

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
FOR-HIRE REPORTING AMENDMENT

SUMMARY

January 15, 2015



What is being proposed?

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is considering mandatory electronic reporting for charter (six-pack) vessels and changes to existing reporting requirements for headboats.

Who has to do this?

Federally permitted charter vessels and headboats in the Snapper Grouper, Dolphin Wahoo, and Coastal Migratory Pelagics (mackerel and cobia) fisheries along the Atlantic Coast. A federal permit is required for all for-hire vessels (charter and headboats) operating more than 3 miles offshore (federal waters).

Why is this being done?

Electronic reporting will improve the accuracy and timeliness of data collection. Fishery managers can better monitor landings and discards, and more accurately assess the impacts of regulations on the charter/headboat (for-hire) industry fishing in federal waters.

The Council is proposing to implement the same reporting requirements for federally permitted charter (6-pack) vessels that currently exist for headboats, and modify the timing of headboat reports.

How many charter vessels will be impacted and will there be a cost for doing this?

There are currently 1,984 charter vessels and 76 headboats in the South Atlantic with Federal For-Hire Permits.

Cost: If you have a computer or access to a computer (for example in a library), it will only cost you the time to input the data. The Council is working on a pilot project, in cooperation with charter vessels (and some headboats), to develop very user-friendly software to make it easy and quick to enter this data.

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Actions in the For-Hire Reporting Amendment

Action 1. Operators of charter vessels would report electronically:

- Alternative 1. No Action. If selected, a charter vessel operator must maintain a fishing record for each trip or portion of such trip. Reports must be postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday).
- **Preferred Alternative 2.** Weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified. Electronic reports would be due by Tuesday following each week that ends on Sunday.
- Alternative 3. Daily. Electronic reports would be due by noon of the following day.

Action 2. Operators of headboats would report on a new deadline:

- Alternative 1. No Action. If selected, a headboat operator must submit an electronic fishing record for each trip of all fish harvested through the Southeast Region Headboat Survey. Electronic fishing records (reports) must be submitted weekly (or at intervals shorter than a week if notified) by 11:59 p.m., local time, the Sunday following a reporting week.
- **Preferred Alternative 2.** Weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified. Electronic reports would be due by Tuesday following each week that ends on Sunday instead of Sunday; change from 7 --> 2 days.
- Alternative 3. Daily. Electronic reports would be due by noon of the following day.

Action 3. Operators of charter vessels would report catch locations the same way headboats currently report location:

- Alternative 1. No action. Charter vessels in the for-hire survey report area fished (inshore, state, or federal waters) if selected.
- **Preferred Alternative 2.** Operators of charter vessels would report location electronically by latitude/longitude in degrees and minutes or by clicking on a headboat chart. This is how headboats report now.

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Timing for the For-Hire Reporting Amendment

- **December 7-11, 2015** (Atlantic Beach, NC) - Council reviews document, picks preferred alternatives, and approves for public hearings.
- **January 19, 2016** – Informal Question & Answer Webinar
- **January 25-February 3, 2016** – Public hearings from NC -> FL
- **February 8, 2016** – Webinar Public Hearing for Mid-Atlantic and New England fishermen
- **February 10, 2016** – Written comments due by 5 pm
- **March 7-11, 2016** (Jekyll Island, GA) – Council reviews public comments, modified preferred alternatives as required, and approves all actions. Public comment on Wednesday, March 9th beginning at 5:30 pm
- **June 13-17, 2016** (Cocoa Beach, FL) – Council reviews complete document and approves for formal review. Public comment on Wednesday, June 15th beginning at 5:30 pm
- **June 30, 2016** - Send for review and implementation by Secretary of Commerce/NMFS
- **January 1, 2017** – target date for regulations to be effective; operators of charter vessels begin electronic reporting and new deadline effective for headboats