



New England  
Fishery Management  
Council



**MID-ATLANTIC**  
FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

*9a. COMMERCIAL eVTR's (January 28-30, 2020)*

#1

# Commercial Electronic VTR (eVTR) Omnibus Framework

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**New England Fishery Management Council  
Portsmouth, NH  
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# eVTR Framework Meeting 2

## *Goals for today:*

- Overview of eVTR Omnibus Framework (Doc.2)
- Review MAFMC preferred alternative and discussion at final action
- Decision point: **Select preferred alternative, submit FW to NMFS**

# Commercial eVTR Framework

- **Proposed action:** require commercial vessels with federal permits issued by GARFO to submit VTRs electronically, unify VTR submission timelines
- **Goal:** Reduce reporting burden/redundancies of paper VTR, improve reporting efficiency, decrease error
- **Note:** No changes are proposed for the data types being collected.

# Current VTR Requirements

- Required for any federally permitted vessel when you catch fish or during activities that would support fishing.
- Vessels with multiple permits held to most restrictive reporting requirement.
- The VTR must be nearly complete prior to entering port.
- Paper VTR satisfies current requirement, but, eVTR has been authorized for all Northeast Region federally permitted vessels since 2013
- eVTR has been required for all MAFMC for-hire permits since March 2018.

# Approved eVTR Applications

## Free

Application (provider)	Compatible Device
eTrips Mobile 2 (ACCSP)	Android and Apple tablet/smartphone, or web-based version
Fish Online (GARFO)	iPhone/iPad, or web-based version
Elog (Ecotrust)	windows computer, iphone, windows tablet (used with electronic monitoring)
FLDRS (NEFSC)*	Computer (used for cooperative research)

*\*FLDRS designed to collect high resolution fisheries data for research that also satisfies eVTR requirements. FLDRS is also the only current app that complies with reporting guidelines for ocean quahog and surf clams.*

# Other eVTR Applications

## Paid

Application (provider)	Compatible device
FACTS (Electric Edge)	Windows computer
Olrac DDL (OLSPS)	Internet browser, Windows computer, Windows tablet

- Fees associated with above applications
- The above apps are currently pending recertification to meet GARFO's technical requirements

# Costs to Permit Holders

- Multiple free applications with free technical support
- No cost if a user:
  - Already has a smartphone, tablet or laptop
  - Access to internet or cellular data
- Basic Wi-Fi capable electronic device (i.e. tablet): \$70-\$130
- Time and cost savings with no need to mail in paper forms

# Action Timeline

Task Description	Date (subject to change)
Initiation	December 2018
Formation of FMAT	January/February 2019
FMAT meeting to develop initial draft alternatives/discuss analyses	March 19, 2019
Joint AP meeting	March 25, 2019
<b>MAFMC Council meeting</b> —Framework meeting 1	April 10, 2019
<b>NEFMC Council meeting</b> —update to NEFMC	April 16, 2019
Follow up FMAT meeting	May 10, 2019
<b>NEFMC Council meeting</b> —initiate Framework action	June 13, 2019
AP/industry webinar	July 23, 2019
<b>NEFMC Council meeting</b> —Framework meeting 1	September 2019
FMAT meeting	October 2019
Evening Public Webinar	November 20, 2019
<b>MAFMC Council meeting</b> —Framework meeting 2 (final action)	December 11, 2019
<b>NEFMC Council meeting—Framework meeting 2 (final action)</b>	<b>January 28, 2020</b>
Finalization of Framework document; submission to NMFS	February 2020
Workshops	Starting Feb. 2020
Proposed rule	April 2020
Final rule	Summer 2020
eVTR requirement implemented	Summer 2021



# Affected Permit Holders

Mid-Atlantic FMPs	New England FMPs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Atlantic Bluefish</li><li>• Black Sea Bass</li><li>• Scup</li><li>• Summer Flounder</li><li>• Spiny Dogfish</li><li>• Tilefish</li><li>• Squid</li><li>• Atlantic Mackerel</li><li>• Butterfish</li><li>• Surfclam</li><li>• Ocean Quahog</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Northeast Multispecies (groundfish)</li><li>• Monkfish</li><li>• Atlantic Herring</li><li>• Skates</li><li>• Small-Mesh Multispecies (whiting/hake)</li><li>• Red Crab</li><li>• Sea Scallop</li></ul>

# Affected Permit Holders

Summary of Affected Users	2018 (Jan 1-Dec 31)
# of vessels issued a MAFMC commercial permit	2,726
# of vessels issued a NEFMC commercial permit	2,723
# of vessels issued both a MAFMC commercial permit and NEFMC commercial permit	2,520
# of MAFMC or NEFMC commercial permit holders	<b>2,929</b>
# of above vessels that submitted VTRs for commercial trips	<b>*1,723</b>

**\*224 of these vessels submitted VTRs electronically in 2018 (~13%)**

# Commercial VTR/eVTR in 2018

# of Commercial VTRs Submitted in 2018	
Paper	73,132
Electronic	7,727

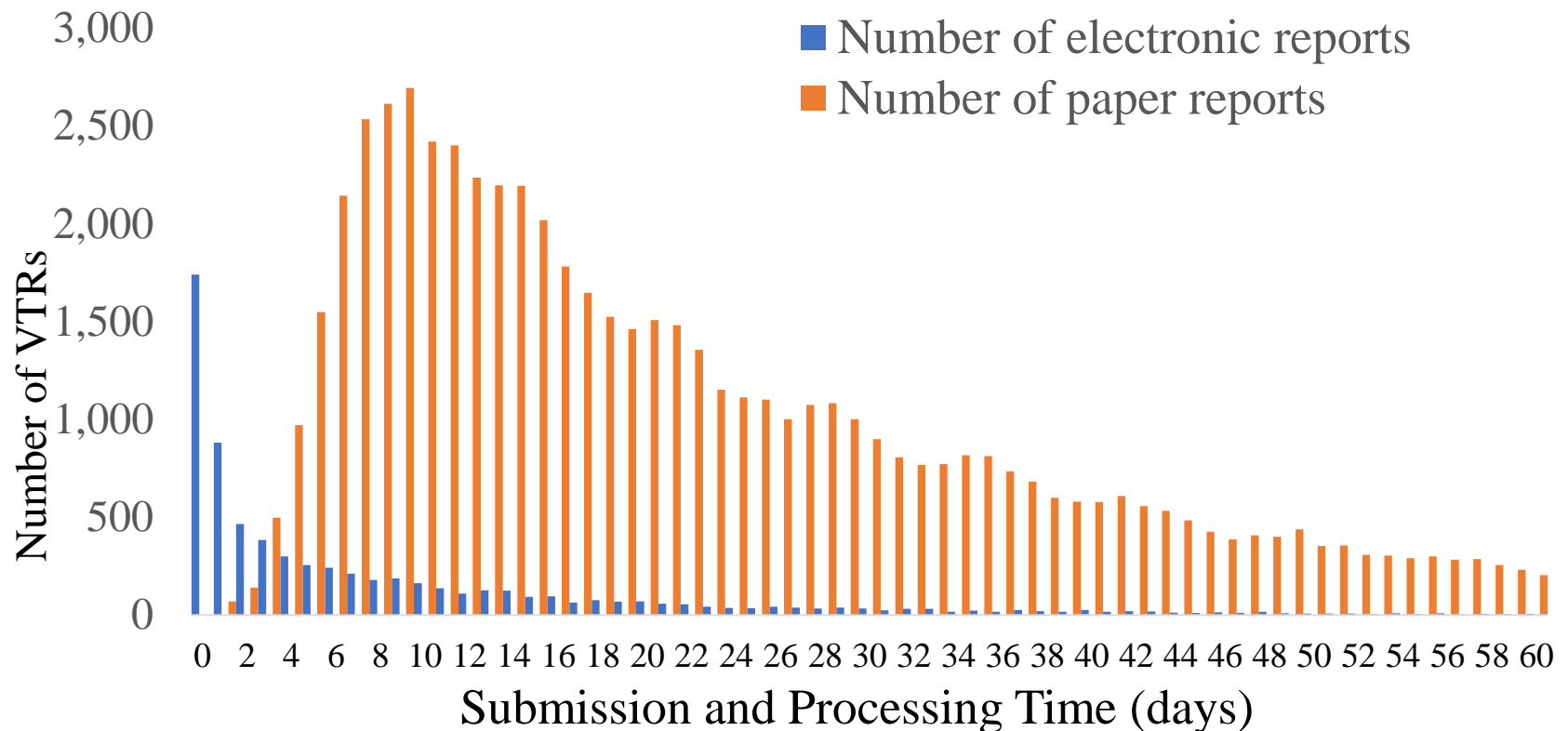
*In 2018, roughly 10% of VTRs submitted electronically*

Provider (app)	Commercial	
	eVTRs	Vessels
ACCSP (eTrips/Mobile)	1,065	81
GARFO (Fish Online)	760	44
NEFSC (FLDRS)	5,750	92
ECOTRUST (Elog)	152	7

# eVTR Use by State in 2018

Landing state	% of VTRs submitted electronically
ME	9%
NH	21%
MA	10%
RI	16%
CT	12%
NY	7%
NJ	4%
DE	0%
MD	1%
VA	1%
NC	1%

# 2018 Commercial eVTR Timing



- Submission and processing = days from end of trip to arrival of VTR in GARFO database
- eVTR time significantly reduced (e.g., 50% of eVTRs submitted/processed 3 days after trip)

# AP and Public Meeting Comments

- Several in support of eVTR with 48 hour deadline
  - consistency with the for-hire sector
  - Working with study fleet, fishermen develop a habit
- Feeling that many operators will likely submit within 24 hours of ending a trip
- Consider existing requirements for groundfish sectors, may need a reporting deadline of 24 hours for quota monitoring
- Suggestion that deadline of 72 hours after a trip is plenty of time

# AP and Public Meeting Comments

- Multiple advisors
  - More fine scale, tow-by-tow information should be collected
  - FLDRS should be expanded and given more resources
  - NEFSC clarified that current FLDRS users will be supported and expand to vessels that are interested in study fleet
- Question of how data has gone since the implementation of eVTR for the MAFMC for-hire sector in March 2018
  - Data handling has gone well with no noticeable drop in compliance; the VTR data has been available in near-real time through the database
- More information about the economic benefits to GARFO

# AP and Public Meeting Comments

- Council and/or NMFS should pay for electronic devices or develop a voucher or reimbursement program for electronic devices
- Recreational sector (private anglers) should be required to submit eVTRs. That is where better data is needed
- Approved applications should accommodate different state reporting
- Under eVTR, there still must be a transfer of the VTR number from the vessel to the dealer.
  - GARFO staff: primary objective of the Fishery Dependent Data Initiative (FDDI) is to integrate these numbers being transferred systematically



# FMAT Discussion

*October 25, 2019 webinar:*

## **Weekly deadline benefits**

- Aligns with dealer reporting
- Consistent with current deadline for many permit holders, aligns reporting across commercial permit holders while still being the closest to status quo
- Issues related to internet accessibility in remote ports
- With quota monitoring, weekly reporting has been successful

## **Aligning with for-hire deadline, 48 hours**

- Reducing recall bias/reducing error
- Same deadline as for-hire: simplicity in reporting, compliance, and enforcement
- Having equity across sectors

# FMAT Discussion (cont'd)

## *October 25, 2019 webinar:*

- Breaking down eVTR app use by gear type may not be an indicator of which apps would be used in the future.
- First eVTR adopters in the commercial fleet were participants in study fleet, using the program FLDRS to report finer scale scientific information as well as fulfill their VTR requirements.
- Economic benefits to GARFO:
  - cost savings to GARFO would be in contract staff time, data entry, postage, printing and FTE time.
  - there are costs to GARFO up front during application development and other IT resources.
- Data quality, efficiency, and a key step towards future modernization

# MAFMC Final Action

## *December 11, 2019 meeting*

Initial motion recommending alternative 1e (electronic submission with a weekly deadline )

- Hesitation around implementing too short of deadline during transition to eVTR
- Cited AP/public comments on internet access in remote ports
- Suggestion: start with weekly, work down to shorter deadline

Motion to amend recommending alternative 1c (electronic submission with a 48-hour deadline).

- *Nowalsky/Pentony (15/4/1) Motion carries*

# MAFMC Preferred Alternative

*December 11, 2019 meeting*

**Alternative 1c: require eVTRs with a reporting deadline 48 hours after entering port (completion of a fishing trip).**

*Discussion/Rationale:*

- Most commercial operators that submitted electronically in 2018 did so within 48 hours after the fishing trip ended.
- Same deadline as for-hire: simplicity in reporting, compliance, and enforcement; establishing equity across sectors.
- Submission can occur immediately upon selling catch and recording dealer number, pounds, etc. Natural “cue” point for submission.
- Shorter time reduces recall bias/reducing reporting error.

# Alternatives for Discussion

- **Alternative 1**: require commercial fishing vessels with Federal permits to submit VTRs through electronic means (eVTR)
  - **Alternative 1a**: no change to reporting deadline
  - **Alternative 1b**: within 24 hours following the completion of the fishing trip
  - **Alternative 1c**: within 48 hours (*MAFMC preferred*)
  - **Alternative 1d**: within 72 hours
  - **Alternative 1e**: weekly following the completion of the fishing trip. Must be received by midnight of the Tuesday following the reporting week (Sunday through Saturday)
- **Alternative 2**: No Action, *status quo*

**Decision point:** select preferred alternative

# Questions?