



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

SEP - 1 2009

Dear Limited Access Northeast (NE) Multispecies Permit Holder:

This letter is to inform you that NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) expects to provide increased at-sea monitoring for all segments of the NE multispecies fishery for the 2010 fishing year (FY). President Obama's 2010 budget has proposed sufficient funding for NMFS to contract additional at-sea monitors to supplement the observer coverage currently provided through the NE Fishery Observer Program (NEFOP) to support the Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM). Although Congress still must agree to support this funding, we have begun planning to provide this increased coverage.

For FY 2010, NMFS anticipates using contract at-sea monitors to supplement the current NEFOP SBRM observer coverage to provide monitoring on at least 30% of groundfish trips fishing under the days-at-sea management system (referred to as the "common pool" vessels). NEFOP will provide training and coordinate deployment for these monitors to ensure that the information collected meets their high standards and can be fully integrated into NMFS's monitoring programs.

Sector managers have been notified that NMFS also expects to provide at least 30% at-sea monitoring coverage, in addition to NEFOP SBRM observer coverage, for vessels fishing under the newly expanded sector management program.

Assuming that Amendment 16 to the NE Multispecies Fishery Management Plan is approved, NMFS will implement new annual catch limits (ACLs) in the NE multispecies fishery in FY 2010, as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Accurate assessment of total catch and discards is crucial to monitoring ACLs to prevent under- or over-harvest of the resource. The increased at-sea monitoring coverage, for both sector and non-sector vessels, would provide needed data to reduce the uncertainty in discard estimates and ensure that monitoring of ACLs is as accurate and timely as possible.

For further questions about sectors or ACLs, please call the Sustainable Fisheries Division at 978- 281-9315.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Kurkul
Regional Administrator

