

person who claims the applicability of an exception has the burden of proving that the exception applies:

(i) Paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this section do not apply if a right whale approach is authorized by the National Marine Fisheries Service through a permit issued under part 222, subpart C, of this chapter (General Permit Procedures) or through a similar authorization.

(ii) Paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this section do not apply where compliance would create an imminent and serious threat to a person, vessel, or aircraft.

(iii) Paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this section do not apply when approaching to investigate a right whale entanglement or injury, or to assist in the disentanglement or rescue of a right whale, provided that permission is received from the National Marine Fisheries Service or designee prior to the approach.

(iv) Paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this section do not apply to an aircraft unless the aircraft is conducting whale watch activities.

(v) Paragraph (c)(2) of this section does not apply to the extent that a vessel is restricted in her ability to maneuver and, because of the restriction, cannot comply with paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(d) *Special prohibitions relating to endangered Steller sea lion protection.* The regulatory provisions set forth in part 223 of this chapter, which govern threatened Steller sea lions, shall also apply to the western population of Steller sea lions, which consists of all Steller sea lions from breeding colonies located west of 144° W. long.

[64 FR 14066, Mar. 23, 1999, as amended at 66 FR 29509, May 31, 2001; 69 FR 69537, Nov. 30, 2004; 70 FR 1832, Jan. 11, 2005]

§ 224.104 Special requirements for fishing activities to protect endangered sea turtles.

(a) Shrimp fishermen in the southeastern United States and the Gulf of Mexico who comply with rules for threatened sea turtles specified in § 223.206 of this chapter will not be subject to civil penalties under the Act for incidental captures of endangered sea turtles by shrimp trawl gear.

(b) Summer flounder fishermen in the Summer flounder fishery-sea turtle protection area who comply with rules for threatened sea turtles specified in § 223.206 of this chapter will not be subject to civil penalties under the Act for incidental captures of endangered sea turtles by summer flounder gear.

(c) Special prohibitions relating to sea turtles are provided at § 223.206(d).

[64 FR 14066, Mar. 23, 1999, as amended at 66 FR 44552, Aug. 24, 2001; 66 FR 67496, Dec. 31, 2001; 68 FR 8471, Feb. 21, 2003; 69 FR 18453, Apr. 7, 2004; 72 FR 31757, June 8, 2007]

§ 224.105 Speed restrictions to protect North Atlantic Right Whales.

(a) The following restrictions apply to: All vessels greater than or equal to 65 ft (19.8 m) in overall length and subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and all other vessels greater than or equal to 65 ft (19.8 m) in overall length entering or departing a port or place subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. These restrictions shall not apply to U.S. vessels owned or operated by, or under contract to, the Federal Government. This exemption extends to foreign sovereign vessels when they are engaging in joint exercises with the U.S. Department of the Navy. In addition, these restrictions do not apply to law enforcement vessels of a State, or political subdivision thereof, when engaged in law enforcement or search and rescue duties.

(1) *Southeast U.S.* (south of St. Augustine, FL to north of Brunswick, GA): Vessels shall travel at a speed of 10 knots or less over ground during the period of November 15 to April 15 each year in the area bounded by the following: Beginning at 31°27'00.0" N-080°51'36.0" W; thence west to charted mean high water line then south along charted mean high water line and inshore limits of COLREGS limit to a latitude of 29°45'00.0" N thence east to 29°45'00.0" N-080°51'36.0" W; thence back to starting point. (Fig. 1).

(2) *Mid-Atlantic U.S.* (from north of Brunswick, Georgia to Rhode Island): Vessels shall travel 10 knots or less over ground in the period November 1 to April 30 each year:

(i) In the area bounded by the following: 33°56'42.0" N-077°31'30.0" W; thence along a NW bearing of 313.26°