

Fishery Conservation and Management

§ 697.25

(2) No vessel or person on a vessel with a trawl or dredge may possess horseshoe crabs in the area described in paragraph (f)(1) of this section.

(3) Horseshoe crabs caught in the area described in paragraph (f)(1) of this section must be returned immediately to the water without further harm.

[64 FR 68248, Dec. 6, 1999, as amended at 66 FR 8911, Feb. 5, 2001]

§ 697.24 Exempted waters for Maine State American lobster permits.

A person or vessel holding a valid permit or license issued by the State of Maine that lawfully permits that person to engage in commercial fishing for American lobster may, with the approval of the State of Maine, engage in commercial fishing for American lobsters in the following areas designated as EEZ, if such fishing is conducted in such waters in accordance with all other applicable Federal and State regulations:

(a) West of Monhegan Island in the area located north of the line 43.5 deg.42'08" N. lat., 69.5 deg.34'18" W. long., and 43.5 deg.42'15" N. lat., 69.5 deg.19'18" W. long.

(b) East of Monhegan Island in the area located west of the line 43.5 deg.44'00" N. lat., 69.5 deg.15'05" W. long., and 43.5 deg.48'10" N. lat., 69.5 deg.08'01" W. long.

(c) South of Vinalhaven in the area located west of the line 43.5 deg.521" N. lat., 68.5 deg.39'54" W. long., and 43.5 deg.48'10" N. lat., 67.5 deg.40'33" W. long.

(d) South of Boris Bubert Island in the area located north of the line 44.5 deg.19'15" N. lat., 67.5 deg.49'30" W. long. and 44.5 deg.23'45" N. lat., 67.5 deg.40'33" W. long.

§ 697.25 Adjustment to management measures.

(a) On or before February 15, 2001, and annually on or before February 15, thereafter, NMFS may, after consultation with the Commission, publish a proposed rule to implement additional or different management measures for Federal waters in any of the management areas specified in § 697.18 if it is determined such measures are necessary to achieve or be compatible with ISFMP objectives, or the ISFMP, to be

consistent with the national standards of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, or to meet overfishing and rebuilding requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. These management measures may include, but are not limited to, continued reductions of fishing effort or numbers of traps, increases in minimum or decreases in maximum size, increases in the escape vent size, decreases in the lobster trap size, closed areas, closed seasons, landing limits, trip limits and other management area-specific measures as may be identified and recommended by the Commission prior to December 1 of the previous year. After considering public comment, NMFS may publish a final rule to implement any such measures.

(b) *Conservation equivalency measures.* The Regional Administrator may consider future recommendations for modifications to Federal regulations based on conservation equivalency for American lobster that are formally submitted to him/her in writing by the ASMFC. These recommendations must, for consideration by the Regional Administrator, contain the following supporting information:

(1) A description of how Federal regulations should be modified;

(2) An explanation of how the recommended measure(s) would achieve a level of conservation benefits for the resource equivalent to the applicable Federal regulations;

(3) An explanation of how Federal implementation of the conservation equivalent measure(s) would achieve ISFMP objectives, be consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act national standards, and be compatible with the effective implementation of the ISFMP; and

(4) A detailed analysis of the biological, economic, and social impacts of the recommended conservation equivalent measure(s). After considering the recommendation and the necessary supporting information, NMFS may issue a proposed rule to implement the conservation equivalent measures. After considering public comment, NMFS may issue a final rule to implement such measures.