



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

March 7, 2005

Dear Federally Permitted Seafood Dealer:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces the publication of a proposed rule (69 FR 10585, March 4, 2005, copy enclosed) and request for comments regarding changes to several aspects of the reporting requirements for some dealers permitted by the Northeast Region of NMFS. The intent of this action to reduce the reporting burden on federally permitted seafood dealers, improve data quality, simplify compliance and enforceability of the reporting regulations, and clarify existing regulations. This action also proposes to make a minor change to vessel operator permits.

Please take time to review the enclosed proposed rule and the online document. The public comment period for this action ends on March 21, 2005. The proposed implementation date for this action is May 1, 2005.

The following are the main areas in which changes are proposed by this action. For more information, please consult the full proposed rule and/or its Regulatory Impact Review (RIR), the Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA) and other supporting materials.

Affected Dealers

Summer Flounder	<i>Illex</i> Squid	Atlantic Bluefish
Scup	<i>Loligo</i> Squid	Atlantic Herring
Black Sea Bass	Atlantic Mackerel	Atlantic Deep-sea Red Crab
Atlantic Sea Scallop	Butterfish	Tilefish
Northeast Multispecies	Spiny Dogfish	Atlantic Surfclam
Monkfish	Skate	Ocean Quahog

Major Measures

- Reporting Frequency: change to a weekly reporting schedule for all dealers.
- Out-of-Region Purchases: require dealers to report only species managed by the NE Region, including American lobster, when purchasing fish from a vessel landing outside the NE Region.
- Inshore Species: minimize reporting of certain inshore species already collected by or managed by other agencies, such as bay scallop, blood arc clam, soft clam, razor clam, blood worm, sand worm, blue crab, green crab, hermit crab, Japanese shore crab, spider crab, blue mussel, oyster, and quahog.





Other Measures

- Eliminate duplicate reporting of Atlantic bluefin tuna purchases.
- Remove the option for dealers to submit reports via phone-line File Transfer Protocol.
- Clarify several existing dealer reporting requirements.
- Allow vessel operator permits issued by the Southeast Region under 50 CFR part 622 to satisfy Northeast operator permit requirements.

For More Information

- Copies of the regulatory amendment, its Regulatory Impact Review (RIR), the Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA), and other supporting materials are available from:
Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator
Northeast Region, NMFS
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

The regulatory amendment/RIR/IRFA is also accessible via the Internet at <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/ro/doc/edrdocumentfinal.pdf>.

Submitting Comments

- Send by mail to the above address in an envelope marked, “Comments on Proposed Rule for Dealer Electronic Reporting.”
- Send via facsimile (fax) to (978) 281-9161.
- Submit via email to DealerER@noaa.gov; mark the subject line “Comments on Dealer Reporting.”

For further information on dealer reporting requirements, please contact your local port office (see enclosed list).

Sincerely,

John F. Witzig
Chief, Fisheries Statistics Office