



TC task: lobster information for the northern edge of Georges Bank



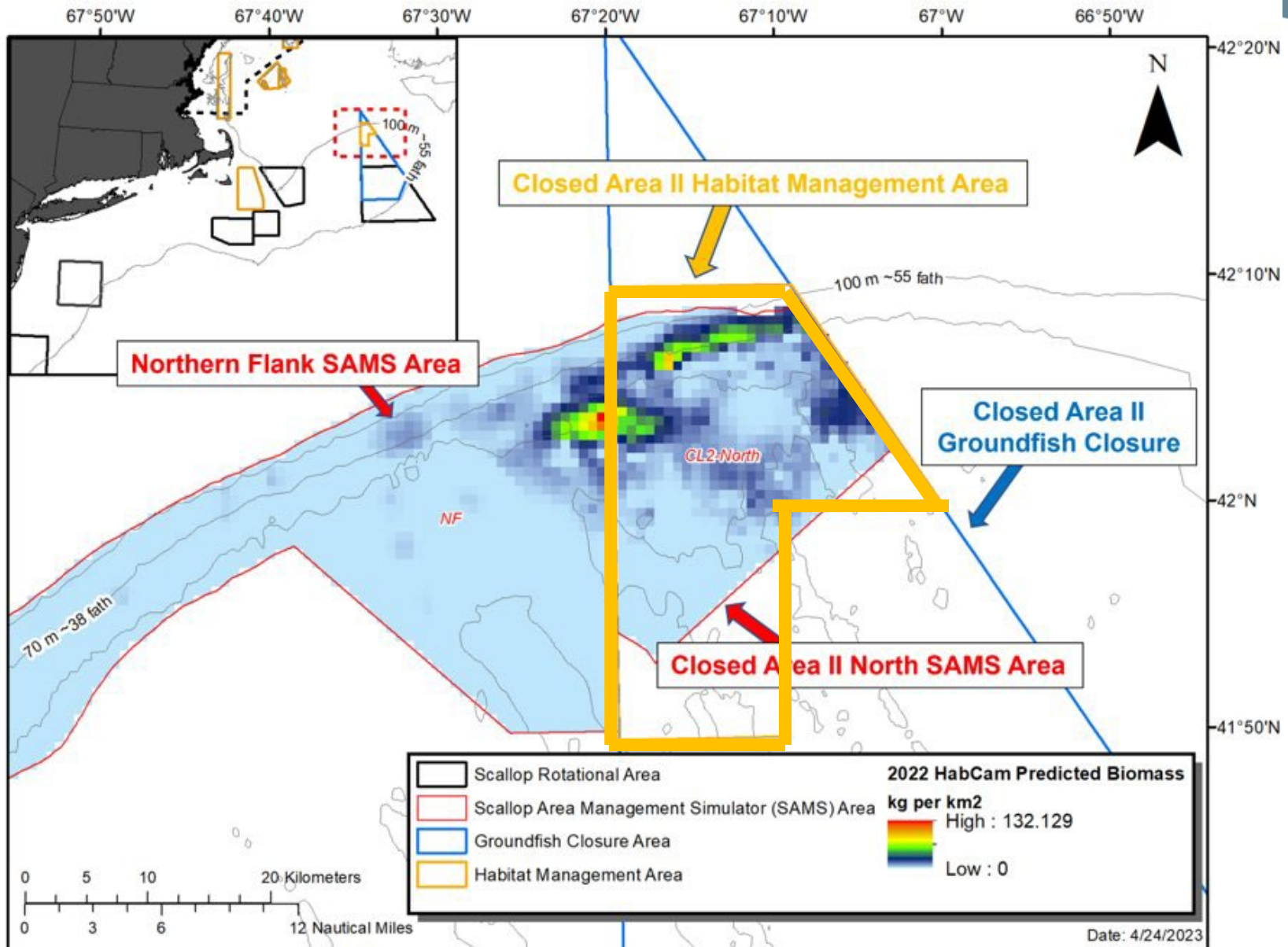
American Lobster Management Board
January 23, 2024

Background



- New England Fisheries Management Council potential action
 - Considering scallop access to a portion of closed Area II
 - Specific area of interest is within a currently closed Habitat Management Area

HMA - Area of Interest



Background



- New England Fisheries Management Council potential action
 - Considering scallop access to a portion of closed Area II
 - Specific area of interest is within a currently closed Habitat Management Area
- Characterize potential impacts that allowing scallop access to the area might have on lobster resource and fishery

Task – topics to address



- Information on the presence and abundance of lobsters, including ovigerous lobsters, in and around the Northern Edge by month/season
- Lobster fishery effort in and around the Northern Edge by month/season
- Potential impacts of mobile gear on the lobster population in this area
- Information on the habitat type and depth preference of lobsters which could inform our understanding of lobsters on the Northern Edge if there are limitations in the data
- Whether current reporting by Area 3 vessels is representative, or an underestimate, of lobster effort in the Northern Edge area and how future requirements will impact the data availability

Data available



- Data *within* the Habitat Management Area (HMA)
 - Harvester reported data = VTRs
 - Limited tracker data (MA only)
 - Potential Federal observer data (most recent is 2015)
 - Potential Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF) Study Fleet data
 - Potential tagging study data (AOLA, NHFG, MEDMR)
 - Limited NEFSC spring & fall trawl survey locations

Data available

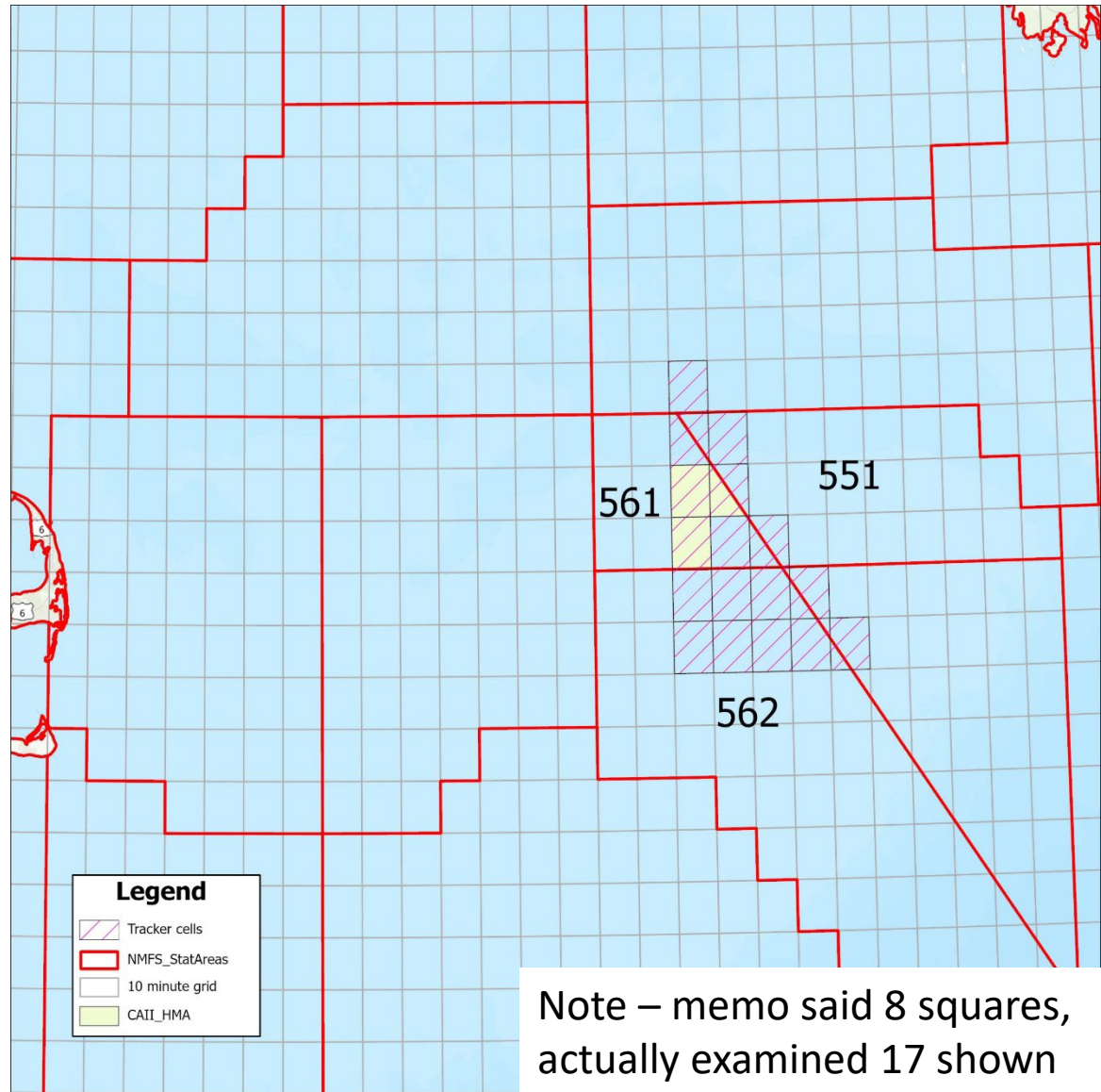


- Data *near* the HMA
 - Everything mentioned previously
 - Coonamessett Farm Foundation seasonal scallop bycatch survey

Preliminary results



- Preliminary analysis of MA tracker data indicates effort is present in or near the HMA (May 2023 – Jan 2024)
 - At least 5 vessels, 34 trips
 - MA boats only represent ~10% of effort in the area based on preliminary VTR examination



Preliminary results



- Previous work indicates that lobsters in this region tend to be very large, and sex ratio tends to be female-skewed
 - Prior tasks looking into impacts of opening Closed Area II to mobile gear (2015 TC memo)
- Lobsters retained in scallop dredges are vulnerable to significant damage (Garcia et al 2017)
 - 34% of 783 observed lobsters had lethal damage
 - 27% had moderate (sublethal) damage
- Damage to lobsters from scallop or other mobile gear is worse for recently molted lobsters (2015 TC memo, Addendum XX & appendices)
 - Seasonality of interaction is important
- Higher bycatch in the scallop surveys near the HMA occurred during summer & fall (Garcia et al 2017)
 - Primarily females

Is reporting sufficient?



- Limitations to VTR data
 - Nearly all vessels active in the region have been reporting VTRs since 2013
 - Single Lat/Long reported instead of coordinates per trawl
 - Confidentiality challenges
- Implementation of Federal eVTRs (April 1 2024) will improve coverage & possibly data quality
- Implementation of trackers on federally permitted vessels will be a big improvement
 - Confidentiality challenges likely will remain

Next steps



- Examine seasonal catch and effort in the vicinity
 - Harvester reporting data (VTRs) for recent years available at 10 minute square level
 - Requires data request from NMFS to capture seasonality & spatial resolution
 - Likely some confidentiality issues
- Size composition and sex ratio for lobsters in the vicinity
 - CFRF study fleet data, Federal observer data, NEFSC trawl survey
 - Some information likely available from Coonamessett Farm Foundation bycatch survey
 - Requires data requests

Timing considerations



- Data requests to NMFS & Coonamessett Farm Foundation
 - Turn around time ??
- Upcoming stock assessment data workshops
 - Feb 15, 26-27
- NEFMC meeting in April – ideally we could provide some input in time for this meeting



Questions?



Jonah Crab Technical Committee Report



American Lobster Management Board
23 January 2024

Outline



- Background
 - Stock assessment overview
- Review of Board tasks
 - Canada fishery research
 - Jonah crab stock indicators
 - Management measures
 - Monitoring recommendations
- Advisory Panel meeting review

Stock Assessment

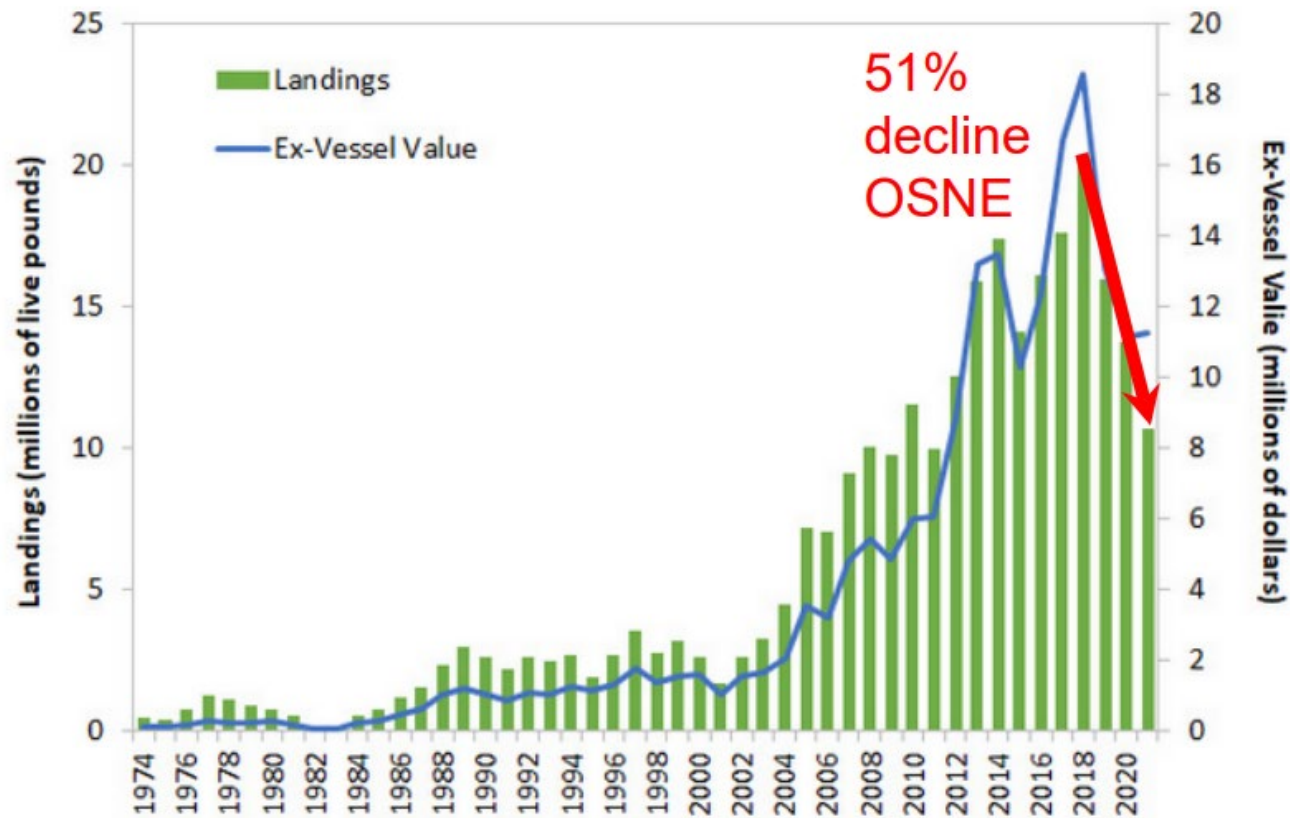


- First Benchmark Assessment: October 2023
- Four stocks: OGOM, IGOM, OSNE, ISNE
- Abundance is above historical lows for GOM and OSNE; status unknown for ISNE
- Fishing mortality rates unknown
- Given data limitations, stock status remains uncertain

Stock Assessment



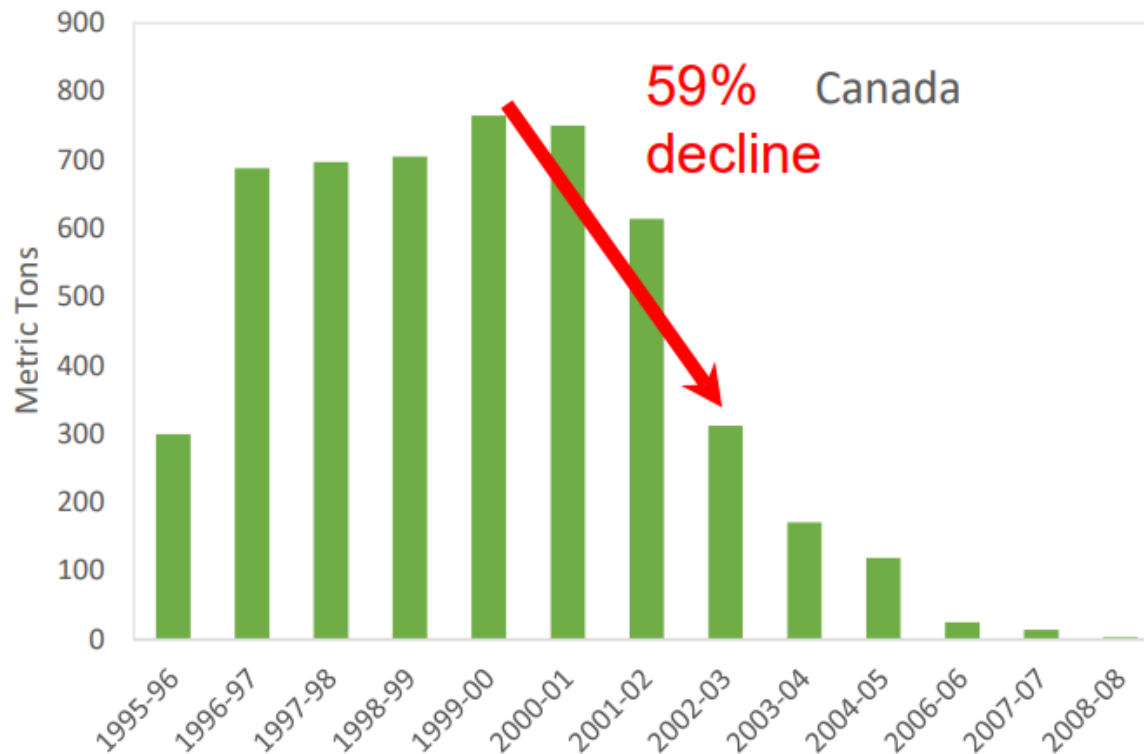
- Landings declined in OSNE 2019-2021



Stock Assessment



- Peer review panel voiced concerns for similarity to Canada's LFA 41 Jonah crab fishery



Technical Committee Tasks



- 1) Gather current information on management and stock conditions for Canadian stock
- 2) Recommend additional indicators from existing data to monitor the stocks
- 3) Recommend frequency of indicator updates
- 4) Recommend potential management measures
- 5) Provide recommendations to improve monitoring in the short term

Technical Committee Tasks



- TC Meetings on November 16 and January 2
- Advisory Panel meeting December 14

Canadian Fishery Analysis



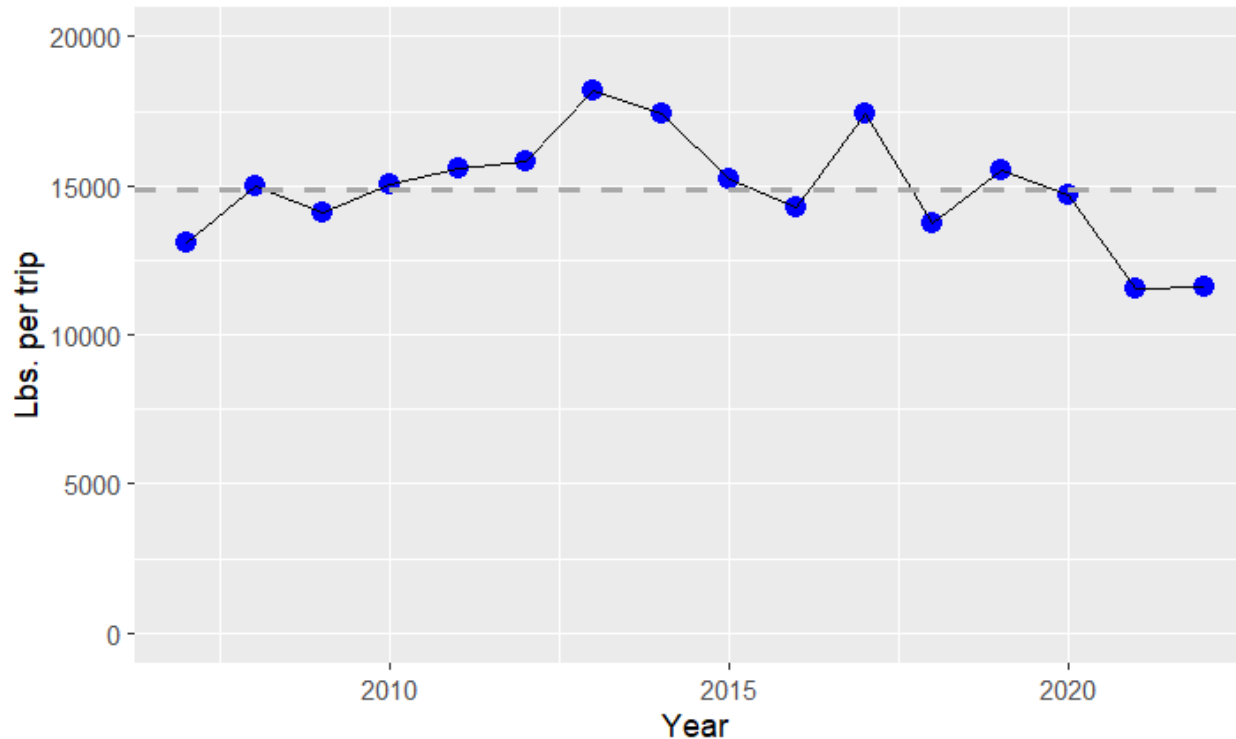
- Last assessment was in 2009, with no ongoing monitoring or assessment
- Sole license holder with several boats
- Fishery largely inactive since 2009

Year	Prohibition of Females?	Min. Carapace Width	Season	Catch Limit
1995-2005	Yes	130 mm	October 16 - October 15	720 t
2006-2009	Yes	130 mm	January 1 - December 31	720 t
2010-2016	Yes	130 mm	January 1 - December 31	540 t
2017-2023	Yes	130 mm	January 1 - December 31	270 t

CPUE Indicators



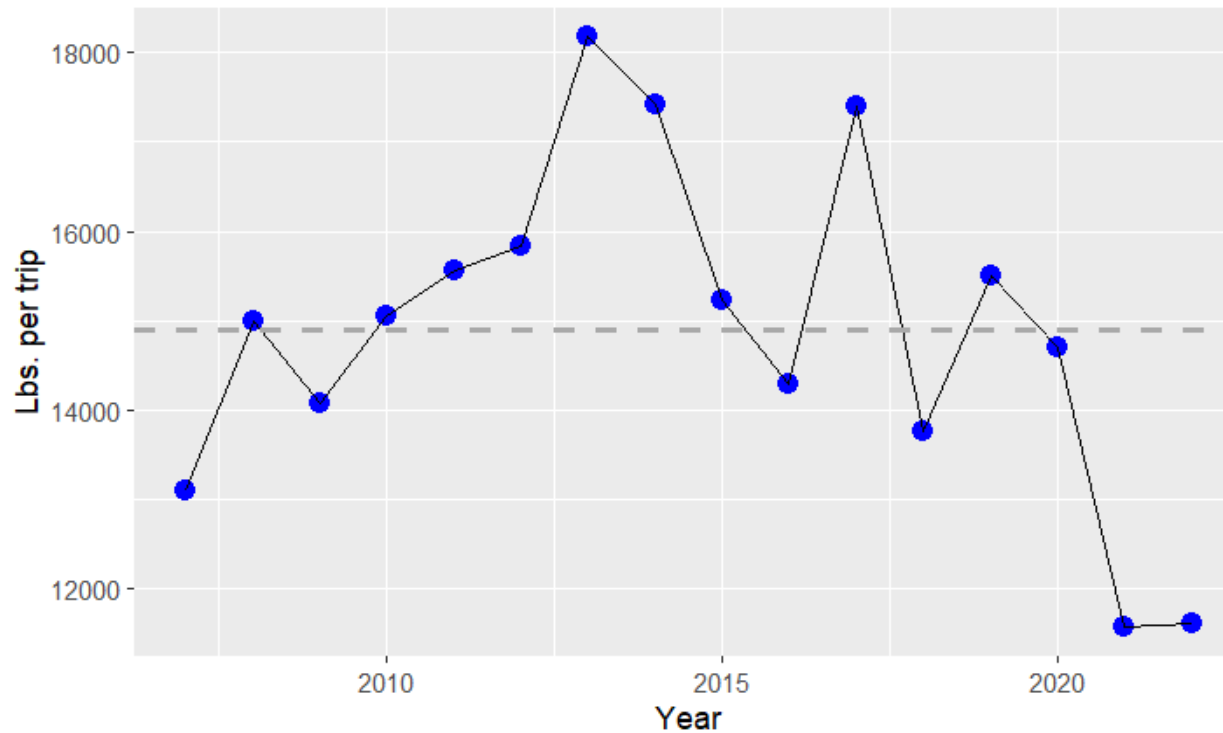
Rhode Island fishery-dependent CPUE: OSNE highliner vessels



CPUE Indicators



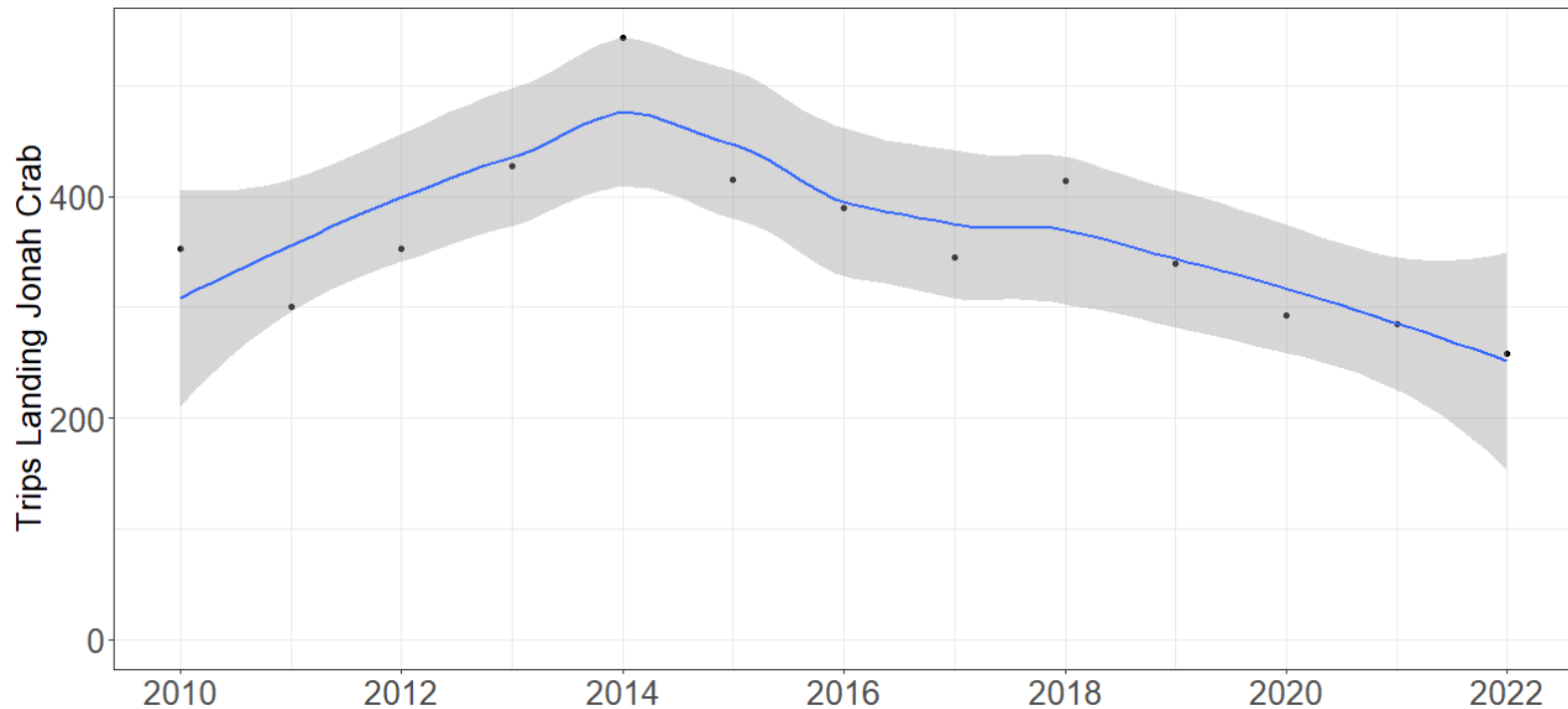
Rhode Island fishery-dependent CPUE: OSNE highliner vessels



CPUE Indicators



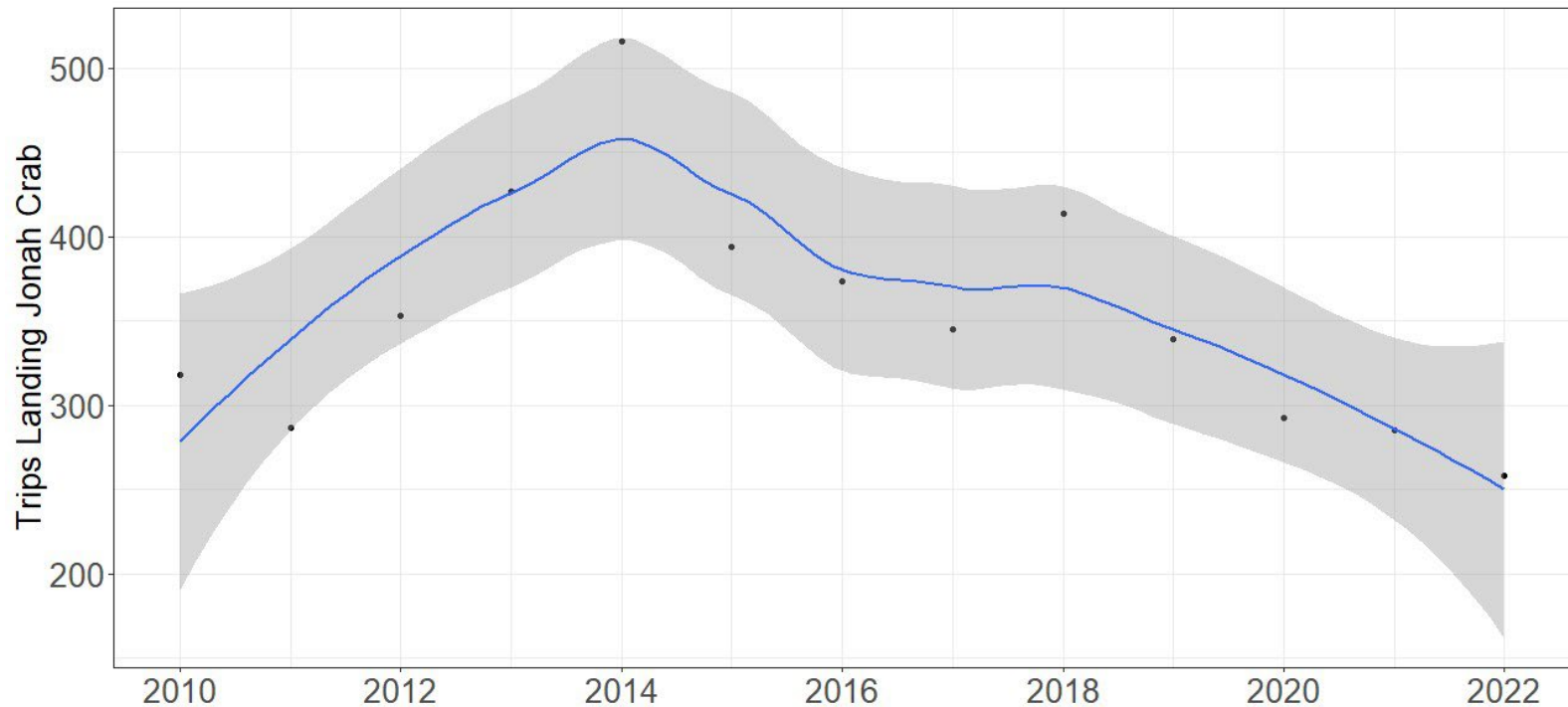
Massachusetts OSNE trips landing Jonah crab (SA 526 and offshore 537)



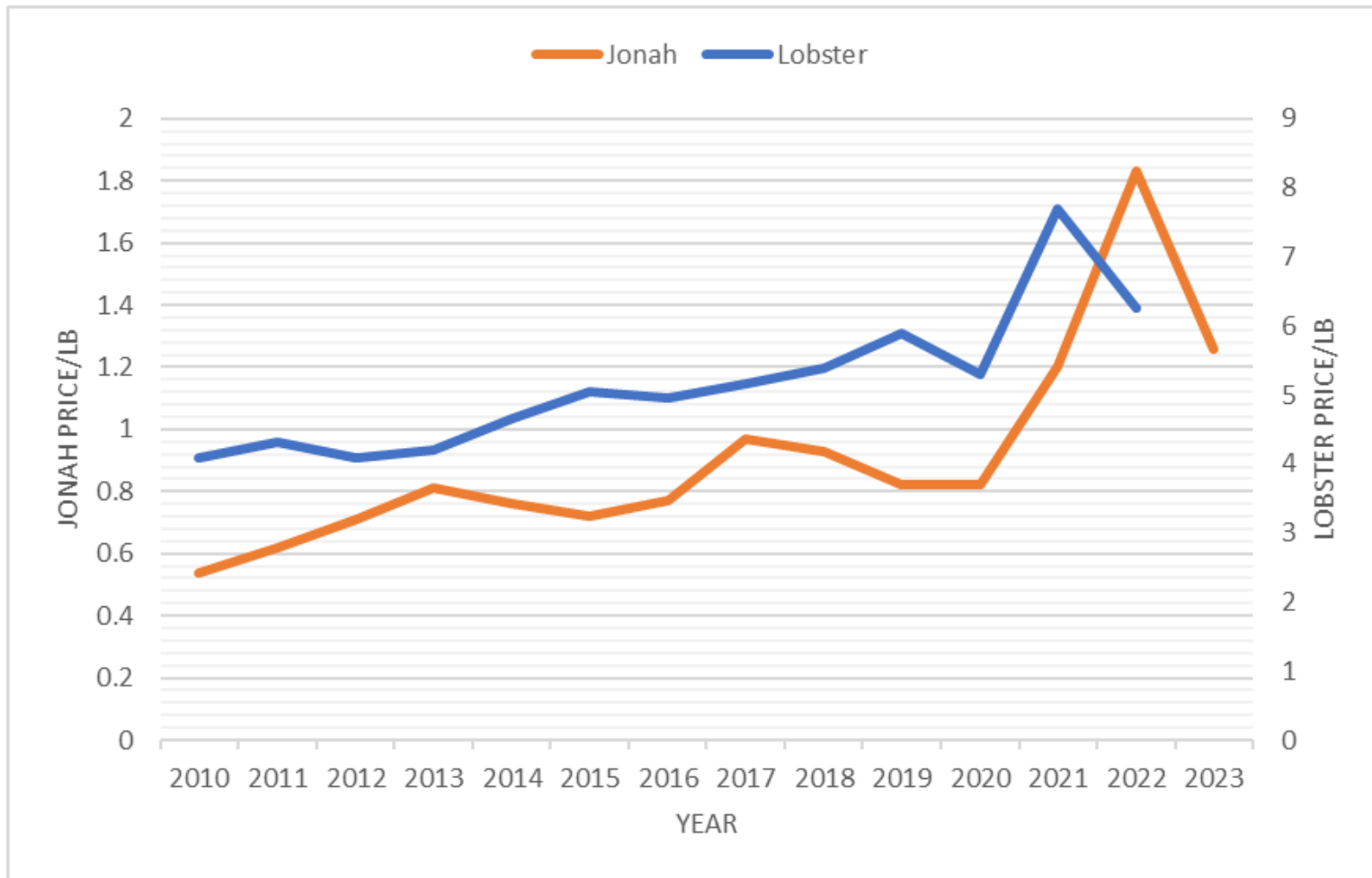
CPUE Indicators



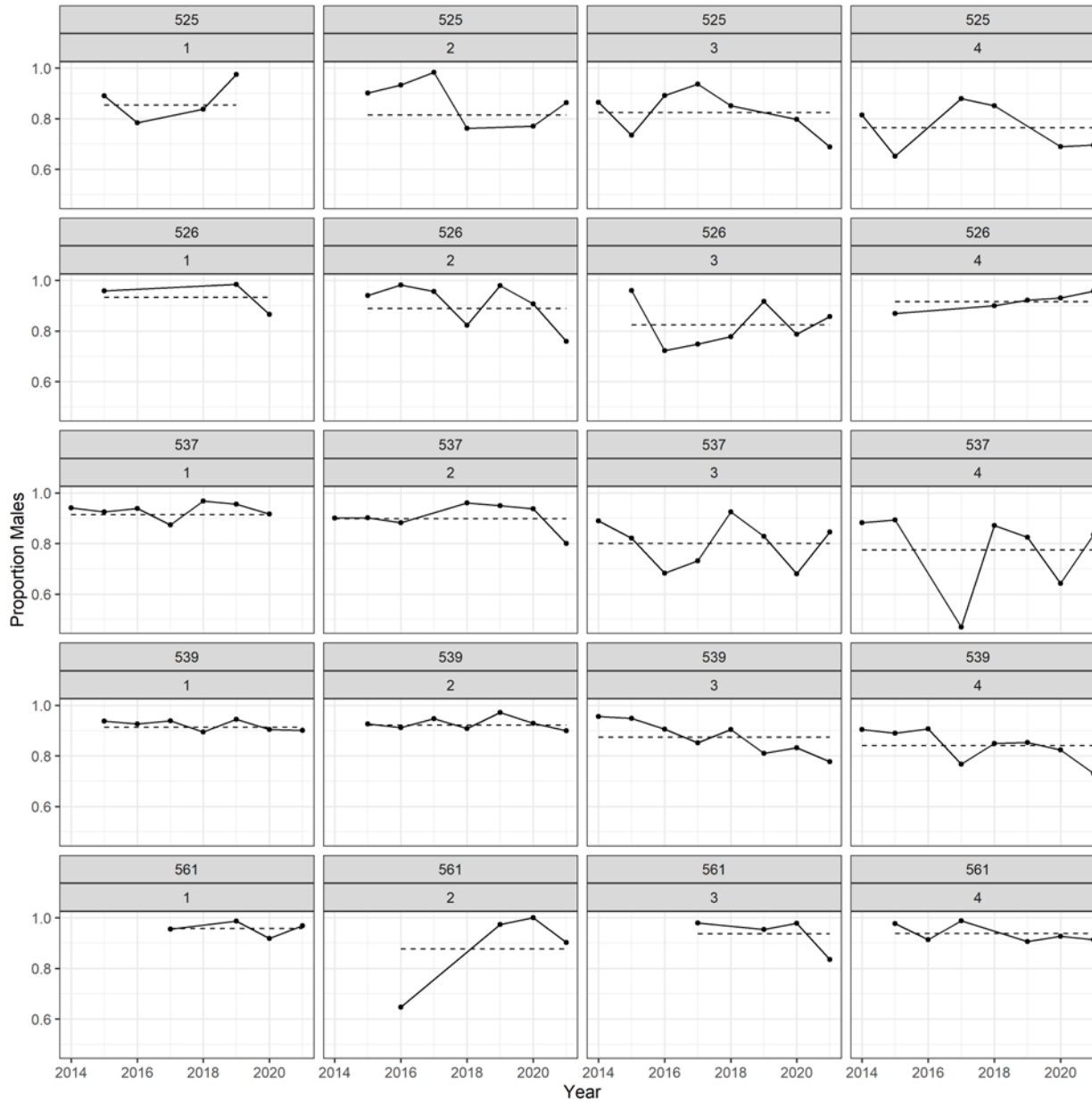
Massachusetts OSNE trips landing Jonah crab (SA 526 and offshore 537)



Price Indicators



Sex Ratios



Length-based Indicators



- Reviewed several indicators during assessment which were not recommended for use
- Additionally, the TC examined 5% smallest crabs in port samples, to indicate market-driven changes in selectivity
- Data are too sparse to discern trends: not recommended for use as indicators

Indicator Update Recommendations



- Add to indicator list:
 - Rhode Island and Massachusetts CPUE data
 - Price data for Jonah crab and lobster
- Update Offshore SNE FD indicators annually
 - Update FI trawl survey indicators biannually due to workload constraints
- Update Inshore SNE and GOM stock indicators every 5 years
- Involve Advisory Panel in update process
 - Include dealer representation
- Provide updates during Annual Meeting



Jonah Crab Advisory Panel

Advisory Panel Meeting



- AP met December 14; four advisors attended
- Discussed stock assessment and economic factors affecting the fishery
 - Indicators from existing data that would be informative of stock or market conditions
 - Data that can be used to identify trip target
 - Why landings have been trending down since the late 2010s, despite high prices
 - What drives CPUE

Advisory Panel Comments



- Decline in landings related to fleet of vessels leaving the fishery, and wind energy development
 - Decrease in catch during acoustic surveys
- Prices driven by Canadian snow crab and processors
 - Fewer processors in New England now
 - Processors place catch limits on boats
- CPUE mostly driven by market factors
 - Price/availability of other crab species
 - Intentional selectivity to catch larger crabs
 - Target species may change on multi-day trips

Technical Committee Tasks



- 1) Gather current information on management and stock conditions for Canadian stock
- 2) Recommend additional indicators from existing data to monitor the stocks
- 3) Recommend frequency of indicator updates
- 4) Recommend potential management measures
- 5) Provide recommendations to improve monitoring in the short term

Potential Management Measures



- TC considered several management measures: seasonal closures, effort controls, circular vent size changes, and legal minimum size changes
- Identifying cause of a population change is necessary to selecting management measures
 - Sperm limitation: seasonal closures, effort controls
 - Increased mortality due to environmental conditions: increase minimum size, modify circular vents
- At this time, TC does not believe management action is necessary
 - Biological condition of stocks uncertain
 - Price decreases, effort reduction, decrease in demand

Monitoring Recommendations



TC recommends maintaining high priority items from the stock assessment:

- 1) Inter-molt duration and growth increment data, particularly for offshore SNE
- 2) Video surveys for estimates of stock size to understand exploitation levels
- 3) Research of recruitment dynamics, including settlement dynamics and source of recruitment to OSNE
- 4) Ecosystem/environmental drivers of population dynamics
- 5) Interpretation of fishery-dependent data; interactions between fishery response to abundance, economic drivers, and lobster fishery dynamics



Questions?



Implications of 2025 Minimum Gauge Size Change (Addendum XXVII)



American Lobster Management Board
January 2024

Background



- Addendum XXVII established a trigger mechanism to implement a series of gauge and vent size changes when a trigger is reached
- Trigger = 35% decline in the trigger index from the reference period (2016-2018)
 - Trigger index declined by 39% with inclusion of 2022 data
- Board delayed implementation of Addendum XXVII measures to January 1, 2025

Addendum XXVII Measures



Changes to Management Measures Initiated When 35% Trigger Level is Reached

Area	LCMA 1	LCMA 3	OCC
Current Measures (Year 0)	Min gauge: 3 ¼" Max gauge: 5" Vent size: status quo	Min gauge: 3 ¹⁷ / ₃₂ " Max gauge: 6 ¾" Vent size: status quo	Min gauge: 3 ⅜" Max gauge: 6 ¾" Vent size: status quo
Measures for Year 1 (Jan 1, 2025)	Min gauge size: 3 ⁵ / ₁₆ " (84 mm)	Status quo	Status quo
Measures for Year 3 (Jan 1, 2027)	Min gauge size: 3 ⅜" (86 mm)	Status quo	Status quo
Measures for Year 4 (Jan 1, 2028)	Vent size: 2 x 5 ³ / ₄ " rectangular; 2 ⁵ / ₈ " circular	Status quo	Status quo
Measures for Year 5 (Jan 1, 2029)	Status quo	Max gauge size: 6 ½"	Max gauge size: 6 ½"

Recommendation to NOAA



- The Commission makes recommendations to NOAA Fisheries for implementation of measures in federal waters
- Magnuson-Stevens prohibits import/sale of lobsters smaller than the minimum possession size in effect under the Commission FMP (Mitchell Provision)
 - Two interpretations of how the live market size limit changes might be considered
 - Without clear direction, could result in a patchwork of regulations

Recommendation to NOAA



Two Interpretations:

- Imports from other countries restricted to the smallest LCMA min size, $3 \frac{5}{16}$ inch
 - Minimum size of live lobster coming into the US could not be any smaller than any LCMA effective size limit
- Imports from other countries restricted to coastwide min size, $3 \frac{1}{4}$ inch
 - Coastwide minimum size is the size limit no LCMA may go below- not an active size limit for any specific LCMA
 - After Jan 1, 2025 no LCMA will have an active min size that matches the coastwide min

Past LEC Discussion



- Imports of American lobster under the minimum gauge size in effect in the US would create additional challenges for enforcement
 - Could create market opportunities for illegal US lobster catch below the minimum gauge size
 - Can enforce different min size at the border, but once lobsters are at dealers they are usually comingled
 - Could require special permits and requirements for dealers to possess lobster below US min size

Board Discussion



- Clarify the Board's intent for foreign imports size limit



Questions?

Overview of Draft Addenda XXI and XXII

January 10, 2024



Background



- In December 2011, the American Lobster Board initiated development of a series of addenda to respond to the depleted stock condition in the Southern New England (SNE) stock by scaling the size of the fishery to the size of the resource
 - Stock Status: overfished but not experiencing overfishing



Background



- Addendum XXI (August 2013)
 - Transferability measures for LCMA 2 and 3
- Addendum XXII (October 2013)
 - LCMA 3 maximum trap and permit caps
- Changes intended to allow for flexibility in the movement of traps while the consolidation program for LCMA 2 and 3 to address latent effort was implemented



Addendum XXI (August 2013)



- LCMA 2
 - Transfers of a Multi-LCMA Trap Allocation
 - The recipient retains the multi-LMCA history & for each fishing year must declare which area(s) will be fished
 - Single Ownership Trap Cap
 - Max 1600 traps can be owned (800 active, 800 banked)
 - Provision expired two years after the last trap reduction as specified in Addendum XVIII (2022) and cap returned to 800
 - Aggregate Ownership Cap
 - Two permits, 1600 maximum traps
 - Those with > 2 permits in December 2003 can retain their permits



Addendum XXI (August 2013)



- **LCMA 3**
 - Transfers of a Multi-LCMA Trap Allocation
 - The recipient retains the multi-LMCA history & for each fishing year must declare which area(s) will be fished
 - Active Trap Cap
 - 2000 traps, to be reduced by 5% per year for five years

Year	Area 3 Active Trap Cap
Year 0	2000
Year 1	1900
Year 2	1805
Year 3	1715
Year 4	1629
Year 5	1548



Addendum XXII (August 2013)



- Single and Aggregate Ownership Caps for LCMA 3
 - Single ownership cap: allowed for accumulation of traps over and above the active trap cap
 - This schedule assumed NOAA Fisheries would implement a 2,000 active trap cap

Year	Single Ownership Trap Cap
Year 0	2,333
Year 1	2,216
Year 2	2,105
Year 3	2,000
Year 4	1,900
Year 5	1,800



Addendum XXII (August 2013)



- Aggregate Ownership Cap for LCMA 3
 - Maximum of 5 times the single ownership cap
 - Based on 5 maximum permits per entity (Addendum IV)
 - Exempts those with more traps before the control date

Year	Aggregate Ownership Trap Cap
Year 0	11,665
Year 1	11,080
Year 2	10,525
Year 3	10,000
Year 4	9,500
Year 5	9,000



Addendum XXII (August 2013)



- Comparison of LCMA 3 Active Trap Caps (as specified under Addendum XXII) and the proposed Individual and Aggregate Permit Caps.

Year	Active Trap Cap	Individual Permit Cap	Aggregate Permit Cap (5x Individual Permit Cap)
Year 0	2,000	2,333	11,665
Year 1	1,900	2,216	11,080
Year 2	1,805	2,105	10,525
Year 3	1,715	2,000	10,000
Year 4	1,629	1,900	9,500
Year 5	1,548	1,800	9,000





Public Input Meeting

January 10, 2024

Public Input Meeting



LCMA 2 Stakeholder Input

- Change sunset date of May 1, 2022 to a future date (2024 to 2030)
 - Fishermen cannot plan for/respond to retrospective date
- Do not support the maximum ownership cap of 800 traps
 - Want to maintain 2 permits with 800 traps each
 - Offers more flexibility and allows families to keep their traps
 - Fishery is different today: increases in cost, whale regulations, wind development, Jonah crab fishery



Public Input Meeting



LCMA 3 Stakeholder Input

- Offshore fleet does not support trap cap reductions and ownership caps
 - Consolidation has already occurred and it would disadvantage larger fleets
- These measures will not reduce traps, just spread them out
- Measures will not have a biological benefit
- Changes to the fishery
 - No longer majority owner/operator
 - Increased business costs, marine mammal protection rules, wind farms, increase in Jonah crab fishery



Public Input Meeting



LCMA 3 Stakeholder Input

- One attendee disagreed
 - Trap caps would make fleet more efficient
 - Reduce fishing pressure on lobster stock
 - Bottom area is decreasing in SNE but traps are not
 - Trap reductions are included in risk reductions for whales
 - Believes more closed areas will open, displacing lobster gear





Questions?



NOAA
FISHERIES

Allison Murphy
Sustainable Fisheries Division
Greater Atlantic Regional
Fisheries Office

Summary of Federal Area 2 & 3 Rulemaking

American Lobster Management Board
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Winter Meeting

23 January 2024

Summary

- Interim final rule similar to what was recommended by ASMFC
- 10+ years have passed
- If measures no longer relevant in current context of fishing, Lobster Board can make recommendation

Terminology Changes

ASMFC Addenda	NMFS Rule
Aggregate Permit Cap	Aggregate Ownership Cap
Individual Permit Cap, Single Ownership Trap Cap	Ownership Cap
Active Trap Cap	Maximum Trap Cap
Entity	Person

Note on Banking

- Addenda XXI and XXII ‘banking’
 - Area 2 single ownership trap cap and
 - Area 3 individual permit cap
- Would have allowed more traps than the area maximum trap cap to be associated with a permit
- If owned before May 1, 2022, ‘banking’ on a second vessel/skiff still allowed.

Area 2 Ownership Cap (Addendum XXI)

- Ownership cap of 800 traps/person
- Those over cap as of May 1, 2022 allowed to retain traps, but can not acquire additional traps
- Will implement on May 1, 2025

- **DIFFERENCE:** single ownership cap or trap 'banking' not considered

Ownership Cap Example

Person Name	Corporation Name	Vessel Name(s)	Area 2 Allocation(s)	Cap
Paul McCartney	Band on the Run, LLC	Quarrymen, Beatles, Wings	800, 550, 200	1,550
Linda McCartney	Band on the Run, LLC	Quarrymen, Beatles, Wings	800, 550, 200	1,550
Stella McCartney	Band on the Run, LLC	Quarrymen, Beatles, Wings	800, 550, 200	1,550
George Harrison	n/a; Things Pass, LLC	Mind Set, Handle with Care	300, 780	1,080
Ringo Starr	n/a	Yellow Submarine	625	800

Area 2 Ownership Cap Impacts

- Minimal impacts, caps the fishery as it exists
- 24 people who are capped in excess of 800 traps, some have overlapping ownership interest in permits
- 1 person acquired additional traps after the May 1, 2022 marker, would lose those traps

Area 3 Maximum Trap Cap Reductions (Addenda XXI and XXII)

- Maximum trap cap reductions from 1,945 traps to 1,548 traps, over 3 years
- Assessed to each permit
- Will implemented in 2025

- **DIFFERENCE:** maximum trap cap reductions over 3 years, not 5 years

Area 3 Maximum Trap Cap Reduction Impacts

Year	Maximum Trap Cap	Permits Affected	Traps in excess of new limit
Current	1,945	0	0
Year 1: 2025	1,805	21	1,022
Year 2: 2026	1,629	37	6,159
Year 3: 2027	1,548	43	9,361
Totals		43	9,361

Area 3 Ownership Cap (Addenda XXI and XXII)

- Aggregate ownership cap 5 times the maximum trap cap in a given year
- Final aggregate ownership cap of 7,740 traps/person
- Those over cap as of May 1, 2022 allowed to retain traps, but can not acquire additional traps

Fishing Year	Maximum Trap Cap	Aggregate Ownership Cap
2023 (current limits)	1,945	n/a
2025	1,805	9,025
2026	1,629	8,145
2027	1,548	7,740

- **DIFFERENCE:** single ownership cap or trap 'banking' not considered

Area 3 Ownership Cap Impacts

- Minimal impacts, caps the fishery as it exists
- 2 people who are capped in excess of 7,740 traps

Questions and Resources

- Proposed rule:
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/07/11/2022-14596/fisheries-of-the-northeastern-united-states-atlantic-coastal-fisheries-cooperative-management-act>
- Interim final rule:
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/10/02/2023-21466/fisheries-of-the-northeastern-united-states-atlantic-coastal-fisheries-cooperative-management-act>
- Comments:
- <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NMFS-2022-0032/comments>

Vessel Tracking Devices



State	Implementation Date
Maine	Dec-23
New Hampshire	Jan-24
Massachusetts	May-23
Rhode Island	Apr-24
Connecticut	Jul-24
New York	May-24
New Jersey	Mar-24
Delaware	Mar-24
Maryland	Mar-24