NOAA FISHERIES

Northeast Fisheries Science Center

Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel

February 8, 2024

Arlington, VA

Welcome new member!

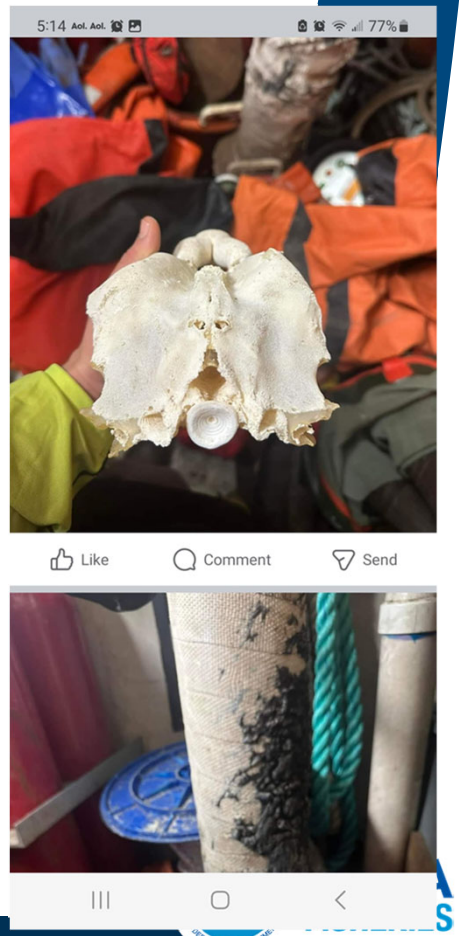
- Jameson Gregg, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Scientist

Update on action items from last meeting

Share C. Roebuck email	Done
Need to confirm OMAO guidelines regarding transiting through wind farms	NEFSC has reached out to OMAO for a formal memo
Re: Contingency plan - Next step is to draft a layout a variety of options and what each looks like. Return in the next few months, and present at the NEFMC meeting in Sep. 2023. (9/26-28/2023)	Done
Plan contingency working group meeting	Done
What is potential conflict of interest with industry vessels doing an industry-based survey?	If industry members are designing the survey, they could potentially have an advantage in bidding over those not involved
What is actual Bigelow day rate	NEFSC reached out to OMAO - $56k

Update on correspondence since last meeting

- Emails from Capt. Novello (wing spread concerns)
- Reviews of IBS white paper
- Update of NTAP fact sheet for MREP (Feb 12-14, 2024)
- Weekly survey updates Sep-Nov for BTS and BLLS
- Monthly email updates
- Porbeagle or mako shark skull identification
- Dave Goethel's book release



Funding Update

- NTAP funding received to support ~2 years of in-person meetings.

Bottom Trawl Survey Update

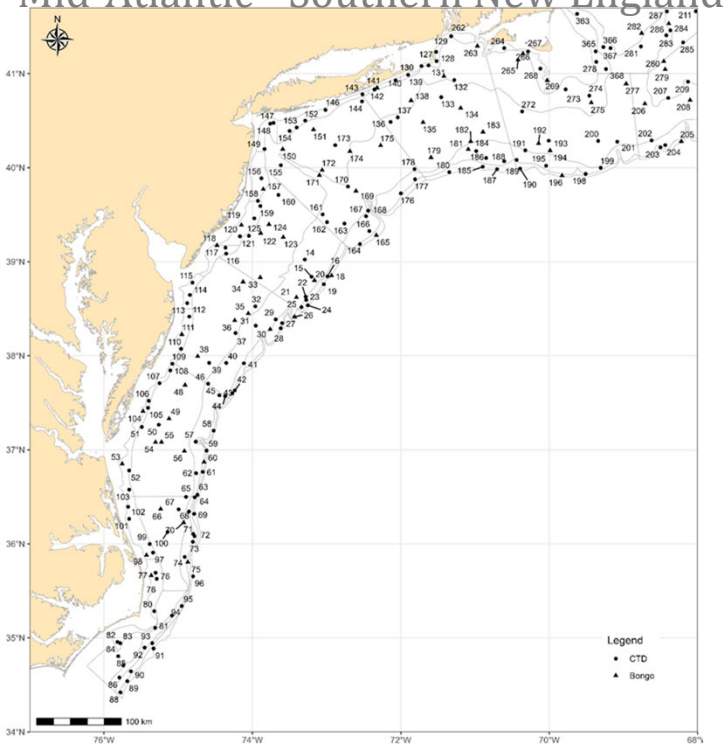
Fall 2023

- This marked the 60th year of the NEFSC Bottom Trawl Survey
- Completed 335 trawls of 377 planned
- 107 bongo samples of 116 planned
- Some weather impacts during September
- Significant fixed gear encountered Downeast Maine, Stratum 039

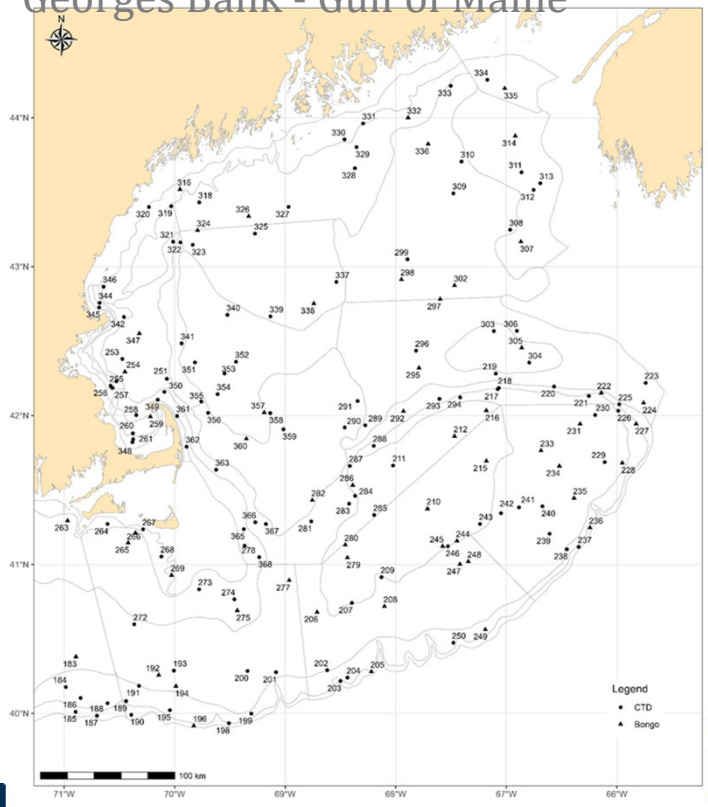
Bottom Trawl Survey Update

Fall 2023 Station Locations

Mid-Atlantic - Southern New England



Georges Bank - Gulf of Maine



Bottom Trawl Survey Update

Spring 2024

- On track to begin as scheduled
- 60 days, 3 legs
- March 6 - May 15
- 377 stations planned

Gulf of Maine Bottom Longline Survey Update

Stations:

- Completed 100% of planned stations (45) in fall 2023
- On track to sail on time in spring 2024!

Highlights:

- Year 10 of The BLLS is complete!
- Strong catches of groundfish, including haddock, pollock, and cod
- Strong catches of hakes (white hake and red hake)
- Strong catches of large barndoor skates
- Two small halibut caught in the eastern strata
- One golden tilefish (6kg) caught in the eastern strata
- One blue shark (35kg) caught and sampled for the Apex Predator program

Lowlights:

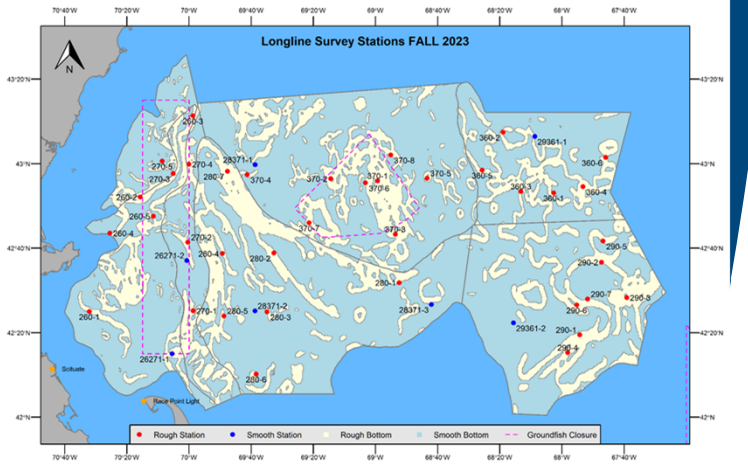
- High dogfish catches made for a challenging work flow

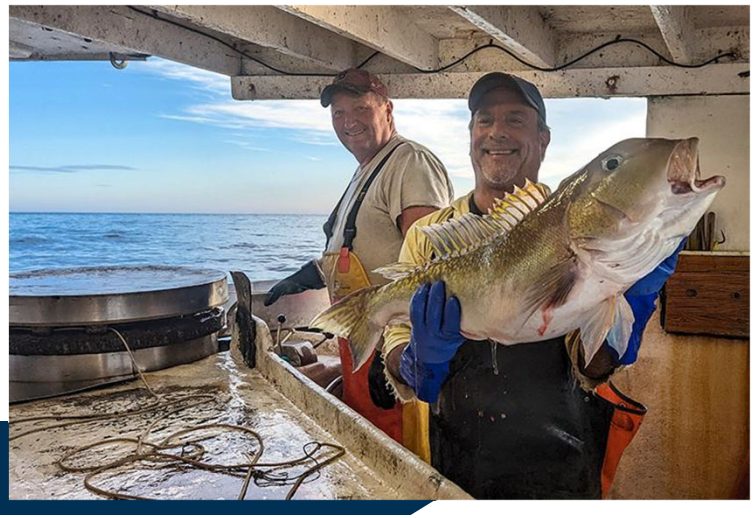
Recent Data Use:

- 2023 Atlantic cod, barndoor skate, red hake, thorny skate stock assessments

New Website and Blog!

- BLLS webpage
- "Surprising Sights and Wondrous Wildlife in the Gulf of Maine" blog





Massachusetts (DMF) Fall Trawl Survey

- 88% station completion (91 of 103)
  - 100% stations in GOM 514
  - combination of vessel staffing issues related to family medical situation and prolonged poor weather were issues for second half of survey
  - Lost a station in Muskeget Channel due to Vineyard Wind avoidance area around unprotected cable.
- High catches of Spotted Hake, Red Hake and Silver Hake
- Scup still dominant species in southern stations
- Continued decline for Little Skate and Winter Skate
- Spring 2024 planned as normal

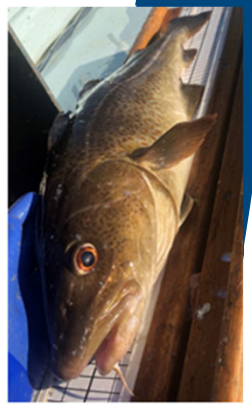
MENH Inshore Trawl Survey: 2023 Surveys

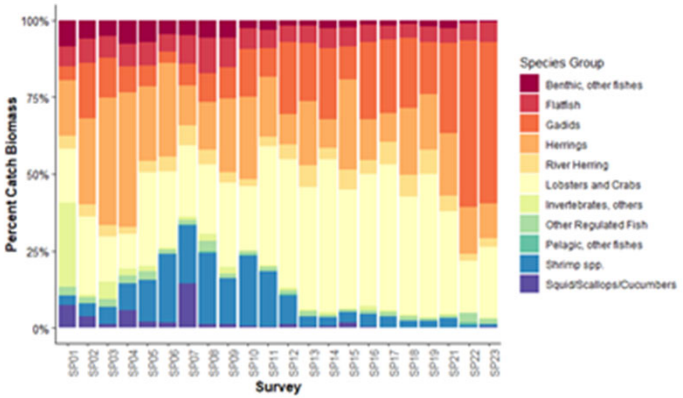
Spring 2023

- 97 tows completed out of 120 planned
  - Reason for missed tows: bad weather at start of survey and mechanical issues combined with bad weather at end of survey

Fall 2023

- 78 tows completed out of 120 planned
  - Reason for missed tows: fixed gear and bad weather
  - Number of tows dropped because fixed gear increased again in the last two years





Mid-Atlantic/Southern New England NEAMAP Nearshore Trawl Survey

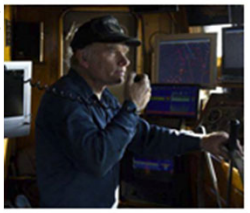
2023 Calendar Year Review:

SPRING 2023- 150/150 stations completed

- 35 calendar days
- **Top species by count**: Scup, Butterfish, Longfin Squid
- **Notable**: Three field going employees departed our workgroup prior to or during the spring trip, including two chief scientists, one of which wa the Chief of Trawl Operations

FALL 2023- 150/150 stations completed

- 29 calendar days
- **Top species by count:** Spot, Scup, Butterfish
- **Notable**: Passing of Capt Jimmy Ruhle just prior to survey departure. It was amazing to complete the survey after Jimmy's loss in only 29 days after a major unexpected delay to the beginning of the trip



Expectations for Spring 2024:

- Trip departure should be within a few days of April 20th weather pending. No major changes or additions

NEAMAP/SEAMAP Trawl Vessel and Gear Calibration Workshop

Objective: develop a best practices guide for gear and vessel calibrations across the NEAMAP/SEAMAP trawl surveys

- 3-day online workshop held in mid-January
- Attendants from Alaska, Canada, down the U.S. east coast

Takeaways:

- How to research vessels and gear before making a change
- How to preemptively tackle calibration challenges
- Statistical methods related to calibrations
- The need for communication to share lessons learned and advice when it comes to gear and vessel changes
- The acknowledgement of funding-related issues
- Creation of literature repository

Next steps:

- NEAMAP/SEAMAP operations committees will provide feedback on 1st draft of best practices to review at annual meetings in March

Communications update

- **Communicating NTAP research**
  - Stock assessment schedule
  - NOAA Fisheries event calendar
  - Research track stock assessment webpages

- **How NTAP research is used in assessments**
  - Dashboard: Tool for tracking use of Rockhopper Catch Efficiency Study result in assessments
    - 2023 used in: red hake, summer flounder, north windowpane flounder
  - Forthcoming web feature story on use of Rockhopper Catch Efficiency Study results in stock assessments
  - Research to Rule infographic
    - Objective: illustrate the path/steps a potential new source of data has through the assessment and catch advice processes.
      - highlight phases when industry can be involved
      - Reach out to Alex (Alexander.dunn@noaa.gov) or Katie (Katie.Burchard@noaa.gov) if interested in helping