



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Northeast Fisheries Science Center  
166 Water Street  
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

September 14, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR: AIS Observers

FROM: David Potter  
Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: Providing Copies of Trip Data to Captains or Owners

With the increased importance of catch data from the Observer Program, more captains and owners are requesting copies of their data when they carry an observer. Discussions have recently been held with Observer Program staff to determine the best plan for providing these copies. Currently, there are two methods that are used. Occasionally, the captain or owner fills out the request form and the observer is able to provide the copies at the end of the trip. More often, the signed form from the captain or owner is sent in with the data, or mailed separately, and NMFS mails the copy to the requester. Both are viable options.

Since there are several reasons for a captain to ask for a copy of the data, there are also several levels of urgency in obtaining the copy. If, for example, the captain or owner is planning to get copies of all their trips and use the information for a presentation at a Fishery Council meeting, the copies may not be needed immediately after the trip. If the captain would like to use the information to help plan his next trip, or review the data collected during the trip, usefulness may diminish if there is a delay of a few weeks in getting the copy.

We should make every effort to comply with a request from a captain or owner if they want a copy right after the trip. We all know there are many potential limiting factors to our ability to do this. If your boat lands in the middle of the night, the dock office is closed and you're heading home to grab some sleep before you leave again first thing the next morning, you won't be able to make the copies. However, if a nearby copier is available within working hours, we should make every reasonable effort to provide the copies to the requester. Some fish houses will allow use of their copiers to make copies for their fishermen. Ask.

**Please remember that at no time should the data leave your sight.** For example, you should never hand data to a dock secretary and walk away while she makes the copies. **We are all responsible for the confidentiality of the data at all times.**



More and more captains are expecting a copy of the data as soon as the trip lands. Being able to respond to that request will go a long way towards building a good relationship.

New data release forms are included in this mailing. Please discard your old versions and begin using the new ones starting now.

If you have any questions regarding this memo or the data release form, please contact Patricia Yoos at (508) 495-2338 or [Patricia.Yoos@noaa.gov](mailto:Patricia.Yoos@noaa.gov). Thank you.

Enclosure: Data Release Form





Only vessel owners, or captains acting as authorized representatives for an owner, may request copies of observer data.

Data can not be released without submission of a completed Trip Data Release Form (see reverse side).

The recipient is responsible for the data upon its release.

Release of data for trips in which more than one vessel participated (*i.e.*, pair trawl trips) may occur only if captains or owners from both vessels complete and submit a Release Form.