NOAA FISHERIES

Northeast Fisheries Science Center

FY 2026 Scallop PTNS Vessel User Guide

PTNS

OBSERVER PRE-TRIP NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

A real-time, responsive, observer deployment system

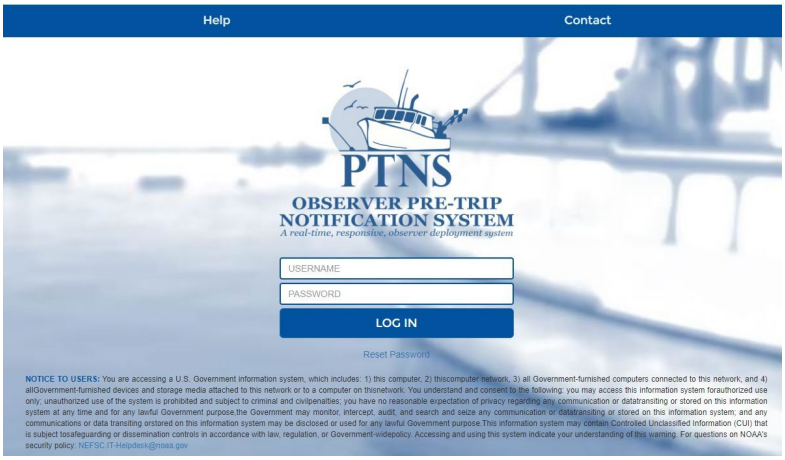
PTNS User Guide Video Tutorial

Website link: [PTNS User Guide Video Tutorial]

Logging In

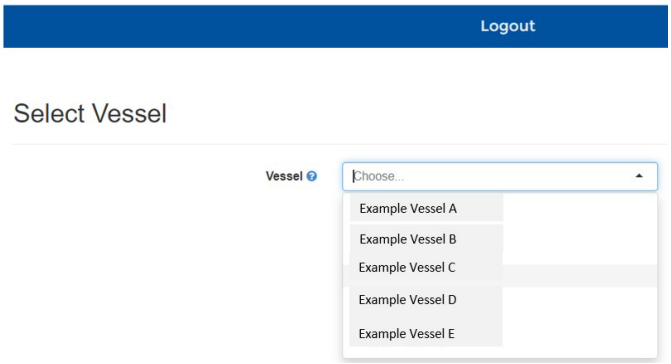
To log into your PTNS web account:

1. Navigate your browser to the [PTNS website].
2. Enter your individual FishOnline username and password.
3. Click the LOG IN button.



If you forget your username, please visit [https://apps-garfo.fisheries.noaa.gov/fishtank/login/forgot_username]. If you forget your password, please visit [https://apps-garfo.fisheries.noaa.gov/fishtank/login/forgot]. The PTNS Team will still be able to access your account during this time and you can contact them at 855-347-4371 if you need PTNS assistance, but they do not have access to your individual username and password.

4. After logging in, if you have vessel entitlements for one vessel you can move to the next section, 'Home Screen.' If you have vessel entitlements for more than one vessel, please select the name of the vessel you would like to manage the account of from the dropdown list.

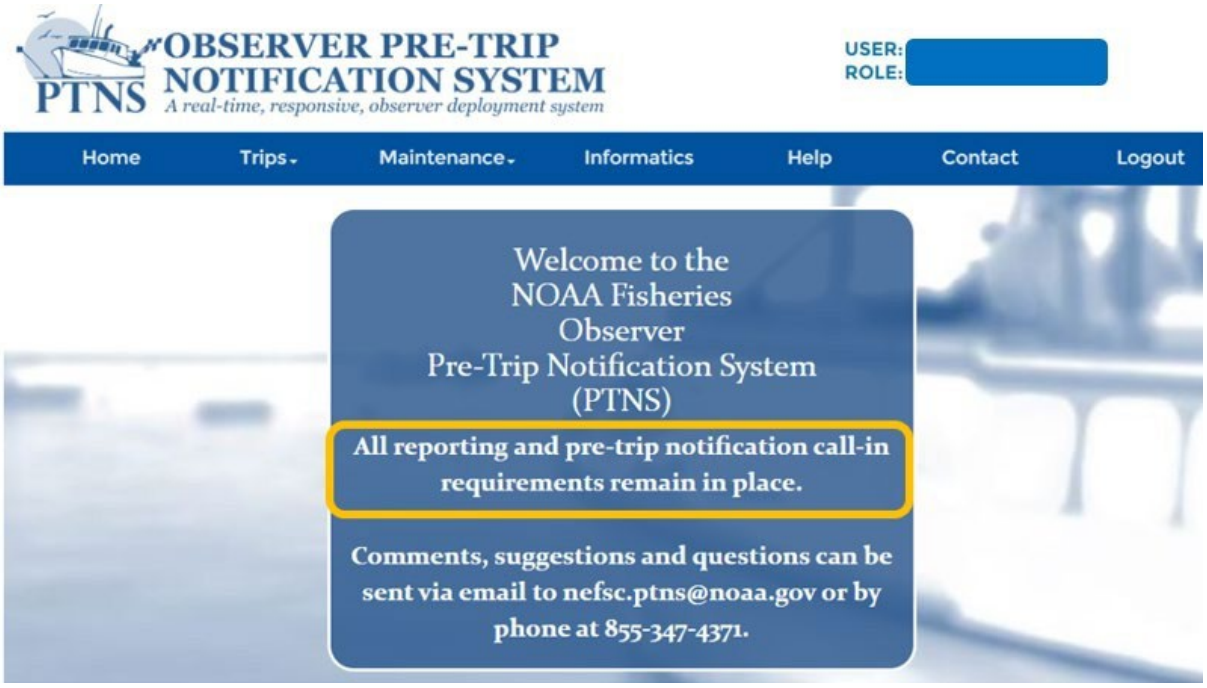


Please note, you will need to log out and back in before managing more than one vessel's account during one PTNS session. Simply log out of your existing session, log back in as the same individual FishOnline user on the PTNS website, and select the next vessel you would like to manage.

Home Screen

PTNS Home Screen

On the 'Home Screen,' you may see alerts displayed in the message box as needed (highlighted in yellow), such as warnings of planned system outages.

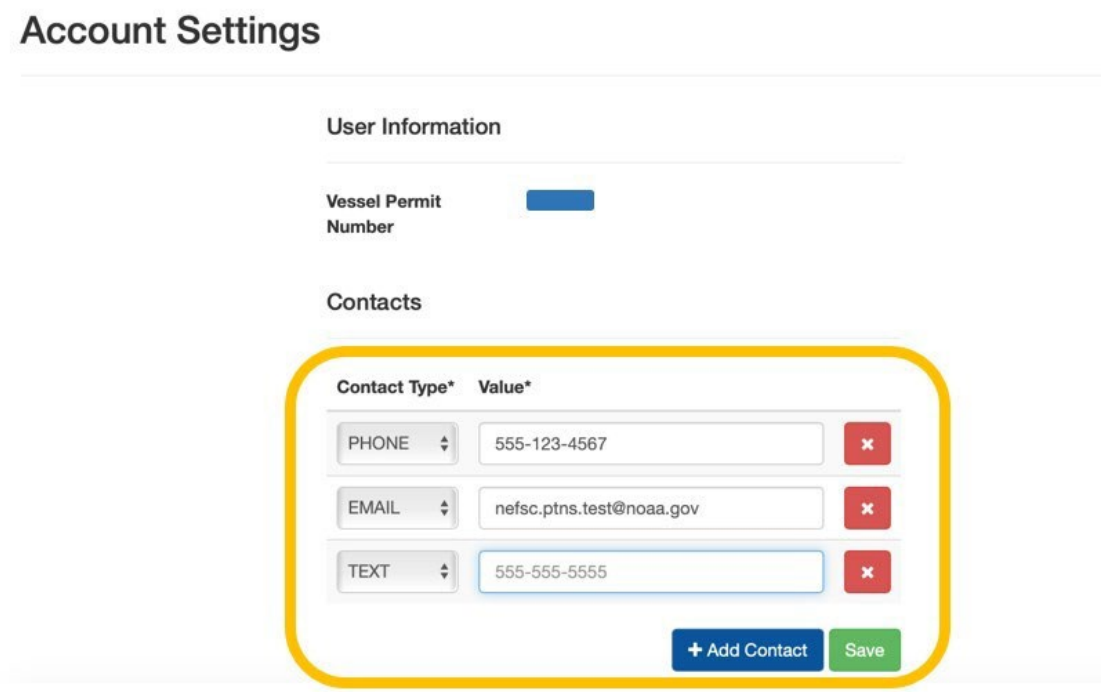


Vessel Account Settings

Vessel Contact Information

To view and edit vessel contact information, click on the 'Maintenance' tab and select 'Vessel Contact Information' from the dropdown menu.





All of the phone numbers and email addresses associated with your PTNS account are listed on the 'Vessel Contact Information' screen.

To add a contact:

1. Click the '+ Add Contact' button.
2. Select the desired 'Contact Type' from the dropdown menu on the left-hand side.
    - 'Email' – email addresses to receive automated alerts and other PTNS correspondence.
    - 'Phone' – phone numbers to receive voice calls from observer providers and NOAA staff.
    - 'Text' – phone numbers you would prefer to be texted first before receiving a voice call.
3. Enter the desired contact (phone or email) into the blank field under 'Value'.
4. Click the Save button.

To delete a contact:

1. Click the red 'X' button next to the contact you want to delete.
2. Click the Save button.

While there is no limit to the number of contacts you can list on your account, you must have at least one phone number and one email address listed on your account in order to enter notifications in PTNS.

Provider Preference

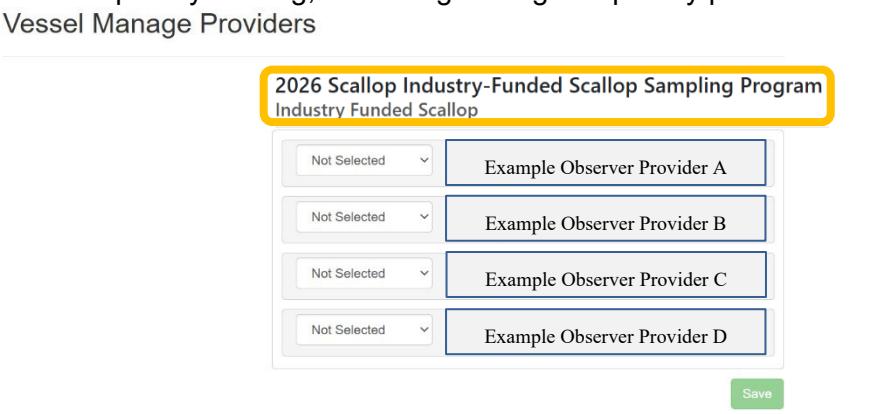
Vessels may rank providers in the order they would like to work with each available provider. If a notification is selected for coverage, it will be offered to the providers in sequential order according to your saved preferences. If your highest ranked provider is unable to provide observer coverage for a selected notification, it will be offered to the next highest ranked provider for a given period of time. *Please call the PTNS staff if you wish to discuss provider offer process in further detail.*

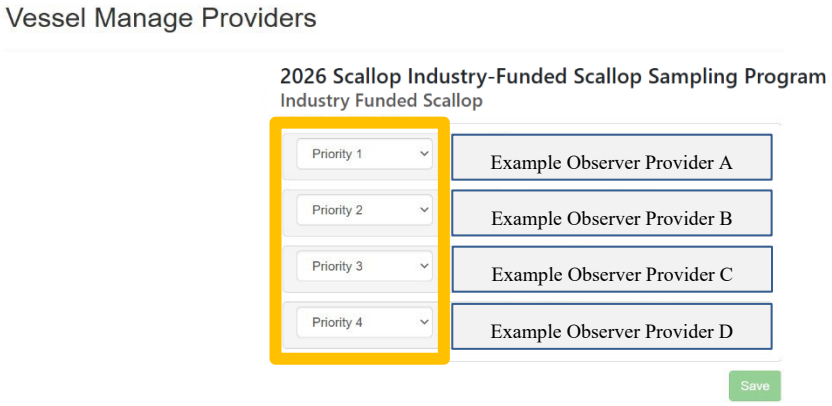
To change your provider preference:

1. Click on the 'Maintenance' tab and select 'Vessel-Provider Management' from the dropdown.



2. On the 'Vessel-Provider Management' screen you will see each program that you can set your provider preference for, an example is shown below. In the drop-down menu showing 'Not Selected' below, you can select priority ranking, one being the highest priority provider.

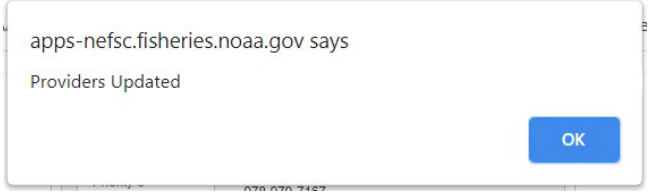




3.

4. Click the Save button when satisfied with the order of preference.

5. Once saved, you will see this pop-up confirmation.



Entering New Notifications

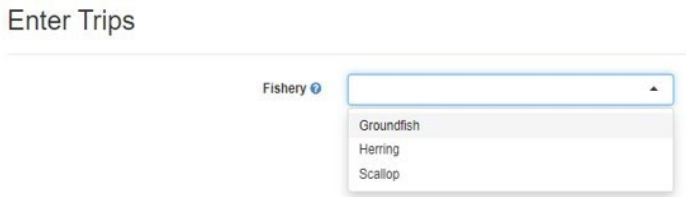
New Notifications

The new trip entry screens collect the information necessary to determine a trip's selection status and facilitate the deployment of assigned observers.

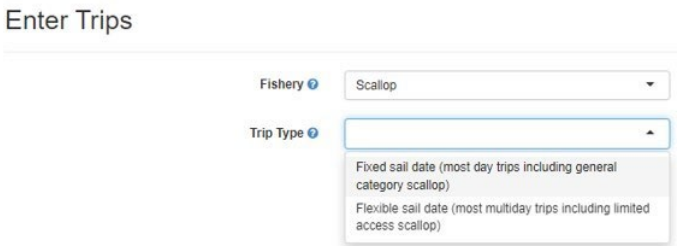


To enter a new PTNS notification:

1. Click the 'Trips' tab and select 'Enter Trips' from the dropdown menu.
2. Verify the 'Fishery' listed is the principal fishery the vessel plans to participate in during the trip. *All PTNS eligible fisheries your vessel is permitted to fish in will be present in this dropdown menu for the current fishing year.*



3. Select one of the following options from the 'Trip Type' dropdown menu which matches your intent.
   - Please select '**Fixed**' notifications if you are a vessel who plans to 'turn and burn.' Vessels using this notification type often notify for blocks of consecutive sail dates. The selection status of each fixed date notification applies to a single calendar day (0000-2359) and may not be delayed.
   - Please select '**Flexible**' notifications if you are a vessel who plans to have >48 hour turnaround times between trips. Vessels may have one active flexible date trip notification in the PTNS system at a time and this notification type is able to be delayed.



If you need assistance determining if you should be notifying fixed-date or flexible-date notifications, please call the PTNS Team at 1-855-FISHES1 (1-855-347-4371) or email NEFSC.PTNS@noaa.gov.

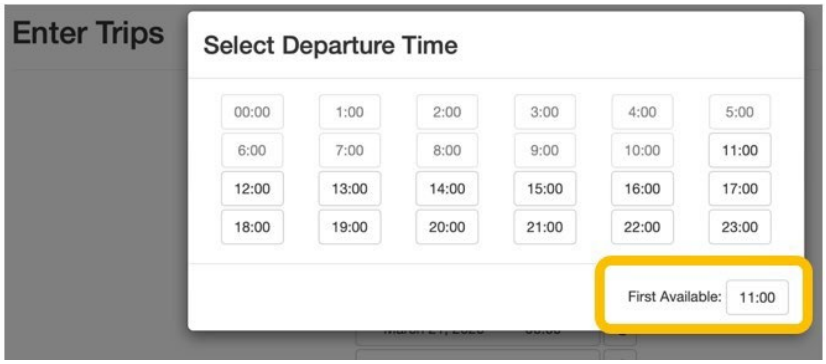
Trip Type: Fixed-Date

Entering your desired 'Sail Date(s)' and times:

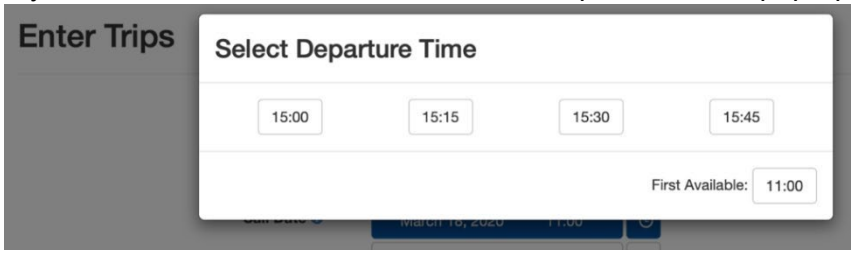


4. Click the box containing your desired sail date. When selected, the box will turn blue.
   - You will only be able to select available sail dates between 48 hours and 10 days in advance.
   - You may need to scroll down the list of dates to see all available notification dates.
   - If a notification already exists for a certain date, the box will be light blue, and you will not be able to select that date.

   You cannot enter 2 notifications for the same day; your fixed-date trip notification selection status applies to any time you leave the dock within that calendar day.
5. If the default time listed is not the time you wish to depart:
   - Click the clock icon to the right of the desired date.



   - In the 'Select Departure Time' pop-up, click on the hour of the day that you plan to leave the dock. The system will only allow times that are 48 hours or more in advance. If not all times for that day are available, the 'First Available' hour will display on the lower right corner of the pop-up.
   - Click your desired 'Sail Minute' in the 'Select Departure Time' pop-up.



6. Repeat these steps until all of your desired dates are selected and highlighted in blue.

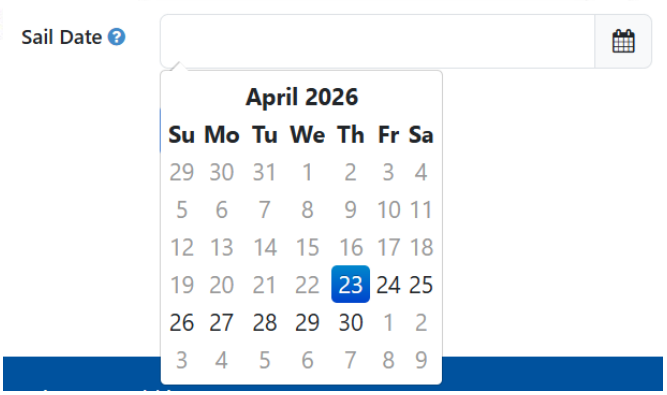


To deselect a sail date, click the box containing that date. The box will no longer be highlighted blue and a notification will not be submitted for that date. In order to enter notifications in bulk, they must all have the same trip characteristics. Continue to the 'Port Sail' section for help entering the rest of the trip details for fixed-date trips.

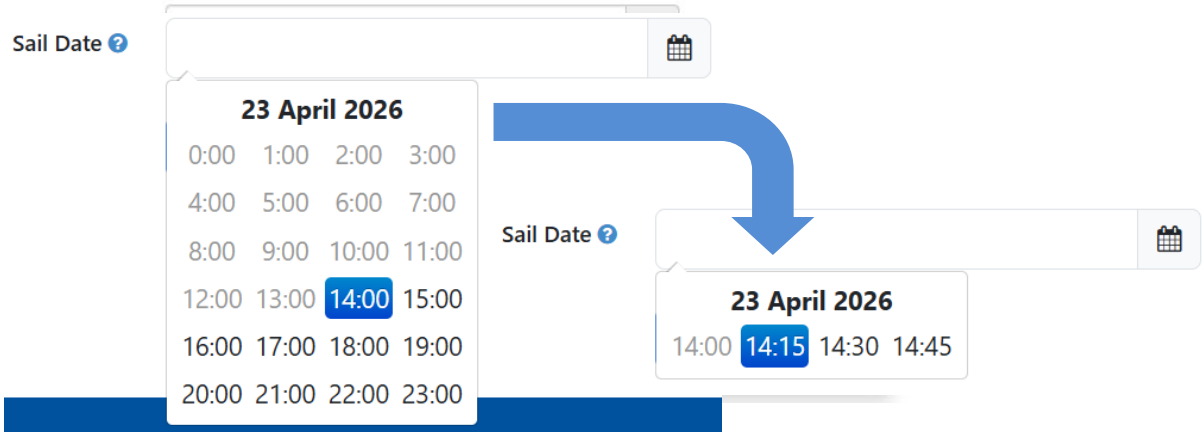
Trip Type: Flexible-Date

To select your desired 'Sail Date' and 'Time':

4. Click the calendar icon.
5. Click your desired 'Sail Date' in the pop-up calendar. Only dates between 48 hours and 10 days in advance will be available to select. The blue highlighted date and time indicates the earliest notification; the date and time that is 48 hours from time of entry.



6. Click your desired 'Sail Hour' and then 'Minute' in the pop-up calendar.



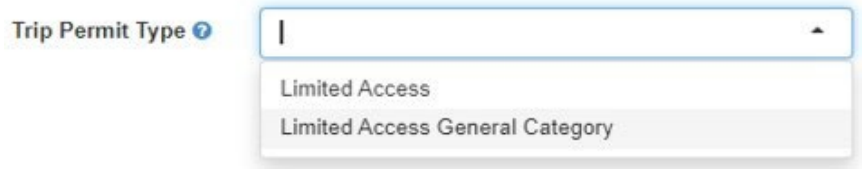
The rest of the fields are the same regardless if fixed-date or flexible-date trip type is selected.

Permit

Select the permit type with which you plan to sail under. Only active permit types for your vessel will appear in this list. It will default to the permit listed in the vessel's most recent notification. If your permit type is the same, no action is needed.

To change the 'Trip Permit Type' field:

7. Click the dropdown field next to 'Permit'.
8. Hit the backspace key.
9. Select the permit type you will be fishing under.



Port Sail

Select the port out of which you plan to sail. It will default to the port listed in the vessel's most recent notification. If your port is the same, no action is needed.

To change the 'Ports' field:

10. Click the dropdown field next to 'Port Sail'.
11. Hit the backspace key.
12. Begin typing the port name and select your port when



Estimated Trip Duration

Select the length of your trip, rounded to days. It will default to the estimated trip duration in the vessel's most recent notification. If your trip duration is the same, no action is needed. You will be able to select a length between 1-15 days for **fixed-date or flexible-date** notifications.

To change the 'Estimated Trip Duration' field:

13. Click the dropdown field next to 'Estimated Trip Duration (Days)'.
14. Select the best estimate for trip length.



Gear/Mesh Size

Select the gear you plan to use the most over the course of the trip. The system will default to the gear listed in the vessel's most recent notification. If your gear is the same, no action is needed.

To change the 'Gear/Mesh Size' field:

15. Click the 'Gear/Mesh Size' field.
16. Make selection from the dropdown menu.

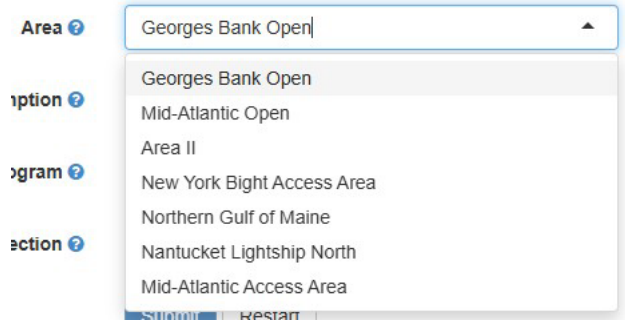


Area

Select the Area you plan to utilize. To make a selection, click the 'Area' field and make a selection from the dropdown menu. *Please note the areas that are presented in this dropdown are available for your vessel to fish. This includes 'active' or 'open' areas, as well as any areas active for RSA. Please refer to GARFO notices on what areas are actually open.*

To change the 'Area' field:

17. Click the 'Area' field.
18. Make selection from the dropdown menu.

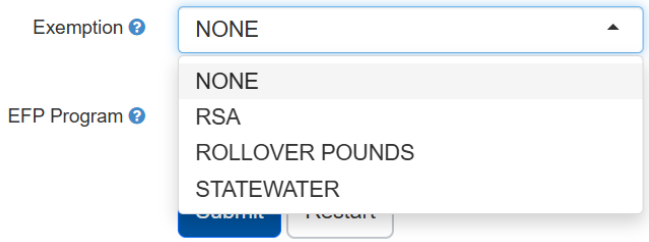


Exemption

Next, select any exemption you will be fishing under. If you will be fishing under an RSA (Research Set Aside) program, select 'RSA'. Vessels eligible to use remaining pounds allocated from FY25 will have the ability to use 'Rollover Pounds' for trips in FY26. If you are fishing under the state waters exemption, you cannot also fish in Federal waters on that trip, you must remain in state waters only. Only for trips in MA and ME waters. Click 'NONE' if you will not be fishing under an exemption.

To change the 'Exemption' field:

19. Click the 'Exemption' field.
20. Make selection from the dropdown menu.



EFP Program

If you are not participating in an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) program, EFP Program will be automatically listed as 'NONE'. No action is needed. There are currently no active EFP programs for the IFS observer program.

To change the 'EFP Program' field:

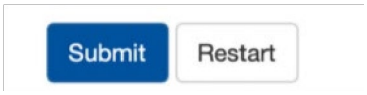
21. This field will not need to be addressed for Fishing Year 2026. It will auto-populate to 'NONE.'



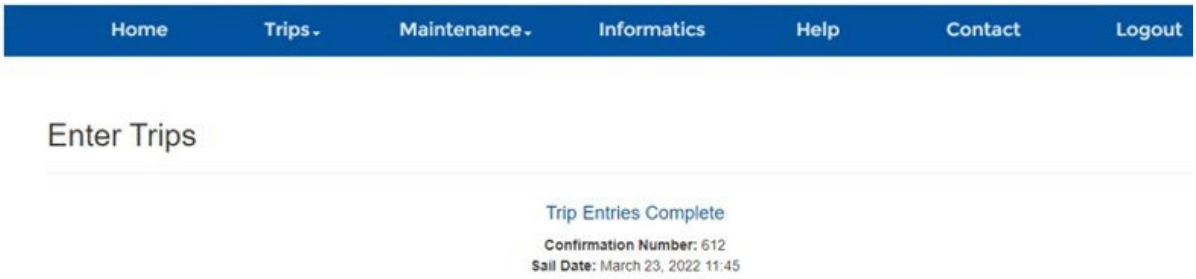
Submit/Restart

If you make a mistake and need to start over, you may hit the 'Restart' button at any time.

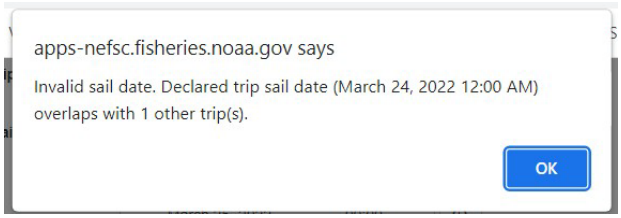
To submit your notification, click the 'Submit' button once. It may take a moment for the site to go to the next page.



When a notification has been successfully submitted, each sail date is shown with its corresponding confirmation number (see image below).

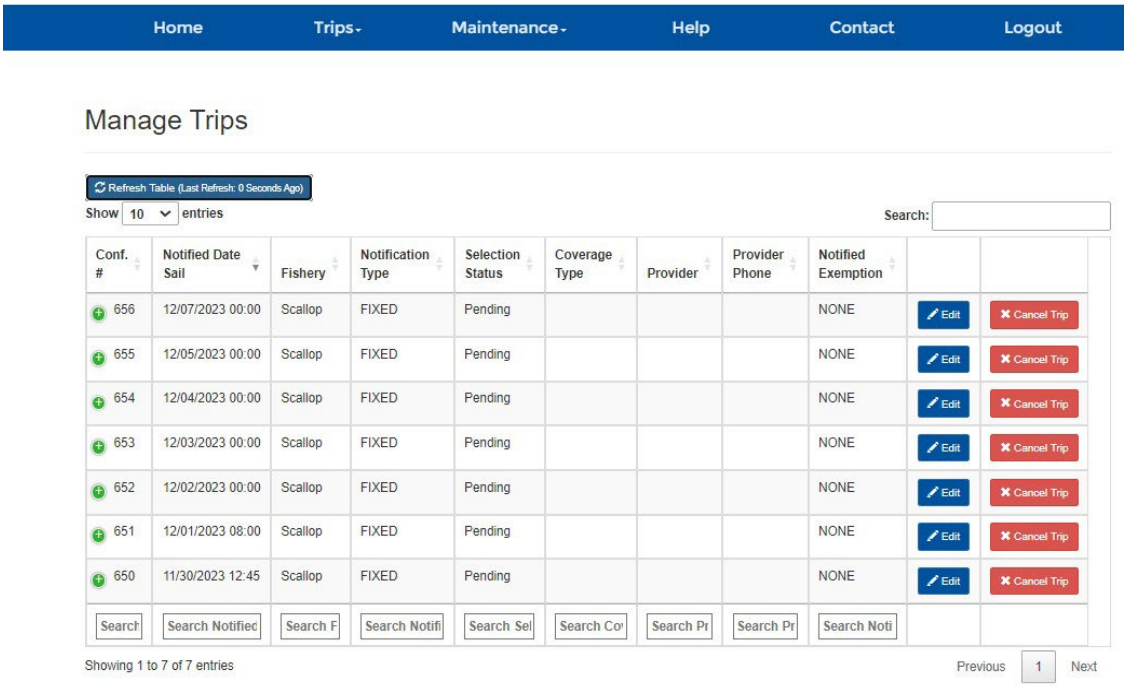


If you get a pop-up for an overlapping trip error, see image below, you must edit the sail date or the estimated trip duration of the existing notification before you can enter a new one. See 'Editing Notifications' below for further assistance (page 13).



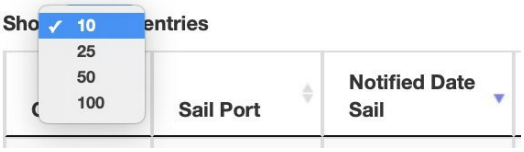
Managing Trips

To view and edit existing notifications, click the ‘Trips’ tab and select ‘Manage Trips’.

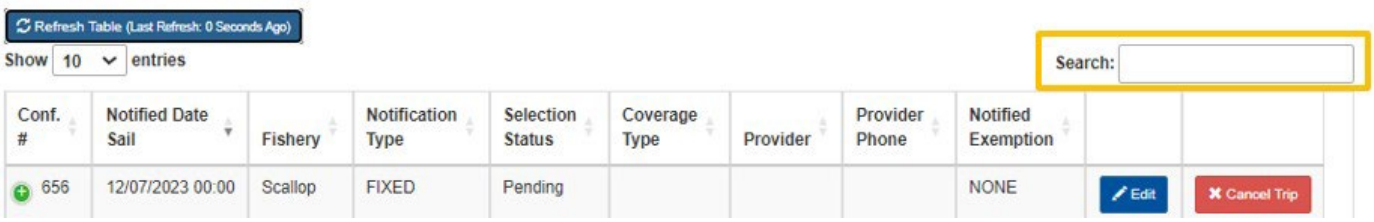


In the ‘Manage Trips’ screen, you will be able to view all of your notifications. The confirmation number, sail port, sail date, observer assignment status, coverage type (if applicable), fishery, and gear for each notification will be visible in the list.

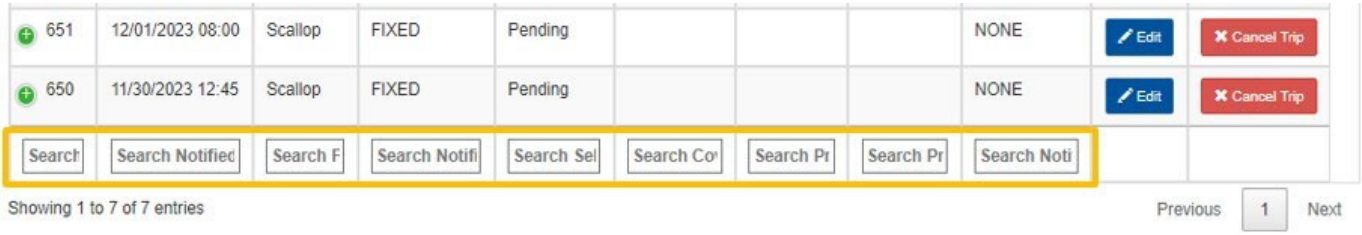
To choose how many notifications are displayed on a page, click the ‘Show Entries’ dropdown in the top left of the table, and select the number of notifications you would like to see on one page.



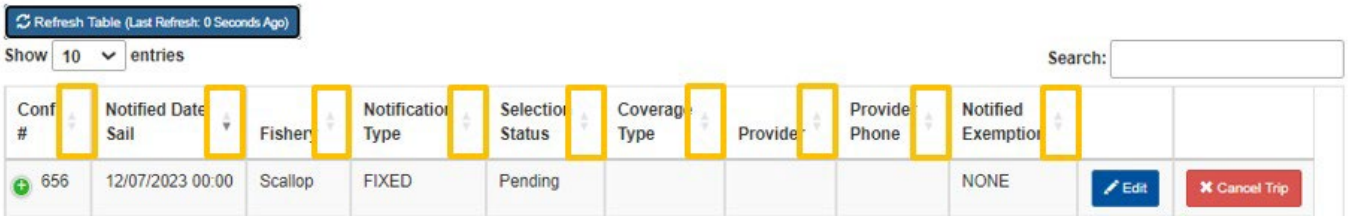
To search all fields in all of your notifications, begin typing in the search box in the upper right corner of the table.



To search an individual field, begin typing in a search box at the bottom of one of the columns.



To order your notifications by a specific field, click the up or down arrows by the field name.



Selection status meanings:

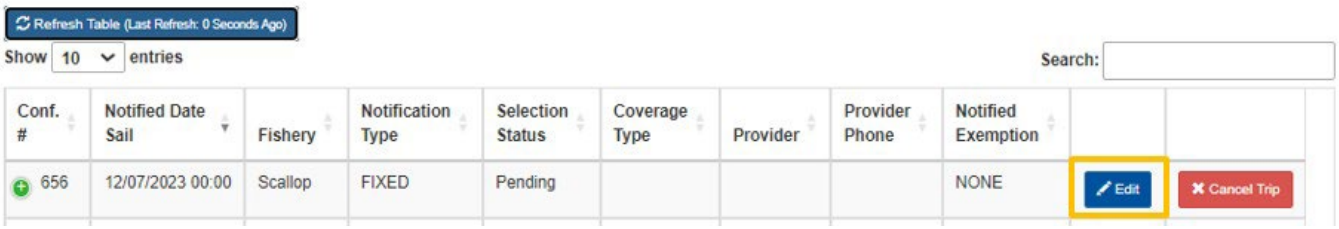
- ‘Pending’ - the final observer or portside sampler assignment status for the trip has not yet been determined.
- ‘Waiver’ - the vessel can sail without an observer or portside sampler under that notification.
- ‘Assigned’ - the provider accepted the trip and has an observer or portside sampler available.
- ‘Deployed’ - there is an observer currently on board the vessel for this trip or a portside sampler at the offload.
- ‘Complete’ - the trip was successfully observed or sampled.
- ‘Canceled’ - the trip did not or will not sail. Vessels may not sail on PTNS-eligible trips under canceled notifications.
- 'Unobserved' - the notification was entered post-sail by PTNS staff due to non-compliance. Vessel sailed without notifying 48 hrs - 10 days prior to the intended sail date.

Editing Notifications

To view additional information on an individual notification or edit a notification, click the ‘Edit’ button on the ‘Manage Trips’ screen.

To edit a notification:

1. Click the ‘Edit’ button for the trip you want to change.
2. Change the desired fields.
3. Click the ‘Submit’ button.

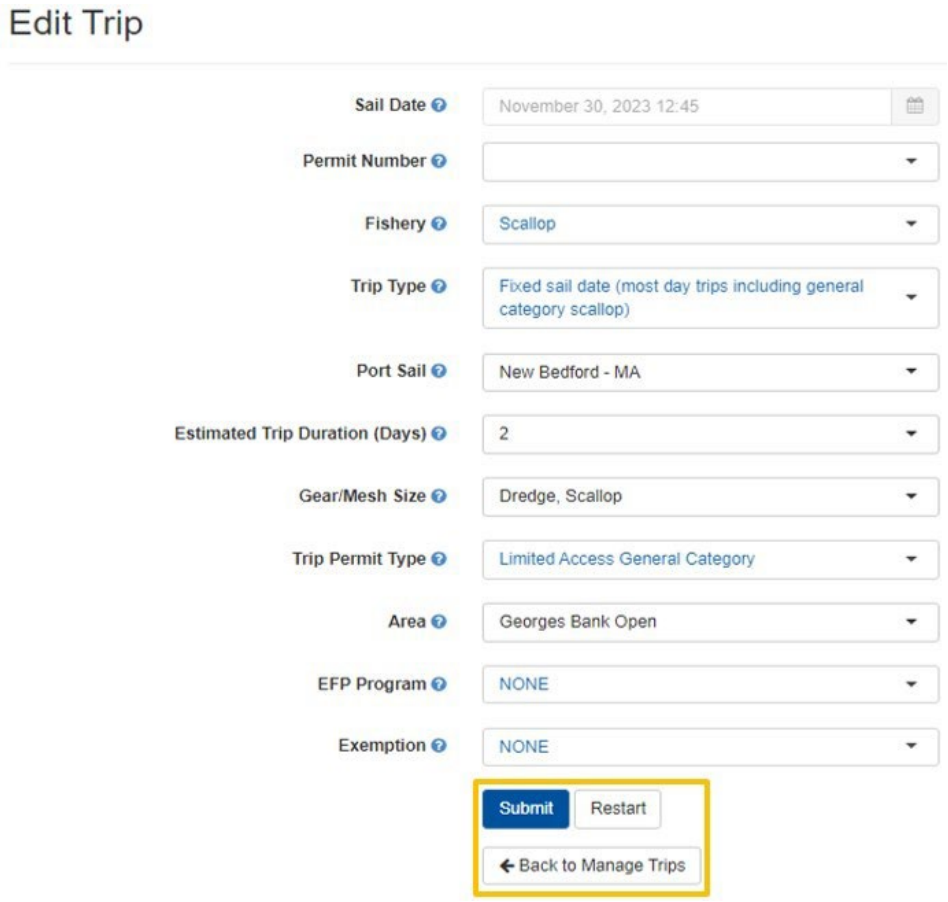


When a notification has been successfully edited, the 'Sail Date' will be shown with its corresponding 'Confirmation Number.'

To clear unsaved changes and start over, you may click the 'Restart' button at the bottom of the 'Edit Trips' screen at any time.

To clear unsaved changes and return to your notification list, click the 'Back to Manage Trips' button at the bottom of the 'Edit Trips' screen.

After viewing the 'Edit Trip' page, you can return to your list of notifications by clicking the 'Back to Manage Trips' button at the bottom of the page.



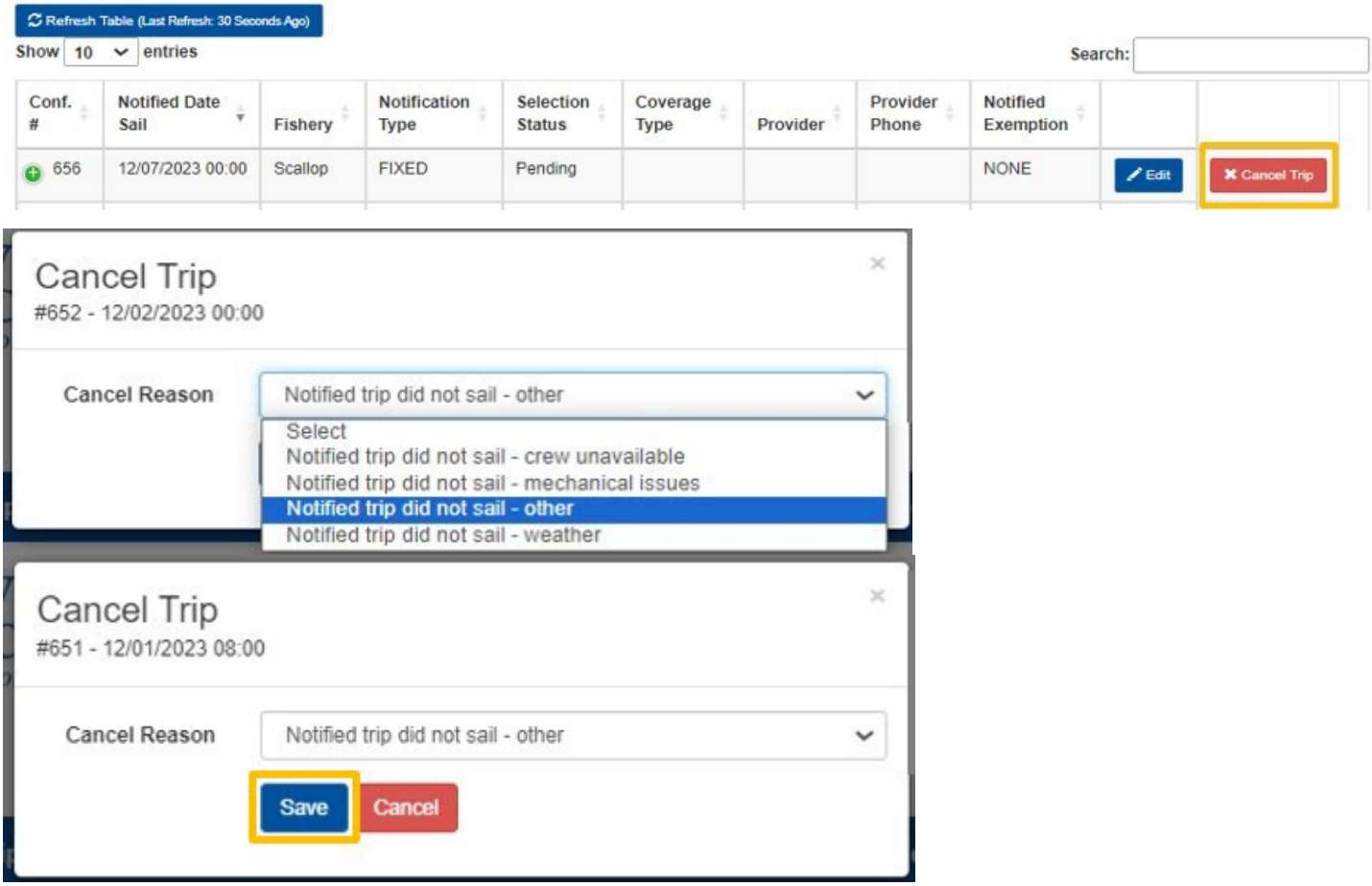
Not all fields can be changed by a vessel. PTNS Coordinators may edit more fields. If you are having trouble editing your trip, contact the PTNS Team at 1-855-347-4371.

Canceling Notifications

If you decide not to sail on a trip that has previously notified for any reason, the trip will need to be cancelled in the PTNS.

To cancel a notification:

1. Click the red ‘Cancel Trip’ button in the ‘Manage Trips’ screen.
2. Select a ‘Cancel Reason’ from the dropdown in the ‘Cancel Trip’ pop-up.
3. Click the blue ‘Save’ button at the bottom of the pop-up.

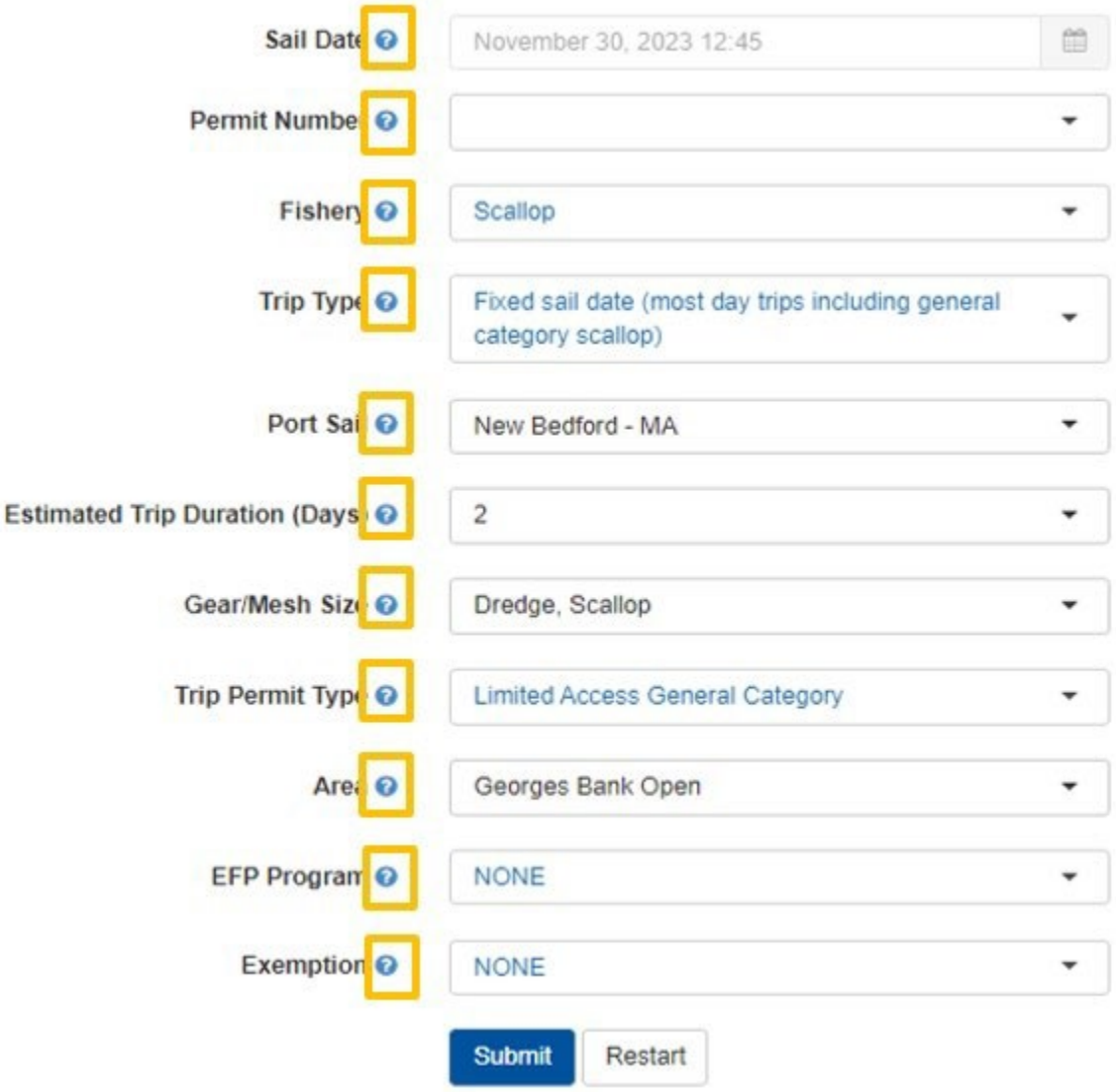


If you do not want to cancel the notification, click the red ‘Cancel’ button at the bottom of the ‘Cancel Trip’ popup and return to your notification list.

You may not sail on a PTNS eligible Atlantic Sea Scallop trip without a matching active notification in the PTNS. If you have cancelled your trip in error or otherwise need to reinstate it, contact the PTNS Team at 1855-347-4371.

Getting Assistance

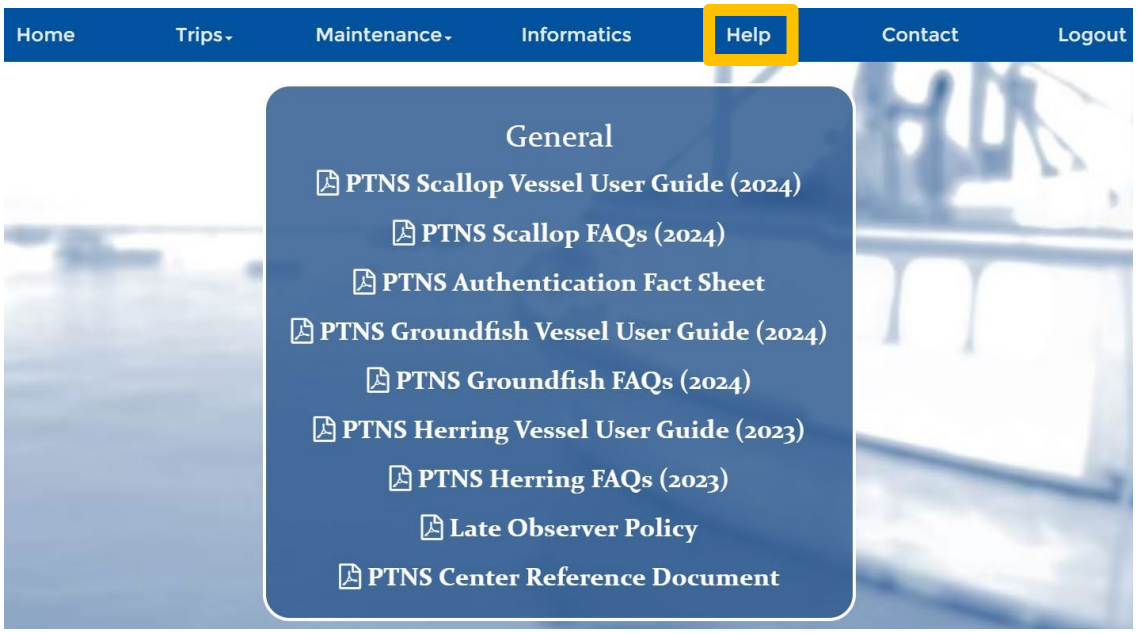
You can find answers to many of your questions in various areas of the PTNS. In the ‘Enter Trips’ and ‘Edit Trip’ screen, each field has a small blue question mark next to it. Clicking on these blue question marks opens a description of the corresponding field requirements and any helpful information associated with that field.



Please contact the PTNS coordinators with any suggestions on how to make this text as helpful as possible. The PTNS Team can be reached at 1-855-FISHES1 (1-855-347-4371) or email NEFSC.PTNS@noaa.gov.

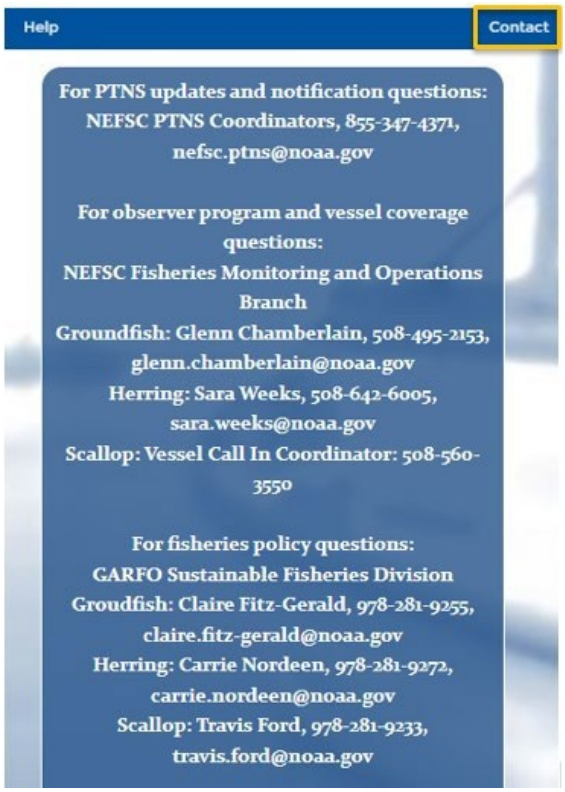
Help Screen

To access the PTNS vessel instructions, FAQ, and other useful information, click the 'Help' tab.



Click on the document you wish to open from the list.

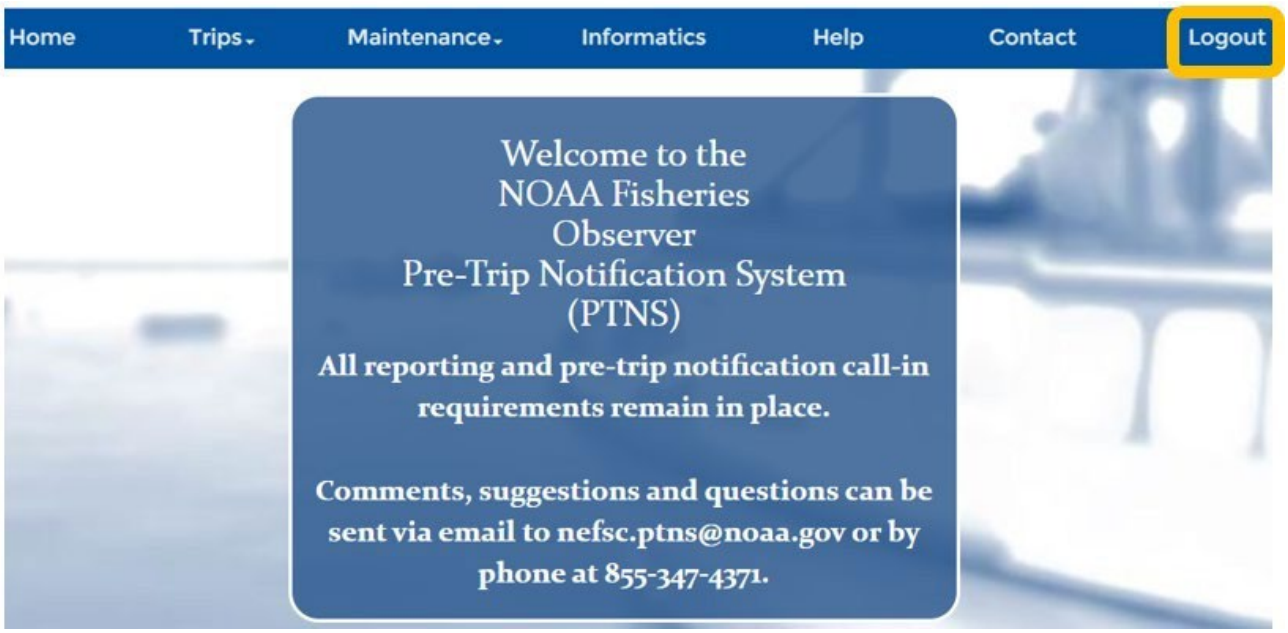
To find contact information for PTNS-related questions, click the 'Contact' tab.



Please note: the images above may not represent the most up-to-date information that appears on the PTNS website and should just be used as an example.

Logging Out

To log out of your account, click the ‘Logout’ tab.



As an increased cybersecurity feature, you will be logged out automatically after 15 minutes of inactivity.