

§ 600.1610 Establishing and reviewing standardized bycatch reporting methodologies in fishery management plans.

(a) *Establishing a standardized reporting methodology*—(1) *Fishery management plan contents*. An FMP must identify the required procedure or procedures that constitute the standardized reporting methodology for the fishery. The required procedures may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following: Observer programs, electronic monitoring and reporting technologies, and self-reported mechanisms (e.g., recreational sampling, industry-reported catch and discard data). The FMP, or a fishery research plan authorized under 16 U.S.C. 1862, must explain how the standardized reporting methodology meets the purpose described in § 600.1600, based on an analysis of the requirements under § 600.1610(a)(2). The FMP, or fishery research plan authorized under 16 U.S.C. 1862, may reference analyses and information in other FMPs, FMP amendments, Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) reports, or other documents. Councils should work together and collaborate on standardized reporting methodologies for fisheries that operate across multiple jurisdictions, as appropriate. In addition to proposing regulations necessary to implement the standardized reporting methodology, a Council should also provide in its FMP, or a fishery research plan authorized under 16 U.S.C. 1862, guidance to NMFS on how to adjust implementation of a standardized reporting methodology consistent with the FMP. See National Standard 6 guidelines, § 600.335.

(2) *Requirements for standardized reporting methodology*. The FMP must establish a standardized reporting methodology as provided under § 600.1610(a)(1) that meets the specific purpose described in § 600.1600. Due to the inherent diversity of fisheries, different standardized reporting methodologies may be appropriate for different fisheries. However, when establishing or reviewing a standardized reporting methodology, a Council must address the following:

(i) *Information about the characteristics of bycatch in the fishery*. A Council must

address information about the characteristics of bycatch in the fishery, when available, including, but not limited to: The amount and type of bycatch occurring in the fishery, which may vary based on different fishing activities and operations; the importance of bycatch in estimating the fishing mortality of fish stocks; and the effect of bycatch on ecosystems.

(ii) *Feasibility*. The implementation of a standardized reporting methodology must be feasible from cost, technical, and operational perspectives. However, feasibility concerns do not exempt an FMP from the requirement to establish a standardized reporting methodology. Recognizing that costs and funding may vary from year to year, a Council must also address how implementation of the standardized reporting methodology may be adjusted while continuing to meet the purpose described under § 600.1600.

(iii) *Data uncertainty*. A Council must address the uncertainty of the data resulting from the standardized reporting methodology. The standardized reporting methodology must be designed so that the uncertainty associated with the resulting bycatch data can be described, quantitatively or qualitatively. The Council should seek to minimize uncertainty in the resulting data, recognizing that different degrees of data uncertainty may be appropriate for different fisheries.

(iv) *Data use*. A Council must address how data resulting from the standardized reporting methodology are used to assess the amount and type of bycatch occurring in the fishery. A Council must consult with its scientific and statistical committee and/or the regional National Marine Fisheries Service science center on reporting methodology design considerations such as data elements, sampling designs, sample sizes, and reporting frequency. The Council must also consider the scientific methods and techniques available to collect, record, and report bycatch data that could improve the quality of bycatch estimates. Different standardized reporting methodology designs may be appropriate for different fisheries.

(b) *Review of FMPs.* All FMPs must be consistent with this subpart by February 21, 2022. Therefore, a Council, in coordination with NMFS, must conduct a review of its FMPs for consistency with this subpart. A Council does not need to amend an FMP if NMFS determines that it is consistent with this subpart. Thereafter, Councils, in coordination with NMFS, should conduct a review of standardized reporting methodologies at least once every 5 years in order to verify continued compliance with the MSA and this subpart.

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