§ 697.7 Prohibitions.

(a) Atlantic Coast weakfish fishery. In addition to the prohibitions set forth in §600.725 of this chapter, it is unlawful for any person to do any of the following:

1. Fish for, harvest, or possess any weakfish less than 12 inches (30.5 cm) in total length (measured as a straight line along the bottom of the fish from the tip of the lower jaw with the mouth closed to the end of the lower tip of the tail) from the EEZ.

2. Retain any weakfish less than 12 inches (30.5 cm) in total length taken in or from the EEZ.

3. Fish for weakfish in the EEZ with a minimum mesh size less than 3 1/4-inch (8.3 cm) square stretch mesh (as measured between the centers of opposite knots when stretched taut) or 3 3/4-inch (9.5 cm) diamond stretch mesh for trawls and 2 3/8-inch (7.3 cm) stretch mesh for gillnets.

4. Possess more than 150 lb (67 kg) of weakfish during any one day or trip, whichever is longer, in the EEZ when using a mesh size less than 3 1/4-inch
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(8.3 cm) square stretch mesh (as measured between the centers of opposite knots when stretched taut) or 3 3/4-inch (9.5cm) diamond stretch mesh for finfish trawls and 2 7/8-inch (7.3 cm) stretch mesh for gillnets.  

(5) Fish using a flynet in the EEZ off North Carolina in the area bounded as follows:  

(i) On the north by a straight line connecting points 35°10.8′ N. lat., 75°29.2′ W. long. (3 nm off Cape Hatteras) and 35°03.5′ N. lat., 75°11.8′ W. long. (20 nm off Cape Hatteras).  

(ii) The east by a straight line connecting points 35°03.5′ N. lat., 75°11.8′ W. long. (20 nm off Cape Hatteras) and 33°21.1′ N. lat., 77°57.5′ W. long., (about 30 nm off Cape Fear on the extension of the North Carolina/South Carolina state line into the EEZ).  

(iii) On the south by a straight line connecting points 33°21.1′ N. lat., 77°57.5′ W. long., and 33°48.8′ N. lat., 78°29.7′ W. long. (3 nm off Little River Inlet on the North Carolina/South Carolina state line).  

(iv) On the west by state waters.  

(6) Possess any weakfish in the closed area of the EEZ, as described in paragraph (a)(5) of this section, when fishing with shrimp trawls or crab trawls.  

(7) Land weakfish for commercial purposes caught in the EEZ in any state other than Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, or North Carolina.  

(b) Atlantic striped bass fishery. In addition to the prohibitions set forth in §600.725 of this chapter, it is unlawful for any person owning or operating a vessel issued a Federal limited access American lobster permit under §697.4 or a vessel or person holding a valid State of Maine American lobster permit or license and fishing under the provisions of and under the areas designated in §697.24 to do any of the following:  

(i) Retain board, land, or possess at or after landing, whole American lobsters that fail to meet the minimum carapace length standard specified in §697.20(a). All American lobsters will be subject to inspection and enforcement action, up to and including the time when a dealer receives or possesses American lobsters for a commercial purpose.  

(ii) Retain board, land, or possess, up to the time when a dealer first receives or possesses American lobster for a commercial purpose, any American lobster or parts thereof in violation of the mutilation standards specified in §697.20(c).  

(iii) Retain board, land, or possess any berried female American lobster specified in §697.20(d).  

(iv) Remove eggs from any berried female American lobster, land, or possess any such lobster from which eggs have been removed. No person owning or operating a vessel issued a Federal limited access American lobster permit or license and fishing under the provisions of and under the areas designated in §697.24 may land or possess any lobster that has come in contact with any substance capable of removing lobster eggs.  

(v) Retain on board, land, or possess any female lobster that do not meet the area-specific v-notch requirements set forth in §697.20(g).  

(vi) Spear any American lobster, or land or possess any American lobster which has been speared.  

(vii) Possess, deploy, fish with, haul, harvest lobster from, or carry aboard a
vessel trap gear in excess of the trap limits specified in § 697.19 unless exempted pursuant to § 697.26.

(xii) Possess, deploy, haul, harvest lobster from, or carry aboard a vessel any trap gear that does not satisfy the requirements on gear identification and marking, escape vents, ghost panel and maximum trap size specified in § 697.21, unless such gear has been rendered unfishable, or unless exempted pursuant to § 697.26.

(xii) Possess, deploy, haul, harvest lobster from, or carry aboard a vessel any trap gear that does not satisfy the requirements on gear identification and marking, escape vents, ghost panel and maximum trap size specified in § 697.21, unless such gear has been rendered unfishable, or unless exempted pursuant to § 697.26.

(xix) Possess, deploy, haul, or harvest lobster from, or carry aboard a vessel any trap gear not tagged in accordance with the requirements in § 697.19, unless such gear has been rendered unfishable, or unless exempted pursuant to § 697.26.

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aboard a vessel trap gear issued to another vessel.

(xxviii) Fail to comply with any gear, time, or area restriction in this part or, as is explained in §697.3 and §697.4(b), fail to comply with any gear, time, or area regulation set forth in any other regulatory part, including part 229 and part 648.

(xxix) Retain on board, land, or possess at or after landing, whole American lobsters that exceed the maximum carapace length standard specified in §697.20(b). All American lobsters will be subject to inspection and enforcement action, up to and including the time when a dealer receives or possesses American lobsters for a commercial purpose.

(xxx) Seasonal closures. The following areas are closed seasonally to lobster fishing.

(A) Outer Cape Area seasonal closure. The Federal waters of the Outer Cape Area shall be closed to lobster fishing with traps by Federal lobster permit holders from February 1 through March 31.

(i) Lobster fishing with traps is prohibited in the Outer Cape Area during this seasonal closure. Federal trap fishers are prohibited from possessing or landing lobster taken from the Outer Cape Area during the seasonal closure.

(ii) All lobster traps must be removed from Outer Cape Area waters before the start of the seasonal closure and may not be re-deployed into Outer Cape Area waters until after the seasonal closure ends. Federal trap fishers are prohibited from setting, hauling, storing, abandoning, or in any way leaving their traps in Outer Cape Area waters during this seasonal closure. Federal lobster permit holders are prohibited from possessing or carrying lobster traps aboard a vessel in Outer Cape Area waters during this seasonal closure unless the vessel is transiting through the Outer Cape Area pursuant to paragraph (c)(1)(xxx)(A)(4) of this section.

(iii) The Outer Cape Area seasonal closure relates only to the Outer Cape Area. The restrictive provisions of §§697.3 and 697.4(a)(7)(v) do not apply to this closure. Federal lobster permit holders with an Outer Cape Area designation on their Federal lobster permits would not have to similarly remove their lobster gear from the other designated management areas.

(B) Area 4 seasonal closure. The Federal waters of Area 4 shall be closed to lobster fishing from April 30 through May 31.

(i) Lobster fishing is prohibited in Area 4 during this seasonal closure. Federal lobster permit holders are prohibited from possessing or landing lobster taken from Area 4 during the seasonal closure.

(iii) The Regional Administrator may condition this authorization as appropriate in order to maintain the overall integrity of the closure.

(B) Area 4 seasonal closure. The Federal waters of Area 4 shall be closed to lobster fishing from April 30 through May 31.

(i) Lobster fishing is prohibited in Area 4 during this seasonal closure. Federal lobster permit holders are prohibited from possessing or landing lobster taken from Area 4 during the seasonal closure.

(ii) All lobster traps must be removed from Area 4 waters before the start of the seasonal closure and may not be re-deployed into Area 4 waters until after the seasonal closure ends. Federal trap fishers are prohibited from setting, hauling, storing, abandoning, or in any way leaving their traps in Area 4 waters during this seasonal closure.

(iii) Lobster fishers have a 1-week grace period from May 24 to May 31 to re-set gear in the closed area. During
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this grace period, re-set traps may not be re-hauled and any Federal lobster permit holder re-setting Area 4 traps during this grace period is prohibited from possessing on board any lobster regardless of the area from which the lobster may have been harvested.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) Federal lobster permit holders are prohibited from possessing or carrying lobster traps aboard a vessel in Area 4 waters during this seasonal closure unless the vessel is operating subject to the grace period identified in paragraph (c)(1)(xxx)(B)(2)(i) of this section or is transiting through Area 4 pursuant to paragraph (c)(1)(xxx)(B)(5) of this section.

(4) The Area 4 seasonal closure relates only to Area 4. The restrictive provisions of §§697.3 and 697.4(a)(7)(v) do not apply to this closure. Federal lobster permit holders with an Area 4 designation and another Lobster Management Area designation on their Federal lobster permits would not have to similarly remove their lobster gear from the other designated management areas.

(5) Transiting Area 4. Federal lobster permit holders may possess lobster traps on their vessels in Area 4 during the seasonal closure only if:

(i) The trap gear is stowed; and

(ii) The vessel is transiting the Area 4. For the purposes of this section, transiting shall mean passing through Area 4 without stopping, to reach a destination outside Area 4.

(6) The Regional Administrator may authorize a permit holder or vessel owner to haul ashore lobster traps from Area 4 during the seasonal closure without having to engage in the exempted fishing process in §697.22, if the permit holder or vessel owner can establish the following:

(i) That the lobster traps were not able to be hauled ashore before the seasonal closure due to incapacity, vessel/mechanical inoperability, and/or poor weather; and

(ii) That all lobsters caught in the subject traps will be immediately returned to the sea.

(iii) The Regional Administrator may condition this authorization as appropriate in order to maintain the overall integrity of the closure.

(C) Area 5 seasonal closure. The Federal waters of Area 5 shall be closed to lobster fishing from February 1 through March 31.

(1) Lobster fishing is prohibited in Area 5 during this seasonal closure. Federal lobster permit holders are prohibited from possessing or landing lobster taken from Area 5 during the seasonal closure.

(2) All lobster traps must be removed from Area 5 waters before the start of the seasonal closure and may not be re-deployed into Area 5 waters until after the seasonal closure ends. Federal trap fishers are prohibited from setting, hauling, storing, abandoning, or in any way leaving their traps in Area 5 waters during this seasonal closure. The following exceptions apply to the Area 5 seasonal closure:

(i) Lobster fishers will have a 2-week grace period from February 1 to February 14 to remove all lobster gear from the closed area. During this grace period, any hauled trap must not be reset and must be removed from the area. Any lobsters taken from traps during this grace period must be returned to the sea immediately and any Federal lobster permit holder retrieving Area 5 traps during this grace period is prohibited from possessing on board any lobster regardless of the area from which the lobster may have been harvested.

(ii) Lobster fishers have a 1-week grace period from March 24 to March 31 to re-set gear in the closed area. During this grace period, re-set traps may not be re-hauled and any Federal lobster permit holder retrieving Area 5 traps during this grace period is prohibited from possessing on board any lobster regardless of the area from which the lobster may have been harvested.

(3) Federal lobster permit holders are prohibited from possessing or carrying lobster traps aboard a vessel in Area 5 waters during this seasonal closure unless the vessel operating subject to the grace period identified in paragraph (c)(1)(xxx)(C)(2)(ii) of this section (ii) or is transiting through Area 5 pursuant to paragraph (c)(1)(xxx)(C)(5) of this section.

(4) The Area 5 seasonal closure relates only to Area 5. The restrictive
provisions of §§697.3 and 697.4(a)(7)(v) do not apply to this closure. Federal lobster permit holders with an Area 5 designation and another Lobster Management Area designation on their Federal lobster permits would not have to similarly remove their lobster gear from the other designated management areas.

(5) Transiting Area 5. Federal lobster permit holders may possess lobster traps on their vessels in Area 5 during the seasonal closure only if:

(i) The trap gear is stowed; and

(ii) The vessel is transiting the Area 5. For the purposes of this section, transiting shall mean passing through Area 5 without stopping, to reach a destination outside Area 5.

(6) The Regional Administrator may authorize a permit holder or vessel owner to haul ashore lobster traps from Area 5 during the seasonal closure without having to engage in the exempted fishing process in §697.22, if the permit holder or vessel owner can establish the following:

(i) That the lobster traps were not able to be hauled ashore before the seasonal closure due to incapacity, vessel/mechanical inoperability, and/or poor weather; and

(ii) That all lobsters caught in the subject traps will be immediately returned to the sea.

(iii) The Regional Administrator may condition this authorization as appropriate in order to maintain the overall integrity of the closure.

(2) In addition to the prohibitions specified in §600.725 of this chapter and the prohibitions specified in paragraph (c)(1) of this section, it is unlawful for any person to do any of the following:

(i) Retain on board, land, or possess American lobsters unless:

(A) The American lobsters were harvested by a vessel that has been issued and carries on board a valid Federal limited access American lobster permit under §697.4; or

(B) The American lobsters were harvested by a vessel without a valid Federal limited access American lobster permit and that fishes for American lobsters exclusively in state waters; or

(C) The American lobsters were harvested by a charter boat, head boat, or commercial dive vessel that possesses six or fewer American lobsters per person on board the vessel and the lobsters are not intended to be, or are not, traded, bartered, or sold; or

(D) The American lobsters were harvested by a recreational fishing vessel; or

(E) The American lobsters were harvested by a vessel or person holding a valid State of Maine American lobster permit or license and is fishing under the provisions of and in the areas designated in §697.24.

(ii) Sell, barter, or trade, or otherwise transfer, or attempt to sell, barter, or trade, or otherwise transfer, for a commercial purpose, any American lobsters from a vessel, unless the vessel has been issued a valid Federal limited access American lobster permit under §697.4, or the American lobsters were harvested by a vessel without a valid Federal limited access American lobster permit that fishes for American lobsters exclusively in state waters or unless the vessel or person holds a valid State of Maine American lobster permit or license and that is fishing under the provisions of and in the areas designated in §697.24.

(iii) To be, or act as, an operator of a vessel fishing for or possessing American lobsters in or from the EEZ, or issued a Federal limited access American lobster permit under §697.4, with or without having been issued and possessing a valid operator’s permit under §697.5.

(iv) Purchase, possess, or receive for a commercial purpose, or attempt to purchase, possess, or receive for a commercial purpose, as, or in the capacity of, a dealer, American lobsters taken from or harvested by a fishing vessel issued a Federal limited access American lobster permit, unless in possession of a valid dealer’s permit issued under §697.6.

(v) Purchase, possess, or receive for commercial purposes, or attempt to purchase or receive for commercial purposes, as, or in the capacity of, a dealer, American lobsters caught by a vessel other than one issued a valid Federal limited access American lobster permit under §697.4, or one holding or owned or operated by one holding a valid State of Maine American lobster permit or license and fishing under the
provisions of and in the areas designated in §697.24, unless the American lobsters were harvested by a vessel without a Federal limited access American lobster permit and that fishes for American lobsters exclusively in state waters.

(vi) Assault, resist, oppose, impede, harass, intimidate, or interfere with or bar by command, impediment, threat, or coercion any NMFS-approved sea sampler/observer aboard a vessel conducting his or her duties aboard a vessel, or any authorized officer conducting any search, inspection, investigation, or seizure in connection with enforcement of this part, or any official designee of the Regional Administrator conducting his or her duties.

(vii) Refuse to carry a sea sampler/observer if requested to do so by the Regional Administrator.

(viii) Refuse reasonable assistance to either a NMFS-approved sea sampler/observer conducting his or her duties aboard a vessel.

(ix) Make any false statement, oral or written, to an authorized officer, concerning the taking, catching, harvesting, landing, purchase, sale, or transfer of any American lobster.

(x) Violate any provision of this part, the ACFCMA, the Magnuson-Stevens Act, or any regulation, permit, or notification issued under the ACFCMA, the Magnuson-Stevens Act, or these regulations.

(xi) Retain on board, land, or possess any American lobsters harvested in or from the EEZ in violation of §697.20.

(xii) Ship, transport, offer for sale, sell, or purchase, in interstate or foreign commerce, any whole live American lobster in violation of §697.20.

(xiii) Fish, or be in the areas described in §697.23(b)(2), (c)(2), (d)(2), and (e)(2) on a fishing vessel with mobile gear during the time periods specified in §697.23(b)(1), (c)(1), and (d)(1), except as provided in §697.23(b)(1), (c)(1), (d)(1), and (e)(1).

(xiv) Fish, or be in the areas described in §697.23(b)(2), (c)(2), and (d)(2) on a fishing vessel with lobster trap gear on board during the time periods specified in §697.23(b)(1), (c)(1), and (d)(1).

(xv) Deploy or fail to remove lobster trap gear in the areas described in §697.23(b)(2), (c)(2), and (d)(2) during the time periods specified in §697.23(b)(1), (c)(1), and (d)(1).

(xvi) Violate any terms of a letter authorizing exempted fishing pursuant to §697.22 or to fail to keep such letter aboard the vessel during the time period of the exempted fishing.

(xvii) Possess, deploy, fish with, haul, or harvest lobster from, or carry aboard a vessel any lobster trap gear on a fishing trip in the EEZ on a vessel that fishes for, takes, catches, or harvests lobster by a method other than lobster traps.

(xviii) Fish, take, catch, or harvest lobster on a fishing trip in the EEZ by a method other than traps, in excess of 100 lobsters (or parts thereof), for each lobster day-at-sea or part of a lobster day-at-sea, up to a maximum of 500 lobsters (or parts thereof) for any one trip unless otherwise restricted by §648.80(a)(3)(i), (a)(4)(i)(A), (a)(9)(i)(D), (a)(12)(i)(A), (a)(13)(i)(A), (b)(3)(i) or §697.7(c)(2)(i)(C) of this chapter.

(xix) Possess, retain on board, or land lobster by a vessel with any non-trap gear on board capable of catching lobsters, in excess of 100 lobsters (or parts thereof), for each lobster day-at-sea or part of a lobster day-at-sea, up to a maximum of 500 lobsters (or parts thereof) for any one trip unless otherwise restricted by §648.80(a)(3)(i), (a)(4)(i)(A), (a)(9)(i)(D), (a)(12)(i)(A), (a)(13)(i)(A), (b)(3)(i) or §697.7(c)(2)(i)(C) of this chapter.

(xx) Transfer or attempt to transfer American lobster from one vessel to another vessel.

(xxi) Fail to comply with dealer record keeping and reporting requirements as specified in §697.6.

(3) Presumptions. (i) Any person possessing, or landing American lobsters or parts thereof at or prior to the time when those American lobsters are landed, or are received or possessed by a dealer for the first time, is subject to all of the prohibitions specified in paragraph (c) of this section, unless the American lobsters were harvested by a vessel without a Federal limited access American lobster permit and that fishes for American lobsters exclusively in state waters; or are from a
§ 697.8 Vessel identification.

(a) Vessel name and official number. Each fishing vessel issued a limited access American lobster permit and over 25 ft (7.6 m) in registered length must:

(1) Have affixed permanently its name on the port and starboard sides of the bow and, if possible, on its stern.

(2) Harvest any Atlantic sturgeon from the EEZ.

(3) Possess any natural or stocked Atlantic sturgeon in or from the EEZ.

(4) Retain any Atlantic sturgeon taken in or from the EEZ.

(5) Possess any natural Atlantic sturgeon parts, including Atlantic sturgeon eggs, in the EEZ.

(e) Atlantic Coast Horseshoe Crab fishery. In addition to the prohibitions set forth in §600.725 of this chapter, it is unlawful for any person to do any of the following:

(1) Fish for horseshoe crabs in the Carl N. Shuster Jr. Horseshoe Crab Reserve described in §697.23(f)(1).

(2) Possess horseshoe crabs on a vessel with a trawl or dredge in the closed area described in §697.23(f)(1).

(3) Fail to return to the water immediately without further harm, all horseshoe crabs caught in the closed area described in §697.23(f)(1).

(f) Atlantic red drum fishery. In addition to the prohibitions set forth in §600.725 of this chapter, it is unlawful for any person to do any of the following:

(1) Harvest or possess Atlantic red drum in the EEZ south of a line extending in a direction of 115° from true north commencing at a point at 40°29.6′ N. lat., 73°54.1′ W. long., such point being the intersection of the New Jersey/New York boundary with the 3-nm line denoting the seaward limit of state waters, and north of the demarcation line between the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council described in §600.105(c) of this chapter.

(2) Fail to release immediately without further harm, all Atlantic red drum caught in the EEZ area described in paragraph (f)(1) of this section.