



**NOAA  
FISHERIES  
SERVICE  
NORTHEAST  
REGION**

## Inside This Issue

Update on Sector Operations Plan Requirements.....	2
Exemption from Groundfish DAS Restrictions.....	2
What is a MRI.....	2

NOAA

## At-Sea Monitoring Levels Determined Sufficient Funding Anticipated for Both Sectors and Common Pool Monitoring in 2010

NOAA Fisheries Service expects to have sufficient funding to cover the cost of at-sea monitoring (ASM) for Northeast groundfish sector and common pool vessels in 2010.

Amendment 16 to the Multispecies Fishery Management Plan would require each sector to have an ASM program beginning in fishing year (FY) 2012, but sectors may opt to have an ASM program before then. It was initially anticipated that sectors would have to cover the ASM program expense themselves. It now appears that the agency will be able to supply 30% monitoring coverage for sectors in 2010. This monitoring coverage provided by the government would not preclude a sector from supplementing the coverage with its own approved program. The agency also is able to provide some monitoring coverage for the common pool to augment existing observer coverage so total coverage will be on the order of 30% for this segment of the fishery as well. This level of monitoring and observer coverage should provide:

- ◇ A better estimate of discards in the groundfish fishery;
- ◇ More precise tracking of sector catch relative to its allocation or annual catch entitlement (ACE) to avoid inadvertent over-or under-harvest; and
- ◇ Information on fishing practices under Amendment 16, which will help to determine observer/monitor coverage levels in future fishing years.

## Sector Dockside Monitoring Program Standards for Fishing Year 2010

In Amendment 16 the New England Fishery Management Council is proposing a requirement for 50 percent random dockside monitoring for sectors for 2010, and 20 percent random dockside monitoring in the following years.

For the past several months, NOAA Fisheries Service and sector proponents have been collaborating to develop standards for dockside monitors.

At the end of August, the agency provided a set of standards to reflect regulatory expectations and requirements, as well as lessons learned from a pilot study conducted this past summer by AIS, Inc. and funded by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute. Key elements in the plan include:

- ◇ Details on hail requirements, that is the notification procedures that a vessel must adhere to when it departs on a fishing trip and returns to port with its landings, and the role of the dockside monitor in this process;
- ◇ Requirements for vessels and dockside monitors during the vessel offloading process including information that must be collected and recorded by the monitors; and
- ◇ Monitoring procedures for unloading landings at a remote unloading facility and offloading to trucks.

To view the Dockside Monitoring Program Standards please visit our website: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd/sectordocs/DSMNMFSFinalStandards2010.pdf>





## Update on Sector Operations Plan Requirements

On September 1, 2009, 17 sectors submitted operations plans and environmental assessments (EAs) to NOAA Fisheries Service. This achievement is the result of an enormous amount of work by sector proponents who recruited sector members while working diligently on programmatic details with NOAA staff to pull together critical documents. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this tremendous effort. Now, even though the deadline is past, there is still a lot of work to do to ensure sectors can be implemented by the start of the 2010 fishing year.

### SOPs Plan Review Schedule

First, sectors have had some extra time to submit finer details of their dockside monitoring (DSM) programs to us. The standards for DSM were not finalized until late August, so we gave sectors until September 15 to work those details into their operations plans.

The agency's first review of the documents was aimed at identifying significant problems or omissions in operations plans and/or EAs. This information was provided to sectors on September 22. Sectors now have an opportunity to make any revisions that are needed to their documents. Revisions to the EA should be made in collaboration with the specialist who was contracted by NOAA to help sector representatives draft

the document.

The deadline for submitting revisions to address major issues, is Wednesday, October 7. The timeline for the review and approval process is very short and we want to be sure that if Amendment 16 is approved, its completed in time for the start of the fishing year. So, it is really important that we receive these revisions on time, otherwise it may not be possible to get your sector up and running by May 1, 2010.

Comprehensive comments on operations plans and EAs will be provided to sectors by the end of October. This set of comments will need to be addressed prior to the publication of the proposed rule on sectors in January.

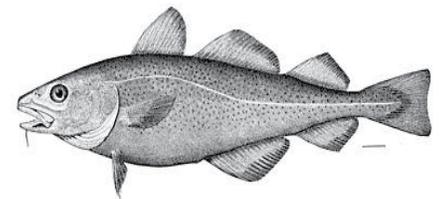
After the proposed rule comment period ends, sectors may have to address further public comments in the documents prior to the publishing of the final rule.

## When Will I Know My Allocation?

The New England Fishery Management Council is slated to discuss the Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) for groundfish at its September meeting, and plans to adopt them at its November meeting.

Once ACLs are set, sector contributions can be determined for each vessel, and the total allocation for each sector can be calculated for the 2010 fishing year.

Of course, final ACLs and allocations will depend on the outcome of rulemaking and the final membership of the sectors on May 1, 2010.



## What is a Moratorium Right Identifier?

### Why Is It Being Used to Track Sector Rosters?

Vessels can be bought, sold, and replaced, and permit numbers can change, but moratorium right identifiers (MRIs) remain constant.

A MRI is the identification number that corresponds to a permit holder's original qualification for a limited access multispecies permit. Behind every limited access permit – no matter how many name changes and vessel replacements there have been over the years – is an MRI that maps the permit to a qualifying history.

## Exemption from Groundfish DAS Restrictions

Amendment 16 proposes to exempt sector vessels from groundfish DAS restrictions and any additional mortality controls adopted by the Amendment. NOAA Fisheries Service interprets this to exempt sector vessels from

- Differential DAS counting,
- 24-hour DAS counting,
- Minimum 15-hour DAS charges for gillnet trips over 3 hours, and
- DAS reduction proposed in Amendment 16.

However, sectors are not exempt from the DAS requirements of other fisheries that require the concurrent use of a groundfish DAS.

## Mark Your Calendars!

### Sector Workshop IV

October 14-15, 2009

Northeast Regional Office

Gloucester, MA

We plan to continue discussion on data management and data quality.