



# The NOAA FISHERIES NAVIGATOR

## The Northern Gulf of Maine Scallop Season Begins April 1

**A**ctivity in the Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) scallop fishery has steadily increased over the last few years. The Northeast Division of NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement recognizes that many vessels relocate to the area for the season and may not be familiar with all of the federal scallop regulations. If you are federally permitted to fish for scallops in the NGOM, we encourage you to review the following regulations. For additional questions, please contact us directly at (978) 281-9213.

### Permit Renewal

An active federal NGOM or Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) permit is required to fish for NGOM scallops. The scallop fishing and permit year runs from April 1 – March 31. This is different from the fishing years of some other federal fisheries. As a result, you may encounter a situation in which some of your federal fishing permits are active, but your scallop permit has expired. You can avoid this problem by renewing your scallop permit in a timely manner.

When renewing your scallop permit, make sure to allow for ample processing time. To ensure that your permit is processed before the season starts, we suggest beginning the process early. Relocating your vessel just before the season starts and beginning the permit renewal process then can lead to delays. After

you have received your new permit, please make sure to keep a copy available for the inspection of your vessel.

The easiest way to renew or apply for your scallop permit is to fill out your forms electronically through your [Fish Online](https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/apps/login/) account (<https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/apps/login/>). Once you log in to Fish Online, navigate the home page to find a button that says "2021 Renewal Application" to begin the renewal application. If you did not already apply online to renew your permit, a paper application should have been mailed to you in mid to late February. You can request an additional paper application by contacting the GARFO Permit Office. If you have any questions about your permits or need to contact the GARFO Permits Office, you may email them ([NMFS.GAR.Permits@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.GAR.Permits@noaa.gov)) or call them at (978) 282-8438.

If you have any questions about accessing your Fish Online web portal account, please contact the GARFO Port Agent in your area (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/contact/port-agents-greater-atlantic-region>) or the GARFO Fish Online Help Desk at (978) 281-9188.

### Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Requirements

All federally permitted NGOM and IFQ scallop vessels must have an operational Vessel Monitoring

Point	N Latitude	W Longitude
SB1	42°26'	70°27'
SB2	42°26'	70°15'
SB3	42°20'	70°15'
SB4	42°20'	70°27'
SB1	42°26'	70°27'

System (VMS). All trips must be declared through the vessel's VMS prior to leaving port. The declaration for a NGOM trip should be SES-SCG-NGXDXX. In addition, all vessels must submit a Pre-Landing Report at least 6 hours before returning to port on each trip. For assistance with VMS requirements, please contact (978) 281-9213.

### Stellwagen Bank Scallop Closed Area

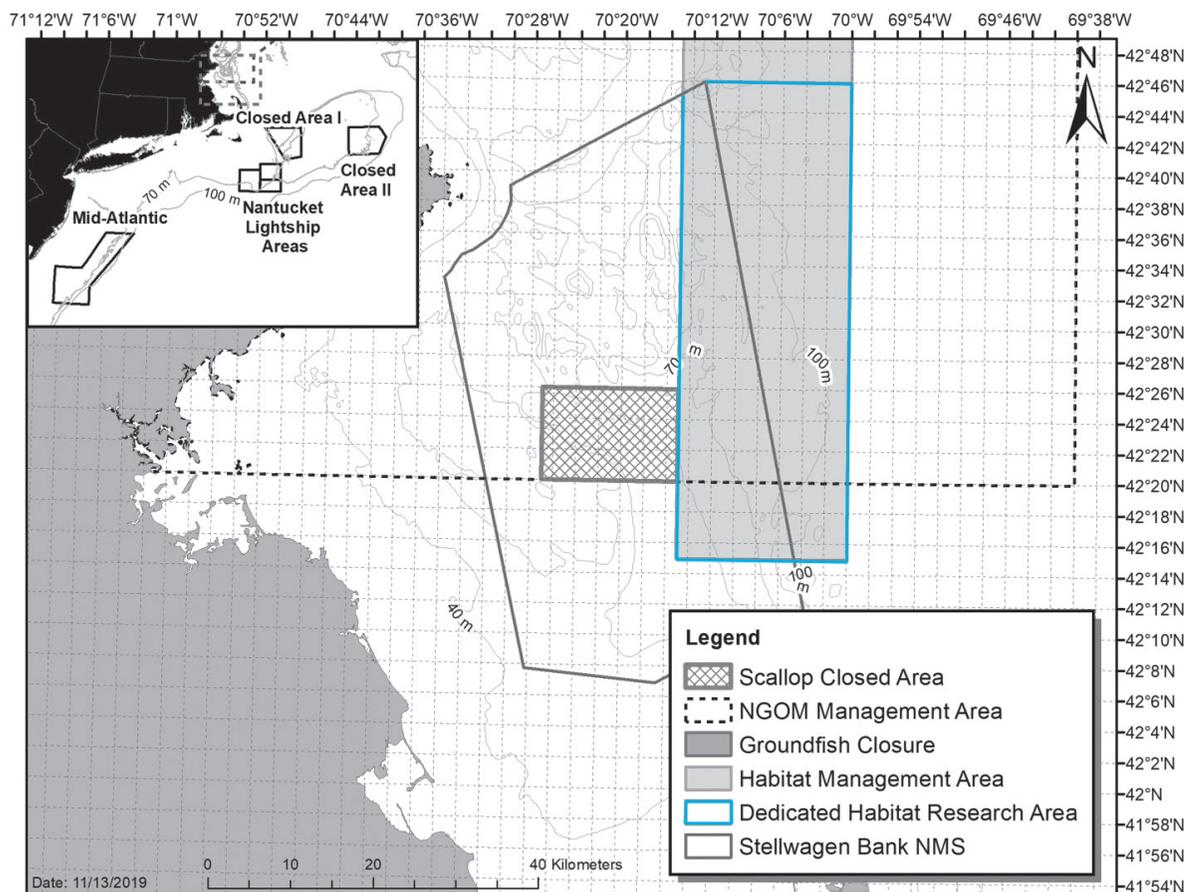
The Stellwagen Bank Closed Area is closed through fishing year 2021. This closure is to protect a substantial number of small scallops that have not recruited into the fishery.

### Only One Landing Per Calendar Day

Only one landing per calendar day is permitted. For example, if you complete a trip and land scallops midday on Monday, then depart for a second trip Monday afternoon, you cannot land scallops again until after midnight (i.e., Tuesday). However, you may return to harbor prior to midnight, but your vessel cannot land at any dock, land, or facility. For example, in Gloucester, many vessels have been anchoring or dropping their dredge out of shipping traffic in the harbor and waiting until after midnight to reach the dock. This is acceptable as long as your vessel does not tie off or land at a location that would be considered a dock, land, or facility where the vessel can be readily accessed from shore.

### Selling to a Federally Permitted Dealer

Federally permitted vessels must sell to a federally permitted dealer. We understand COVID-19 may have impacted the market and many fishermen seek to sell directly to the consumer. However, to sell your scallops directly to the consumer you need a federal dealer permit. This requires additional reporting and compliance with federal dealer regulations. You should also consult with the appropriate office in the state where you are offloading to ensure that you are in compliance with state dealer regulations. Please contact GARFO for questions and to obtain a federal dealer permit at (978) 282-8438 or by visiting: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/resources-fishing/greater-atlantic-region-forms-and-applications-summary>.



THIS SUPPLEMENT PROVIDED BY NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE'S GREATER ATLANTIC REGIONAL OFFICE

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## Restoring the Coonamessett

**T**he Coonamessett River in Falmouth, Massachusetts is rather small compared to other more mighty New England rivers draining to the Atlantic Ocean, but is ecologically very significant. The great importance of this Cape Cod coastal river is well recognized in the historical accounts and on-going efforts by the Town of Falmouth and its many partners to restore the river as a fully functioning ecosystem. To recognize the substantial river restoration accomplishments to date, understanding the past history of and ecological changes to the Coonamessett is key.

The river is only a little over three miles in length, situated in a low-lying, level landscape with a low gradient with a meandering channel and gentle flows. The river's source are the 158-acre Coonamessett Pond in the upper watershed, and 22-acre Flax Pond on the eastern flank of the lower river. Both are natural glacial kettle ponds to help sustain the river and provide important habitats. The Coonamessett watershed is underlain by a broad glacial outwash plain consisting of well-sorted sands and gravels to help recharge underlying cold groundwater and sustain a healthy river base flow.

Native People in this region, named the river "Coonamessett" meaning "the place of the long fish," referring to American eel. They were highly dependent on the river herring runs, eel, and other fish in the river as a vital food source. Vast numbers of river herring returned annually from years at sea to spawn in the river and these large glacial ponds. Young eel or "elvers" also enter the river to spend a decade or more for most of their life cycle in freshwaters.

European settlers first arrived in 1660, and named the river as the Five Mile River. Philip Dexter built the first gristmill near the mouth of the river in 1700, thus beginning a long period of barriers on the river, which greatly impacted river ecology and fisheries. By 1795, there were three dams supporting mills on the lower river, resulting in more than a century of conflict between mill owners and local citizenry who depended on the river herring for food and as a commodity. The conflict escalated with a local bylaw passed in 1798 requiring mill owners to allow passage of herring during the annual migration run. Infamous "herring wars" ensued soon after, and tensions peaked in 1805 when a local group opposed to the herring passage provision organized on the Falmouth village green and fired a cannon packed with herring. These battles over the use of the river and its resources continued as a series of woolen and textile mills operated the dams through the 1880s, decimating herring populations.

Beginning in 1891, commercial cranberry bogs were developed by the Swift Brothers by filling and converting the wetlands bordering the lower Coonamessett to cleared, flat basins, and straightening the river channel and diverting river flows through a network of straight, intersecting side ditches, all managed by dams to periodically impound and then drain the cranberry fields.

Fast forward, the town purchased the lower river bogs and bordering lands in 1971, but allowed cranberry operations to continue. Commercial cranberry operation of the Lower Bog was retired by the town in 2005, and the remaining cranberry



Coonamessett River, Falmouth, MA soon after dam removal, 2017 (left) and restoring habitat, 2019 (right). NOAA photos

operations in Middle and Upper Bogs ceased by 2012. These outcomes facilitated the planning for the river restoration. It was the foresight of a group of townspeople who helped focus on restoring the river and its riparian wetlands, and preserving the surrounding lands as public open space.

Much of the success of the Coonamessett restoration is attributed to Dr. Betsy Gladfelter, a retired coral biologist who worked at the nearby Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution for 25 years. Dr. Gladfelter has both great enthusiasm and a passion for the project. She points out that early on, state and federal fishery biologists recognized the river as a vital resource to fishery resource restoration. In the early 2000s, Coonamessett River Trust had the vision for the river restoration, while The 300 Committee set out to preserve lands surrounding the river for public benefit. A Coonamessett River Working Group (CRWG) was formed in 2004 by the Falmouth Board of Selectman, and over a 6-year period, the CRWG met regularly to discuss and develop the restoration and land protection strategy. Others, like Dr. Chris Neil, a research scientist that is now at the Woodwell Climate Research Center, not only further engaged Betsy in the project, but also brought in American Rivers, The Nature Conservancy, and other organizations to become strong regional advocates for the river restoration.

Momentum in the restoration planning gained in 2009, when the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration (MA DER) designated the Coonamessett as a priority restoration to infuse state funds into the project. By this time, NOAA's Restoration Center was also engaged in the project, providing technical assistance, and in 2010, NOAA through its partnership with the Fish America Foundation, awarded crucial funds to the Town to complete project feasibility studies. Many other organizations also joined as partners to assist the Town Conservation Commission and Department of Public Works in the restoration planning and design.

In 2016, NOAA awarded a significant Coastal Resilience grant totaling \$1.15 million to the Town for both design and implementation of the removal of the Lower and Middle Bog dams, replacement of a failing culverts under John Parker Road, and restoration of the river channel and bordering wetlands. The Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service followed suit in 2018 and 2019, infusing additional federal funds to match state, town,

and private funds and in-kind services to facilitate completion of the restoration.

Through the NOAA funding award, the Lower Bog dam removal and lower river restoration began in October 2017 with the dam removal, followed by reconstruction of a deeper, narrower, meandering river channel and excavation and removal of vast amounts of soils that had been placed on former wetlands to restore 12 acres of riparian habitats. All lower river restoration activities were completed by May 2018, and with a healthy seedbank in the remnant wetland peat, the riparian plant community rapidly re-established. The removal of the Middle Bog dam, replacement of the road culverts, excavation of thousands of cubic yards of former commercial cranberry operation fill soils from the middle and upper bog areas, and restoration of the river reaches were subsequently completed by spring 2020.

As a result of these river reconstruction and wetland restoration efforts, 2.2 miles of the Coonamessett River are once again accessible by river herring. In total, this valuable project reconstructed 4,600 feet of the river and restored 56 acres of riparian wetlands. As a result, the Coonamessett ecological resilience project is one of the largest river restorations in southern New England to date.

To add to the lower river restoration, the town has worked tirelessly to secure supplemental funds, increasing the overall project funding to about \$4 million, to design and implement and all-persons loop trail to provide persons with various levels of physical ability to access the restored area. This trail, with two boardwalks, a visual overlook of the restoration area, and access trail switchbacks and granite benches, is expected to be completed by June 2021. Additional MA DER funds were also secured in February 2021 to advance a conceptual design for restoration of the upper river. Once the upper reach restoration is completed, hundreds of thousands of herring are expected to once again return annually to the Coonamessett.

Dr. Gladfelter recently summed up the most significant outcomes for the Coonamessett project. "It's been a miracle to see the ecological communities come back so fast following the restoration. The restoration has allowed our local community to become more engaged in and gain stewardship values for the project."

For more information contact Jim Turek at [James.G.Turek@noaa.gov](mailto:James.G.Turek@noaa.gov).

# Scientists Seek Input From Scallop Industry for Study on Ocean Acidification Impacts

**G**uided by input from the fishing community, a team of scientists will bring together computer modeling and experiments to inform management of Northeast scallop fisheries facing the threat of ocean acidification. Throughout the project, the team will hold several workshops with fishermen and the fishing community, and will incorporate their concerns into a set of recommendations for management.

Researchers from the University of Connecticut, NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC), the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF), and Rutgers University will work together on this study, with support from NOAA's Ocean Acidification Program. Worth more than \$500 million per year, scallops are the second most valuable fishery in the Northeast and are particularly vulnerable to ocean acidification.

Scientists currently lack a clear understanding of exactly how ocean acidification will impact scallops. What is ocean acidification? As the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere increases, the ocean becomes more acidic as it absorbs the excess carbon dioxide. This increased acidity may impact the ability of hard-shelled organisms, like scallops, to make their shells.

## Upcoming Workshops with Fishing Community

The researchers will collaborate directly with local fishing communities through workshops with CFRF to develop tools that can be used to manage these vital resources. A series of three workshops will be held in different sea scallop communities each year so that a continuous dialogue between scientific partners and the fishing community is maintained throughout the project. In March, CFRF conducted a pilot workshop to a small group of industry participants to get their feedback and recommendations on workshop logistics and content. For updates on the workshop dates and to participate in the workshops, please visit: [CFRFoundation.org](http://CFRFoundation.org).

Almost all aspects of this research project are an

industry-scientific community collaboration. The Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation has created several research fleets in partnership with commercial fishermen to collect oceanographic and biological data. Oceanographic data collected from the CFRF/Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute Shelf Oceanographic Research Fleet and CFRF Lobster and Jonah Crab Research Fleets will be used to evaluate the model simulations.

"This project will improve the fishing community's understanding of the impacts and implications of ocean acidification, and allow us to chart a path forward together," said David Bethoney, executive director of CFRF.

Lisa Colburn, an anthropologist from the NEFSC, will lead the effort to incorporate the feedback of fishing communities into the work. "We plan to have detailed discussions during these workshops," Colburn says. "We'll take our approach and results to the fishing community and listen to their feedback to incorporate the industry perspective. We want to know how we can make our recommendations as meaningful as possible."

"The questions we hope to answer are: What do scallop fishermen and fishing communities need to know in order to adapt to and be resilient to changing ocean conditions? And how can this inform fisheries management?"

## Collecting Biological Data on Sea Scallops

Shannon Meseck, a research scientist at the NEFSC based in Milford, Connecticut, will focus on understanding the physiological effects of ocean acidification on scallops. Meseck and her team will collect biological data, which will be combined with models and social science data to create a more comprehensive picture. "Incorporating new data specific to the effects of ocean acidification on sea scallops will help the industry anticipate those effects and respond," Meseck said. "The more we can understand the effects of ocean acidification on each life stage, the better."



CFRF photo

## Modeling the Future

Samantha Siedlecki, assistant professor of marine sciences at UConn, will use computer models to investigate how changing ocean conditions could impact Northeast scallop fisheries in the near future. The models will help researchers and fishers understand how ocean acidification may impact factors such as scallops' growth rates, which may affect time to harvestable size.

Dvora Hart, the NEFSC's lead assessment scientist for Atlantic sea scallops, will incorporate the findings into a computer model that will estimate the effects of ocean acidification on future catch. She provides short term forecasts of sea scallop catch and biomass to fisheries managers who use them to help set annual specifications for the fishery. "This project is an opportunity to look longer term, and to predict the impacts of ocean acidification on the sea scallop fishery," Hart says.

Adapted from a web story originally published by *UConn Today*.

## Fisheries Stock Assessments Underway

**E**arlier this year the Northeast Region Coordinating Council released the 2021 fisheries stock assessment schedule for management and research track assessments.

The management track assessments scheduled for 2021 are: Atlantic mackerel, golden tilefish, summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, bluefish, Georges Bank cod, Gulf of Maine cod, Georges Bank haddock, and Gulf of Maine haddock. Management track assessments follow

a routine schedule to provide the updated advice needed to inform fisheries management.

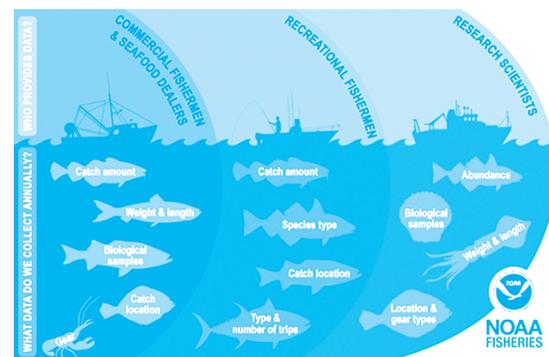
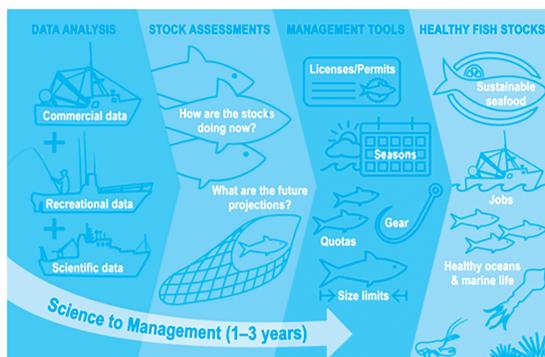
There are two research track assessments scheduled for 2021. Haddock (all stocks) will be peer reviewed in July in conjunction with the Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee, while *Illex* squid and butterfish will be peer reviewed in November. Research track assessments dive deeper into research topics needed to better understand the overall condition of one or more stocks.

Our fisheries stock assessments follow a robust, transparent and collaborative process that brings experts together to determine the overall health of a fishery. Stock assessments have many steps to ensure the best available science and information about the fishery are considered. Sign up for our science news to stay up to date with our assessment schedule this year.

For more information, contact Michele Traver at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center at [michele.traver@noaa.gov](mailto:michele.traver@noaa.gov).

### Stock Assessments Use Data From All Sources

Commercial fishermen and fish dealers, recreational fishermen, and research scientists all collect and contribute to fisheries data. Together, these data help us develop our stock assessments, which in turn help us determine sustainable harvest levels for each fish stock.





# The NOAA FISHERIES NAVIGATOR

## A New Way to Login to Fish Online: Coming June 1

To increase security and support the transition to electronic vessel reporting, we are changing the way commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishermen login to their Fish Online accounts. Major advantages of this new system are that you can give access, or “entitlements,” to your vessel records to other trusted people and you can manage all of your vessels in one account.



Instead of entering your permit number and PIN, you will need to use a Fish Online user account. If you don't already have an account, you can create one by following the instructions on our [How to Create a Fish Online User Account](#) webpage.

Once an account is created, you will need to link your vessel to your account. You can do that by entering your vessel permit number and existing PIN in the Fish Online ‘Create Account’ page and then using the new Credential Security Code (CSC). If you need any assistance, please call us and we will help you link your vessel to your account.

You must create a new account or you will not be able to login to your Fish Online account after June 1.

To obtain your CSC code and for additional help:

Call our Help Desk at (978)281-9188 from the phone number listed on your vessel permit. This is needed to verify your identity.

Contact your local Port Agent. Find your local Port Agent by searching online for “GARFO Port Agent.”

Search online for “GARFO How to create a fish online account.”

## Positive Feedback from Fishermen on Electronic Reporting

This fall, we are requiring electronic reporting for much of the commercial and for-hire fishing industry and will no longer distribute paper logbooks. This will increase both reporting efficiency and the accuracy and timeliness of fisheries data in our region.



You can choose from several smart device and web-based apps to report electronically, and also get technical assistance. We strongly encourage fishermen to start reporting electronically right away to get comfortable with the system of their choice.

Some fishermen are already reporting electronically and find the new systems to be easy to use. Ryan Kelly, owner/operator of the *F/V Seaquestor II* out of Barnegat Light, NJ, has been reporting electronically on his iPhone for several years using our iOS Fish Online app.

Captain Kelly operates multiple fishing vessels and believes that reporting electronically is more efficient than using paper reports. Two of the things he likes best are the automatic function that sends his reports quickly to federal or state agencies, and the “quick pick” buttons for frequently used information so he doesn't have to enter it each time. This is especially helpful in rough weather. Captain Kelly's experience with electronic reporting has been positive, and he is helping other fishermen learn how to do it themselves.

In Point Pleasant, NJ, Patrick Fehily, *F/V Major Expense* and *F/V Market Price*, is new to electronic reporting but already recognizes its benefits. He appreciates that the Fish Online app ensures that all entries are complete and correct before a report can be submitted, which means that he will not have to make corrections later. Also, the app prevents any handwriting or code issues. Captain Fehily says that it's “actually one of the easiest apps I have ever used in my life.” He encourages other fishermen to start using it now and not wait until the last minute when GARFO staff will be very busy assisting fishermen's transition to electronic reporting.

Other electronic reporting systems are also available to meet your particular needs. See our eVTR webpage for a complete list of approved applications.

### **For more information:**

Go to our [vessel trip reporting web pages](#) by searching online for “GARFO eVTR.”

Contact your [local Port Agent](#) by searching online for “GARFO Port Agent.”

## Ongoing Updates to Our Fish Online Reporting Platforms

We continue to improve our Fish Online reporting system. Our goal is to provide a reporting application that works seamlessly across various operating platforms. We appreciate your feedback as we continue to make updates.



You can now access Fish Online through iPhones, iPads, Android phones, tablets, Macs, and Windows machines. After you login to the Fish Online app for the first time, you will not need an internet connection to access and fill out the form. However, you will still need an internet connection to submit your reports to us. Additional access for Android devices is coming soon.

In addition to Fish Online, we offer other electronic reporting systems to meet your particular needs. See our eVTR webpage for a complete list of approved applications.

### **For more information**

Go to our [Vessel Trip Reporting web page](#) by searching online for “GARFO eVTR.” Contact your [local Port Agent](#) by searching online for “GARFO Port Agent.” Give us your feedback at [nmfs.gar.feedback@noaa.gov](mailto:nmfs.gar.feedback@noaa.gov)

## New Reporting Systems Replace the Interactive Voice Response Telephone Line

As of April 1, our Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone system is no longer active. If you used the IVR system, you need to use one of the new reporting options through Fish Online. We made this change to increase security, improve our reporting systems, and make reporting easier.



### **Does this Apply to Me?**

This action applies to you if you participate in any of the fisheries or circumstances listed on our [Vessel Trip Reporting web page](#) (search online for “GARFO Vessel Trip Reporting”).

### **Fish Online Access**

If you used the IVR system, we offer several new ways for you to submit your reports, all of which require you to have a Fish Online account. This means that instead of using your permit number and PIN to login, you need to create a Fish Online username and password and then link it to your vessel(s).

If you haven't already updated your account, read our related article in this issue or go to our web page on [creating a new account](#) by searching online for “How to Create an Account in Fish Online” for more information.

### **Reporting Options**

You can start reporting on our web-based form, though Fish Online, or via our iPhone app immediately. We are developing an Android app to provide another reporting option.

If you currently use eTrips or FLDRS, you cannot submit a report via those systems, and must use either our web-based form or one of our reporting apps.

### **For more information**

For information on how to use these reporting options, go to our [IVR Reporting web page](#) by searching online for “GARFO Interactive Voice Response System”

For technical assistance with your login credentials for Fish Online, call our Help Desk at (978) 281-9188 from the phone number listed on your vessel permit. This is needed to verify your identity.

Your [local Port Agent](#) can help you access or update your Fish Online account as well as support reporting and smart device apps. Search online for “GARFO Port Agent.”