

September 2025

Dear FACTS™ Shellfish Pilot Participant,

Thank you for your participation in the FACTS E-Reporting program. With the start of the 2025-2026 shellfish season, we wanted to reach out with some important program information and helpful suggestions for how to avoid common entry errors.

Program Contact Information:

- 24 hour Program Helpline at 1-877-979-1820 for tech support (call or text) while using your FACTS account.
- “Opt In” to receive important text messages (like End Hail reminders) from FACTS. Just text the word “START” to 1-443-726-1807 and you will receive a confirmation message.
- Questions about the FACTS program, including how to join for another fishery (crab, finfish, or charter) or to opt out and return to paper reporting, please contact Meredith Jones at 410-260-8301 or fisheriesreporting.dnr@maryland.gov
- Questions about shellfish reporting, please contact Sierra Hancock at 410-260-8316 or fisheriestshellfishreport.dnr@maryland.gov

FACTS Mobile website is **maryland.fisheryfacts.com/mobile**



Best Reporting Practices and Account Updates – Since you are a participant in the Shellfish Pilot, you are required to use FACTS for reporting all of your commercial oyster and/or clam harvest activity:

- No Harvest Days - You only need to start a trip in FACTS on the days that you are going out to harvest. If you do not start a trip, the system will report it as a “No Harvest” day, whether that is for a day, week, month, or the entire season.
- Harvest Days - On the days that you will be harvesting, be sure to start your trip *before* you leave the dock and send your End Hail (harvest report) *before* you land.
 - Early Start Time Flexibility – Use the checkbox in the Start Hail to elect to use the early start option and remember to mark your vessel “EHRS”.
 - Please report only your own individual catch (not total boat catch) per day. Example: If two harvesters working on the same boat each get 12 bushels of oysters per day, each person should report 12 bushels in their End Hail, not 24 bushels (for the boat).
 - Remember to confirm the correct gear type, so that your harvest amount correctly reflects the legal limit for the gear you were using.
- **NEW - Skipjack Reporting Improvements** – Based on Shellfish Pilot participant feedback!
 - Instead of calling the NRP Communications Center each day, harvesters that use a *Skipjack with Auxiliary Yawl* will be able to check a box in their Start Hail to satisfy the notification requirement (COMAR 08.02.01.10C).
 - The gear code list now offers a choice for “Skipjack Under Power” and “Skipjack Under Sail”.

- Dealer Buy Tickets
 - If you are selling to a dealer who uses FACTS, then your trip information (End Hail) will pre-fill the buy ticket when you tell the dealer your license number.
 - When working with dealers who complete a paper buy ticket, please be sure to confirm the information they write is correct (matches your End Hail harvest details).
- License Transfers – Please let the program know if your license number has changed, so that we can update your account. If your license is transferred to another harvester, remember that it is the license owner's responsibility to make sure that they submit their reports on time (paper) or get their own FACTS account to report electronically (real-time, so no late reports).

Special Harvest Flexibilities – For the 2025-2026 season the program's special harvest flexibilities remain the same, as described on your pilot program permit agreement:

- Authorized Representative - Pilot participants can designate authorized representatives to take their harvest to dealers under their license. Authorized representatives must be commercially licensed individuals allowed to harvest shellfish and be participating in the Shellfish FACTS pilot program.
- Early Start Time
 - Pilot participants licensed to harvest shellfish in the Chesapeake Bay can start harvesting up to ½ hour before sunrise by electing to daily report using FACTS as part of their start hail for each trip.
 - Pilot participants electing to start ½ hour before sunrise must display the letters "EHRS" on their vessel. The letters shall be painted or firmly attached to the port side near the stern of the vessel. The letters shall be plain vertical block characters of not less than 3 inches in height and shall contrast with the color of the background.
 - Pilot participants will observe the same workday total hours as non-FACTS users. If they elect to start early they must cease harvesting:
 - Oysters by 2:30 p.m. when using shaft tong, patent tong, dredge boat, diving apparatus, or power dredge;
 - Oysters at least 1/2 hour before sunset when using a dredge boat propelled by means of an auxiliary yawl boat; and
 - Clams at least 1/2 hour before sunset.

The FACTS system continues to grow and user feedback is an important part of the program's success. If you would like to provide feedback, including general questions/concerns or suggestions for new harvest flexibilities, please contact the E-Reporting team at 410-260-8301 or fisheriesereporting.dnr@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Richards
 Commercial Harvest Reporting Manager
 Data Management and Quota Monitoring Division
 Fishing and Boating Services