



April 24, 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR: MRAG Americas  
Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP) Observers

FROM: Amy S. Van Atten   
Branch Chief, Fisheries Sampling Branch (FSB)

SUBJECT: Lobster pot/trap update

Following the pilot phase of the lobster pot/trap coverage during fishing year 2012-2013, NEFOP has made revisions to sampling protocols, pre-brief requirements, and digital voice recorder (DVR) use. Please see attached reference guides and summaries below for a description of these revisions. Please discard the lobster pot/trap, dial calipers and DVR reference guides in your possession and replace them with the enclosed reference guides.

### **Sampling changes**

After reviewing data from observed pot/trap trips and soliciting feedback from observers and Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) staff, NEFOP reviewed existing protocols for the lobster pot/trap fishery. These protocols were revised (summarized below) and are intended to reduce the duties of observers while preserving the high quality data required by the NEFSC. See revised lobster pot/trap reference (attached) for complete description and definitions.

- For all trips (inshore and offshore), lobster catch from 50% of hauls should be completely sampled and 75% of hauls should be observed.
- Observers may sample greater than 50% of hauls or observe greater than 75% of hauls if time permits.
- Sampling of finfish bycatch is of equal priority to sampling of lobster catch and should take place for all observed hauls.

### **Lobster pot/trap pre-brief**

Due to the complex nature of this fishery, a pre-brief is necessary. However, with an increase in the number of sea days assigned to this fishery, NEFOP has reduced the pre-brief call in requirement (below).

Observers are required to call in for a lobster pot/trap trip if any of the below conditions are met.

- First trip on lobster pot/trap gear.
- Observer has not deployed on a pot/trap trip within the last 30 days.

- FSB staff requests that the observer calls in prior to next pot/trap trip.

Observers should make every effort to call in for a pre-brief during business hours. Observers should call the cell phone number provided after business hours or if unable to reach FSB staff. The editor's hotline is also provided in the event that the primary and secondary contacts are unavailable. See revised lobster pot/trap reference (attached) for complete description.

*Pre-brief contact*

Primary: Glenn Chamberlain

Business hours (office phone) – 508-495-2153

After hours (cell phone) – 339-237-0791

Secondary: Jenna Rockwell

Business hours (office phone) – 508-495-2189

Tertiary: Editor's Hotline

After hours phone – 774-392-5270

**Digital Voice Recorder**

Data from trips where the DVR was used correctly were of high quality, while data from trips where the DVR was not used were of variable quality. As a result, observers are *required* to use the DVR on all pot/trap trips unless the unit stops functioning or is damaged. A summary of changes in DVR use can be found below. See revised DVR reference sheet (attached) for a complete description of changes.

- The DVR should be used on all pot/trap trips unless the unit is no longer functioning or is damaged.
- The pre-trip DVR exercise must be completed prior to each lobster pot/trap trip and the exercise audio file should be uploaded via the WINS CP program to ensure that the DVR is functioning. Refer to the attached DVR exercise (Appendix I, DVR reference guide).
- Observers are no longer required to upload audio files generated during pot/trap trips unless requested to do so by NEFOP staff. Observers should transfer audio files from the DVR to their Tough Book for storage until instructed to delete the files by NEFOP staff. Audio files must be stored as they may be used by editing staff as a secondary verification source.

If you have any questions concerning the changes outlined in this memo please contact Sara Weeks at 508-495-2227, or email [sara.weeks@noaa.gov](mailto:sara.weeks@noaa.gov) or Glenn Chamberlain at 508-495-2153 or email [glenn.chamberlain@noaa.gov](mailto:glenn.chamberlain@noaa.gov).

Attachments:

Lobster pot/trap reference guide; revised April 2013

Digital voice recorder reference guide; revised April 2013

Mitutoyo Dial Calipers reference guide; revised April 2013