

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT: VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEMS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a report from Mr. Dayna Matthews on a vessel monitoring systems (VMS) case relating to the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) for which a final decision and order was made on Aug. 29, 2013.

Mr. Matthews reviewed the case and its judicial review. Two of the main points of the case were the continuous transit language and the ping rate, which is currently one ping rate per hour, for which NMFS Office of Law Enforcement is proposing changes.

Some of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) options suggestions include changing the RCA lines to polygons, increasing the ping rate to every 15 minutes (four times an hour) or using electronic logbooks.

While changing the RCA lines in various configurations would likely work for trawl vessels, this option would not work for fixed-gear vessels.

In the long-term, electronic logbooks may work, but this is an issue that has been in the works for years and there is no timeline for immediate implementation.

Increasing the ping rate will have financial consequences for all vessels, smaller vessels in particular. As an example, we've included the VMS service plans from one of the VMS manufacturers, Skymate. A small, open-access fixed-gear vessel that has the basic plan (Silver) of \$21.99 a month likely would be burdened with a higher-cost plan, the Gold (\$38.99 per month) or Platinum (\$73.99 per month), which would allow for more pings per hour. Over a year, the cost increases could be considerable. Additionally, some vessel operators may have to purchase different equipment if their existing VMS is incapable of working within any new NMFS specifications.

Any VMS changes would have national implications and therefore bears greater scrutiny from other councils as well.

The GAP discussed alternatives such as testing a ping rate of two pings per hour, changing the declaration rules so that ping rates are increased only near sensitive areas, requesting the ping rate not be increased while the VMS equipment is in "sleep mode" (e.g., when the boat is tied to the dock). These were just some of the GAP's recommendations and we believe this issue requires further analysis rather than just an immediate change in the ping rates.

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Products

SkyMate VMS Package

Designed for commercial fishermen with NMFS tracking requirements. Includes a SkyMate satellite communicator with an internal 12 channel GPS receiver with NEMA input capabilities, the SkyMate approved premium commercial grade 48" fiberglass VHF band antenna, a marine grade GPS antenna with 30' of LMR coax cable for the VHF and GPS antennas, a GPS data cable, and a 8V 3.2 A-hr. sealed reserve battery. The package also includes the VMS user guide, power cables, a serial-to-USB adapter, a message indicator light, a serial data cable, and SkyMate PC software. This Package is not currently type approved for the Reefish Program(Amendment 18A).

[View Product Image](#)**\$1599.00**

Specifications

Frequency band	VHF
Transmit frequency	148-150 Mhz
Receive frequency	137-138 Mhz
Antenna impedance	50 Ohms
Input voltage	12-24 V DC
Transmit current	2.5 A (1% duty cycle)
Receive current	170 milliamps
Data interface	DB9 Female RS232 level
Satellite network	ORBCOMM
Operating conditions	40-185 degree F
Humidity	95%
Length	7.08 in (180 mm)
Width	4.06 in (104 mm)
Height	1.42 in (30 mm)
Weight	24.9 oz (800 grams)
GPS	12 channel

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Service Plans

SkyMate offers you the flexibility to change your service plan month-to-month based on your fishing activity. *

Platinum Plan

Send or receive 50,000 characters per month for just \$73.99. Additional data costs only \$1.40 per 1000 characters.

Gold Plan

Send or receive 20,000 characters per month for just \$38.99. Additional data costs only \$1.90 per 1000 characters.

Silver Plan

Send or receive 8,000 characters per month for just \$21.99. Additional data costs only \$2.25 per 1000 characters.

SkyMate suggests the following plans based on your reporting requirements. Each position report equals 20 characters.

Reporting Interval	Reports Per Day	Characters/Month	Lowest Cost Plan	Lowest Plan with Messaging
Hourly	24	14,400	Silver	Gold
Every 30 Minutes	48	28,800	Gold	Platinum

*\$149 one time fee charged upon activation.

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