



NOAA
FISHERIES

Office of
Sustainable
Fisheries

Implementing the Requirements of the Shark Conservation Act of 2010

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Spring Meeting

Karen Abrams
May 22, 2013

2010 Shark Conservation Act Overview:

- Signed into law on January 4, 2011.
- Amended the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act and the MSA to improve existing domestic and international shark conservation measures.
- Prohibits removal of shark fins at sea. Does not impose a universal prohibition on the possession or sale of shark fins after they have been landed.

Shark Conservation Act Implementation:

Through three separate rule-makings:

- Final rule for the Identification and Certification Procedures to Address Shark Conservation (78 FR 3338) – Effective January 16, 2013.
- Proposed rule to implement the provisions of the SCA “savings clause” for smoothhound sharks– In development.
- Proposed rule to implement the domestic provisions of the SCA - Published and accepting comments until June 17.

Proposed Rule to Implement Domestic 2010 SCA Provisions:

- Needed to bring U.S. federal domestic shark fisheries into compliance with some requirements of the Shark Conservation Act of 2010.
- Published May 2, 2013 and open for public comment until June 17, 2013.
- Comments can be submitted at Regulations.Gov
<http://www.regulations.gov/>

Key elements of the SCA proposed rule:

- Prohibits possession of shark fins aboard a fishing vessel, or landing, transferring, or receiving shark fins or carcasses, unless the shark fins are naturally attached to the corresponding shark carcasses.
- Clarifies that this rule does not apply to skates, rays, or individuals fishing for smoothhound sharks.
- Explains NMFS views on preemption of state laws.

Coordination with States:

- NMFS contacted all states with potentially conflicting shark finning laws before publication of the proposed rule.
- NMFS welcomes comments on ways to minimize conflicts between 2010 SCA and state laws.

Current Status and Public Comments:

- Proposed Rule under public comment through June 17, 2013
 - Comments can be submitted at Regulations.Gov
<http://www.regulations.gov/>



Thank you

Questions? Contact Karen Abrams or Kim Marshall



Recommended Revisions to the ISFMP Charter

May 2013



Recommended Changes

- **Description of the ASC role**
- **Description of the TC role**
- **Description of the Species SAS role**
- **Addition of the Artificial Reef Committee**
- **Additional member of the LEC**
- **HC Appointment timing**
- **Electronic Votes**



Discussion of Whelk Management



May 2013



Concern

- **Horseshoe Crab Board requested the Policy Board discuss whelk management**
- **Concern with the recent increase in catch and effort in the whelk fishery and the possible impacts of these trends on horseshoe crabs**

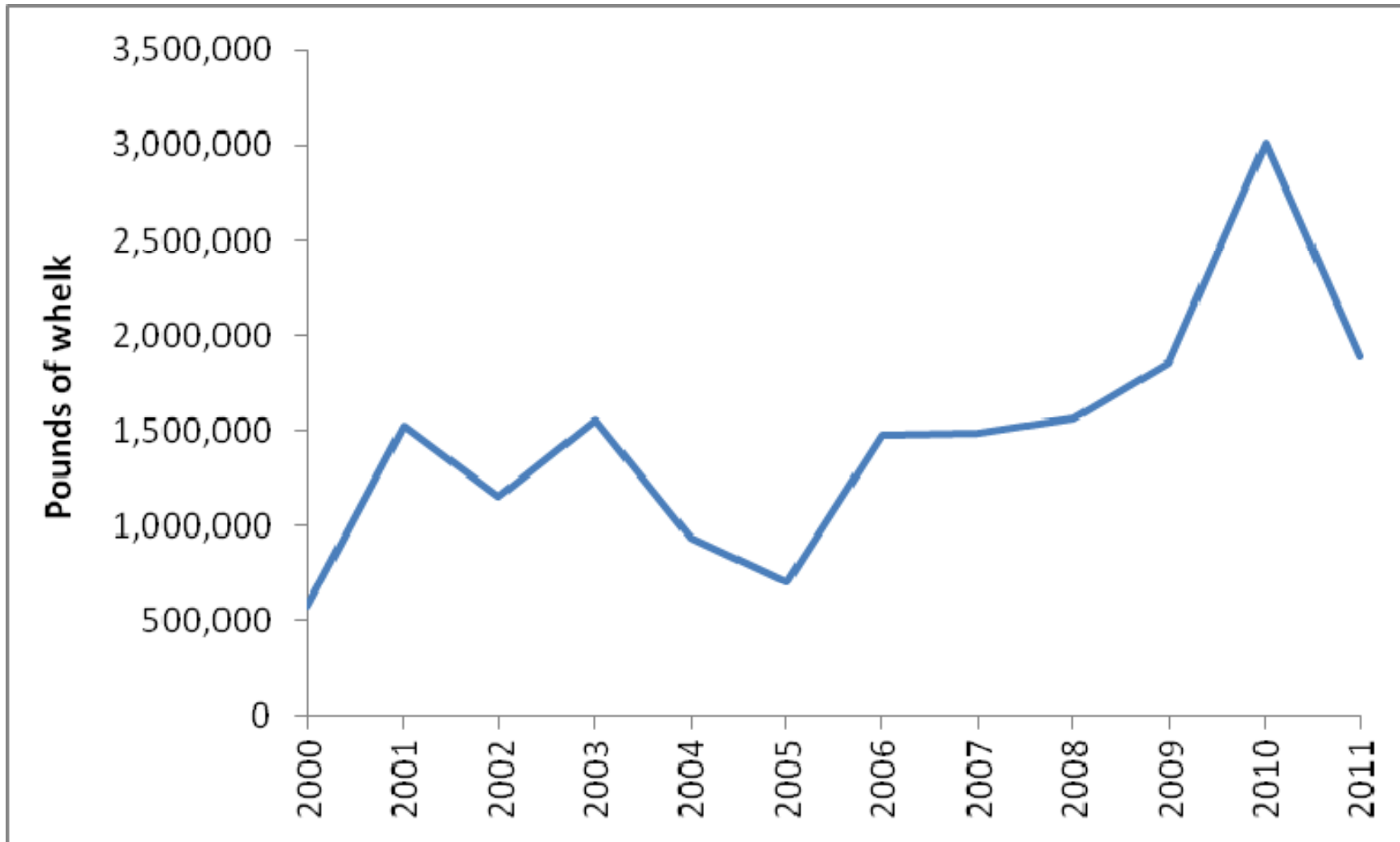


Life History

- **No planktonic life stage**
- **Movement is season for food and breeding**
 - **Limited movement**
- **Knobbed bury into the substrate for feeding**
- **Channeled scavenge when feeding**
- **Females are larger than males**
- **Size at maturity (GA, VA, and MA studies)**
 - **Females range from age 6 to 12**
 - **Males range from age 4 to 9**



Landings





Ex-Vessel Value in Millions of Dollars

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
\$2.7	\$5.8	\$4.1	\$4.9	\$6.3	\$6.4	\$8.7



State Regulations

- **Varying state regulations**
 - **Limits on participation, minimum shell size, gear requirements, harvest timing, and season and area closures**
- **Effectiveness of exploitation rate with effort controls may not be certain due to latency in states as well as a poor relationship between traps fished and hauled**
- **Effectiveness of biological measures is not certain because it is based on market not biological measures in some states**



Fishery Management

- **Likely there is little movement of whelk across multiple states**
- **Varying size and age at sexual maturity**
- **Therefore multistate management may not have a significant impact on the population as migratory species**
- **Uniform size limit may not be effective**
- **Recommend reporting requirements**



Artificial Reef Committee Request

May 2013





Background

- **MARAD changed their policy on vessels eligible for sinking for artificial reefs**
- **Vessels built prior to 1985 may not be sunk**
- **Change in policy was arbitrary, too restrictive , and limits states options for vessel use**
- **Vessels have been successfully remediated of all regulated PCBs**
- **Storied vessels attract divers and states see an economic benefits**



Committee Request

- **Send a letter requesting MARAD rescind the policy that does not allow pre-1985 vessels to be candidates for artificial reefs**
- **Allow all vessels slated for disposal and safe to transport to become candidate for artificial reef use**

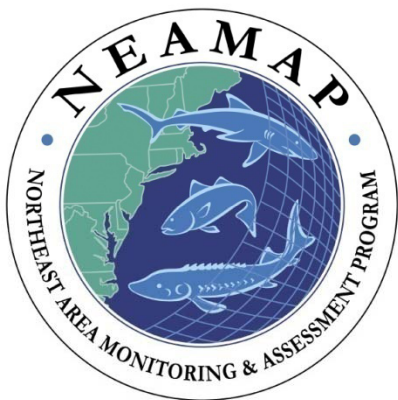


*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations
for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful
restoration well in progress by 2015*

NEAMAP Board Report

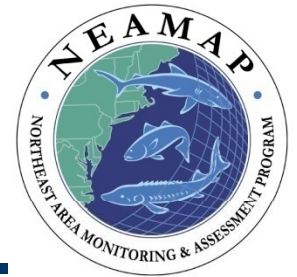
May 22, 2013

ISFMP Policy Board

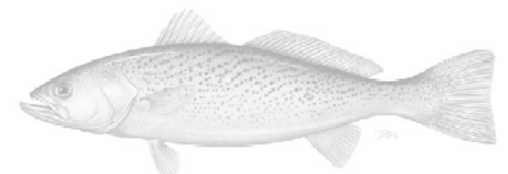




NEAMAP

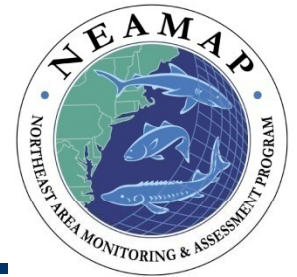


- Cooperative state/federal fishery-independent research and data collection program
 - From the Gulf of Maine to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina
- Coordinate fishery-independent data collection and data management activities
 - Among the states and federal partners in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic regions

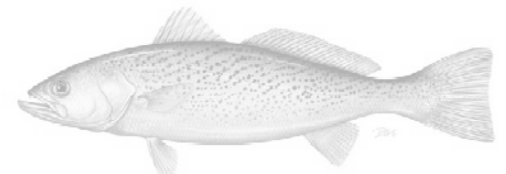
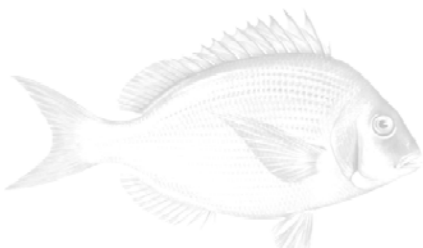




NEAMAP Fishery-Independent Surveys: Objectives

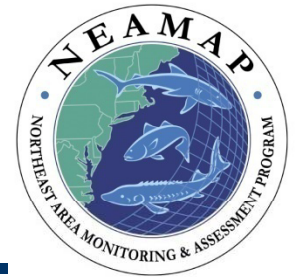


- To provide long-term estimates of
 - abundance
 - biomass
 - length- and age-structure
 - diet composition
 - other critical stock assessment parameters for the various fishes of management interest in the northeast

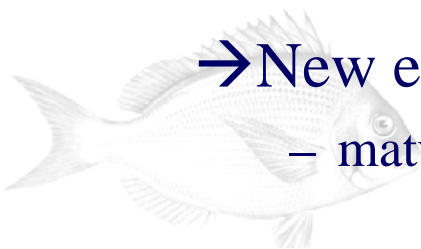




NEAMAP SNE/M-A Survey

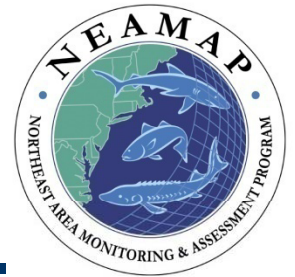


- NEAMAP Mid-Atlantic/Southern New England Nearshore Trawl Survey (MA-NC)
 - Over 6 million individual fish and invertebrates, >175 different species, 12 full-scale surveys completed.
 - Individual length measurements -- 800,000 specimens
 - Overall catch for Fall 2012 cruise was largest yet- 156,858 lbs. for an AVG. catch/tow of 1,046 lbs.
 - Laboratory processing -- 36,000 stomach samples; 49,000 ageing structures (ear bones, vertebrae, spines)
 - Collaborative increased stomach collection with SEAMAP
 - Processed backlog of age samples
 - New elements to field sampling efforts in 2012
 - maturity stage **horseshoe crab**; egg stage **American lobster**

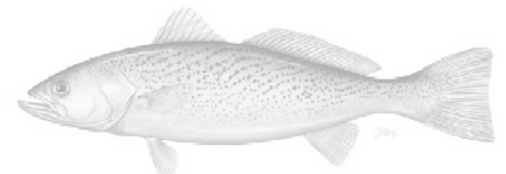


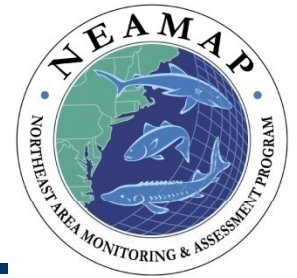


NEAMAP SNE/M-A Survey



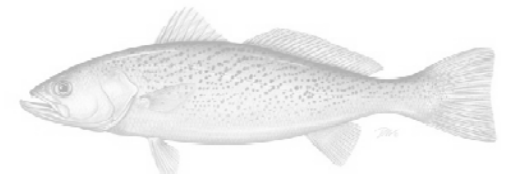
- NEAMAP Mid-Atlantic/Southern New England Nearshore Trawl Survey (MA-NC)
 - Web portals -- GIS based survey results, abundance indices and food habits database available online
 - Data provided for use in stock assessments:
 - Weakfish, longfin squid, river herring; scup, summer flounder, black sea bass, croaker, winter flounder, spiny dogfish, bluefish, spot





ME/NH Trawl Survey

- **Maine-New Hampshire Inshore Trawl Survey**
 - Spring, Fall surveys conducted annually off ME coastal waters since Fall 2000 aboard the F/V Robert Michael
 - Provides seasonal abundance indices for approximately 25 species of finfish and invertebrates
 - Collections done for/by collaborative researchers
 - Collected over 1600 otoliths (incl. winter flounder, shad); expand age processing and digitizing (winter flounder, cod)
 - Data provided for use in stock assessments:
 - lobster, shad; management decisions for Northern shrimp, monkfish, winter flounder, herring





MA DMR Trawl Survey



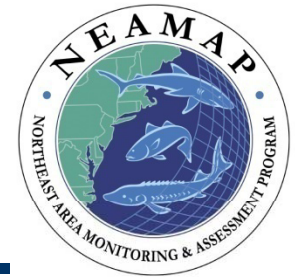
■ Massachusetts Resource Assessment Inshore Trawl Survey

- 35 consecutive years of spring and fall surveys completed.
- Over 6,600 stations successfully completed in MA territorial waters.
- Age processing of winter flounder and black sea bass survey samples taken over by MDMF Gloucester lab in 2012.
- Aged indices generated with survey age keys available for summer flounder, GOM cod, Cape Cod/GOM yellowtail flounder, SNE winter flounder, and GOM winter flounder.

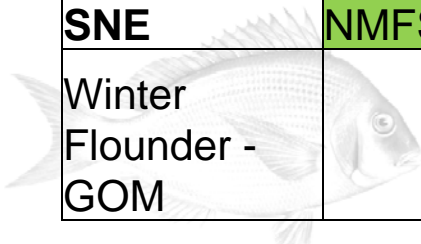




NEAMAP Data Usage



	SNE/MA	ME/NH	MASS
American Lobster	Provided data to ASMFC	Data for stock assessment 2009 GOM and for 2014	2009 Abundance indices by sex and size groupings, sex ratio, mean size for GOM
Atlantic croaker	Growth, size, distribution for 2010 SEDAR; likely next assessment		
Sea Scallop	Provided data to NMFS/Councils	Provided data for designing species-specific survey	
Scup	Biomass indices used in update 2011		Biomass indices used in update 2011
Summer Flounder	Provided data to NMFS/ASMFC		Aged indices used to calibrate model
Winter Flounder - SNE	Provided data to NMFS/ASMFC		Aged indices used to calibrate model. Maturity observations used to estimate maturity at age.
Winter Flounder - GOM		Used in the direct biomass area swept estimate	Used for computation of swept area biomass estimates

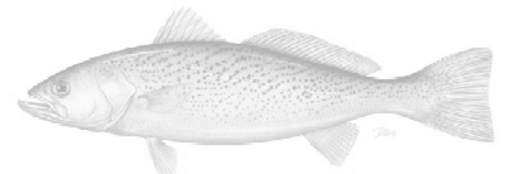




NEAMAP Utility for Stock Assessments

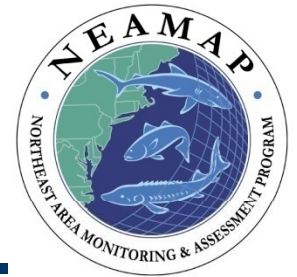


- NEAMAP surveys personnel to attend stock assessment workshops
 - to ensure data understood and incorporated in assessment.
- NEAMAP Analytical Committee to conduct periodic reviews of stock assessment needs and NEAMAP data availability relative to these needs.

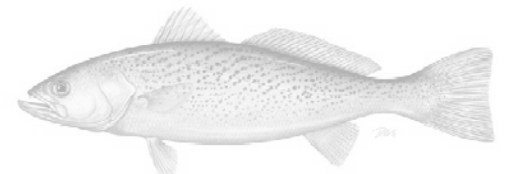


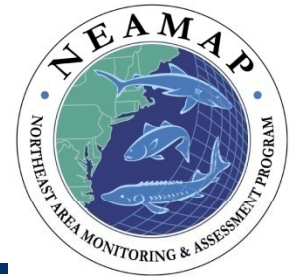


NEAMAP Committees



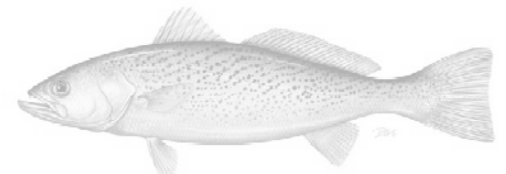
- More coordination and information sharing amongst partners through the Committees
- Data Management Committee – to convene an Onboard Data Practices Workshop in June
 - project personnel to share current practices through demonstrating hardware and software currently in use
 - Participation from ME through NC





NEAMAP Committees

- Operations Committee to explore opportunities for:
 - re-establishment of survey personnel exchanges
 - efforts to characterize changes in relative catchability for the NEAMAP surveys (as needed)
 - acquisition of equipment that can be used among the program surveys and partner agencies
 - ageing workshops
 - expanding current collection effort to address data needs identified in the ASMFC Research Priorities and Stock Assessment reports

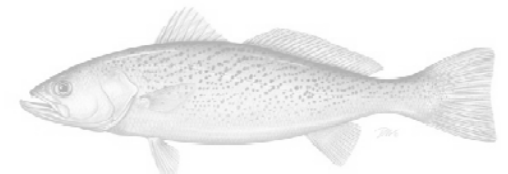


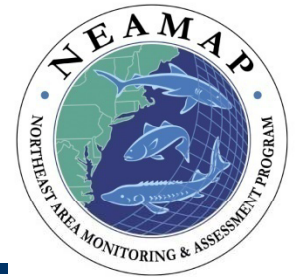


NEAMAP Committees

■ Trawl Technical Committee

- to explore and evaluate technologies that would either increase or streamline data collection efforts
 - (e.g., underwater cameras, bottom mapping equipment, etc.).
- to review fixed gear surveys (black sea bass, possibly scup) and how data is incorporated for possible inclusion under NEAMAP





Overall funding FY13

➤ NEAMAP SNE/M-A

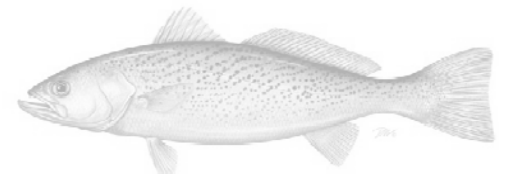
- RSA \$1.1M

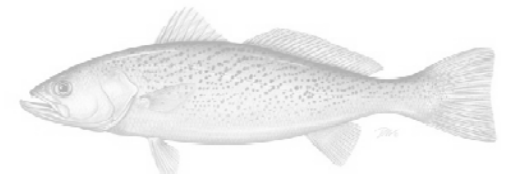
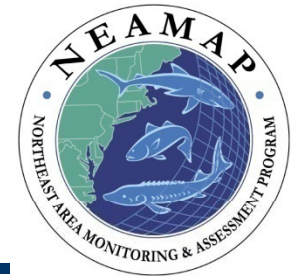
➤ ME/NH

- Need \$375,000, Receive less than that from NOAA

➤ MA DMF

- Supported by USFWS, Wallop-Breaux
→ 75% fed/ 25% state match

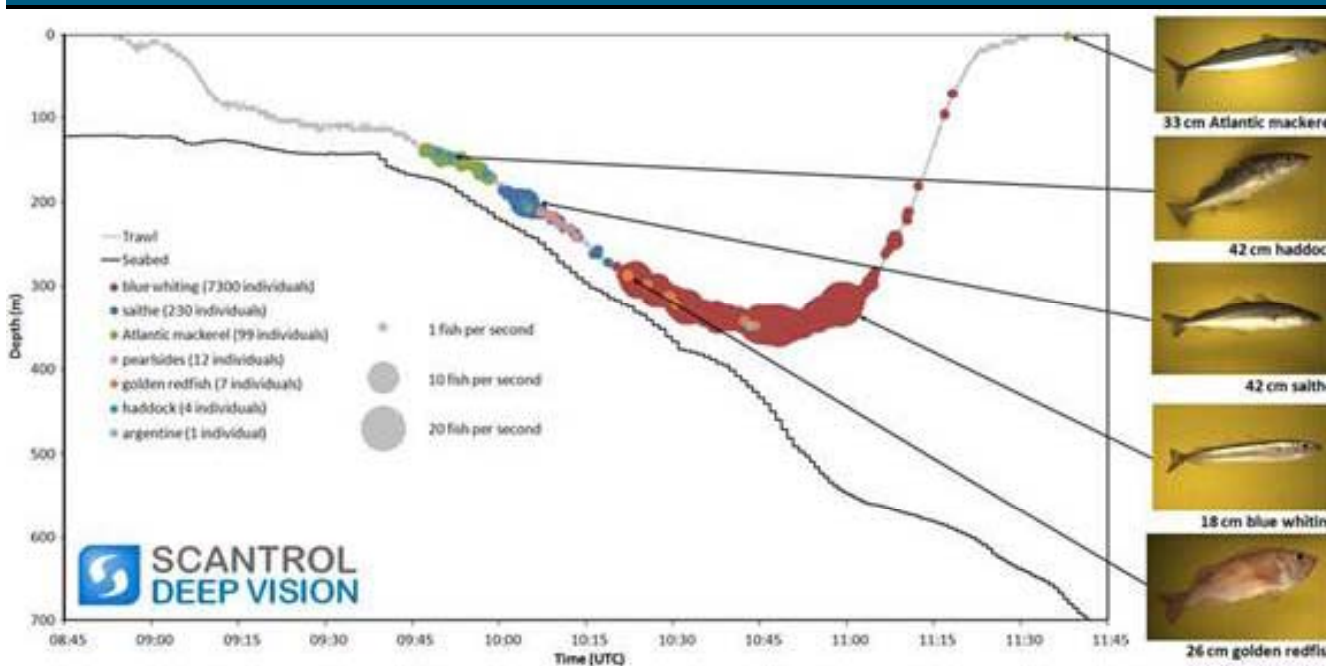




Quantify Capture Efficiency

Generate **ABSOLUTE ABUNDANCE ESTIMATES**

Start with Long-Finned Squid, working w. NEFSC



Deep Vision





Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by 2015

Habitat Committee Update

Report to the ISFMP Policy Board

May 22, 2013

Kent Smith, Habitat Committee Chair



Habitat Committee Update

- **Updates/Presentations from**
 - **ACFHP**
 - **Artificial Reef Committee**
 - **TNC's Aquatic Connectivity Project**
- **Review 2013 Action Plan Progress**
- **Discuss ASMFC Strategic Plan**
- **2013 Habitat Hotline – Regulatory theme**



Habitat Committee Update:

Habitat Bottlenecks

- **Habitat Bottlenecks for Commission Managed Species with Poor Stock Status**
 - **Adding Information to Addenda**
 - ✦ **Red Drum**
 - ✦ **Lobster – coming soon**
 - **Developing Working Paper**



Habitat Committee Update: Habitat Management Series

Next Installation:

Habitat Implications of Nearshore & Estuarine Aquaculture

- **Address finfish & shellfish**
- **Recent NOAA Fisheries & Regional Fishery Management Council Policies**
- **Reference 2002 ASMFC Aquaculture Report**



Habitat Committee Update:

American Lobster Habitat FMP Section

- **Background Habitat Information:
Contract with Dr. Jason Goldstein, UNH**
- **Monitoring, management, & research
recommendations: HC**
- **Process:**
 - **Now – HC Review**
 - **June -TC Review**
 - **August Lobster Management Board**



Habitat Committee Update:

Draft Black Drum FMP

- **Reviewed & Offering Edits for Final FMP**
- **Recommend Sciaenid Source Document**
 - **Lack of Black Drum specific information**
 - **Need to update habitat information for other Sciaenids**
- **Black Drum Habitat Addenda**
 - **When more information is available**



Habitat Committee Update: Habitat Guidance Document

- **Governing document for Habitat Program, Committee & Products**
- **Includes:**
 - **Habitat Program Review Recommendations**
 - **Polices of the *Technical Committee Guidance & Assessment Process***
- **August – Policy Board Consideration**



Habitat Committee Update

Questions?

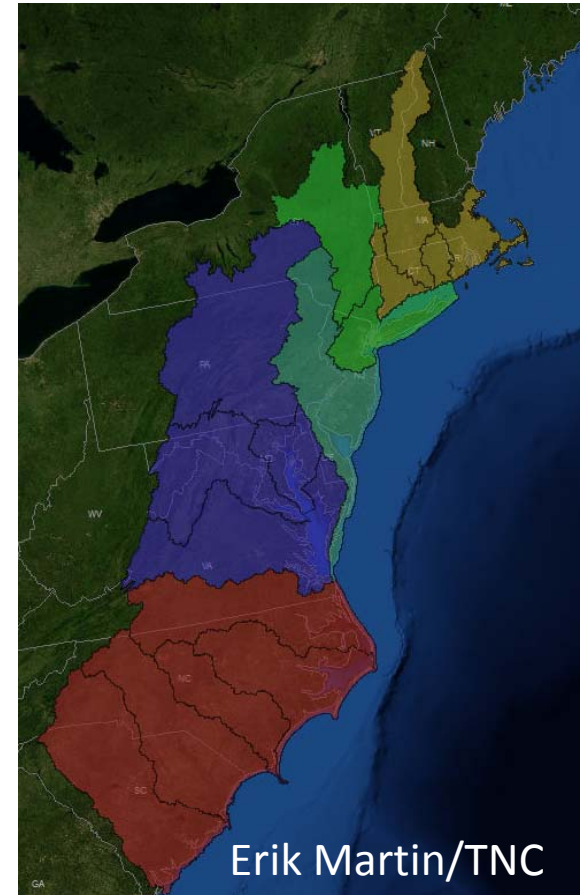
NFWF River Herring Conservation Initiative

Project Partners:

- Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership
- The Nature Conservancy
- University of New Hampshire

Proposed focus areas:

- Southern New England rivers (MA, RI) and the Connecticut River (VT, NH, MA, CT)
- Long Island Sound (CT, NY) and the Hudson River (NY, NJ)
- Delaware River and tributaries (NJ, DE, PA)
- Chesapeake Bay and tributaries (DC, NY, PA, DE, MD, VA)
- Pamlico Sound (NC) to the Santee- Cooper River (SC)



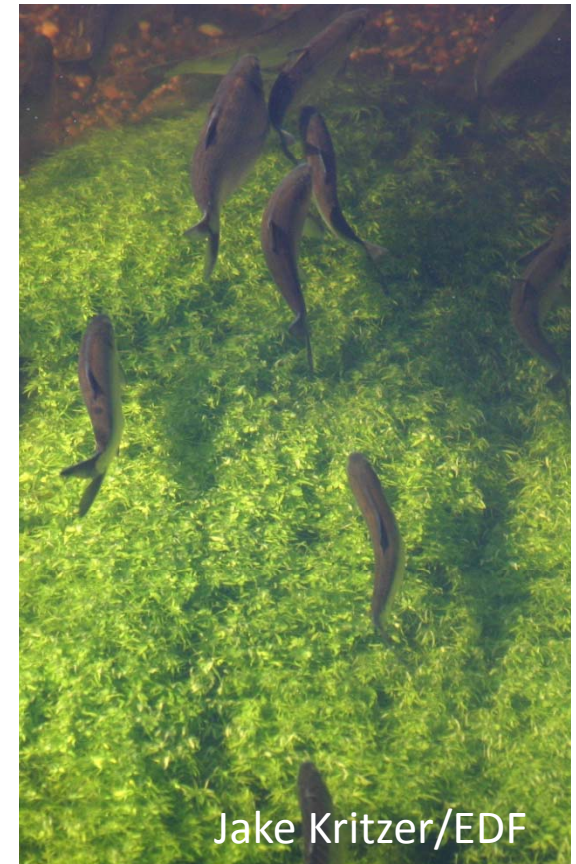
NFWF River Herring Conservation Initiative

Scope of Work:

- Convene a series of webinars, and potential in-person supplemental meetings, to gather river-system specific river herring information
- One in-person workshop to prioritize, plan, and strategize river herring restoration needs

Major Products:

- Working paper summarizing information on river herring habitat needs
- Report from in person workshop includes prioritization of river herring restoration needs within the specific river systems.



Cape Fear Project

- Restore 0.5-acre of spawning habitat for the benefit of ASMFC managed species; below Lock & Dam No. 2 in Bladen County
- Assess benthic habitat along a three-mile stretch of river utilizing sidescan sonar;
- Develop a substrate map identifying potential spawning habitat restoration areas;
- Annual post-construction survey of eggs within the vicinity of the restored habitat.



2013 "10 Waters to Watch"



ACFHP MOU Addition: Merrimack River Watershed Council

- Partner focused, regional impact
- Shared goals:
 - Improve water quality and quantity
 - Restore habitat and watershed health
 - Watershed planning
- Importance to coastal and migratory fish



Atlantic Coastal
Fish Habitat Partnership



www.merrimack.org

2013 Bring Back the Natives/More Fish Funding Priorities

- Projects that address habitat alteration, lack of adequate instream flows, and invasive and/or non-native species
- Projects that protect coastal and marine habitats
- Projects benefitting one or more of the following fish species:
 - Native Atlantic coast estuarine-dependent or anadromous species (alewife, blueback herring, Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon, American eel, and American shad)
 - Native fish species identified by recognized and candidate National Fish Habitat Partnerships

2013 Bring Back the Natives/More Fish Criteria for Competitive Proposals

- If the project supports implementation of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) and/or a recognized or candidate Fish Habitat Partnership, describe how the project meets one or more of the NFHAP goals and strategies and how the outcomes will be measured and reported consistent with NFHAP guidelines.
- If the project has a NFHAP nexus, applicants are highly encouraged to include a letter of support from the relevant Fish Habitat Partnership with the full proposal.

2013 Bring Back the Natives /More Fish

ACFHP encourages the development a native fish habitat project that meets the priorities and criteria outlined in the RFP, particularly a habitat protection project that will benefit one or more of ACFHP's Subregional Priority Habitats and one or more of the species listed below. While these are not the only species that ACFHP considers, they are of particular interest for this RFP:

- American eel
- Atlantic Salmon
- Atlantic Sturgeon
- Black Sea Bass
- River Herring
- Scup
- Shad
- Shortnose Sturgeon
- Summer Flounder
- Weakfish
- Winter Flounder

2013 Bring Back the Natives /More Fish

In order to include a letter of endorsement from ACFHP in your pre-proposal ACFHP applications for letters of endorsement are Due May 27.

Guidelines and Applications for ACFHP endorsement can be downloaded at:

www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/opportunities/endorsement/



Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by 2015

Shad and River Herring Research Proposals





Georgia Stocking Program

- 5-year experimental stocking program to determine the effectiveness of a stocking program and increase the number of adult shad
- Complimenting recent closures to the American shad fishery.
- Attempt to collect broodfish from the Ogeechee River
- Program to begin in 2014.





Georgia Stocking Program

- TC recommends the board consider approval of the proposal, with the requirement that fish only taken from Ogeechee, as well as continuation of YOY and adult monitoring by state and coordination with GA EDP on water quality monitoring and verification of OTC marks.
- TC felt this stocking program may also be premature





Maine Research Proposal

- The state of Maine requests review and consideration of approval for a proposal to collect juvenile river herring for research focused on diet analysis, ageing, and habitat use. Maine DMR supports this research.
- TC supports this research; may provide valuable information for stock assessment.

