

## Foreword

The Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (SAW) process has three parts: preparation of stock assessments by the SAW Working Groups and/or by ASMFC Technical Committees / Assessment Committees; peer review of the assessments by a panel of outside experts who judge the adequacy of the assessment as a basis for providing scientific advice to managers; and a presentation of the results and reports to the Region's fishery management bodies. Starting with SAW-39 (June 2004), the process was revised in two fundamental ways. First, the Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) became a smaller panel with panelists provided by the Independent System for Peer Review (Center of Independent Experts, CIE). Second, the SARC provides little management advice. Instead, Council and Commission teams (e.g., Plan Development Teams, Monitoring and Technical Committees, Science and Statistical Committee) formulate management advice, after an assessment has been accepted by the SARC. Starting with SAW-45 (June 2007) the SARC chairs were from external agencies, but not from the CIE. Starting with SAW-48 (June 2009), SARC chairs are from the Fishery Management Council's Science and Statistics Committee (SSC), and not from the CIE. Also at this time, some assessment Terms of Reference were revised to provide additional science support to the SSCs, as the SSC's are required to make annual ABC recommendations to the fishery management councils.

Reports that are produced following SAW/SARC meetings include: An *Assessment Summary Report* - a summary of the assessment results in a format useful to managers; an *Assessment Report* – a detailed account of the assessments for each stock;

and the SARC panelist reports – a summary of the reviewer's opinions and recommendations as well as individual reports from each panelist. SAW/SARC assessment reports are available online at

<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/publications/series/crdlist.htm>. The CIE review reports and assessment reports can be found at <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/saw/>”.

The 53rd SARC was convened in Woods Hole at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, November 29 – Dec. 2, 2011 to review benchmark stock assessments of Gulf of Maine cod (*Gadus morhua*) and black sea bass (*Centropristis striata*). CIE reviews for SARC53 were based on detailed reports produced by NEFSC Assessment Working Groups. This Introduction contains a brief summary of the SARC comments, a list of SARC panelists, the meeting agenda, and a list of attendees (Tables 1 – 3). Maps of the Atlantic coast of the USA and Canada are also provided (Figures 1 - 5).

### Outcome of Stock Assessment Review Meeting:

Based on the Review Panel reports (at <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/saw/> under the heading “SARC 53 Panelist Reports”), the SARC review panel concluded that the results of the **Gulf of Maine cod** assessment can serve as a scientific basis for fishery management of this stock. All terms of reference for this stock assessment were fully met. Both catch and survey data were fully and adequately summarized. The newly developed statistical catch at age model (ASAP) was appropriately applied to the data and the time series of abundance and fishing mortality estimated from the model represent the best scientific estimates

available for this stock. In particular, the Panel agrees that the 2005 cod year class in the Gulf of Maine was less strong than suggested by analyses conducted for a prior assessment. The Panel did not accept the proposed revision of the reference points from  $F_{40\%}$  to  $F_{35\%}$  that were recommended during the assessment review, but rather recommended the continued use of  $F_{40\%}$  as the basis for biological reference point proxies. However, regardless of which reference point is selected, results indicate that the Gulf of Maine cod stock is overfished and is experiencing overfishing. Stock projections provided at the SARC-53 meeting indicate that the stock will not be rebuilt by 2014.

The Review Panel unanimously rejected the newly proposed statistical catch at age stock assessment model (ASAP) for **black sea bass** and concluded that it did not provide a suitable scientific basis for management of

this stock. The Panel identified substantial concerns over the potential for spatial structure and incomplete mixing within the stock area that compromised the ability of the forward projecting catch at age model to index abundance and fishing mortality reliably based on the data available. Based on the biological reference points and assessment as approved at the Data Poor Species Workshop in 2007, black sea bass is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The SARC-53 panel suggested that the assessment team continue to consider alternative methods for assessing the black sea bass stock, perhaps continuing with age-based methods, although achieving a new framework should not be expected in the short term.

CIE review reports can be found at <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/saw/> under the heading “SARC 53 Panelist Reports”.

**Table 1. 53rd Stock Assessment Review Committee Panel.**

**SARC Chairman (MAFMC SSC):**

Dr. Thomas Miller  
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**SARC Panelists (CIE):**

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**Table 2. Agenda, 53rd Stock Assessment Review Committee Meeting.**

**53rd Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (SAW 53)  
Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) Meeting**

**Nov. 29 - Dec. 2, 2011**

Stephen H. Clark Conference Room – Northeast Fisheries Science Center  
Woods Hole, Massachusetts

**REVISED AGENDA (version: 30 Nov. 2011)**

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TOPIC	PRESENTER(S)	SARC LEADER	RAPPORTEUR
<b><u>Tuesday, Nov. 29</u></b>			
<b>9:00 – 9:30 AM</b>			
Welcome	<b>James Weinberg</b> , SAW Chair		
Introduction	<b>Thomas Miller</b> , SARC Chair		
Agenda			
Conduct of Meeting			
<b>9:30 – 11:45</b>	Assessment Presentation (A. GOM Cod) <b>Mike Palmer</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>Tony Wood</b>
<b>11:45 – 1</b>	Lunch		
<b>1 – 5:30</b>	SARC Discussion w/ presenters (A. GOM Cod) <b>Thomas Miller</b> , SARC Chair		<b>Tony Wood</b>

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## **Wednesday, Nov. 30**

<b>8:30 – 9:30</b>	<b>SARC panel (closed session)</b>	
<b>9:30 - 11:30</b>	Assessment Presentation (B. Black sea bass) <b>Gary Shepherd      TBD</b>	<b>Toni Chute/ Jessica Blaylock</b>
<b>11:30 - 12:45</b>	Lunch	
<b>12:45 – 3:15</b>	SARC Discussion w/ presenters (B. Black sea bass) <b>Thomas Miller, SARC Chair</b>	<b>Toni Chute/ Jessica Blaylock</b>
<b>3:15 – 3:30</b>	Break	
<b>3:30 – 5:30</b>	<b>(May not get this far)</b> Revisit w/ presenters (A. GOM Cod) <b>Thomas Miller, SARC Chair</b>	<b>Tony Wood</b>

(7:30 Dinner – Coonamessett Inn, 311 Gifford Street Falmouth)

## **Thursday, Dec. 1 (times may vary depending on progress)**

<b>8:30 – 9:45</b>	Revisit w/ presenters (A. cod and B. Black sea bass) <b>Thomas Miller, SARC Chair</b>	<b>Tony Wood/Toni Chute/ Jessica Blaylock</b>
<b>9:45 - 10</b>	Break	
<b>10 – 12:30</b>	Review/edit Assessment Summary Report (B. Black sea bass.) <b>Thomas Miller, SARC Chair</b>	<b>Toni Chute/ Jessica Blaylock</b>
<b>12:30 – 1:45</b>	Lunch	
<b>1:45 – 4:30</b>	Review/edit Assessment Summary Report (A. GOM cod.) <b>Thomas Miller, SARC Chair</b>	<b>Tony Wood</b>
<b>4:45 – 5:30</b>	SARC Report writing. (closed meeting)	

## **Friday, Dec. 2**

**9:00 - 4 PM** (cont.) SARC Report writing. (closed meeting)

\*All times are approximate, and may be changed at the discretion of the SARC chair. The meeting is open to the public, except where noted.

**Table 3. 53rd SAW/SARC, List of Attendees**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Email</b>
James Weinberg	NEFSC	<a href="mailto:James.weinberg@noaa.gov">James.weinberg@noaa.gov</a>
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Kurt Trzcinski	CIE	<a href="mailto:kurtis.trzcinski@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">kurtis.trzcinski@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a>

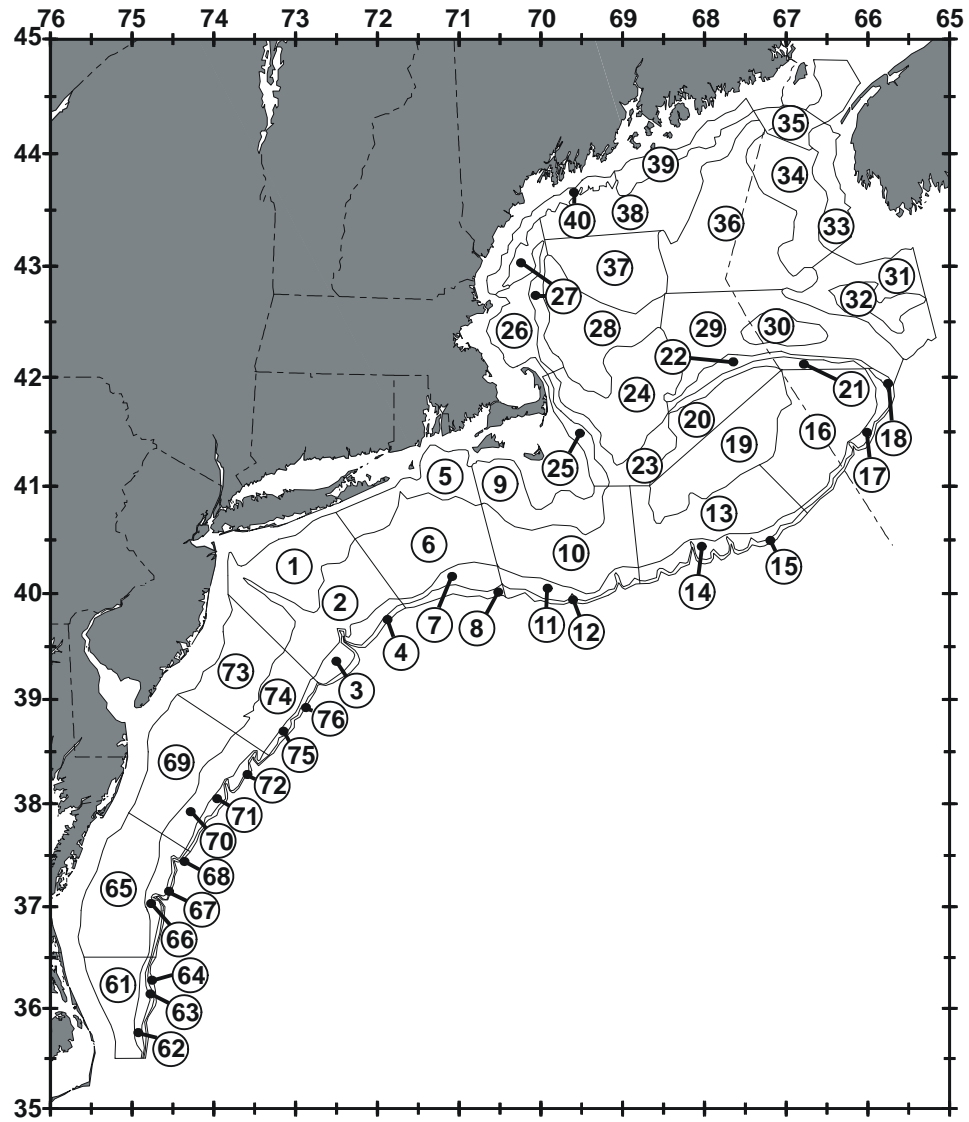


Figure 1. Offshore depth strata that have been sampled during Northeast Fisheries Science Center bottom trawl research surveys. Some of these may not be sampled presently.

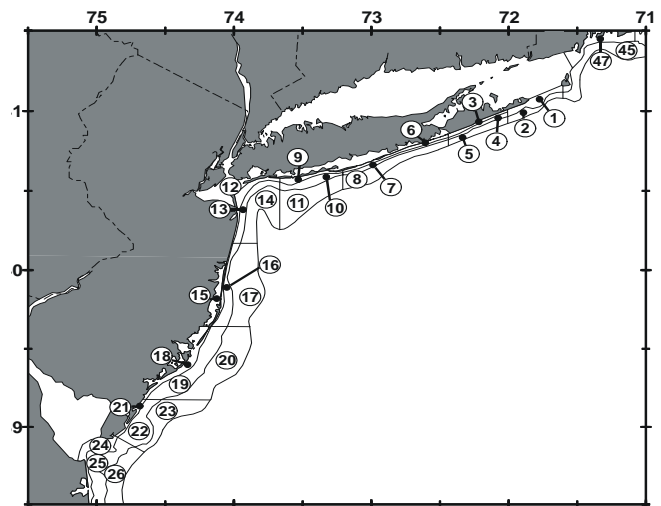
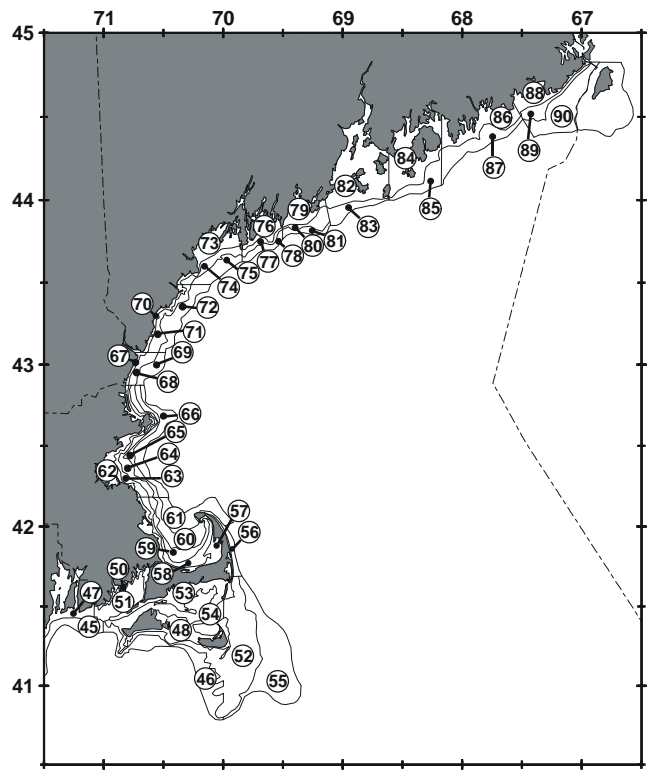
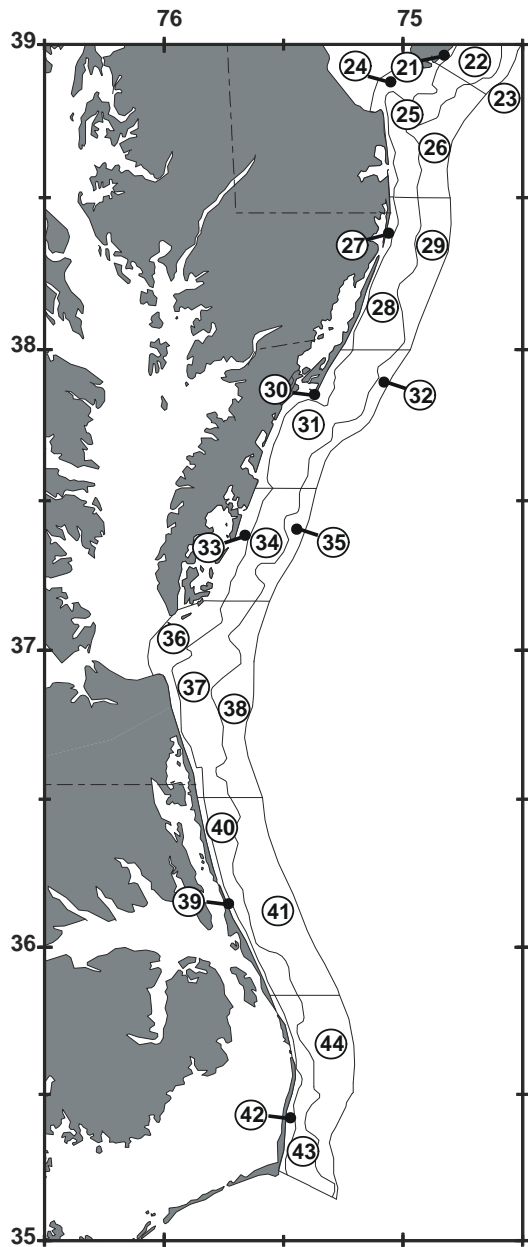


Figure 2. Inshore depth strata that have been sampled during Northeast Fisheries Science Center bottom trawl research surveys. Some of these may not be sampled presently.



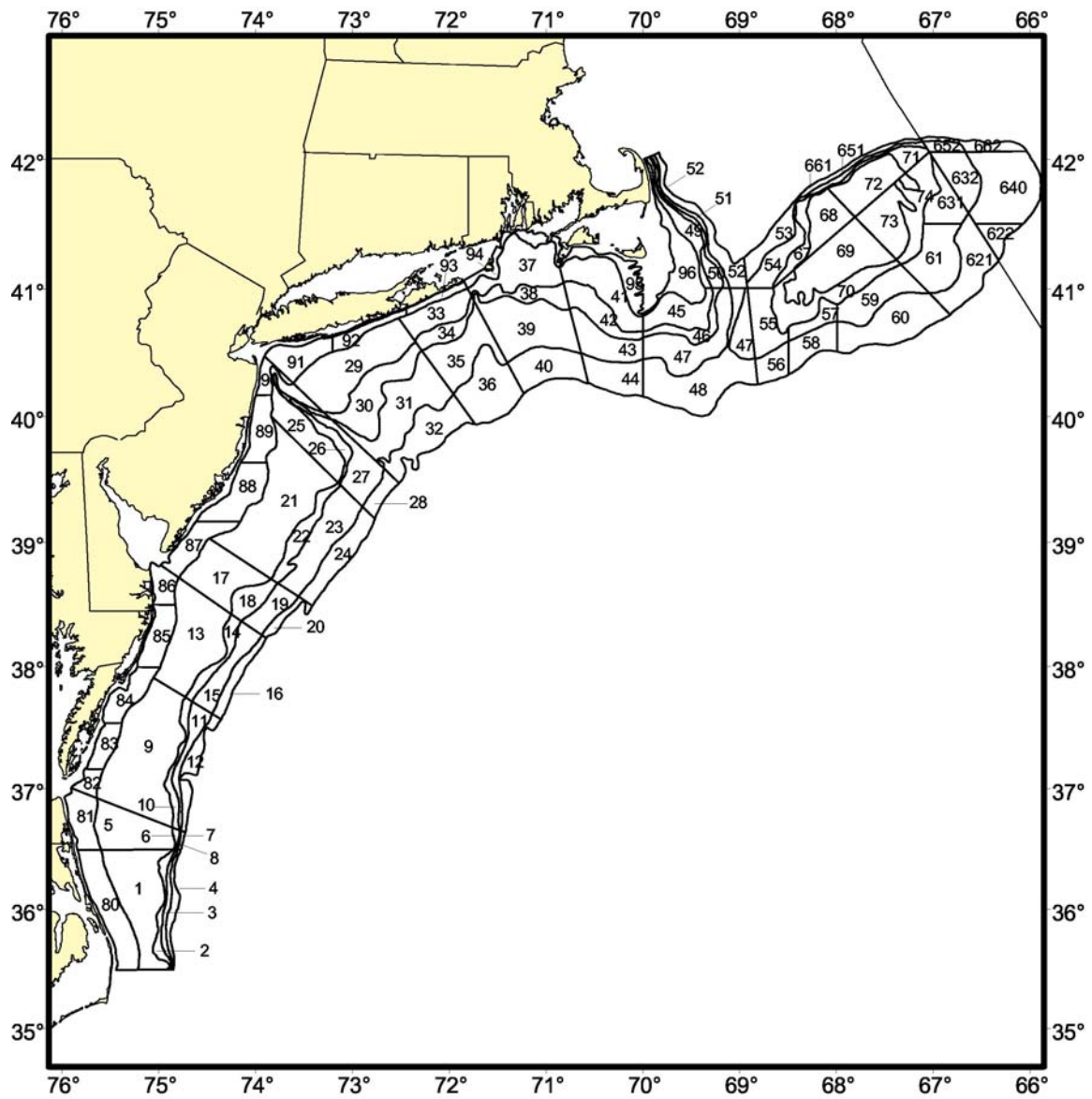


Figure 3. Depth strata sampled during Northeast Fisheries Science Center clam dredge research surveys.

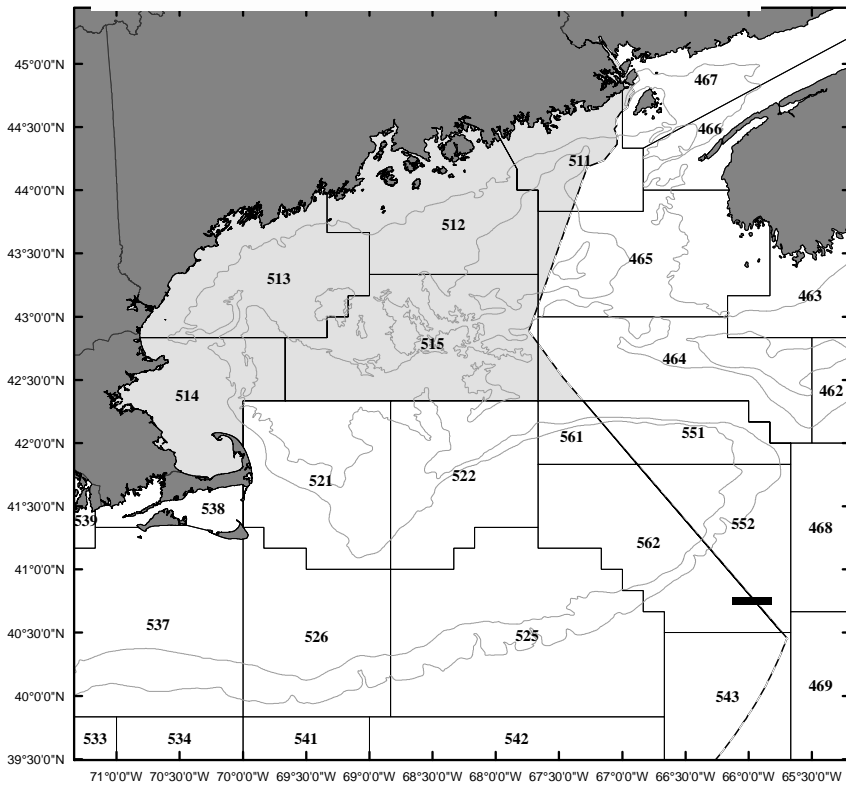
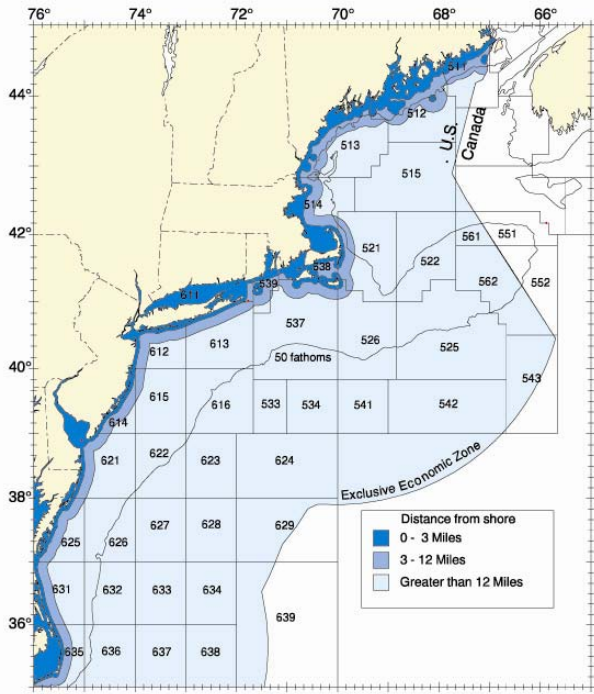


Figure 4. Statistical areas used for reporting commercial catches.

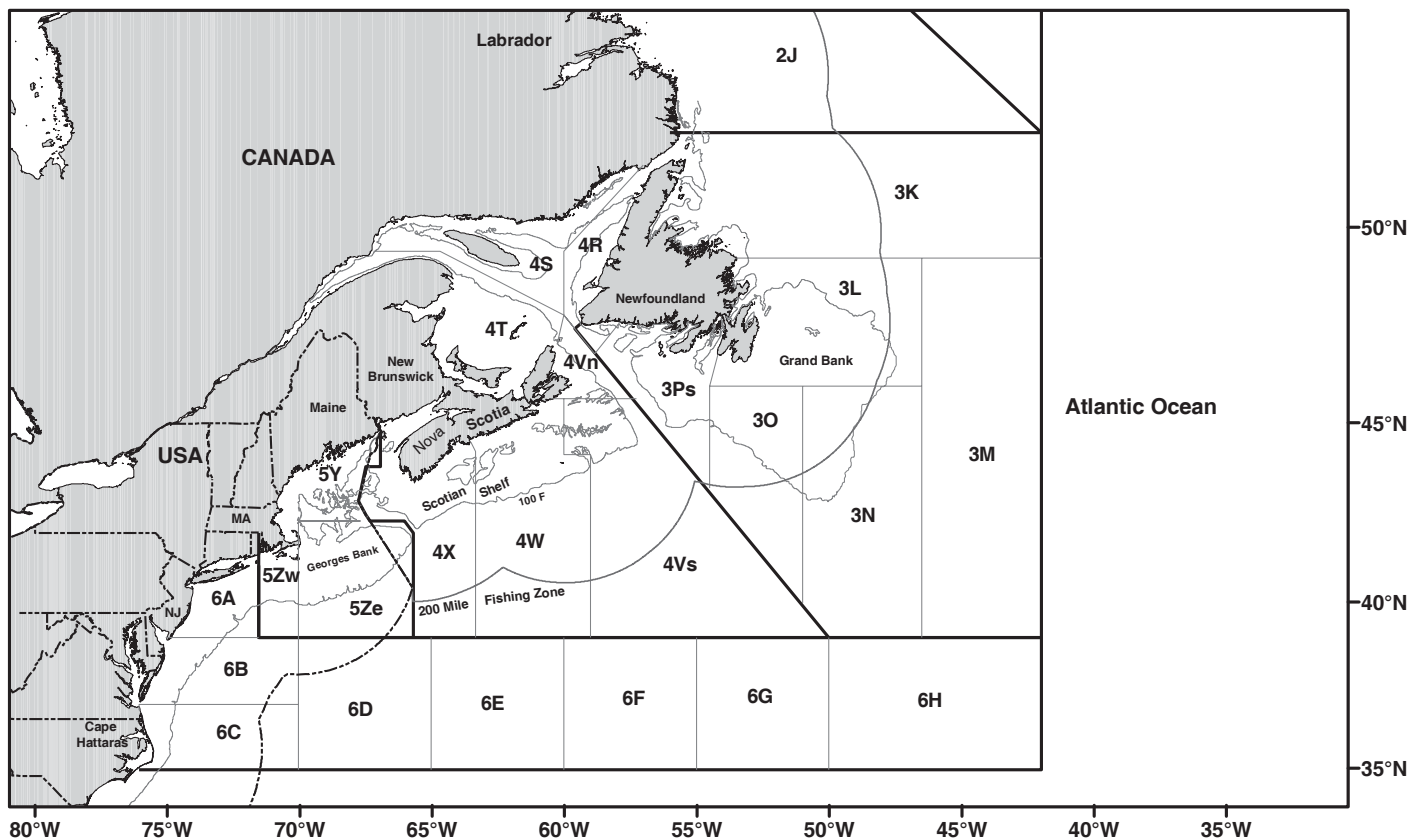


Figure 5. Catch reporting areas of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) for Subareas 3-6.