

The Fisheries Logbook System records the fishing and non-fishing activity of fishermen who are required to report their fishing activity via logbooks submitted for each trip.

As the need for conservation of the Nation's marine resources increases the need for more and better quality data on how these resources are utilized also increases. One of the most useful types of data is catch per unit effort. To meet these needs, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center has implemented several vessel logbook programs. In 1986, a comprehensive program was initiated for the pelagic longline fisheries along the eastern seaboard, in the Gulf of Mexico and in the Caribbean. In 1990, logbook reporting was initiated for the vessels catching species in the reef fish management plan ([Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council](#)). Similar to the logbook program for reef fish, a program for vessels catching species in the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery management plan ([South Atlantic Fishery Management Council](#)) was initiated in 1992. In 1993, a comprehensive logbook was initiated for the federally managed shark fisheries ([Highly Migratory Species, National Marine Fisheries Service](#)). In 1999, logbook reporting was initiated for vessels catching king and Spanish mackerel (Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils).

Although these programs were initiated at various times and cover many different fisheries and types of gear, the SEFSC has attempted to make the logbooks relatively easy to complete. There are 2 types of reporting forms currently in use (although separate forms are used for the limited vessels that are permitted in the wreckfish and golden crab fisheries).

One form is used for the pelagic longline fisheries. Because this fishery uses gear that are set (deployed) for a relatively long period (6 to 10 hours), catch and effort data are collected for each set. Thus, a separate form is required for each set. Fishermen are required to report the numbers of each species caught, the numbers of animals retained or discarded alive or discarded dead (longline gear is non-selective and unwanted or prohibited species such as, billfishes, sea turtles, etc., must be returned to the water), the location of the set, the types and size of gear, and the duration of the set.

Because some of the needed catch/effort information for pelagic longline fisheries remains the same for the entire trip (i.e., it would be redundant to report it for every set), a supplemental form is used to report this type of data. Information on the port of departure and return, unloading dealer and location, number of sets, number of crew, date of departure and landing are reported on the Trip Summary form. In addition, information on costs associated with the trip can be reported on this form. This type of economic data is critical to the evaluation of existing and proposed management regulations. The National Marine Fisheries Service is required by law to assess (estimate) the economic consequences of proposed management regulations. Without accurate data from the fishing industry, such estimates are not likely to reflect the true effects.

The second type of logbook form is used to report catch and effort data for the Gulf reef fish, South Atlantic snapper-grouper, coastal shark and king and Spanish mackerel fisheries. Because the soak time for these fisheries is relatively short, it is infeasible to require fishermen to complete a separate form every time the gear is

deployed. Thus, the catch and effort data for the entire trip are reported on a single form (i.e., one form per trip).

The types of information required on this trip form are nearly the same as the pelagic longline logbook. Information on the quantity (reported in pounds) caught for each species, the area of catch, the type and quantity of gear, the date of departure and return, the dealer and location (county and state where the trip is unloaded), the duration of the trip (time away from dock), an estimate of the fishing time, and the number of crew are included on this form.

In response to the increased need for data on the amount of fish that are discarded, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center is now using a supplementary form that selected fishermen use to report quantities of fish that are discarded. Comments on the program can be submitted to the Logbook Program care of the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, 75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami Florida 33149 or via e:mail at sefsc.logbook@noaa.gov.