Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

NOAA Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

For Information Contact: http://www.nero.noaa.gov/
Sustainable Fisheries Division - (978) 281-9315   Date Issued: 2/19/2014
VMS Team - (978) 281-9213

New Vessel Monitoring System Software
SkyMate Users
Effective Date: March 18, 2014

The software that runs on your vessel monitoring system (VMS) unit is being updated to comply with recent regulatory changes. SkyMate will be mailing you the new software CD version 3.946 on February 24, 2014, along with installation instructions. If you want the CD mailed to a different address than you previously gave SkyMate, or you prefer to receive the larger, standard-size 5 1/2" disk, please call 1-866-SKYMATE.

Please load and begin using this new software for trips on or after March 18, 2014. You will not be compliant with the regulations if your vessel sails on or after this date with old software.

Immediately after loading the new software, please be sure the top left corner of your computer screen states "SkyMate 3.946 Client Software." Once loaded, we recommend that you send a 'Declare Out of Fishery – Transit' declaration which alerts us that you have updated the new software. You must then send the appropriate activity declaration from your SkyMate VMS prior to your next trip.

You may also download the new software from the SkyMate web site at www.skymate.com (under 'Downloads').

Requirement to Enter Your Operator Permit Number

With the exception of the declaration screens, all VMS forms now require that the vessel operator for that trip enter their 8-digit 'Federal Vessel Operator Permit Number' in the 'Operator's Permit Number' field. This should not be confused with the vessel permit number. As an official record, this information helps us to determine responsibility for reporting requirements from trip to trip.

Summary of Software Declaration Changes

1. Monkfish Research Set-Aside (RSA) Trips. You must now declare monkfish RSA days-at-sea from the monkfish declaration screen on your VMS unit, instead of through the IVR call-in system.

2. Scallop Research Set-Aside Trips. To declare a scallop RSA trip, you must now make your fishing area selection in either the 'General Category (LAGC) Permit' or 'Limited Access Permit' section and then select 'yes' to the scallop RSA quota question at the bottom of the screen. For limited access special access area trips, remember to answer both the 'compensation trip' and 'fishing area' questions.

3. Herring Trips. The declaration screen is now on its own page and you must answer questions pertaining to whether this is a carrier trip, gear type, mackerel/squid retention, and if you intend to harvest herring RSA quota.

4. Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Trips. The declaration screen is now on its own page. Trips into the Reopened Portion of the Georges Bank PSP Area must now be declared via VMS and you should no longer call the VMS Team when declaring this type of trip.

5. Mackerel and Longfin Squid Trips. There are two new declaration screens, one for each species. These trips must be declared via VMS when the requirement becomes effective on or about August 2014. For longfin squid trips, you will be able to declare your intent to harvest Longfin Squid RSA quota.

Summary of Software Reports Changes

1. Multispecies Catch. Species kept must now be reported by statistical area fished; this will be used to determine the broad stock area fished. The 'All Fish Kept' field has been removed; instead, you must report each species kept and 'non-groundfish' kept by statistical area. We will add up groundfish and non-groundfish to calculate all fish kept. The 'Date Fish Caught' field includes a new selection for 'year'.

2. Multispecies Trip Start Hail and Trip End Hail. The start hail includes two new fields; one field for declaring any sector exemptions and a second field for declaring any sector operations plan provisions that you intend to fish under for the trip. The 'Estimated Arrival' and 'Estimated Offload' fields in both hail forms include a new selection for 'year'.

3. Herring Catch. The 'Date Fish Caught' field includes a new selection for 'year'. A new field asks whether you will fish mid-water trawl gear; if you select 'yes', the 'Total Fish Kept' field must be filled in before sending the form.

4. Herring Pre-Landing. The report is now required to be sent by all vessels declaring a herring trip. A 'VTR' field has been added. The 'Estimated Arrival' field includes a new selection for 'year'.

5. Mackerel and Longfin Squid Catch. This is a new report which must be sent via VMS when the requirement becomes effective on or about August 2014.

6. Mackerel Pre-Landing. This is a new report for vessels with landings exceeding 20,000 lbs. The report must be sent via VMS when the requirement becomes effective on or about August 2014.

7. RSA/EFP Trip Start Hail and RSA/EFP Trip End Hail. These are two new VMS reports. You must now send both a trip start hail and trip end hail from your VMS unit when RSA compensation fishing or fishing under an EFP. These reporting requirements will be addressed in the permit that authorizes the compensation fishing or experimental fishing activity.

Reminder of VMS Requirements

Sector Vessel Owners/Operators. If your sector is exempt from continuous VMS reporting at the dock/mooring, you must (1) keep your VMS powered up if you have other permits requiring continuous reporting, or (2) send the Power Down declaration prior to powering off your VMS. The Power Down declaration is at 'Activity NE', 'More' (twice), then 'DOF' (scroll to bottom of screen).

VMS Operator Instructions. You'll find views of all the new VMS declaration and reports screens. You'll also find information about how and when to send your required declarations and reports. It's available on the VMS web page at http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/vms/ (under 'Instructions and Forms'). If you want a paper copy, please contact us.

Contacting the VMS Team. If you have questions about this new VMS software or your VMS requirements, please call us at (978) 281-9213, option 2.