

vessel that is operating as a charter vessel or headboat, the vessel has two licensed operators aboard, and each passenger is issued and has in possession a receipt issued on behalf of the vessel that verifies the length of the trip.

(d) *South Atlantic snapper-grouper*—(1) *Bag limits.* (i) Greater amberjack—3.

(ii) Groupers, combined, excluding jewfish and Nassau grouper, and tilefishes—5.

(iii) Hogfish in the South Atlantic off Florida—5.

(iv) Snappers, combined, excluding cubera snapper measuring 30 inches (76.2 cm), TL, or larger, in the South Atlantic off Florida, and excluding vermilion snapper—10, of which no more than 2 may be red snapper. (See § 622.32(c)(2) for limitations on cubera snapper measuring 30 inches (76.2 cm), TL, or larger, in or from the South Atlantic EEZ off Florida.)

(v) Vermilion snapper—10.

(2) *Possession limits.* Provided each passenger is issued and has in possession a receipt issued on behalf of the vessel that verifies the duration of the trip—

(i) A person aboard a charter vessel or headboat on a trip that spans more than 24 hours may possess no more than two daily bag limits.

(ii) A person aboard a headboat on a trip that spans more than 48 hours and who can document that fishing was conducted on at least 3 days may possess no more than three daily bag limits.

(3) *Longline bag limits.* Other provisions of this paragraph (d) notwithstanding, a person on a trip aboard a vessel for which the bag limits apply that has a longline on board is limited on that trip to the bag limit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper for which a bag limit is specified in paragraph (d)(1) of this section, and to zero for all other South Atlantic snapper-grouper. For the purpose of this paragraph (d)(3), a vessel is considered to have a longline on board when a power-operated longline hauler, a cable or monofilament of diameter and length suitable for use in the longline fishery, and gangions are on board. Removal of any one of these three elements constitutes removal of a longline.

(e) *Caribbean queen conch*—(1) *Applicability.* Paragraph (a)(1) of this section notwithstanding, the bag limit of paragraph (e)(2) of this section does not apply to a fisherman who has a valid commercial fishing license issued by Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands. See § 622.44 for the commercial daily trip limit.

(2) *Bag limit.* The bag limit for queen conch in or from the Caribbean EEZ is 3 per person or, if more than 4 persons are aboard, 12 per boat.

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EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 63 FR 18147, Apr. 14, 1998, in § 622.39, paragraph (b)(1)(iii) was suspended and paragraph (b)(1)(vi) was added, effective Apr. 29, 1998, through Oct. 13, 1998.

§ 622.39 Bag and possession limits.

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(vi) Redsnapper—4.

§ 622.40 Limitations on traps and pots.

(a) *Tending*—(1) *Caribbean EEZ.* A fish trap or Caribbean spiny lobster trap in the Caribbean EEZ may be pulled or tended only by a person (other than an authorized officer) aboard the fish trap or spiny lobster trap owner's vessel, or aboard another vessel if such vessel has on board written consent of the trap owner, or if the trap owner is aboard and has documentation verifying his identification number and color code. An owner's written consent must specify the time period such consent is effective and the trap owner's gear identification number and color code.

(2) *Gulf EEZ.* A fish trap in the Gulf EEZ may be pulled or tended only by a person (other than an authorized officer) aboard the vessel with the fish trap endorsement to fish such trap. If such vessel has a breakdown that prevents it from retrieving its traps, the owner or operator must immediately notify the nearest NMFS Office of Enforcement and must obtain authorization for another vessel to retrieve and land its traps. The request for such authorization must include the requested

effective period for the retrieval and landing, the persons and vessel to be authorized to retrieve the traps, and the point of landing of the traps. Such authorization will be specific as to the effective period, authorized persons and vessel, and point of landing. Such authorization is valid solely for the removal of fish traps from the EEZ and for harvest of fish incidental to such removal.

(3) *South Atlantic EEZ.* A sea bass pot or golden crab trap in the South Atlantic EEZ may be pulled or tended only by a person (other than an authorized officer) aboard the vessel permitted to fish such pot or trap or aboard another vessel if such vessel has on board written consent of the owner or operator of the vessel so permitted. For golden crab only, a vessel with written consent on board must also possess a valid commercial vessel permit for golden crab.

(b) *Escape mechanisms*—(1) *Caribbean EEZ.* (i) A fish trap used or possessed in the Caribbean EEZ must have a panel located on each of two sides of the trap, excluding the top, bottom, and side containing the trap entrance. The opening covered by a panel must measure not less than 8 by 8 inches (20.3 by 20.3 cm). The mesh size of a panel may not be smaller than the mesh size of the trap. A panel must be attached to the trap with untreated jute twine with a diameter not exceeding $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3.2 mm). An access door may serve as one of the panels, provided it is on an appropriate side, it is hinged only at its bottom, its only other fastening is untreated jute twine with a diameter not exceeding $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3.2 mm), and such fastening is at the top of the door so that the door will fall open when such twine degrades. Jute twine used to secure a panel may not be wrapped or overlapped.

(ii) A spiny lobster trap used or possessed in the Caribbean EEZ must contain on any vertical side or on the top a panel no smaller in diameter than the throat or entrance of the trap. The panel must be made of or attached to the trap by one of the following degradable materials:

(A) Untreated fiber of biological origin with a diameter not exceeding $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3.2 mm). This includes, but is not

limited to tyre palm, hemp, jute, cotton, wool, or silk.

(B) Ungalvanized or uncoated iron wire with a diameter not exceeding $\frac{1}{16}$ inch (1.6 mm), that is, 16 gauge wire.

(2) *Gulf EEZ.* A fish trap used or possessed in the Gulf EEZ must have at least two escape windows on each of two sides, excluding the bottom (a total of four escape windows), that are 2 by 2 inches (5.1 by 5.1 cm) or larger. In addition, a fish trap must have a panel or access door located opposite each side of the trap that has a funnel. The opening covered by each panel or access door must be 144 in² (929 cm²) or larger, with one dimension of the area equal to or larger than the largest interior axis of the trap's throat (funnel) with no other dimension less than 6 inches (15.2 cm). The hinges and fasteners of each panel or access door must be constructed of one of the following degradable materials:

(i) Untreated jute string with a diameter not exceeding $\frac{3}{16}$ inch (4.8 mm) that is not wrapped or overlapped.

(ii) Magnesium alloy, time float releases (pop-up devices) or similar magnesium alloy fasteners.

(3) *South Atlantic EEZ.* (i) A sea bass pot that is used or possessed in the South Atlantic EEZ between 35°15.3' N. lat. (due east of Cape Hatteras Light, NC) and 28°35.1' N. lat. (due east of the NASA Vehicle Assembly Building, Cape Canaveral, FL) is required to have on at least one side, excluding top and bottom, a panel or door with an opening equal to or larger than the interior end of the trap's throat (funnel). The hinges and fasteners of each panel or door must be made of one of the following degradable materials:

(A) Untreated hemp, jute, or cotton string with a diameter not exceeding $\frac{3}{16}$ inch (4.8 mm).

(B) Magnesium alloy, timed float releases (pop-up devices) or similar magnesium alloy fasteners.

(C) Ungalvanized or uncoated iron wire with a diameter not exceeding $\frac{1}{16}$ inch (1.6 mm), that is, 16 gauge wire.

(ii) A golden crab trap that is used or possessed in the South Atlantic EEZ must have at least one escape gap or escape ring on each of two opposite vertical sides. The minimum allowable inside dimensions of an escape gap are

2.75 by 3.75 inches (7.0 by 9.5 cm); the minimum allowable inside diameter of an escape ring is 4.5 inches (11.4 cm). In addition to the escape gaps—

(A) A golden crab trap constructed of webbing must have an opening (slit) at least 1 ft (30.5 cm) long that may be closed (relaced) only with untreated cotton string no larger than $\frac{3}{16}$ inch (0.48 cm) in diameter.

(B) A golden crab trap constructed of material other than webbing must have an escape panel or door measuring at least 12 by 12 inches (30.5 by 30.5 cm), located on at least one side, excluding top and bottom. The hinges or fasteners of such door or panel must be made of either ungalvanized or uncoated iron wire no larger than 19 gauge (0.04 inch (1.0 mm) in diameter) or untreated cotton string no larger than $\frac{3}{16}$ inch (4.8 mm) in diameter.

(c) *Construction requirements and mesh sizes*—(1) *Caribbean EEZ*. A bare-wire fish trap used or possessed in the EEZ that has hexagonal mesh openings must have a minimum mesh size of 1.5 inches (3.8 cm) in the smallest dimension measured between centers of opposite strands. A bare-wire fish trap used or possessed in the EEZ that has other than hexagonal mesh openings or a fish trap of other than bare wire, such as coated wire or plastic, used or possessed in the EEZ, must have a minimum mesh size of 2.0 inches (5.1 cm) in the smallest dimension measured between centers of opposite strands.

(2) *Gulf EEZ*. A fish trap used or possessed in the Gulf EEZ must meet all of the following mesh size requirements (based on centerline measurements between opposite wires or netting strands):

(i) A minimum of 2 in² (12.9 cm²) opening for each mesh.

(ii) One-inch (2.5-cm) minimum length for the shortest side.

(iii) Minimum distance of 1 inch (2.5 cm) between parallel sides of rectangular openings, and 1.5 inches (3.8 cm) between parallel sides of square openings and of mesh openings with more than four sides.

(iv) One and nine-tenths inches (4.8 cm) minimum distance for diagonal measures of mesh.

(3) *South Atlantic EEZ*. (i) A sea bass pot used or possessed in the South At-

lantic EEZ must have mesh sizes as follows (based on centerline measurements between opposite, parallel wires or netting strands):

(A) Hexagonal mesh (chicken wire)—at least 1.5 inches (3.8 cm) between the wrapped sides;

(B) Square mesh—at least 1.5 inches (3.8 cm) between sides; or

(C) Rectangular mesh—at least 1 inch (2.5 cm) between the longer sides and 2 inches (5.1 cm) between the shorter sides.

(ii) A golden crab trap deployed or possessed in the South Atlantic EEZ may not exceed 64 ft³ (1.8 m³) in volume in the northern zone or 48 ft³ (1.4 m³) in volume in the middle and southern zones. See § 622.17(h) for specification of the golden crab zones.

(d) *Area-specific restrictions*—(1) *Gulf EEZ*. In the Gulf EEZ, a fish trap may be pulled or tended only from official sunrise to official sunset. The operator of a vessel from which a fish trap is deployed in the Gulf EEZ must retrieve all the vessel's fish traps and return them to port on each trip. A fish trap that is not returned to port on a trip, and its attached line and buoy, may be disposed of in any appropriate manner by the Assistant Administrator or an authorized officer. The owner of such trap and/or the operator of the responsible vessel is subject to appropriate civil penalties. A buoy that floats on the surface must be attached to each fish trap, or to each end trap of traps that are connected by a line, used in the Gulf EEZ. The maximum allowable size for a fish trap fished in the Gulf EEZ shoreward of the 50-fathom (91.4-m) isobath is 33 ft³ (0.9 m³) in volume. Fish trap volume is determined by measuring the external dimensions of the trap, and includes both the enclosed holding capacity of the trap and the volume of the funnel(s) within those dimensions. There is no size limitation for fish traps fished seaward of the 50-fathom (91.4-m) isobath. The maximum number of traps that may be assigned to, possessed, or fished in the Gulf EEZ by a vessel is 100.

(2) *South Atlantic EEZ*. (i) In the South Atlantic EEZ, sea bass pots may not be used or possessed in multiple configurations, that is, two or more

pots may not be attached one to another so that their overall dimensions exceed those allowed for an individual sea bass pot. This does not preclude connecting individual pots to a line, such as a “trawl” or trot line.

(ii) Rope is the only material allowed to be used for a mainline or buoy line attached to a golden crab trap, except that wire cable is allowed for these purposes through January 31, 1998.

[61 FR 34934, July 3, 1996, as amended at 61 FR 43959, Aug. 27, 1996; 62 FR 13988, Mar. 25, 1997; 63 FR 10568, Mar. 4, 1998; 63 FR 38303, July 16, 1998]

§ 622.41 Species specific limitations.

(a) *Aquacultured live rock*. In the Gulf or South Atlantic EEZ:

(1) Aquacultured live rock may be harvested only under a permit, as required under § 622.4(a)(3)(iii), and aquacultured live rock on a site may be harvested only by the person, or his or her employee, contractor, or agent, who has been issued the aquacultured live rock permit for the site. A person harvesting aquacultured live rock is exempt from the prohibition on taking prohibited coral for such prohibited coral as attaches to aquacultured live rock.

(2) The following restrictions apply to individual aquaculture activities:

(i) No aquaculture site may exceed 1 acre (0.4 ha) in size.

(ii) Material deposited on the aquaculture site—

(A) May not be placed over naturally occurring reef outcrops, limestone ledges, coral reefs, or vegetated areas.

(B) Must be free of contaminants.

(C) Must be nontoxic.

(D) Must be placed on the site by hand or lowered completely to the bottom under restraint, that is, not allowed to fall freely.

(E) Must be placed from a vessel that is anchored.

(F) In the Gulf EEZ, must be distinguishable, geologically or otherwise (for example, be indelibly marked or tagged), from the naturally occurring substrate.

(G) In the South Atlantic EEZ, must be geologically distinguishable from the naturally occurring substrate and, in addition, may be indelibly marked or tagged.

(iii) A minimum setback of at least 50 ft (15.2 m) must be maintained from natural vegetated or hard bottom habitats.

(3) Mechanically dredging or drilling, or otherwise disturbing, aquacultured live rock is prohibited, and aquacultured live rock may be harvested only by hand. In addition, the following activities are prohibited in the South Atlantic: Chipping of aquacultured live rock in the EEZ, possession of chipped aquacultured live rock in or from the EEZ, removal of allowable octocoral or prohibited coral from aquacultured live rock in or from the EEZ, and possession of prohibited coral not attached to aquacultured live rock or allowable octocoral, while aquacultured live rock is in possession. See the definition of “Allowable octocoral” for clarification of the distinction between allowable octocoral and live rock. For the purposes of this paragraph (a)(3), chipping means breaking up reefs, ledges, or rocks into fragments, usually by means of a chisel and hammer.

(4) Not less than 24 hours prior to harvest of aquacultured live rock, the owner or operator of the harvesting vessel must provide the following information to the NMFS Law Enforcement Office, Southeast Area, St. Petersburg, FL, telephone (813) 570-5344:

(i) Permit number of site to be harvested and date of harvest.

(ii) Name and official number of the vessel to be used in harvesting.

(iii) Date, port, and facility at which aquacultured live rock will be landed.

(b) *Caribbean reef fish*. A marine aquarium fish may be harvested in the Caribbean EEZ only by a hand-held dip net or by a hand-held slurp gun. For the purposes of this paragraph, a hand-held slurp gun is a device that rapidly draws seawater containing fish into a self-contained chamber, and a marine aquarium fish is a Caribbean reef fish that is smaller than 5.5 inches (14.0 cm), TL.

(c) *Coastal migratory pelagic fish*—(1) *Authorized gear*. Subject to the prohibitions on gear/methods specified in § 622.31, the following are the only fishing gears that may be used in the Gulf, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic EEZ