



July 18, 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR: MRAG Americas
Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Observers

FROM: Amy S. Martins 
Branch Chief, Fisheries Sampling Branch (FSB)

SUBJECT: High Volume Fisheries (HVF) definition

High Volume Fisheries have traditionally been defined as those that pump catch onboard (pair trawl, midwater trawl, and purse seine). Recently, we have seen an increase in the number of bottom otter trawl vessels catching large quantities of herring, requiring catch composition and estimation methods more similar to pumped catches than to standard bottom trawls. These data are critical to the monitoring of the entire herring fleet, and poor data quality can have a large influence.

To better account for these sensitive data, the definition of High Volume Fisheries is being updated to include:

- *Any trip where a pump is used to bring catch onboard.*
- *Any bottom otter trawl trip targeting herring, mackerel, or menhaden (regardless of pumping).*
- *Any purse seine trip (regardless of target species).*

FSB will supply the observer provider(s) with a list of BOT vessels which possess herring permits but do not require HVF observers due to past observed low catches of herring. This list will be updated at least once per year and as needed thereafter. Along with these changes, the first HVF training trip must be on a vessel that pumps catch. After that, each first trip on a new gear type, and an observer's first bottom trawl herring trip will be considered a training trip.

These changes do not affect current HVF-certified observers. Any observer who is not HVF-certified will no longer be able to take bottom trawl herring trips or bottom trawl trips using a pumping system. If there are questions about which vessels may be included in this definition, please contact Glenn Chamberlain.

Thank you.