

VMS/Enforcement Report

NEFMC Meeting

June 20, 2013

Enforcement Policy

- The Council's current Enforcement Policy was developed by OLE, USCG, and GCNE in 2007. These three organizations produced a revised version, Enforcement Precepts for Northeast Regional Fishery Management Councils (April 2013). The Enforcement committee comments were incorporated into the final revised version (in your binder)
- The committee recommends that the Council accept these Precepts to replace its current Enforcement Policy.

Hidden Compartments

- The Coast Guard proposed the prohibition of anyone knowingly building, purchasing, fitting out in whole or in part, or using, a hidden compartment, for the purpose of employing it to defraud law enforcement officers authorized to conduct boardings and inspections.
- The Committee recommended that NOAA General Counsel work on wording to prohibit and to define hidden compartments, and report to the next Enforcement meeting.

Other Business – Gear Stowage

- Gear stowage rules remain in force for groundfish trips (fishermen were notified)
- NOAA indicates that it will work on the safety at-sea concerns of gear stowage requirements
- NOAA will move forward with the orange mesh recommendation, to cover nets on the reel, but not the other recommendations (removal of the rule to detach the doors)
- Coast Guard wants to develop a list of approved materials, to provide flexibility

Other Business – Industry Request

- Fisheries Survival Fund stated that several scallopers violated closed areas two years ago, received revenue for their landings, and are yet to be prosecuted
- Coast Guard spent much time and resources establishing these cases
- Lack of prosecution is very detrimental to scallop area management
- Now, several vessels are landing very large amounts of scallops, apparently more than seven crew/shuckers can cut
- And there is a noted absence of law enforcement in these closed areas
- Lack of at-sea enforcement is very detrimental to scallop area management

Closed Areas

The Committee approved the following recommendations for the Habitat-Groundfish meeting on June 11, 2013:

- 1. There are significant concerns about the enforceability of a no ground cable restriction, and
- 2. There is interest in further information on the reduced impact (raised) ground cables to study their enforceability.