

# Changing Tides

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## Northeast Multispecies

On May 1, 2004, Amendment 13 to the Northeast (NE) Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) was implemented. The measures implemented in this major amendment included significant reductions in Days-at-Sea (DAS) allocations and modifications to trip limits/gear restrictions, in addition to other measures necessary to rebuild groundfish stocks. The Amendment defined multiple categories of DAS, including A DAS, which may be used in an unrestricted manner, and B DAS (both Reserve and Regular B DAS), which can only be used in a Special Access Program (SAP) in a restricted

manner. The Amendment was implemented with the intent of carefully balancing the restrictive management measures required to rebuild stocks with other measures designed to allow more flexibility and opportunity in the fishery, such as the DAS Leasing Program and the Closed Area II (CA II) Yellowtail Flounder Special Access Program (SAP). In addition, regulations were developed for the U.S./Canada Management Area that enable better management of the Georges Bank stocks of groundfish shared by the U.S. with Canada.

Although it is too early to determine whether Amendment 13 is resulting in the intended level of fishing effort and mortality reductions, the programs that it implemented have generally been successful in providing flexibility and opportunity in the fishery.

To date, in the multispecies DAS Leasing Program there has been a total of 96 approved leases of DAS resulting in 3,145 DAS leased at an average price of \$540 per DAS (ranging from zero to \$1,969 per DAS). Vessel owners taking advantage of the opportunity have benefited

*(continued on page 8)*

## Federal Funding Helps States Build, Monitor and Manage Fisheries - Maine

The Northeast Region's State, Federal and Constituent Programs Office administers financial assistance programs to the states and other non-federal interests (including universities, fishery management councils, fisheries commission, and fishery development associations) for carrying out projects consistent with program mandates and/or authorizing legislation relating primarily to the conservation, management, and utilization of fishery resources from the Northwest Atlantic.

The State of Maine is home to 24 active awards that are split among

11 different recipients and are funded under 6 separate programs. The awards fund projects that range from creating a vaccine for farm-raised salmon to developing markets for crustacean processing waste and include biological and technical projects designed to improve fisheries management.

Currently, eight Saltonstall-Kennedy (S-K) grants have been awarded in Maine. The University of Maine in Franklin is developing sustainable cod farming while the campus in Orono is advancing waste products from crustacean processing for remediation of sites contaminated

with heavy metals. The University of Southern Maine is researching the effects of the Endangered Species Act

*(continued on page 7)*

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Northeast Multispecies .....	1
Federal Funding - Maine .....	1
Galilee and Point Judith .....	2
Maine Atlantic Salmon .....	3
Atlantic Sea Scallops .....	3
Dealer Electronic Reporting .....	4
NEPA Website .....	7
Reducing Right Whale Mortality .....	5
NOAA Fisheries Proactive Program .....	6

# The History of Galilee and Point Judith

The history of Galilee and Point Judith has always been tied to Point Judith Pond and the breakway that joins it to the sea. In the early 1900s, a series of construction projects allowed Point Judith's port of Galilee to become one of the largest fishing ports on the East Coast. First, the Town of South Kingstown and the State of Rhode Island dredged the current breakway and stabilized it with stone jetties. Then, the Army Corps of Engineers constructed nearly three miles of stone breakwaters in the open ocean to create the Point Judith Harbor of Refuge.

Originally constructed to provide a refuge for ships traveling between Boston and New York during bad weather, the breakwaters also protected the breakway from the full force of the sea. The construction was carried out using horse-drawn wagons, dynamite, and the raw strength of men and women making

it a local testament of the human spirit.

In the eighteenth century, the area around Point Judith

Pond was inhabited primarily by farmers who used the breakway to transport crops to markets in Providence, Newport, Boston, and New London. Point Judith Pond was at one time a tidal body of water that would periodically breach with storms or unusually high tides. The harvest of natural resources (fishing, clamming, and cattle grazing) was timed to these events. It wasn't until

*Galilee is Rhode Island's largest commercial fishing port. The southeastern portion is home to some of our largest seafood processors, while the remainder is largely recreational in nature.*

the late 1800s that a permanent channel was cut into the sand dunes, changing the pond from brackish to saltwater. Only in the upper reaches of the pond where the Saugatucket River empties does a brackish environment persist. The biological profile changed from white perch, oyster, and herring to quahog, lobster, and the full range of coastal open ocean fish. Prior to this breaching, oystering was such a lucrative business that one could harvest several bushels in the dead of winter through the ice.

Generations of fishermen have worked the waters of Point Judith Pond, the Rhode Island and Block Island Sounds, and more recently the offshore canyons along the Mid-Atlantic and New England coast. With the construction of the Harbor of Refuge and the stabilization of the breakway, Galilee became the homeport to a large, ocean-going fishing fleet.

This fleet grew quickly between the 1970s and 1980s landing over a hundred million pounds of fish per year. The fishermen of Galilee always worked on a mixed fishery and were very innovative in their use of gear and their ability to switch back and forth between fisheries seasonally due to a sudden abundance of fish. From the mid 1990s to the present overcapitalization, overfishing, and strict regulation dropped the catch down to 49 million pounds worth approximately 34 million dollars; a very sobering figure in the minds of fishermen.



Galilee is Rhode Island's largest commercial fishing port, but is not the sole identity of Galilee. While the southeast portion of Point Judith Pond is industrial and home to some of our largest seafood processors, the remainder is largely recreational in nature. The west side and upper reaches of the pond are full of sport fishing and pleasure boat marinas, as well as beautiful ocean front residences. The port also serves as the major embarkation point for Rhode Island's ocean jewel Block Island. The Block Island Ferry, and the local beaches at the end of Great Island Road, brings thousands of tourists and dollars to the port every summer. Galilee is an extremely lucrative hybrid port, one that combines the tourist industry with commercial fishing, and is often the topic of heated discussions between varying user groups. Although tempers occasionally flare, all recognize the port as an economic and recreational hub and ultimately try to coexist.

## Draft Recovery Plan Issued

# Maine Atlantic Salmon

On June 18, 2004, NOAA Fisheries published a draft recovery plan for the Gulf of Maine distinct population segment of Atlantic salmon. The draft recovery plan, developed in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Maine Atlantic Salmon Commission, complements current conservation efforts, particularly those described in Maine's Atlantic Salmon Conservation Plan.

In December 2000, the Atlantic salmon population was listed as endangered. At the time of the listing, eight rivers were known to still support wild salmon populations (i.e., Sheepscot, Dennys, Machias, East Machias, Narraguagus, Ducktrap and Pleasant rivers, and Cove Brook). However, since that time the population has continued to decline, with fewer than 100 adult fish returning to the eight rivers to spawn in 2003.

NOAA Fisheries, under the Endangered Species Act, is required to develop a recovery plan to identify specific management actions necessary for the conservation and survival of the species, measurable criteria for determining when recovery is achieved, and time and cost estimates for recovery activities. The primary objective of the recovery plan is to halt the decline of endangered Atlantic salmon. Initial recovery efforts focus on continued survival of the population by reducing the most severe threats such as acidified water, mixing of wild and farmed fish, take of adults and juvenile fish by anglers, predation and competition, and excessive or unregulated water withdrawals.

The recovery plan also identifies numerous actions needed for full recovery, which includes protecting and restoring freshwater and estuarine habitat, supplementing the



naturally spawning fish with hatchery-reared salmon from the same rivers, conserving of the population's genetic integrity, assessing the fish during key stages in their lives, promoting salmon recovery through outreach and education, and assessing and revising the recovery program over time.

For further information regarding the recovery plan, contact Mark Minton, NOAA Fisheries, at 978-281-9328. The recovery plan is available online at: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/at salmon/>.

## Amendment 10

# Sea Scallop Management



The 2004 scallop fishing year, which began on March 1, has been a year of changes, complexity, and uncertainty. On March 1, NOAA Fisheries implemented an emergency action

that authorized four trips per vessel into the Hudson Canyon Access Area and maintained the days-at-sea (DAS) allocations scheduled in the regulations. The emergency action was implemented while the Sustainable Fisheries Division (SFD) was completing the final rule for Amendment 10 to the Scallop

Fishery Management Plan (FMP), which included some major changes to the way that the scallop fishery is managed and increased the complexity of the FMP. Amendment 10

implemented a formal area rotation program, established closed areas to protect essential fish habitat, revised the DAS allocation system to be area-specific for open and access areas, increased the minimum ring size for scallop dredges, and included several other measures designed to complete the area rotation program and make the management of the fishery more effective and efficient. New DAS allocations under Amendment 10 became effective on June 23, 2004. All other measures, with the exception of the increased minimum ring size fishery-wide, became effective on July 23, 2004. Four-inch rings (an increase of ½ inch from the current ring size)

*(continued on page 8)*

# Northeast Region Implements Electronic Reporting

## Dealer Electronic Reporting



On May 1, 2004 the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional Office, working in close collaboration with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC), and northeast region state resource management agencies introduced the “Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System” (SAFIS) for mandatory use by all federally NERO permitted seafood dealers in the Northeast region. SAFIS, a web-based reporting system, is designed to replace all various paper-based and Interactive Voice Response system (IVR) dealer reporting methods while meeting all mandatory data collection requirements for NOAA Fisheries and all state partner agencies.

The introduction of SAFIS met the deadline established by the Regional Administrator in June 2003, setting May 1, 2004 as the target date for deploying a web-based dealer data collection system capable of allowing all Federally-permitted dealers to file reports electronically. The efforts involved in the development, deployment and ongoing support and enhancement of the SAFIS system is a complete collaborative effort, combining scarce resources of NERO, NEFSC, Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), and various state agencies, all of which have agreed to adopt the SAFIS dealer data collection and management system. Complete

rollout of SAFIS beyond NOAA Fisheries dealers to states data collection is ongoing and is scheduled to be completed over the FY05 timeframe.

Meeting the May 2004 deadline required a concerted effort from all of the partners. Rules and regulations governing dealer

reporting were rewritten and published. Outreach efforts to state agencies, various commissions, and the seafood industry were coordinated to gather requirements and advise on impending changes. The rollout and ongoing support of seafood dealers has been the primary focus and has resulted in close to 90 percent of Federally-permitted dealers currently reporting under SAFIS.

What remains to be done? In the short term, we will review the data quality and completeness of reporting as well as compliance with the regulations. The Region will take the necessary steps to address any problems. In addition, we will continue outreach and support to seafood dealers, identify remaining issues associated with a rollout of a new system, and refine the dealer reporting requirements. Development and support efforts are now being shifted to focus on development of data management and reporting capability for NERO staff and



improving the responsiveness of the web-based system. In the long term, system upgrades are being planned to make the SAFIS system more efficient, to add new data collection and management capabilities not covered in this initial round of development, and to make the SAFIS system more capable and easier to use.

For more information regarding the implementation of SAFIS, contact Reggie Howe at: 978-281-9149.



## New Webpages

### NEPA Site

The newly added web page to the Northeast Regional Office's website provides information for both staff and the public about environmental analyses that are required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In addition to general information about NEPA, links are provided to NOAA NEPA guidance as well as other laws and executive orders that impose environmental analyses requirements.

The Region's NEPA Program is responsible for facilitating the compliance of regional actions with NEPA and other laws and executive orders that impose requirements for environmental, social, and economic analyses. The group works with regional and council staff to improve the timeliness, quality, and consistency of NEPA environmental documentation and the NEPA process in general.

## NOAA Fisheries Develops Strategy

# Reducing Right Whale Mortality

For the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*), ship strikes are not only a cause of serious injury and mortality to individual animals, but may also be inhibiting the already slow-paced recovery of the species. Unfortunately, despite nearly three-quarters of a century of international legal protection, the right whale population has shown little sign of recovery. In fact, mortalities and serious injuries due to collisions with ships account for more confirmed right whale mortalities than any other human-related activity. NOAA Fisheries has responded to the urgent need to reduce interactions between vessels and right whales by recently developing a comprehensive strategy to address ship strikes and improve the uncertain future of the right whales.

The development of the strategy was heightened in early 2004, when a pregnant right whale was struck and killed by a ship somewhere between New York and Maryland. According to scientists, with a population size of approximately 300 individuals, the death of just one adult female could affect the ability of the entire species to recover.

The strategy, proposed in June 2004, includes measures that take into consideration vessel traffic patterns, ocean conditions, and right whale behavior during the times when and in the areas where the collision risk is perceived to be high. More specifically, the strategy proposed would rely on a combination of routing and speed options, which would be narrowly defined (in time and area) according to the presence of right whales and adapted to the unique conditions in each of the three major regions along the east coast (e.g., Northeast, Mid-

Atlantic, and Southeast ports). In addition, the proposed strategy recommends continued support for ongoing measures designed to protect right whales, and expanded outreach and education initiatives.

In the Northeast U.S., for example, measures are being considered for implementation in areas where right whales congregate to feed, including Cape Cod Bay, an area off Race Point, the Great South Channel, and in the Gulf of Maine. The measures proposed in the strategy for further development include routing vessel traffic lanes to reduce the amount of overlap between the ships and the whales and/or speed limits to give both animals and vessel masters additional time and opportunity to take affirmative avoidance actions.

In the Mid-Atlantic, which is a migratory corridor for right whales traveling between the feeding grounds in the Northeast and the calving grounds in the Southeast, speed restrictions for vessels would be proposed. Finally, in the Southeast U.S., especially near port cities that overlap with the only known right whale calving ground, the strategy proposes vessel traffic lanes with speed restrictions.

The measures proposed in the ship strike reduction strategy would apply to vessels 65 feet and longer,



both domestic and international, within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. U.S. military vessels and government research vessels would be exempt from the mandatory measures, but would be strongly encouraged to comply on a voluntary basis.

The proposed ship strike strategy is just one of several management programs developed and implemented by NOAA Fisheries to reduce the risk of human-caused injuries and mortalities to right whales. Other programs designed to conserve and protect right whales include aerial surveys to alert mariners of right whale sightings and their locations, a mandatory ship reporting system that requires vessels 300 tons and greater to provide information on right whale sightings within designated areas, and the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan that regulates commercial fixed gear fisheries in an effort to reduce the risk of entanglement. Together, these measures represent one of the most comprehensive approaches in the world for protecting and preserving a living marine resource.

## Species At Risk

# NOAA Fisheries Proactive Conservation Program

NOAA Fisheries Northeast Region is working to increase involvement in a Proactive Conservation Program to address issues related to Species of Concern. As part of this program, the Region, in collaboration with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, hosted a workshop this summer to develop partnerships with states and interest groups in an effort to obtain information necessary to evaluate species' status and threats and gain public support for the shared stewardship of species potentially at risk of being threatened or endangered.

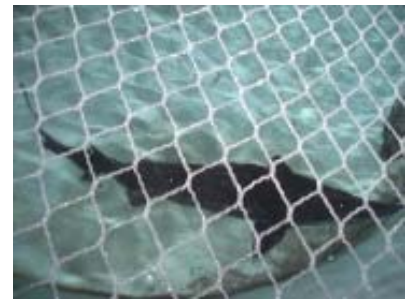
Representatives from nine states as well as the Ocean Conservancy, various state Sea Grant offices, and academic institutions participated in the workshop. NOAA Fisheries gained input and insights from the participants regarding the process by which a species is designated as a Species of Concern. Participants also discussed the current Species of Concern, identified several of the existing data gaps for these species, discussed potential conservation opportunities, and identified outreach materials and efforts that would assist NOAA Fisheries in maintaining stakeholder involvement in the process. The workshop afforded a tremendous opportunity to foster working relationships with the Region's constituents and provided the information necessary to maintain these relationships.

Currently, Species of Concern are not listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and, as such, do not receive any substantive or procedural protection under the Act. However, NOAA Fisheries highlights species for which listing may be

warranted so that Federal and state agencies, Native American tribes, and the private sector are aware of which species could benefit from proactive conservation efforts. The purpose of the Species of Concern list is to identify species potentially at risk including data deficiencies and uncertainties in species' status and threats; increase public awareness about those species; stimulate cooperative research efforts to obtain the information necessary to evaluate species status and threats; and foster voluntary efforts to conserve the species before listing becomes warranted.

NOAA Fisheries' Candidate Species are those that have received a petition for listing under the ESA and are undergoing formal status reviews. In addition, NOAA Fisheries initiates its own status review and determines that a listing is warranted. Species of Concern, on the other hand, are (1) classified as those that are in danger of extinction or risk of becoming endangered or threatened but have insufficient data to list them under the ESA; and (2) are "not warranted" for listing at the time, but concern or uncertainty remain regarding their extinction risk and/or threat.

As a follow-up to the workshop, the Region will finalize and distribute a briefing book with information on each of the Species of Concern found within the Northeast Region. The book will include information on the following ten species, which have been designated as Species of Concern in the Northeast Region. It will also include general distribution maps, life history information including vulnerable life history traits, species status and known threats, domestic



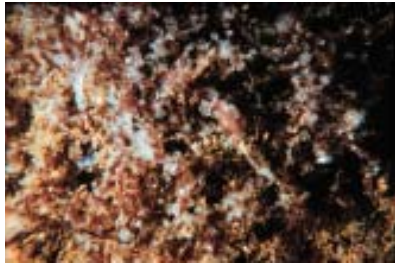
## Species of Concern in the Northeast Region:

- *Atlantic halibut*
- *Atlantic salmon*
- *Atlantic sturgeon*
- *Atlantic wolffish*
- *Barndoor Skate*
- *Cusk*
- *Thorny Skate*
- *Rainbow Smelt*
- *Dusky Shark\**
- *White Marlin\**

*\*Dual jurisdiction with the Southeast Region*

regulations/existing protections, and other state and international designations. The Protected Resources Division is also working on identifying conservation recommendations for each of these species and will be providing this information to constituents whenever possible in an effort to foster voluntary efforts to minimize risk to these species and promote cooperative research efforts. For more information about the Region's Proactive Conservation Program, contact Kim Damon-Randall at [Kimberly.Damon-Randall@noaa.gov](mailto:Kimberly.Damon-Randall@noaa.gov) or 978-281-9328 x. 6535.

# Federal Funding *(continued from page 1)*



and Clean Water Act on the aquaculture industry and ways to reduce related litigation. The Northeast Region also funded three private companies (Micro Technologies Inc., Maine Biotek and Capricorn Products Inc.) to investigate methods of detecting, monitoring and immunizing against Infectious Salmon Anemia Virus. The MER Assessment Corp. in Brunswick is evaluating the effects of aquaculture pen operations on environmental health and the Atlantic Salmon Federation is tracking farm-raised salmon experimentally released from net-pens. Together these award recipients are working to improve both resource health and value in the state of Maine.

In addition to the S-K Grants, Maine recipients have received nine NOAA Northeast Region Cooperative Research Program (CRP) awards to cover tagging, habitat and gear topics affecting the northeast groundfish industry. Three separate awards to the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR), Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) and the Island Institute, fund the New England Regional Cod Tagging

Program. This large-scale program, in cooperation with Canada, is tracking cod movements to identify the distribution of cod both inshore and offshore in the Gulf of Maine. Maine DMR received two other awards to support an industry-based inshore trawler survey studying populations of cod and developing an associated GIS database. The Region provided four CRP awards to support habitat and gear research conducted by GMRI. The first study is identifying juvenile groundfish habitat in the Gulf of Maine nearshore waters and the second is documenting benthic community recovery in closed areas. The final two projects are investigating two gear modifications to selectively harvest recovered



haddock stocks without impacting other stocks. Through government, partnerships, academia, and industry, the CRP is

fostering a new level of cooperation and synergy in managing Maine's marine resources.

The Maine DMR also has six current awards: the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (IJ Act), Anadromous Fish Conservation Act (AFC Act), and Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ACA Act). For the past several years, Maine has received an annual AFC Act grant to increase the abundance, survival and reproduction of river herring and American shad in the Androscoggin River. Four separate ACA Act awards to the DMR are supporting diverse

projects developing an integrated marine information database, instituting mandatory dealer reporting, conducting dockside sampling of commercial landings, and monitoring recreational fisheries. The IJ Act grant awarded to the DMR is used to partially fund over 15 projects relating to species whose range overlaps state boundaries. Under this award, the DMR monitors fisheries for lobster, northern shrimp, sea urchins, herring, scallops and groundfish. Additionally, this award supports experimental investigations in developing both an Atlantic halibut and a green crab fishery. The Maine DMR has taken an integrative approach to the activities conducted under these awards, articulating staff and activities funded under different awards and programs to accomplish larger goals associated with management of interjurisdictional species.

The final active award to the State of Maine is an Unallied Science Program grant to enhance data collection for the American lobster resource along the coast of Maine. American lobster is not only Maine's largest fishery, but provides 85 percent of all lobster landings in the Gulf of Maine. Project activities support an active lobster sea sampling program that provides systematic collection of fishery dependent data, ground truths electronic log book data, and monitors incidence of shell rot.



# Scallop Management (continued from page 3)

will be required everywhere beginning December 23, 2004. The expectation is that Amendment 10 will foster higher yield from the scallop fishery over the long-term and improve value of the fishery, while reducing costs to the industry.

Even with the implementation of Amendment 10 and the new area rotation program in July, the Scallop FMP was still subject to more revision under Framework 16 to the Scallop FMP and Framework 39 to the Multispecies FMP (Joint Frameworks). The Joint Frameworks, as approved by the New England Fishery Management Council, would allow scallop vessels to fish within portions of the groundfish closed areas to take advantage of the large concentrations of large scallops within those areas. While contemplated in

Amendment 10, more development and complementary Multispecies FMP action was necessary to allow the access. Due to delays, SFD determined that publication of the Joint Frameworks could not occur until after September 15, 2004, the Amendment 10 DAS default date, when DAS increase to account for a lack of access to the multispecies closed areas. The Division informed the scallop industry that fishers would be allowed to fish additional DAS, but they would have to decide whether they wanted to use the additional DAS or wait until NOAA Fisheries allows access to the groundfish closed areas, thereby forfeiting those additional DAS. The



choice left the scallop industry with decisions that became more difficult as winter approached. SFD reviewed the Joint Frameworks and the Final Rule was published November 2, 2004.

Despite the uncertainty in the 2004 fishing year, Amendment 10 established a biennial review process. As a result, industry will know what its 2005 DAS and trip allocations will be upon implementation of the Joint Frameworks. SFD expects that new management measures will be clearly defined prior to the start of each scallop fishing year, eliminating the uncertainty resulting from the unusual occurrence of three scallop management actions in one year.

# Northeast Multispecies (continued from page 1)

from fishing additional DAS, obtaining additional income and managing operations with multiple vessels more efficiently.

The CA II Yellowtail Flounder SAP opened on June 1, 2004, and closed on September 3, 2004, after the maximum number of trips (320) had been taken. Based on VMS and observer data, the total amount of yellowtail flounder caught in the SAP was 8,232,402 pounds.



Framework Adjustment 40-A to the FMP, submitted by the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), is currently under review by NOAA Fisheries. If approved, the regulatory action would implement 3 new programs this fall that would provide the multispecies fishery with additional opportunities to use B DAS. The Regular B DAS Pilot

Program would allow participating vessels to target relatively healthy stocks using B Regular DAS. The Closed Area I (CA I) Hook Gear Haddock SAP would allow vessels to target haddock using hook gear in a portion of CA I, using either an A, B Regular, or B Reserve

DAS, from October through December. The Eastern U.S./Canada Haddock SAP Pilot Program would allow vessels to target haddock in the Eastern U.S./Canada Area (and a portion of CA II) using either an A, B Regular, or B Reserve DAS, during May through December. Vessels would also be allowed to fish both inside and outside of the Western U.S./Canada Area on the same trip (but not in the Eastern U.S./Canada Area).

The Council is currently developing Framework Adjustment 40-B, which contains modifications to Amendment 13 as well as including additional SAPs. For more information concerning this article and other issues involving the NE Multispecies FMP, please contact Tom Warren at [Thomas.Warren@noaa.gov](mailto:Thomas.Warren@noaa.gov) or 978-281-9347.

photo credit: NMFS, MADFG, USCG

