



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
NORTHEAST REGION  
55 Great Republic Drive  
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

## Small Entity Compliance Guide

MAY 13 2011

### Northeast (NE) Skate Fishery Changes to Regulations for Fishing Year 2011

Dear Northeast Skate permit holder:

Effective May 17, 2011, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is implementing new regulations for the skate fishery, summarized below.

**REMINDER: In order to possess more than 500 lb of skate wings (or 1,135 lb of whole skates), you must be fishing under a day-at-sea (DAS), unless you fish in an exemption area and obtain and comply with the requirements of the Skate Bait Letter of Authorization (LOA).**

Here's what has changed for the 2011 fishing year:

- From May 17-August 31, the skate wing possession limit is **2,600 lb of skate wings** (5,902 lb whole weight) per trip for vessels fishing on a DAS.<sup>1</sup>
- From September 1-April 30, the skate wing possession limit will be **4,100 lb of skate wings** (9,307 lb whole weight) per trip for vessels fishing on a DAS.<sup>1</sup>
- When **85 percent** of the skate wing total allowable landings (TAL) has been landed, NMFS will reduce the skate wing possession limit to the incidental limit of 500 lb of skate wings (1,135 lb of whole skates) per trip for the rest of the fishing year.
- Vessels may now possess and land **skate carcasses** as well as skate wings (and/or whole skates). The weight of skate carcasses may not exceed 1.27 times the weight of skate wings, and vessels may not possess skate carcasses without retaining the associated wings. For example, if the vessel possesses 1,000 lb skate wings, the vessel could possess up to 1,270 lb of skate carcasses (1,000 lb of skate wings × 1.27).

For a complete description of the changes to the skate fishery regulations, please see the final rule implementing Framework Adjustment 1 to the Skate Fishery Management Plan. This rule can be found at [www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/hotnews/](http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/hotnews/).

<sup>1</sup> To meet the DAS requirement, the vessel must be called out on a monkfish DAS, a sea scallop DAS, or a NE multispecies "A" DAS. For vessels fishing on a NE multispecies "B" DAS (regardless of gear type), the possession limit is 220 lb of skate wings (500 lb of whole skates) per trip. For vessels NOT fishing on a DAS, the skate wing possession limit remains unchanged at 500 lb of skate wings (1,135 lb whole weight) per trip.



There are no changes to the management measures affecting the skate bait fishery, and all vessels fishing under the Skate Bait LOA can only possess whole skates that are less than 23 inches in total length, with a maximum possession limit of 20,000 lb of whole skates. Vessels fishing under the Skate Bait LOA may not possess any amount of skate wings. Once 90 percent of the skate bait seasonal fishing quota has been landed, NMFS will reduce the possession limit for vessels fishing under the Skate Bait LOA to the whole weight equivalent of the prevailing possession limit for skate wings.

In order to possess and land skates from the EEZ portion of the Skate Management Unit, vessels must continue to carry a valid open access Federal Skate Permit. All skate landings will be applied to the appropriate TAL (either wings or bait skates). Weekly quota reports, showing cumulative landings for each fishery, are available on the Northeast Regional Office (NERO) website: [www.nero.noaa.gov](http://www.nero.noaa.gov).

**Prohibited Species:** You may not fish for, possess, or land barndoor, thorny, and/or smooth skates. Species ID guides are available on the NERO web site to help you identify these species.

Table 1. Skate possession limits during open fishing seasons.

		Trip Limit (lb)		
		Skate Wings	Whole Skates	Whole Skate Bait w/ LOA
<b>NE Multispecies, Scallop, or Monkfish DAS</b>	<b>May 17 - Aug 31</b>	2,600	5,902	20,000*
	<b>Sept 1 - April 30</b>	4,100	9,307	
<b>NE Multispecies B DAS</b>	<b>May 1- April 30</b>	220	500	500
<b>Non-DAS</b>	<b>May 1 - April 30</b>	500	1,135	1,135

\* This limit also applies to vessels fishing in an approved Skate Fishery Exemption Area defined in the NE Multispecies regulations.

This letter does not contain all the regulatory provisions that pertain to the Northeast skate fishery, and is not a substitute for the regulations. A copy of the regulations can be obtained through NOAA's NERO web site: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov>. If you have further questions, please contact the Sustainable Fisheries Division at (978) 281-9315.

Sincerely,



Patricia A. Kurkul  
Regional Administrator

*This small entity compliance guide complies with Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.*