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## **Groundfish Industry in Northeast Now Has Option to Report Trip Data Electronically**

Owners or operators of commercial groundfish vessels with federal permits will now have the option to voluntarily submit their vessel trip reports, or VTRs, for each fishing trip to NOAA electronically beginning in July.

“We want to make it easier for anyone interested to submit their data electronically instead of on paper,” said Patricia Kurkul, regional administrator for NOAA’s Fisheries Service. “Electronic reporting is an example of improving the quality and timeliness of industry-generated data so critical to managing the fishery, a recommendation of our recent management review, as well as something in which the fleet has been increasingly interested.”

Vessel trip reports are required in many fisheries, including groundfish, to provide information on when and where catch occurred. Among other uses, these logs provide a link between the catch and the fish stock from which it came, critical for good stock assessments.

Electronic reporting will make the collection of important data on fishing vessel activity more efficient, convenient and timely for the fishing industry, fishery managers, and other data users. Vessel trip reports will be encrypted prior to transmission to maintain the confidentiality of data being transmitted.

Vessel permit holders can already view up to twelve months of trip reports online.

Vessel trip reports do not have to be submitted electronically, it is merely an option for fishing vessels that have the capacity and are seeking an alternative to paper reporting. Over the next several months, the agency will work with interested members of the fishing industry to expand the use of electronic vessel trip reporting throughout the groundfish and other fisheries.

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