

§ 229.35

50 CFR Ch. II (10–1–23 Edition)

comply with these specified gear characteristics, the gear must have all the following characteristics:

(A) *Floatline length.* The floatline is not more than 3,900 ft (1,188.7 m) in length.

(B) *Twine size.* The twine is at least 0.035 inches (0.90 mm) in diameter.

(C) *Size of nets.* Individual nets or net panels are not more than 300 ft (91.4 m or 50 fathoms) in length.

(D) *Number of nets.* The total number of individual nets or net panels for a vessel, including all nets on board the vessel, hauled by the vessel or deployed by the vessel, does not exceed 80.

(E) *Number of nets per string.* The total number of nets or net panels in a net string does not exceed 13.

(F) *Tie-down system.* The gillnet gear is equipped with tie-downs spaced not more than 24 ft (7.3 m) apart along the floatline, and each tie-down is not more than 48 inches (18.90 cm) in length from the point where it connects to the floatline to the point where it connects to the lead line.

(iii) *Gear limitations and requirements—small mesh gillnet gear.* From February 1 through April 30, no person may fish with, set, haul back, possess on board a vessel unless stowed in accordance with § 229.2, or fail to remove any small mesh gillnet gear in the Southern Mid-Atlantic Management Area unless the gear complies with the specified gear characteristics described in paragraphs (b)(4)(iii)(A) through (F) of this section. During this period, no vessel may enter or remain in the Southern Mid-Atlantic Management Area with small mesh gillnet gear on board, unless the gear complies with the specified gear characteristics described in paragraphs (b)(4)(iii)(A) through (F) of this section, or is stowed in accordance with § 229.2. In order to comply with these specified gear characteristics, the gear must have all the following characteristics:

(A) *Floatline length.* The floatline is no longer than 2,118 ft (645.6 m).

(B) *Twine size.* The twine is at least 0.031 inches (0.81 mm) in diameter.

(C) *Size of nets.* Individual nets or net panels are not more than 300 ft (91.4 m or 50 fathoms) in length.

(D) *Number of nets.* The total number of individual nets or net panels for a

vessel, including all nets on board the vessel, hauled by the vessel or deployed by the vessel, does not exceed 45.

(E) *Number of nets per string.* The total number of nets or net panels in a net string does not exceed 7.

(F) *Tie-down system.* Tie-downs are prohibited.

(c) *Research permits.* An exemption to the requirements set forth in this section may be acquired for the purposes of conducting scientific or gear research within the restricted areas described in this section. A scientific research permit must be acquired through NMFS' existing permit application process, administered by NMFS.

(d) *Other special measures.* The Assistant Administrator may revise the requirements of this section through notification published in the FEDERAL REGISTER if NMFS determines that the boundary or timing of a closed area is inappropriate, or that gear modifications are not reducing bycatch to below the stock's PBR level.

[75 FR 7399, Feb. 19, 2010]

§ 229.35 Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan.

(a) *Purpose and scope.* The purpose of this section is to implement the Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan (BDTRP) to reduce incidental mortality and serious injury of strategic stocks of bottlenose dolphins within the Western North Atlantic coastal morphotype in specific Category I and II commercial fisheries from New Jersey through Florida. Specific Category I and II commercial fisheries within the scope of the BDTRP are identified and updated in the annual List of Fisheries. Gear restricted by this section includes small, medium, and large mesh gillnets and pound nets. The geographic scope of the BDTRP is all tidal and marine waters within 6.5 nautical miles (12 km) of shore from the New York-New Jersey border southward to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and within 14.6 nautical miles (27 km) of shore from Cape Hatteras, southward to, and including the east coast of Florida down to the fishery management council demarcation line between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico (as described in § 600.105 of this title).

(b) *Definitions.* In addition to the definitions contained in the Act, §§216.3 and 229.2 of this chapter, the terms defined in this section shall have the following definitions, even if a contrary definition exists in the Act, §216.3, or §229.2:

Beach means landward of and including the mean low water line.

Beach/water interface means the mean low water line.

Bottlenose Dolphin Pound Net Regulated Area means all Virginia marine waters of the Atlantic Ocean within 3 nautical miles (5.56 km) of shoreline and all adjacent tidal waters, bounded on the north by 38°01.6' N. (Maryland/Virginia border) and on the south by 36°33' N (Virginia/North Carolina border); and all southern Virginia waters of the mainstem Chesapeake Bay bounded on the south and west by the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel across the James River and the Coleman Memorial Bridge across the York River; and north and east by the following points connected by straight lines in the order listed:

Point	Area description
1	Where 37°19.0' N. lat. meets the shoreline of the Severn River fork, near Stump Point, Virginia (western portion of Mobjack Bay), which is approximately 76°26.75' W. long.
2	37°19.0' N. lat., 76°13.0' W. long.
3	37°13.0' N. lat., 76°13.0' W. long.
4	Where 37°13.0' N. lat. meets the eastern shoreline of Chesapeake Bay, Virginia, near Elliotts Creek, which is approximately 76°00.75' W. long.

Large mesh gillnet means a gillnet constructed with a mesh size greater than or equal to 7-inches (17.8 cm) stretched mesh.

Medium mesh gillnet means a gillnet constructed with a mesh size of greater than 5-inches (12.7 cm) to less than 7-inches (17.8 cm) stretched mesh.

New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland State waters means the area consisting of all marine and tidal waters, within 3 nautical miles (5.56 km) of shore, bounded on the north by 40o 30' N. (New York/New Jersey border at the coast) and on the south by 38o 01.6' N. (Maryland/Virginia border at the coast).

Night means any time between one hour after sunset and one hour prior to sunrise.

Northern North Carolina State waters means the area consisting of all marine and tidal waters, within 3 nautical miles (5.56 km) of shore, bounded on the north by 36° 33' N. (Virginia/North Carolina border at the coast) and on the south by 34° 35.4' N. (Cape Lookout, North Carolina).

Northern Virginia State waters means the area consisting of all marine and tidal waters, within 3 nautical miles (5.56 km) of shore, bounded on the north by 38° 01.6' N. (Virginia/Maryland border at the coast) and on the south by 37° 07.23' N. (Cape Charles Light on Smith Island in the Chesapeake Bay mouth).

Small mesh gillnet means a gillnet constructed with a mesh size of less than or equal to 5-inches (12.7 cm) stretched mesh.

South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida waters means the area consisting of all marine and tidal waters, within 14.6 nautical miles (27 km) of shore, bounded on the north by a line extending in a direction of 135°34'55" from true north from the North Carolina/South Carolina border at 33°51'07.9" N. and 78°32'32.6" W., and on the south by the fishery management council demarcation line between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico (as described in §600.105 of this title).

Southern North Carolina State waters means the area consisting of all marine and tidal waters, within 3 nautical miles (5.56 km) of shore, bounded on the north by 34°35.4' N. (Cape Lookout, North Carolina), and on the south by a line extending in a direction of 135°34'55" from true north from the North Carolina/South Carolina border at 33°51'07.9" N. and 78°32'32.6" W.

Southern Virginia State waters means the area consisting of all marine and tidal waters, within 3 nautical miles (5.56 km) of shore, bounded on the north by 37° 07.23' N. (Cape Charles Light on Smith Island in the Chesapeake Bay mouth) and on the south by 36° 33' N. (Virginia/North Carolina border at the coast).

(c) *BDTRP regulated waters*—(1) *Gillnets.* The regulations pertaining to gillnets in this section apply to New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland State waters; Northern North Carolina State waters; Northern Virginia State

§ 229.35

50 CFR Ch. II (10–1–23 Edition)

waters; South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida waters; Southern North Carolina State waters; and Southern Virginia State waters as defined in § 229.35(b), except for the waters identified in § 229.34(a)(2), with the following modification and addition. From Chincoteague to Ship Shoal Inlet in Virginia (37° 52' N. 75° 24.30' W. to 37° 11.90' N. 75° 48.30' W) and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida waters, those waters landward of the 72 COLREGS demarcation line (International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972), as depicted or noted on nautical charts published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Coast Charts 1:80,000 scale), and as described in 33 CFR part 80 are excluded from the regulations.

(2) *Pound nets.* The regulations pertaining to pound nets in this section apply to the Bottlenose Dolphin Pound Net Regulated Area.

(d) *Regional management measures*—(1) *New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland State waters*—(i) *Medium and large mesh gillnets.* From June 1 through October 31, in New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland state waters, no person may fish with any medium or large mesh anchored gillnet gear at night unless such person remains within 0.5 nautical mile (0.93 km) of the closest portion of each gillnet and removes all such gear from the water and stows it on board the vessel before the vessel returns to port.

(ii) [Reserved]

(2) *Virginia state waters*—(i) *Medium and large mesh gillnets.* From June 1 through October 31, in Southern Virginia State waters and Northern Virginia State waters, no person may fish with any medium or large mesh anchored gillnet gear at night unless such person remains within 0.5 nautical mile (0.93 km) of the closest portion of each gillnet and removes all such gear from the water and stows it on board the vessel before the vessel returns to port.

(ii) *Pound nets.* (A) Year-round, any offshore pound net in the Bottlenose Dolphin Pound Net Regulated Area must use a modified pound net leader.

(B) Year-round, any nearshore and offshore pound nets set in the Bottlenose Dolphin Pound Net Regulated Area must have all three continuous sections as defined in 50 CFR

229.2, except that one or more sections may be missing for a maximum period of 10 days for purposes of setting, removing, and/or repairing pound nets.

(C) The pound net licensee and the vessel operator of any offshore pound net set in the Bottlenose Dolphin Pound Net Regulated Area must have completed modified pound net leader compliance training and possess on board the vessel a valid modified pound net leader compliance training certificate issued by NMFS. NMFS retains discretion to provide exemptions in limited circumstances where appropriate. Notice will be given by NMFS announcing the times and locations of modified pound net leader compliance training.

(3) *Southern Virginia State waters*—(i) *Large mesh gillnets.* From November 1 through December 31, in Southern Virginia State waters, no person may fish with, possess on board a vessel unless stowed, or fail to remove from the water, any large mesh gillnet gear at night.

(ii) [Reserved]

(4) *Northern North Carolina State waters*—(i) *Small mesh gillnets.* From May 1 through October 31, in Northern North Carolina State waters, no person may fish with any small mesh gillnet gear longer than 1,000 feet (304.8 m).

(ii) *Medium mesh gillnets.* From November 1 through April 30 of the following year, in Northern North Carolina State waters, no person may fish with any medium mesh gillnet at night.

(iii) *Large mesh gillnets.* (A) From April 15 through December 15, in Northern North Carolina State waters, no person may fish with any large mesh gillnet.

(B) From December 16 through April 14 of the following year, in Northern North Carolina State waters, no person may fish with any large mesh gillnet without tie-downs at night.

(5) *Southern North Carolina State waters*—(i) *Medium mesh gillnets.* From November 1 through April 30 of the following year, in Southern North Carolina State waters, no person may fish with any medium mesh gillnet at night.

(ii) *Large mesh gillnets.* (A) From April 15 through December 15, in

Southern North Carolina State waters, no person may fish with any large mesh gillnet.

(B) From December 16 through April 14 of the following year, in Southern North Carolina State waters, no person may fish, possess on board unless stowed, or fail to remove from the water, any large mesh gillnet at night.

(6) *South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida waters—(i) Gillnets.* Year-round, in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida waters, no person may fish with any gillnet gear unless such person remains within 0.25 nautical miles (0.46 km) of the closest portion of the gillnet. Gear shall be removed from the water and stowed on board the vessel before the vessel returns to port.

(ii) [Reserved]

[71 FR 24796, Apr. 26, 2006, as amended at 73 FR 77533, Dec. 19, 2008; 77 FR 45270, July 31, 2012; 80 FR 6929, Feb. 9, 2015]

§ 229.36 Atlantic Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Plan (PLTRP).

(a) *Purpose and scope.* The purpose of this section is to implement the PLTRP to reduce incidental mortality and serious injury of short-finned pilot whales in the Atlantic pelagic longline fishery off the U.S. East Coast, a component of the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico large pelagics longline fishery. The requirements in this section apply to the owner or operator of any vessel that has been issued or is required to be issued an Atlantic HMS tunas, swordfish, or shark permit (under 50 CFR 635.4) and that has on-board pelagic longline gear (as defined at 50 CFR 635.2) in the EEZ (as defined in 50 CFR 600.10) of the Atlantic Ocean east of the line of demarcation between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico (as defined in 50 CFR 600.105(c)).

(b) *Definitions.* In addition to the definitions contained in the MMPA and §§ 216.3 and 229.2 of this chapter, the following definitions apply.

(1) *Active gear* means mainline in the water with gangions (as defined in 50 CFR 635.2) or hooks attached.

(2) *Mid-Atlantic Bight* means the area bounded by rhumb lines connecting the following points: 43° N 77° W; 43° N 71° W; 35° N 71° W; 35° N 77° W; and 43° N 77° W.

(c) *Marine Mammal Handling and Release Placard.* The placard, “Marine Mammal Handling/Release Guidelines: A Quick Reference for Atlantic Pelagic Longline Gear,” must be kept posted inside the wheelhouse and on the working deck. You may contact the NMFS Southeast Regional Office at (727) 824-5312 to request additional copies of the placard.

(d) [Reserved]

(e) *Mainline gear restrictions.* Vessels operating in the portion of the Mid-Atlantic Bight in the EEZ (as defined in 50 CFR 600.10) may not deploy pelagic longline gear unless the gear meets the following mainline specifications:

(1) *Mainline setting.* There can only be one piece of mainline in the water at any time. If the gear breaks or parts after setting, the vessel owner or operator must make every effort to remove the additional portions of the gear as soon as possible.

(2) *Mainline length.* Mainline length cannot exceed 32 nmi.

(3) *Active gear.* There can be no more than 30 nmi of active gear.

(4) *Maximum active gear length.* A section of active gear cannot exceed 20 nmi.

(5) *Gaps.* Between any two parts of active gear, there must be a gap of at least 1 nmi.

[74 FR 23358, May 19, 2009, as amended at 88 FR 36972, June 6, 2023]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 88 FR 36972, June 6, 2023, § 229.36 was amended by adding paragraph (d), effective July 8, 2024. For the convenience of the user, the added text is set forth as follows:

§ 229.36 Atlantic Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Plan (PLTRP).

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(d) *Hook and gangion requirements.* Vessels operating in the EEZ (as defined in 50 CFR 600.10) of the Atlantic Ocean east of the line of demarcation between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico (as defined in 50 CFR 600.105(c)) can only possess, use, and deploy hooks and gangions that meet the following specifications:

(1) *Hooks.* The hook shank must be constructed of corrodible round wire stock that can be measured with a caliper or other appropriate gauge and meet the following specifications:

(i) A 16/0 circle hook must not exceed 4.05 mm (0.159 in) in diameter and straighten