



How are Party/Charter Vessel Trip Reports Used?

Owners and operators of party/charter boats that fish for certain species in federal waters (e.g. summer flounder, black sea bass, scup, bluefish, mackerel, squid, and tilefish) are required to have federal fishing permits. One of the requirements of permit holders is that they complete a Vessel Trip Report, or "VTR," for each fishing trip they take. As of March 12, 2018, party/charter VTRs for vessels with Mid-Atlantic species permits must be submitted electronically (<http://www.mafmc.org/for-hire-evtr/>).

The data reported on VTRs for each trip include date, number of anglers, general area of fishing, number and species of fish that were kept by anglers fishing on the vessel, and the number and species of fish discarded. Party/charter VTRs are made available to scientists and managers in databases soon after submission.

Some current uses of party/charter VTR data include:

- VTR data are used to calculate final Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) party/charter catch estimates. For the group of vessels that submit VTRs, the number of trips (effort) reported from VTRs is multiplied by "catch per trip" (from dockside interviews) to produce catch estimates.
- Stock assessments incorporate VTR data by using the recreational party/charter MRIP catch estimates described above. VTR catch data are typically not utilized in stock assessments. For data-limited fisheries, like blueline tilefish, direct VTR catch records have been used in assessments and for setting catch limits.
- Information about fishing areas from party/charter VTRs has been used in economic analyses regarding potential closed areas.
- In data-limited situations VTR data is used for evaluating and adjusting management measures. VTR data were used to set golden and blueline tilefish bag limits and used to adjust the black sea bass season during Wave 1 (January/February), when MRIP does not operate in the Mid-Atlantic.
- Descriptive information from VTRs (for example, how many party-charter vessels are operating in different states) are used in a variety of presentations and fishery management documents.

In addition, MRIP (www.countmyfish.noaa.gov) staff are currently developing methodologies for validating and incorporating self-reported party/charter catch data as official catch estimates that would utilize this VTR data.

Questions? Contact Jason Didden, (302) 526-5254.