

§ 622.4 Permits and fees.

* * * * *

(r) *Moratorium on charter vessel/headboat permits for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish and Gulf reef fish.* The provisions of this paragraph (r) are applicable through the date that is three years after the effective date of the final rule implementing the corrected Amendments. Notwithstanding the other provisions of this paragraph (r), the expiration dates of all charter vessel/headboat permits for Gulf reef fish or Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish that were not issued under the provision of this paragraph (r) and that were valid or renewable as of December 17, 2002, will be extended through the date that is 150 days after the effective date of the final rule implementing the corrected Amendments provided that a permit has not been issued under this paragraph (r) for the applicable vessel.

(1) *Applicability.* Beginning 150 days after the effective date of the final rule implementing the corrected Amendments, the only valid charter vessel/headboat permits for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish or Gulf reef fish are those that have been issued under the moratorium criteria in this paragraph (r). No applications for additional charter vessel/headboat permits for these fisheries will be accepted. Existing permits may be renewed, are subject to the transferability provisions in paragraph (r)(9), and are subject to the requirement for timely renewal in paragraph (r)(10) of this section.

(2) *Initial eligibility.* Initial eligibility for a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish or Gulf reef fish is limited to the following—

(i) An owner of a vessel that had a valid charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish or coastal migratory pelagic fish on March 29, 2001, or held such a permit during the preceding year or whose application for such permit had been received by NMFS, by March 29, 2001, and was being processed or awaiting processing.

(ii) Any person who can provide NMFS with documentation verifying that, prior to March 29, 2001, he/she had a charter vessel or headboat under construction and that the associated expenditures were at least \$5,000 as of that date. If the vessel owner was constructing the vessel, the vessel owner must provide NMFS with receipts for the required expenditures. If the vessel was being constructed by someone other than the owner, the owner must provide NMFS with a copy of the contract and/or receipts for the required expenditures.

(iii) A historical captain, defined for the purposes of paragraph (r) of this section as a person who provides NMFS with documentation verifying that

(A) Prior to March 29, 2001, he/she was issued either a USCG Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel license (commonly referred to as a 6-pack license) or a USCG Masters license; operated, as a captain, a federally permitted charter vessel or headboat in the Gulf reef fish and/or coastal migratory pelagic fisheries; but does not have a fishery permit issued in their name; and

(B) At least 25 percent of his/her earned income was derived from charter vessel or headboat fishing in one of the years, 1997, 1998, 1999, or 2000.

(3) *Special conditions applicable to eligibility based on historical captain status.* A person whose eligibility is based on historical captain status will be issued a letter of eligibility by the RA. The letter of eligibility may be redeemed through the RA for a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish and/or Gulf reef fish, with a historical captain endorsement. The letter of eligibility is valid for the duration of the moratorium; is valid only for a vessel of the same authorized passenger capacity as the vessel used to document earned income in paragraph (r)(2)(iii)(B) of this section; and is valid only for the fisheries certified on the application under paragraph (r)(2)(iii)(A) of this section. A charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish or Gulf reef fish with a historical captain endorsement is valid only on a vessel that the historical captain operates as a captain.

(4) *Determination of eligibility based on permit history.* NMFS' permit records are the sole basis for determining eligibility based on permit or application history. An owner of a currently permitted vessel who believes he/she meets the permit or application history criterion based on ownership of a vessel under a different name, as may have occurred when ownership has changed from individual to corporate or vice versa, must document his/her continuity of ownership. An owner will not be issued initial charter vessel/headboat permits for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish or Gulf reef fish under the moratorium in excess of the number of federally permitted charter vessels and/or headboats that he/she owned simultaneously at some time during the period March 29, 2000 through March 29, 2001.

(5) *Application requirements and procedures—(i) General.* An applicant who desires a charter vessel/headboat

permit for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish or Gulf reef fish must submit an application for such permit to the RA postmarked or hand-delivered not later than 90 days after the effective date of the final rule implementing the corrected Amendments. Application forms are available from the RA. The information requested on the application form varies according to the eligibility criterion that the application is based upon as indicated in paragraphs (r)(5)(ii), (r)(5)(iii), and (r)(5)(iv) of this section; however, all applicants must provide a copy of the applicable, valid USCG Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel license or Masters license and valid USCG Certificate of Inspection. Failure to apply in a timely manner will preclude permit issuance even when the applicant meets the eligibility criteria for such permit.

(ii) *Application based on the prior permit/application history criterion.* On or about the effective date of the final rule implementing the corrected Amendments, the RA will mail an application for a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish and/or Gulf reef fish to each owner of a vessel who, according to NMFS' permit records, is eligible based on the permit or application history criterion in paragraph (r)(2)(i) of this section. Information requested on the application is consistent with the standard information required in paragraph (b)(3)(ii) of this section. The RA will also mail each such owner a notice that his/her existing charter vessel/headboat permit(s) for coastal migratory pelagic fish and/or Gulf reef fish will expire 150 days after the effective date of the final rule implementing the corrected Amendments and that the new permit(s) required under this moratorium will be required as of that date. A vessel owner who believes he/she qualifies for a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish and/or Gulf reef fish based on permit or application history, but who does not receive an application from the RA, must request an application from the RA and provide documentation of eligibility. The RA will mail applications and notifications to vessel owner addresses as indicated in NMFS' permit records.

(iii) *Application based on a charter vessel/headboat under construction prior to March 29, 2001.* A person who intends to obtain a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish and/or Gulf reef fish based on the vessel-under-construction eligibility criterion in