



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

April 25, 2003

Small Entity Compliance Guide

Dear Northeast (NE) Multispecies Permit Holder:

This letter is to inform you that a proposed emergency rule has been published in the Federal Register soliciting comments on management measures for the NE multispecies fishery (for both the commercial and recreational fisheries). The management measures under consideration would be in place for the period beginning July 28, 2003, and ending on the date Amendment 13 to the NE Multispecies Fishery Management Plan is implemented, which is expected to be May 1, 2004.

The proposed measures would continue the current rules that were implemented on August 1, 2002, consistent with the Settlement Agreement and adopted by a Court Order in Conservation Law Foundation, et al. v. Evans et al. In addition the rule proposes a Days-at-Sea (DAS) leasing program that would allow limited access multispecies permit holders to lease DAS, subject to certain restrictions. You may be sent additional information (specific instructions and an application) in the near future to expedite the administration of this program in the event it is implemented.

If you hold a NE multispecies limited access permit, your multispecies DAS allocation for the new fishing year beginning May 1, 2003, will be the same as the allocation of DAS that you received under the August 1, 2002, interim groundfish action. In contrast to last year, during the period May through July 2003, DAS use will not be limited to 25% of the annual allocation. Only vessels that have obtained a Day gillnet designation and that fish under a NE multispecies DAS with gillnet gear are subject to the differential DAS accounting rule under which trips greater than 3 hours, but less than or equal to 15 hours, will be counted as 15 hours.

The proposed rule may be accessed on-line from the following web site: www.nero.nmfs.gov or a copy of the proposed rule may be obtained by contacting Tom Warren at (978) 281-9347. Written comments on the proposed emergency rule should be sent to Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope, "Comments on the Proposed Emergency Rule for Groundfish." Comments also may be sent via facsimile (fax) to (978) 281-9135. Comments will be accepted until May 27, 2003, but will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or Internet.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia A. Kurkul".

Patricia A. Kurkul
Regional Administrator

