

Fishery Conservation and Management

§ 635.69

scheme. The text of the ICCAT port inspection scheme may be obtained from NMFS.

§ 635.51 Authorized officer.

For the purposes of this subpart, an authorized officer is a person appointed by an ICCAT contracting party to serve as an authorized inspector for ICCAT, and who possesses identification issued by the authorized officer's national government.

§ 635.52 Vessels subject to inspection.

(a) All U.S. fishing vessels or vessels carrying fish species subject to regulation pursuant to a recommendation of ICCAT, and their catch, gear, and relevant documents, including fishing logbooks and cargo manifests, are subject to inspection under this subpart to verify compliance with ICCAT measures by an authorized officer when landing or transshipping tuna or when making a port call at a port of any ICCAT contracting party.

(b) A vessel, or a vessel carrying fish species subject to regulation pursuant to a recommendation of ICCAT, that is registered by any of the ICCAT contracting parties, and the vessel's catch, gear, and relevant documents, including fishing logbooks and cargo manifests, are subject to inspection under this subpart to verify compliance with ICCAT measures when landing or transshipping regulated species or when making a port call in the United States.

(c) The master of a vessel, or a vessel carrying fish species subject to regulation pursuant to a recommendation of ICCAT, must cooperate with an authorized officer during the conduct of an inspection in national and foreign ports. Inspections will be carried out so that the vessel suffers minimum interference and inconvenience, and so that degradation of the quality of catch is avoided.

§ 635.53 Reports.

(a) Apparent violations shall be reported by the authorized officer on a standardized ICCAT form or form produced by the national government which collects the same quality of information. The authorized officer must sign the form in the presence of the

master of the vessel, who is entitled to add or have added to the report any observations, and to add his own signature. The authorized officer should note in the vessel's log that the inspection has been made.

(b) Copies of the report form must be sent to the flag state of the vessel and to the ICCAT Secretariat within 10 days. Flag states will consider and act on reports of apparent violations by foreign inspectors on a similar basis as the reports of their national inspectors in accordance with their national legislation. The vessel's flag state will notify ICCAT of actions taken to address the violation.

Subpart F—Enforcement

§ 635.69 Vessel monitoring systems.

(a) *Applicability.* To facilitate enforcement of time-area and fishery closures, an owner or operator of a commercial vessel, permitted to fish for Atlantic HMS under § 635.4 and that fishes with a pelagic or bottom longline or strikenet gear, is required to install a NMFS-approved vessel monitoring system (VMS) unit on board the vessel and operate the VMS unit under the following circumstances:

(1) Whenever the vessel is away from port with pelagic longline gear on board;

(2) As of January 1, 2005, whenever a vessel issued a directed shark LAP, is away from port with bottom longline gear on board, is located between 33°00' N. lat. and 36°30' N. lat., and the mid-Atlantic shark closed area is closed as specified in § 635.21(d)(1); or

(3) As of November 15, 2004, whenever a vessel, issued a directed shark LAP, is away from port with a gillnet on board during the right whale calving season specified in the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan in § 229.32(f) of this title.

(4) A vessel is considered to have pelagic longline gear on board, for the purposes of this section, when gear as specified at § 635.21(c) is on board. A vessel is considered to have bottom longline gear on board, for the purposes of this section, when gear as specified at § 635.21(d) is on board. A vessel is considered to have gillnet gear on

board, for the purposes of this section, when gillnet, as defined in § 600.10, is on board a vessel that has been issued a shark LAP.

(b) *Hardware specifications.* The VMS hardware must be approved by NMFS and must be able to perform all NMFS required functions. NMFS will file with the Office of the Federal Register for publication notification listing the specifications for approved VMS units. As necessary, NMFS will make additions and/or amendments to the VMS hardware type approval list to account for changes in specifications or new products offered by manufacturers. NMFS will file with the Office of the Federal Register for publication notification listing such additions and/or amendments.

(c) *Communications specifications.* The communications service provider must be approved by NMFS and must be able to provide all NMFS required functions. NMFS will file with the Office of the Federal Register for publication notification listing the specifications for approved VMS communications service providers. As necessary, NMFS will make additions and/or amendments to the VMS communications service providers type approval list to account for changes in specifications or new services offered by communications providers. NMFS will file with the Office of the Federal Register for publication notification listing such additions and/or amendments.

(d) *Installation and service activation.* When installing and activating the NMFS-approved VMS unit, a vessel owner or operator must follow procedures indicated on an installation and activation checklist obtained from NMFS. Re-installation shall require the same checklist. Upon completion of installation, the vessel owner must sign a statement certifying compliance with the installation procedures of the checklist and submit such certification to NMFS as indicated on the checklist. Vessels fishing prior to submission of the certification will be in violation of the VMS requirement.

(e) *Operation.* Owners or operators of vessels permitted, or required to be permitted, to fish for HMS, that have pelagic or bottom longline gear or gillnet gear on board, and that are re-

quired to have a VMS unit installed, as specified in paragraph (a), must activate the VMS to submit automatic position reports beginning 2 hours prior to leaving port and continuing until the vessel returns to port. While at sea, the unit must operate without interruption and no person may interfere with, tamper with, alter, damage, disable, or impede the operation of a VMS, or attempt any of the same. Vessels fishing outside the geographic area of operation of the installed VMS will be in violation of the VMS requirement.

(f) *Interruption.* When the vessel operator is aware that transmission of automatic position reports has been interrupted, or when notified by NMFS that automatic position reports are not being received, the vessel operator must contact NMFS and follow the instructions given. Such instructions may include but are not limited to manually communicating to a location designated by NMFS the vessel's position or returning to port until the VMS is operable.

(g) *Repair and replacement.* After a fishing trip during which interruption of automatic position reports has occurred, the vessel's owner or operator must replace or repair the VMS unit prior to the vessel's next trip. Repair or reinstallation of a VMS unit or installation of a replacement, including change of communications service provider shall be in accordance with the checklist provided by NMFS and require the same certification.

(h) *Access.* As a condition to obtaining a LAP for Atlantic swordfish, sharks, or tunas, all vessel owners or operators using pelagic or bottom longline or gillnet gear, subject to the VMS provisions of this section must allow NMFS, the USCG, and their authorized officers and designees access to the vessel's position data obtained from the VMS at the time of or after its transmission to the vendor or receiver, as the case may be.

[64 FR 29135, May 28, 1999, as amended at 64 FR 37705, July 13, 1999; 65 FR 47238, Aug. 1, 2000; 68 FR 45169, Aug. 1, 2003; 68 FR 74788, Dec. 24, 2003; 69 FR 51012, Aug. 17, 2004]