NOAA FISHERIES

Northeast Fisheries Science Center

# PTNS Vessel User Guide

## Groundfish Fishing Year 2026

PTNS

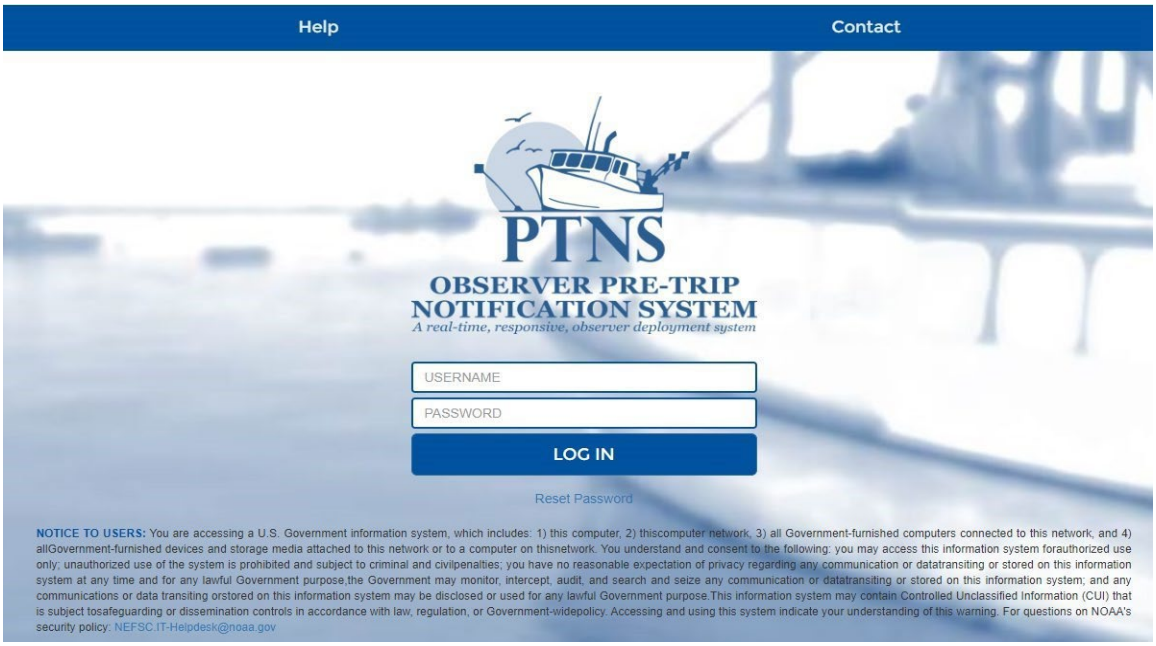
OBSERVER PRE-TRIP NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

*A real-time, responsive, observer deployment system*

# Logging In

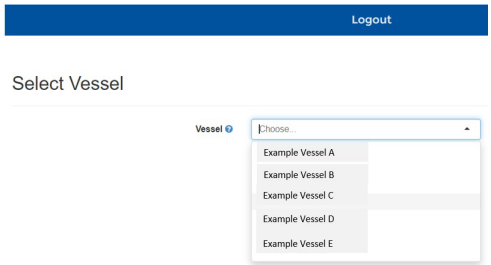
To log into your PTNS web account:

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



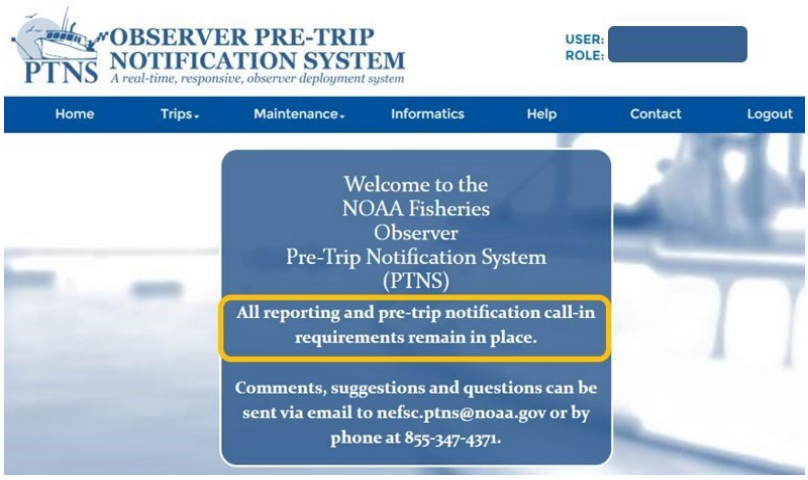

*If you forget your username, please visit [https://apps-garfo.fisheries.noaa.gov/fishtank/login/forgot_username](#). If you forget your password, please visit [https://apps-garfo.fisheries.noaa.gov/fishtank/login/forgot](#). The PTNS Team will still be able to access your account during this time and 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

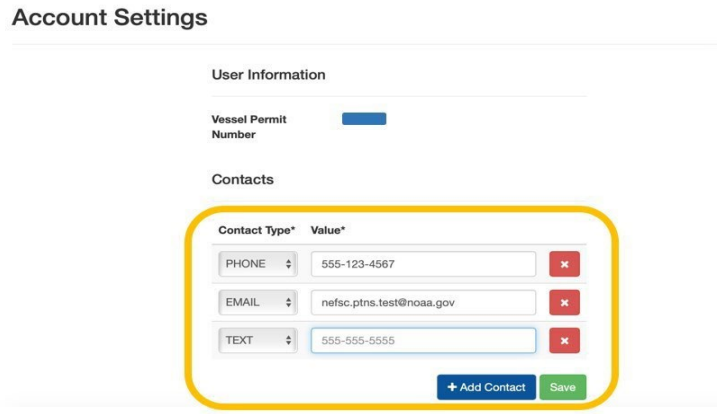



# Vessel Account Settings

## 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.
    a. 'Email' – email addresses to receive automated alerts and other PTNS correspondence.
    b. 'Phone' – phone numbers to receive voice calls from providers and FSB staff.
    c. '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.*

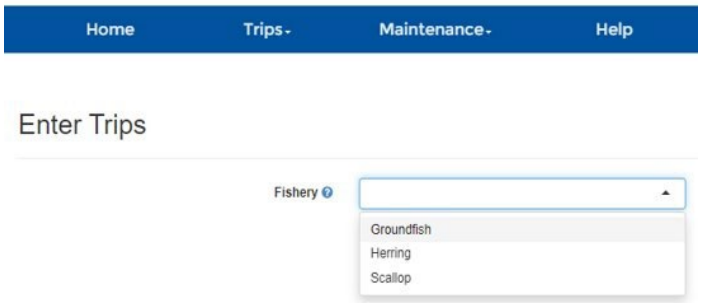
# Entering New Notifications




To enter new notifications of any type, users should navigate to 'Trips'>'Enter Trips' along the heading bar. The new trip entry screens collet the information necessary to determine a trip's selection status and facilitate the deployment of assigned observers.

To enter a new notification:

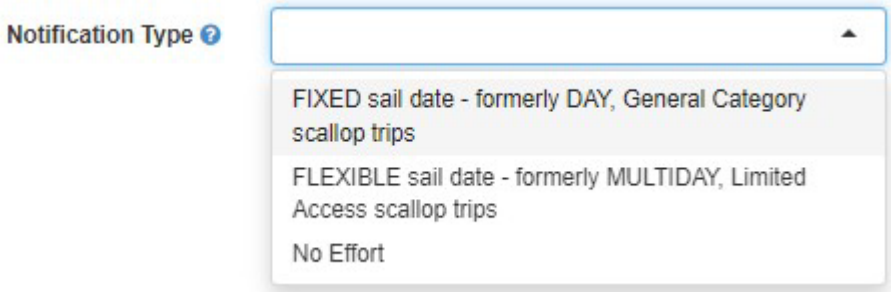
1. Click the 'Trips' tab and select 'Enter Trips' from the dropdown menu.
2. Verify the 'Fishery' listed is the principal fisher the vessel plans to participate in during the trip. Vessels will only see the options that match what type of permit(s) they have. For vessels with permits for both Northeast Multispecies and Herring there will be a dropdown option. Users should select the fishery for which they want to enter the current notification for. Vessels will only be able to enter for one fishery at a time. Note: If vessels are trying to switch fisheries for a specific day of if they don't know which fishery they want to notify for a given trip they should call PTNS staff to discuss options.



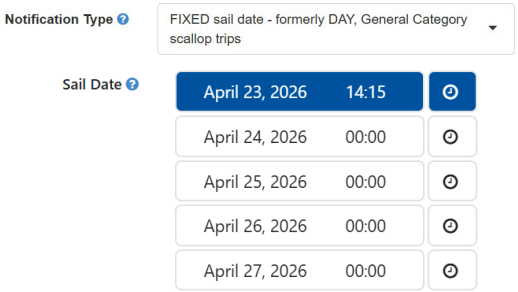

3. Select one of the following options from the 'Notification Type' dropdown menu which matches your intent.
    a. Fixed-Date Notification- Short trips generally 1 or 2 days in length. Vessels often notify for blocks of consecutive sail dates. Fixed-date notifications and selection status apply to a single calendar day (0000-2359) and many not be delayed.
    b. Flexible-Date Notification- Longer trips generally 3 or more days in length and may have longer turnaround times. Vessels have one active trip notification in the PTNS system at a time.
    c. No-Effort- if you are taking a transit trips with product or acting as a carrier vessel. Vessels may not have any fishing activity if they notify for a No-Effort trip.

*If you need assistance determining if you should be notifying for 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.*

# Notification Type: Fixed-Date



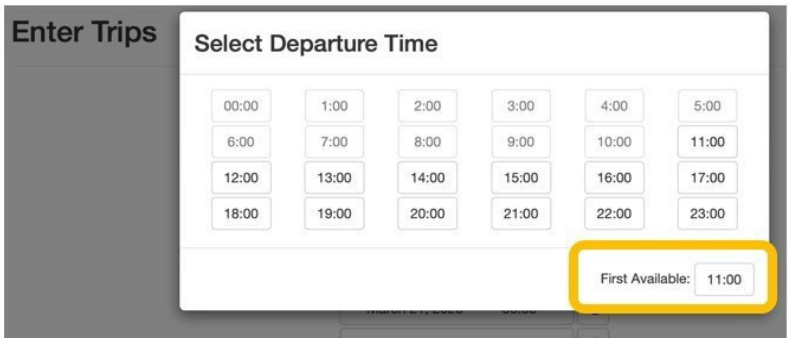

4. Entering your desired 'Sail Date(s)' and times: Click the box containing your desired sail date. When selected, the box will turn blue.



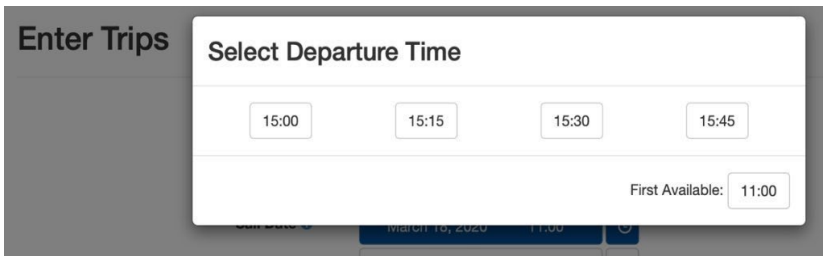

    a. You will only be able to select available sail dates between 48 hours and 10 days in advance.
    b. You may need to scroll down the list of dates to see all available notification dates.
    c. If a notification already exists for a certain date, the box will be light blue, and you will not be able to select that date.

*You cannot enter 2 notifications for the same day; your fixed-date notification selection status applies to any time you leave the dock within that calendar day.*

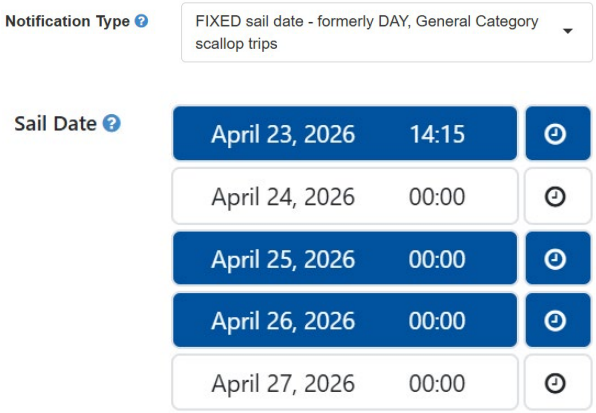
5. If the default time listed is not the time you wish to depart:
    a. Click the clock icon to the right of the desired date.
    b. In the 'Select Departure Time' pop-up, click on the hour of the day that you plan to leave the dock. The system will only allow times that are 48 hours or more in advance. If not all times for that day are available, the 'First Available' hour will display on the lower right corner of the pop-up.




    c. Click your desired 'Sail Minute' in the 'Select Departure Time' pop-up.

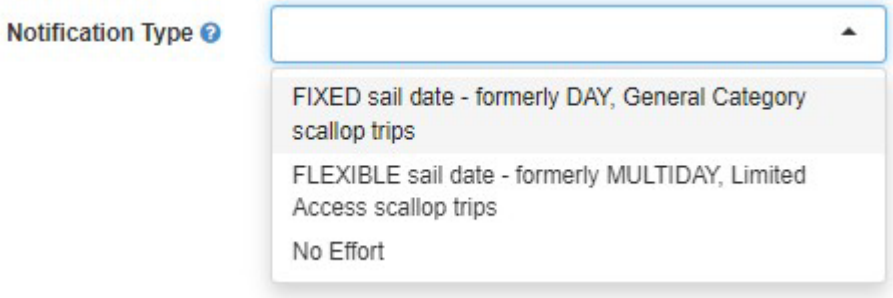



6. Repeat these steps until all of your desired dates are selected and highlighted in blue.



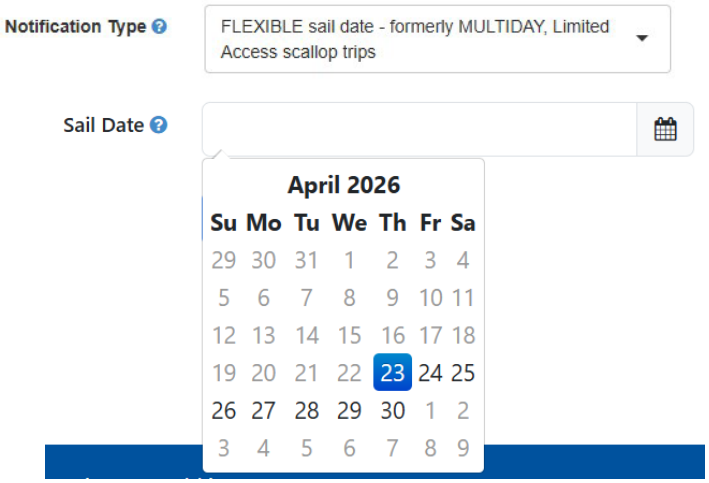

To deselect a sail date, click the box containing that date. The box will no longer be highlighted blue and a notification will not be submitted for that date. In order to enter notifications in bulk, they must all have the same trip characteristics. Continue to the 'Port Sail' section for help entering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

# Notification Type: Flexible-Date

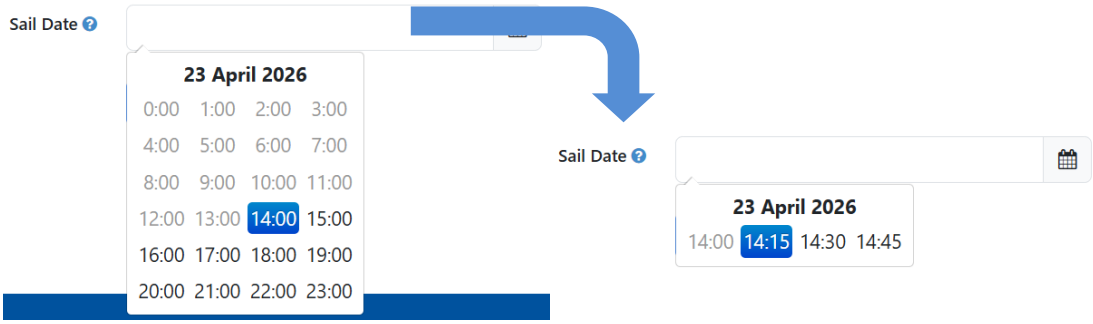



To select your desired 'Sail Date' and 'Time':

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.



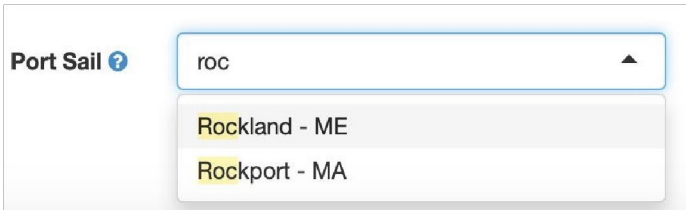

The remaining fields will be the same, regardless of whether you choose fixed-date or flexible-date notifications.

# 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 ports:

1. Click the dropdown field next to 'Port Sail'.
2. Hit the backspace key.
3. Begin typing the port name and select your port when it appears.




# Estimated Trip Duration (Days)

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. As a reminder, these notification types have different rules. Contact the PTNS Coordinators if you need assistance determining if you should be entering fixed-date notifications or flexible-date notifications. This 'Estimated Trip Duration' field will not show up if the 'No-Effort' notification type is selected.



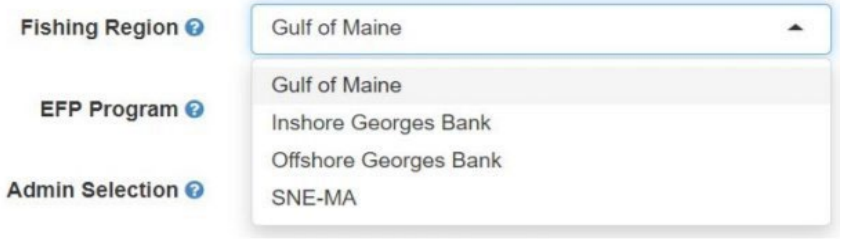

# Gear/Mesh Size

Select the gear you plan to use the most over the course of your 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.



*Ruhle Trawl and Haddock Separator Trawls have definitions in regulations; 50 CFR 648.85 (b)(6)(iv)(J)(3) and 50 CFR 648.85 (a)(3)(iii)(A), respectively. The regulations can be found at 50 CFR 648.85. Any trawl gears modified from these exact specifications are considered 'Otter Trawl, Fish'.*

# Fishing Region

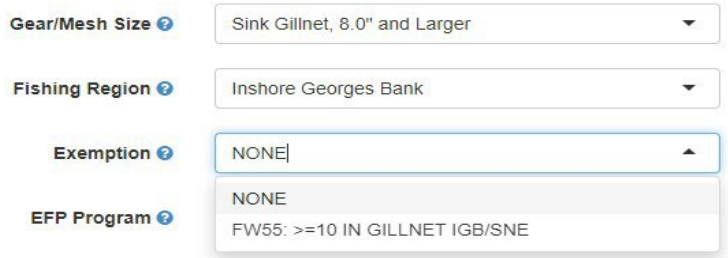



Select the broad stock area in which you plan to fish the most. It will default to the area listed in the vessel's most recent notification. If your area is the same, no action is needed. *Note: SNE-MA stands for Southern New England – Mid-Atlantic.*

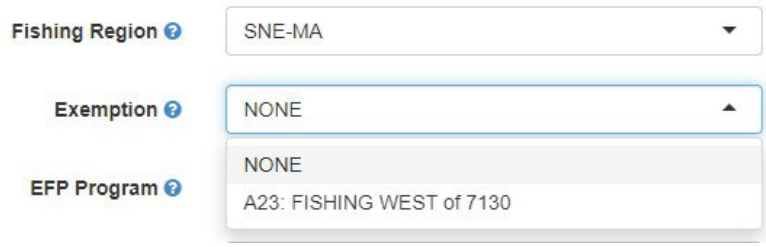
# Exemption

If you are not participating in an 'Exemption or Exclusion,' the 'Exemption' field will be automatically listed as 'NONE'. No action is needed.

If you are fishing under Framework 55 guidelines, this exemption option will appear in the dropdown list. You should select the 'FW55:>=10 IN GILLNET IGB/SNE' exemption if you are fishing using XL gillnet gear, greater to or equal to 10 inch mesh, and fishing within the Southern New England/MA or Inshore Georges Bank Broad Stock Areas.



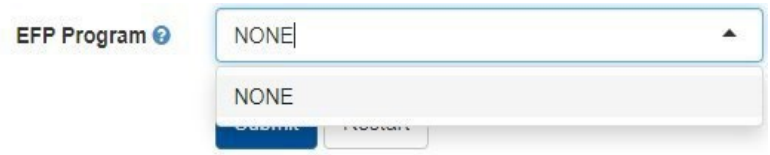

If you are fishing entirely west of 71°30' W Longitude, this exclusion option will appear in the exemption dropdown list. You should select the 'A23: FISHING WEST of 7130' option if you are fishing in Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic entirely west of the 71°30' W Longitude line.



# EFP Program

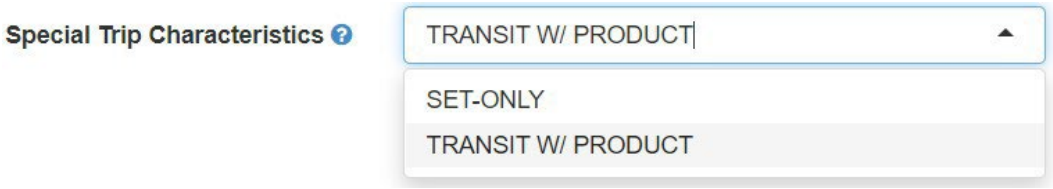
If you are not participating in an 'Exempted Fishing Permit' (EFP) program, EFP Program will be automatically listed as 'NONE'. No action is needed.

If your permit is enrolled in an approved EFP, those EFP options will appear in the dropdown list. If you are participating in an EFP, select the EFP under which you will be fishing. For vessels who will be fishing multiple EFPs in a single trip, there will be combination options such as the ability to choose 1) EFP A 2) EFP B or 3) EFP A and EFP B.



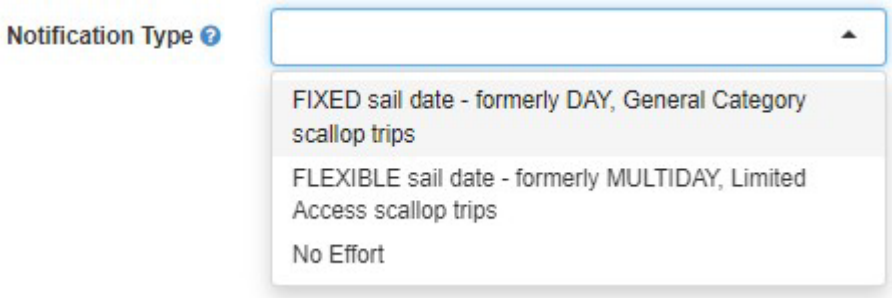

# No Effort Notification Types

Select special trip characteristics that may affect coverage requirements, if applicable:




- 'Set-Only' is for gillnet trips where the vessel will be setting gear only. This option only appears on the dropdown if a gillnet gear/mesh was selected. The screenshot above does not show Set-Only because a trawl gear was chosen for this particular notification.
    - Vessels may not haul any type of gear if they notify for a set-only trip.
- 'Transit W/ Product' is for trips where the vessel will be transiting under a groundfish VMS activity declaration code rather than 'Declaring out of Fishery' (DOF). It is rare for a vessel to need to notify as a groundfish transit with product.
    - Vessels may not have any fishing activity if they notify for a transit trip.

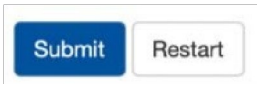
*This field will only apply if, 'No Effort,' is selected for the 'Notification Type' field. See image below:*



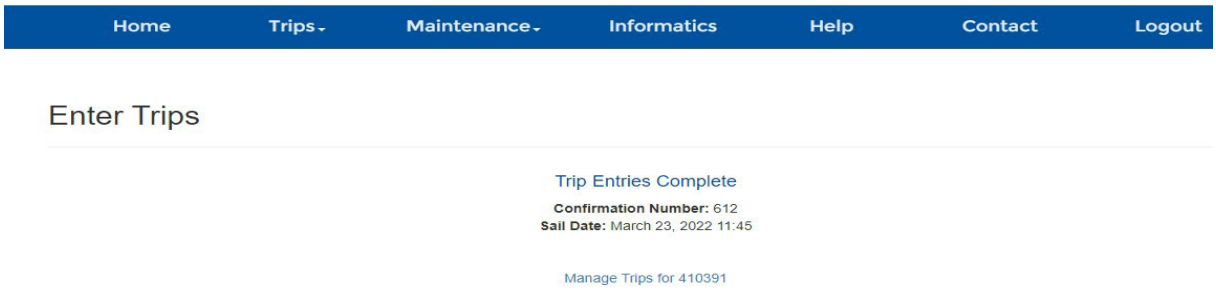
# Submit/Reset

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

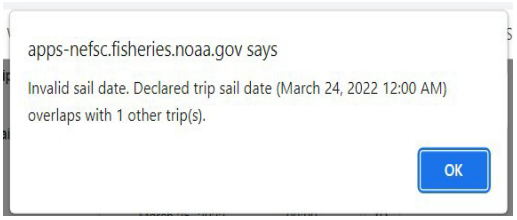
To submit your notification, click the 'Submit' button once. It may take a moment for the site to go to the next page.




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



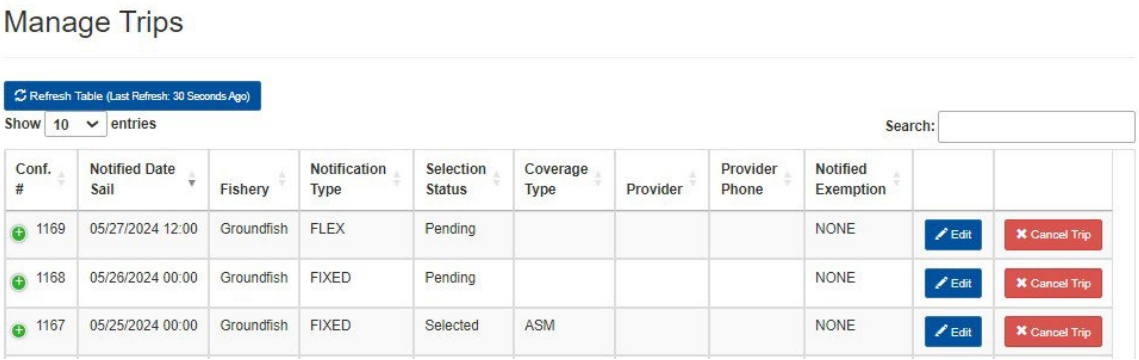

If you get a pop-up for an overlapping trip error, you must edit the estimated trip duration of the existing notification before you can enter a new one. See 'Editing Notifications' below for further assistance (page 19).




# Managing Trips

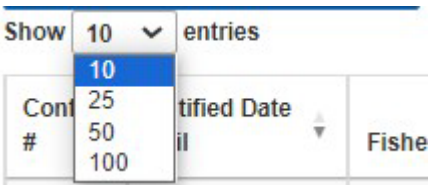
To view and edit existing notifications, click the 'Trips' tab and select 'Manage Trips.'

## Viewing Notifications

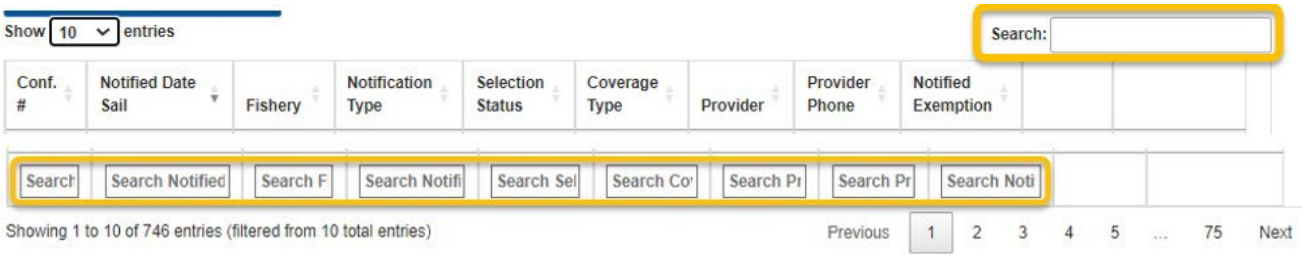


In the 'Manage Trips' screen, you will be able to view all of your notifications. The confirmation number, sail port, sail date, observer assignment status, coverage type (if applicable), fishery, and gear for each notification will be visible in the list.

To choose how many notifications are displayed on a page, click the 'Show Entries' dropdown in the top left of the page, 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 to the upper right. To search an individual field, begin typing in the search box at the bottom of the column.




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 assignment status for the trip has not yet been determined.
- 'Waiver' - the vessel can sail without an observer under that notification. • 'Assigned' - the provider accepted the trip and has an observer available.
- 'Deployed' - there is an observer currently on board the vessel for this trip.
- 'Complete' - the trip was successfully observed.
- '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

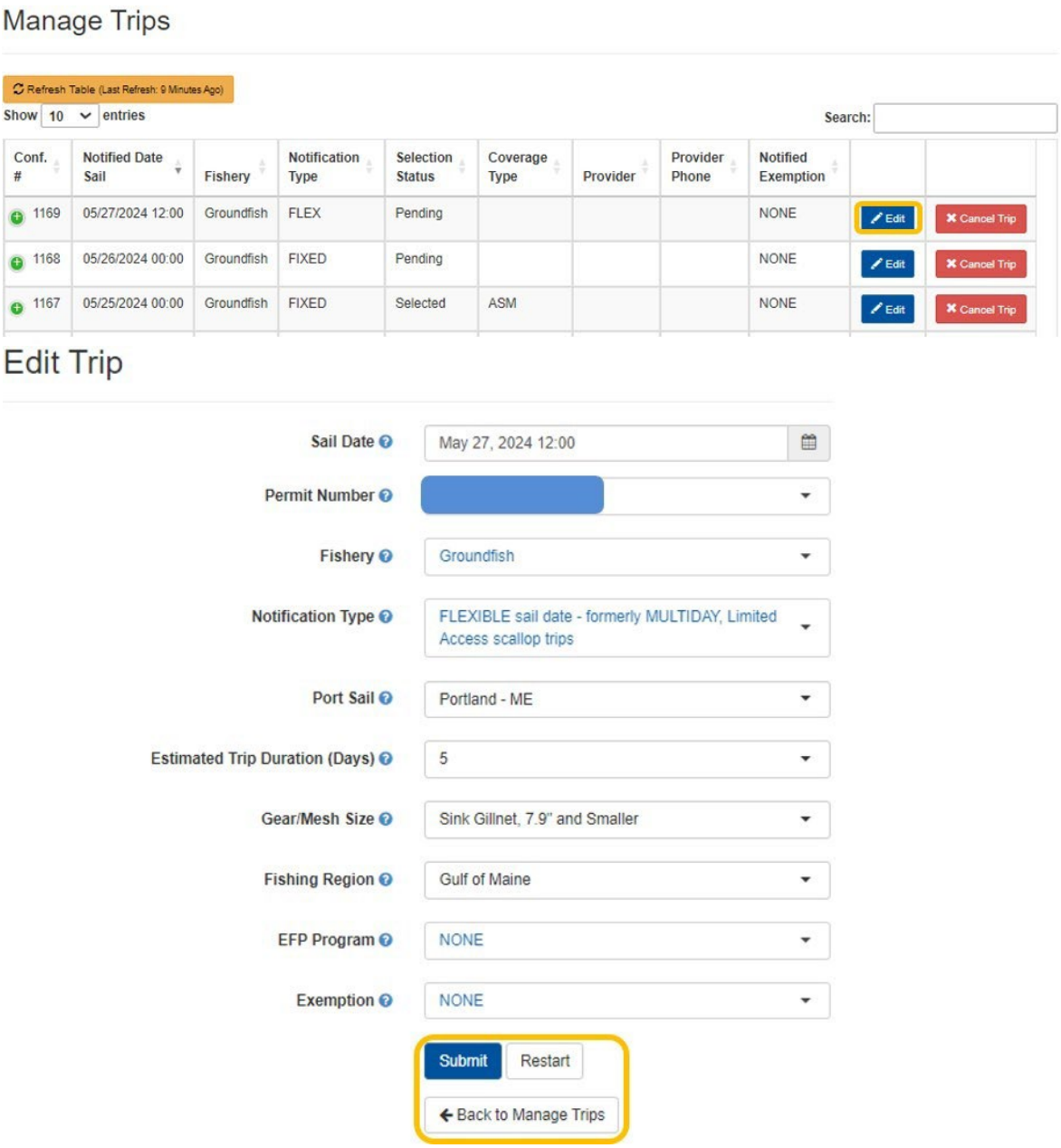
To view additional information on an individual notification, click the 'Edit' button. After viewing the editing page, you can return to your list of notifications by clicking the 'Back to Manage Trips' button.

To edit a notification:

1. Click the 'Edit' button for the trip you want to change.
2. Change your 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 any time. To clear unsaved changes and return to your notification list, click the 'Back to Manage Trips' button.

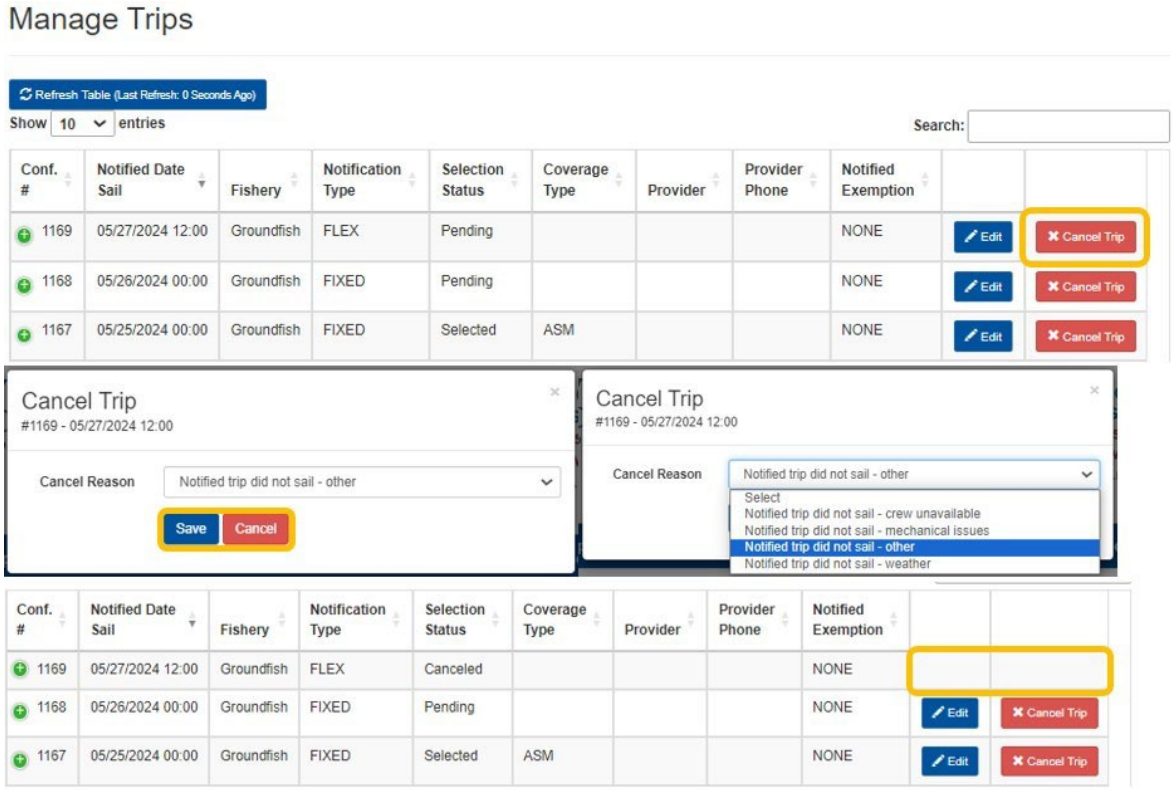



*Please note: Not all fields can be changed by a vessel. PTNS Coordinators may edit more fields. If you are having trouble editing your trip, contact the PTNS Team at 1-855-347-4371.*

# Cancelling Notifications

To cancel a notification:

1. Click the 'Cancel Trip' button.
2. Select a 'Cancel Reason' from the dropdown in the 'Cancel Trip' pop-up.
3. Click the 'Save' button.

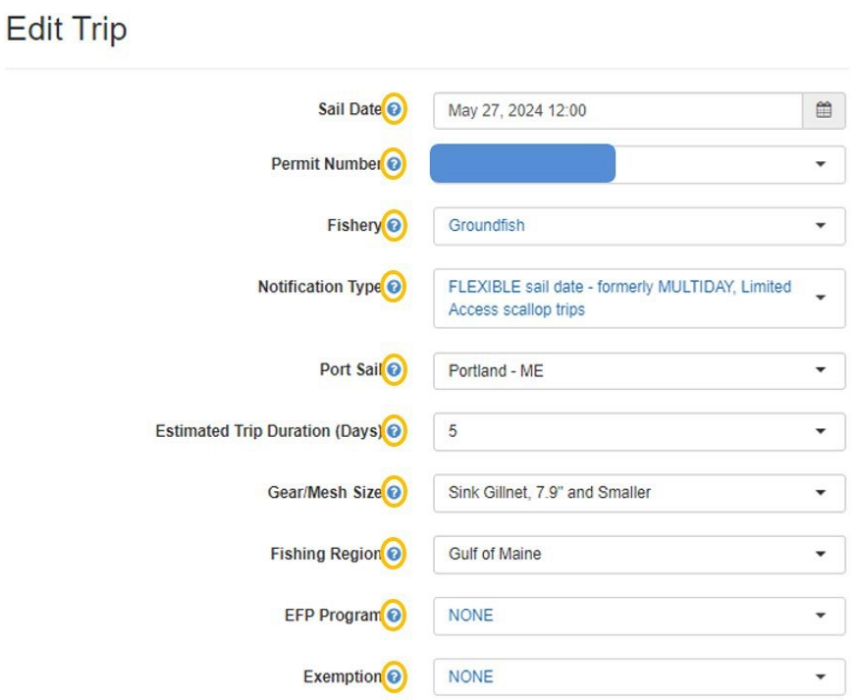



If you do not want to cancel the notification, click the 'Cancel' button in the 'Cancel Trip' pop-up to return to your notification list.

*You may not sail on a groundfish trip without a matching active notification in PTNS. If you have canceled your trip in error or otherwise need to reinstate it, contact the PTNS Team at 1-855-347-4371.*

# 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.

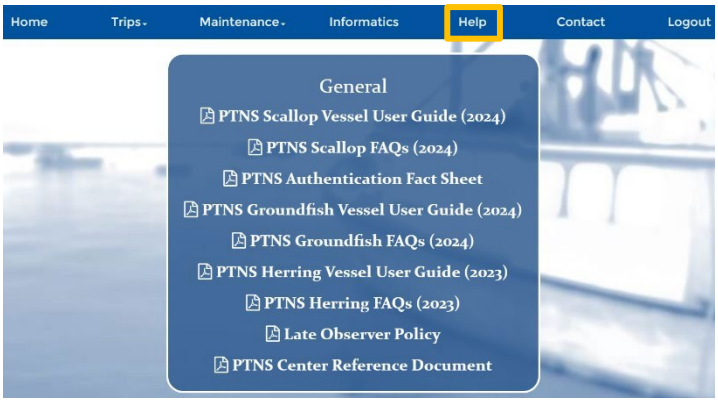



*Please contact the PTNS coordinators with any suggestions to change this text to make it as helpful as possible. The PTNS Team can be reached at 1-855-FISHES1 (1-855-347-4371) or email NEFSC.PTNS@noaa.gov.*

# 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.




# Logging Out

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

