

WHAT is trip-level reporting?

Trip-level reporting means collecting catch and effort information from commercial fishermen on a trip-by-trip basis and is the standard established over the last fifteen years by all Atlantic coast marine fisheries agencies, through partnership in the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). This standard was established so that data collected by all states and the federal government could be pooled together, allowing for more effective management of marine resources, particularly those that span multiple jurisdictions. Today, most Atlantic states and the federal government collect comprehensive trip-level data.

WHO will this affect?

Many Massachusetts fishermen already report trip-level data to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), through the Vessel Trip Report (VTR) or Highly Migratory Species (HMS) programs, and therefore will not have to report to the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF). All other Massachusetts commercial fishermen will be required to submit trip-level data to DMF. Furthermore, all trips conducted under the author-

ity of their commercial permit will be reported, regardless of whether the catch is sold or consumed personally. If a federal permit is dropped or moved to a dormant vessel while fishing continues, or if fishing occurs on a non-federally permitted vessel, those trips must be reported to DMF. The objective is to expand coverage to all commercial trips and all species, in a standardized format, while at the same time eliminate duplicate reporting.

WHEN will it begin?

Trip-level reporting will begin on January 1st 2010, with the first reports due by February 15th. Fishery-specific annual catch reports for 2009 will be submitted to DMF for the last time during the permit renewal process for 2010 .

WHY is this happening?

Accurate and comprehensive catch and effort data are critical to effective fisheries management. Massachusetts has been collecting commercial catch & effort data for over thirty-five years, via a series of annual fishery-specific catch reports. While this system has yielded invaluable information, it is neither comprehensive nor at the trip-level. Comprehensive, standardized trip-level data will provide the information

required for management strategies such as catch shares and/or individual quotas to work. It will also provide a less-confusing reporting scheme, replacing the multitude of fishery-specific annual reports used currently, and eliminating duplicative reporting now required by most federally-permitted Massachusetts fishermen. Lastly, it dovetails with efforts currently underway to improve the collection of recreational fishing data, through the implementation of a recreational saltwater permit.

HOW will I report?

Permit holders will have several options to submit their trip-level information. An on-line application will be available to those who wish to report electronically. Electronic files, such as spreadsheets, will also be accepted via email. For those who don't use a computer or prefer to submit a written report, paper forms will be provided to be submitted monthly, which can be sent in by mail or fax. Reports will be due on the 15th of the following month. Detailed instructions will be mailed with the permit renewal applications, as well as the 2010 permit. Program details can also be found on the DMF website (www.mass.gov/marinefisheries).



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