

Subject: Fwd: Salmon Trollers VMS

Date: Sat, 25 Oct 2003 21:27:33 -0700

From: Douglas Fricke <fricked@techline.com>

To: Chuck Tracy <Chuck.tracy@noaa.gov>

CC: Don Stevens <Spirit.spirit@verizon.net>

Chuck, Don Stevens suggested that I forward the following Email so it could go into the Council briefing book in the discussion on VMS - Thanks -- Doug Fricke

>Date: Thu, 23 Oct 2003 13:32:20 -0700

>To: Dayna Matthews

>From: Douglas Fricke <fricked@techline.com>

>Subject: Salmon Trollers VMS

>Cc: Don Stevens, Cathy Fosmark, WTA Board, Judie Graham, Mark Cedergreen,

>Phil Anderson

>

>It has come to my attention that PFMC VMS Advisory Group is considering
>whether or not to exempt Coastal Salmon Trolling from the requirement of
>carrying VMS while Trolling for salmon. One of the considerations is
>the allowance of incidental retention of yellowtail rockfish by the
>trollers while targeting on salmon. It seems that the incidental allowance
>of yellowtail rockfish of which you are required to land two pounds of
>salmon before any yellowtail can be retained and a 200 lb per month
>(approximately \$50 landing value) total allowance is going to encourage
>salmon trollers to target on groundfish is totally unrealistic. We know
>that yellowtail rockfish have a tendency to be higher in the water column
>than most other rockfish and this is a way to reduce bycatch that is a
>positive interest to everyone. We have vessels that troll for salmon along
>the entire coasts of WA., OR., and CA., and can attest that there is no
>targeting on groundfish while trolling for salmon and that the fishing
>techniques utilized along all three states are virtually the same. We can
>see no reason why VMS should be required for salmon trollers along the
>Pacific Coast.

>The Washington Trollers do not have a representative on the GAP and do not
>have the funds to send representatives to the GAP or VMS meetings on a
>continual basis. We would appreciate notification to present our views on
>issues affecting our fisheries before final decisions are made. - Doug
>Fricke, WTA President

Captain Mike Cenci
Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
PO Box 1279
Long Beach, WA 98631
cencimac@dfw.wa.gov

Dear Mike,

We feel more than compelled to write to you about the drifting in the RCA issue. We are adamant that some provision must be made to allow drifting in this area and our concerns centers around basic crew safety.

When a trawl vessel is reeling in the net, as soon as the net leaves the bottom, the boat develops a mind of its own. The net breaches the boat from the rear, the same location as the propeller. So it is very hard to maneuver the boat at this time and it is subject to the mercy of the wind and the currents. If the vessel were fishing near the RCA, the wind and currents could move the vessel inside the RCA while the crew is busy trying to secure the catch. This is an extremely vulnerable time for both the crew and the boat. All hands are so busy that they can not even take the time to respond to a phone or radio call. Snagging something on the bottom as the net is being raised could even pull the boat down. So this is the most crucial time during trawl fishing.

We need a solution to the problem of drifting in the RCA that the fishers can live with and the enforcers can manage. Not all boats fish close to the RCA lines all the time but most boats do occasionally find themselves close to the line as they attempt to catch what they are allowed to catch. A declaration system is part of the strategy of enforcing the RCA so why can't a boat contact the declaration system when they find themselves ready to haul in and are close to the RCA? That way it would be declared if they do drift into the RCA while hauling in. All trawl vessels have radios, cell phones, sat phones or some method of communication with shore. This requirement would have no economic impacts on the fleet and would not increase the size of the RCA by requiring a large drift zone margin around the RCA.

Another time a boat may drift is when the crew is making repairs. They may be on deck making repairs to the gear or they may be in the engine room dealing with mechanical problems During this time the boat is subject to the currents and wind and it is not uncommon to drift up to 10 miles while the crew deals with the repair. A simple call to the declaration system would avoid the need for the enforcers to come out to investigate.

Both drifting problems mentioned above could be addressed with a simple phone call if the declaration system could be used for this purpose. This solution has very little economic impact on the fleet. Perhaps some data from the observer program could shed some light on how boats are effected by net haul ups. Observer information could at least give some frequency data that may be useful in finding a solution to the drifting problems.

Sincerely,

Steve Bodnar, Executive Director

Coos Bay Trawlers' Association, Inc.
PO Box 5050
Coos Bay, Oregon 97420
phone:541-888-8012
fax:541-888-6165
c.trawl@verizon.net