



NOAA FISHERIES

Northeast Fisheries
Science Center

Background

The New England Fishery Management Council is charged with developing management plans that meet the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

In 2010, most participants in the Northeast Multispecies groundfish fishery shifted to a system referred to as sectors. Each sector receives an allocation of fish it can harvest for each allocated groundfish stock. Fishermen who do not join a sector fish in the “common pool.”

Amendment 23

Amendment 23 Purpose

The purpose of Amendment 23 is to improve the reliability and accountability of catch reporting in the commercial groundfish fishery. Accurate catch data (landing and discards) is necessary to ensure that catch limits are set at levels that prevent overfishing and to determine if catch limits are exceeded. Amendment 23 will maintain the current goals and objectives of the groundfish monitoring program. The new measures will improve documentation of catch and catch accounting.

Amendment 23 will also allow additional sector monitoring tools by giving groundfish sector vessels the choice to carry a human observer or use electronic monitoring to meet sector monitoring requirements—provided the sector has a corresponding approved monitoring plan and a contract with an approved service provider.

Catch reporting requirements should be fair for all commercial groundfish fishermen, while maximizing the value of collected catch data, and minimizing costs for the fishing industry and the NOAA Fisheries.

Monitoring Changes

The most significant change is a monitoring coverage target of 100 percent of eligible trips. This comprehensive monitoring should remove much of the uncertainty surrounding catch. As a result, Amendment 23 would allow removing the management uncertainty buffers for sectors for allocated groundfish stocks. The additional quota that results may mitigate costs to industry associated with increased monitoring.





What Does 100 Percent Coverage Mean?

The 100 percent coverage target is subject to available federal funding.

- Currently, NOAA Fisheries expects to be able to fund 100 percent coverage for at least 2 years.
- The minimum coverage rate is 40 percent. Meaning, in the absence of sufficient federal funding, the groundfish industry will fund the additional coverage not funded by the agency needed to achieve 40 percent total monitoring coverage.

Additional at-sea monitors are being hired and trained to meet the need to cover more trips.

Vessels using human monitors are excluded from the monitoring requirement for certain trips:

- Fishing exclusively west of 71 30.
- Fishing exclusively with 10-inch, or larger, gillnets in the inshore Georges Bank and/or Southern New England Broad Stock Areas.

Amendment 23 approves two types of electronic monitoring: The Audit and Maximized Retention Models.

- The audit model uses cameras to validate the groundfish discards reported on a vessel's eVTR for use in catch accounting.
- The maximized retention model verifies compliance with catch retention requirements and collects information on sublegal allocated groundfish shoreside that would normally be collected at sea. Vessels retain and land all allocated groundfish, regardless of size, and dealers report the catch data. Dockside monitoring verifies the landings.

The Pre-Trip Notification System (PTNS)

The PTNS will be used by all groundfish vessels to notify for trips at least 48 hours in advance, but no more than 10 days in advance. The PTNS will be required for all vessels regardless of chosen monitoring option (electronic monitoring or at-sea monitors).



Photo credits: NOAA Fisheries

CONTACT:

At-Sea Monitoring

Glenn Chamberlain
glenn.chamberlain@noaa.gov
(508) 524-3163

Electronic Monitoring

Nichole Rossi
nichole.rossi@noaa.gov
(508) 642-6001