



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

April 7, 2008

CLARIFICATION OF MONKFISH LANDING REGULATIONS

Dear Monkfish Permit Holder:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northeast Regional Office has recently received some reports of monkfish landings where the heads and tails are being landed and sold separately. This letter is intended to clarify the landings regulations for monkfish and monkfish parts.

According to 50 CFR 648.94(a), **“Monkfish may be possessed or landed either as tails only, or in whole form, or any combination of the two.”** Additionally, § 648.94(d) states that landings of monkfish livers are permitted, but must not exceed 25% of the tail weight (or 10% of the whole weight) per trip. Therefore, **landing of monkfish heads, or any other body parts separate from the tails and livers, is prohibited.**

If a vessel wishes to sell monkfish heads, or body parts other than tails and livers, the monkfish must first be landed in whole form, and then subsequently processed on shore. These regulations are necessary to ensure that minimum size limits are complied with, that landings can be accurately calculated relative to trip limits, and to minimize incentives to high grade (e.g. keeping heads and discarding smaller tails for more profitable larger tails once the tail limit is reached).

This letter only summarizes the regulatory provisions that pertain to the monkfish fishery, and is not intended as a substitute for the actual regulations. A copy of the regulations can be obtained through the NMFS Northeast Regional Office web site: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov>. If you have questions, please contact the Sustainable Fisheries Division at (978) 281-9315.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Kurkul
Regional Administrator

