



**NOAA
FISHERIES
SERVICE
NORTHEAST
REGION**

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NOAA

Groundfish Sector Monitoring Provider Workshop

NOAA Fisheries Service held a third sector implementation workshop on August 5th in Falmouth, MA. NOAA Fisheries staff, sector representatives and companies seeking to provide dockside and at-sea monitoring services to sectors attended. The standards for sector monitoring and reporting providers are set forth in Amendment 16 to the Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. The goals of this workshop were to clarify these standards: 1) define the criteria companies need to meet in order to become an approved sector monitor provider, 2) develop performance standards for sector monitors, and 3) clarify monitoring elements required in Sector Operating Plans (SOPs). Sectors are required to submit a list of potential monitoring providers for NOAA approval by September 1 as part of their sector operations plans.



The group discussed a template for service providers to ensure that service providers include the necessary information to support sector operations plans. The template is available online at

http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd/sectordocs/Sector_Provider_Template_08112009-1.pdf

Meeting participants also discussed the role of dockside monitors who are required to observe the offloading of fishermen's catches. Sector members were provided guidance on how their dockside programs should be structured to provide the required 50% dockside monitoring coverage proposed under Amendment 16, which will decrease dockside monitoring providers, necessary training for monitors, pre-trip notification and vessel selection and dockside safety.

During the workshop performance standards for at-sea monitoring were presented including procedures employed in observer programs to select vessels for observation, factors that could cause bias in estimates of catch, and recommendations for improved designs and procedures that could reduce such bias.

There were a number of follow-up questions and next steps generated during this workshop. Some of those issues are more long term in nature and will be addressed at a subsequent workshop this fall or over the next several months, others which were of a more immediate nature or could be answered more quickly are addressed in this newsletter and through other communications mechanisms (e.g., permit holder letters, emails to interested parties). To view Workshop III meeting materials go to: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd/sectordataworkshop3.html>

Since the workshop, NOAA Fisheries Service has determined that beginning in 2010, all sectors must have a minimum level of at-sea coverage of 30% to accurately monitor sector operations so that Annual Catch Entitlements (ACEs) are not exceeded or under-harvested. The agency also anticipates being able to cover the cost of this monitoring in 2010.

Sector Exemption: Eastern US/Canada Area Closure

All sectors are automatically exempt from any Eastern US/Canada Area closure triggered by Georges Bank (GB) yellowtail flounder, similar to closure exemptions for GB cod and haddock, provided the sector has Annual Catch Entitlement (ACE) remaining for the stock in that area. Accordingly, it is not necessary for sector operations plans to request, nor for Environmental Assessments to analyze, an exemption from closures of the Eastern US/Canada Area for GB yellowtail flounder. Amendment 16 will clarify this exemption once it has been finalized.



PSC and DAS Data Distributed

On August 20, NOAA Fisheries Service mailed updated Potential Sector Contribution (PSC) data to each groundfish permit holder, which is the share of the allocated stock quota your permit contributes to a sector if you join a sector. NOAA also provided preliminary Days At Sea (DAS) allocations for FY 2010. These data may help inform your decision whether to participate in a sector or fish under a DAS allocation in FY 2010.

The PSC information was updated in response to data corrections made to some sector landings data through internal audits and revised analysis of the details of Option 5 of the proposed Amendment 16. Amendment 16 proposes to base the PSC calculation for allocated groundfish stocks on accumulated catch histories from fishing year (FY) 1996 through FY 2006 for all stocks except GB cod. GB cod PSC for permits committed to either of the two existing sectors as of March 1, 2008, will be calculated based on the accumulated catch histories from FY 1996 through FY 2001, while the GB cod PSC for all other permits will be calculated based on PSC for FY 1996 through FY 2006. Further details about this option can be found in the Regional Administrator letter, dated June 11th or in Amendment 16. These data corrections have minimal effects for most permit holders but there is a substantial change to a small number of permits. Please contact our Sustainable Fisheries Division at (978) 281-9315 if you have any questions regarding sectors and/or your DAS allocation. To view the June 11 letter and get other information on sectors go to:

<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd/sfdmultisector.html>

More information on Amendment 16 can be found at NEFMC website:

<http://nefmc.org/nemulti/index.html>

Update on Monitoring Service Provider Requirements

Requirements for at-sea and dockside monitoring providers, individual monitors, and monitoring programs are included in the Amendment 16 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (available from the Council's website: www.nefmc.org). NOAA Fisheries Service is developing additional guidance for monitoring providers and sectors, which will be available shortly.

These requirements include the provision that monitoring providers must be free from a conflict of interest with fishing-related

parties including, but not limited to, vessels, dealers, shipping companies, sectors, sector managers, advocacy groups, or research institutions.

In order to offer monitoring services to Northeast Multispecies sectors, providers must be approved by NOAA Fisheries Service. The agency will evaluate each potential monitoring provider based on the materials submitted with a sector's operations plan, due September 1, 2009.

Sector Weekly Report Due Date

Sector weekly reports will be due to NOAA Fisheries Service on Thursdays at 23:59 pm EST. Sector representatives will then have 48 hours to reconcile and process the data from all sources to meet their report deadlines.

To Join or Not To Join?

In the next few weeks, multispecies sectors will be finalizing their rosters for fishing year 2010. Signing up for a sector by September 1, 2009 preserves your opportunity to be in a sector for fishing year 2010.

If you change your mind, federal regulations still allow you to opt out of the sector and join the common pool before the start of the 2010 fishing year.

Each sector may handle withdrawals prior to May 1, 2010 differently, so be sure to check with your Sector Manager before you sign up. For a summary of proposed measures required for sectors and the common pool, please visit our website. For sector measures go to:

<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd/sfdmultisector.html>

and click on Commonly Asked Questions under Information Sheets and Other Background Materials.

For common pool measures go to:

<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/hotnews/>

and click on link entitled Proposed Amendment 16 Common Pool Measures -- 08/13/09.

NERO Hires New Outreach Coordinator



Many of you know Olivia Rugo from her cooperative research work with the Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership. For the next year or so, she will be helping NOAA Fisheries Service's Northeast

Regional Office provide up to date information about sectors and other catch share initiatives.

What Is the Sector Ownership Provision?

Amendment 16 adds the following sector ownership provision: "A sector is defined as three or more persons, none of whom have ownership interests in at least two other persons' vessels in the sector." So what does this really mean? Having an ownership interest includes, but is not limited to, persons or entities who are shareholders, officers, or partners, in a corporation owning

a permit/vessel; who are partners to a permit/vessel owner; or who, in any way, partly own a permit/vessel. Other factors that may indicate ownership are whether an individual derives any financial benefit, or exercises any control over another permit/vessel. NOAA Fisheries Service interprets permit ownership as including permits in a Confirmation of Permit History (CPH) status.

Save the Date

Workshop IV:

Sector Data Quality & Management

October 13-15, 2009

NOAA Fisheries Service

Northeast Regional Office

Gloucester, MA

Further details in our next issue!