



What Sectors Are and What they Aren't

Amendment 16 will make it possible for vessels to fish under days-at-sea (DAS) and trip limits as part of the common pool, or hard quotas under sectors.

In expanding the use of sectors, the New England Fishery Management Council intended to provide fishermen with more flexibility to decide where and how they wanted to fish to more effectively target healthy stocks and avoid stocks that were in the worst condition. Thirteen groundfish stocks are currently considered overfished.

A sector is a group of vessel permit holders who voluntarily agree to fishing measures and procedures in exchange for a share of the total catch allocated to the industry.

NOAA Fisheries Service does not consider groundfish sectors to be Limited Access Privilege Programs (LAPPs) because

- ❑ Sector vessels are not issued a federal permit nor a permanent allocation.
- ❑ A vessel owner can choose to join a sector or not, and can change his/her decision from one year to the next, and fish in another sector or in the common pool, based on what he/she considers the best opportunity at that point in time.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management

Act (MSA) requires a 2/3 majority vote in referendum before an Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) program can be established in New England. However, sectors are not IFQs and are explicitly exempted from the referendum requirement by the MSA. Because sectors are not considered an IFQ they are also exempt from the cost recovery requirement, which obligates the fishing industry to cover some of the administrative expenses of implementing management regulations.

Nineteen sectors have been authorized to fish in the commercial groundfish fishery, of which 17 have submitted operations plans to do so for 2010. More than half the groundfish permit holders, representing 98 percent of the historic catch, have signed up for a sector in 2010.

Fishing Opportunity Despite Low Allocations

Due to the poor condition of some groundfish stocks, allocations for these stocks are low. Sectors do not necessarily have to stop fishing once their allocation is exhausted. They have the ability to trade or transfer catch allocation to augment their initial allocations. Fishing vessels also have the ability to fish in modified Special Access Programs (SAPs), using specialized gear and/or baits to target healthy stocks and avoid stocks in the worst condition.

Will Sectors Cause Further Industry Consolidation?

Consolidation in this fishery has been occurring for many years. If there is further consolidation, it will likely be due to stock condition rather than sectors. Because the majority of groundfish stocks are considered overfished, they require further reductions in fishing mortality to ensure continued rebuilding. Yearly quotas may not be adequate to enable all current vessels to fish at historic levels.

However, as fish stocks continue to rebuild, quota levels will increase and there will be expanded opportunity for the fishing industry in the future.

Preserving Small Boat Integrity of the Fishery

NOAA Fisheries Service has allocated \$5 million to set up permit banks to help maintain the historic character and infrastructure of local fishing ports.

Permit Banks can provide an affordable means for small fishing vessels from small coastal communities operating in sectors or the common pool to secure additional catch and enhance their profitability. The agency will also collaborate with the Council

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and the industry to identify further opportunities for preserving the traditional make up of our coastal fishing communities (e.g., ownership caps).

Sector Growing Pains

The widespread use of fishing sectors in the groundfish industry constitutes a new way of doing business for many vessel owners as well as for NOAA Fisheries Service.

Understandably in this first year of implementation, there will be some challenges. Not everything will go smoothly, but we are committed to working closely with the industry and the Council to track the social and economic implications of sectors and make adjustments as we can throughout the fishing year.

More on Monitoring Requirements for Commercial Fishery

NOAA Fisheries Service is funding at-sea monitoring in 2010, supplementing the coverage obtained with the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program.

At-sea monitors collect similar data to that of observers, with an emphasis on quantifying catch with less biological sampling. Once a vessel trip is selected, it is a mandatory requirement to accommodate the at-sea monitor.

The same vessel safety requirements apply, including US Coast Guard commercial fishing vessel safety examination decal, valid and operable Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB), life raft and sufficient immersion and personal floatation devices for crew onboard.

REMINDER

Effective **May 1**, with the implementation of new groundfish regulations

Vessel Trip Reports (VTR) will be due **weekly** rather than monthly!

**** Vessel Operators Note: Pre-trip Notification: entered via web-based system 48-hrs before each trip**

Multispecies Fishery Bulletin (formerly Sector News) is a monthly publication providing updates on groundfish management in the Northeast. Suggestions for how we can make it better? Contact: Marjorie.Mooney-Seus@noaa.gov or call 978-281-9175.

To learn more about sectors, please visit our website: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd/sfdmultisector.html>

Scheduled NOAA Fisheries Service Industry Meetings to Explain 2010 Groundfish Fishing Requirements

Tuesday, March 23 – New Bedford, MA
Days Inn Conference Center, 500 Hathaway Road, New Bedford, MA

Thursday, March 25 – Gloucester, MA
National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA

Monday, March 29 – Portland, ME
Gulf of Maine Research Institute, 350 Commercial Street, Portland, ME

Thursday, April 1 – Narragansett, RI
Corless Auditorium, Watkins Building, University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography, Narragansett Bay Campus, South Ferry Road and Tarzwell Drive, Narragansett, RI

Thursday, April 8 – Portsmouth, NH
Sheraton Portsmouth Harborside, 250 Market Street, Portsmouth, NH

**** All meetings are from 5-7 pm, Free and Open to the Public**