

4.3 Conditional Release Disposition

Chapter 3 evaluates the conditional release policy and the impact on the sampling plan. The analysis, however, did not include details about why conditional releases were granted since removing a vessel from the sampling frame occurs regardless of the reason. This section provides more information on the disposition of conditional releases that were granted in 2013.

In its October, 2012, motion the Council expressed its intention that crew members should not be displaced by the requirement to have an observer on board. In the halibut and sablefish IFQ fishery, vessels sometimes have the opportunity to take additional IFQ permit holders (sometimes called “IFQ clients”) on board who are above and beyond the number of crew normally associated with the vessel. The Council’s intention was that IFQ clients would also be considered crew. In accordance with this policy, NMFS granted releases for situations when all bunk space on the vessel was filled with crew or IFQ permit holders. NMFS also granted releases from observer coverage to vessels that had sufficient bunk space, but did not have enough life raft capacity to accommodate the observer and all other persons on the boat. For example, a boat might have had 6 bunks and 4 crew members, but had only a 4-person life raft; therefore, although there was bunk space for the observer, the life raft capacity was insufficient.

Table 4-13 shows the types of conditional releases that were granted for each 2-month period in 2013 and Figure 4-1 shows the conditional release by vessel size. Note that these totals are higher than the totals reported in Chapter 3 and is likely due to a few conditional releases that were granted but the vessel decided not to fish, whereas the totals in chapter 3 reflects realized fishing.

As described in chapter 3, the combined impact of the conditional releases and poorly defined list of vessels resulted in NMFS having to select a greater number of vessels in each selection to reach anticipated selection goals in the 2013 ADP. The probability that a vessel that fished and was selected for coverage is shown in Table 3-4 line 5 and it increased throughout the year. Of the 105 vessels that were selected and fished (Table 3-3, line 10), there were 8 observed vessels that got selected for multiple periods; 7 were observed for 2 periods and one was observed for 3 periods. Of those 8 vessels, however, 2 of these vessels had some of their trips conditionally released and some trips were observed.

Table 4-13. The number and type of conditional releases by time period in 2013.

	Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Nov-Dec	Total
Lack of bunk space - crew	0	2	10	8	11	8	39
Lack of bunk space - IFQ client	0	1	1	3	4	2	11
Lack of life raft space	0	0	2	4	6	1	13

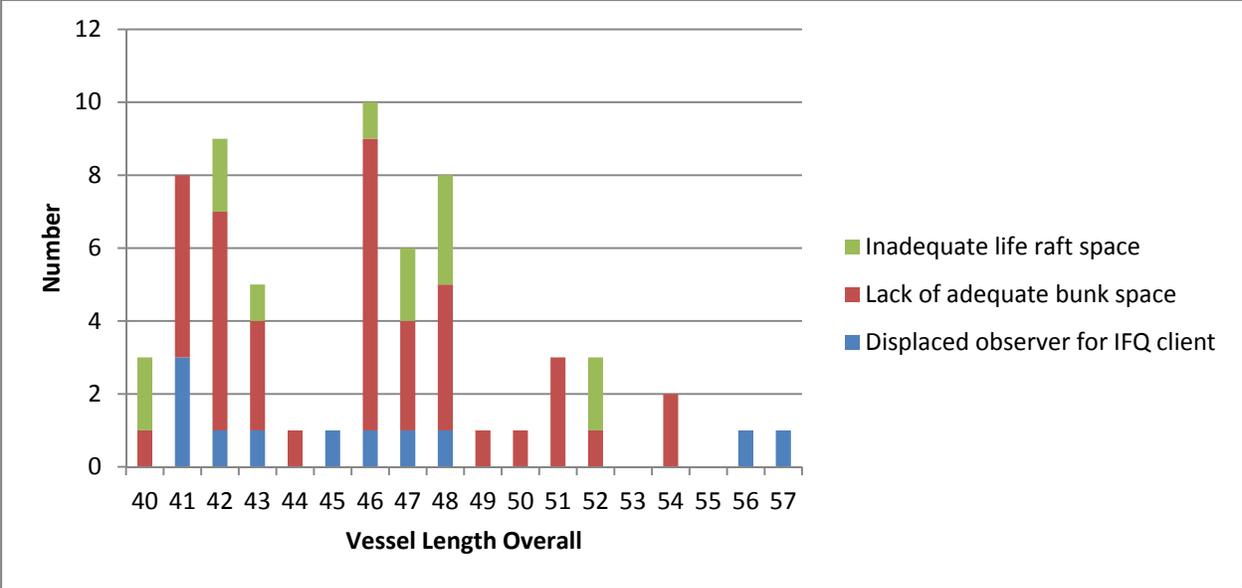


Figure 4-1. Number and type of conditional releases by size (length overall) of the vessel.