



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

October 18, 2001

Dear Permit Holder:

On September 20, 2001, you were sent a permit holder letter that announced the final rule implementing the Tilefish Fishery Management Plan (FMP); effective November 1, 2001. Among other measures, this final rule establishes a 3-tiered limited entry program for qualifying vessels.

The management of golden tilefish under the FMP is limited to an area referred to as the Tilefish Management Unit. The Tilefish Management Unit is defined as the area north of the Virginia and North Carolina border (36E33.36' N. Lat.), to the United States-Canada border. Tilefish south of the VA/NC border are currently managed under the fishery management plan for the snapper-grouper fishery by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. This permit holder letter clarifies that to qualify for a Federal limited access tilefish permit, tilefish landings must have been harvested from within the Tilefish Management Unit. Therefore, tilefish landed south of the VA/NC border (i.e., outside the Tilefish Management Unit) cannot be used for qualification purposes when submitting landing slips for any of the three limited access permit categories. The qualification requirements for the three limited access permit categories are summarized below.

- < Category A (full-time tier 1) Permit - Any vessel that landed at least 250,000 lb of tilefish per year from within the Tilefish Management Unit, for any 3 years between 1993 and 1998, at least 1 lb of which was landed prior to June 15, 1993.
- < Category B (full-time tier 2) Permit - Any vessel that landed at least 30,000 lb per year from within the Tilefish Management Unit, for any of 3 years between 1993 and 1998, at least 1 lb of which was landed prior to June 15, 1993.
- < Category C (part-time) Permit - Any vessel that landed 10,000 lb of tilefish in any 1 year from within the Tilefish Management Unit, between 1988 and 1993, and 10,000 lb in any 1 year between 1994 and 1998, or landed 28,000 lb of tilefish in any 1 year between 1984 and 1993, at least 1 lb of which was landed prior to June 15, 1993.

A vessel owner has up through November 1, 2002, to submit an initial permit application for a Federal limited access tilefish permit. If you have not already submitted an application and want to apply, contact the NMFS Permit Office at 978-281-9370. This letter is only a summary of the major regulatory measures implemented by the tilefish final rule and is not considered a substitute of the actual regulations. For a copy of the complete permit holder letter related to the tilefish FMP, and/or to read the regulations in their entirety, please contact the Sustainable Fisheries Division at 978-281-9315, or you can access our internet home page at <http://www.nero.nmfs.gov/ro/doc/nero.html>.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Kurkul
Regional Administrator

