

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]

§ 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.

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(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 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

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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