

# The NOAA FISHERIES NAVIGATOR

## Andy Lipsky to Lead NEFSC Wind Team

The first large-scale, offshore wind project in the United States was approved by federal regulators in May. More than 25 offshore wind projects are planned in Northeast U.S. lease areas, from North Carolina to Massachusetts. Large areas off Maine, the New York Bight, and the southern Mid-Atlantic.

Our nation's goal is to generate 30 gigawatts of wind-generated power by 2030. Included in this goal is protecting biodiversity and promoting ocean co-use. That's where NOAA Fisheries comes in.

It's a busy time for NOAA Fisheries scientists and managers whose job it is to evaluate how wind development will affect fisheries, marine resources, and the scientific surveys important for their health and management.

No one is more aware of this than Andy Lipsky, who was recently named to lead the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's wind team.

"Strong collaborative science programs will be critically important to meeting our mission needs and I am thrilled to help our science center advance the needed science," said Lipsky. "There is still a lot of uncertainty associated with large-scale offshore wind development planned across the U.S. and its effects on our fisheries, protected species, and marine habitats and ecosystems. The Northeast U.S. is ground zero for this development with over 2.5 million acres of our region in leases and wind energy areas."

It's a complex assignment. Lipsky is charged with:

- Ensuring that the center's growing offshore wind science program meets the scientific needs of the regulatory process.



- Developing mitigation plans for NOAA Fisheries' long-term resource surveys that will have to adapt to accommodate the construction and operation of offshore wind energy plants.
- Advancing center and partner research on how offshore wind development affects fisheries resources, fishing communities, protected species, habitats, and marine ecosystems.

"Effective collaboration with our partners both inside and outside the government is key to building the trusted science needed to fill gaps in our knowledge," said Lipsky.

Lipsky is no stranger to offshore wind energy development and its many ripple effects. From 2012-2016 he worked on the first collaborative fisheries studies to evaluate the effects of the Block Island Wind Farm on groundfish and lobster resources and supported fisheries mitigation efforts.

Lipsky says one thing that he learned from his years in the U.S. Department of Agriculture and in the private sector, is that collaboration is not easy and it takes time and effort. "It's crucial to leave your desk, and spend time on the dock. Even better, spend time in the wheelhouse at sea, to understand perspectives and knowledge, and design solutions to problems," he said. "I value the co-production of knowledge and will bring this ethic to help us scale-up the science needed to support sustainable offshore development."

The center has been working on a team approach to meet the need for scientific evaluation of wind energy projects since 2017. Lipsky has been leading that effort in acting capacity. Jon Hare, Northeast Fisheries Science Center director explains, "The lifecycle of an offshore plant is more than 30 years, so it's vital that we be forward-looking and make a commitment on a similar scale. Naming Andy to a permanent position is just another step toward ensuring our center can deliver the science that our partners and stakeholders expect and need."

The core wind team at the center includes marine ecologist Elizabeth Methratta, zoologist Chris Orphanides, social scientist Angela Silva, and budget analyst Liz McGovern. A number of other staff throughout the center also dedicate time and expertise to offshore wind energy topics through our regional wind team.

While the wind team is focused on science, other NOAA Fisheries regional and national offices focus on regulatory requirements. These offices, including our Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, work closely with Lipsky and the wind team on all aspects of the development process.

Lipsky has been with the center since 2016, serving as a planner, acting cooperative research chief, and as the acting wind team lead. Prior to that, he was a partner for SeaPlan, a private resource planning company, where he led cooperative research studies on the Block Island Wind Farm. He has also been a scientific advisor to the White House Council on Environmental Quality and a fish and wildlife biologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Andy holds an M.S. in natural resources sciences from the University of Rhode Island and B.A. from University of Vermont.

**G**reater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Permit Office is Going Paperless January 1, 2022

Beginning January 1, 2022, the Greater Atlantic Region will **no longer send or accept paper applications** for vessel renewals, initial vessel permits and operator permits and will not mail issued permits.

Vessel owners and operators will need to apply for, and once issued, print their permits from their secure Fish Online user account. This includes all vessels and operator permit holders, without any exceptions.

A valid paper vessel permit will still be required to be carried on board the vessel at all times.

For those that have not used Fish Online yet,



we will be sending out further instructions on how to apply for and print a permit online.

We will no longer issue plastic operator cards beginning January 1, 2022. All operator cards will be replaced with paper operator permits, which will be available to print inside each person's Fish Online account. Any plastic card that was issued before January 1, 2022 will still be valid. A valid operator permit, whether a plastic card or a paper permit, will still be required to be carried on board the vessel at all times by the captain or operator of the vessel. [This is a correction from the October issue of NOAA Navigator.](#)

If vessel owners and fishermen would like assistance linking their vessel or operator permit to their Fish Online User Account, they can call us at (978) 282-8438 or (978) 281-9188, or visit our webpage at <https://go.usa.gov/x6AtJ>

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

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## Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Closure Reminder

The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (Plan) was implemented to reduce serious injuries and deaths of right, humpback, and fin whales due to entanglement in commercial trap/pot and gillnet gear from Maine to Florida. A final rule modifying the Plan was published September 17, 2021 (86 FR 51970).

The following table lists the upcoming trap/pot and gillnet closure areas established by federal regulations only. **Additional state regulations may apply.** Please check with your state agency for the most current regulations.

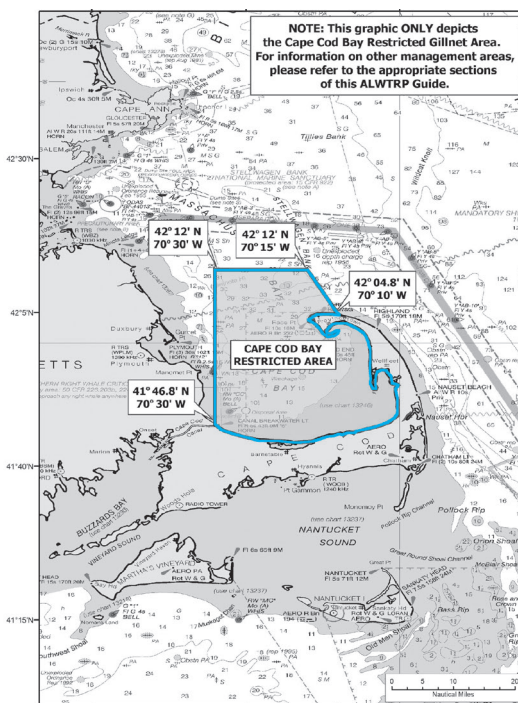
**Lobster and Jonah crab fisheries:** All new and existing closures are modified from restricting all trap/pot fishing to only restricting trap/pot fishing that uses persistent (traditional) buoy lines, except for federal waters in the Outer Cape Lobster Management Area (LMA), which remains closed consistent with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission American Lobster Interstate Fishery Management Plan. Gear that does not use persistent buoy lines, such as "ropeless" gear that retrieves trap/pot trawls when the vessel is on-site, is now allowed in these areas for research purposes with appropriate state and federal authorizations.

**Exempted Fishing Permits:** Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs) are issued for activities in support of fisheries-related research. There are studies underway to develop fishing methods that do not use buoy lines to retrieve gear and alert other fishermen to the presence of gear on the bottom. Results of this work would enable the fishing industry to operate in areas where persistent buoy lines are prohibited. To participate in this research, federally permitted vessels must operate under EFPs. Given the research, monitoring, and reporting requirements for EFPs, we recommend fishermen partner with research, academic, or fishing industry groups to apply for EFPs. To find out more, please contact your NOAA Fisheries regional office. Please note that state authorization may also be required.

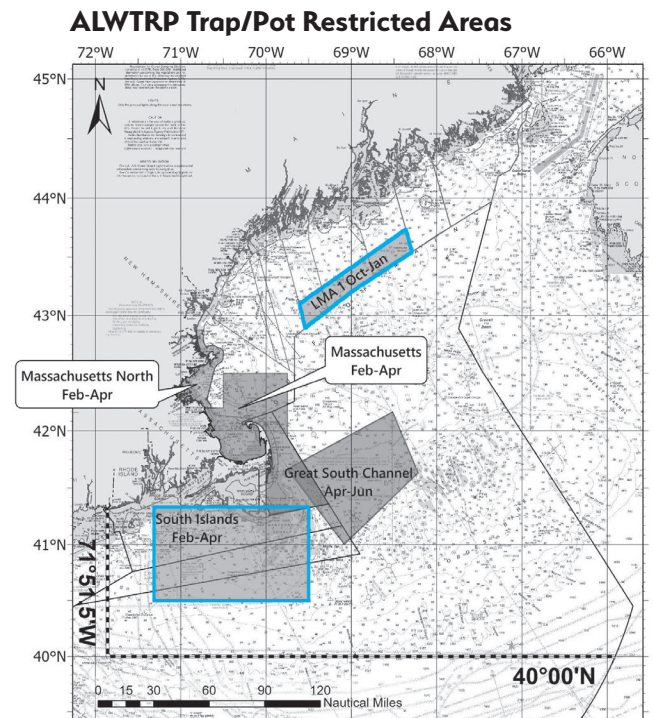
Trap/pot and gillnet gear restrictions, modifications, and area-specific gear markings are also required in areas that are open to fishing. Please visit: [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alwtrp](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alwtrp) for more details on these requirements. If you have questions about gear requirements:

John Higgins, Northeast Fisheries Liaison:  
(207) 610-3282, <[john.higgins@noaa.gov](mailto:john.higgins@noaa.gov)>  
Rob Martin, Northeast Gear Specialist:  
(617) 710-6322, <[robert.martin@noaa.gov](mailto:robert.martin@noaa.gov)>  
David Hilton, Southeast Fisheries Liaison:  
(252) 921-0142, <[david.hilton@noaa.gov](mailto:david.hilton@noaa.gov)>

*Please note: These graphics may overlap with other seasonal management areas. Visit [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alwtrp](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alwtrp) for full regulations and coordinates.*

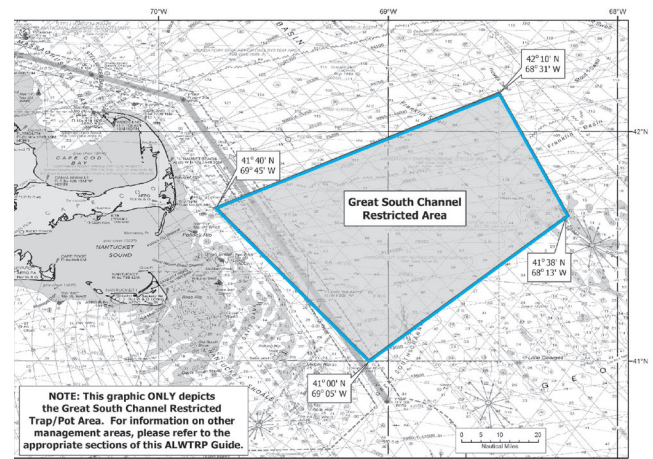


ALWTRP Gillnet Restricted Areas



Updated Nov 2, 2021

*\*LMA 1 and South Islands Restricted Areas apply only to lobster/Jonah crab trap/pot gear; All other areas apply to all trap/pot gear.*



Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan		
Trap/Pot Closures		
Management Area	Dates	Closure or Gear Modifications
Massachusetts Restricted Area	February 1-April 30	<b>CLOSED</b> to ALL trap/pot fishing
Massachusetts North	February 1-April 30	<b>CLOSED</b> to lobster and Jonah crab trap/pot fishing
South Island Restricted Area	February 1-April 30	<b>CLOSED</b> to lobster and Jonah crab trap/pot fishing
Great South Channel Restricted Trap/Pot Area	April 1-June 30	<b>CLOSED</b> to ALL trap/pot fishing
LMA 1 Restricted Area	October 1- January 31 (Not in effect at this time)	CLOSED to lobster and Jonah crab trap/pot fishing. Note: Area remains open as of 11/02/2021 due to Court Order. Check website for updates on the status of restrictions.
Gillnet Closures		
Management Area	Dates	Closure or Gear Modifications
Cape Cod Bay Gillnet Restricted Area	January 1-May 15	<b>CLOSED</b> to ALL gillnet fishing
Great South Channel Gillnet Restricted Area	April 1- June 30	<b>CLOSED</b> to ALL gillnet fishing

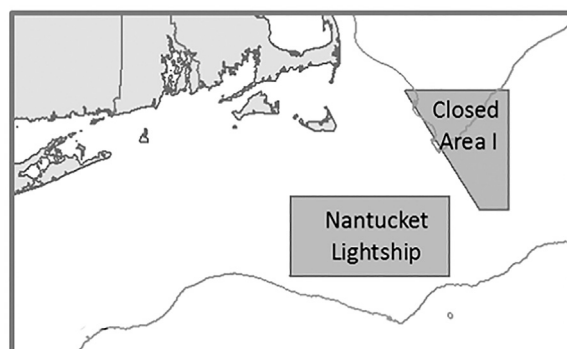


# Nantucket Lightship Closure Area and Closed Area 1 Reopen to Vessels Using Gillnet Gear on November 10, 2021

In compliance with a 2019 Court Order, NOAA Fisheries has fulfilled its responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act for consultation on the New England Fishery Management Council's Omnibus Essential Fish Habitat Amendment 2. Originally implemented in April 2018, a Court Order enjoined NOAA Fisheries from allowing gillnet fishing in the Nantucket Lightship and Closed Area I Groundfish Closure Areas until such time that it fully complied with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

On May 27, 2021, we issued a Biological Opinion that considered the effects on ESA-listed species and designated critical habitat of our authorization of the Omnibus Habitat Amendment, in addition to 10 FMPs and the NOAA Fisheries North Atlantic Right Whale

Conservation Framework. The 2021 Opinion determined that these actions would not jeopardize the continued existence of protected species, including the North Atlantic right whale. Finalizing this analysis fulfills the mandate from the Court and shows the Omnibus Habitat Amendment is in compliance



with the Endangered Species Act and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

As a result, on November 10, 2021, we are reopening the Nantucket Lightship and Closed Area I Groundfish Closure Areas to vessels using gillnet gear, as approved in the Omnibus Habitat Amendment.

The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (TRT) is currently considering measures to further minimize impacts of gillnet gear on large whales, including North Atlantic right whales. Interested parties should contribute to the TRT process. More information is available on our website at [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/marine-mammal-protection/atlantic-large-whale-take-reduction-plan](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/marine-mammal-protection/atlantic-large-whale-take-reduction-plan). Please contact Moira Kelly at [moira.kelly@noaa.gov](mailto:moira.kelly@noaa.gov) or (978) 281-9218 if you have any questions.

## Know Your VMS Requirements

Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) reporting requirements vary among the Greater Atlantic Region's fishing permits. Complexities involved with VMS reporting can result in misreporting or failed declarations. Please keep an eye out for incoming messages on your VMS unit from the VMS Team alerting you of errors. Paying attention to some of the most commonly encountered compliance issues, listed below, can help you stay in compliance with VMS reporting requirements.

**Common Mistake #1:** Failure to Declare VMS Activity. A common VMS compliance issue is failure to declare an activity in VMS prior to each time the vessel sails. If you are required to report through VMS, but are fishing in a fishery that does not require VMS reporting, please follow the VMS reporting instructions for declaring out of the fishery (DOF) every trip. If you are on a limited access multispecies fishing trip that requires VMS and plan to fish inside the VMS demarcation line, you must submit a DOF declaration through VMS, and start and end your trip through the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office's Interactive Voice Response System (IVR). GARFO's IVR system is now only accessible as an app or on GARFO's Fish Online web portal. Please follow the IVR instructions on our website: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/resources-fishing/interactive-voice-response-system>.

**Common Mistake #2:** Groundfish vessels fail to have an operational VMS unit installed and operating when declaring a groundfish trip. Vessels issued a limited access NE multispecies permit that fish or intend to fish under a NE multispecies Category A or B DAS, or catch regulated species or ocean pout while on a sector trip; or a vessel issued a limited access NE multispecies small vessel category or Handgear A permit that fishes in multiple stock areas, are required to report through VMS. Once the first

groundfish declaration of the fishing year is made, the vessel is required to report through VMS on all trips through the remainder of the fishing year.

**Common Mistake #3** (Powering Down Your VMS When You Shouldn't): When considering whether you can power down your VMS unit in port, it is important to remember that your most restrictive permit determines how you can power down. The power down VMS declaration is available only if a Limited Access General Category (LAGC) scallop permit is the only VMS required permit you possess. For instance, if you have an LAGC scallop permit and a surfclam permit, you must report 24/7 at the dock or on a mooring, and you cannot declare the power down code. In this case the vessel may be eligible for a VMS Power Down Letter of Exemption. There are a number of other conditions that need to be satisfied before a VMS vessel can power down at port, including obtaining a VMS Power Down Exemption Authorization Letter or sending in a Power Down declaration, etc. Please contact the VMS Team for more details (see below).

We recognize there are many nuances to VMS reporting, which have evolved over time and some are more difficult than others to follow. Our VMS Team is available help you to stay compliant with VMS reporting requirements Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at (978) 281-9213, option 1. After those hours and on weekends, please contact the Enforcement Hotline at (800) 853-1964. A comprehensive list of all permit types that require VMS reporting is available on the Northeast VMS webpage: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/enforcement/regional-vessel-monitoring-information#northeast-greater-atlantic-region>.

For specific VMS unit troubleshooting, please contact your VMS vendor <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/contact-directory/vms-equipment-provider-directory>.

## Marine Mammal Authorization Program Carrying Over 2020 Authorization into 2022

The Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) is a mandatory commercial fishermen's registration program that provides annual exemptions for accidentally killing or injuring marine mammals-referred to as incidental take-during commercial fishing activities. If you own a commercial fishing vessel or non-vessel gear that operates in a *Category I or II fishery*, you must obtain a marine mammal authorization certificate. You can find your category in the [List of Fisheries](#) on our website and in the *Federal Register*. The online list is reviewed and revised each year. The MMAP requires you to: (1) carry an authorization certificate during fishing activities, (2) carry an observer when requested, (3) comply with applicable Take Reduction Plans, and (4) report any marine mammal serious injury/mortality caused by fishing operation within 48 hours of returning from the trip where the interaction occurred. Reports can be submitted online or printed and mailed in (visit <https://go.usa.gov/x7866> for more information).

Fishermen are normally mailed a new Authorization Certificate automatically each January. In recognition of logistical challenges with certificate issuance related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the MMAP certificate issued in 2020 remains in effect, valid through December 31, 2022, for vessel or gear owners participating in all Category I and II fisheries. Therefore, to comply with the MMAP in 2022, you will need to **RETAIN OR REPRINT YOUR 2020 CERTIFICATE TO KEEP YOUR COMPLIANCE UP TO DATE**. Your registration will be automatically carried over into the new calendar year. No additional steps are required on your part.

You can download the 2020 Certificate from this website: <https://go.usa.gov/x787z>.



# The NOAA FISHERIES NAVIGATOR

**A**s of November 10, 2021, GARFO-permitted commercial fishing vessels, except those that hold only an American lobster permit, and all for-hire fishing vessels are required to have an electronic device onboard and complete an electronic vessel trip report (eVTR) for each trip, and submit completed reports electronically within 48 hours of the end of a trip. Below are a series of questions and answers that will help make the transition easier.

In association with online vessel and operator permitting, GARFO has developed our Fish Online (FOL) eVTR application which can be used on a number of devices. There are several approved applications developed by others available and a full list and additional information is found on our website: <<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/resources-fishing/vessel-trip-reporting-greater-atlantic-region>>

## General

- *What time is used for the trip start and end?*

Local time, which in most cases this will be Eastern Time. Your device will likely set to this. The trip start is the local time a vessel leaves the dock to begin their trip. The trip end is the local time a vessel ends their trip by returning to dock.

- *Do you no longer care about the size of scallops or other species being recorded?*

Only hail weights are needed for eVTRs. We receive the size or market categories from the dealer(s) you sell your catch to and those are matched to your trip. For more information, see Table 33 on Page 31 of the Fishing Vessel Trip Report (VTR) Reporting Instructions.

- *Are exceptions being made for captains that cannot operate a phone or tablet?*

No. We delayed the implementation of the eVTR requirement for a year after the rule was published to provide sufficient time for captains to acquire and learn the technology needed to report electronically. We are also providing remote or in-person assistance and training to any captain that needs help.

## Fish Online eVTR app

- *Can a vessel be linked to more than one person's FOL account?*

Yes. A vessel owner can entitle multiple FOL accounts to a vessel. However, vessel operators do not need this entitlement to submit an eVTR.

- *How many vessels can one person link to their FOL account?*

There is no limit.

- *Do I need an account to use the FOL app?*

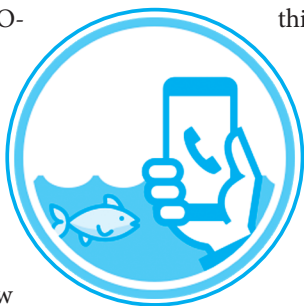
Yes. The account is also used to renew vessel and operator permits as well as obtain information about your vessel and reported fishing activity.

- *Can I use my VMS tablet for this?*

You should contact the vendor of your VMS system to inquire about this.

- *I don't see one of my boats when I look at my FOL account.*

Your vessel(s) will need to be linked to your personal account. Our help desk can assist you with



this. They can be reached at (978) 281-9188

- *I still use a flip phone. Can I just get a tablet without a cell plan?*

Yes. You will need Wi-Fi internet access to download the app and to submit reports. Also, if you are offline while on a trip you should not log out of FOL.

- *Can I change my email address within FOL?*

Yes. If you need assistance please contact the vessel reporting help desk at (978) 281-9188.

- *Can I use ACCSP's eTrips to make my IVR reports?*

No. IVR reports can only be made using one of the FOL apps or the website. You can use eTrips or other apps for eVTR reporting and FOL for IVR.

## Editing/Errors

- *Once an eVTR is submitted, can it be edited and how long do you have to make edits?*

Once submitted, you can edit an eVTR almost immediately through our FOL eVTR website. There is no expiration of your editing ability. We track when and who changes any data.

- *What if a trip ends before fishing is started due to a breakdown, weather etc.?*

You can submit a no effort trip. For more information see the Page 7 of the Fishing Vessel Trip Report (VTR) Reporting Instructions.

- *What if I have two trips on the same date, will there be an error message?*

No. You may have multiple trips on the same day as long as the time sailed for the second trip is after the time landed for the previous trip.

- *Is the eVTR number saved if the captain turns off the phone while sailing?*

The apps are designed to work offline, so the information will be saved on your device as an open trip.

## End of trip / Dealer

- *Now that there is no dealer copy of the paper eVTR, what do fishermen provide the dealer when they sell their catch?*

Fishermen are only required to provide the eVTR trip number which replaces the traditional paper VTR number. The eVTR Trip number has 14 characters and is formatted based on vessel permit number, year, month, date, and hour in which the trip report was created. See the example below. Fishermen should provide their dealer with the eVTR trip number automatically generated within their eVTR app when they begin creating the trip report.

- *What happens when a boat comes in and*

*doesn't offload in 48 hours? How do I get the weight information from the dealer?*

You are submitting hail weights (estimate of catch) and not dealer weights on eVTRs. You do not need to wait for the exact information from your dealer(s). The exact weights will be submitted by the dealer(s) you sell your catch to and matched to your trip.

- *Does home pack exist as an option under dealer?*

Yes, enter 99998 Home Consumption for the dealer code. For a complete listing of non-dealer codes see the Page 22 of the Fishing Vessel Trip Report (VTR) Reporting Instructions

- *Can you offload in multiple ports on multiple days?*

Yes, you may break up the offload by port and date for the same trip, each offload allows you to select the day offloaded.

- *Why are there two prepopulated selections for the same gear?*

There may be different details for a single gear code. Each entry in your favorites likely have some differences in the gear configuration that you have used in the past.

- *Why does the species code repeat? For example... Cod, Cod?*

This is a VMS declaration code.

- *Once the eVTR is submitted to GARFO, can it also be emailed to my sector manager or accountant?*

Yes, there is an option to download the trip as a PDF so you can save it to your device and email the file.

- *Does the vessel operator need a FOL account or just the company/owner?*

Each captain needs to set-up their own FOL account to enable them to submit eVTRs through FOL. However, they do not need to be entitled to that vessel. They will not be able to access any other data about the vessel or anyone else's eVTRs unless they are granted entitlement privileges by a vessel owner.

- *Can I delete a submitted trip through the FOL eVTR app?*

No, this can only be done online through FOL. Although you can delete an open trip that has not been submitted through the app.

- *I'd like to try the ACCSP's eTRIPS Mobile 2 app. Do I use the FOL username and password?*

No. You need to contact their 24/7 customer at (800) 984-0810 or <[mobile\\_support@accsp.org](mailto:mobile_support@accsp.org)> and their staff will be able to set you up.

*If you have any questions concerning implementation of eVTR in the northeast, you may contact your local port agent or our vessel reporting help desk at <[nmfs.gar.reporting@noaa.gov](mailto:nmfs.gar.reporting@noaa.gov)> or (978) 281-9188. Additional Q & As can be found on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's website at: <<https://www.mafmc.org/commercial-evtr>>*

