



NOAA FISHERIES

Please Participate in the Northeast Commercial Fishing Business Cost Survey for 2015

**We want to make sure fisheries managers understand the costs
your fishing business faces.**

Who are we and what do we do?

This survey is being conducted by a team of economists in the Social Sciences Branch (SSB) of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

The Social Sciences Branch:

- Is a part of NOAA Fisheries, but does not have the ability to enact fisheries regulations.
- Collects and analyzes economic, social, and cultural data on the people that depend on fisheries for their livelihood and well-being.

How can filling out the survey benefit you, the fisherman?

Here's what we've heard from the fishermen:

- Past regulatory analysis failed to tell the complete story of the economic and social impacts of fisheries regulations on fishermen, ports and communities.
- Fishermen have taken previous surveys, but have not been kept informed as to what happens to the data collected or what reports and analyses the data is used in.
- Economic impacts are not considered as heavily as biological impacts.

We need data from fishermen, not only in periods of biological uncertainty and regulatory change, but also routinely and over the long term. Such data allows us to produce better, more complete economic and social analyses. The SSB's goal is that these analyses will help fisheries managers to:

- Understand the economic and social implications of fisheries management regulations.
- Recognize how, where and why some measures will have varying impacts on different sectors of the industry, ports, and groups of fishermen and fishing communities.
- Increase the consideration given to economic and social impacts in regulatory decision-making.
- Choose measures that generate the greatest net economic benefits.

Why are we collecting this data?

The survey is driven by the need for economic data on the total costs of operating commercial fishing businesses.

- Fisheries observers currently collect costs associated with vessel trips (for example, ice and fuel costs), but...
- We want to accurately represent the total costs associated with your fishing business, so we also need information on your non-trip related costs (for example your repair and maintenance, insurance, crew payments and other costs).

Hasn't this data been collected from me before?

We most recently collected 2011 and 2012 cost data. We received 450 responses from a survey of about 1700 vessel owners in 2011 and 375 responses from a survey of 1800 different vessel owners in 2012. We are requesting this data again because we need:

- Access to data that is up to date, since costs change over time.
- To include as many fishermen as possible to capture the diversity in costs across fisheries.
- To strive to improve our data quality by getting feedback from you on the collected data.

However, from here on out, **SSB will only be collecting cost data every three years** to minimize how often we ask fishermen to participate in our cost survey.

Who are we asking to take this survey?

- We are asking each fishing business to fill out the survey for one of its federally permitted Northeast U.S. commercial fishing vessels (around 2,700 vessels).
- The sample of fishing businesses receiving this survey includes businesses with vessels across federally managed fisheries, gear types, and vessel sizes.

How can I be updated on that data that is being collected and find out how it is being used?

- In this mailing, you should have received a brochure that summarized the cost data collected for 2012 and indicated how that data has been used; if you did not receive this summary, and would like a copy, please contact us. Keep an eye on the SSB website, which is being re-designed and will include a section on our cost data collection effort: <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/read/socialsci/>.

Is taking the survey voluntary or mandatory? What about confidentiality?

- Responses to this survey are completely voluntary and completely confidential.
- By law, all survey data are confidential. Your responses are NOT being collected for ANY enforcement related purposes.
- In data analyses and reports, the information provided by individual fishing businesses will be combined, resulting in a summary of costs by gear type, vessel size, region, etc.
- No individual fishing business' data will be published or made available to anyone other than those specifically authorized to analyze the data.

Questions or Comments? Please contact our SSB economists on the cost survey team: Tammy Murphy, by telephone at 508.495.4716 or by email at Tammy.Murphy@noaa.gov Megan Bailey, by telephone at 508.495.4717 or by email at Megan.Bailey@noaa.gov.