

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- SAFIS Video Tutorial Release
- Striped Bass Tagging Program Overview
- Meet the Statistics Program Staff!
- eTRIPS and Dealer Data Audits

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MA E-Reporting Newsletter



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

AUGUST 5, 2014

Welcome to Electronic Reporting



Hello! In 2010, through partnership in the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) completed the launch of a full two-ticket data collection system that follows the standard established over the last fifteen years by all Atlantic coast marine fisheries agencies. 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.

The two-ticket system means that the dealers and the fishermen report separately, creating a complete picture of Massachusetts catch, effort, and landings. All primary buyers in Massachusetts are required to report their purchases of any marine species (including those intended for bait purposes) from fishermen weekly. Reports containing catch and effort information from commercial fishermen on a trip-by-trip basis are required monthly.

Electronic reporting allows both state and federal dealers, state-only commercial permit holders, and those federally permitted fishermen without federal vessel trip report (VTR)

requirements to enter the trip level data directly into the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS) housed by ACCSP rather than fill out and submit paper or spreadsheet forms to DMF. Currently, there are just under 2,000 commercial permit holders and over 300 dealers enrolled in electronic reporting with more joining every day (see figure on page 2). This newsletter will provide a one stop shop for announcements of program changes as well as other information relating to the e-reporting program.

Help is Here!

Have you or someone you know wanted to throw your computer or phone against the wall while trying to enter data into eTRIPS? We use it every day too, so don't worry, even we have felt the same way occasionally!

This is why we are committed to helping you understand how to

use the program. While we are available during regular business hours by phone and email, we realize that you may need help at other times as well. We recently released a tutorial video series intended to help walk you through the major

steps for setting up your favorites, entering did not fish reports, entering trip reports, and more. The new help website can found here: [SAFIS Help](#), and our FAQ page still remains active here: [FAQs](#).



Striped Bass Tagging Program



The ASMFC established a mandatory commercial striped bass tagging program implemented by MA in 2014.

In 2012, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) approved Addendum III to Amendment 6 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass, which established a mandatory commercial tagging program. Ultimately, the goal is to provide better management for the fishery and to reduce illegal harvest and overages.

Beginning in 2014, all primary buyers of striped bass in Massachusetts must affix a valid, DMF-issued Striped Bass ID Tag to each striped bass at the place of primary purchase and prior to transit. The tags must remain affixed to whole striped bass until the fish are processed into fillets, thereafter the tags must accompany the fillets while in possession for re-sale. Tags are to remain on the

premises of retail seafood dealers or food establishments until all portions are sold, thereafter the tags must be cut into two pieces and discarded.

The number of striped bass tags available to primary buyers will be dictated by the size of the annual quota. DMF made tags available to all primary buyers of striped bass prior to the start of the 2014 season. The quantity of the striped bass tags initially received by primary buyers was based on striped bass purchasing history. Additional tags are made available upon request to DMF.

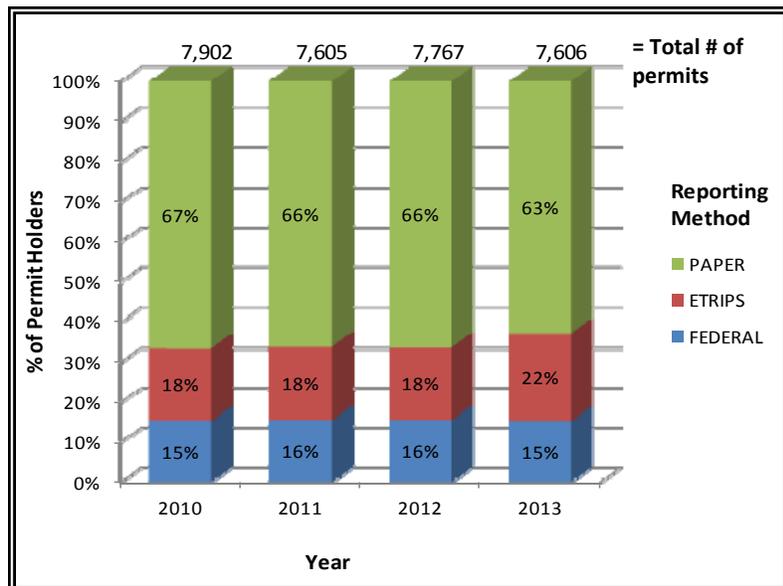
Dealers authorized to be primary buyers of striped bass will be subject to tag accountability measures following the close of the commercial striped bass season. On an annual basis, primary buyers shall return their unused striped bass tags to DMF and submit a striped bass tag accounting report on forms provided by DMF. These items are due to DMF after the close of the commercial striped bass season and within 30-days of a written request from the Director. Future participation as a primary buyer of striped bass may be restricted for failure to comply.

If you have any questions about this project, or need more tags, please contact us!



Reporting Endorsement Trends

Total number of permit holders and the percent of permit holders by reporting endorsement method by year.



Common Errors in eTRIPS: Spotlight on Fishing Time



We are auditing data entered into eTRIPS as part of our effort to maintain a high level of data quality in the trip level data collection program. Results of this process will highlight commonly encountered errors and show us where outreach to you, the users, is needed. If we encounter errors in your data, you will receive specific emails detailing the error, the correct way to enter the data, and what needs to be fixed or what information we need to update your records.

Error Spotlight: Entering a “0” in the fishing time field is one of the most commonly encountered errors in eTRIPS.

Fishing time is an important field in trip level data collection. It is used in the calculation of catch per unit effort for a specific gear type. Gathering the correct information is critical to creating a complete picture of the fishing effort by gear type in Massachusetts.

Many records are saved with a fishing time of “0”. There are two common ways this occurs:

- 1) Not changing the “0” to a valid fishing time. While it is a required field on the paper form, it is easy to miss filling in this field electronically as it defaults to “0” and can be saved without a valid value.
- 2) Fishing time can also be saved as “0” for an inactive gear type. For example, if you fish with lobster pots, and occasionally hook and line, you may have both gear types included in your favorites and set to appear on all trip re-

ports. However, if you do not hook and line fish on a given trip and do not delete the effort from that trip report, the effort information is saved with a “0” for fishing time. This means the final report appears as a trip with both lobster pot and hook and line effort but no catch associated with the hook and line gear. Saving the trip report with the inactive gear type adds unnecessary rows to the database.

To prevent these errors, be sure to enter the proper fishing time in the field and delete any unused gear types from a trip report prior to saving. To help with this problem, a validation was added to the form requiring you to enter a fishing time prior to saving the record. Hopefully this will eliminate most errors moving forward.

Please contact us with any questions on entering the fishing time into eTRIPS!

One of the most commonly encountered errors in eTRIPS: “0” entered for fishing time.

Help is Here! Con’t from page 1

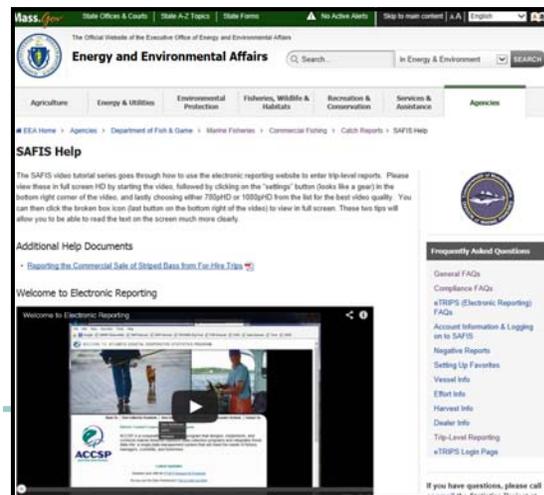
These videos are also especially helpful for those of you who are considering switching to online reporting. The videos will let you get a feel for the program before you sign up, and give you an idea of what to expect when you log-on for the first time.

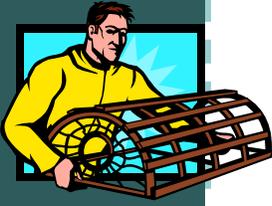
Don’t have time to watch them all? Focus on the “How to set up your Favorites” video. If you’ve received emails from us regarding e-reporting or spoken to one of us on the phone, you’ll know how

important setting up your favorites can be prior to entering any data. Watching the “Favorites” video and setting up your own will make a huge difference in the amount of time it takes to enter your data. Watching the “How to Enter a Trip Report” video after the Favorites video will provide you with the most comprehensive overview of electronic trip reporting and will hopefully help make your data entry easier. Please check them out!

If you are still confused, please

don’t hesitate to call or email us. We can help you find vessels and dealers, fix any issues in your favorites, walk you through any problem areas, and more!





Catch Source: An Overview

A new field was added to SAFIS in June 2014 called “Catch Source”. Previously, the gears and disposition fields captured certain data that were not technically gears and dispositions (i.e., Placed in Car, Aquaculture, Research Set Aside). The new field was created to capture this information and retain the ability to capture the correct gear and disposition information.

Several dispositions were removed from the available options: “Placed in car”, “Removed for Sale”, “Aquaculture”, and all “Research Set Aside (RSA)” dispositions. Additionally, “Aquaculture (803)” was removed from the gear options; all aquaculture should now be reported with the appropriate

gear type (if an appropriate gear type does not appear in the list, “Other” may be used for cultured shellfish harvest).

The new field, Catch Source, was added with 4 options: “Standard” – indicates a traditional commercial trip (default value), “Aquaculture” – indicates the landing is a cultured product, “Carred” – indicates the landing was carred for future sale, and “Research Set Aside (RSA)” – indicates the landing was caught under a RSA compensation fishing or research project permit.

Commercial harvesters with the electronic reporting endorsement should view this video for a tutorial on how to use the new field in SAFIS: [Catch Source](#).

Seafood Dealers should follow the following guidelines:

- 1) When purchasing cultured product- change the Catch Source field to “Aquaculture”.
- 2) When purchasing product landed under the guise of a valid RSA permit (either compensation fishing or for research purposes), choose “RSA”.
- 3) When a dealer knows a purchase is coming from multiple landings, please choose the “Carred” catch source to indicate that the purchase was from carred landings.
- 4) All others should carry the defaulted “Standard” Catch Source.

Collecting correct vessel registrations is vital to mitigate regulatory effects on fishery participants and to judge overall fishery performance.



Common Errors in Dealer Data: Spotlight on Vessel Registrations

Dealer data is subjected to a variety of daily audits highlighting outliers in the landings, duplicate reporting, etc. Additional audits are performed in house and in conjunction with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that look at a variety of potential errors in more detail. Many times dealers are contacted directly via phone or email to correct minor errors.

This column will focus on broader scale errors seen across many dealers.

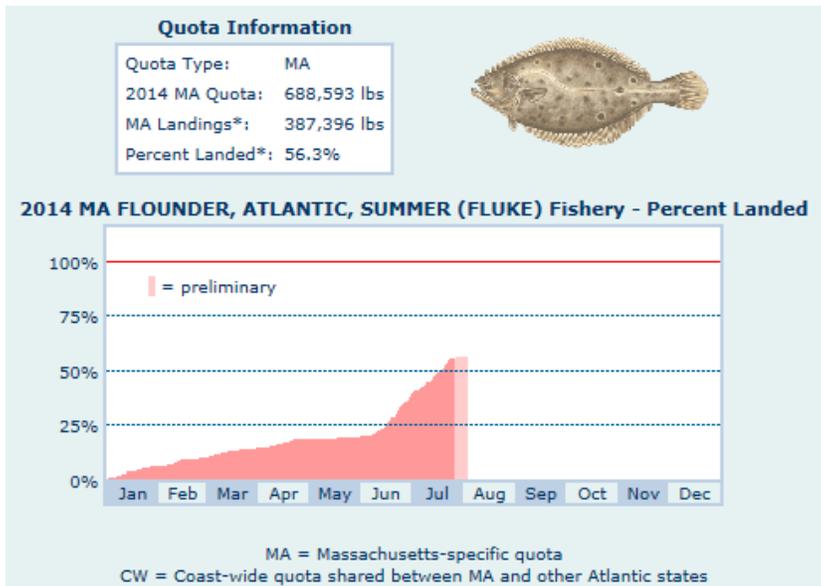
Both agencies recently became

focused on reducing the number of unknown vessel registrations entered into SAFIS. Unknown vessels cannot be saved to favorites or to conversion tables, yet continue to be entered into SAFIS through all of the dealer reporting methods (eDR, file upload, Bluefin). This undermines the connection between fisher and vessel data particularly at the federal level. Accurately tracking vessel information is necessary to characterize the commercial fishery in Massachusetts, which is vital to mitigate regulatory effects on fishery

participants and to judge overall fishery performance.

Massachusetts fishermen declare their fishing vessels on their permits and the vessels are available in SAFIS within a week of purchasing a permit. As a reminder, dealers should get the registration number from the fisherman during the sale, but if that is overlooked, we provide a fisherman and vessel lookup table on our website that is updated nightly (found [here](#)). Additionally, we ask that a dealer call or email us if they cannot find a particular registration in SAFIS.

Examples of the quota figures and landings summaries for three open fisheries, fluke, summer scup, and striped bass, as of 8/4/14.



Open fisheries & percent of quota landed & reported as of 8/4/14

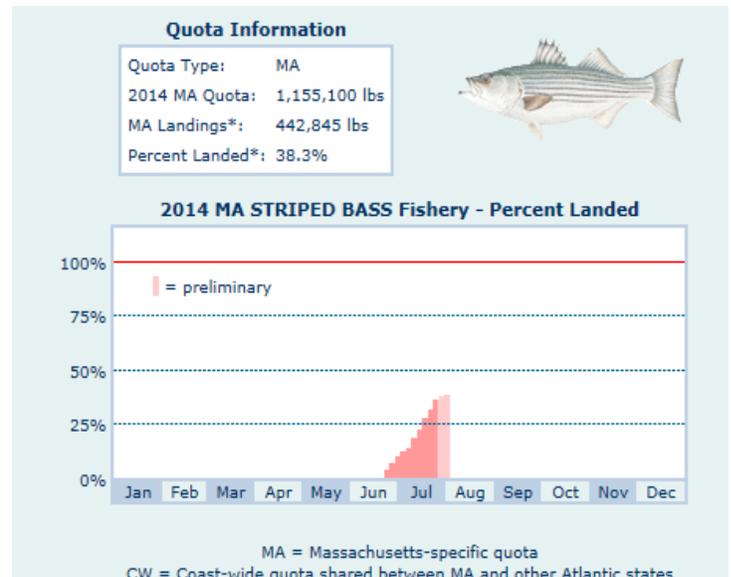
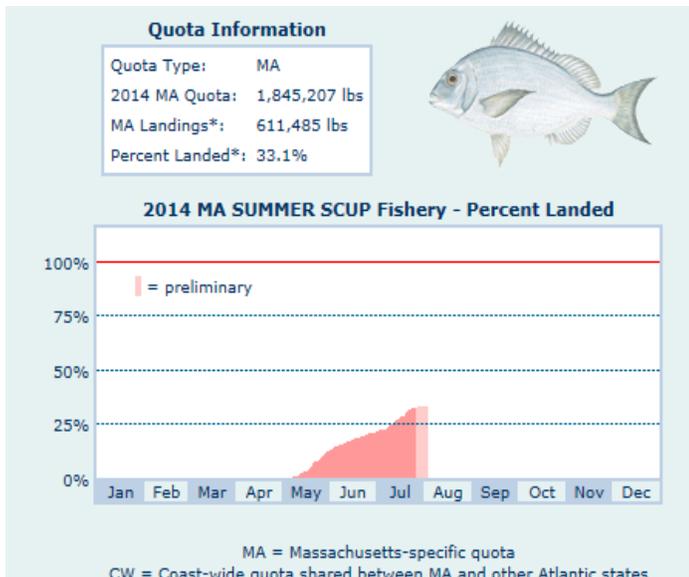
Bluefish	54.7%
Dogfish	14.0%
Fluke	56.2%
Horseshoe Crab	53.6%
Menhaden	67.5%
Scup	33.1%
Striped Bass	38.3%

Quota Update

The Statistics Project tracks and reports landings of quota-monitored species through weekly dealer reports. This information is used by managers to make projections about fishery closings. The projections are based on the trends in the landings and account for any

incomplete weeks of data. Total landings of regulated species up to the current week can be found on the [quotas and landings](#) section of our website or by calling the quota information phone system, also supported by the MIS & Fisheries Statistics Program, at 978-282-

0308. Follow the prompts to find out landings as well as commercial and recreational fishery regulations and reporting requirements. If you have any questions about the landings or data collection involved in producing the quota reports, please contact us.





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The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries is responsible for the development and promulgation of the Commonwealth's regulations governing commercial and recreational fishing activity conducted in the marine environment. Central to our vision is a commitment to balance our living marine resources with our coastal culture through innovation, collaboration, and leadership.

The Management Information Systems (MIS) and Fisheries Statistics Project collects, analyzes, and distributes catch/effort and economic data from lobster, shellfish and "regulated" fisheries through landings and catch reports from licensed fishermen and seafood dealers. These data are used to assist managers in the development of fisheries management plans.

See our website for more info!
www.mass.gov/marinefisheries

Meet the Staff!

Calls to our 101 phone line extension will rotate through to whoever has an open phone line in an effort to get you connected to a real person faster. All of us can help you with whatever questions you may have. This newsletter gives us a chance to introduce ourselves:

Thomas Hoopes: Tom has been the project leader for the DMF Statistics Program since before the inception of SAFIS. He is heavily involved with ACCSP as the chair of their Operations Committee, and has spearheaded many of the electronic reporting advances over the past few years.

Kim Lundy: Kim is the Program Coordinator for the dealer reporting program for DMF. She works closely with both dealers and harvesters using the SAFIS system and can help you with any

questions you may have. She has been working with DMF for over 12 years.

Anna Webb: Anna joined the team in April 2014 coming to DMF from the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Program and has been involved with fishery dependent data collection and SAFIS since 2011. She is the Program Coordinator for the harvester logbook program for DMF, which means coordinating the collection of trip level data, auditing the eTRIPS data submissions, and providing outreach to the fishing community.

Mary Ann Fletcher: Mary Ann works with data entry of dealer data and helps keep the data collection organized and streamlined. She has been working with DMF Stats since 2004 and is well versed in helping you get set up with SAFIS.

Whitney Sargent and Rosemary Mitchell: Whitney and Rosemary are the faces of DMF. If you have ever had to come to our Gloucester office, they have greeted you as you entered the front door. Both help deal with the incoming paper reports, and can point you in the right direction to help you get set up with SAFIS if they don't have time to set you up themselves.

