

# MEMORANDUM

---

---

TO: Chris Moore, Executive Director MAFMC

FROM: Andrew Loftus, MAFMC Contractor

DATE: June 1, 2016

SUBJECT: Framework 1 document for proposed mandatory electronic VTRs in for-hire fisheries

Attached is the Framework 1 document outlining options and justification for proposed mandatory electronic submission of VTRs by for-hire vessels with Federal permits for species managed by the Council beginning January 1, 2017. This proposed action was outlined in the Council's 2016 Implementation Plan adopted in December, 2015.

While the general information and the currently-required VTR paper form are included in this document for reference (Attachment A), detailed VTR instructions have been made available at <http://www.mafmc.org/briefing/june-2016> should Council members wish to review those.

The initial Framework Meeting will be during the Council meeting June 13-16, 2016 in Newark, DE during which I will present the options and be available for questions and discussion. Following this meeting, I will work with Council staff to arrange and host an interactive session and other mechanisms to solicit input from constituents. The second Framework Meeting will be at the Council's meeting August 8-11, 2016 in Virginia Beach, VA with final action anticipated during that meeting. Implementation of the requirements under this action is anticipated January 1, 2017.

Omnibus Framework for

Mandatory Electronic Vessel Trip Reports From  
Federally-Permitted For-Hire Vessels and Operators in  
the Mid-Atlantic Region

Framework Meeting 1 Document

June 14, 2016

## Contents

Introduction.....	1
Purpose and Need for Action.....	1
Purpose of the Action.....	1
Need for the Action.....	1
Timeline for Action.....	1
Background.....	1
Summary of Current Reporting Regulations .....	2
Problems with the Current Reporting Regulations .....	3
Proposed Management Measures and Alternatives .....	4
Proposed Action.....	4
Preferred Alternative 1: Require Electronic Submission of VTRS .....	4
Rationale for Proposed Action.....	5
Non-Preferred Alternative 2: No Action.....	5
Non-Preferred Alternative 3: Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) .....	5
Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives.....	6
Impacts on Fishery Resources .....	6
Impacts on Habitat .....	6
Impacts on Protected Resources .....	6
Economic Impacts.....	6
Consistency with Applicable Laws-to be completed.....	6
Attachment A. Vessel Trip Report Form.....	8

## **Introduction**

Federally-permitted for-hire fishing vessels in the Mid Atlantic are required to submit Vessel Trip Reports (VTRs) documenting all fishing activity and catches (.50 CFR 648.7). Electronic vessel trip reports (eVTRs), which allow direct entry of data by the vessel operator using a computer-based system, have been available as an option since 2011. In early 2016, the first mobile-based system for submitting eVTRs was approved by NOAA Fisheries (the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program's SAFIS eTrips app for Apple and Android platforms). The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) has explored the use of eVTRs and as part of the 2016 Implementation Plan elected to develop an omnibus Framework to require electronic submission of VTRs by the for-hire sector beginning January 1, 2017.

## **Purpose and Need for Action**

### **Purpose of the Action**

The purpose of this action is to require for-hire vessels with Federal permits for species managed by the Council to submit currently-required VTRs to NOAA through electronic means beginning January 1, 2017. This action is not a change in reporting requirements but an administrative modification in the method for submitting VTRs.

### **Need for the Action**

This action is expected to: 1) increase the timeliness (availability) of data submitted through VTRs; 2) reduce the reporting burden on data providers (for-hire operators and/or captains) by eliminating the need of paper-based reporting, and; 3) increase the accuracy and quality of data by reducing recall bias associated with delayed completion and submission of paper forms. According to NOAA Fisheries, "electronic reporting will make the collection of important data on fishing vessel activity more efficient, convenient, and timely for the fishing industry, fishery managers, and other data users."<sup>1</sup>

### **Timeline for Action**

The initial Framework Meeting will be during the Council meeting June 13-16, 2016 in Newark, DE. The second Framework Meeting will be at the Council's meeting August 8-11, 2016 in Virginia Beach, VA with final action anticipated during that meeting. Implementation of the requirements under this action is anticipated January 1, 2017.

## **Background<sup>2</sup>**

In 1992, NOAA Fisheries began mandating reporting of catch, landings, and trip information through Vessel Trip Reports (VTRs) for federally permitted vessels holding summer flounder permits. This requirement was expanded during 1994-96 to include all vessels with federal fishing permits. In 2004, mandatory electronic reporting by federally permitted dealers was implemented for almost all federally-managed species. Requirements for weekly reporting were implemented in 2010 for fisheries under catch shares, with weekly reporting later expanded to herring, mackerel, surf clam/ocean quahog IFQ fisheries. In July 2011, the NOAA Fisheries

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/evtr/electronic/index.html>, May 26, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Some information extracted from: StCyr, J., Conigliari, T., Witzig, J. 2013. Fisheries Dependent Data Collections Vessel and Dealer Reporting. Presentation prepared August 6, 2013. NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional Office. 41p.

Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) approved the use of electronic reporting of VTRs on a limited, voluntary basis. Currently, XX for-hire vessels in the Mid-Atlantic region hold permits requiring them to submit VTRs. In 2015, XX vessels submitted XX VTRs, with few submitted electronically according to preliminary discussion with GARFO staff.[NOTE: will clarify numbers before Framework 2].

### Summary of Current Reporting Regulations

Owners and operators of federally permitted vessels possessing any of the permits listed below are required to submit a VTR for every commercial, party, or charter trip taken, regardless of where they fish (state or federal waters) or what they catch.

Northeast multispecies	Atlantic bluefish*	Spiny dogfish*
Atlantic sea scallop	Atlantic herring	Summer flounder*
Monkfish*	Northeast skate	Scup*
Ocean quahog*	Tilefish*	Surf Clam*
Black sea bass*	Atlantic deep sea red crab	Atlantic mackerel, squid, butterfish*

\* Covered by a MAFMC Plan

VTRs must be received or postmarked by the 15th day of the month, following the month in which the trip occurred except for Northeast Multispecies, Herring, Surf Clam & Ocean Quahog, Squid, Mackerel and Butterfish which require weekly reporting where VTRs must be submitted by midnight of the Tuesday following the reporting week (Sunday through Saturday) in which fish were offloaded for any trip, including trips landing other species. If a trip encompasses multiple chart areas a separate VTR must be submitted for each area where fishing activity takes place. If a vessel does not fish for an entire reporting period, a “Did Not Fish” report was initially required.<sup>3</sup> A separate VTR is required for each reporting period. If a vessel does not land any fish on a trip, all trip information must be completed and “No Catch” entered in as the species code name. A VTR is required regardless of where fishing occurs, meaning that a vessel subject to these requirements in the Northeast must report even if they fish in the Southeast Region or for Highly Migratory Species (HMS) except for vessels holding only an American lobster permit. Since VTRs are in addition to any other reports which may be required by other Regions or plans, multiple reports may be required. VTRs, and any records upon which the reports were based, must be kept on board the vessel for at least 1 year and retained by the owner/operator for a total of 3 years after the date of the last entry on the report.

Attachment A contains additional information and the currently-required VTR form. Detailed instructions for submitting VTRs are available at <http://www.mafmc.org/briefing/june-2016> .

---

<sup>3</sup> Although a “Did Not Fish” report was initially required, this was eliminated August 26, 2015 under the Secretary's authority at section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act to promulgate regulations necessary to carry out Councils' amendments consistently with the Act (Federal Register Vol. 80, No. 165). However, there is some initial discussion of reinstating this requirement.

Operators have the option to submit their VTRs electronically (eVTR). At present, the following software applications are approved to meet the technical requirements of eVTR submissions:<sup>4</sup>

- Fisheries Logbook and Data Recording Software (FLDRS)
- Fishing Activity & Catch Tracking System (FACTS™)
- Ecotrust Canada Electronic Logbook (Elog)
- Dynamic Data Logger (DDL)
- Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information eTrips Mobile (SAFIS eTrips/M)

The SAFIS eTrips application is currently the only approved mobile-based application (Apple iOS and Android operating platforms) while the others are computer-based systems.

### **Problems with the Current Reporting Regulations**

With the advent and ubiquitous availability of high-speed Internet, paper forms are no longer the most efficient method for permit holders to submit the required information, nor for NOAA Fisheries to process it. As previously stated, NOAA Fisheries considers that electronic reporting “will make the collection of important data on fishing vessel activity more efficient, convenient, and timely for the fishing industry, fishery managers, and other data users.” At present, paper-based reports create a substantial time delay between the time when fishing activity occurs and when the data are available to fisheries managers. Reports may not be mailed (or faxed) to NOAA Fisheries for up to six weeks after the fishing activity occurs (if regulations are followed). Following receipt of paper forms, data must be entered into the system and checked for anomalies and errors (creating further delay if contact must be made with the operator for clarification or correction). Paper reports may also suffer from illegible handwriting or messy forms that further impede accurate data entry.

Under VTR regulations, operators must submit a separate VTR for each area fished, theoretically requiring multiple paper forms for a single trip. While eVTRs still require reporting of fishing activity in each area fished, eVTRs eliminate the paper associated with such reporting and ease the reporting associated with multiple areas. Operators are required to retain VTRs for three years after the date of the last entry on the report. Electronic VTRs alleviate the need to maintain paper-based copies since the original electronic copy will be stored in the system (although additional supporting documentation, if any, may still need to be retained). Additionally, vessel operators may be faced with duplicate reporting if they are fishing in another region or for a species (e.g., HMS) that also requires reporting through a separate system. Several states also require reporting from for-hire vessels with information that is identical, or similar, to that provided through VTRs. As electronic data entry by vessel operators is established, the development of systems to submit multiple reports from a single data entry screen will be facilitated.

Recommendations were made during a May 2016 Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) workshop addressing for-hiring reporting on the Atlantic coast that all federal fisheries reporting programs should investigate means to develop a common reporting system to

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/evtr/electronic/index.html> , May 26, 2016.

reduce the burden of duplicate reporting, which could be achieved through an electronic reporting system.

## **Proposed Management Measures and Alternatives**

### **Proposed Action**

The proposed action is to modify the administrative requirements to require for-hire fishing vessels with Federal permits for species managed by the Council to submit currently-required VTRs to NOAA through electronic means beginning January 1, 2017. No changes are proposed for the data types being collected; this is simply a change in the means of submission.

### **Preferred Alternative 1: Require Electronic Submission of VTRS**

Beginning January 1, 2017, owners/operators of for-hire fishing vessels with Federal permits for species managed by the Council will be required to submit Vessel Trip Reports through one of the NOAA-approved electronic Vessel Trip Report systems. Five options are currently available for this:

#### Computer-based systems

- Fisheries Logbook and Data Recording Software (FLDRS)
- Fishing Activity & Catch Tracking System (FACTS™)
- Ecotrust Canada Electronic Logbook (Elog)
- Dynamic Data Logger (DDL)

#### Mobile-based system

- Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information eTrips Mobile (SAFIS eTrips/M), for use on smart phones or tablets operating the Apple iOS or Android platforms.

Additional systems may be developed and, upon approval by NOAA for submitting VTRs, would automatically be added to this list.

This alternative does not change any of the requirements for data elements that are currently-reported through paper-based VTRs. This alternative does not change any of the NOAA-mandated reporting deadlines, although electronic reporting facilitates an increased frequency of reporting of VTRs should the vessel owner/operator so choose or the Council/NOAA so require in later action. Geographic locations of effort and catch will not change from that required through paper VTRs; permit holders will report by NOAA Chart Area and depending on the system used may be able to choose greater geographic specificity if they desire.

The cost of this alternative is free or minimal. Computer based reporting options are available through any computer with internet connection which many people have in their homes/businesses and which is available for free through most public libraries. The mobile-based option (SAFIS eTrips) would require a tablet computer (many basic models available for under \$200) and either a cellular data plan or wireless internet connection (many free access points) for submitting reports.

There would be no increased cost to the government for this alternative. Electronic systems are available and already operational for submitting and receiving eVTRs. It is anticipated that in the long run, administrative costs would be reduced due to the reduction in need for physically entering (scanning) paper-based VTRs and reduction in inaccuracies due to illegible hand writing, messy paper forms, or other obstructions causing delays in processing.

Because this proposed action deals entirely with the administrative mechanisms by which for-hire fishing vessels permit holders submit reports, the alternative would not affect fishing vessel effort, operations, species targeted, or areas fished and there would be no direct impacts of the proposed action on any fishery resources or habitat managed under a Council FMP or on any associated protected resources.

### ***Rationale for Proposed Action***

As stated previously, the proposed action is expected to increase efficiencies in data submission, improve accuracy in data management, and vastly expedite data availability for all fisheries management purposes. The May 2016 ACCSP Workshop participants identified several desirable aspects to help programs move to electronic reporting that are encompassed in this proposed action, including:

- Multiple ways to access the reporting feature, including smart phones, tablets, and pc-based system;
- Provide incentives to users of the system (including ease of data entry/submission);
- Provide functionality requiring report submission;
- Provide training opportunities to help individuals learn the system;
- Provide for multiple federal and state reporting capabilities through a single application

The proposed action will achieve or facilitate many of these recommendations and meet the desired intent at little or no cost to permit holders and ultimately reduce administrative costs of NOAA Fisheries currently associated with data entry.

### **Non-Preferred Alternative 2: No Action**

Under this alternative, VTRs would continue to be submitted by paper (mail or fax) or optionally through the use of an available eVTR system. This status quo is not preferred since it would perpetuate the lengthy delay of the availability of VTR data for managers and the burden on permit holders to maintain paper VTR records. Continued use of paper VTRs would not facilitate the development of integrated systems with state agency partners (and other federally mandated reporting programs) to provide a single point of data entry by permit holders to satisfy multiple reporting requirements, thus continuing the burden of multiple reporting requirements for some users. The continued use of paper VTRs would necessitate the maintenance of administrative resources to accept, process, and manage paper forms.

### **Non-Preferred Alternative 3: Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)**

This non-preferred alternative would implement electronic reporting through the use of Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS). VMS is a satellite surveillance system to monitor the location and movement of fishing vessels using on-board transceiver units. These units send position reports that include vessel identification, time, date, and location, and are paired with a catch reporting mechanism to accurately capture catch, effort, and location of fishing activity. While VMS is



suitable for larger commercial vessels, it requires installation of equipment that may be logistically unfeasible for some of the smaller for-hire vessels to install, is substantially more costly than the preferred alternative, and imposes data reporting burdens on for-hire vessels that are not currently a part of VTR submission.

## **Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives**

### **Impacts on Fishery Resources**

Because the proposed action deals entirely with the administrative mechanisms by which Federal permit holders in the for-hire fisheries would report currently-required VTRs, and would not affect fishing vessel effort, operations, species targeted, or areas fished, there would be no direct impacts of the proposed action on any fishery resources managed under a Council FMP. There are no differences between the alternatives as far as direct impacts on fishery resources.

### **Impacts on Habitat**

Similar to the impacts on fishery resources, due to the nature of the measures in the proposed action, there would be no direct impacts of the proposed action on the habitat, including essential fish habitat (EFH), of any fishery resources managed under a Council FMP. There are no differences between the alternatives as far as direct impacts on any fish habitat, including EFH.

### **Impacts on Protected Resources**

Similar to the impacts on fishery resources, due to the nature of the measures in the proposed action, there would be no impact, either direct or indirect, of the proposed action on protected resources. There are no differences between the alternatives as far as direct or indirect impacts on any protected resources.

### **Economic Impacts**

There is little to no direct economic impact to permit holders. The approved eVTR systems are freely available to users once registered. The ubiquitous nature of computers and Internet availability in private homes and businesses, as well as free access to both in most public libraries and other locations, provides a free to low cost means for permit holders to access eVTRs. The ability to use electronic reporting programs to automatically fill in some reporting fields may decrease reporting burden. In the long term, government costs for administering this program are expected to be reduced resulting from efficiencies gained in data processing. Improved and expedited availability of the data is expected to expand the utility of the data currently collected to fisheries management, research, and law enforcement purposes.

### **Consistency with Applicable Laws-to be completed**

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act  
Compliance with the National Standards  
Compliance with Other Requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act  
National Environmental Policy Act  
Executive Order (EO) 12866 – Regulatory Impact Review  
Statement of the Problem and Need for Action  
Management Objectives  
Description of the Affected Entities  
Description of the Alternatives  
Expected Economic Effects of the Alternatives

Determination of Significance under EO 12866  
Administrative, Enforcement, and Information Costs

Regulatory Flexibility Act-  
Reasons the Action is Being Considered  
Management Objectives and Legal Basis  
Description of the Affected Entities  
Description of the Reporting, Recordkeeping, and Compliance Requirements  
Identification of Relevant Federal Rules  
Description of the Alternatives  
Economic Impacts on Small Entities  
Endangered Species Act  
Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)  
Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA)  
Coastal Zone Management Act  
Data Quality Act  
EO 12898, 13132, and 13158

# **Greater Atlantic Region**

## **Fishing Vessel Trip Report (VTR) Reporting Instructions**

**December 5, 2014**

These instructions may be found online at:

[http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/evtr/doc/vtr\\_inst.pdf](http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/evtr/doc/vtr_inst.pdf)

## VESSEL TRIP REPORTING (VTR) OVERVIEW

The Greater Atlantic Region is reissuing our VTR instructions because we have clarified several sections to improve the information we collect. While you may want to focus on the changes and pages pointed out below, we urge you to review the entire set of instructions—we have tried to make them easier to understand so that fewer reports will have to be returned to you for correction. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the VTR support team at (978) 281-9246. This line is heavily used, so if you get voicemail, please leave your name and number—in most cases, we are able to return calls within one business day.

### VTR requirements by vessel permit type

	Frequency of reporting	Report deadline	If you did not fish.....
If a vessel is issued a permit for: *Atlantic herring; *Atlantic mackerel; *Illex squid; *Longfin squid/butterfish; *Northeast multispecies; *Ocean quahogs; *Surfclams . . . .	Then the owner/operator must submit trip reports weekly	Reports must be postmarked or received by midnight of the Tuesday following the reporting week (Sunday through Saturday). If a trip starts in one week, and offloads in the next, it should be reported in the week the catch was offloaded.	If subject to weekly reporting, you must submit a Did Not Fish report for each week that there is no fishing trip activity. If you know your vessel will be inactive, you may submit these reports electronically up to 3 months in advance.
If a vessel is issued a permit for: *Atlantic bluefish *Atlantic deep-sea red crab *Atlantic sea scallop *Black sea bass *Monkfish *Northeast skate *Scup *Spiny dogfish *Summer flounder *Tilefish . . . .	Then the owner/operator must submit trip reports monthly	Reports must be postmarked or received within 15 days of the end of the month. If a trip starts in one month, and offloads in the next, it should be reported for the month in which the catch was offloaded	If subject to monthly reporting, you must submit a Did Not Fish report for each month that there is no fishing trip activity. If you know your vessel will be inactive, you may submit these reports electronically up to 3 months in advance.
If a vessel is issued a permit for American lobster <b>and</b> no other Greater Atlantic Region vessel permit . . . .	Then the owner/operator is not required to submit trips reports (check with your state, which may require reporting).	--	--

### Defining fishing trip activity that requires a VTR

If your vessel is issued any of the fishery permits with reporting requirements shown in the table above, you are required to complete a VTR for every fishing trip, whether the vessel is fishing in state or federal waters, or in another region of the country, such as Gulf of Mexico. This is true for all trips, no matter what species is being fished for or caught. Having an observer or at-sea monitor on board during a trip does not relieve you from this requirement.

These instructions clarify that a VTR is required for any trip on a federally permitted vessel when you catch

fish, or when your operations include activities that would support fishing, such as preparing to catch or harvest fish, or attempting to catch or harvest fish. All such fishing activities must be reported, even if no landings are made. The trip is the period of time during which these activities are conducted, beginning when the vessel leaves port and ending when the vessel returns to port.

**There are only two instances where a VTR isn't required for a specific trip:**

- **If you are transiting without any product onboard and don't engage in any fishing activity. For example, you're moving your vessel to a shipyard or you're returning to your home port.**
- **If you are operating under a scientific Letter of Acknowledgement**

You are required to report fishing trips even if no fish are caught or onboard if the following events occur:

- If you begin a fishing trip, but must return to port before setting or retrieving gear because of issues like bad weather or mechanical problems, then you must still complete a VTR. In this case, you must complete the information in VTR Fields 1-6, along with fields 24-27, and enter "No Effort" in the lower portion of the VTR.
- If you make a fishing trip just to set out gear you must still complete a VTR. Complete the information in VTR fields 1-6, along with fields 24-27, and enter "Set Only" in the lower portion of the VTR.
- If you make an unsuccessful trip, and don't catch any fish, you must still complete a VTR. In this case, you must complete all of the trip information in VTR Fields 1-16, and enter "No Catch" or "NC" in the species code field (#17).

**Submitting a VTR if you conducted no fishing trip activity**

As noted in the table, you must submit a VTR even if you did not use your vessel for any fishing activity for the entire reporting period, weekly or monthly, that is applicable to your permit types. In this case, you must fill out the "Did Not Fish" field at the top of the form, complete the vessel identification information in Fields 1-3, and sign and submit the form. However, we remind you that activity such as starting a fishing trip or preparing to catch fish is considered fishing activity. For example, if you start a fishing trip on Wednesday, but land and offload your catch the following Monday (i.e., after a trip of 6 days), the VTR must be submitted by midnight Tuesday of the third week and must provide all of the information about the trip. In this case, there is no week in which you "Did Not Fish".

Did Not Fish (DNF) reports may be submitted on the NMFS issued paper VTR or through our secure webpage, "Fish-On-Line" at <https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/NMFSlogin> **DNF reports submitted electronically through Fish-On-Line do not need to be mailed into NMFS.** If you need your confidential vessel Personal Identification Number (PIN) or cannot access Fish-On-Line please contact NMFS at (978) 281-9133 or by email at [nmfs.gar.data.requests@noaa.gov](mailto:nmfs.gar.data.requests@noaa.gov)

You must report all species caught (both kept and discarded), including all protected species. To report sea turtles or ESA-listed fish species (e.g., Atlantic salmon or sturgeon) incidentally caught, injured, or killed, enter the species code for each turtle or fish under the species code name column (#17) on the VTR. Enter the actual number (count) of sea turtles or listed fish caught in the discard column (#19). Under the dealer name column (#21), comment on the condition of the sea turtles or listed fish (e.g., alive, injured, or dead).

When an incidental mortality or injury of a marine mammal (seals, dolphins, porpoises, and whales) occurs during commercial fishing activities, you must also fill out and return the Marine Mammal Authorization Program Mortality & Injury Reporting Form within 48 hours of returning from the trip on which the incident occurred. You may obtain additional information, including a reporting form at: [www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/mmap/certificate.html](http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/prot_res/mmap/certificate.html) or call 978-281-9328.

## **When to complete and submit more than one VTR page**

You must complete all of the fields on a new VTR page each time you change your fishing area or gear. This means a new page is required each time you:

- Change the chart area (inshore or offshore) in which you are fishing;
- Change the type of gear you are using; or
- Change the mesh size or ring size in the gear you are using.

## **New gear codes**

VTR Field #7 requires you to identify the type of gear you used. New codes have been added to the gear code table (page 9) so that we can get better information about fishing gears. The scallop dredge codes are critical for evaluating the effectiveness of scallop dredge gear modifications for reducing interactions with sea turtles. The codes are summarized below:

- DRS – this code should be used for the standard scallop dredge
- DSC – this code should be used for the standard scallop dredge with chain mat
- DTS – this new code should be used for the scallop turtle deflector dredge
- DTC – this new code should be used for the scallop turtle deflector dredge with chain mat
- OTT – this code should be used for otter trawls (OTF) that are joined together in a “Twin Trawl” configuration.

## **How to report when you fish in more than one chart area**

If your fishing activity occurs in more than one chart area, you must submit a VTR for each chart area where you started to haul back or retrieve gear. If your tow or the placement of your fixed gear (for example, gillnets) crosses chart area boundaries, the area you report must be the area you were in when you started to retrieve or haul back your gear. For the gear types shown in the gear code table on page 9, this means:

- For mobile gear (trawl gears and dredges), you report the area where the hauling equipment is put into gear with the intention of hauling back and retrieving a net or dredge;
- For fixed gear (gillnets, longline, pots, traps, and weirs) you report the area where the hauling equipment is put into gear or retrieval of one end of the set begins.
- For purse seine gear, and other seine gears, you report the area where the skiff hits the water upon setting the gear, or when the first piece of gear hits the water, whichever occurs first.
- For handline, rod and reel, and the gears listed as “other gears”, you report the area where the gear is completely retrieved and aboard the vessel.

For example, if you start a tow in chart area 522, start hauling back in area 525, and land 100 pounds of monkfish, then all the catch from this tow would be reported in chart area 525.

The National Marine Fisheries Service requires this information for the conservation and management of marine fishery resources in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The data reported will be used to develop, implement, and monitor fishery management strategies and for a variety of other uses. Submission is mandatory for those persons falling under the requirements of 50 CFR 648.7 (b). All data submitted will be handled as Confidential material in accordance with NOAA Administrative Orders. Public reporting burden for the survey is estimated to average 5 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to NOAA Fisheries, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

