

Commercial Fisheries Reporting Rates

Since 2013, the number of commercial harvest reports provided to Fisheries Service (now Fishing and Boating Services) has been steadily decreasing. By August 2016, reporting rates had fallen below 70%, and rates of reports submitted on time have fallen below 50%.

Without timely harvest reports, we can't manage in-season fishing quotas (mandated by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission). The economic impact to the industry could be significant. If they over harvest a species this year, they lose money next year when overages are paid back. If we close early due to the high level of uncertainty regarding harvest, they lose money this year. If we ignore the quotas entirely and are out of compliance, our fisheries can be closed by the Department of Commerce. Not having the necessary information negatively impacts the bottom line of the business.

Why have reporting rates gone down?

In 2012, Fisheries Service implemented suspension and revocation penalties for failing to report. Over the course of the following year or so, it was determined the department could not prove that the reports were not mailed or faxed; the reports may have been mailed but not received. Since then, reporting has gone down. Currently, the department posts those who are behind on reporting on our website. The department can't pursue penalties for failing to report using the current paper reporting tools and penalty system.

Table 1. 2016 reporting rates per fishery.

2016	Finfish	Crab	Charter
Jan	76%	NA	NA
Feb	75%	NA	NA
March	74%	NA	NA
April	73%	86%	78%
May	73%	85%	75%
June	71%	84%	73%
July	70%	82%	71%
Aug	68%	78%	66%
Sept	64%	74%	60%
Oct	63%	73%	56%
Nov	57%	70%	48%
Dec	52%	70%	41%
Annual Avg	68%	78%	63%

Table 2. 2016-2017 reporting rates for shellfish fisheries.

2016-2017 Season	Oyster	Clam
September 2016	NA	47%
October 2016	64%	47%
November 2016	65%	43%
December 2016	49%	38%
January 2017	4%	17%
February 2017	1%	16%
March 2017	1%	15%
April 2017	NA	13%
May 2017	NA	12%
June 2017	NA	11%
July 2017	NA	11%
August 2017	NA	11%
Average thru December	59%	44%