

## § 648.105

of the net from the belly to the terminus of the codend along the top, bottom, and each side of the net. "Top of the regulated portion of the net" means the 50 percent of the entire regulated portion of the net that (in a hypothetical situation) will not be in contact with the ocean bottom during a tow if the regulated portion of the net were laid flat on the ocean floor. For the purpose of this paragraph (c), head ropes shall not be considered part of the top of the regulated portion of a trawl net. A vessel shall not use any means or mesh configuration on the top of the regulated portion of the net, as defined in §648.104(e), if it obstructs the meshes of the net or otherwise causes the size of the meshes of the net while in use to diminish to a size smaller than the minimum specified in §648.100(a).

(d) *Mesh obstruction or constriction.* (1) A fishing vessel may not use any mesh configuration, mesh construction, or other means on or in the top of the net, as defined in paragraph (c) of this section, that obstructs the meshes of the net in any manner.

(2) No person on any vessel may possess or fish with a net capable of catching summer flounder in which the bars entering or exiting the knots twist around each other.

(e) *Stowage of nets.* Otter trawl vessels retaining 100 lb (45.3 kg) or more of summer flounder from May 1 through October 31, or 200 lb (90.6 kg) or more of summer flounder from November 1 through April 30, and subject to the minimum mesh size requirement of paragraph (a)(1) of this section may not have "available for immediate use" any net or any piece of net that does not meet the minimum mesh size requirement, or any net, or any piece of net, with mesh that is rigged in a manner that is inconsistent with the minimum mesh size requirement. A net that is stowed in conformance with one of the methods specified in §648.23(b) and that can be shown not to have been in recent use is considered to be not "available for immediate use."

(f) The minimum net mesh requirement may apply to any portion of the net. The minimum mesh size and the portion of the net regulated by the

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minimum mesh size may be adjusted pursuant to the procedures in §648.100.

[61 FR 34968, July 3, 1996, as amended at 62 FR 63876, Dec. 3, 1997; 69 FR 62821, Oct. 28, 2004; 70 FR 35046, June 16, 2005; 71 FR 42318, July 26, 2006; 72 FR 8289, Feb. 26, 2007]

### § 648.105 Possession restrictions.

(a) Unless otherwise specified pursuant to §648.107, no person shall possess more than four summer flounder in, or harvested from, the EEZ, unless that person is the owner or operator of a fishing vessel issued a summer flounder moratorium permit, or is issued a summer flounder dealer permit. Persons aboard a commercial vessel that is not eligible for a summer flounder moratorium permit are subject to this possession limit. The owner, operator, and crew of a charter or party boat issued a summer flounder 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 §648.100.

(b) If whole summer flounder are processed into fillets, the number of fillets will be converted to whole summer flounder at the place of landing by dividing the fillet number by two. If summer flounder are filleted into single (butterfly) fillets, each fillet is deemed to be from one whole summer flounder.

(c) Summer flounder harvested by vessels subject to the possession limit with more than one person on board may be pooled in one or more containers. Compliance with the daily possession limit will be determined by dividing the number of summer flounder on board by the number of persons on board, 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.

(d) Owners and operators of otter trawl vessels issued a permit under §648.4(a)(3) that fish with or possess nets or pieces of net on board that do

not meet the minimum mesh requirements and that are not stowed in accordance with §648.104(e), may not retain 100 lb (45.3 kg) or more of summer flounder from May 1 through October 31, or 200 lb (90.6 kg) or more of summer flounder from November 1 through April 30, unless the vessel possesses a valid summer flounder small-mesh exemption LOA and is fishing in the exemption area as specified in §648.104(b). Summer flounder on board these vessels must be stored so as to be readily available for inspection in standard 100-lb (45.3-kg) totes or fish boxes having a liquid capacity of 18.2 gal (70 L), or a volume of not more than 4,320 in<sup>3</sup> (2.5 ft<sup>3</sup> or 70.79 cm<sup>3</sup>).

[61 FR 34968, July 3, 1996, as amended at 62 FR 37157, July 11, 1997; 63 FR 27868, May 21, 1998; 66 FR 39292, July 30, 2001; 67 FR 50372, Aug. 2, 2002; 68 FR 44236, July 28, 2003; 69 FR 62822, Oct. 28, 2004]

**§ 648.106 Sea Turtle conservation.**

Sea turtle regulations are found at 50 CFR parts 222 and 223.

[64 FR 57595, Oct. 26, 1999]

**§ 648.107 Conservation equivalent measures for the summer flounder fishery.**

(a) The Regional Administrator has determined that the recreational fishing measures proposed to be implemented by Massachusetts through North Carolina for 2007 are the conservation equivalent of the season, minimum fish size, and possession limit prescribed in §§648.102, 648.103, and 648.105(a), respectively. This determination is based on a recommendation from the Summer Flounder Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

(1) Federally permitted vessels subject to the recreational fishing measures of this part, and other recreational fishing vessels harvesting summer flounder in or from the EEZ and subject to the recreational fishing measures of this part, landing summer flounder in a state whose fishery management measures are determined by the Regional Administrator to be conservation equivalent shall not be subject to the more restrictive Federal measures, pursuant to the provisions of §648.4(b). Those vessels shall be subject

to the recreational fishing measures implemented by the state in which they land.

(2) [Reserved]

(b) Federally permitted vessels subject to the recreational fishing measures of this part, and other recreational fishing vessels subject to the recreational fishing measures of this part and registered in states whose fishery management measures are not determined by the Regional Administrator to be the conservation equivalent of the season, minimum size, and possession limit prescribed in §§648.102, 648.103(b) and 648.105(a), respectively, due to the lack of, or the reversal of, a conservation equivalent recommendation from the Summer Flounder Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, shall be subject to the following precautionary default measures: Season – January 1 through December 31; minimum size – 19.0 inches (48.26 cm); and possession limit – one fish.

[67 FR 50372, Aug. 2, 2002, as amended at 68 FR 44236, July 28, 2003; 69 FR 53840, Sept. 3, 2004; 70 FR 35046, June 16, 2005; 71 FR 29256, May 22, 2006; 71 FR 42318, July 26, 2006; 72 FR 30497, June 1, 2007]

**§ 648.108 Framework adjustments to management measures.**

(a) *Within season management action.* The Council, at any time, may initiate action to add or adjust management measures within the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP if it finds that action is necessary to meet or be consistent with the goals and objectives of the plan.

(1) *Adjustment process.* The Council shall develop and analyze appropriate management actions over the span of at least two Council meetings. The Council must provide the public with advance notice of the availability of the recommendation(s), appropriate justification(s) and economic and biological analyses, and the opportunity to comment on the proposed adjustment(s) at the first meeting and prior to and at the second Council meeting. The Council's recommendations on adjustments or additions to management measures must come from one or more of the following categories: Minimum