

Electronic Lobster Reporting Frequently Asked Questions for 2023

Q: Can I still send in my reports via paper logbooks?

A: As of January 1st, 2023, 100% electronic harvester reporting is mandatory for all commercial lobster license holders (including student license holders). The DMR will not be accepting paper reports. If you need help setting up an electronic reporting option, please read the information provided in this document and on the [DMR website](#) (under ‘Landings Reporting Options’). If you have further questions after reading through these resources, please contact the Landings Program at (207) 633-9414.

Q: What electronic reporting options are available for me to report?

A: The DMR has two electronic reporting options available to you.

1. **[VESL Mobile App](#)**: This is a new mobile application for iOS® (iPhone/iPad) and Android® that will work with or without an active internet connection. Please click the hyperlink above to view instructions on how to download the App on your device, create an account, and start reporting. VESL app is available for download via the following hyperlinks:
 - i. [Apple Store](#)
 - ii. [Google Play Store](#)
2. **[Maine LEEDS](#)**: The [LEEDS platform](#) can be used on a tablet, iPad, computer, or mobile device; however, it requires an active internet connection to work. This is the same system harvesters and dealers use to renew their license online. You can also monitor your reporting status on LEEDS.

Q: When do I have to start reporting?

A: Harvesters must start reporting with the month your license was issued. For instance, if you renew your license in March 2023, you will need to start reporting in March.

Q: When do I need to submit my landings reports?

A: For commercial lobster license holders, landings reports are due monthly, by the 10th of the following month (i.e., January reports are due by February 10th). For each fishing trip, you will need to submit a positive report. It is up to you whether you submit them on the same day that you fish, a few days later, or all at once at the end of the month. As long as you submit all your trip reports for one month by the 10th of the following month, you will be able to renew your license for next year.

Q: I already submit federal trip reports through Fish Online/eTrips. Do I need to submit to the state as well?

A: No, you can continue to submit your trip reports via Fish Online/eTrips and the state will receive that data monthly to update compliance for your state licenses. However, if you hold a federal and state halibut permit, you will need to submit your halibut landings using Fish Online/eTrips, as well as in [Maine LEEDS](#). Using the [VESL Mobile App](#) to submit your trip reports would fulfill both federal and state reporting requirements at once, so we do recommend using that platform if you have both federal and state reporting obligations.

Q: What’s the difference between a positive and negative (or “Did not fish”) landings report?

A: A positive report should be submitted for each fishing trip. If you actively fished but did not catch anything, you will still need to create a positive report indicating that you had no landings in the catch & species information sections of your report. A negative report should only be submitted when you do not fish for an entire month.

Q: Do I need to submit a negative report every day I do not go fishing?

A: No, you only need to submit a negative report for an entire month that you do not fish. For example, if you only fish one day out of an entire month, you only need to submit a positive report for that trip day. You would not have to submit a negative report for the other days of that month you did not fish. If you do not plan to fish until summer, you can submit a negative report indicating the start & end date range you will not be fishing.

Q: Do I need to submit any type of report for the days when I am only setting traps?

A: No. You should only submit a positive report for days when you are hauling traps, or a negative report for an entire month if you did not have any fishing activity at all.

Q: I only hold my license and do not actually fish. Do you really need me to report?

A: Yes. "Did not fish" reports are as important for effort estimates as reports from harvesters that fish almost every day. You can submit a negative report for the full year if you do not plan to use your license or email the Landings Program (Landings.DMR@maine.gov) requesting a negative report be made for the entire year (you will need to do this every year).

Q: Will I have to do this again next year?

A: Yes. From here on (as of 1/1/2023), all commercial lobster license holders (including student license holders) are required to electronically submit all their trip reports on a monthly basis.

Q: Do apprentice or non-commercial license holders have to report?

A: No, only commercial lobster license holders (including student license holders) are required to report their landings.

Q: Why does the State of Maine need to implement these changes?

A: One of the main reasons is to maintain compliance with the Atlantic States Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Lobster Fishery Management Plan Addendum XVII. If the DMR does not implement 100% electronic harvester reporting, then the State of Maine will be out of compliance with the management plan. This would put the State of Maine at risk of having its fishery closed.

Q: The State of Maine should have pushed back on ASMFC's proposal for required electronic reporting.

A: The State of Maine did push back on ASMFC's proposal, resulting in a 5-year implementation delay. Maine was the last state without 100% electronic harvester reporting.

Q: Why do you need to know this information? Shouldn't pounds be sufficient?

A: While pounds landed are very important, the amount of effort it took to land those pounds is also an important measure of the fishery. The number of traps hauled, set over days, sea time, and area fished are all important pieces of data to help describe effort. The purpose of this data is to improve the information we have on fishing effort and location, which will help inform better management decisions in the future. All report data is confidential. More information on previous commercial landings data can be found on the DMR's website [here](#) and [here](#).

Q: Is this information automatically going to the IRS or offshore wind developers?

A: No. Landings information submitted to the DMR is protected as confidential data according to Maine law and regulation.

Q: What if I fish on another person's boat and do not haul traps of my own?

A: If you are a sternman for another lobsterman and you do not fish your own traps, submit a "did not fish" report for the entire year.

Q: What if I fish on another person’s boat and do haul traps of my own?

A: If you are a sternman for another lobsterman and you do fish your own traps, you need only report the effort and catch for your own traps.

Q: I pay my help in lobsters, so should I report the amount of lobsters the boat caught or the amount I personally sold?

A: Report the total poundage caught from your traps, which includes poundage given to sternmen. Dealers submit all landings by captain/owner; therefore, the dealer-reported data and the harvester-reported data will match.

Q: What happens if I do not report at all?

A: Commercial lobster license holders who fail to report will not be eligible to renew their license the following year.

LEEDS Online FAQs:

How-To Manuals for LEEDS can be found on the DMR’s website [here](#).

Q: I’m having trouble logging in & can’t remember my landings number/password? What should I do?

A: You can find your landings number by clicking on “[Forgot Landings Number](#)”. To reset your password, click on “[Forgot Password](#)”. Both can also be found under the LEEDS ‘Log in’ button. Make sure to write down and save all password information for future reference.

Q: I’m encountering odd issues that I previously didn’t have while using LEEDS. How should I try to troubleshoot?

A: First, check what web browser you are using. LEEDS does not work in Internet Explorer but does work in Google Chrome and Safari. Second, make sure you only have one tab/window with the LEEDS website open. Sometimes having multiple tabs of the website open can cause technical difficulties. Third, try refreshing the webpage. If that does not work, logout of your account, then log back in again. If you attempt all the steps above and you are still experiencing an issue, please contact the Landings Program at (207) 633-9414.

Q: The page isn’t displaying all the required inputs on my phone. How do I see all the input fields?

A: The LEEDS platform is displayed best on and recommended for use on a tablet or computer. Your phone screen is small, so it will not be able to display & fit the entire webpage properly. You will need to scroll around on your phone screen to see all required reporting input information or turn your phone on its side.

Q: How do I find out what Statistical Area I’m fishing in?

A: You can use the [Lobster Statistical Areas and Zone Map](#) to determine which statistical area you fish in. The link to this map can also be found on the DMR’s website among other LEEDS reporting resources [here](#).

Q: My Lobster Zone is not appearing as an option in the drop-down menu. Why is that?

A: You must enter the correct Statistical Area first before you input your Lobster Zone. By selecting the Statistical Area first, the zone options will be limited to the Lobster Zones included in that statistical area. Please fill out all the location information in chronological order as the fields appear.

Q: I fished in multiple Ten-Minute Square (TMS) Areas. What area should I enter?

A: You should enter one TMS number for the area you fished in most frequently during that day’s trip. You can find a link to a map with the TMS Areas next to the “Area Fished” section in LEEDS or [here](#). Zoom in on the map to find your TMS.

Q: I'm using my mobile phone to enter my report and see "CLP N" above an input field in the Fishing & Landing Area section. What does this mean?

A: Some iOS & Android users mentioned that they see "CLP N" above the field for the Ten-Minute Square (TMS) Area in the Fishing & Landing section. This may be due to a distorted display on your mobile device screen; however, you should still enter your Ten-Minute Square (TMS) Area in the field.

Q: Do I need to make two different reports if I sold my trip's catch to a dealer and kept some for myself?

A: No. You can add multiple species and catch details in one report using the "Add Another Catch" button above the green "Species Information" box. More details on how to do this are outlined in steps 8 & 9 [here](#).

Q: I'm typing my dealer's name in the "Dealer Name" field, but they are not showing up. What should I do?

A: You can also try typing in the dealer's personal name or their landings number into that field and LEEDS will accept it. If you still do not see your dealer, you can contact the Landings Program at (207) 633-9414 and someone can look up the information for you.

Q: I submitted a trip report, but realized I made a mistake. How do I edit my report?

A: At this time, LEEDS does not allow you to edit your reports after you have already submitted them. If you realize you made a mistake, please contact the Landings Program at (207) 633-9414 to let them know what to edit and we will manually update it.

VESL App FAQs:

How-To Manuals for VESL app can be found on the DMR's website [here](#).

Q: I downloaded the app and started to create an account. Do I register with Fish Online or Bluefin Data?

A: If you already have a Fish Online account and have federal reporting requirements, select "Sign in with Fish Online". If you only have state reporting requirements, select "Register with Bluefin Data".

Q: After logging in, I do not see a "Create Report" option. How do I get that option?

A: If you log in and see "View Reporting Status", "Find Report", "Create Did Not Fish" but not a "Create Report" option, it means that you are on the VESL website and not the app interface. You can either click the back arrow in the bottom/top-left corner of the browser screen or exit out and click on the app icon. This will bring you to the actual app interface where you can create a trip report.

Q: I can't remember my password. How do I reset it?

A: Click on the "Forgot password" option below the password entry field. Make sure to write down and save all username & password information to refer to in the future. You will need to be able to access the email address you used to set up your VESL account to reset your password.

Q: It's showing that I haven't submitted reports in the past, but I have. Why is that?

A: New users will see a red display showing they have not submitted reports in the months before registering for VESL. This is because you have not used the app before, not necessarily because you haven't reported. Previous report submission information is stored in LEEDS but is not directly linked to the VESL app.

Q: I submitted my reports through VESL, but when I check my reporting compliance in LEEDS it says I am still missing reports. Why?

A: It typically takes one overnight for the reports submitted in the VESL app to be updated with LEEDS online. Check your reporting compliance status in LEEDS 1-2 days after submitting through VESL.

Q: Lobster reports are due monthly, but when I go in to submit a Did Not Fish (DNF) report for a full month, it asks for daily submissions. Why?

A: The VESL app developers are currently working on an update that will allow harvesters to select a date range for filing a DNF report. Until that update has happened, you will have the option to file a DNF report for each day of the month. If you do not plan to fish for the entire month, you can either file a negative for each day, or you can file a negative for one day for each month that you will not be fishing. If you hold another license that requires daily or weekly reporting, this statement does not apply.

Additional Resources & Information:

LEEDS information and manuals:

<https://www.maine.gov/dmr/fisheries/commercial/landings-data/on-line-harvester-catch-landings-reporting>

- [How to File a Negative Landings Report \(PDF file, 3 pages\)](#)
- [How to File a Positive Landings Report - Lobster / Crab \(PDF file, 7 pages\)](#)

VESL information and manuals:

<https://www.maine.gov/dmr/fisheries/commercial/landings-data/reporting-forms>

- [Accessing the VESL Harvester Reporting Application, **State-only** version \(PDF file, 6 pages, 827 kb\)](#)
- [Accessing the VESL Harvester Reporting Application, **Federal-only** version \(PDF file, 7 pages, 1 MB\)](#)
- [Creating a Did Not Fish Report \(PDF file, 556 kb\)](#)
- [Creating a Positive Lobster Report, State-only version \(PDF file, 17 pages, 2.4 MB\)](#)

Maine Fishermen's Forum

The DMR Landings Program will be available at the Maine Fishermen's Forum, which is being held at the Samoset Resort in Rockland from Thursday March 2 – Saturday March 4, 2023, to provide hands-on assistance to anyone who needs it. We will be located in the Fitness Center.

If you have further questions after reading through these FAQs and the respective manuals & information above, please contact the Landings Program at (207) 633-9414. Thank you!