



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

August 13, 2007

Small Entity Compliance Guide
**Monkfish Gear Requirements: Gillnet Vessels Fishing Under a Monkfish
Day-at-Sea (DAS)**

Dear Limited Access Monkfish Permit Holder:

This letter is to remind you of the gear requirements applicable to limited access monkfish vessels fishing with gillnet gear under a monkfish DAS.

The regulations implementing the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) restrict all vessels fishing with gillnet gear under a monkfish DAS to a minimum mesh size of 10-inch diamond mesh, even if the vessel is also fishing under a concurrent Northeast (NE) multispecies DAS (see 50 CFR 648.91(c)(1)(iii)). This means that limited access monkfish vessels that also possess a NE multispecies DAS permit (e.g., a Category C or D vessel) that are fishing under a concurrent NE multispecies DAS may not haul their NE multispecies gillnet gear while under a monkfish DAS, due to the smaller mesh size associated with NE multispecies gillnet gear. However, such a vessel may land NE multispecies, up to the limits allowed under its limited access NE multispecies DAS permit, while fishing under a joint monkfish/NE multispecies DAS if that vessel catches NE multispecies in its monkfish gillnet gear.

In addition, limited access monkfish gillnet vessels must tag all monkfish gillnet gear and comply with the applicable restrictions concerning the number of gillnets that the vessel may fish, haul, or deploy (see § 648.92(c)(8)). Limited access Category A and B monkfish vessels are restricted to a maximum of 160 gillnets, while limited access Category C, D, F, or G monkfish vessels that also possess a limited access NE multispecies DAS permit are restricted to a maximum of 150 gillnets (which also includes NE multispecies gillnets, if declared into the NE multispecies day gillnet category).

Finally, a limited access monkfish vessel fishing in open areas under a monkfish DAS only, is not required to remove its monkfish gillnet gear from the water upon returning to port (see § 648.92(c)(8)(v)). However, a limited access monkfish vessel with a limited access NE multispecies permit that is declared into the trip gillnet category must remove all gillnet gear from the water, including all monkfish gillnets, before calling out of the NE multispecies DAS program.

If you have any further questions concerning monkfish gear requirements, please contact the Sustainable Fisheries Division at (978) 281-9315.

Sincerely,

George H. Quincy
for Patricia A. Kurkul
Regional Administrator

