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FISHERIES

Lobster Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology

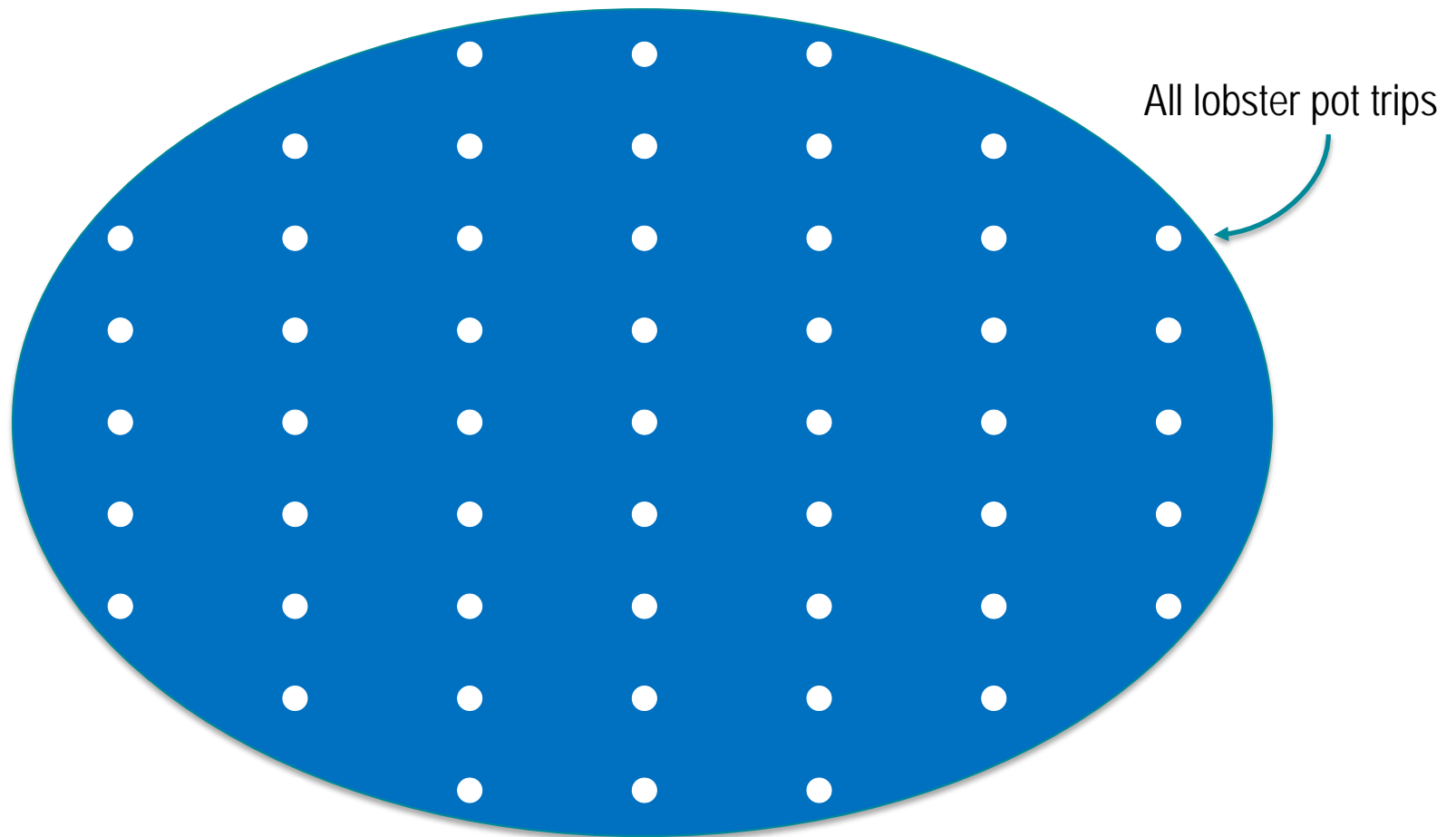
Omnibus Framework Adjustment: Meeting 2

New England Fishery Management Council – September 28, 2017
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council – October 11, 2017

Background

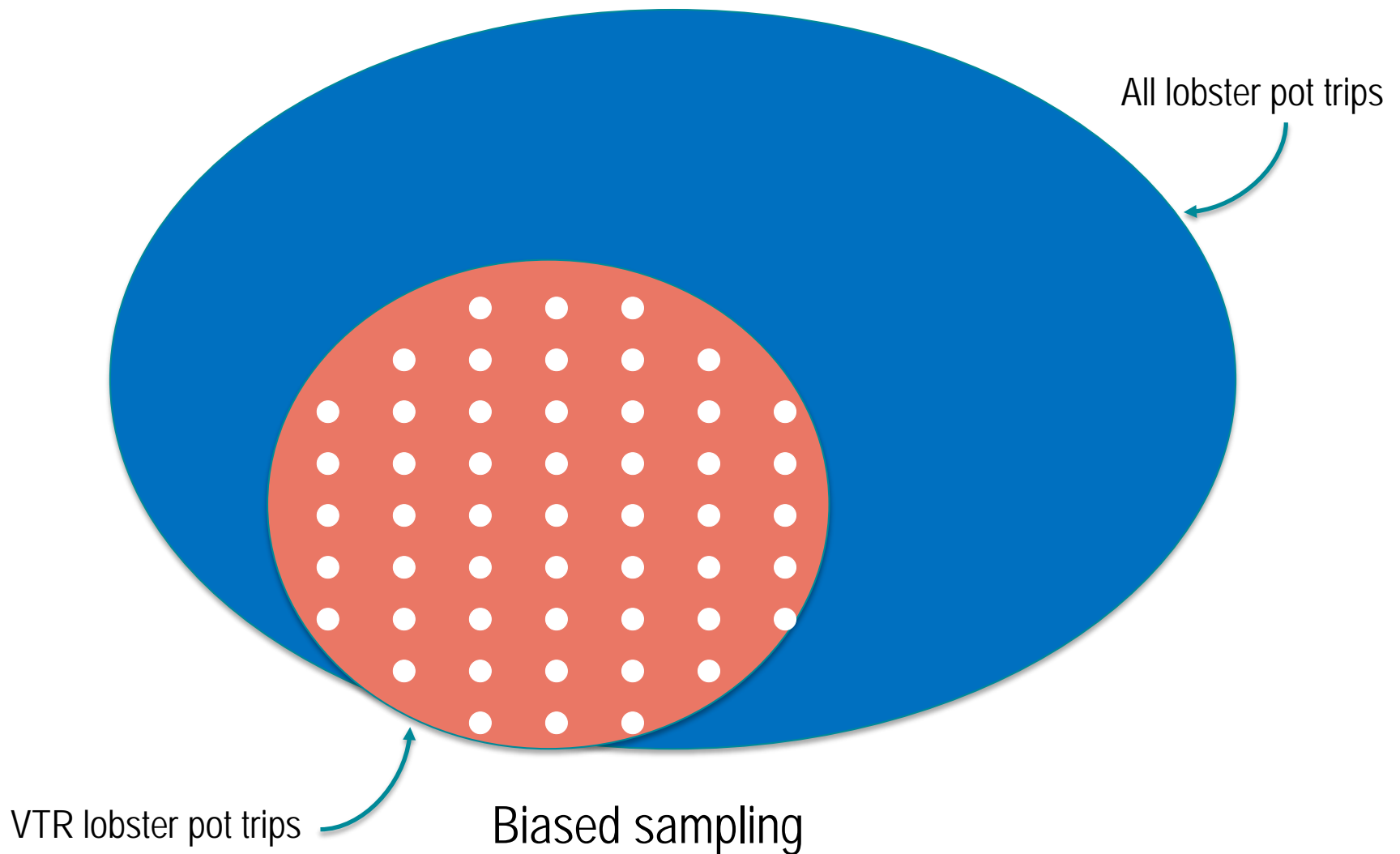
- SBRM uses VTR data to measure activity.
- Federal lobster permit does not require VTR.
- Only lobster boats with another federal permit are in the SBRM.
- May not reflect the lobster pot fishery as a whole.

Potential Bias in Sampling Frame



Unbiased sampling

Potential Bias in Sampling Frame



Background

- Increased sea days in 2015 highlighted this issue.
- ASMFC, NEFSC, States, and GARFO staff developed expanded sampling frame using permit and dealer data to address issue.
- But SBRM Omnibus Amendment specifically says it does not apply to lobster-only boats without VTRs.
- Returned to original sampling frame until we can implement a permanent solution through the public process.

Proposed Goal

- To refine the existing bycatch monitoring in the federal lobster pot fishery.
- Reduce potential sources of bias in sampling and discard estimates, and
- Do it as soon as practical, while minimizing the administrative burden on these vessels.

Proposed Actions/Solutions/Alternatives

1. No Action.
2. Include Non-VTR Lobster Pot Vessels in the SBRM. We could use the expanded sampling frame already devised, which could be modified in the future without further Council action.
3. Require all federal lobster vessels to submit VTRs for all trips. May not be consistent with the proposed goal of this action as it increases burden on vessels (and gov't) and may conflict with ASMFC process.

Likely Impacts

- Clarifies the Councils' intent to include all active Federal lobster pot vessels in the SBRM.
- Would not increase or decrease the number of observer sea days.
- Spreads coverage over a larger number of vessels.
- Lobster permit holders already required to carry an observer when requested.
- Therefore, this action is not anticipated to result in any changes to the operation of the lobster pot fishery, including where, when, or how they fish.

Likely Impacts - Example

2017 expected lobster pot effort for vessels that submit VTRs vs. lobster-only permits:

	Vessels	Trips
MA - VTR	46	1,484
MA – lobster only	4	77
NE - VTR	406	27,956
NE – lobster only	1,080	89,048

Likely Impacts - Example

SBRM observer sea days for lobster pot fleets

SBRM Year	Mid-Atlantic	New England
2015	47	572
2016	15	18
2017	15	17

Timeline

- June 2017 – Framework meeting #1.
- September/October 2017 – Framework Meeting #2.
- Fall/Winter – GARFO completes rulemaking.
- April 2018 – The 2018 NEFOP observer year begins, using sea day schedule based on new sampling frame.



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Questions