



July 17, 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR: NEFOP Observers, NEFOP Observer Service Provider

FROM: Amy Van Atten 
Branch Chief, Fisheries Sampling Branch

SUBJECT: Revised Incident Report Form and Instructions
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)
Information and Updated Cheatsheet
Updated Bird Permit and Cheatsheet
River Herring Identification Cheatsheet
Updated Freezer List Cheatsheet
River Herring Sample Request
Groundfish Framework 47 Information
Updated Data Release Form
Observer Training Certification Information

Revised Incident Report and Instructions

Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP) observers are required to report incidents that occur while performing their duties at sea. The purpose of this memo is to inform NEFOP observers and NEFOP providers the NEFOP Incident Form has been revised to reflect modifications and provide clarification.

The updates concerning the Incident Report Form are as follows:

- Added information for MAC users
- Updated website link
- Removal of dockside monitoring fields, dealer name and number
- Addition of vessel hull number and VTR serial number
- Removal of the requirement for hard-copies
- Updated file naming conversion for clarity

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- Updated optional lists to submit form to (no longer required to submit to operational email address - only NEFOP observer, Industry Funded Scallop observer, At-Sea Monitor email lists apply)

The updated Incident Report Form and accompanying instructions are posted on the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC), Fisheries Sampling Branch (FSB) website <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/fsb/forms/> under 'Data and Forms' in the located on the left hand side of the website, and are also attached to this memo for reference. Please remember to submit the online incident report within **12 hrs of landing** or of incident occurring.

Any questions regarding these changes should be directed towards Sara Weeks, (508) 495-2227 or Sara.Weeks@noaa.gov.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)

The Fisheries Sampling Branch will provide specialized at-sea observer coverage on small mesh (<5.5”) otter trawl vessels that hold a limited access incidental catch permit targeting scup, black sea bass, summer flounder, weakfish, croaker, bluefish, or squid in state and federal waters off of Rhode Island, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia. This coverage began August 1, 2011 and will continue until otherwise notified. Please use program code **042** for all ASMFC trip documentation and corresponding sample envelopes.

The overarching priorities for these trips are to document discard of river herring, scup, weakfish, croaker, bluefish, black sea bass, summer flounder, spiny dogfish; collect catch data on all trips; collect biological samples as possible. Please prioritize the following species for biological data to be collected:

SPECIES	SAMPLE TYPE
Scup	Scale samples (priority on large specimens)
River Herring	Scale samples
Summer Flounder	Otolith samples
Weakfish	Otolith samples
Black Sea Bass	Scale samples & otolith samples
Bluefish	Otolith samples
Atlantic Croaker	Otolith samples



Enclosed in this memo is the updated NEFOP ASMFC Biological Sampling Priorities Cheatsheet. Please discard any existing ASMFC cheatsheets and begin using the enclosed cheatsheet as soon as possible.

If you have any questions regarding these types of trips or sampling priorities, please contact Sara Weeks, (508) 495-2227 or Sara.Weeks@noaa.gov.

Updated Bird Permit Information

Enclosed you will find a renewed permit to salvage and sample migratory birds good from 4/1/2012 to 3/31/2015. It is the same permit we were under before so no changes to protocols, continue to sample and/or photograph as you have previously. Please remove your old permit and replace it with the new one.

Also, a new bird identification cheat sheet is enclosed (opposite side of turtle identification). It is very important to note this cheat sheet includes the species we see **most commonly** but by no means should you assume every bird will be one of the species listed. If you do not find a match on the cheat sheet refer to the *Beached Birds* book for more species and a more complete description of characteristics to use. You can remove the old turtle identification cheat sheet and replace it with this one, some of the sea turtle life history details we did not feel were essential information to have on deck so it was removed.

Herring Identification Cheatsheet

An updated set of Herring ID cheat sheets has been created. New protocols are included to address the more difficult river herring ID issues that have recently arisen. Any questions regarding herring ID issues should be directed to Pete Canavin at 508-495-2388 or to your editor.

Updated List of Available Freezers

Enclosed is an updated list of available freezers. Please replace the outdated cheatsheet with the new one. We have checked with all of these groups within the last few weeks about using space in their facilities. Please follow any notes and size requirements for that particular freezer or building. If you place samples in one of these facilities' freezers please make sure you provider is aware.

If you have any questions regarding any of these items please contact Bill Greer, (508)495-2126 or William.greer@noaa.gov or Kathryn Roy, (508)495-2141 or Kathryn.roy@noaa.gov.



River Herring and American Shad Biological Sampling Request

Researchers from Duke University and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries have requested samples of river herring (blueback herring, alewife) and American shad respectively. The basic goal of the research being conducted is to analyze where bycatch events occur and their impact to the local watershed level. Duke University is attempting to map bycaught river herring back to their natal origins, by pinpointing the fish to the exact river in which they were spawned, using genetic and otolith geochemical markers. They wish to determine if river herring runs are impacted by bycatch events and where those events occur. Researchers in Virginia are attempting to look at the bycatch rate of oxytetracycline (OTC) marked fish are encountered and the overall implications of bycatch to fisheries management and recovery of American shad populations.

In the event that there is river herring/shad bycatch on a haul, observers are asked to retain whole samples, bagged and tagged according to standard biological sample tag protocols, and frozen or placed in a cooler with ice as soon as possible. Please bag separately the river herring and American shad samples. On the tag, please write "River Herring Bycatch: Duke" or "American Shad Bycatch: VA" to ensure the samples do not get mixed up with regular samples sent in for species ID or training purposes. Also, it is very important to record the haul number of which the bycatch event occurred, so that specific location and date information may be obtained, as this pertains directly to the study. Remember to record the samples as disposition code 007 (no market, but retained by observer for science purposes) on your haul log. You are encouraged to collect as many specimens per haul/trip as is reasonable.

If you have questions regarding sampling or need additional supplies please contact Chad Keith, (508)495-2067, Charles.keith@noaa.gov.

Groundfish: Framework 47 Information

As you may know Framework 47 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP went into effect on May 1st. There isn't too much relevant information that affects our program but below is a summary of the major changes/information updates that are occurring this year in general:

- GB winter flounder is no longer experiencing overfishing and the stock is no longer over fished.
- SNE/MA winter founder is still over fished but overfishing is no longer occurring in this stock.
- Overfishing is not occurring for GOM winter flounder.
- Overfishing is occurring for GOM cod and the stock is over fished.
- Allocations for GB (307.5 metric tons) and SNE/MA (126 metric tons) yellowtail flounder have been set in the scallop fishery.
- Allocations for GB (286 mt) and GOM (9 mt) Haddock in the mid-water trawl fishery have been set.

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- Incidental catch TAC's (Total Allowable Catch) have been specified for certain stocks of concern (i.e., stocks that are overfished or subject to overfishing) for common pool vessels fishing in the special management programs (i.e., Special Access program and Regular B DAS program). Any catch on a trip that ends on a Category B DAS (regular or reserve) is attributed to the Incidental Catch TAC for the pertinent stocks.
- Western GB Multispecies Restricted Gear Area and the SNE Multispecies RGA have been removed.
- This action adopted reactive Accountability Measures (AMs) for ocean pout, both stocks of windowpane flounder, and Atlantic Halibut for sector and common pool vessels that would be triggered if the total ACL (annual catch limit) is exceeded.
- This action allocates zero trips to the CAII Yellowtail flounder SAP unless they are using a haddock separator trawl, a Ruhle trawl or hook gear. Flounder nets are not allowed in this area.
- Mid-size eliminator trawl has been accepted under this action. This net replaces the minimum fishing circle requirements with a more concise and enforceable measure using the minimum number of meshes at the wide end of the first bottom belly; adjust the mesh configuration in the forward part of the net; and remove the sweep configuration requirements. There are large meshes in the forward part of the net to reduce bycatch. This net can be used by both sector and non-sector vessels in the Eastern US/Canada Haddock SAP and Regular B DAS program. This will hopefully increase the fishing opportunity for smaller vessels by allowing them to utilize this smaller scale trawl and have access to the Haddock SAP and B DAS program.
- In FW 47 it says that NMFS will be using ASM and NEFOP data (specifically footrope length) to monitor how the experimental net performs since it is not captured on the VTR. As you know ASM's do not collect that information. The Regional Office will solely be using NEFOP data for that purpose.

Any additional information regarding groundfish or sectors, please contact KB McArdle at (508) 495-2377 or Katherine.mcardle@noaa.gov.

Updated Data Release Forms

The Data Release Forms have recently been updated. Please discard all outdated forms and begin using the enclosed forms immediately. Any questions regarding the Data Release Form may be directed to Patricia Yoos (508) 495-2338 or Patricia.yoos@noaa.gov

Observer Training Certification Information

This document details the NEFOP certification criteria for initial certification as well as criteria required to become certified in specialized NEFOP gears. Please refer to this document for

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information regarding all NEFOP training and status requirements. For additional information please contact Tania Lewandowski (508) 495-2264 or Tania.lewandowski@noaa.gov.

Attached: Updated Incident Report and Instructions
ASMFC Biological Sampling Priorities Cheatsheet
Updated Bird Permit and Cheatsheet
Herring Cheatsheet and Updated List of Available Freezers
Updated Data Release Forms
Observer Training Certification document

Thank you.

