

considering the criteria in paragraphs (c)(1) through (4) of this section, NMFS determines the species only meets one criterion.

(1) Biological information indicates that the stock warrants protection.

(2) Information indicates that the species is rarely encountered or observed caught in HMS fisheries.

(3) Information indicates that the species is not commonly encountered or observed caught as bycatch in fishing operations for species other than HMS.

(4) The species is difficult to distinguish from other prohibited species.

■ 15. In § 635.69, paragraphs (a), (e), and (h) are revised to read as follows:

**§ 635.69 Vessel monitoring systems.**

(a) *Applicability.* To facilitate enforcement of time-area and fishery closures, an owner or operator of a commercial vessel, permitted to fish for Atlantic HMS under § 635.4 and that fishes with a pelagic or bottom longline or strikenet gear, is required to install a NMFS-approved vessel monitoring system (VMS) unit on board the vessel and operate the VMS unit under the following circumstances:

(1) Whenever the vessel is away from port with pelagic longline gear on board;

(2) Whenever a vessel, issued a directed shark LAP, is away from port with bottom longline gear on board, is located between 33°00' N. lat. and 36°30' N. lat., and the mid-Atlantic shark closed area is closed to bottom longline fishing as specified in § 635.21(d)(1); or

(3) Whenever a vessel, issued a directed shark LAP, is away from port with a gillnet on board during the right whale calving season specified in the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan in § 229.32(f) of this title. **Note:** Paragraphs (a)(2) and (a)(3) of this section are not effective until further notification is published in the **Federal Register**.

(4) A vessel is considered to have pelagic longline gear on board, for the purposes of this section, when gear as specified at § 635.21(c) is on board. A vessel is considered to have bottom longline gear on board, for the purposes of this section, when gear as specified at § 635.21(d) is on board. A vessel is considered to have gillnet gear on board, for the purposes of this section, when gillnet, as defined in § 600.10, is on board a vessel that has been issued a shark LAP.

(e) *Operation.* Owners or operators of vessels permitted, or required to be permitted, to fish for HMS, that have

pelagic or bottom longline gear or gillnet gear on board, and that are required to have a VMS unit installed, as specified in paragraph (a), must activate the VMS to submit automatic position reports beginning 2 hours prior to leaving port and continuing until the vessel returns to port. While at sea, the unit must operate without interruption and no person may interfere with, tamper with, alter, damage, disable, or impede the operation of a VMS, or attempt any of the same. Vessels fishing outside the geographic area of operation of the installed VMS will be in violation of the VMS requirement.

(h) *Access.* As a condition to obtaining a LAP for Atlantic swordfish, sharks, or tunas, all vessel owners or operators using pelagic or bottom longline or gillnet gear, subject to the VMS provisions of this section must allow NMFS, the USCG, and their authorized officers and designees access to the vessel's position data obtained from the VMS at the time of or after its transmission to the vendor or receiver, as the case may be.

■ 16. In § 635.71, paragraphs (a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(7), (a)(14), (a)(17), (a)(18), (a)(23), (a)(26), (a)(34), (a)(37), (b)(7), (b)(8), (c)(1), (d)(10), (d)(12), and (d)(13) are revised, and paragraphs (a)(39) and (a)(40) are added to read as follows:

**§ 635.71 Prohibitions.**

\* \* \* \* \*

(a) \* \* \*

(1) Falsify information required on an application for a permit submitted under § 635.4 or § 635.32.

(2) Fish for, catch, possess, retain, or land an Atlantic HMS without the appropriate valid vessel permit, LAP, EFP, SRP, or display permit on board the vessel, as specified in §§ 635.4 and 635.32.

\* \* \* \* \*

(7) Fail to allow an authorized agent of NMFS to inspect and copy reports and records, as specified in § 635.5(e) or § 635.32.

\* \* \* \* \*

(14) Fail to install, activate, repair, or replace a vessel monitoring system prior to leaving port with pelagic longline gear, bottom longline gear, or gillnet gear on board the vessel as specified in § 635.69.

\* \* \* \* \*

(17) Fish for Atlantic tunas or swordfish with a gillnet or possess Atlantic tunas or swordfish on board a vessel with a gillnet on board, as specified in § 635.21 (b), (e)(1), and (e)(4)(ii).

(18) Fail to retrieve fishing gear and move after an interaction with a protected species, as specified in § 635.21 (c)(3) or (d)(2).

\* \* \* \* \*

(23) Fail to comply with the restrictions on use of a pelagic longline, bottom longline, or gillnet as specified in § 635.21 (c), (d), or (e)(3).

\* \* \* \* \*

(26) Violate the terms and conditions or any provision of a permit issued under §§ 635.4 or 635.32.

\* \* \* \* \*

(34) Fail to disengage any hooked or entangled sea turtle with the least harm possible to the sea turtle as specified at § 635.21 (c)(5) or (d)(3).

\* \* \* \* \*

(37) Fail to report to NMFS, at the number designated by NMFS, the incidental capture of listed whales with shark gillnet gear and sea turtle mortalities associated with pelagic longline gear as required by § 635.5.

\* \* \* \* \*

(39) Deploy or fish with any fishing gear, from a vessel with a bottom longline on board, in any closed area during the time periods specified at § 635.21(d)(1).

(40) Deploy or fish with any fishing gear, from a vessel with bottom longline gear on board, without carrying a dipnet, line clipper, and dehooking device as specified at § 635.21(d)(3).

(b) \* \* \*

(7) Fish for, catch, retain, or possess a BFT with gear not authorized for the category permit issued to the vessel or to have such gear on board when in possession of a BFT, as specified in § 635.21(e)(1).

(8) Fail to request an inspection of a purse seine vessel, as specified in § 635.21(e)(1)(vi)(B).

\* \* \* \* \*

(c) \* \* \*

(1) Retain a billfish on board a vessel with a pelagic longline on board or harvested by gear other than rod and reel, as specified in § 635.21(e)(2).

\* \* \* \* \*

(d) \* \* \*

(10) Retain, possess, sell, or purchase a prohibited shark, as specified under § 635.22(c) and § 635.27(b)(1) or fail to disengage any hooked or entangled prohibited shark with the least harm possible to the animal as specified at § 635.21(d)(3).

\* \* \* \* \*

(12) Fish for Atlantic sharks with unauthorized gear or possess Atlantic sharks on board a vessel with unauthorized gear on board as specified in § 635.21(e)(3).