

§ 648.322

50 CFR Ch. VI (10–1–07 Edition)

shall then be published as a final rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(4) If the Regional Administrator approves the Council's recommendations, the Secretary may, for good cause found under the standard of the Administrative Procedure Act, waive the requirement for a proposed rule and opportunity for public comment in the FEDERAL REGISTER. The Secretary, in so doing, shall publish only the final rule. Submission of recommendations does not preclude the Secretary from deciding to provide additional opportunity for prior notice and comment in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(5) The Regional Administrator may approve, disapprove, or partially approve the Council's recommendation. If the Regional Administrator does not approve the Council's specific recommendation, the Regional Administrator must notify the Council in writing of the reasons for the action prior to the first Council meeting following publication of such decision.

(b) *Possible framework adjustment measures.* Measures that may be changed or implemented through framework action, provided that any corresponding management adjustments can also be implemented through a framework adjustment, include:

- (1) Skate permitting and reporting;
- (2) Skate overfishing definitions and related targets and thresholds;
- (3) Prohibitions on possession and/or landing of individual skate species;
- (4) Skate possession;
- (5) Skate closed areas (and consideration of exempted gears and fisheries);
- (6) Seasonal skate fishery restrictions and specifications;
- (7) Target TACs for individual skate species;
- (8) Hard TACs/quotas for skates, including species-specific quotas, fishery quotas, and/or quotas for non-directed fisheries;
- (9) Establishing a mechanism for TAC set-asides to mitigate , conduct scientific research, or for other reasons;
- (10) Onboard observer requirements;
- (11) Gear modifications, requirements, restrictions, and/or prohibitions;

(12) Minimum and/or maximum sizes for skates;

(13) Adjustments to exemption area requirements, area coordinates and/or management lines established by the FMP;

(14) Measures to address protected species issues, if necessary;

(15) Description and identification of EFH;

(16) Description and identification of habitat areas of particular concern;

(17) Measures to protect EFH;

(18) Adjustments and or/resetting of the "baseline" of management measures in other, described in § 648.320(c);

(19) OY and/or MSY specifications; and

(20) Any other measures contained in the FMP.

(c) *Emergency action.* Nothing in this section is meant to derogate from the authority of the Secretary to take emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

§ 648.322 Skate possession and landing restrictions.

(a) *Skate wing possession and landing limit.* A vessel or operator of a vessel that has been issued a valid Federal skate permit under this part, provided the vessel fishes under an Atlantic sea scallop, NE multispecies, or monkfish DAS as specified at §§ 648.53, 648.82, and 648.92, respectively, unless otherwise exempted under paragraph (b) of this section, may fish for, possess, and/or land up to the allowable daily and per trip limits specified as follows:

(1) Possess up to 20,000 lb (9,072 kg) of skate wings (45,400 lb (20,593 kg) whole weight) per trip of greater than 24 hours in duration; or

(2) Land up to 10,000 lb (4,536 kg) of skate wings (22,700 lb (10,296 kg) whole weight) per trip of 24 hours or less in duration.

(b) *Bait Letter of Authorization (LOA).* A skate vessel owner or operator under this part may request and receive from the Regional Administrator an exemption from the skate wing possession limit restrictions, provided that the following requirements and conditions are met:

(1) The vessel owner or operator obtains an LOA. LOAs are available upon

Fishery Conservation and Management

§ 654.2

request from the Regional Administrator.

(2) The vessel owner/operator possesses and/or lands only whole skates less than 23 inches (58.42 cm) total length.

(3) The vessel owner or operator fishes for, possesses, or lands skates only for use as bait.

(4) Vessels that fish for, possess, and/or land any combination of skate wings and whole skates less than 23 inches (58.42 cm) total length must comply with the possession limit restrictions under paragraph (a) of this section for all skates or skate parts on board.

(5) Any vessel owner/operator meets the requirements at § 648.13(h).

(6) Skate bait-only possession limit LOA—The vessel owner or operator possesses and lands skates in compliance with this subpart for a minimum of 7 days.

(c) *Prohibitions on possession of skates.* All vessels fishing in the EEZ portion of the Skate Management Unit are subject to the following prohibitions:

(1) A vessel may not retain, possess, or land barndoor or thorny skates taken in or from the EEZ portion of the Skate Management Unit.

(2) A vessel may not retain, possess, or land smooth skates taken in or from the GOM RMA described at § 648.80(a)(1)(i).

[68 FR 49701, Aug. 19, 2003, as amended at 69 FR 22988, Apr. 27, 2004]

PART 654—STONE CRAB FISHERY OF THE GULF OF MEXICO

Subpart A—General Measures

Sec.

- 654.1 Purpose and scope.
- 654.2 Definitions.
- 654.3 Relation to other laws.
- 654.4 Trap limitation program.
- 654.5 Recordkeeping and reporting. [Reserved]
- 654.6 Vessel and gear identification.
- 654.7 Prohibitions.
- 654.8 Facilitation of enforcement.
- 654.9 Penalties.

Subpart B—Management Measures

- 654.20 Seasons.
- 654.21 Harvest limitations.
- 654.22 Gear restrictions.

654.23 Southwest Florida seasonal trawl closure.

654.24 Shrimp/stone crab separation zones.

654.25 Prevention of gear conflicts.

654.26 Adjustment of management measures.

654.27 Specifically authorized activities.

654.28 Tortugas marine reserves.

APPENDIX A TO PART 654—FIGURES

FIGURE 1—STONE CRAB CLAW

FIGURE 2—SOUTHWEST FLORIDA SEASONAL TRAWL CLOSURE

FIGURE 3—SHRIMP/STONE CRAB SEPARATION ZONES

AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

SOURCE: 60 FR 13919, Mar. 15, 1995, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General Measures

§ 654.1 Purpose and scope.

(a) The purpose of this part is to implement the Fishery Management Plan for the Stone Crab Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico, prepared by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

(b) This part governs conservation and management of stone crab and restricts the trawl fishery in the management area.

(c) “EEZ” refers to the EEZ in the management area, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

[60 FR 13919, Mar. 15, 1995, as amended at 67 FR 61993, Oct. 3, 2002]

§ 654.2 Definitions.

In addition to the definitions in the Magnuson-Stevens Act and in § 620.2 of this chapter, the terms used in this part have the following meanings:

Management area means the EEZ off the coast of Florida from a line extending directly south from the Alabama/Florida boundary (87°31'06" W. long.) to a line extending directly east from the Dade/Monroe County, FL boundary (25°20.4' N. lat.).

Regional Administrator (RA) for the purposes of this part, means the Administrator, Southeast Region, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702, or a designee.

Stone crab means *Menippe mercenaria*, *M. adina*, or their interbreeding hybrids, or a part thereof.

[60 FR 13919, Mar. 15, 1995, as amended at 67 FR 61991, 61993, Oct. 3, 2002]