



REGION 6

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Annual Letter to Industry

January 18, 2008

Dear Coastal Pink Shrimp Fisher:

This letter is to provide you a courtesy notice regarding changes to the NOAA Fisheries Vessel Monitoring Program that will affect Washington coastal pink shrimp license holders. The Pacific Fishery Management Council has expanded the original vessel monitoring requirements to include the Open Access commercial non-groundfish trawl fleet in order to monitor compliance with groundfish conservation areas. Under new federal regulations, **effective February 4th, 2008 all non-groundfish trawl vessels - vessels that use trawl gear but are not registered to limited entry groundfish permits - must have VMS to fish in state or federal waters (0-200 nautical miles offshore).**

For your convenience I have enclosed a guide published by NOAA-Fisheries summarizing the VMS program for Open Access. This guide covers the basic information you will need. Website links for this document plus other information you will need are listed below. Copies can be obtained, in person, from Glen White at Washington Crab at Westport. If you would like copies of these documents mailed to you, please contact me at the address above.

In reviewing the information you will see a reimbursement program has been established. The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission has indicated that the dollar amount fishers may qualify for has not been determined yet. To qualify, your VMS unit will need to be installed and confirmed through NOAA-Fisheries before submitting the reimbursement application with receipts. This reimbursement program will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Information Sources

The name of each document is followed by a link to the appropriate website. The Compliance Guide includes phone numbers to contact for further information.

- For a summary of the VMS program, including frequently asked questions:

Compliance Guide for the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Vessel Monitoring Program
http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Groundfish-Halibut/Groundfish-Fishery-Management/Public-Notices/upload/VMS_ComplianceGuide.pdf

- For a copy of the VMS regulation – this will provide all the information and legal requirements in detail (13 pages):

Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; Vessel Monitoring System; Open Access Fishery
<http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Publications/FR-Notices/2007/upload/72FR69162.pdf>

<http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Publications/FR-Notices/2008/upload/73FR4759.pdf>

- For the specifications and models, and company contacts for approved mobile transmitting units:

Vessel Monitoring Systems; Approved Mobile Transmitting Units...Open Access Sector.
<http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Publications/FR-Notices/2007/upload/72FR60826.pdf>

- For reimbursement program information and application:

Summary of VMS Information and National VMS Reimbursement Form
<http://www.psmfc.org/home/index.php>

The Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery management measures for 2008 have been published. If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact me to have copy mailed to you.

- For the complete notice go to the NOAA Fisheries website at:
http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Groundfish-Halibut/Groundfish-Fishery-Management/Public-Notices/upload/NMFS_SEA_07_10_JAN2008Inseason.pdf
- To receive these public notices automatically by email send a request to:
westcoastgroundfish@noaa.gov.

Enclosed is a summary of Washington landings for the 2007 coastal pink shrimp fishery. This information can be found on-line at www.wdfw.wa.gov, click on "Fishing/Shellfishing" and scroll down the page to the Coastal Pink Shrimp Fishery link.

Please feel free to call if you need any assistance or have any questions. My phone number is (360) 249-1221.

Sincerely,

Lorna Wargo
Coastal Shellfish/Marine Fish Biologist

Enclosures (2)