



***Social Sciences Branch
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
Woods Hole, Massachusetts***



***Please Participate in the
Northeast Fishing Vessel Cost Survey
for 2015***

Who are we and what do we do?

This survey is being conducted by a team of economists in the Social Sciences Branch (SSB) of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

The Social Sciences Branch:

- is a part of NOAA Fisheries, but does not have the ability to enact fisheries regulations.
- collects and analyzes economic, social, and cultural data on the people that depend on fisheries for their livelihood and well-being.

How can filling out the survey benefit you, the fisherman?

Here's what we've heard from the fishermen:

- past regulatory analysis failed to tell the complete story of the economic and social impacts of fisheries regulations on fishermen, ports and communities.
- fishermen have taken previous surveys, but have not been kept informed as to what happens to the data collected or what reports and analyses the data is used in.
- economic impacts are not considered as heavily as biological impacts.

We need data from fishermen, not only in periods of biological uncertainty and regulatory change, but also routinely and over the long term. Such data allows us to produce better, more complete economic and social analyses. The SSB's goal is that these analyses will help fisheries managers to:

- understand the economic and social implications of fisheries management regulations.
- recognize how, where and why some measures will have varying impacts on different sectors of the industry, ports, and groups of fishermen and fishing communities.
- increase the consideration given to economic and social impacts in regulatory decision-making.
- choose measures that generate the greatest net economic benefits.

Why are we collecting this data? The survey is driven by the need for economic data on the total costs of operating commercial fishing businesses.

- Fisheries observers currently collect costs associated with vessel trips (for example, ice and fuel costs), but...
- We want to accurately represent the total costs associated with your fishing business, so we also need information on your other costs (for example your repair and maintenance, insurance, and other non-trip costs).

Hasn't this data been collected from me before? In 2012 and 2013, we collected data on costs incurred in 2011 and 2012. We received 741 responses for those two years. This data request is for 2015 cost data. We are requesting this data again, because:

- We need data that is up to date, since costs change over time and the composition of the fleet may change over time.
- We need to hear from more fishermen to get a better idea about the diversity in costs across fisheries.
- We are continuously trying to improve our data quality by getting feedback from you on the collected data.

Who are we asking to take this survey?

- Approximately 50% of the owners of federally permitted Northeast U.S. commercial fishing vessels that landed any fish in 2015.
- The sample of fishermen receiving this survey includes fishermen across federally managed fisheries, gear types, and vessel sizes.

How can I be updated on that data that is being collected and find out how it is being used?

- This survey packet includes a card with the website address for our SSB website, where you can find additional details about the vessel cost data that is being collected and analyzed, as well as other SSB activities.
- The website will describe how the vessel cost data is being used as time passes. As the data is used in various analyses, we will provide links to those documents on our website.

Is taking the survey voluntary or mandatory? What about confidentiality?

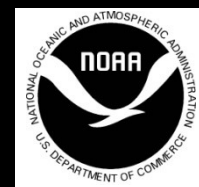
- Responses to this survey are completely voluntary and completely confidential.
- By law, all survey data are confidential. Your responses are NOT being collected for ANY enforcement related purposes.
- In data analyses and reports, the information provided by individual vessel owners will be combined, resulting in a summary of costs by gear type, vessel size, region, etc.
- No individual owner's data will be published or made available to anyone other than those specifically authorized to analyze the data.

Questions or Comments? Please contact Tammy Murphy, an economist in the Social Sciences Branch by telephone at 508.495.4716 or email her at Tammy.Murphy@noaa.gov.

***We are listening & we're working hard to do a better job
for fishermen...now and in the future.***



**Social Sciences Branch
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
Woods Hole, Massachusetts**



March XX, 2016

{RESPONDENT NAME}
{RESPONDENT ADDRESS}

Dear {NAME},

Within the next few days you will be receiving a survey from the Social Sciences Branch (SSB) of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, MA. The SSB is a part of NOAA Fisheries, but does not have the ability to enact fisheries regulations. What we do is advocate for increased attention to economic and social impacts to fishing communities in the fisheries management process, and we work to provide complete and accurate information on such impacts to decision makers.

We last collected fishing vessel cost data for costs incurred by vessel owners in 2011 and 2012. In those two years combined, we received 741 complete surveys. A brief summary of this survey effort and summary results are enclosed with this letter. You may also find additional information on our cost data program and the cost data vessel owners provide to is used for on the Social Sciences Branch website at <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/read/socialsci/>.

You have been selected in the survey sample for costs incurred during 2015. Total costs are likely to vary depending on fishery, gear type, and vessel size. To capture those cost differences and communicate them to fisheries managers, we need to hear from every fisherman in the sample, including you.

We encourage you to complete the survey once you receive it. You may complete the survey on paper or on the web. The survey will ask you a number of questions on your fishing vessel costs. Responses to the survey are completely voluntary and confidential, as required by law. A self-addressed stamped envelope will be sent in case you choose to complete the paper survey and return it by mail. The survey will also be available online at a secured site. You will be given a user ID and password to access the online survey. We estimate the survey will take about an hour to complete. Responses to the survey are voluntary, but by completing it, you will be helping us understand how fishery management policies affect you.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Tammy Murphy, Economist
Social Sciences Branch

Questions, comments or concerns? Please contact Tammy Murphy, an economist in the SSB, by telephone at 508.495.4716 or by email at Tammy.Murphy@noaa.gov.

Please visit us on the web!
www.nefsc.noaa.gov/read/socialsci

Thank you for participating in the 2015 NE Vessel Cost Survey!

The Social Sciences Branch is trying hard to make sure that survey participants are kept up-to-date as we work to inform decision makers about the social and economic impacts that fisheries regulations have on you and your fishing community. Our website will provide updates and summary information on data collected from our surveys as it becomes available. We will also post links to any documents that include the analysis of this survey data. Check out some of the other projects we're working on... we welcome your comments!