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| **Subject:** | Over the top.. |
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Greetings at Marine Fisheries Management's Pinnacle and to Friends in DC,
Thank You All for your concern and attention to this matter of SERO's VTRs (NOAA's SE Regional Office Vessel Trip Reports) questions gone too far - an unimaginable overstepping.. Andy, thanks especially for your call ..though it did more to heighten my fear NOAA's going to carry VTRs too far than relieve us of unnecessary computer work.
I have long been a proponent of successful restoration strategies. I work on improving marine seafloor habitat & turning the Mid-Atlantic blue again virtually every waking hour. I see clearly the need for tight catch data - and, sadly, have lived time and again the idiocy imposed on fisheries and the retardation of truthful restorations when management is force fed bad recreational catch data.
I see no path for these new VTR questions from the SE to assist or prevent either of those issues - catch data shall not be improved knowing client sales and fuel data, nor shall fisheries rebound should NOAA accumulate vast stores of this knowledge.
Owing a misstep in the creation of the HMS permit (Highly Migratory Species), SERO has access to our general permits above Hatteras in the Greater Atlantic Region. (Perhaps also via king/spanish mackerel?) SERO's new questions penetrate deeper into my business, (which is My Business!), deeper than I do.
Do you imagine partyboat skippers fret over each day's fares? Each day's fuel consumption? How much fuel costs each day or week? Sounds like a good way to go nuts - drive a skipper plain crazy.
And yet now NOAA demands it?
I think not.
Allowing SERO into our business above Hatteras was mistake #1.. Fishers in the Mid & NE certainly have no representation at anything in the SE - and I fully anticipate HAVING representation where regulations are promulgated that may affect my business, especially in the addition of so many additional hours of paperwork a month.
Secondly, I cannot imagine anyone, not even the IRS, wanting such a detailed accounting of sales - or fuel consumption. This requirement simply defies belief. Any skipper above Hatteras who would knowingly kowtow NOAA's demands here has forgotten our nation's founding and the fight for the right to representation.
Nope. This is too much. SERO's claims of 'better restitution in the event of disaster' fall far short of the reality I've experienced. Anyone who can't show you what they took in during a year, or demonstrate how much basic supplies such as fuel cost, has an odd business model indeed. When my darkest hour was upon me in the 2009 "emergency" sea bass closure, an event that very nearly bankrupted me, NOAA averaged ALL Maryland Party/Charter boats—not just the three or four actively sea bass fishing—& concluded there was no economic affect from the sea bass closure.
None.
Who's best interests does SERO suddenly have at heart?
Showing "no affect" simplified the paperwork in DC, I suppose. I never had any expectation NOAA would help anyway.
Instead of greater complexity, y'all should simplify the HMS permit, add inshore king/spanish mac fisheries to some basic permit too. They're no different from bluefish & striped bass in locations caught, and often technique as well. All you really want to know is how many were caught and kept or released.
Complexity leads to failure. Make these new questions go away. Simplify permits wherever possible. Find and eliminate flyers in MRIP. Seek to understand habitat loss from early in the industrial period (post WWII when diesel engines were cheap) and hasten in those lost habitats' restoration. Discover too management's ability to force some species to spawn young. From there, from maximized spawning potential, bioeconomic prosperity and flourishing fish populations shall result.
From a bunch of nosey dang questions?
Just angry fishermen.
Regards,
Monty

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