

2024 State Menhaden Fishery

Designated Partnership Agreement FAQ

What is the purpose of the Designated Partnership Agreement (DPA) pilot program?

A: The DPA pilot program was added to the Menhaden regulation for 2024 in response to industry concerns. It is an attempt to create an avenue for some harvesters to reduce the amount of fish “slippage” occurring during the fishery.

If approved for a DPA, when may I use the DPA privilege?

A: Commercial Menhaden harvesters utilizing purse seine gear may apply for and if approved utilize the privileges of their DPA during the 2024 State Allocation Fishery only.

What does the language “similarly rigged to fish with purse seine gear” mean as used in the DPA regulation?

A: “Similarly rigged to fish with purse seine gear” means that both vessels listed on a DPA must be fully rigged to fish at all times when engaged in the Menhaden fishery. Both vessels must have equipment and a purse seine net with them that would allow either vessel to make a set and take fish without their partner present.

Does the vessel limit still apply to vessels issued an approved DPA?

A: Yes, weekly vessel limits still apply to each vessel in a DPA. It is still unlawful for a vessel to fish for, take or possess more than the vessel weekly limit. Furthermore, if Vessel A and Vessel B fish together under a DPA and Vessel A takes aboard 51 barrels, Vessel A is then done fishing for the week – Vessel A may not make another set nor assist Vessel B in further harvest activities.

Which vessel acting under an approved DPA is responsible for reporting the fish retained/landed?

A: Each vessel is responsible for reporting their own fish. The fish you take aboard your vessel must be reported by your vessel.

Vessels A and B are in an approved DPA. Could Vessel A brail fish from their purse seine net onto Vessel B.

A: No, each vessel must brail their own fish out of the purse seine.

Could two vessels who share a purse seine net fish under a DPA?

A: No, each vessel must be “similarly rigged to fish with purse seine gear.” This means each vessel must have their own purse seine. Vessels who have shared a net in the past may continue to do so but would not be able to fish legally under a DPA with only one net.

If I have an approved DPA for the 2024 State allocation fishery, do I have to fish with my partner vessel?

A: No, vessels who have an approved DPA are not required to always fish together. Each vessel may fish alone.