



# Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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## **Vessels Issued a Federal Monkfish Permit** Reminder of Minimum Gillnet Mesh Size Regulations

This is a reminder that the minimum mesh size for any vessel fishing with gillnets under a monkfish day-at-sea (DAS) is 10 inches. If a vessel is issued a limited access monkfish Category C, D, or H permit and is also fishing under a Northeast multispecies (groundfish) DAS, the vessel may use gillnets with 6.5-inch mesh.

The New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils are currently developing a new framework action that may consider allowing a vessel to use gillnets with less than 10-inch mesh to target spiny dogfish or other species while also on a monkfish DAS. However, the Councils have neither analyzed, nor formally adopted, this measure to date. Therefore, monkfish vessels must continue to comply with the existing minimum mesh size regulations.

For more information on monkfish and the monkfish fishery, check out our newly redesigned Fish Species Page at:

<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/monkfish/>

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

<b>When did the minimum mesh size regulation come into effect?</b>	The current monkfish minimum mesh size regulations have been in effect since November 1999 when the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan was first implemented. Revisions to the groundfish minimum mesh size regulations have occurred over time, but have been relatively consistent since 2004.
<b>When would proposed changes to the minimum mesh size become effective?</b>	If the Councils adopt and we approve a measure that allows monkfish vessels to use gillnets with less than 10-inch mesh while on a monkfish DAS, the earliest such a measure would likely become effective would be August 2015.
<b>Why can't the proposed change be implemented now?</b>	The current monkfish regulations do not allow us to revise the minimum mesh size requirements except through a Council action.

*For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region.*