



## Listening to Industry: Bullard Hits the Road

Since he took office at the beginning of August, John Bullard, the new Regional Administrator of NOAA Fisheries Service's Northeast Region, has not stopped moving. As of early fall, he had met with fishermen and other industry people from Maine to Maryland.

Mr. Bullard's main goal on this road trip has been to hear from stakeholders, especially fishermen, about their top concerns for the commercial fishing industry and their thoughts on what success for the industry could look like.

At all of these meetings, Mr. Bullard has stressed his commitment to maintaining working waterfronts and his recognition that preserving fisheries means preserving both fish and fishermen.

The meetings, or listening sessions as they are called, are not formal public hearings. Rather, they are informal discussions to gather ideas for charting a course together.

So far, Mr. Bullard has met with stakeholders in: Annapolis, MD; Surf City, NJ; Gloucester, New Bedford, Scituate, and Chatham, MA; Portland, ME; Ellsworth, ME; Pt. Judith, RI; Portsmouth, NH; and Setauket, NY. He also held a regional meeting with seafood dealers and processors to hear their particular concerns and suggestions. Additional meetings in Virginia and North Carolina are being planned for the near future.

Industry people have been turning out to meet and talk with their new Regional Administrator. Approximately 440 fishermen have attended these meetings and engaged in dialogue with Mr. Bullard.

And Mr. Bullard is listening.

While each locality has its own specific issues, here are some of the more general themes that Mr. Bullard has heard during his travels throughout the Northeast Region.

### Regulatory issues

Stakeholder comments about regulatory issues have included the following.

- Flexibility is needed to reduce fishing mortality while preserving a viable fishing fleet.
- Rapid changes in fishing regulations make business decisions and long-term business planning difficult. Annual fluctuations in quota should be limited to increase fishermen's ability to make long-term business plans.
- Some fishermen simply cannot afford to pay for observer coverage.
- Some fishermen accepted input controls to conserve stocks which, in some cases, resulted in low allocations when catch history years were selected by the New England Fishery Management Council as the basis for groundfish allocation.
- Hard catch allowances in the Mid-Atlantic have rebuilt the stocks. Now we need to carefully manage healthy stocks.
- For Mid-Atlantic fisheries that have been

rebuilt, access to fish is difficult due to inflexible state allocations that are based on past effort and fish distribution.

- Adaptive and flexible allocation management will become increasingly important if the distribution of stocks shifts due to climate change or other factors.
- Too much potential quota is allotted to uncertainty buffers.
- Some fishermen perceive that allowing large draggers to fish in previously closed waters inshore depleted local stocks. And,
- Mid Atlantic fishermen are concerned about vessels moving into their fisheries from New England.

### Science, research

Stakeholder comments about science and research have included the following:

- Some fishermen do not have confidence in the stock assessment science that NOAA Fisheries uses to create policy.
- Fishermen would like to be more involved in research and want to work with scientists to generate accurate fisheries data.
- A shift to ecosystem-based management is needed to reduce predators and increase valuable stocks.
- Natural cycles of distribution and abundance need to be considered in fishery management decision-making.
- More closed areas need to be opened to better distribute effort and enable large vessels to fish offshore. Closed areas, except for those designated for habitat protection, were promised to be opened under sectors.
- It is difficult to target abundant species due to discard assumptions and catch allocations on other species. Current discard regulations cause unnecessary waste of the resource.
- Existing science cannot support the demands that are put on the data to allow compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and

Management Act. And,

- There is a need for more and better studies.

### Other comments

Other ideas voiced by stakeholders have included the following.

- A diverse fleet is necessary to maintain market share, a sustainable marine environment, and working waterfronts in small communities.
- Assistance is needed to market underutilized species to the public.
- In order to run an effective business, charter boats need to know the regulations they must abide by early in the calendar year.
- As the average ages of both fishermen and vessels rise, safety concerns become increasingly significant.
- Rising costs and lower profits cause fishermen to take more risks such as fishing alone and foregoing vessel maintenance.
- Industry supports engaging fisheries scientists and fishermen in plain-language dialogues.
- There is a need for better assessment of the effects management actions have on communities in order to reduce impacts on working waterfronts.

### Setting priorities

Mr. Bullard is using these and other points raised by members of the fishing industry to prioritize and address the important issues they are facing. Industry comments will help NOAA Fisheries determine the path to maintaining a viable fishing industry now and in the future.

Summaries of these listening sessions may be found on the NOAA Fisheries Service's Northeast Regional Office's website at <[www.nero.noaa.gov](http://www.nero.noaa.gov)>.

If you were not able to attend a public listening session and would like to submit your ideas, please call Olivia Rugo at (978) 675-2167 or e-mail her at <[olivia.rugo@noaa.gov](mailto:olivia.rugo@noaa.gov)>.

## Meet John Bullard, NOAA's New Northeast Regional Administrator

John K. Bullard became the Regional Administrator for the Northeast Regional Office of NOAA Fisheries Service on Aug. 6, 2012. As the Regional Administrator, Mr. Bullard is responsible for running NOAA programs that manage living marine resources from Canada to Cape Hatteras.

In this capacity, Mr. Bullard directs NOAA Fisheries programs in support of international and domestic fisheries management in the Northeast Region. He also guides multidisciplinary programs that provide the scientific and technical information necessary to manage living marine resources in the Northeast and support the information requirements and decision-making processes of the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils.

Mr. Bullard brings with him a deep understanding of fishing communities and their importance to our

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NOAA photo

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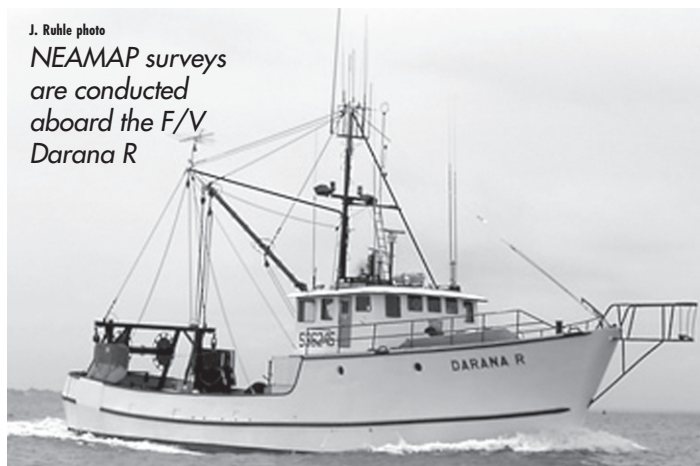
## NEAMAP: Collaborating to Improve Fisheries Monitoring

**T**he Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP) is a network of nearshore trawl surveys designed to contribute important information to the management of Atlantic coastal fish stocks. The network is made up of several survey efforts, including the NEAMAP Mid-Atlantic/Southern New England (MA/SNE) Near Shore Trawl Survey, the Massachusetts State Trawl Survey, and the Maine-New Hampshire Inshore Trawl Survey.

Funding for these surveys comes from numerous sources, including state marine fisheries agencies, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program, NOAA Fisheries Northeast Cooperative Research Program, the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation, and other congressional funds administered through NOAA Fisheries Service.

The nearshore waters of the Mid-Atlantic and Southern New England serve as important foraging, spawning, and nursery areas for a variety of fishes and invertebrates which, in turn, support valuable commercial and recreational fisheries. If left unaddressed, the gap in sampling coverage would have resulted in major "unknowns" for future fishery stock assessments.

One of the first major efforts of the NEAMAP network was to design the NEAMAP MA/SNE Near



J. Ruhle photo  
NEAMAP surveys are conducted aboard the F/V Darana R

Shore Trawl Survey. This bottom trawl survey of inshore waters from New York to North Carolina was implemented to address concerns about survey coverage and sampling intensity in these areas.

Until recently, NOAA Fisheries' Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) Bottom Trawl Survey sampled these inshore waters. However, the sampling intensity (~1 station per 90 nm<sup>2</sup>) was lower than that typically performed by fishing industry-based surveys in this region and by state coastal surveys in

New England waters (~1 station per 20-50 nm<sup>2</sup>). Additionally, the fisheries survey vessel Albatross IV was replaced in 2008 by the much larger Henry B. Bigelow, preventing NEFSC sampling in waters less than about 10 fathoms (60').

Conceived by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and executed by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), College of William and Mary in Gloucester Point, VA, a successful pilot cruise was conducted in the fall of 2006. As a result, the NEAMAP MA/SNE Near Shore Trawl Survey area was expanded in 2007 to include Block Island Sound and Rhode Island Sound, extending the survey range from Cape Hatteras, NC to Martha's Vineyard, MA.

The survey is now conducted annually in the spring and fall on the fishing vessel Darana R operated by Capt. Jim Ruhle. As New Jersey was previously the only state between Rhode Island and North Carolina that regularly monitored fish populations in its coastal waters, the NEAMAP MA/SNE survey is extremely important to other states in need of scientific monitoring data for management of their coastal stocks.

### Accomplishments

The NEAMAP MA/SNE Trawl Survey has been structured to provide inputs for both single-species and multispecies stock assessments and has an impressive list of accomplishments, including the following.

- Peer review and stock assessments – Following the pilot survey in 2006, full spring and fall surveys have been completed each year since 2007, providing a valuable time series of data.

The survey was successfully peer-reviewed in December 2008. As a result, the data is considered to be of high value and has been used in stock assessments for weakfish, river herring, American lobster, Atlantic croaker, Atlantic sea scallop, Atlantic sturgeon, black sea bass, bluefish, butterfish, river herring, scup, skates (clearnose, little, and winter), spiny dogfish, spot, summer flounder, weakfish, and winter flounder.

- Increased sampling intensity – Each cruise samples 150 sites using a stratified random design at a coverage rate of 1 site per 30 nm. This is considered a moderate-to-high level of sampling intensity relative to other surveys.

- Improving understanding of fishery independent surveys – Survey staff and participating fishermen invite the public and elected officials aboard for demonstrations of operations and sampling processes. This practice has garnered substantial support for the NEAMAP survey system. And,

- Collaborations – NEAMAP personnel participate in an exchange of age samples for summer flounder, scup, winter flounder, and black sea bass with the NEFSC to improve stock assessments for these species.

Data from this program also has been used in the analysis for the Rhode Island Ocean Special Area Management Plan. Additionally, the survey has

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nation's economy and to its social and cultural heritage.

A native of New Bedford, MA with a lifelong interest in the ocean, Mr. Bullard joined NOAA Fisheries following his retirement at the end of June as the president of the Massachusetts-based Sea Education Association. Known as SEA, the non-profit education organization headquartered in Woods Hole teaches college students and others about the science and culture of the sea through a 12-week "SEA Semester" that combines on-campus studies in oceanography, nautical science, and maritime studies with sailing and research aboard one of the organization's tall ships in the Atlantic or Pacific.

From 1993 to 1998, Mr. Bullard was a member of the Clinton Administration in Washington, DC, where he led NOAA's first federal Office of Sustainable Development and Intergovernmental Affairs.

There, he created programs to assist fishing families in New England, the Gulf of Mexico, the Pacific Northwest, Alaska, and around the nation, advised communities on sustainable development, and helped set policy for aquaculture. He also worked on the President's Council on Sustainable Development, developing policies to unite the goals of economic opportunity, environmental health, and social equity.

At the state and regional level, Mr. Bullard helped create a pioneering marine spatial plan as a governor-appointed member of the Massachusetts' Ocean Advisory Commission. As a longtime board member of the Buzzards Bay Coalition, Bullard has been a leader in bringing people together to clean up and sustain the bay's environmental health for fishing, boating,

shipping, and tourism.

From 1986 to 1992, Mr. Bullard was mayor of the City of New Bedford. During his three terms in office, he introduced community policing, recycling, AIDS prevention, and other programs. He encouraged the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth to build the Center for Marine Science and Technology in New Bedford, which is now known as the School for Marine Science and Technology or SMAST. He also brought the city into compliance with the Clean Water Act by building a modern secondary wastewater treatment plant. His decision to locate the plant in New Bedford's south end cost him re-election to a fourth term – the political price of clean water.

Mr. Bullard understands the challenges being faced by the fishing industry, scientists, and managers and is committed to finding ways to increase constructive dialogue among them. Through increased dialogue, mutual respect, and understanding, his goal is to chart a course toward a sustainable and vibrant fishing industry.

He also recognizes that the fishing industry of yesterday may not look like the fishing industry of the future and that difficult decisions will need to be made to ensure the long-term viability of the fishing industry in the Northeast.

Mr. Bullard earned his Bachelor of Arts magna cum laude at Harvard in 1969. He received both a Master of Architecture and a Master of City Planning from MIT in 1974. He has lectured widely and received numerous awards, including an Honorary Master of Public Service from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

Mr. Bullard can be reached at [john.bullard@noaa.gov](mailto:john.bullard@noaa.gov) or 978-281-9250.

# Removing the Great Works Dam on Maine's Penobscot River

In the summer of 2012, East Coast fisheries received a boost with the removal of the Great Works Dam on the Penobscot River in Maine. The largest freshwater input to the Gulf of Maine, the Penobscot River once was home to millions of sea-run fish, especially Atlantic salmon, American shad, and alewife, but the river was heavily impacted by industrialization beginning in the early 19th century. The construction of dams and mills blocked fish migration routes and contributed to pollution of the river.

The Great Works Dam removal is the beginning of an ambitious Penobscot River Restoration Project (PRRP). This project also will include the removal of the head-of-tide Veazie Dam downstream of Great Works and fish passage at the Howland Dam upstream on the Piscataquis River. The PRRP will improve access to nearly 1,000 miles of historical fish habitat and will reduce fish mortality associated with these hydropower dams. Also, there will be no net loss of hydropower generation within the Penobscot River watershed because the former owner of the dams, Black Bear Hydro Partners LLC, plans to expand generating facilities at other existing sites.

Demolition of the Great Works Dam began on June 11 in front of a crowd that included officials from municipal, state, and federal government, members of the Penobscot Indian Nation, non-profit organizations, and local citizens.

To date, the NOAA Restoration Center has contributed \$19.9 million towards the PRRP, including grants to the Penobscot River Restoration Trust for the purchase of the facilities and dam removal. NOAA is the principal funder of the Great Works Dam

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resulted in collaborations with dozens of other scientists and organizations to collect specimens for projects conducted by graduate students and other marine fisheries researchers.

### Valuable contributions

Now in its sixth year, the NEAMAP MA/SNE survey has made valuable contributions to nearshore marine fisheries research and monitoring.

This network of states, fishery management councils, and the ASMFC is collaborating with many partners to develop additional surveys and maximize the utility of data collected from existing coastal surveys.

With continued support, the NEAMAP survey system as a whole will ensure the collection of vital information to manage and improve nearshore ecosystem and fishery monitoring along the entire Atlantic Coast from North Carolina to the Maine/Canada border.

For more information on the NEAMAP survey system, please e-mail Chris Bonzek at <cfb@vims.edu> or visit the survey's website at <www.neamap.net>.



removal, and has pledged at least \$1 million toward the subsequent removal of the Veazie Dam, which may begin as early as 2013.

Constructed in 1887, the main dam at Great Works replaced an upstream dam originally built in 1834 for sawmills on both sides of the river. By the 1880s, the site became the first chemical pulp fiber mill in the country, and a working pulp mill still exists at the site.

The Great Works Dam removal is being performed by a local contractor, RF Jordan & Sons of Ellsworth, ME. Funding for the removal was provided by NOAA through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 with oversight conducted by NOAA staff based in Orono, ME, Gloucester, MA, and Silver Spring, MD.

Despite a short delay due to unseasonably high river flow in June, work quickly resumed on the demolition of the 1,000'-long main dam – the largest dam removal to date in the Northeast.

By August, artifacts of the site's history began to emerge as the impoundment was lowered, exposing previously submerged features including timber crib legacy dams, rusty chains, and booms used to sort logs during the log-driving era. Most importantly, the old channels used by migrating fish became visible amidst outcroppings of ledge and boulders.

### Migration pathways

Remnants of iconic sea-run fish populations still exist in the Penobscot, which provides hope for their recovery. Maine is home to the last remaining runs of federally endangered Atlantic salmon in the United States, with the Penobscot River run being the largest.

In 2011, 3,030 returning adult Atlantic salmon were counted at the Veazie Dam, but, unfortunately, only 609 returning adults were documented in the spring of 2012.

NOAA scientists and colleagues also have observed other migratory fish in the lower Penobscot River in recent years, including endangered shortnose sturgeon, threatened Atlantic sturgeon, American shad, and river herring (alewife and blueback herring, presently undergoing Endangered Species Act Status Review by NOAA).

Restoration of river herring is greatly anticipated on the Penobscot River because of the importance of river

herring biologically and because of their importance as food or bait for other commercially fished species. River herring are commercially harvested on other Maine rivers, largely as bait for the state's most valuable fishery, American lobster.

The bait industry, including alewife and blueback herring harvested in Maine, contributed to the 104 million pounds of lobster landed in 2011 with a value of over \$331 million. River herring also are known to be consumed by groundfish such as Atlantic cod.

NOAA's involvement in the restoration of the Penobscot River will continue after the removal of the Great Works and Veazie Dams. In anticipation of the main stem dam removals, the NOAA Restoration Center has already funded fishway projects on important tributaries, such as Blackman Stream and Pushaw Stream, to restore alewives to thousands of acres of lake

spawning habitat.

As part of the Penobscot River restoration, NOAA also is sponsoring some of the most ambitious scientific monitoring in the nation associated with large dam removals.

### Habitat challenges

Including ARRA funding that leveraged partner contributions, NOAA has invested over \$2 million to date in pre- and post-removal studies that evaluate how the dam removals affect marine, estuarine, and riverine fish populations and habitat, wetlands, water quality, and river geomorphology.

NOAA also identifies and implements other recovery actions for Atlantic salmon and conducts regulatory reviews under federal laws to protect endangered species and fish habitats.

The removal of the Great Works dam is expected to be an important milestone in the restoration of Gulf of Maine fisheries and a continuation of improvements to the health of the Penobscot River that began in the 1970s with the passage of the Clean Water Act.

During his remarks at the June 11 Great Works breaching ceremony, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries Eric Schwaab highlighted the importance of the dam removals to fish stocks and of continuing habitat restoration work in the future.

"In NOAA Fisheries, we've been working hard with the state and with local partners to end overfishing to rebuild federally managed stocks, and we've made tremendous progress in that regard. But as we do that, we look ahead and see big habitat challenges for important coastal and ocean fisheries all along the coast," he said.

"So, to be able to invest in these kinds of projects going forward and replicate this success is going to be incredibly important, again, not just to this river, but to resources of national interest all up and down our coasts," he added.

The NOAA Restoration Center is the only office within NOAA solely devoted to restoring the nation's coastal, marine, and migratory fish habitat. For more information about the NOAA Restoration Center, visit the center's website at <www.habitat.noaa.gov/restoration>.

# Acoustic Deterrents Can Be Effective In Reducing Harbor Porpoise Entanglements If Used Correctly

Under the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan, gillnet fishermen are required to use acoustic deterrent devices, or pingers, on their gillnet gear during certain times and in certain areas when porpoises are present to help avoid deadly interactions. We urge gillnet fishermen fishing within the harbor porpoise management areas, to make sure that their gillnets are equipped with the correct number of pingers and that the pingers have fresh batteries so they are properly functioning. This is especially important during the months of October and November when high levels of harbor porpoise bycatch have typically occurred in the coastal waters of the Gulf of Maine.

A gillnet fishery closure was originally scheduled to be in effect during October and November because bycatch of harbor porpoises in the Gulf of Maine was nearly twice the acceptable threshold in these waters. However, the timing of this closure has been shifted to February and March of 2013, thus still requiring the use of pingers during October and November.

Based on recent 2010 and 2011 bycatch information that showed a higher number of harbor porpoise entanglements during February/March, NOAA Fisheries decided to shift the closure from October and November when historically bycatch has been highest in the fishery in the Gulf of Maine. The economic impacts on the fishing industry should be less as a result of the shift in timeframe.

"While it is a good news for fishermen that we were able to shift the closure, we really can't emphasize enough how important it is for fishermen to use pingers properly when they are fishing," said Northeast Marine Mammal Team Coordinator, David Gouveia. "The early information we have on harbor porpoise stock condition doesn't look good and we need to make sure that we do everything possible to keep bycatch rates down. Pingers work to deter harbor porpoises if they are used correctly."

According to NOAA Fisheries research, if used correctly, this preventative technology is nearly 92 percent effective in reducing entanglements by warning harbor porpoises away from fishing nets.

Pingers are small acoustic devices Northeastern fishermen are required to attach to their gillnets to reduce marine mammal bycatch during specific fishing seasons. When a gillnet is submerged underwater, the pingers attached to the net broadcast short, high pitched sounds or "pings" every four seconds. Those pings are designed to deter harbor porpoises from getting close to the nets.

A gillnet is a series of nets that are strung together to form a wall of net. Fish are caught by hitting this wall and "gilling" themselves in the mesh. Most of the time, the targeted fish are the ones caught in the gillnets. However, marine life, such as harbor porpoises, may also accidentally get entangled in the nets—a situation that the proper number of pingers is often able to prevent.

NOAA Fisheries equipment specialists like John

Higgins and others including NOAA enforcement officers, state officers, and the Coast Guard are on the docks emphasizing how important that it is that fishermen use pingers in the prescribed manner to keep the bycatch of harbor porpoise down.

"There is a lot of satisfaction in the results of proper pinger use," said Higgins. "What we need to do is make sure there is 100 percent compliance."

The number of pingers required by NOAA on each gillnet string depends on the length of the string. According to the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan every net within a string needs to have a working pinger on each end. For example, a string of ten nets is required to have eleven pingers (one on each end of the net string and one in between each net). Studies have shown that when there are too few pingers, or if a device is not working, bycatch often increases, possibly due to

the animals sensing a gap in the nets and attempting to swim through it.

"Not having the right number of pingers may actually be worse than having none at all," said Gouveia. "Scientists believe that porpoises, in an attempt to avoid a lone pinger, end up swimming straight into another area in the string of nets if adjacent pingers are not present or are not functioning."

Between 1999 and 2003, when pingers were first required, porpoise bycatch numbers declined to an estimated 373 animals per year, down from 1,600 prior to the requirements. But, entanglements are on the rise, driving the new emphasis on the use of pinger technology by NOAA Fisheries.

If you have questions on pinger use, call the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Region Protected Resources Division at (978) 281-9328.

## Vessel Monitoring System Software Upgrades – New Declarations and Forms Beginning November 1, 2012

The software running on your vessel monitoring system (VMS) unit is being upgraded to comply with recent NOAA Fisheries Northeast Region regulatory changes. We have also enhanced the functionality of your VMS software which should make using VMS easier to use. When your VMS service provider sends you the new software, you'll notice a few changes:

- For groundfish fishermen, we created separate declarations for sector and common pool members. These declaration menus are now in a question-based format and the menu selections are clearly marked either 'optional' or 'required'. We also removed the often-confusing U.S./Canada Management sub-area 1-8 selections and replaced them with areas by name; you simply select one or more areas from the menu that you intend to fish.
  - For monkfish fishermen, the declaration menu follows the same format as the groundfish declaration menu.
  - For scallop fishermen, the declaration menu looks the same, but we have changed the access area choices.
  - For all fishermen, we expanded the Declare Out of Fishery (DOF) declaration menu to give us a better idea of your intended activity under this declaration. When you declare out of fishery, we now ask that you select a DOF declaration for either transit activity (no fishing), commercial fishing (for non-VMS-required species), recreational/charter fishing, scientific activity (non-EFP) or Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) participation.
- We also added some additional instruction

text to the Power Down declaration for general category scallop and groundfish sector vessels (with approved exemptions). Please remember to send the power down declaration before turning the power off to your VMS at the dock or mooring if you are an Limited Access General Category (LAGC) scallop vessel or exempted groundfish sector vessel that does not have other Northeast permits requiring continuous reporting.

Finally, we added an optional 'comments' field to the groundfish trip start and trip end haul reports. This additional field was requested by many sector managers who may use the field to collect data from their members (please note that only the trip end haul report is currently required by NMFS).

During the second half October 2012, your VMS service provider will be sending you the software upgrade and, if applicable, any instructions for installing this software. Additionally, the Northeast Regional Office will be sending you a permit holder letter about the new software. Announcements concerning this VMS software change may be found at: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/vms/>

Please be sure that your vessel's VMS unit has the new software loaded and please begin using the new software for trips on or after November 1, 2012.

If you have any questions about the new VMS software or about Northeast VMS changes and reporting requirements, please call (978) 281-9213 and ask for a Northeast VMS team member to assist you.



# The NOAA FISHERIES NAVIGATOR