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Fisheries Statistics Office Publications

Frequently Asked Questions About Potential Sector Contributions

NOAA



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General Information

1. **Q:** What is a Potential Sector Contribution?

A: A “Potential Sector Contribution” (PSC) is used to determine the Annual Catch Entitlement (ACE) for a particular stock in a sector.

A sector is a group of limited access permit holders who agree under contract to cooperate with one another and to abide by certain fishing restrictions in return for the opportunity to harvest a collective allocation. When you join a sector, you bring your PSC with you.

Your PSC is *your historical share of landings* of allocated Northeast (NE) multispecies stocks during particular fishing years (i.e., 1996 - 2006 for most stocks, but 1996-2001 for Georges Bank cod for participants in existing sectors).

The landings have been tracked by NMFS using a unique identifying number called the Moratorium Right Identifier (MRI). NMFS compiles your landings history from dealer reports. There is no other valid source for landings, even though fishing vessel trip reports (FVTRs) are used to attribute catch to stock area.

Once NMFS calculates your PSC for a stock, it is added to the PSCs of the other members of your sector for that stock. That PSC sum is multiplied by the share of the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for that stock available to the commercial fleet. This final number is the Annual Catch Entitlement (ACE) for that stock in whole fish weight. The ACE represents the whole fish weight by species and stock area that the sector is allowed to catch for the upcoming fishing year.

2. **Q:** What are the steps that NMFS uses to determine a sector member’s PSC?

A: You can find information about the PSC calculation method in the document: “*Sectors 2010: How is the Potential Sector Contribution (PSC) Calculated?*” at the following web site: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd/SectorManagers.html>

3. **Q:** Why is the dealer data used in determining the PSC?

A: Dealer data is used because dealers use scales calibrated by an official such as a town or state Weights and Measures authority. The data are used to assess volume and value of U.S. domestic landings of groundfish catch and as a check against the FVTR data. Also, Amendment 16 specifies that dealer data be used.

4. **Q:** What is the vessel data used for in determining the PSC?

A: FTVR data is primarily used to assess the catch, effort, and location of species by proper stock areas for U.S. domestic landings of groundfish catch. These data are also used as a check against the dealer data.

5. **Q:** Why have the numbers on my PSC letter changed?

A: A number of methodologies were reviewed by the New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC) to create the PSC. The NEFMC selected the final methodology which could have caused your numbers to change.

Since NMFS has been making changes and corrections to MRI data, it is likely that the PSCs will change for all multispecies permit holders.

6. **Q:** Will my PSC be recalculated annually?

A: The PSC is a proportion of historical catch by species and stock area and was not intended to be recalculated during the year, or even on an annual basis. However, it is possible that PSCs would be recalculated for a subsequent fishing year if data corrections or other actions warrant this.

Missing, Incomplete, or Incorrect Data

7. **Q:** Why would I have missing data or data gaps in my history?

A: There could be a number of reasons that you do not have a complete landings history, for example:

- You might not have submitted all of your required reports.
- Your dealer may not have fully or accurately reported your landings.
- Landings may have been attributed to the wrong permit number/vessel.

8. **Q:** How will my data be corrected?

A: The process by which data corrections are made is a cooperative process between NMFS and the vessel owner/operators. A request for correction must include a summary of the corrections requested and copies of all documentation supporting each correction requested. This would include any dealer weighout slips (with unit and total price by species) you have that can document the fact that you made sales to your dealer during the time period in question.

Once NMFS has received all documentation, NMFS compares the requested review to the dealer data in our databases for your vessel(s), and adjusts the landings data if necessary. If additional missing data gaps or issues arise, NMFS will contact you so that you can help provide information. Only by working together with NMFS can these issues be resolved.

9. **Q:** How long will it take for my data to be addressed and corrected?

A: The time to identify, resolve, and correct your data depends on a number of items:

- The amount of data files being reviewed at any one time and the size of your data correction file.
- The time span that you are requesting NMFS to review.
- Whether NMFS has to request additional information from the vessel owner/ operator. In the event this information is needed, the amount and time frame in which it takes additional data to be received and reviewed will also delay the final outcome.

Corrections will not be completed for use in determining the PSC for fishing year 2010 but are slated to be completed for fishing year 2011.

10. **Q:** Why is the quality of the dealer data so varied?

A: Historically, a range of errors has occurred over time, including unreported, incomplete, and misreported records, and keypunch mistakes. NMFS has been addressing this situation by upgrading data entry programs, instituting more robust internal auditing processes, and working with dealers to improve reporting accuracy at the source.

11. **Q:** What if my dealer is now out of business?

A: In order to submit corrections to the databases, vessels have to rely on the dealer records they kept whenever they sold or shipped their fish. NMFS has no control over the discarded business records of others. Data corrections cannot be made without official documentation in the form of dealer weighout slips from the time in question.

Resolving Issues

12. **Q:** What is my recourse if I feel that my PSC is incorrect?

A: You should first review your FVTRs and dealer weighout slips. Then you can contact NMFS and request a copy of your vessel's dealer-reported purchases. After reviewing your dealer purchases against any dealer weighouts in your possession, compile a list of any errors or omissions and submit the same, with copies of all corresponding dealer weighouts in support of your request, to:

NOAA Fisheries, Landings Data Corrections
55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA, 01930

NOAA Fisheries will review your findings and work with you to correct or explain the data issue related to your vessel and its history.

13. **Q:** How did NFMS determine the statistical (stat) area formulation if the areas were not originally reported correctly?

A: The stat area is taken from FVTRs for those trips that have both a dealer report and corresponding FVTR. In the absence of a FVTR, or the presence of an invalid FVTR area, the landing is assigned the area that was reported by the majority of the fleet from the principal port of the vessel in question.