

# The NOAA FISHERIES NAVIGATOR

## Development of the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument

On September 15, President Obama designated the first marine national monument in the Atlantic Ocean, the **Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument**, using his authority under the Antiquities Act of 1906.

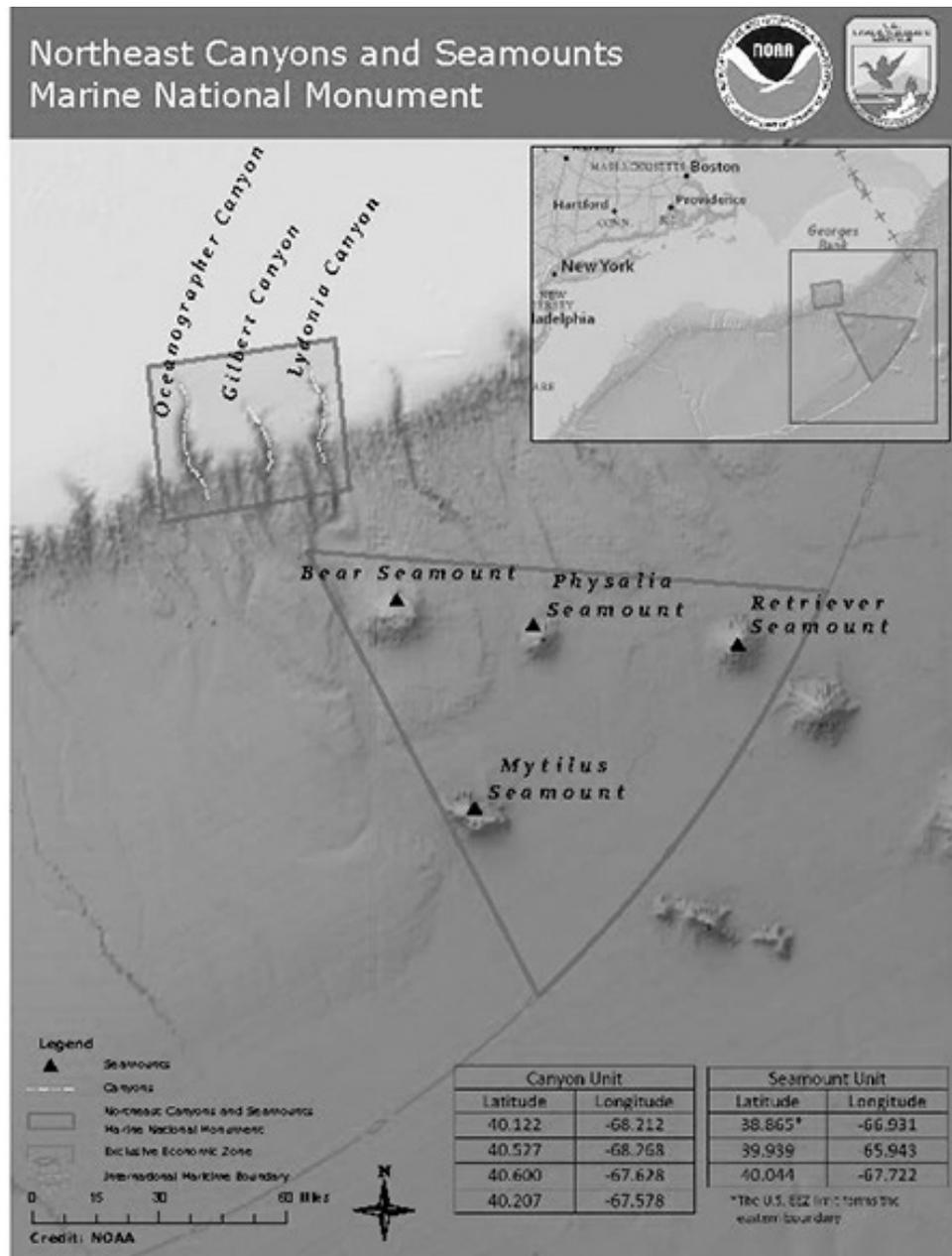
### What does the monument mean for fishermen?

Commercial fishing and other resource extraction activities will be prohibited within the monument boundaries. A 60-day transition period for all commercial fisheries ends at 12:01am on November 14, 2016. The red crab fishery and the American lobster fishery will continue under existing permits for up to seven years.

### Who will manage the monument?

The Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior share management responsibility for the monument. NOAA is responsible for managing activities and species within the monument under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and any other applicable Department of Commerce legal authorities. The Department of the Interior is responsible for managing activities and species under the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, the Refuge Recreation Act, and the Endangered Species Act,

Public Law 98-532 and Executive Order 6166 of June 10, 1933. The two agencies will cooperatively develop a monument management plan over the next three years. There will be opportunities for public comments. Some



implementing regulations related to prohibited and restricted activities may be issued prior to the completion of the management plan.

### Where is the Monument?

The monument includes two distinct areas; one that covers three canyons, and one that covers four seamounts. These are located about 130 miles east-southeast of Cape Cod. In total, the monument covers more than 4,900 square miles, about the size of Connecticut, or slightly larger than Yellowstone National Park. Coordinates below:

### When will you publish regulations on the monument?

We are working closely with our counterparts at Department of Interior to develop an approach and a timeline.

### Can I fish there now?

Commercial fishermen were given 60 days after the date of the proclamation (until 12:01am on November 14, 2016) to move out of the monument area. After November 14, recreational fisheries, as well as commercial American lobster and red crab fisheries, may continue fishing in the monument area. If you have commercial fishing gear in the area – except for red crab and lobster gear – you need to remove it by 12:01 am November 14.

### Will there be any limits on the types of recreational fishing allowed in the monument?

Anglers can continue to fish according to permits and limits that existed before the monument designation. However, there could be future restrictions or permit requirements. We will provide anglers ample notice of any changes, and we will provide updated information regularly.

### Are there transit provisions for commercial fishing vessels to transit through the area?

Yes, after November 14, commercial fishermen may transit through the area if fishing gear is stowed and not available for immediate use during passage without interruption through the monument.

### Where can I find out more about the monument?

We will update information periodically on our website at: <http://bit.ly/2dqG72O>

### Canyons: Oceanographer, Gilbert, and Lydonia (941 sq mi)

Latitude	Longitude
40° 7.32' N	68° 12.72' W
40° 31.62' N	68° 16.08' W
40° 36.00' N	67° 37.68' W
40° 12.42' N	67° 34.68' W

### Seamounts: Bear, Physalia, Mytilus, and Retriever (3,972 sq mi)

Latitude	Longitude
38° 51.90' N *	66° 55.86' W *
39° 56.34' N	65° 56.58' W
40° 2.64' N	67° 43.32' W

\*The southeastern boundary of the Seamounts unit is the outer limit of the US EEZ.

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

Olivia Rugo • Managing Editor • 978-675-2167 • [olivia.rugo@noaa.gov](mailto:olivia.rugo@noaa.gov)

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## Coming Soon: New Accountability Measures for Trawl Gear in the Windowpane Flounder Fishery

**T**he Magnuson-Stevens Act requires every fishery to set catch limits to prevent overfishing, and to set accountability measures (AMs) to keep catches within these limits. In 2015, catches of northern and southern windowpane flounder exceeded the limits, which triggered the AMs. As a result, vessels using trawl gear must use selective gear when fishing in certain areas from May 1, 2017, to April 30, 2018 (see map). For the southern windowpane flounder areas, both groundfish and non-groundfish vessels must use selective trawl gear.

### Why are AMs necessary?

AMs either slow down catch so that catch limits are not exceeded, or correct for an overage from a previous year.

### What are the AMs for windowpane flounder?

The windowpane flounder AMs are only for trawl vessels and require the use of one of the following selective trawl gears when fishing in the AM areas (see map): 1) haddock separator trawl, 2) Ruhle trawl, or 3) rope separator trawl. These gears are designed to minimize the catch of flounder species. If you would like information about these gears, please contact us at 978-281-9315.

### How are the AMs triggered?

Each fishing year, annual catch limits are set for both the northern and southern stocks of windowpane flounder. The AM areas for either stock are triggered if the catch limit for a given year is exceeded by more than 5%. The AM areas are implemented at the start of the next fishing year (after the final catch information is available). For example, if it is determined in 2016 that catch in 2015 exceeded the 2015 limit, the AM would be triggered for 2017.

If windowpane catch is between 5% and 20% over the limit for either stock, the Small AM Area restriction is triggered. If windowpane catch is more than 20% over the limit for either stock, the Large AM Area restriction is triggered.

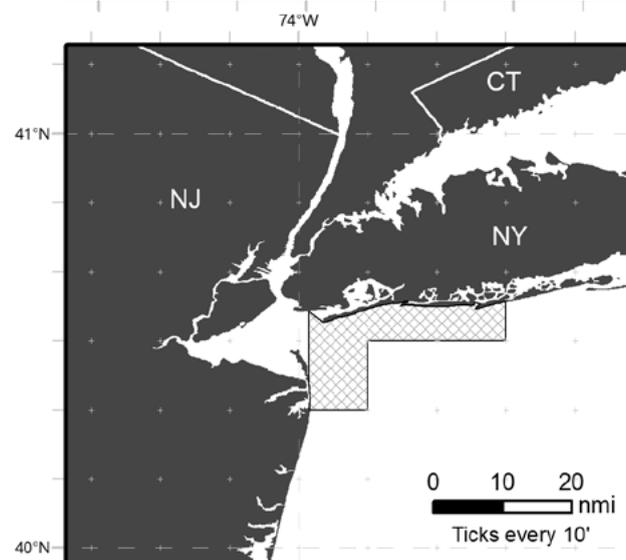
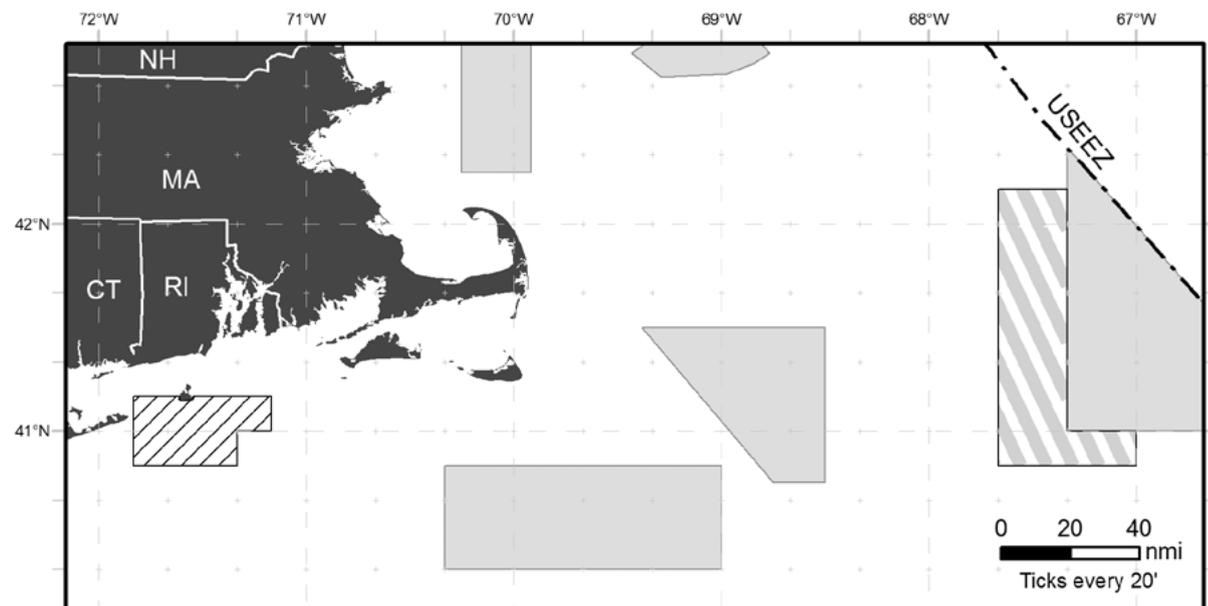
For 2015, the northern and southern windowpane flounder catch was more than 20% over the limit, so the large AM areas are will be in effect for both stocks for 2017.

### What vessels and gear types do the AMs apply to in 2017?

The commercial groundfish fishery and non-groundfish fishery catches exceeded their catch limits of southern windowpane flounder, so both groups must use selective gear. This means all groundfish trawl vessels, as well as any non-groundfish vessels using trawl gear with mesh greater than or equal to 5 inches, must use selective gear in the southern windowpane flounder Large AM areas.

The scallop fishery also exceeded its catch limit, and therefore scallop vessels must use dredge gear in the area west of 71° W. longitude for the month of February 2018, excluding the Mid-Atlantic scallop access areas.

Only the groundfish fishery must use selective gear when fishing in the northern windowpane flounder Large AM area.



Groundfish Closed Areas

### Northern Windowpane Flounder (NWF) Accountability Measure (AM) Areas

NWF Large AM Area

### Southern Windowpane Flounder (SWF) Accountability Measure (AM) Areas

SWF Large AM Area 1

SWF Large AM Area 2

### Can the AMs be changed or removed before the end of a fishing year?

Yes. NOAA Fisheries can reduce the size or duration of the AM under certain conditions.

If one of the Large AM area restrictions is triggered for a given year, we can implement the Small AM area for the stock instead of the Large AM area if the stock is considered rebuilt and recent NOAA Fisheries survey information suggests that the excess catch hasn't had a substantial impact on the stock. However, neither stock of windowpane flounder has met both conditions.

Under certain circumstances, we can remove an AM area mid-year. The AMs are implemented at the start of the fishing year after the catch limit has been exceeded. For example, catch over the limit in 2015 triggered the AM for 2017. We can remove the AM area restriction after September of 2017 if we determine the 2016 catch was below the catch limit.

For more information, contact Aja Szumylo, Sustainable Fisheries Division, at 978-281-9195 or email her at [Aja.Szumylo@noaa.gov](mailto:Aja.Szumylo@noaa.gov).

## Reminder: You Can Now Submit IVR Reports Online

**A**s an alternative to the current interactive voice response (IVR) telephone system, you can now submit reports for monkfish trips, herring trips, exempted fishing permits, and research set-asides through a new online system, which is also optimized for mobile devices.

To access this simple system in Fish Online, click the "IVR Reporting" link in the left side menu. You will need a PIN number to log in. If you do not have one or have technical issues with the IVR system, contact our Help Desk at (978) 281-9188.

# Electronic Monitoring: Update on the Atlantic Herring and Mackerel Project

**N**OAA Fisheries is evaluating the utility of Electronic Monitoring (EM) for catch monitoring on midwater trawl vessels in the Atlantic herring and mackerel fisheries. NOAA has contracted Saltwater Inc. to provide and install EM units on up to 12 commercial fishing vessels in the Northwest Atlantic. Work from this project will help inform the implementation of the Industry-Funded Monitoring (IFM) Omnibus Amendment and the development of future EM programs. This 16-month project is currently underway and will run through December of 2017.

## Project Goals

Deploy and test an EM program in an operational setting, allowing analysis and adjustment of EM program requirements, and development of business practices to support an EM program.

Evaluate the utility of EM for monitoring catch retention and identifying discard events in the Atlantic herring and mackerel midwater trawl fisheries.

Familiarize the fishing fleet with EM and gain industry input on EM operations

Refine industry and NOAA EM cost estimates.



## How Electronic Monitoring Works: When and What It Records

EM consists of multiple cameras, a control box, a monitor, a GPS receiver, and two sensors (hydraulic and rotation).

Cameras begin recording when the sensors are triggered by the drum rotation or hydraulic pressure transducer; cameras target the vessel's deck and waters surrounding the vessel, including where the codend is pulled to the surface and pumping occurs.

Camera views are focused only on the areas of the deck where catch handling occurs (e.g., net reel, pump, dewatering box, etc.).

Cameras are set up to turn on when gear is first deployed, remain on for the duration of every trip, and turn off once the vessel returns to port.

100% of EM footage collected on every trip would be reviewed by Saltwater, Inc.

The system does **NOT** record audio.

## How are the data stored and transferred to Saltwater, Inc.?

Data are stored on a hard drive inside a control box (hard drives can hold up to a month's worth of data) and handled as confidential data. Before their first fishing trip, vessel operators will be



trained on how to remove and mail their hard drives to Saltwater, Inc.

## Who owns the data collected during the project?

The data will be the property of the U. S. government and are subject to the same data confidentiality regulations as observer data. Vessel owners may request copies of video collected aboard their boats.

## Would data gathered in this project be used in management of the fishery?

The data will only be used to evaluate the effectiveness of EM as a means of monitoring the fishery. Slippage requirements are triggered only by carrying an observer, not by carrying EM equipment.

## Who owns the equipment?

Saltwater, Inc. will supply all necessary equipment and will remove all equipment at the end of the project. At the completion of the project, vessel ownership of the equipment or a lease agreement with Saltwater is possible, but should be discussed between Saltwater and vessel representatives.

## Will I have to take a NEFOP observer once EM equipment has been installed on my vessel?

There would be no additional NEFOP coverage associated with this project, but if your vessel is selected for NEFOP coverage, you would be required to carry an observer and operate the EM system on the same trip. Data from trips with both NEFOP coverage and EM would be compared to evaluate the effectiveness of EM.

## When do I have to turn on the EM System?

The EM system will be turned on for every declared Atlantic herring or mackerel fishing trip. The EM system will be on for the duration of a trip, but the cameras will not be triggered to start recording until gear is first deployed. Cameras will stop recording when the vessel returns to port.

See *ELECTRONIC MONITORING*, next page



## How to Get News from Us

**Fish OnLine** - a password protected website for all vessel permit holders to access vessel data and regulatory information. To view, go to [www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/apps/login](http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/apps/login). You will need a user ID, which is your permit number, and a vessel PIN number, or password. To obtain a PIN, please call 978-281-9314.

**Regulatory Smartphone text alerts** - alerts include information about emergency actions, area openings and closings, and possession limit adjustments. To sign up, go to: <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/fish>

**NOAA Navigator** - a bi-monthly insert in *Commercial Fisheries News*. Archived issues can be found at: <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/fish>

**Vessel Monitoring Systems** - urgent regulatory notices may be transmitted via satellite to VMS-equipped vessels

**U.S. Coast Guard radio** - for messages, tune to Channel 16 on the VHF and to Channel 2182 on the High Seas Radio

**Fishery Bulletins (Permit Holder Letters)** - for information about specific regulatory actions, go to: <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/fish>

**Fishery Information Sheets** - for information on current regulatory information by fishery, go to: <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/regs/info>

**Our email address for industry questions** - [nmfs.gar.feedback@noaa.gov](mailto:nmfs.gar.feedback@noaa.gov)



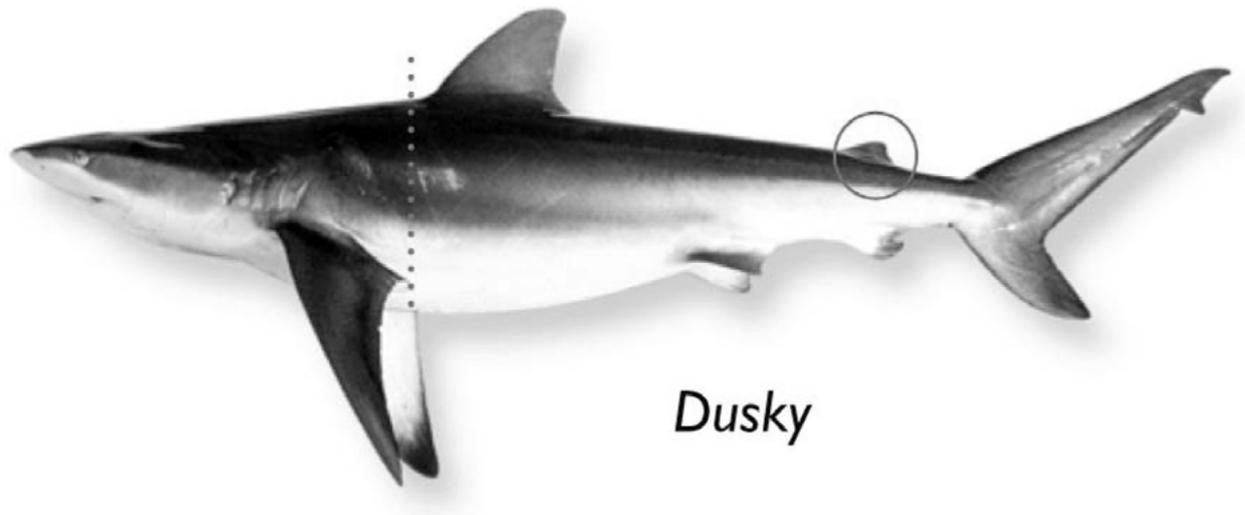
## New Proposed Recreational and Commercial Measures to Rebuild Dusky Sharks

On October 13, we announced the release of Draft Amendment 5b to the Consolidated Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The amendment proposes a range of commercial and recreational management measures to address overfishing of the dusky shark stock. These measures are based on recent assessments that determined that dusky sharks, which are a prohibited species, are overfished and are experiencing overfishing.

The objectives of Amendment 5b are to end overfishing on dusky sharks and to make any needed changes to their rebuilding plan so that fishing mortality levels on dusky sharks are maintained at or below levels determined by the assessment and within the recommended rebuilding timeframe. Specifically, based upon the results of the 2016 SEDAR 21 dusky shark assessment update, we aim to achieve a 35 percent mortality reduction relative to 2015 levels, and to rebuild the dusky shark stock by the year 2107.

Amendment 5b also clarifies annual catch limits and implements preventative accountability measures for the prohibited shark species complex.

Amendment 5b could affect any commercial fishermen with HMS permits, any recreational fishermen who catch sharks of any species, and any dealers who buy or sell sharks or shark products. The full range



Dusky

of alternatives considered can be found in the draft environmental impact statement and/or proposed rule (see link below).

The proposed rule published in the *Federal Register* on October 18, 2016 (81 FR 71672). The public comment period ends on **December 22, 2016**. We will be holding numerous public hearings for this rulemaking along the Atlantic Coast, including the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico regions, until the end of the comment period.

All supporting documents, public hearing schedules, and other additional details can be found here: [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/news/news\\_list/2016/10/draft\\_a5b\\_101316.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/news/news_list/2016/10/draft_a5b_101316.html)

For more information, contact Tobey Curtis (978-281-9273; [Tobey.Curtis@noaa.gov](mailto:Tobey.Curtis@noaa.gov)) or Karyl Brewster-Geisz (301-427-8503; [Karyl.Brewster-Geisz@noaa.gov](mailto:Karyl.Brewster-Geisz@noaa.gov)) of the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Management Division.

## Electronic monitoring

*Continued from previous page*

### Will the vessel incur any EM costs during this project?

NOAA Fisheries is responsible for equipment, data retrievals, data reviewing, data storage, and EM provider overhead costs. Vessels requiring power upgrades to accommodate the EM system are responsible for those costs.

### What happens if the EM equipment is not working properly and I want to leave on a trip?

Since participating vessels are acting on a voluntary basis, they will not be prevented from fishing if the EM system malfunctions. Vessels will be required to report all system failures to Saltwater, Inc. and allow them access to the vessel to fix the issue.

### Would vessels be required to modify fishing practices/effort or be subjected to additional regulations during this project?

No. It is important for vessels to fish in a normal manner to determine if EM can capture the elements necessary to monitor the fishery (e.g., catch retention, discard events). Slippage requirements are triggered only by carrying an observer, not by carrying EM equipment.

For more information or questions regarding electronic monitoring on Atlantic herring or mackerel vessels visit [www.nefsc.noaa.gov/femad/fsb/ems](http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/femad/fsb/ems) or contact: Dan Luers 978-282-8457 or [Daniel.Luers@NOAA.gov](mailto:Daniel.Luers@NOAA.gov) or Nichole Rossi (508) 495-2128 or [Nichole.Rossi@NOAA.gov](mailto:Nichole.Rossi@NOAA.gov)



## Sector Operations Plans: Making Less Work for Everyone

Recently, we took several important steps to streamline the sector operations plan approval process to reduce the administrative burden on the fishing industry and to free up time to work with sectors on their priorities. Sectors now submit two-year operations plans instead of submitting operations plans each year. This has saved a lot of work for the sectors.

At the same time, we developed an environmental assessment that would cover sector operations for six years. Reviewing and approving operations plans every two years, and not having to write an environmental assessment each year, allows us to instead spend that time working together with sectors to craft solutions to the many challenges we face, including the development of exemptions.

Sectors recently submitted new two-year operations plans for 2017 and 2018. To further streamline the sector process this year, we will approve at-sea monitoring providers for two years, rather than for a single year. This will provide sectors additional stability and flexibility in negotiating contracts with monitoring companies.

These changes are part of an ongoing effort to simplify the sector process for the commercial fishing industry. For more information, contact Mark Grant, Sustainable Fisheries Division, at 978-281-9145 or email [Mark.Grant@noaa.gov](mailto:Mark.Grant@noaa.gov)