



Contact: Maggie Mooney-Seus
NOAA Fisheries Service
978-281-9175
Cheri Patterson
New Hampshire Fish and Game
603-868-1095
Jane Vachon
New Hampshire Fish and Game
603-271-3211

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NOAA and New Hampshire Fish and Game to Partner to Create Permit Bank
Goal to Enhance Fishing Opportunities for Small-scale Groundfish Fishermen

NOAA's Fisheries Service and the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department today announced a program to create a permit bank to help maximize economic and social benefits to New Hampshire groundfishermen and communities. NOAA is providing \$1 million to support this effort, which the N.H. Fish and Game will administer.

"We want to preserve the diversity of this historic fishery," said Eric Schwaab, NOAA assistant administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service. "That is why we have provided \$1 million to New Hampshire, which is part of \$6 million we have granted to support northeast states that are creating or expanding their own permit banks."

A permit bank is a collection of fishing permits that are purchased and held by an organization, in this case the state of New Hampshire, to provide additional access rights such as days-at-sea and annual catch share to qualifying fishing vessels. Each permit carries with it a catch history that determines how much fish the vessel can take, or the number of days-at-sea the vessel can fish in 2010. Days-at-sea can also be leased to vessels needing groundfish days-at sea to fish for monkfish.

The goal of permit banks is to provide owners of fishing vessels who are members of a sector (a legal entity comprised of a group of fishermen collectively using their allocation to fish for different groundfish species) with limited or no groundfish fishing history an opportunity to obtain additional fishing days or allocation. This will make it much more economically viable for these small fishing vessels to participate in the fishery.

"We look forward to working with NOAA to implement this project, which will help New Hampshire's rural fishing communities and small-scale fishing businesses," said Doug Grout, chief of N.H. Fish and Game Marine Fisheries. "These funds will directly benefit our local groundfish sectors and will allow us to establish a repository for future permit bank funds."

For more information, contact Cheri Patterson, N.H. Fish and Game Marine Fisheries, at 603-868-1095; or Michael Pentony, NOAA Fisheries Service, at 978-281-9283.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Visit us on Facebook <<http://www.facebook.com/usnoaagov>>.

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department is the guardian of the state's fish, wildlife and marine resources and their habitats. Visit <http://www.fishnh.com>.