



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

MAR - 7 2011

Dear Northeast (NE) Multispecies Permit Holder:

This letter is to remind you of the correct vessel trip report (VTR) gear codes to be used on fishing trips where a Ruhle trawl (previously called the "haddock rope trawl") or haddock separator trawl are fished.

Currently, 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 a Ruhle or haddock separator trawl. Also, through April 30, 2011, common pool trawl gear vessels must fish with a Ruhle or haddock separator trawl when fishing in the Eastern U.S./Canada Area, and must fish with a Ruhle, haddock separator, or rope separator trawl when fishing in the Western U.S. Canada Area. Vessels, of course, may also elect to use these nets at any time outside of these programs or areas.

Vessels fishing with a Ruhle trawl or haddock separator trawl are required to properly report these gears on their VTRs. The codes are:

OTR – Otter Trawl, Ruhle

OHS – Otter Trawl, Haddock separator

Ruhle and haddock separator trawls are more selective gear types, therefore discard rates for trips using these gear types would likely be lower than the discard rate associated with the traditional otter trawl. Currently, many vessels are incorrectly coding Ruhle or haddock separator trawl trips as otter trawl trips (OTF), and, therefore, do not receive all the benefits associated with fishing more selective gear.

The VTR gear codes are required to be reported on the VTR form in block #7, "gear code" on the VTR form. The instructions for other gear description information collected on the VTR (#8 "mesh/ring size," #9 "gear quantity," and #10 "gear size") remain the same. Please refer to the instructions found at http://www.nero.noaa.gov/ro/fso/vtr_inst.pdf for more detailed VTR reporting requirements.

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

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Kurkul
Regional Administrator

