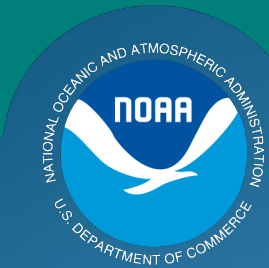


*Science, Service, Stewardship*



# Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Seaday Accomplishments

NOAA

**NOAA  
FISHERIES  
SERVICE**

June 15, 2018

Amy Martins, Branch Chief  
Fishery Monitoring & Research Division  
Fisheries Sampling Branch

Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Woods Hole, MA

# Northeast Fisheries Observer Programs

## Sea Day Accomplishments

- Three types of Observer Programs
- Six different types of Seaday assignments
- SBRM Process and Timeline
- Total number of Seadays Accomplished in 2017 SBRM
- Contributing factors to Unaccomplished Seadays
- Improvements to Seaday Accomplishments
- 2018 SBRM Seaday schedule

*What we've done, how we did, and what is in the works*

# Types of Observer Programs and Seaday Assignments in the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program

- Observer Programs: 1) Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP); 2) Industry Funded Scallop (IFS); 3) At-Sea Monitoring (ASM)
- The Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Types of Seadays:
  - SBRM – Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (for fish and turtles)
  - MMPA – Marine Mammal Protection Act
  - ACCSP, NY – Agreement with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation



# Observer Service Providers

- Northeast Fisheries Observer Program
  - AIS
- Industry Funded Scallop Observer Program
  - AIS, EWTS, Fathom Resources, MRAG
- At-Sea Monitoring Program
  - AIS, EWTS, Fathom Resources, MRAG

# Operational details

## How are observers deployed?

- Dock-intercept process
  - Seaday schedule is drafted by NOAA and provided to observer provider
  - Mainly in the mid-Atlantic
  - Face to face encounters, or by phone
  - Selection letters
- Pre-Trip Notification System (PTNS 2.0)
  - Collects notifications, performs selection, notifies provider
  - Web-based database, supported by phone and email options
  - Groundfish only, includes NEFOP SBRM, MMPA, and ASM
- Telephone Call-in
  - Herring and Mackerel
- Interactive Voice Recording Call-in
  - Industry-Funded Scallop



# What is the Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM)?

- Sampling design, data collection procedure, and analyses used to estimate bycatch in multiple fisheries.
- A structured approach used to establish observer coverage in fleets engaged in commercial fishing throughout the Greater Atlantic fishery management plans (FMPs).
- The methodology calculates the number of observed seadays needed to achieve a precision-based performance standard of a 30% coefficient of variation of the discard estimate.
- SBRM Omnibus Amendment was implemented on July 30, 2015 (MAFMC and NEFMC).

# SBRM Species Groups & Fleets

- 15 species groups considered in SBRM
  - 14 fish/inverts (FMP species groups; 35 individual species)
  - 1 sea turtle (loggerhead)
- “Fleet” is defined by 5 variables
  - Gear type
  - Mesh size, binned into groups
    - Otter trawl: small (<5.5 in), large ( $\geq 5.5$  in);
    - Gillnet: small (<5.5 in), large (5.5 in to 7.99), extra-large ( $\geq 8$  in)
  - Access area type
  - Trip category
  - Region
  - 50+ fleets



# SBRM Timelines and Products

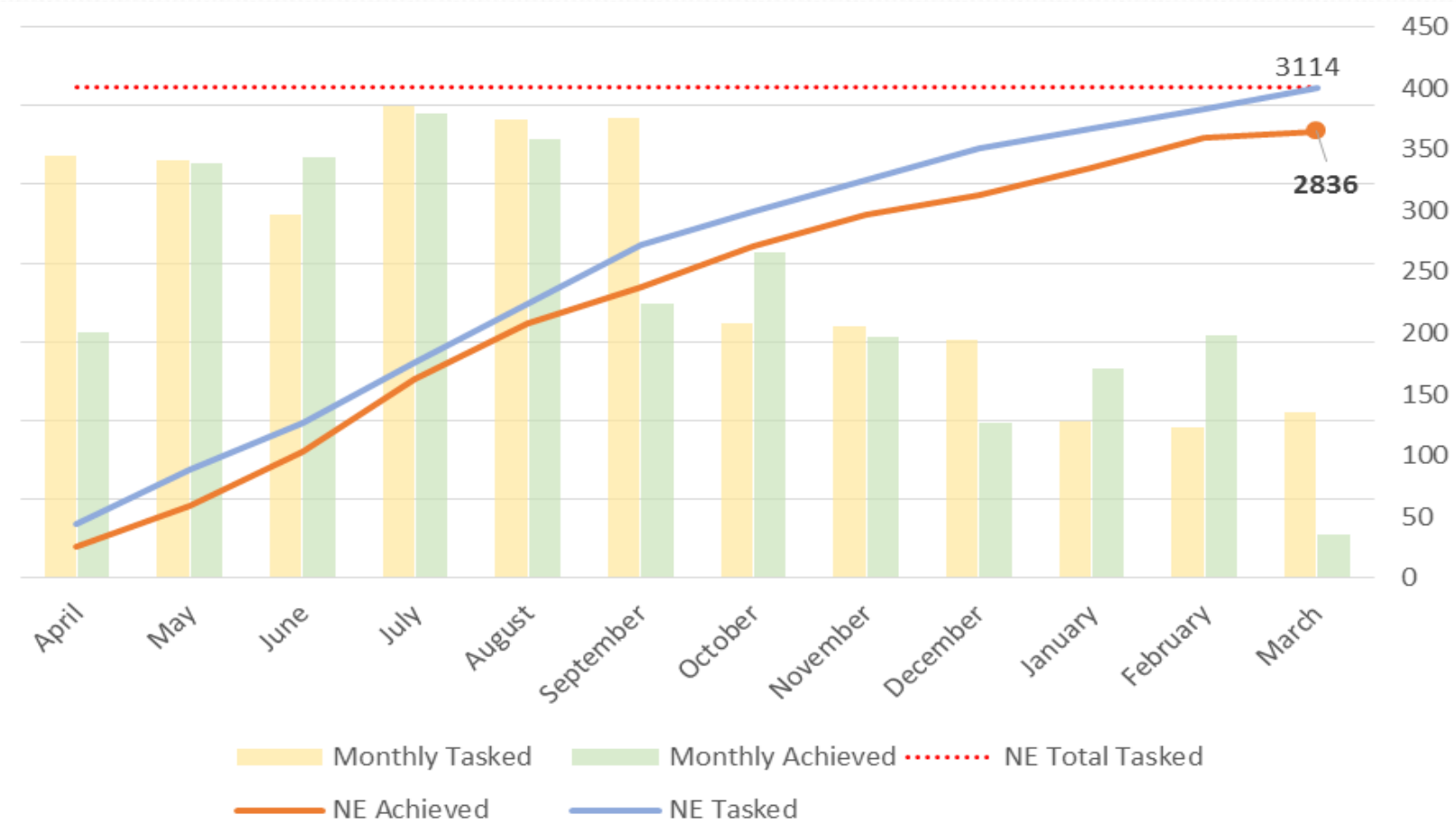
- For this 2018-2019 seadays schedule year:
  - Data Used: July 2016 – June 2017
  - 9,654 seadays (11,401 seadays in the previous year)
    - Data Preparation: July 2017 – September 2017
    - Conduct Analysis and Report Writing: October 2017 – March 2018
    - Final Seaday Schedule: April 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019 (Released April 24, 2018)
- Annual reports (publically available through [NEFSC web site](#))
  - [Annual discard report with observer sea day allocation](#)
  - [Discard estimation, precision and sample size analysis](#)
  - New: [Estimated Bycatch of Sea Turtles in Sink Gillnet Gear](#)
  - NEFOP [Sea Day Schedule](#)



# Seaday Accomplishments, 2017-2018: 13,487 Seadays Completed

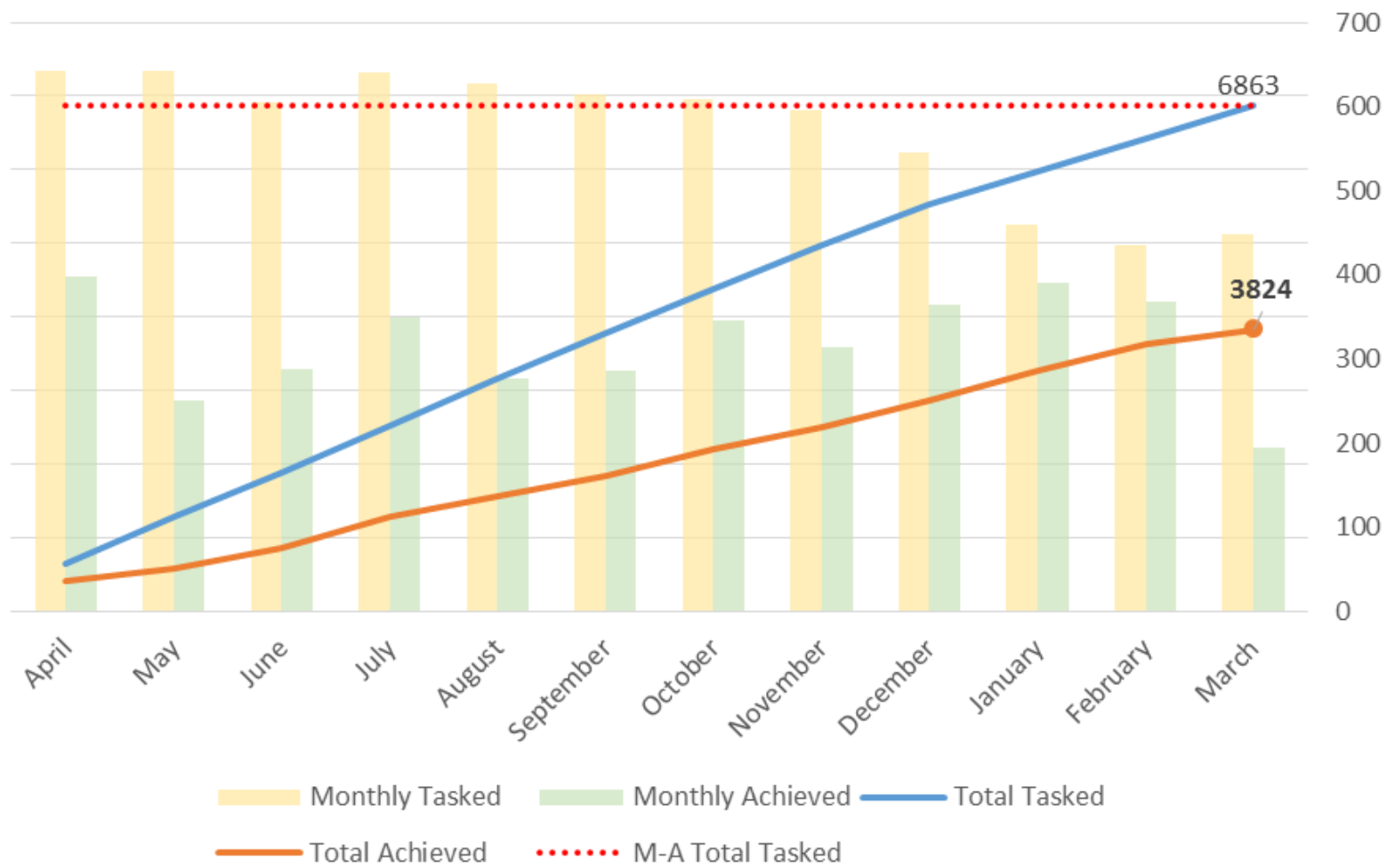
- NEFOP: 4,183 trips; completing 8,771 tasked seadays between April 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018.
- IFS: 686 trips, completing 3,752 seadays from March 1, 2017 through February 28 2018.
- ASM: 964 seadays + 1,678 NEFOP seadays met the 16% groundfish coverage.
- 72% of all NEFOP tasked days were accomplished, up by 14% from the previous year.
  - 99% of the days needed to monitor fish discards were completed.
  - 34% of the days needed to monitor turtle discards.

# SBRM Tasked vs. Achieved in the New England Region





# SBRM Tasked vs. Achieved in the Mid-Atlantic Region



# Industry Funded Scallop Coverage

Area	Trip Category	Observed Trips	Obs. Days	Estimated Coverage	Target	% Achieved
Elephant Trunk	Limited Access	43	359	14%	15%	93%
Elephant Trunk	General Category	43	78	6%	8%	75%
Nantucket Lightship	Limited Access	68	385	16%	15%	107%
Nantucket Lightship	General Category	63	126	7%	10%	70%
CA II	Limited Access	58	450	16%	15%	107%
Mid-Atlantic Access A	Limited Access	64	509	9%	10%	90%
Mid-Atlantic Access A	General Category	13	33	10%	8%	125%
MA/GB Open Areas	Limited Access	145	1168	9%	10%	90%
MA/GB Open Areas	General Category	167	343	5%	5.5%	91%



# Mid-Atlantic Coverage

## Improving Coverage in the Mid-Atlantic in 2018

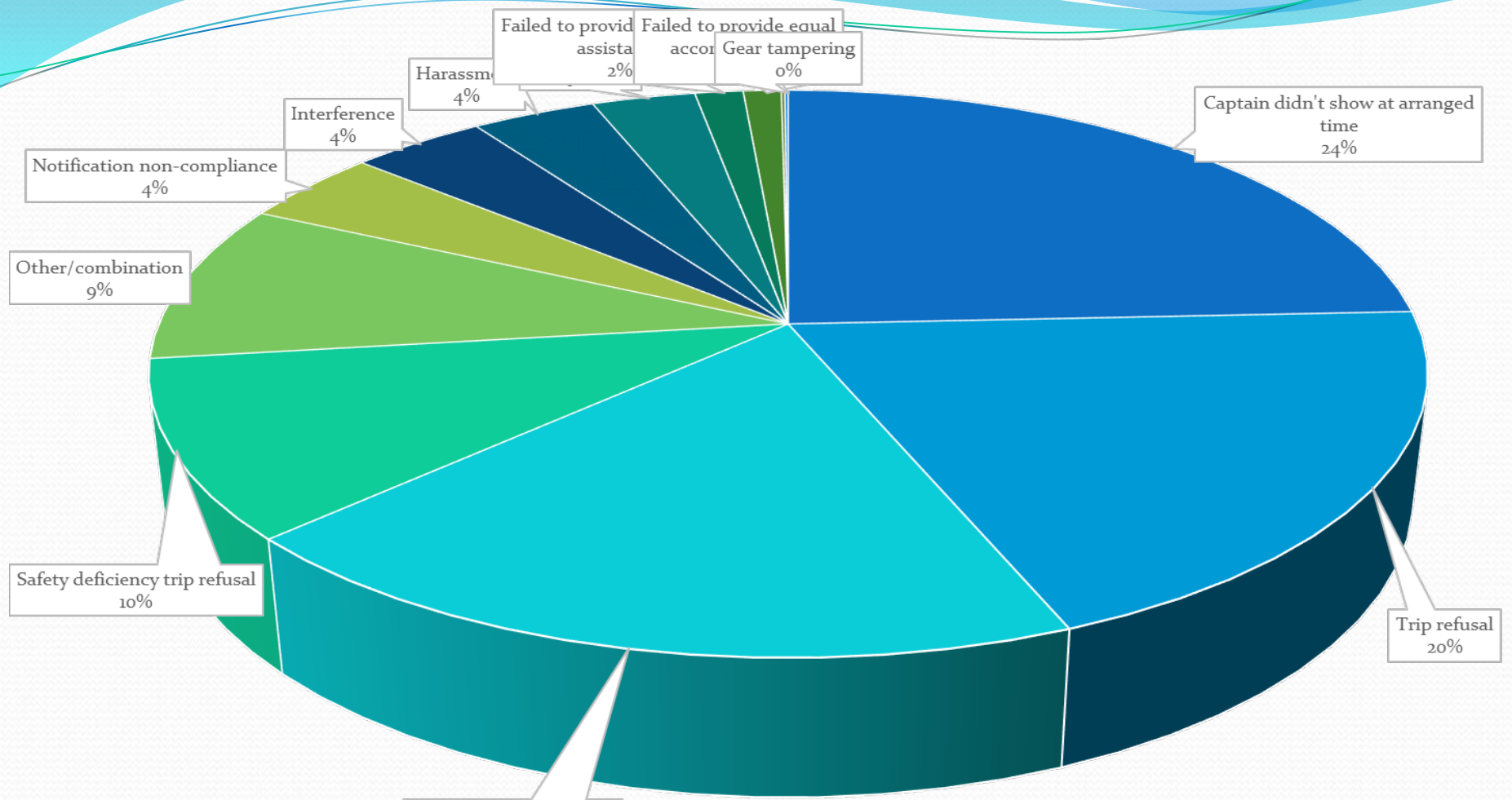
- NEFSC working closely with the observer provider & area coordinators
- New provider contract in place, April 2018
- Establishment of a Mid-Atlantic Lead in Sandy Hook, NJ – Ken Keene
- More effective outreach efforts and compliance assistance (examples of outreach sheets in binder)
- Achieving 2018 SBRM seadays continues to be challenging

# Contributors to Unaccomplished Seadays

- Industry's tolerance with taking an observer is strained
- Reduction in observer availability – Difficult to retain observers under the strained conditions
- Inherent delays in getting final schedule/award of contract (budget, contract protest & legal review)



# The Sum of Incidents Reported By Observers, Jan 2015-May 2018



	Sum (3.4 yrs)	CY 2015	CY 2016	CY 2017	2018 (Jan-May)
Total incidents reported	968	221	155	409	183
Number of trips	15,720	4,179	4,618	5,366	1,557
Percentages of trips encountering problems	6.16%	5.29%	3.36%	7.62%	11.75%

# Would a Pre-Trip Notification (PTNS) requirement help?

- **Would address one of the largest issues contributing to under accomplishment of seadays**
- Selection would be a formal documented process
- Dock intercept process would no longer be necessary
- May be a less biased mode of selection
- May be less expensive, would not have to pay observers/providers to roam at the docks
- Could be perceived as more fair by the industry to have a standard notification for all federally permitted vessels



# Evaluation of an alternative means of vessel selection

- Management fix may be needed in how we are selecting vessels for coverage
- To better assign observers
- Fisheries Dependent Data Visioning should include this trip start process
- The suitability & flexibility of a pre-trip notification systems needs to be considered for each fishery and vessel type

# 2018-2019 SBRM Seaday Schedule

- 10,568 observed days are required
  - 1,137 fewer days than last year
  - Of that, 7,519 days are needed for agency-funded fleets and
  - 3,049 days are needed for the industry funded scallop fleets
- Fleets with notable changes in coverage requirements this year, in the Mid-Atlantic:
  - Large-mesh gillnet (-781 days) (new turtle analysis)
  - Extra-large-mesh gillnet (-733 days) (new turtle analysis)
  - Small-mesh otter trawl (+289 days)
  - Large-mesh otter trawl (-351 days)
- State-specific information sheets in binder



# Industry Funded Scallop Targets in 2018

- The SBRM is met/exceeded by the IFS set asides.
- 1% Set Aside, of the Total Acceptable Biological catch/annual catch limit
- Compensation rates for Limited Access vessels are 225 lbs/Day At Sea for Access Area Trips, and 0.12 per Day At Sea in open areas.
- Coverage Targets:
- 20% for Georges Bank open area, 5% for mid-Atlantic open area, 9.5% for the MAAA, 10% for the NLAA-W, and 15% for the NLAA-S and CAIAA. Additionally, LAGC IFQ coverage rates at 6.8% for open areas, 5% for the MAAA and NLAA-W, and 7.5% for the NLAA-S and CAIAA.



# Funding For the 2018 SBRM

- Sufficient to not trigger the prioritization approach
- Total of 12,354 observer sea days funded
- Agency funded (8,253 sea days)
  - Funds for SBRM (7,681 days)
    - Atlantic Coast Observers
    - Northeast Fisheries Observer
    - National Observer Program
    - Reducing Bycatch
  - Funds not for SBRM - Protected species
    - Marine Mammal Protection Act (572 days)
- ~3,000 seadays carried over into this year
- Industry funded scallop program (4,101 days)

# Seaday Needs for Loggerhead Turtles

Fleets	2017	2018
Mid-Atlantic Otter trawl fleets; Mid-Atlantic Scallop trawl fleets; Mid-Atlantic Ruhle trawl fleet	3,309	3,309
Mid-Atlantic Gillnet fleets	2,593	887

# Seaday Needs for Non-Loggerhead Species

- Sea day coverage for Kemp's ridley and leatherback turtles were not allocated in 2018 due to low encounter rate of these species
- A “rarity filter” removes these species from sea day allocations if there is <50% probability of observing  $\geq 5$  turtles over 800 trips in a year



# Lobster Sampling Frame

- SBRM framework action is not yet final
- If the framework action is approved
  - Expand the sampling pool of lobster boats from not just the vessels required to submit VTR's to all Federal permits
  - Result in more vessels sharing the requirement to take an observer, and less of a burden on specific vessels
  - This would not affect the overall number of seadays needed in the lobster fleets
  - It would take effect at the start of a quarter following approval

# FY2018 Budget

- Still working through the final appropriations and process.
- Congress has directed NOAA to fully fund at sea monitoring.
- Provides funding to cover the full cost of the fishing year 2018 sea days.
- NOAA Fisheries must submit, and Congress must approve, a spend plan before funding can be made available.
- We expect to have final information on funding once the spend plan is approved.



# What you can read more about in SBRM Discard Report

- Erroneous Fleets – i.e. incorrect trips – resulting from VTR reporting errors of gear types, mesh size, or mismatches across datasets
- Importance Filters – to ensure coverage is not driven by imprecise estimates of small quantities
  - Removes seadays associated with fleets that:
    - Contribute the smallest fraction of discards, and
    - The smallest fraction of total mortality
- Refinement Approach – to integrate fish/invertebrates and sea turtles to derive seadays
- Practical Limitations – 5 fleets (floating trap, urchin dredge, etc.) – no sampling procedures in place
- Standardization of Mesh Size



# Website References

- <https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/fsb/>
- [https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/fsb/SBRM/2018/tm244\\_2018 Standardized Bycatch Reporting Allocation.pdf](https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/fsb/SBRM/2018/tm244_2018_Standardized_Bycatch_Reporting_Allocation.pdf)
- [https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/fsb/SBRM/2018/2018 nefop seaday schedule version1.pdf](https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/fsb/SBRM/2018/2018_nefop_seaday_schedule_version1.pdf)
- <https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/monitoring/atlanticseascallop.html>



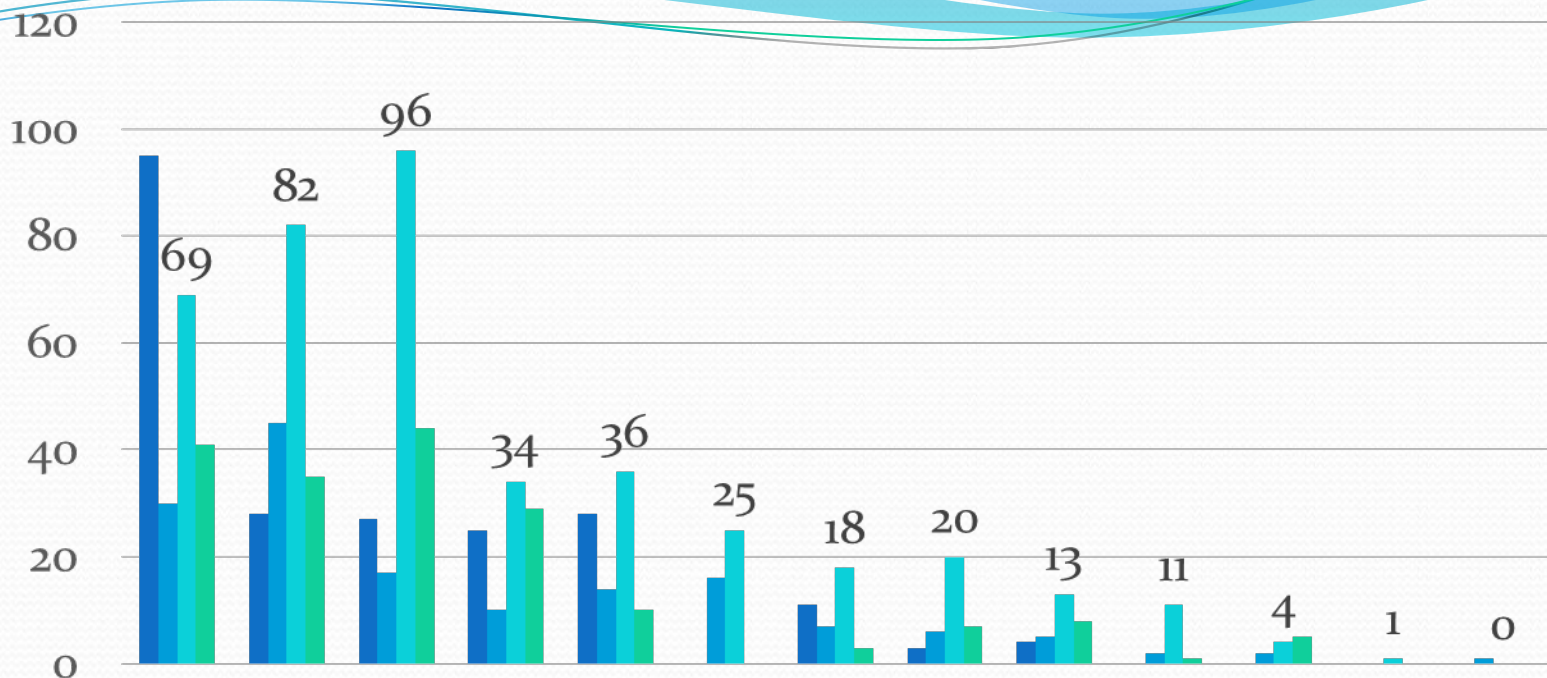
# Incidents Reported By Observers

(Not including injuries, vessel sinkings/collisions/groundings/flooding/stability issues)

Incident Type	Sum (3.4 yrs)	CY 2015	CY 2016	CY 2017	2018 (Jan- May))
Captain didn't show at arranged time	235	95	30	69	41
Trip refusal	190	28	45	82	35
Difficulty setting up trip	184	27	17	96	44
Safety deficiency trip refusal	98	25	10	34	29
Other/combination	88	28	14	36	10
Notification non-compliance	41	0	16	25	0
Interference	39	11	7	18	3
Harassment	36	3	6	20	7
Intimidation	30	4	5	13	8
Failed to provide reasonable assistance	14	0	2	11	1
Failed to provide equal accommodation	11	0	2	4	5
Assault	1	0	0	1	0
Gear tampering	1	0	1	0	0
Total incidents reported	968	221	155	409	183
Number of trips	15,720	4,179	4,618	5,366	1,557
Percentages of trips encountering problems	6.16%	5.29%	3.36%	7.62%	11.75%



# Incidents Reported By Observers, Calendar Year 2015-2018



■ 2015  
 ■ 2016  
 ■ 2017  
 ■ 2018 (5 months only)

# FY 2018 Observer Funding– Detail

PPA/Detail funding (\$ in thousands)*	FY 2017 Spend Plan	FY 2018 Enacted	Proportion to the NEFSC
<b>Observers and Training (PPA)</b>	<b>\$43,655</b>	<b>\$53,955</b>	<b>24,192</b>
<i>Atlantic Coast Observers</i>	3,585	3,585	44.2%
<i>East Coast Observers</i>	358	358	-
<i>Hawaii Longline Observer Program</i>	4,216	4,216	-
<i>N. Pacific Marine Resources Observers</i>	5,987	5,987	-
<i>Northeast Fisheries Observers</i>	8,838	19,138**	100%
<i>National Observer Program</i>	12,970	12,970	26%
<i>S. Atlantic/Gulf Shrimp Observers</i>	1,881	1,881	-
<i>West Coast Observers</i>	5,165	5,165	-
<i>Reducing Bycatch - Observers</i>	655	655	14.9%

\*Funding represents enacted levels, not final allocation amount to FMCs.

\*\* \$10.3 million increase in FY18 Omnibus for “Observers - At Sea Monitoring Program / Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology”



# What is still a challenge

- Opportunistic vessel selection at the dock
  - Fleets with coverage that amount  $>25\%$  & are outside of a call-in system become difficult
- Positive incentives for taking observers
- Convincing industry that observer data are indeed pivotal to making balanced management decisions
  - Legitimacy and support for the program
  - Find ways to collaborate and be more involved
  - Build public value