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(D) If the sea turtle revives and becomes active, it must be returned to the sea in the manner described in paragraph (f)(2)(vii) of this section. Sea turtles that fail to revive within the 24-hour period must also be returned to the sea in the manner described in paragraph (f)(2)(vii) of this section, unless NMFS requests that the turtle or part thereof be kept on board and delivered to NMFS for research purposes.

(vii) *Sea turtle release.* After handling a sea turtle in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs (f)(2)(v) and (f)(2)(vi) of this section, the sea turtle must be returned to the ocean after identification unless NMFS requests the retention of a dead sea turtle for research. In releasing a sea turtle the vessel owner or operator must:

(A) Place the vessel engine in neutral gear so that the propeller is disengaged and the vessel is stopped;

(B) Using the dip net or a turtle hoist to release the sea turtle with little impact, gently release the sea turtle away from any deployed gear; and

(C) Observe that the turtle is safely away from the vessel before engaging the propeller and continuing operations.

(viii) *Other sea turtle requirements.* No sea turtle, including a dead turtle, may be consumed or sold. A sea turtle may be landed, offloaded, transshipped or kept below deck only if NMFS requests the retention of a dead sea turtle or a part thereof for research.

(g) Owners, operators, and crew of fishing vessels of the United States used for commercial fishing for HMS in the Convention Area shall not set or attempt to set a purse seine in the Convention Area on or around a whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) if the animal is sighted at any time prior to the commencement of the set or the attempted set. This paragraph does not apply to the territorial seas or archipelagic waters of any nation, as defined by the domestic laws and regulations of that nation and recognized by the United States, or to areas under the national jurisdiction of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement.

(h) The crew, operator, and owner of a fishing vessel of the United States used for commercial fishing for HMS in the Convention Area must release any

whale shark that is encircled in a purse seine net in the Convention Area, and take reasonable steps for its safe release, without compromising the safety of any persons. This paragraph does not apply to the territorial seas or archipelagic waters of any nation, as defined by the domestic laws and regulations of that nation and recognized by the United States.

[74 FR 38554, Aug. 4, 2009, as amended at 76 FR 82183, Dec. 30, 2011; 77 FR 71513, Dec. 3, 2012; 78 FR 30778, May 23, 2013; 80 FR 8815, Feb. 19, 2015; 80 FR 29223, May 21, 2015; 80 FR 51480, Aug. 25, 2015; 80 FR 59048, Oct. 1, 2015; 81 FR 41250, June 24, 2016; 83 FR 33869, July 18, 2018; 84 FR 37148, July 31, 2019; 85 FR 37390, June 22, 2020; 86 FR 31181, June 11, 2021; 88 FR 30678, May 12, 2023]

§ 300.224 Longline fishing restrictions.

None of the requirements of this section apply in the Overlap Area.

(a) *Establishment of bigeye tuna catch limits.* (1) There is a limit of 3,554 metric tons of bigeye tuna per calendar year that may be captured in the Convention Area by longline gear and retained on board by fishing vessels of the United States.

(2) [Reserved]

(b) *Exception for bigeye tuna landed in territories.* Except as provided in paragraphs (c) and (d), bigeye tuna landed in American Samoa, Guam, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will be attributed to the longline fishery of the territory in which it is landed and will not be counted against the limit established under paragraph (a) of this section, provided that:

(1) The bigeye tuna were not caught in the portion of the EEZ surrounding the Hawaiian Archipelago; and

(2) The bigeye tuna were landed by a fishing vessel operated in compliance with a valid permit issued under § 660.707 or § 665.801 of this title.

(c) *Exception for bigeye tuna caught by vessels with American Samoa Longline Limited Access Permits.* Except as provided in paragraph (d), bigeye tuna caught by a vessel registered for use under a valid American Samoa Longline Limited Access Permit issued under § 665.801(c) of this title will be attributed to the longline fishery of American Samoa and will not be counted against the limit established under

paragraph (a) of this section, provided that:

(1) The bigeye tuna were not caught in the portion of the EEZ surrounding the Hawaiian Archipelago; and

(2) The bigeye tuna were landed by a fishing vessel operated in compliance with a valid permit issued under § 660.707 or § 665.801 of this title.

(d) *Exception for bigeye tuna caught by vessels included in specified fishing agreements under § 665.819(c) of this title.* Bigeye tuna caught by a vessel that is included in a specified fishing agreement under § 665.819(c) of this title will be attributed to the longline fishery of American Samoa, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands, according to the terms of the agreement to the extent the agreement is consistent with § 665.819(c) of this title and other applicable laws, and will not be counted against the limit, provided that:

(1) The start date specified in § 665.819(c)(9)(i) of this title has occurred or passed; and

(2) NMFS has not made a determination under § 665.819(c)(9)(iii) of this title that the catch of bigeye tuna exceeds the limit allocated to the territory that is a party to the agreement.

(e) *Announcement of catch limit being reached and fishing prohibitions.* NMFS will monitor retained catches of bigeye tuna with respect to the limit established under paragraph (a) of this section using data submitted in logbooks and other available information. After NMFS determines that the limit is expected to be reached by a specific future date, and at least seven calendar days in advance of that specific future date, NMFS will publish a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER announcing that specific prohibitions will be in effect starting on that specific future date and ending December 31 of that calendar year.

(f) *Prohibitions after catch limit is reached.* Once an announcement is made pursuant to paragraph (e) of this section, the following restrictions will apply during the period specified in the announcement:

(1) A fishing vessel of the United States may not be used to retain on board, transship, or land bigeye tuna captured by longline gear in the Convention Area, except as follows:

(i) Any bigeye tuna already on board a fishing vessel upon the effective date of the prohibitions may be retained on board, transshipped, and/or landed, to the extent authorized by applicable laws and regulations, provided that they are landed within 14 days after the prohibitions become effective. The 14-day landing requirement does not apply to a vessel that has declared to NMFS, pursuant to § 665.803(a) of this title, that the current trip type is shallow-setting.

(ii) Bigeye tuna captured by longline gear may be retained on board, transshipped, and/or landed if they are landed in American Samoa, Guam, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, provided that:

(A) The bigeye tuna were not caught in the portion of the EEZ surrounding the Hawaiian Archipelago;

(B) Such retention, transshipment, and/or landing is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations; and

(C) The bigeye tuna are landed by a fishing vessel operated in compliance with a valid permit issued under § 660.707 or § 665.801 of this title.

(iii) Bigeye tuna captured by longline gear may be retained on board, transshipped, and/or landed if they are caught by a vessel registered for use under a valid American Samoa Longline Limited Access Permit issued under § 665.801(c) of this title, provided that:

(A) The bigeye tuna were not caught in the portion of the EEZ surrounding the Hawaiian Archipelago;

(B) Such retention, transshipment, and/or landing is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations; and

(C) The bigeye tuna are landed by a fishing vessel operated in compliance with a valid permit issued under § 660.707 or § 665.801 of this title.

(iv) Bigeye tuna caught by longline gear may be retained on board, transshipped, and/or landed if they were caught by a vessel that is included in a specified fishing agreement under § 665.819(c) of this title, if the agreement provides for bigeye tuna to be attributed to the longline fishery of American Samoa, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands, provided that:

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(A) The start date specified in § 665.819(c)(9)(i) of this title has occurred or passed; and

(B) NMFS has not made a determination under § 665.819(c)(9)(iii) of this title that the catch of bigeye tuna exceeds the limit allocated to the territory that is a party to the agreement.

(2) Bigeye tuna caught by longline gear in the Convention Area may not be transshipped to a fishing vessel unless that fishing vessel is operated in compliance with a valid permit issued under § 660.707 or § 665.801 of this title.

(3) A fishing vessel of the United States may not be used to fish in the Pacific Ocean using longline gear both inside and outside the Convention Area during the same fishing trip, with the exception of a fishing trip during which the prohibitions were put into effect as announced under paragraph (e) of this section, in which case the bigeye tuna on board the vessel may be retained on board, transshipped, and/or landed, to the extent authorized by applicable laws and regulations, provided that they are landed within 14 days after the prohibitions become effective. This prohibition does not apply to a vessel that catches bigeye tuna that is to be attributed to the longline fishery of American Samoa, Guam, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in accordance with paragraphs (b), (c), or (d) of this section, or to a vessel for which a declaration has been made to NMFS, pursuant to § 665.803(a) of this title, that the current trip type is shallow-setting.

(4) If a fishing vessel of the United States, other than a vessel that catches bigeye tuna that is to be attributed to the longline fishery of American Samoa, Guam, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, in accordance with paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, or a vessel for which a declaration has been made to NMFS, pursuant to § 665.803(a) of this title, that the current trip type is shallow-setting, is used to fish in the Pacific Ocean using longline gear outside the Convention Area and the vessel enters the Convention Area at any time during the same fishing trip, the longline gear on the fishing vessel must, while it is in the Convention Area, be stowed in a manner so as not

to be readily available for fishing; specifically, the hooks, branch or dropper lines, and floats used to buoy the mainline must be stowed and not available for immediate use, and any power-operated mainline hauler on deck must be covered in such a manner that it is not readily available for use.

[78 FR 58246, Sept. 23, 2013, as amended at 79 FR 64111, Oct. 28, 2014; 80 FR 43636, July 23, 2015; 81 FR 41251, June 24, 2016; 83 FR 33870, July 18, 2018; 85 FR 37390, June 22, 2020]

§ 300.225 Eastern High Seas Special Management Area.

The owner and operator of a fishing vessel of the United States used for commercial fishing for HMS is prohibited from engaging in transshipment in the Eastern High Seas Special Management Area.

[83 FR 33870, July 18, 2018]

§ 300.226 Oceanic whitetip shark and silky shark.

None of the requirements of this section apply in the Overlap Area.

(a) The crew, operator, and owner and operator of a fishing vessel of the United States used for commercial fishing for HMS cannot retain on board, transship, store, or land any part or whole carcass of an oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*) or silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) that is caught in the Convention Area unless subject to the provisions of paragraph (c) or (e) of this section.

(b) The crew, operator, and owner and operator of a fishing vessel of the United States used for commercial fishing for HMS must release any oceanic whitetip shark or silky shark that is caught in the Convention Area as soon as possible after the shark is caught and brought alongside the vessel, and take reasonable steps for its safe release, without compromising the safety of any persons, unless subject to the provisions of paragraph (c) or (e) of this section.

(c) Paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section do not apply in the event that a WCPFC observer collects, or requests the assistance of the vessel crew, operator, or owner in the observer's collection of, samples of oceanic whitetip