



United States Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
Northeast Region
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

April 3, 2009

Dear Federal Fishing Permit Holder:

This letter is to inform you of the implementation of new gear codes to be used for reporting purposes on vessel trip reports (VTRs). A vessel fishing with bottom trawl gear and participating in either the Regular B Days-at-Sea Program or the Eastern U.S./Canada Haddock Special Access Program, must use either the Ruhle Trawl (previously called the “haddock rope trawl”) or the haddock separator trawl, as specified in the regulations. A trawl vessel fishing in the Eastern U.S./Canada Area must use one of these nets, or one of two specific configurations of a flounder trawl. Finally, any vessel may also elect to use these nets at any time outside of these programs or areas. Vessels using these gear configurations are required to report these gears on their VTRs. The new codes are:

OTR – Otter Trawl, Ruhle
OHS – Otter Trawl, Haddock separator

These new codes will be required to be reported in block #8, “Gear Fished” on the VTR form. The instructions for other gear description information collected on the VTR (#9, “mesh/ring size”, #10, “quantity of gear”, and #11, “size of gear”) remain the same. Please refer to the VTR instructions for more detailed VTR reporting requirements. The instructions can be found at: http://www.nero.noaa.gov/ro/fso/vtr_inst.pdf

Information on the approval of these gears can be found at:
<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/nr/nrdoc/07/07multhad.pdf>
<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/nr/nrdoc/08/08mulhaddockropetrawl.pdf>
<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/nr/nrdoc/08/08ruhletrawl.pdf>

If you have further questions about this matter or any other VTR issue, contact the Northeast Vessel Trip Reporting Office at (978) 281-9246.

Sincerely,

John Witzig
Director, Fisheries Statistics Office