboard, other than the captain and the crew. If there is a violation of the possession limit on board a vessel carrying more than one person, the violation shall be deemed to have been committed by the owner and operator of the vessel.

(d) Owners or operators of otter trawl vessels issued a moratorium permit under §648.4(a)(7) and fishing with, or possessing on board, nets or pieces of net that do not meet the minimum mesh requirements specified in §648.144(a) and that are not stowed in accordance with §648.144(a)(4) may not retain more than 500 lb (226.8 kg) of black sea bass from January 1 through March 31, or more than 100 lb (45.4 kg) of black sea bass from April 1 through December 31. Black sea bass on board these vessels shall be stored so as to be readily available for inspection in a standard 100-lb (45.4-kg) tote.

§ 648.146 Black sea bass recreational fishing season.

Vessels that are not eligible for a moratorium permit under §648.4(a)(7), and fishermen subject to the possession limit specified in §648.145(a), may only