MID-ATLANTIC
FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Frequently Asked Questions Related to Permitting and Electronic Reporting for Recreational Tilefish Anglers

These questions and responses relate to the required reporting of trip information by recreational tilefish anglers beginning August 17, 2020.

Questions

General

1. ## What is changing?

   A: Beginning August 17, 2020 boat owners using their vessels to fish for <u>or</u> retain golden and/or blueline tilefish for recreational purposes (not for-hire trips or commercial trips) in waters north of the Virginia/North Carolina border need to obtain a free Federal vessel tilefish permit and are required to submit electronic vessel trip reports (eVTRs) within 24 hours of returning to port through any NMFS-approved electronic reporting system. This includes for-hire vessels being used for non-for-hire recreational trips targeting or retaining tilefish. Retained fish may only be kept for personal consumption and may not be sold or bartered.

2. ## Does this impact for-hire vessels (charter/party vessels)?

   A: Maybe
   - If you use your party/charter vessel for non-for-hire fishing trips (for example, taking family or friends out for a day of recreational fishing) during which you target or catch tilefish, you will need to have added a free recreational tilefish permit to your permit portfolio, <u>and</u> you will need to submit your eVTR within 24 hours of entering port *following those trips* rather than 48 hours as required for your for-hire trips. You can use the same software package for reporting as you are currently using for your for-hire trips.
   - If you do <u>not</u> use your vessel for any non-for-hire trips during which you target or retain tilefish, then nothing changes from the current regulations. You can still use your vessel for recreational trips on which you do not target or retain tilefish as you currently do.
   - As a reminder, party/charter vessel operators are already required to submit reports for all for-hire and non for-hire (recreational) trips. This new regulation will only impact the permitting and the timing of submitting your reports for the recreational tilefish trips that you take. Additional details on for-hire reporting requirements can be found at https://www.mafmc.org/for-hire-evtr.

3. ## Do I need to fill out my eVTR while at sea?

   A: Unlike regulations for reporting that apply to commercial and for-hire vessels, private recreational vessels targeting tilefish will not be required to keep an electronic or paper log while out at sea, although they may find it useful to do so. This regulation only requires submission of an eVTR within 24 hours of returning to port.

4. ## Do I need to report recreational trips where I do not target or retain any tilefish?

   A: Reporting is required on any recreational trips when you target <u>or</u> retain tilefish. If the trip was targeting tilefish but you catch no tilefish, you still must complete an eVTR and report 0 for the number of fish caught, released, and retained. Accurate reporting of fishing effort, even when you don't catch any tilefish, will help fishery scientists and managers have a better understanding of the stock.

5. What other information must I report?

A: Your eVTR system will prompt you to enter the data you are required to report. All eVTRs are required to include the vessel name, USCG documentation number (or state registration number, if undocumented), permit number, date/time sailed, date/time landed, trip type, number of anglers, species, gear fished, quantity and size of gear, fishing time, depth, chart area, latitude/longitude where fishing occurred, count of individual golden and blueline tilefish landed or discarded, and Port and state landed. Note that once an electronic application is set up for reporting, the Vessel and Permit information will be automatically entered.

6. Why were these new requirements implemented for tilefish?

A: By many indications the harvest of golden and blueline tilefish has been increasing in all fisheries for several years. While these species are an important recreational fishery for certain communities/ports, the fishery occurs so far offshore that relatively few anglers partake (as compared to popular fisheries as bluefish) and therefore few tilefish anglers are intercepted in traditional port access site interviews such as MRIP. So, few data for private recreational tilefish anglers exist and recreational bag limits have been set using an estimation methodology developed by MAFMC several years ago. A reporting mechanism using the eVTR structure already used for commercial and for-hire fisheries was determined to be the best way to improve private recreational data, thereby improving stock assessments and our ability to set appropriate fishing regulations in the future.

Recreational Tilefish Permits

7. How do I obtain a private recreational tilefish permit?

A: Permits are only available through GARFO's online permitting system. For information, refer to https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/resources-fishing/vessel-and-dealer-permitting-greater-atlantic-region. You will be required to provide: Vessel name, owner name or name of the owner's authorized representative, mailing address, and telephone number; USCG documentation number and a copy of the vessel's current USCG documentation or, for a vessel not required to be documented by USCG the vessel's state registration number and a copy of the current state registration.

8. How much do permits cost? How long are they valid?

A: Recreational tilefish permits are free of charge and must be renewed each year.

9. If I don't own a boat, can I still get a permit?

A: No. Permits are issued to a vessel owner. Since tilefish are not caught from shore, you will need to be on a boat in order to fish for them and will be covered by the tilefish permit issued for that vessel.

10. If I'm fishing on a boat owned by another person, do I need a permit?

A: Tilefish permits are issued to the <u>vessel</u> owner. Each <u>vessel</u> used for fishing for or catching tilefish must be permitted. If you are onboard a vessel issued a valid tilefish permit, you do not need another individual permit. Each vessel may carry as many individuals as the vessel is rated to carry and all may fish for tilefish under the single vessel permit.

Electronic Reporting Systems

11. What systems are available for electronic reporting?

A: Any NMFS-approved electronic system for submitting eVTRs is permissible but anglers not already using another system will find the Harbor Light Software *eFin Logbook* the easiest to use for this purpose along with NOAA Fish Online app. Other systems that may be suitable for recreational anglers include SAFIS eTrips/mobile 2 and SAFIS eTrips/Online although these are more complicated for simple reporting purposes. You can access information about approved applications and other aspects of electronic reporting at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/resources-fishing/vessel-trip-reporting-greater-atlantic-region.

12. What devices can I use to report electronically?

A: Systems are available that operate on tablets, smartphones, and laptop/desktop computers.

13. Can I use any of the approved packages on my smart phone?

- **eFin Logbook** is available for all Apple and Android mobile devices (iPhone, iPad, Android phone, and Android tablet).
- **NOAA Fish Online** is available for Apple (iOS) devices.
- **SAFIS eTrips/mobile 2** is available for Apple, Android, and Windows 10 devices.

14. How do I get started with eFin Logbook?

A: Once you have obtained your recreational tilefish permit from NOAA, download the free app from the Apple or Google Play store (search for "eFin Logbook"). The support page for eFin Logbook provides additional training resources: https://www.harborlightsoftware.com/efin-logbook. For additional assistance, call/email 1-800-984-0810, support@harborlightsoftware.com.

15. How do I get started with NOAA Fish Online?

A: For the mobile version, view the NOAA Fish Online Quick Start Card at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/resources-fishing/vessel-trip-reporting-greater-atlantic-region then call 1-978-281-9188 or email nmfs.gar.helpdesk@noaa.gov. Be sure to have your federal permit numbers handy.

16. Can I switch between NOAA Fish Online for iPhones and Fish Online for desktop computers?

A: Yes. Switching between any of the approved eVTR applications and programs is permissible but may complicate your own record keeping system.

17. Can I submit an eVTR to fulfill my Highly Migratory Species (HMS) reporting requirements?

A: Not at this time, although GARFO expects single "one-stop-reporting" to be available in the near future. Until then, if you hold HMS permits and a recreational tilefish permit, you will need to complete both HMS reports and recreational eVTRs. Efforts are underway to enable the submission of a single vessel report to satisfy the reporting requirements of multiple agencies, including GARFO, HMS, Southeast Regional Office (SERO), Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC), and states.

18. Is training available?

A: Each software vendor is responsible for providing training and support for their system. Visit the links at the bottom of the page for more information.

Data Privacy

19. How is the information that I report handled? Will it be shared with anyone?

A: All approved eVTR software applications must transfer VTR data through secure methods into the VTR database. Submitting electronically does not change the confidentiality of the VTR information.

20. Will these electronic devices track where I fish?

A: No. Reporting will still be done on the basis of NOAA grids (statistical area). SAFIS eTRIPS/mobile 2 offers you the ability to track where you caught your fish but this information stays with the device and is not submitted with the report *if you choose to use this feature*.

Additional Resources

- MAFMC eVTR Page (www.mafmc.org/evtr)
- GARFO Overview of Approved eVTR software
- Apply for a Permit Through NOAA Fish Online
- MAFMC Staff Lead: Matthew Seeley, mseeley@mafmc.org, (302) 526-5262