

DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

Chapter 8 Landings Program

8.20 Harvester Reporting

N. Lobster Harvest

16. Number of strings hauled. For purposes of this section, a string means a single trap or multiple traps connected by a groundline.

## Basis Statement

Chapter 8.20(N) Landings Program, Harvester Reporting,  
Lobster Harvest

The additional reporting element “number of strings hauled” has been added to Chapter 8.20(N)(A) required of lobster harvesters. The purpose would be to improve data collected on gear configurations for use in vertical line density estimates, for the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, and compliance with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). A definition of the term “string” has been added to the regulations for clarification, along with example information added in the reporting instructions.

These regulations apply to all persons selected to report that hold a Class I, II, or III, student or noncommercial lobster and crab fishing license issued under 12 M.R.S.A. §6421 (A, B, C, E, F and G). Ten percent of these license holders, except lobster apprentices, during a given calendar year are randomly selected to report the harvesting information required for the following calendar year; except that all Monhegan Island Lobster Conservation Area lobster and crab license holders, not including apprentices, are required to report each year. The next two year cycle will begin in 2010 with a new group of 10% lobster harvesters reporting.

## Summary of Comments

Chapter 8.20(N) Landings Program, Harvester Reporting,  
Lobster Harvest

A public hearing was held in Hallowell on October 26, 2009. No persons from the public attended the hearing and no written comments were received from the public. During Lobster Management Zone Council meetings (D and E) held within the comment period questions were discussed that resulted in staff recommendations on clarifications in the regulation.

### **Sarah Cotnoir, DMR Resource Coordinator/Council Liaison**

During the comment period Sarah Cotnoir, Resource Coordinator attended a Zone D Lobster Zone Management Council meeting held October 8, 2009. Discussion in this meeting of the proposed rulemaking indicated the potential for confusion about the term “string” as this has various meanings coast wide among lobster fishermen. In some areas it could mean a number of singles in a row; or a number of pairs in an area or it could mean a “trawl” line, it could refer to bottom fished or it could mean a set of numbers, etc.

### **Response:**

To clarify the intent of the term “string” a definition was recommended to be added in the rule: “For purposes of this section, a string means a single trap or multiple traps connected by a groundline.” In addition to the clarification in the regulation text the reporting instructions would contain additional information. In the reporting form field “# of Sets” used to state “Skip this field”. This will be changed to mirror the definition added to the regulation with some examples: *“Number of strings hauled (e.g. quads, triples, pairs, singles, etc.). For purposes of this section, string means a single trap or multiple traps connected by a groundline.”* Also, following normal procedures the landings program staff assists persons with additional questions on reporting requirements.