

Fishery Conservation and Management

§ 648.75

clams or ocean quahogs harvested in the shell by the vessel. Such certification shall be made by the observer's signature on the daily fishing log required by § 648.7.

(b) *Conversion factor.* (1) Based on the recommendation of the MAFMC, the Regional Administrator may allow shucking at sea of surf clams or ocean quahogs, with or without an observer, if he/she determines a conversion factor for shucked meats to calculate accurately the amount of surf clams or ocean quahogs harvested in the shell.

(2) The Regional Administrator shall publish notification in the FEDERAL REGISTER specifying a conversion factor together with the data used in its calculation for a 30-day comment period. After consideration of the public comments and any other relevant data, the Regional Administrator may publish final notification in the FEDERAL REGISTER specifying the conversion factor.

(3) If the Regional Administrator makes the determination specified in paragraph (b)(1) of this section, he/she may authorize the vessel owner to shuck surf clams or ocean quahogs at sea. Such authorization shall be in writing and be carried aboard the vessel.

§ 648.75 Cage identification.

Except as provided in § 648.76, the following cage identification requirements apply to all vessels issued a Federal fishing permit for surf clams and ocean quahogs:

(a) *Tagging.* Before offloading, all cages that contain surf clams or ocean quahogs must be tagged with tags acquired annually under paragraph (b) of this section. A tag must be fixed on or as near as possible to the upper crossbar of the cage for every 60 ft³ (1,700 L), or portion thereof, of the cage. A tag or tags must not be removed until the cage is emptied by the processor, at which time the processor must promptly remove and retain the tag(s) for collection or disposal as specified by the Regional Administrator.

(b) *Issuance.* The Regional Administrator will issue a supply of tags to each individual allocation owner qualifying for an allocation under § 648.70 prior to the beginning of each fishing

year, or he/she may specify, in the FEDERAL REGISTER, a vendor from whom the tags shall be purchased. The number of tags will be based on the owner's initial allocation as specified in § 648.70(a). Each tag represents 32 bu (1,700 L) of allocation.

(c) *Expiration.* Tags will expire at the end of the fishing year for which they are issued, or if rendered null and void in accordance with 15 CFR part 904.

(d) *Return.* Tags that have been rendered null and void must be returned to the Regional Administrator, if possible.

(e) *Loss.* Loss or theft of tags must be reported by the owner, numerically identifying the tags to the Regional Administrator by telephone as soon as the loss or theft is discovered and in writing within 24 hours. Thereafter, the reported tags shall no longer be valid for use under this part.

(f) *Replacement.* Lost or stolen tags may be replaced by the Regional Administrator if proper notice of the loss is provided by the person to whom the tags were issued. Replacement tags may be purchased from the Regional Administrator or a vendor with a written authorization from the Regional Administrator.

(g) *Transfer.* See § 648.70(b)(2).

(h) *Presumptions.* Surf clams and ocean quahogs found in cages without a valid state tag are deemed to have been harvested in the EEZ and to be part of an individual's allocation, unless the individual demonstrates that he/she has surrendered his/her Federal vessel permit issued under § 648.4(a)(4) and conducted fishing operations exclusively within waters under the jurisdiction of any state. Surf clams and ocean quahogs in cages with a Federal tag or tags, issued and still valid pursuant to this section, affixed thereto are deemed to have been harvested by the individual allocation holder to whom the tags were issued under § 648.75(b) or transferred under § 648.70(b).

[61 FR 34968, July 3, 1996, as amended at 63 FR 27485, May 19, 1998; 68 FR 69974, Dec. 16, 2003]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 72 FR 51703, Sept. 11, 2007, § 648.75 was amended by revising paragraph (a), effective Jan. 1, 2008. For the convenience of the user, the revised text is set forth below.