

**COMPILATION AND SUMMARY OF COMMERCIAL  
CATCH REPORT FORMS USED IN THE U.S. VIRGIN  
ISLANDS, 1974/75 TO 2004/05**

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U.S. Virgin Islands

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## **BACKGROUND**

The commercial catch report is a vital component of assessing the health of commercial fisheries in the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as fisheries globally. The more information the commercial catch report contains, the more management decisions can be made accurately and to the benefit of the fishery.

The information recorded on catch report forms will differ according to region, targeted fisheries, and the involvement by resource managers. It is important to gather all the necessary information without making the form too complicated for fishers.

The objective of this report is to document the different catch report forms used by commercial fishers in the U.S. Virgin Islands over the years. This information can be used to determine which type of catch report form is most effective at collecting important catch data. In addition, it will facilitate the task of harmonizing existing non-uniform commercial catch data files.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Sources of Information – There were two main information sources for the commercial catch report form used in the USVI for fishing years 1974/75 to 2004/05.

1. Commercial Catch Report Data Files – As part of the organization of old catch reports, all available catch reports for the U.S. Virgin Islands from 1974/75 to 2004/05 are in the process of either being: (1) entered and proofed, (2) re-proofed, or (3) re-entered and re-proofed.
2. Commercial Catch Report Forms – In addition to data files, as part of the organization of old catch report files, blank catch report forms were identified and compiled from 1974/75 to 2004/05 for both the St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix districts.

Comparison of Commercial Catch Report Forms – The above sources of data were examined and reviewed. The catch report forms were compared to commercial catch report hard copies for each year. For those years that the compilation contained more than one catch report form, the hard copies were used to determine which form was actually used for that fishing year. All of the information identified was compiled by fishing year and district (see Table 1).

## **RESULTS**

All available catch report forms were collected and consolidated into Appendices A through T. There were basically two types of catch reports: short and long forms. The short catch report form organized fish into categories according to the type of gear used, including nets, pots and hooks. The long catch report form organized fish by species groups such as grouper, snapper, grunt, etc.

The short forms were mainly used in the 1970s, 1980s and into the mid 1990s. Long catch report forms were introduced in the mid 1990s.

The original commercial catch report form (see Appendix A) attempted to separate species groups by breaking down potfish, hookfish, etc. into two categories: “snapper/grouper” and “all others.” This form also included fish prices. The fish price column was later removed in 1990/91.

The form that separated snapper and grouper from other catch (see Appendix A) was used for a number of years in the 1970s and 80s. For some of these years, it was used in combination with Form B (see Appendix B), which only separated fish by gear type. Six fishing years used both of these catch report forms (1978/79 and 1987/88 in St. Croix, 1981/82 in St. Thomas/St. John, and 1982/83, 1983/84 and 1984/85 for both islands).

The early 1990s also used a combination of the short forms. Form C (see Appendix C) incorporated species groups, while Form D (see Appendix D) did not. In 1992/93, St. Croix used both of these forms.

A number of revisions were made to the short catch report form in 1991/92 and 1992/93. Pot fishers were asked to record the number of pots hauled each fishing day. Monthly forms were produced with the month and year already printed on them and a baitfish column was added. The conch and whelk columns were also modified; “lbs of meat” was added to both.

Long forms were introduced in 1995/96 for St. Croix (see Appendix H) and 1997/98 for St. Thomas/St. John (see Appendix K). However, only a small percentage of commercial fishers were using the long forms during both of these fishing years. For St. Croix, only 11% of fishers were using the new long form in 1995/96. This number is based on the estimate of 180 total licensed fishers for that year (Holt and Uwate 2004). For St. Thomas/St. John, 18% of fishers were using the new long form in 1998/99. This number is based on the estimate of 153 total licensed fishers for that year (Holt and Uwate 2004).

Two additional fishing years (1996/97 for St. Croix and 1998/99 for St. Thomas/St. John) used both the long and short forms. On St. Croix in 1996/97, 72% of fishers were using the long commercial catch report form. This number is on the estimate of 212 total licensed fishers for that year (Holt and Uwate 2004). 65% of fishers in St. Thomas/St. John were using the long form in 1998/99. This number is based on the estimate of 186 total licensed fishers for that year (Holt and Uwate 2004).

## **DISCUSSION**

Based on the above information, the Division of Fish and Wildlife has used several different commercial catch report forms during the past 30 years. Some of these forms included fish price information, but only divided the catch by the gear type used. However, other forms divided the

catch more specifically by fish type but did not include price information. The forms are basically the same, but modifications have been made as needed.

According to Barshinger (1992), snapper and grouper were separated because they were targeted more heavily than other species. However, the catch report form was recombined in 1992/93 when too many fishers were incorrectly dividing their catch into these categories.

The baitfish fishery was of particular concern in the early 1990s, so the baitfish column was added to help assess its health (Barshinger 1992).

Barshinger (1992) also explained that potfishers were asked to record the number of pots hauled in order to get a more accurate estimate of fishing efforts. It is unclear why other fishers weren't also asked to record their gear numbers (hooks, nets, etc).

The Annual Summary Report for 1993/94 asked for revisions to the catch report form in order to collect more detailed information (Meyers 1994). Meyers suggested information such as gear quantity, time spent fishing and catch divided by species groups would allow for better catch data, which in turn would allow for better management. The catch per unit of effort (CPUE) would be more accurate based on the additional information.

The long catch report form was first introduced in St. Croix during the 1994/95 fishing year, and in St. Thomas/St. John during the 1997/98 fishing year. However, the Division of Fish and Wildlife's data files do not contain any long forms for St. Croix in 1994/95. The long forms were used in a two year test period by a small group of fishers on a volunteer basis to obtain their opinions of the form (Tobias 2000). The test period was also used to determine the reasonableness of asking the fishers for the information, given their time constraints and ability to accurately identify species groups (B. Kojis, Personal communication).

The long form was not simultaneously introduced in both fishing districts in part because of continued concerns expressed by both Fishery Advisory Committee (FAC) members and commercial fishers (B. Kojis, personal communication). However, the long forms became the standard commercial catch report forms in 1997/98 in St. Croix and in 1999/00 in St. Thomas/St. John.

The current commercial catch report form is updated and revised as management deems necessary.

## **REFERENCES CITED**

- Barshinger, C.W. ca 1993. State/Federal Commercial Fishery Statistics Project #SF-42 (NA90AAHSF228) Annual Summary Report, U.S. Virgin Islands 1991-1992. Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Holt, M., and K.R.Uwate. 2004. Estimates of the number of licensed commercial fishers per year in the U.S. Virgin Islands, 1974/75 to 2003/2004. Bureau of Fisheries, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Planning and Natural Resources, U.S. Virgin Islands. 20 pp.

Meyers, S. 1994. Annual Summary Report April 1993 - March 1994, Cooperative Fishery Statistics Program #SF-42 (NA27FT0301-01). Bureau of Fisheries, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Planning and Natural Resources, United States Virgin Islands.

Tobias, W., R. Gomez, and B. Kojis. 2000. Three year summary report, April 1997 - March 1999, Cooperative Fishery Statistics Program NA77FT0093. Bureau of Fisheries, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Planning and Natural Resources, United States Virgin Islands.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

An earlier draft of this report was reviewed by Cheryl Ondeka, Dr. Roger Uwate and Dr. Barbara Kojis.

Table 1. Comparison of Commercial Catch Report Forms Used in St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix, 1974/75 to 2004/05

Fishing Year	St. Thomas/St. John	St. Croix
74/75	A	A
75/76	A	A
76/77	A	A
77/78	A	A
78/79	B	A, B
79/80	A	A
80/81	A	A
81/82	A, B	A
82/83	A, B	A, B
83/84	A, B	A, B
84/85	A, B	A, B
85/86	B	B
86/87	B	B
87/88	B	A, B
88/89	B	B
89/90	B	B
90/91	C	C
91/92	C	C
92/93	D	C, D
93/94	E	E
94/95	F	F
95/96	G	G, H
96/97	I	I, J
97/98	K, L	K
98/99	M, N	M
99/00	O	O
00/01	P	P
01/02	Q	Q
02/03	R	R
03/04	S	S
04/05	T	T









# Appendix D. Commercial Catch Report D

Years in Use, STT/STJ: 92/93  
 Years in Use, STX: 92/93

COMMERCIAL CA H R ORT FOR JULY 1992

name \_\_\_\_\_ boat reg. no. \_\_\_\_\_ number of helpers used \_\_\_\_\_  
 island \_\_\_\_\_ buoy colors \_\_\_\_\_

day of month	POT FISH		HOOK FISH lbs	NET FISH lbs	SPEARGUN FISH lbs	LOBSTER by POT lbs	LOBSTER by DIVING lbs	CONCH lbs of meat	WHELK lbs of meat	BAITFISH/FRY lbs	AREA FISHED V
	lbs	# Pots hauled									
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# Appendix E. Commercial Catch Report Form E

Years in Use, STT/STJ: 93/94  
 Years in Use, STX: 93/94

## COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT FORM FOR JULY 1993

name \_\_\_\_\_ boat reg. no. \_\_\_\_\_ number of helpers used \_\_\_\_\_  
 island \_\_\_\_\_ buoy colors \_\_\_\_\_

day of month	POT FISH		NET FISH lbs	HOOK FISH lbs	SPEARGUN FISH lbs	LOBSTER by POT	LOBSTER by DIVING	CONCH lbs of meal	WHELK lbs of meal	BATTISH/FRY lbs	AREA FISHED	PELAGICS
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# Appendix F. Commercial Catch Report Form F

Years in Use, STT/STJ: 94/95  
Years in Use, STX: 94/95

ID Number \_\_\_\_\_ COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT FORM FOR **JULY 1994**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Boat reg. no. \_\_\_\_\_ Number of helpers used \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Port \_\_\_\_\_ Buoy colors \_\_\_\_\_ Did you fish this month? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

day of month	POT FISH # Pots hauled	HOOK FISH lbs	NET FISH lbs	SPEARGUN FISH lbs	LOBSTER by POT	LOBSTER by DIVING	CONCH lbs of meat	WHELK lbs of meat	BATTERED/FRY lbs	AREAS FISHED	DID YOU FISH MORE THAN 3 MILES FROM SHORE (YES/NO/OTI)
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# Appendix G. Commercial Catch Report Form G

Years in Use, STT/STJ: 95/96  
 Years in Use, STX: 95/96

## COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT FORM FOR JULY 1995

ID number \_\_\_\_\_ name \_\_\_\_\_ boat reg. no. \_\_\_\_\_  
 home port \_\_\_\_\_ buoy colors \_\_\_\_\_ number of helpers used \_\_\_\_\_

day of month	POT FISH		HOOK FISH lbs	NET FISH lbs	SPEAR GUN FISH lbs	POT LOBSTER		LOBSTER by DIVING	CONCH lbs of meal	BAIT FISH/FRY lbs	AREAS FISHED	Did you fish more than 3 miles from shore (Yes/No/Both)
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I attest that the information recorded on this form is true and accurate.

(sign & date)




# Appendix I. Commercial Catch Report Form I

Years in Use, STT/STJ: 96/97  
 Years in Use, STX: 96/97

## COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT FORM FOR JULY 1996

Name port \_\_\_\_\_  
 boat reg. no. \_\_\_\_\_  
 buoy colors \_\_\_\_\_

Date	POT FISH # Pots Hauled	HOOK FISH lbs	NET FISH lbs	SPEARGUN FISH lbs	POT LOBSTER # Pots Hauled	LOBSTER by DIVING	CONCH lbs of meat	BALFISH/ FRY lbs	AREAS FISHED 	Did you fish more than 3 miles from shore (Yes/No/Both)	
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I attest that the information recorded on this form is true and accurate.

(sign & date)

Form of Fish & Wildlife 96.06 CW1B

# Appendix J. Commercial Catch Report Form J

Years in Use, STX: 96/97

Commercial Catch Report **NOVEMBER 1996**

Day	Type/No.	Area Fished	Hours Fished	Boat Reg. no. VI-										Home Port	Buoy Colors	No. helpers				
				Grouper	Snapper	Grunt	Jack	Surgeon	Parrot	Shellfish	Trigler	Angel	Barra				Coat	Mackerel	Pelagic	PAD
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I attest that the information recorded on this form is true and accurate. \_\_\_\_\_ (sign and date)

same see reverse side of page for explanation of column headings.





# Appendix L. Commercial Catch Report Form L

Years in Use, STT/STJ: 97/98

## COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT FORM FOR JULY 1997

name \_\_\_\_\_

boat reg. no. \_\_\_\_\_

buoy colors \_\_\_\_\_

number of helpers used \_\_\_\_\_

day of month	POT FISH		HOOK FISH lbs	NET FISH lbs	total traps in water: fish pots		lobster pots		CONCH lbs of meat	WHEAT lbs of meal	BAITFISH/FRY lbs	AREAS FISHED	Did you fish this month? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Did you fish more than 3 miles from land? (Yes/No/Both)
	# Pots Hauled	lbs			SPEARGUN FISH lbs	POT LOBSTER # Pots Hauled	LOBSTER by DIVING							
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Division of Fish & Wildlife 97.05 CWR

I attest that the information recorded on this form is true and accurate.

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*[Signature]*



# Appendix N. Commercial Catch Report Form N

Years in Use, STT/STJ: 98/99

## COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT FORM FOR JULY 1998

name \_\_\_\_\_ boat reg. no. \_\_\_\_\_ buoy colors \_\_\_\_\_ number of helpers used \_\_\_\_\_

day of month	POT FISH		HOOK FISH		NET FISH		SPEAR GUN FISH		POT LOBSTER		LOBSTER		CONCH		WHELK		BAIT FISH/FRY		AREAS FISHED	Did you fish more than 3 miles from land? (Yes/No/Both)
	lbs	# Pots Hauled	lbs	lbs	lbs	lbs	lbs	# Pots Hauled	by DIVING	lbs of meat	lbs of meat	lbs of meat	lbs	lbs	lbs	lbs	lbs			
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Division of Fish & Wildlife Resources

I attest that the information recorded on this form is \_\_\_\_\_ and accurate.

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*[Signature]*

# Appendix O. Commercial Catch Report Form O

Years in Use, STT/STJ: 1999/2000  
 Years in Use, STX: 1999/2000

## REVISED COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT FORM FOR JULY 1999

Day	Gear Type	Gear No.	Area Fished	Hours Fished	boat reg. no. VI -										total traps in water	fish pots	lobster pots		no. helpers used	Distance from land			
					Grouper lbs	Snapper lbs	Gunt lbs	Jack lbs	Surgeon lbs	Parrot lbs	Swfish lbs	Trigger lbs	Porgy lbs	Barrs lbs			Goat lbs	Mackrl lbs			Offshore D/7/W	FAD	Balrfsh lbs
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(sign & date)

Received at DFW

JULY 15



# Appendix Q. Commercial Catch Report Form Q

Years in Use, STT/STJ: 01/02

Years in Use, STX: 01/02

## REVISED COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT FORM FOR **JULY 2001**

DATE

**JULY 2 01**

Received at DFW ▲

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ boat reg. no. VI- \_\_\_\_\_ buoy colors \_\_\_\_\_ local traps in water: fish pots \_\_\_\_\_ lobster pots \_\_\_\_\_ no. helpers used \_\_\_\_\_

Day	Gear Type	Gear No.	Area Fished	Hours Fished	Grouper lbs	Snapper lbs	Grunt lbs	Jack lbs	Surgeon lbs	Parrot lbs	Shellfish lbs	Trigger lbs	Porgy lbs	Barra lbs	Goat lbs	Mackl lbs	Offshore D/T/W	FAD	Baldfish lbs	Lobster lbs	Conch	Whale	Distance from land	
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*[Signature]*

# Appendix R. Commercial Catch Report Form R

Years in Use, STT/STJ: 02/03  
 Years in Use, STX: 02/03

## COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT FORM FOR JULY 2002

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ Boat Reg. No. VI- \_\_\_\_\_ Buoy Colors: \_\_\_\_\_ Total pots fished: fish pots \_\_\_\_\_ lobster pots: \_\_\_\_\_ no. of helpers used: \_\_\_\_\_

day	gear type	gear no.	area fished	Distance from land (miles)	hours fished	grouper lbs	snapper lbs	gunt lbs	jack lbs	surgeon lbs	parrot lbs	shellfish lbs	trigger lbs	pongy lbs	barrs lbs	goat lbs	mackerel lbs	hairfish lbs	lobster lbs	conch meat lbs	whelk lbs	Offshore D/T/W	RAD #	artificial feed #	
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JULY 20





Appendix T. Commercial Catch Report Form T

Years in Use, STT/STJ: 04/05  
 Years in Use, STX: 04/05

COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT FORM JULY 2004

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ Boat Reg. No.: VI- \_\_\_\_\_

Total Pots Fished: \_\_\_\_\_ Fish pots \_\_\_\_\_ Lobster pots \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Helpers: \_\_\_\_\_

date fished	gear type	gear no.	area fished	distance from land (miles)	hours fished	trap soak time (hours)	grouper lbs	snapper lbs	giant lbs	jack lbs	surgon lbs	parrot lbs	shellfish lbs	triger lbs	porgy lbs	barra lbs	goat lbs	mackerel lbs	hull lbs	lobster lbs	conch meat lbs	whale lbs	pelagic D/T/VV lbs	FAD No.	Other catch lbs	fish type	released D/A & F/L
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RECEIVED AT DFW:  

JULY 2004