

The Value of Electronic Reporting for Atlantic Coast Fishermen and Dealers



It's not surprising that fisheries managers, scientists, and law enforcement officers often encourage fishermen and dealers to report electronically. The increased timeliness of the data enables fisheries managers to better monitor catch and more closely manage any quotas. There is more detailed and precise data available for scientists. And, it is much easier for law enforcement to keep an eye on reporting compliance.

But, what are some of the advantages of electronic reporting for dealers and fishermen? In late 2012, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) brought together industry advisors and fisheries managers to develop a survey that was distributed to Atlantic coast fishermen and dealers to collect attitudes and opinions about the current state of electronic reporting. What follows is a list of ten benefits of electronic reporting compiled from the over 1,900 responses to that survey. It seems as though no matter how you report electronically (e.g., SAFIS, file upload, trip ticket), there are significant advantages.

1) Reduces Stress:

With electronic reporting, there is no more searching around for old, paper reports. The data are easily accessible and readily organized to quickly print out for your records. This at-your-fingertips information is useful when it comes time to do the taxes at the end of the year.

2) Increases Confidence:

Once you've entered a fishing report, you immediately receive a confirmation that your information has been submitted to then keep for your records. Also, by reporting when you find it convenient, you can minimize human errors.

3) Reliability:

Electronic reporting initiatives are designed to obtain the most accurate information from you. If there are conspicuous errors before you submit a report, those errors will be flagged, and you will have to resubmit the report with proper information. Also, if you are a dealer, SAFIS

has an integrated price board that dynamically adjusts its prices through time.

4) Security:

Once you report the data it's kept on external servers, which ensures security in case your computer crashes.

"It's a great feeling knowing my data is backed up on a database. I can get the reports back by setting up on another computer and a simple phone call."

5) Speed:

Data is saved in the system so that once you go back in to enter new report information, it does not have to be entered again. Also, electronic reporting can quickly encompass a large time frame.

"All of my information is already saved into my favorites, all I do is enter the date, species, pounds, and hit save and I am done!"

6) Simplicity:

Each state and federal system is designed to gather the infor-



Image (c) ACCSP

mation that is relevant to your area, so there is no unnecessary data entry. In addition, electronic reporting will ease the burden of fumbling around with a large vessel trip report book every day.

7) Convenient:

Electronic reporting can be done in the comfort of your own home or from the field. SAFIS is the only web-based electronic reporting system that is available from any computer and can be used with no need to download additional software.

“I report at the end of each day so there is no need to scramble to get a paper report done all at once. Doing an ‘all at once’ paper report requires gathering all the slips from the week which can be quite insane.”

8) Economical:

Electronic reporting is an efficient way to enter and store information and with increased efficiency, comes an increase in your bottom line.

9) Looking Back and 10) Thinking Ahead:

With the ability to assemble and examine records quickly, catch can be easily reviewed in planning for future trips. The data entered into SAFIS can even be downloaded and shared in other formats (e.g., Excel).

“What’s fantastic from a business perspective, are the reports I can quickly generate to review how well (or, not well) we’ve been doing lately.”

What is SAFIS?

The Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS) is a real-time, web-based reporting system for catch and effort landings on the Atlantic coast created by the program partners of the ACCSP.

- eDR provides dealers an online form that satisfies multiple state and federal reporting requirements. Also, dealers have the option to upload electronic files in lieu of data entry. Dealers can view data-of-record with confidential access.
- eTRIPS provides fishermen an online form that satisfies multiple state and federal reporting requirements and offers biosamples from the recreational fisheries. Fishermen can also view data-of-record with confidential access.
- e-1Ticket is a web-based trip ticket form to collect trip, effort, and catch data and simultaneously create a dealer report.
- eLogbooks is a web-based application that collects data from private recreational anglers on a voluntary basis.

For more information about SAFIS, please visit <http://www.accsp.org/safis.htm>.

What is a trip ticket?

A trip ticket is a form used by fish dealers to report commercial landings information. Bluefin Data L.L.C., created a PC trip ticket for federal dealers in South Carolina and Georgia. Several other states (e.g., Maine and North Carolina) have worked with Bluefin Data, L.L.C. to develop additional trip ticket options that would allow for data to go to multiple agencies.

For more information about Bluefin Data, L.L.C., please visit <http://www.gulftogbook.com>.



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