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TITLE 250 – DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER 90 – MARINE FISHERIES

SUBCHAPTER 00 – N/A

PART 13 – Cooperative Multi-State Possession and Landing Pilot Program for Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass

13.1 Purpose

The purpose of these Regulations is to authorize a program, entered into cooperatively by the Director and other States, which will increase the efficiency of the commercial summer flounder and/or black sea bass fisheries by allowing certain eligible and qualifying commercial fishers to simultaneously carry possession limits for, and land summer flounder and/or black sea bass in cooperating States during the same fishing trip.

13.2 Authority

These Rules and Regulations are promulgated pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws Title 20, R.I. Gen. Laws Chapters 42-17.1, 42-17.6, and 42-17.7, and in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-35, Administrative Procedures Act.

13.3 Application

The terms and provisions of these Rules and Regulations shall be liberally construed to permit the Department to effectuate the purposes of State law, goals, and policies.

13.4 Definitions

See Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Regulations, Part [1](#) of this Subchapter.

13.5 Severability

If any provision of these Rules and Regulations, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the validity of the remainder of the Rules and Regulations shall not be affected thereby.

13.6 Superseded Rules and Regulations

On the effective date of these Rules and Regulations, all previous Rules and Regulations, and any policies regarding the administration and enforcement of these Regulations shall be superseded. However, any enforcement action taken by, or application submitted to, the Department prior to the effective date of these Rules and Regulations shall be governed by the Rules and Regulations in effect at the time the enforcement action was taken, or application filed.

13.7 Applicability

- A. This program is limited to Rhode Island and cooperating States. “Cooperating States” is defined as States other than Rhode Island that enacted Rules authorizing commercial fishermen licensed by that State to participate in this program, and that have reached an agreement with the Director of intent to cooperatively participate in this Program.
- B. Permit holders shall be authorized to possess a multi-State possession limit. A “multi-State possession limit” is defined as the sum of the commercial summer flounder and/or black sea bass possession limit for Rhode Island waters and the current commercial summer flounder and/or black sea bass possession limits for cooperating States within which the permit holder is authorized to participate.
- C. This program is limited to the Federal Winter Period 1 (January 1 through April 30). This program is subject to annual review and re-authorization by the Director.

13.8 Permit Required

A permit issued from the Director is required to participate in this program. Permit applications shall be completed on forms as prescribed by the Director. Applications not completed in their entirety shall not be considered.

13.9 Eligibility

- A. Applicants must hold a valid commercial fishing license or landing permit issued by the Director authorized to possess and/or land summer flounder and/or black sea bass.
- B. Applicant vessels must be commercial declared pursuant to Part [2](#) of this Subchapter.
- C. Applicants must be licensed or otherwise authorized to possess and/or land summer flounder and/or black sea bass in at least one (1) cooperating State.

- D. Applicants must not have been assessed a criminal or administrative penalty for violations of State commercial fishing Regulations or Laws within any cooperating State, or for violations of Federal commercial fishing Regulations or laws, within the past three (3) years.
- E. Applicants must be in compliance with commercial fishing data reporting requirements pursuant to Part [2](#) of this Subchapter.
- F. Applicant vessels must be permitted by NOAA Fisheries to possess and/or land summer flounder and/or black sea bass harvested in Federal waters.

13.10 Permit Conditions

- A. Participants and participating vessels must adhere to all applicable Rules and Regulations governing commercial fishing operations, including but not limited to mesh size restrictions, offloading hours, at-sea transfers, and reporting and record-keeping requirements.
- B. Participants and participating vessels will be subject to all State and Federal small mesh landing levels for summer flounder and/or black sea bass when fishing with small mesh.
- C. Participants and participating vessels will be allowed to fish south of the Southern New England declared day at sea (DDAS) counting area for summer flounder and/or black sea bass when properly enrolled in the Small Mesh Exemption Program.
- D. Participants must maintain proof of privilege to land summer flounder and/or black sea bass in cooperating States as applicable.
- E. To be eligible to land in Rhode Island with multi-State possession limit(s) on board, participants shall have on board official documentation verifying their authorization to participate in the program of any cooperating State(s) in which the participant intends to land the remainder of the multi-State possession limit(s).
- F. Permits are valid only for the calendar year issued.
- G. Participants may only retain their multi-State possession limit(s) when fishing on a permitted vessel associated with that Program participant's authorization.
- H. Summer flounder may only be landed between the hours of 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM, consistent with Part [3](#) of this Subchapter.

- I. Summer flounder and/or black sea bass catch intended for landing in Rhode Island and any cooperating State(s) shall be stored such that the catch intended for each State is physically separated; catch intended for each State must be stored in separate totes and identified with a written sign as to the intended port of landing.
- J. Program participants intending to land summer flounder and/or black sea bass in Rhode Island must call the Division of Law Enforcement (401-222-3070) at least two (2) hours prior to landing, and provide intended port and facility of landing, estimated time of landing, total weight of summer flounder and/or black sea bass to be landed in Rhode Island, and intended ports of landing and total weight for any summer flounder and/or black sea bass to be landed in cooperating States.
- K. Participants must maintain compliance with commercial fishing data reporting requirements pursuant to Part [2](#) of this Subchapter.
- L. Permits are non-transferable. Only vessels authorized by the Director may participate in the pilot program.

13.11 Penalties for Non-Compliance

- A. In addition to the penalties for non-compliance specified in § [1.11](#) of this Subchapter, the Director may revoke, in writing, the authorization to participate in this Program, should the Director determine that such participant:
 - 1. Has been assessed a criminal or administrative penalty for violations of State commercial fishing Regulations or laws within any cooperating State, or for violations of Federal commercial fishing Regulations or laws, within the past three (3) years.
 - 2. Has had program privileges revoked by a cooperating State.
- B. In the event that a participant's privileges are revoked, the permitted vessel associated with that participant's authorization is no longer eligible to participate in this Program upon receipt of privilege revocation.
- C. Appeals: Appeals made pursuant to § [1.13](#) of this Subchapter shall be limited to taking factual issue regarding one (1) or more allegations provided by the Director for revocation, as provided in § 13.11(A)(1) of this Part. Should the Director deem that the revocation of Program privileges was for due cause, the former participant may not apply for re-admittance into this Program for a period of five (5) years from the date of revocation.