



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
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December 19, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR: AIS Observers

FROM: David Potter
Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: Manual Changes

This memo is to notify observers of recent changes with the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Manual and the Biological Sampling Manual. Updated manuals will not be sent to you for a couple of months due to the lengthy publication process. In the meantime, start using the updated logs provided in this packet immediately (must be used by 01/01/06), and discard any previous versions of each log. Please staple these updated logs to your Observer Program Manual for future reference. Logs that include major changes are:

- Vessel & Trip Log
- Scallop Trawl Gear Log
- Otter Trawl Gear Log
- Trawl Gear Log
- Trawl Haul Log
- Scallop Dredge Gear Log
- Longline Gear Log
- Sea Turtle Biological Sample Log
- Photo Log

The changes made to each of these logs are described below.

- Vessel & Trip Log – Vessel Trip Report (VTR) Serial Number. We now require that you collect the serial number from the Captain's Vessel Trip Report. This information should be obtained from the Captain. If more than one VTR serial number is used during a trip, record the serial number of the first log used on the trip. In an effort to inform Captains/owners of this protocol change, a letter is being sent to all permit holders. Please review the attached letter.



- Scallop Trawl Gear and Otter Trawl Gear Logs – Sweep Gear (NUMBER and DIAMETER). For the Number Field, record the total number of the largest piece of gear present on the sweep (rollers, rock hoppers). Ask the Captain if you are unable to obtain this number. For the size field, record the diameter, in whole inches, of the largest piece of gear used on the sweep. Ask the Captain if you are unable to measure this. If the largest type of gear used on the sweep are of multiple sizes (i.e. 5 inch and 3 inch), measure and record the diameter of the largest sized gear. Please note that if the largest piece of gear used on the sweep is chain or cable/wire or wrapped cable then dash both the number and diameter fields.
- Trawl Haul Log – Pair Trawl Fields. Recently, Pair Trawl Haul logs have been created for the pair trawl fishery, therefore the pair trawl fields (DEPTH RANGE, HEADROPE and DISTANCE RANGE BETWEEN BOATS) have been removed from the Otter Trawl Haul Logs.
- Scallop Dredge Gear Log – Configuration. A new field was added below the rock and tickler chains fields called Configuration. In this field you should record the type of configuration used for the scallop dredge by placing an “x” next to either *Standard* or *Turtle Chain Mat*. With this new log, crossing off the “1” under YES and writing the number “2” is no longer necessary.
- Longline Gear Log – Multi-Strand Nylon. A code (4) has been added to account for mainline and gangion material that is multi-strand.
- Sea Turtle Biological Sample Log – Flipper sample. The flipper samples field was removed from this log as this type of sample is no longer required.
- Photo Log – Frame Numbers. The frame numbers were reversed to accommodate Fisheries Sampling Branch issued disposable cameras. Remember that cameras are required to be sent in after any pictures of incidental takes are taken.

Other changes were made to the manuals that you should be aware of:

- Clam/Quahog and Scallop Trawl Sampling protocols have been added to the Biological Sampling Manual. Please refer to these protocols to distinguish between priority samples on Clam/Quahog and Scallop Trawl Trips.
- Notes about how to observe in the Pair Trawl Fishery have also been added to the Biological Sampling Manual. Copies of the protocols are attached in this packet.
- Catch Composition protocols and their protocols have also been added the Observer Program Manual. Please refer to these when embarking on purse seine, pair trawl and mid-water otter trawl trips.

***Please remember with the New Year that trip numbering should start over. Your first trip that lands in January should be numbered as trip 001. ***



Tally sheet data for Special Access Program (SAP) trips (Program codes 130, 140, 141, 150, 201, 202, 203) are important and time sensitive. SAPs are under “real-time” management by NMFS and daily analyses of the species weight data submitted on your tally sheets are used to track the TAC (Total Allowable Catch) and determine if and when a SAP area should be closed. A laminated "SAP Cheat Sheet" is enclosed to help eliminate common data collection errors in order to improve timeliness of data transmission to the Northeast Regional Office (NERO). Also enclosed is a sample of a completed US/CAN tally sheet, for reference.

Finally, observers are being asked to please use only the current Pre Trip Vessel Safety Checklist (PTVSC) when completing their safety checks (attached). The current PTVSC has the date 7/05 in the upper left hand corner. Any checklist submitted with a trip, that is not the most recent version, will be counted as a missing log when determining data bonus eligibility. This protocol will go into effect for all trips landing after 01/01/06. The current PTVSC can be obtained by contacting Bill Norton or by downloading a copy from Fisheries Sampling Branch’s web site www.nefsc.noaa.gov/femad/fsb.

Any questions regarding these changes should be directed towards KB McArdle (508) 495-2377 or Katherine.McArdle@noaa.gov.

Thank you.

