

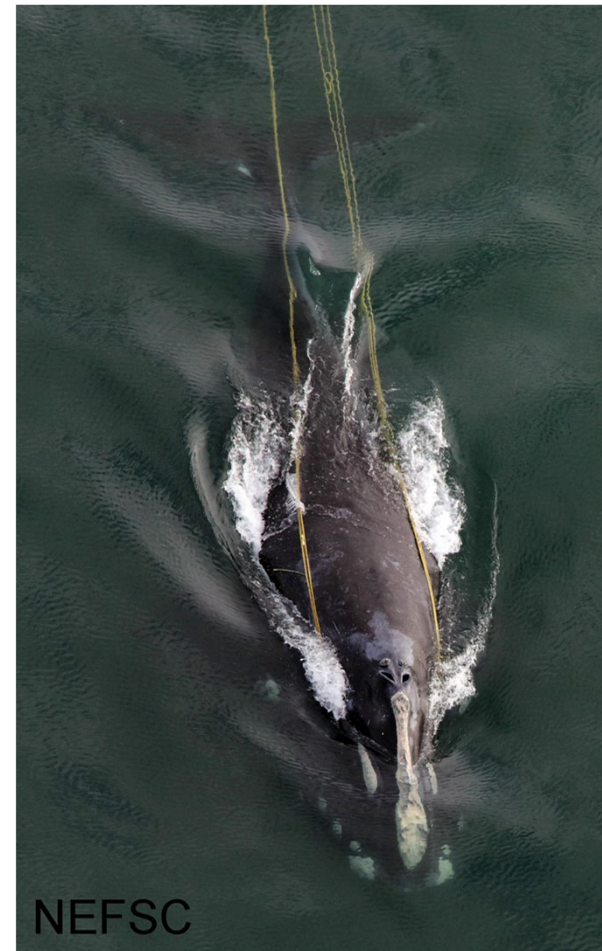
Update: Phase 2 Modifications to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan

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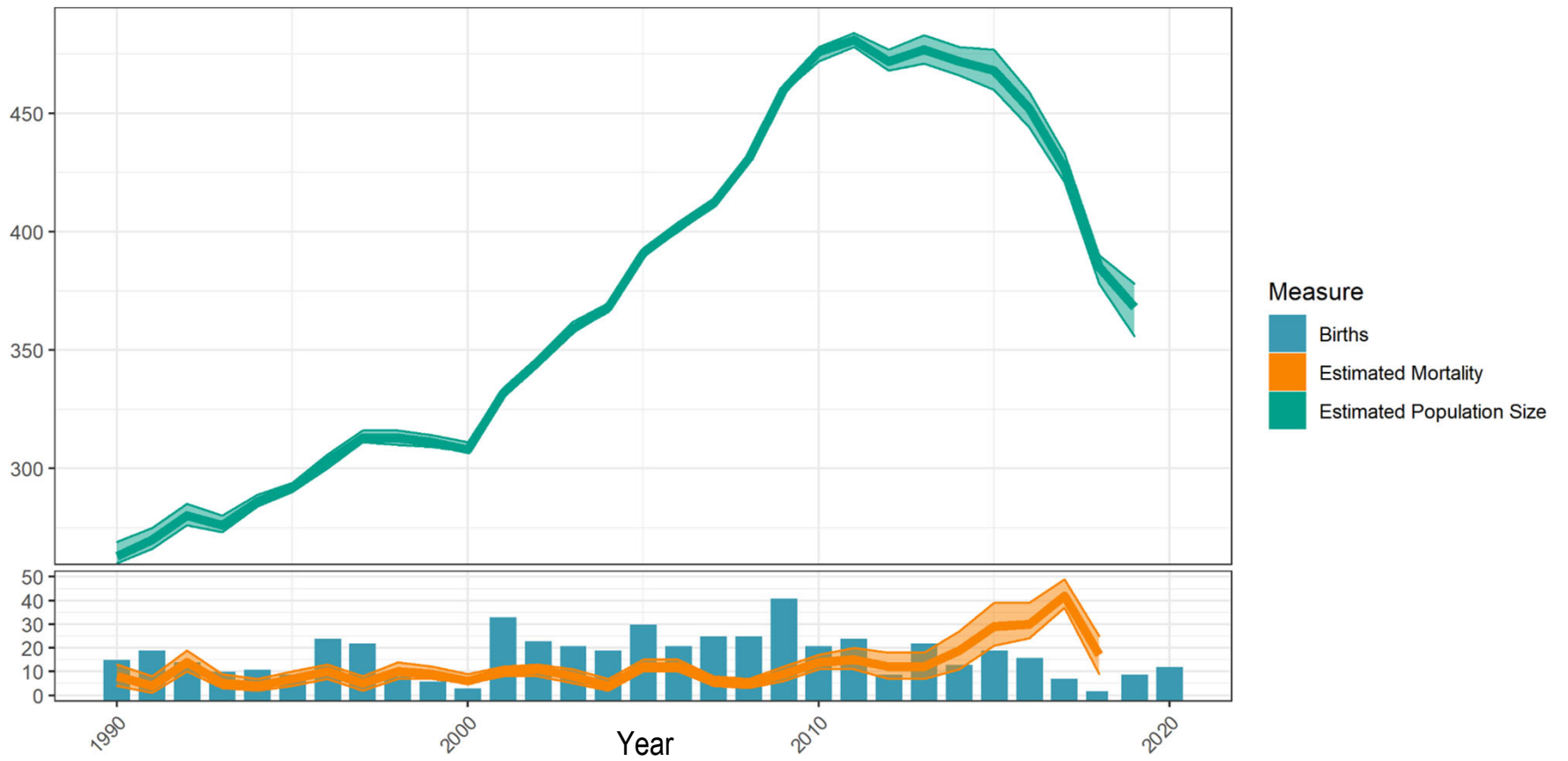


Background on Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan

- **Required by MMPA if incidental mortality and serious injury in U.S commercial fisheries exceeds Potential Biological Removal (PBR)**
 - Because PBR is <1 mortality or serious injury annually, focus is right whales
- **Take Reduction Planning:**
 - Develop and recommend take reduction measures
 - Consensus-based
 - NMFS has the ultimate responsibility to take action
- **Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team**
 - 60 member team including 18 fishermen
- **Latest modification: Final rule in OMB (Northeast lobster and Jonah crab)**



North Atlantic Right Whale Population in Decline Since 2010



Observed Mortality and Serious Injury 2017 - present

~368

TOTAL WHALES IN 2019

<100

POTENTIAL MOTHERS

52

KNOWN MORTALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES

40

COW/CALF PAIRS SINCE WINTER OF 2016/2017

5

SERIOUS INJURIES AVOIDED VIA DISENTANGLEMENT

MORTALITIES

34 Known mortalities (10 US, 24 CN)

9 entanglements (4 US, 5 CN)

11 vessel strikes (3 US, 8 CN)

13 cause undetermined (2 US, 11 CN)

1 perinatal mortality (1 US)

INJURIES THAT WILL LIKELY RESULT IN MORTALITY

18 Known Seriously Injured (11 US, 4 CN)

14 entanglements (9 US, 5 CN)

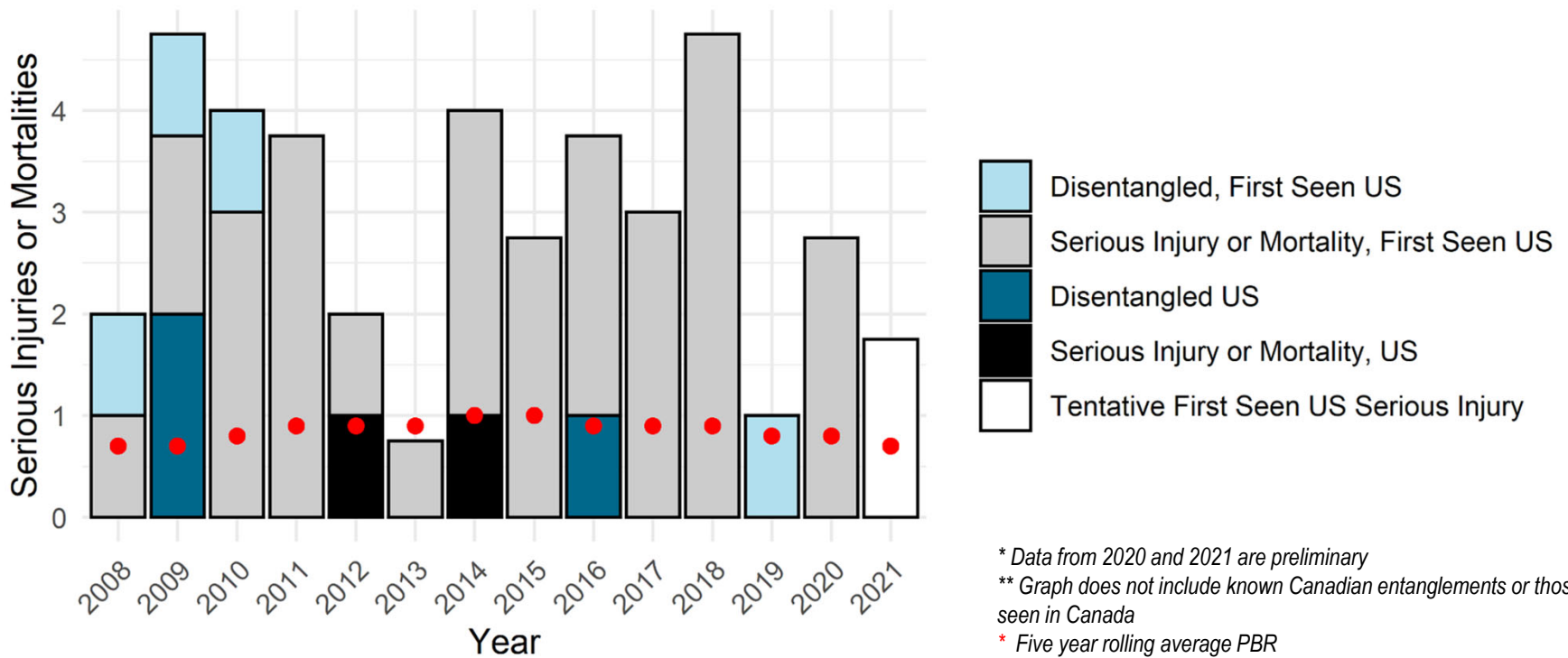
2 vessel strikes (2 US)

2 cause undetermined (2 US)



MMPA: Reduce mortality and serious injury in U.S. commercial fisheries to below PBR

Documented Mortality and Serious Injury* of NARWs
*Known US entanglements and those first seen in US***



* Data from 2020 and 2021 are preliminary
 ** Graph does not include known Canadian entanglements or those first seen in Canada
 * Five year rolling average PBR
 Data from: Henry et al 2020, Henry et al 2015, Henry et al 2010, NMFS

Parallel Rulemaking Processes in Progress

NE Lobster/Jonah Crab Rule: Phase 1

fisheries.noaa.gov/ALWTRP

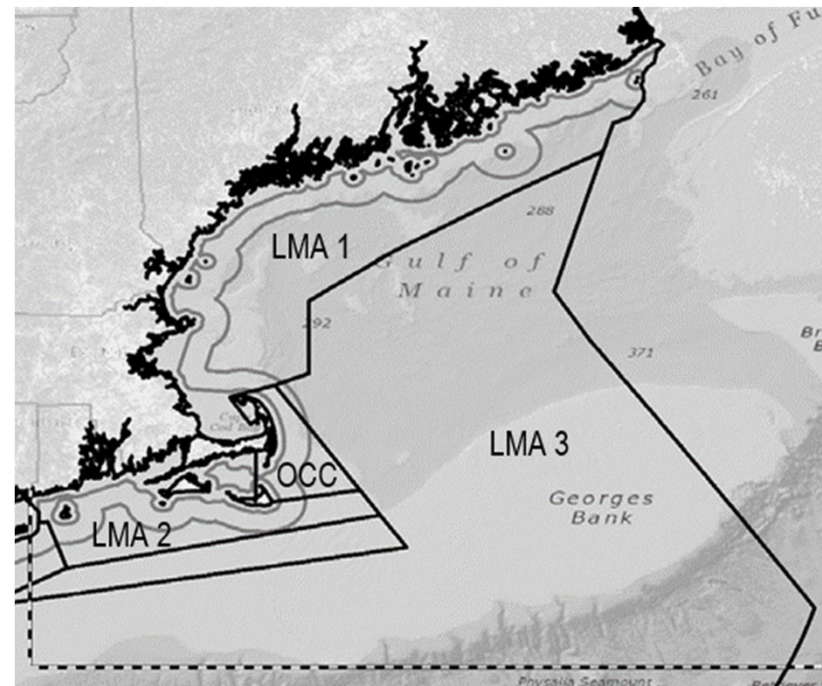


Coastwide Rulemaking: Phase 2



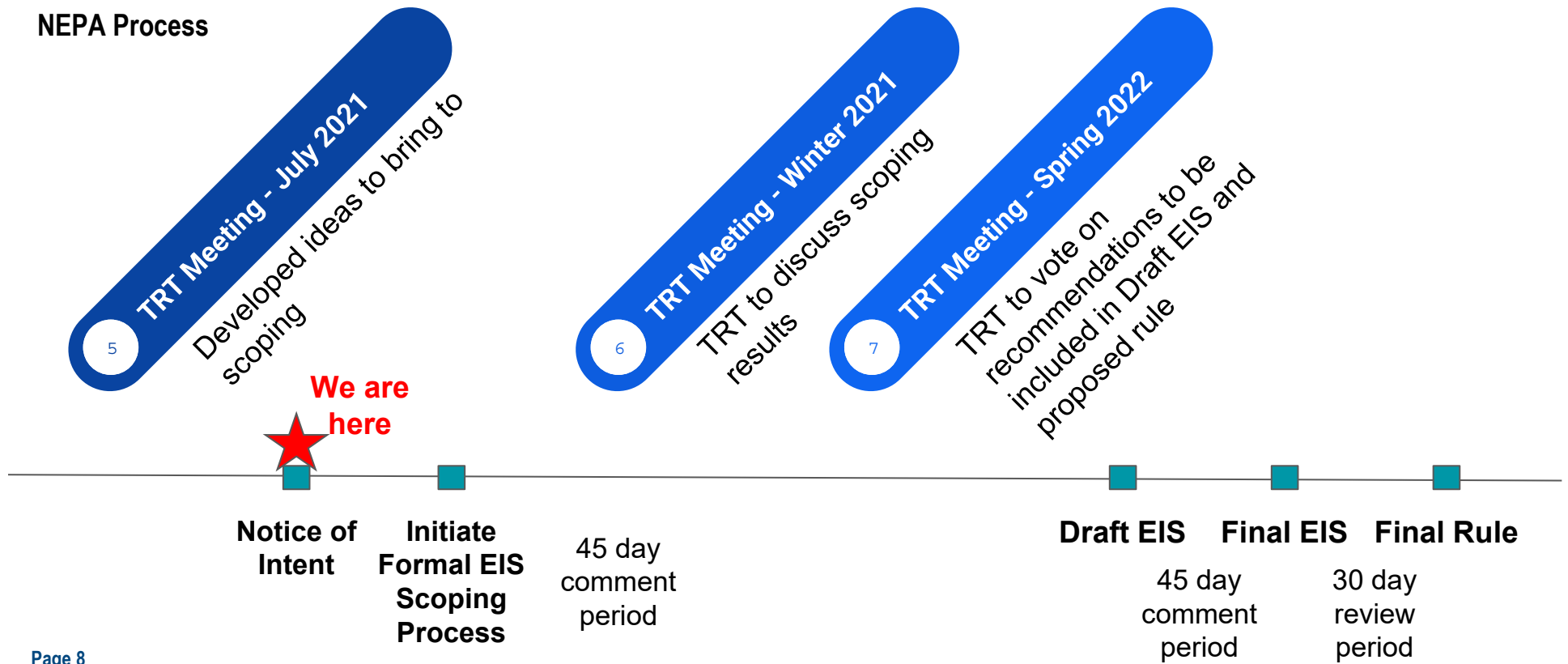
Phase 1: Update

- 60-80% risk reduction within Northeast lobster and Jonah crab trap/pot fisheries
- The FEIS was released on July 2, 2021 (cooling off period ends today)
- The Final Rule is in OMB/OIRA (0648-BJ09)



Phase 2: Modifications to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan

NEPA Process



Phase 2: Overview

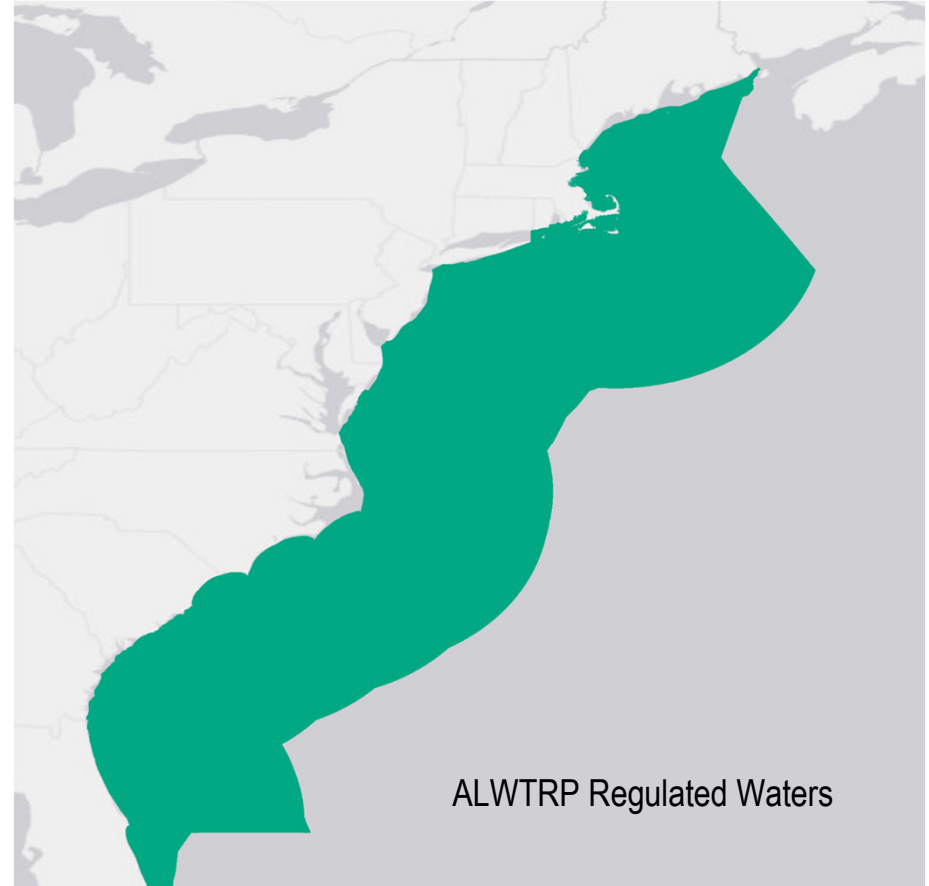
60-80% risk reduction in:

- Atlantic gillnet
- Atlantic mixed species trap/pot
- mid-Atlantic Lobster and Jonah crab fisheries

ALWTRT meetings began in spring of 2021

- Baseline distribution and risk
- Ideas for scoping (does not imply broad consensus for future recommendations for rulemaking)

Scoping will occur through October 21, 2021



MAFMC Fisheries regulated under the Plan

Species

Summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, mackerel (Atlantic and chub), squid (Longfin and *Illex*), butterfish, and [forage species](#), surfclam, ocean quahog, bluefish, golden and blueline tilefish, spiny dogfish, monkfish

Affected Fisheries

Mid-Atlantic gillnet fisheries for monkfish, spiny dogfish, bluefish, scup, and butterfish

Northeast sink gillnet fisheries for spiny dogfish, monkfish, mackerel

Northeast drift gillnet fisheries for mackerel

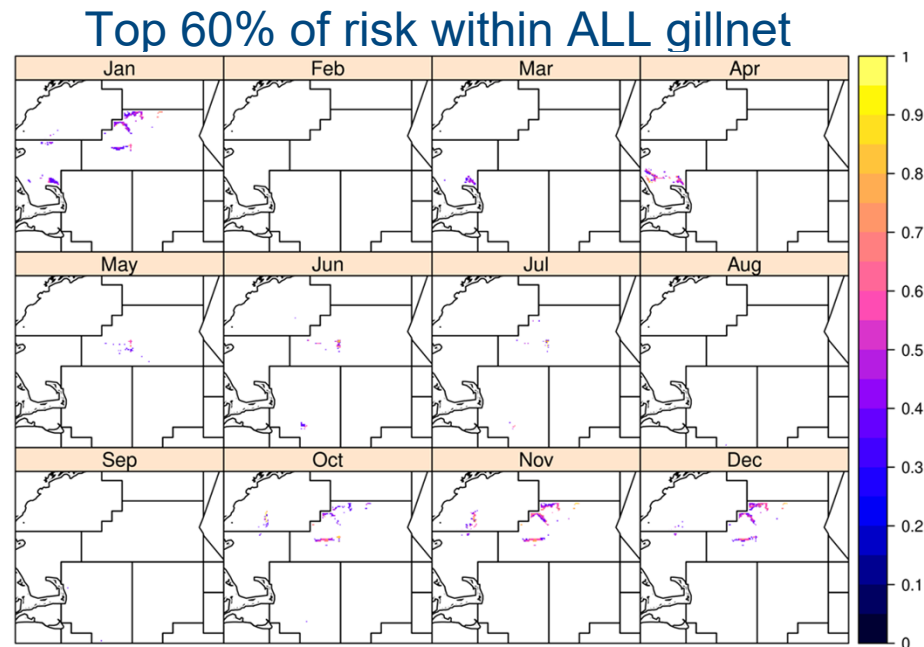
Southeast Atlantic gillnet fisheries for bluefish

Northeast anchored float gillnet fishery for mackerel

Atlantic mixed species trap/pot fisheries for black sea bass, scup

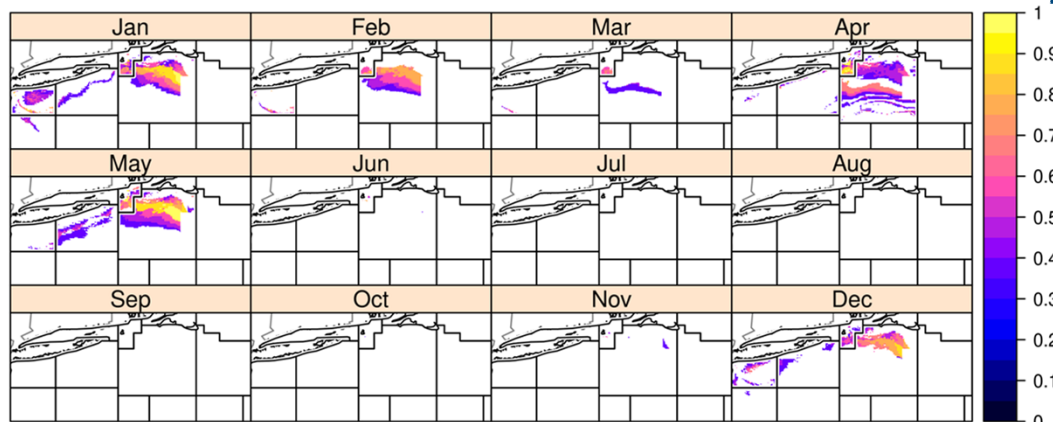
U.S. Federal Fisheries Hotspot Analysis: Gulf of Maine

- Other Trap/Pot in the GOM show no coast-wide or local hot spots within the top 60%
- Data and analyses will be updated for scoping to include state fisheries

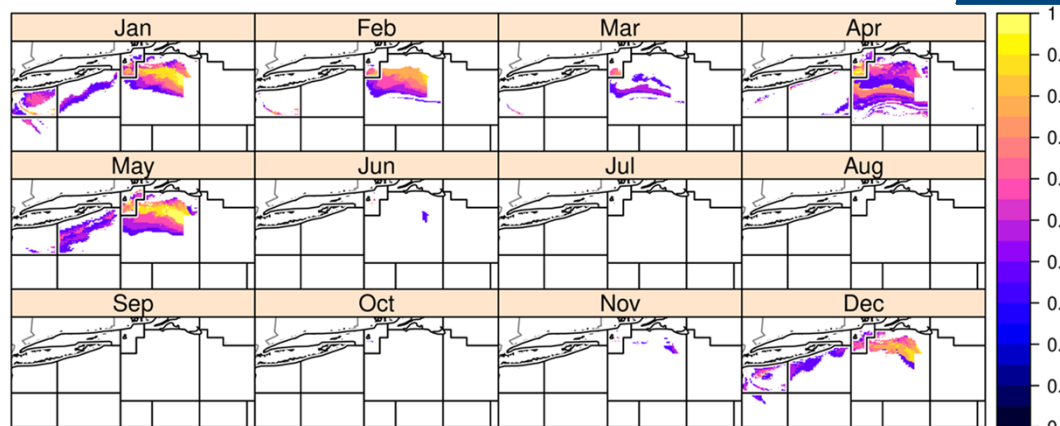


U.S. Federal Gillnet Hotspot Analysis: Southern New England

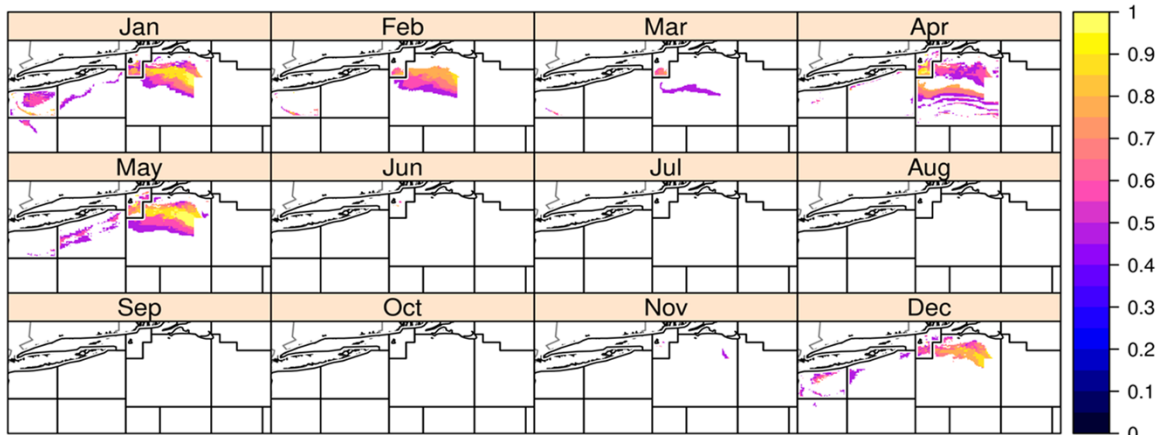
Top 60% of risk
within SNE gillnet



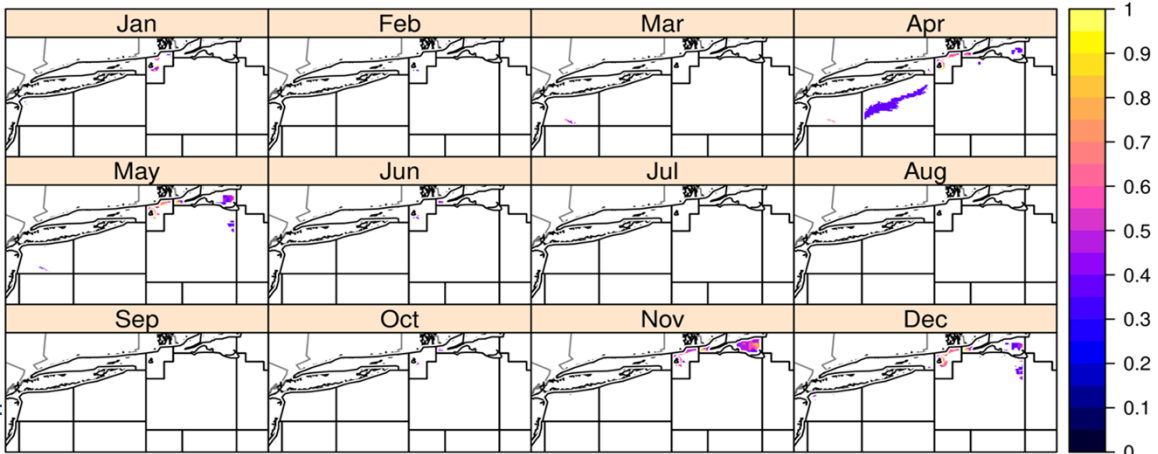
Top 60% of risk
within ALL gillnet



U.S. Federal OTP Hotspot Analysis: Southern New England



Top 60% of risk with
SNE OTP



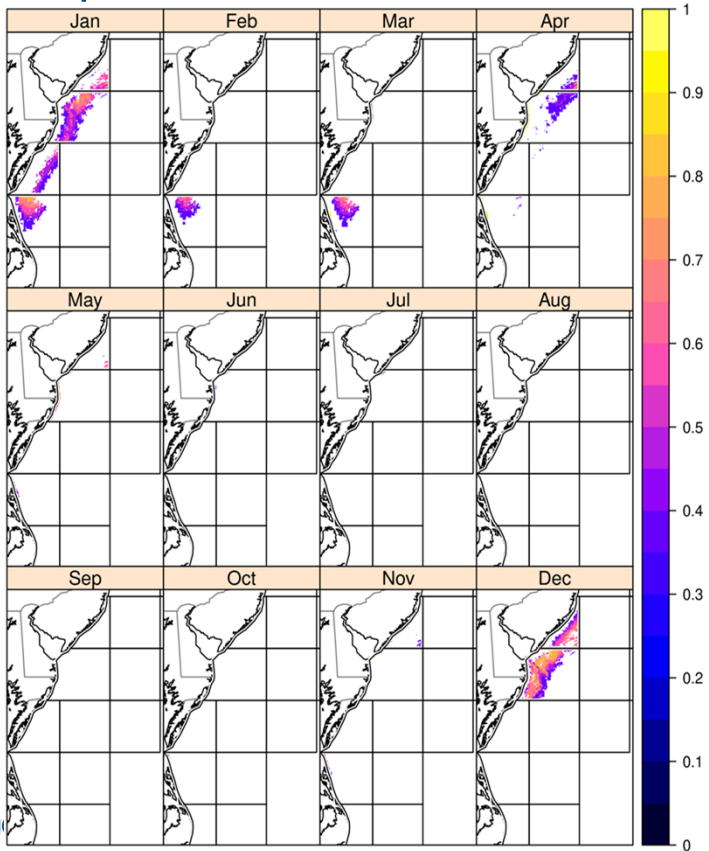
Top 60% of risk
ALL OTP



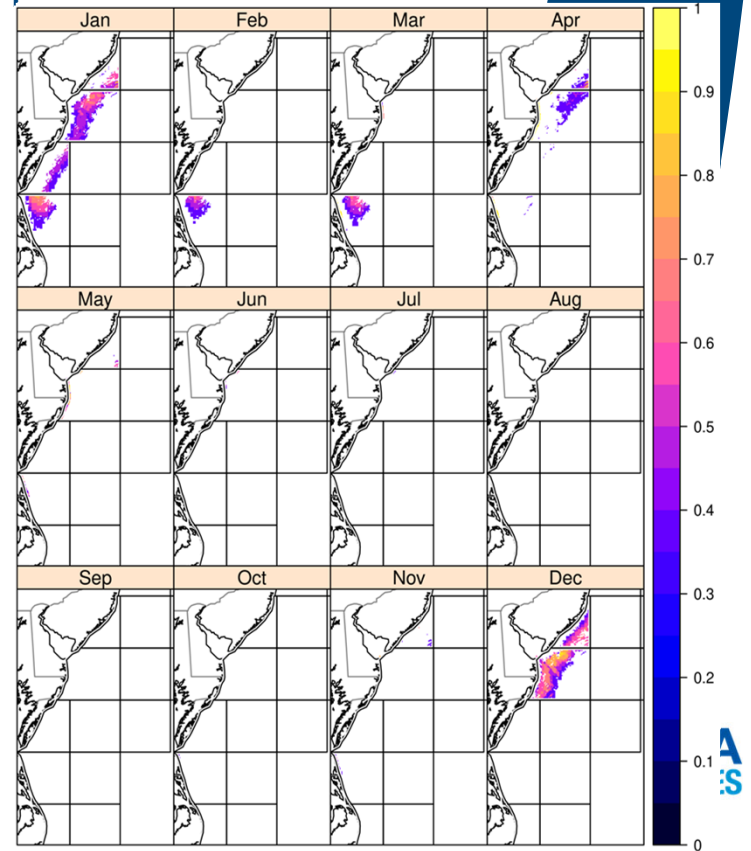
NOAA
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U.S. Federal OTP Hotspot Analysis: Mid Atlantic

Top 60% of risk within MAB OTP

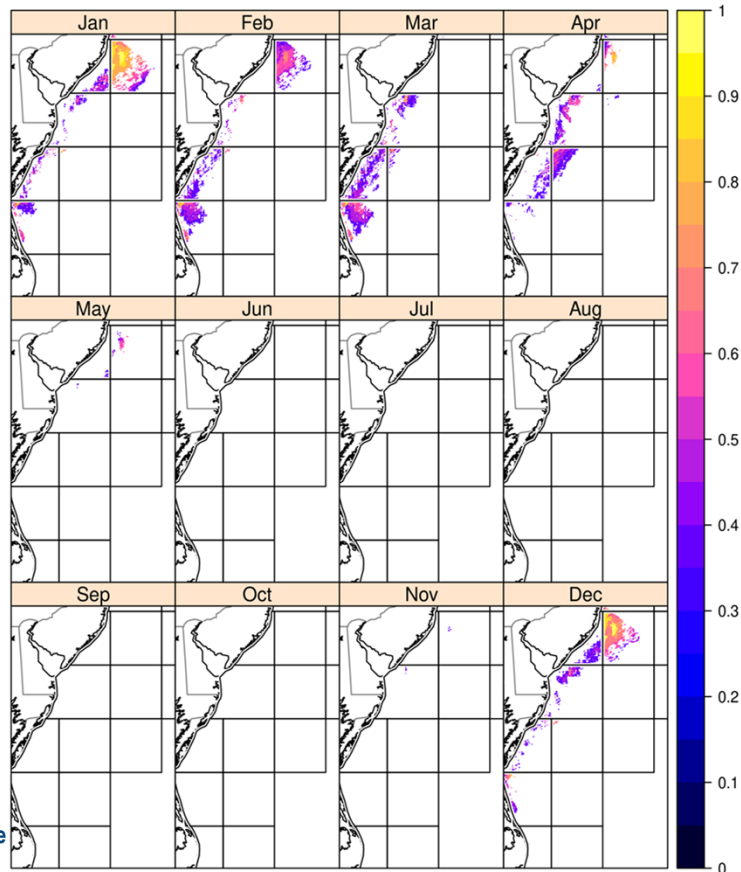


Top 60% of risk within ALL C

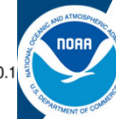
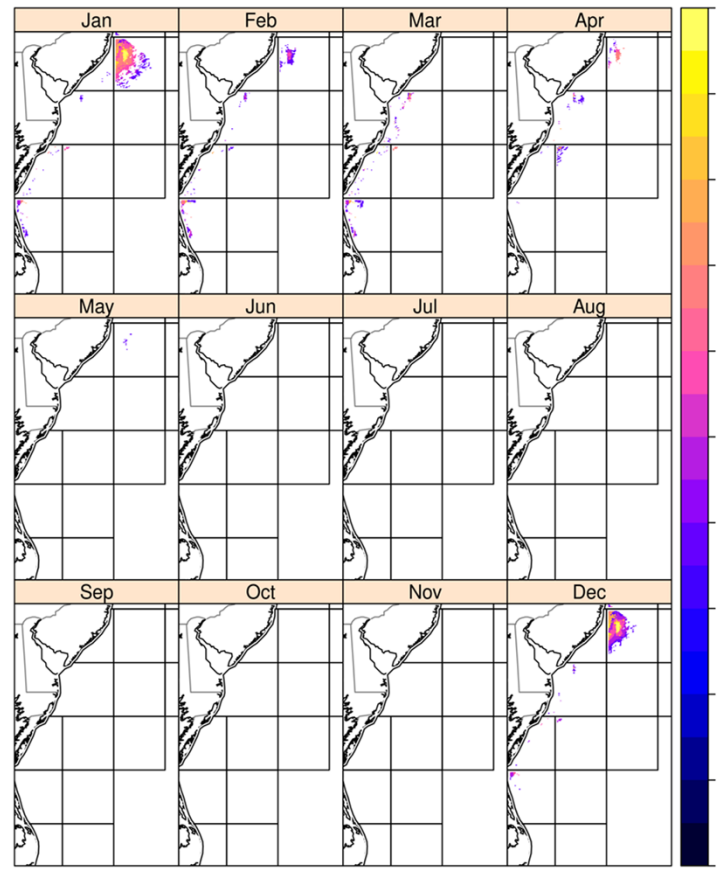


U.S. Federal Gillnet Hotspot Analysis: Mid-Atlantic

Top 60% of risk within MAB gillnet

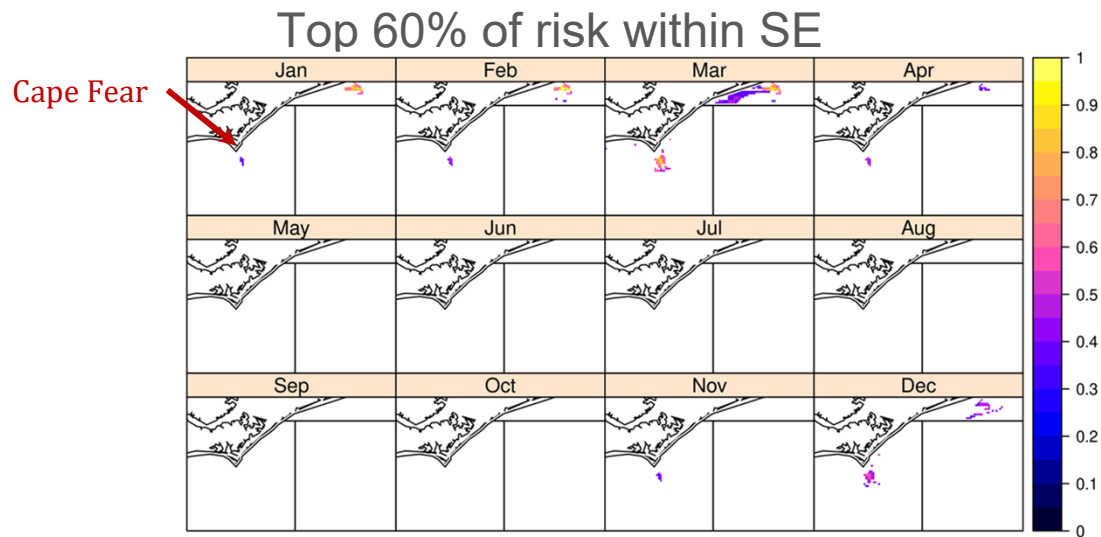


Top 60% of risk within ALL gillnet



U.S. Federal Fisheries Hotspot Analysis: Southeast

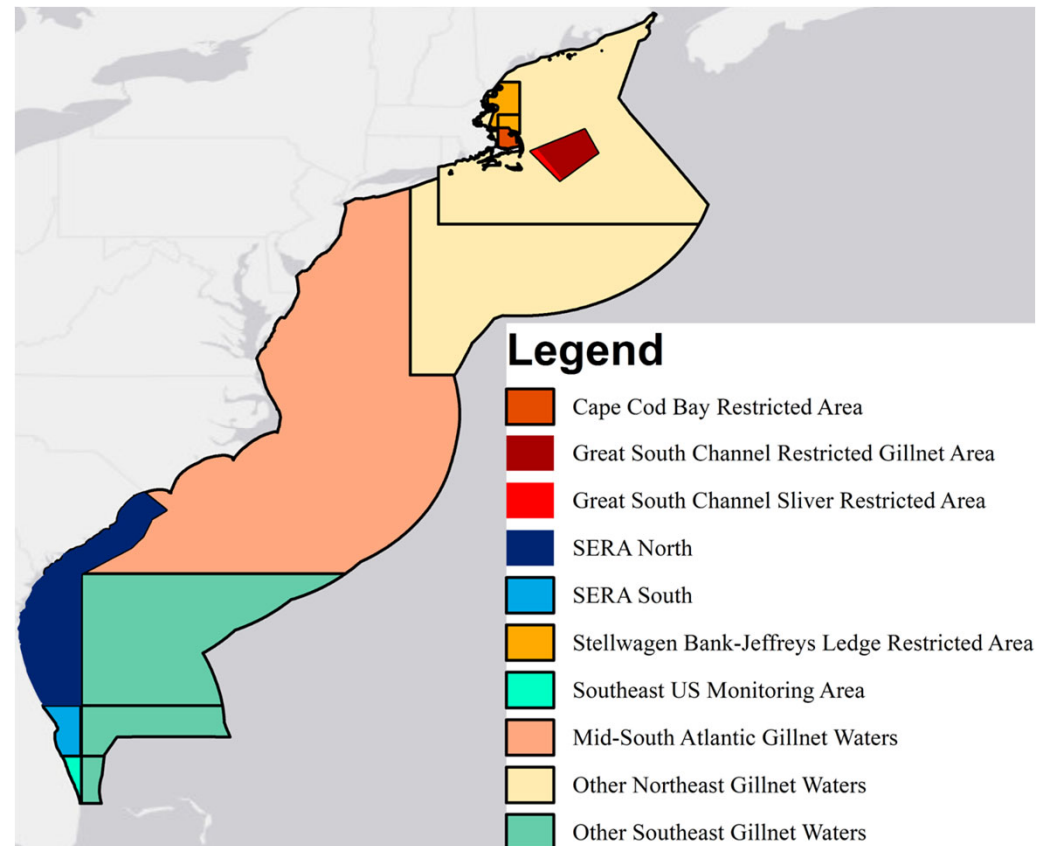
- Other Trap/Pot in the Southeast show no coast-wide or local hot spots within the top 60%
- No coast-wide hot spots for federal gillnet fisheries within the top 60% of risk
- Preventative measures have likely helped minimize risk
- Data and analyses will be updated for scoping to include state fisheries



*SE gillnet = gillnet south of Hatteras, NC

Phase 2: TRT scoping topics for gillnet fishing reduction

- Reduce soak times
- Restrict overnight soaks
- Minimum/maximum number of nets on a string
- Evaluate the use of tie-downs
- Hybrid ropeless gillnet (e.g. one end ropeless, other end weak rope)



Phase 2: TRT scoping topics for trap/pot gear reduction

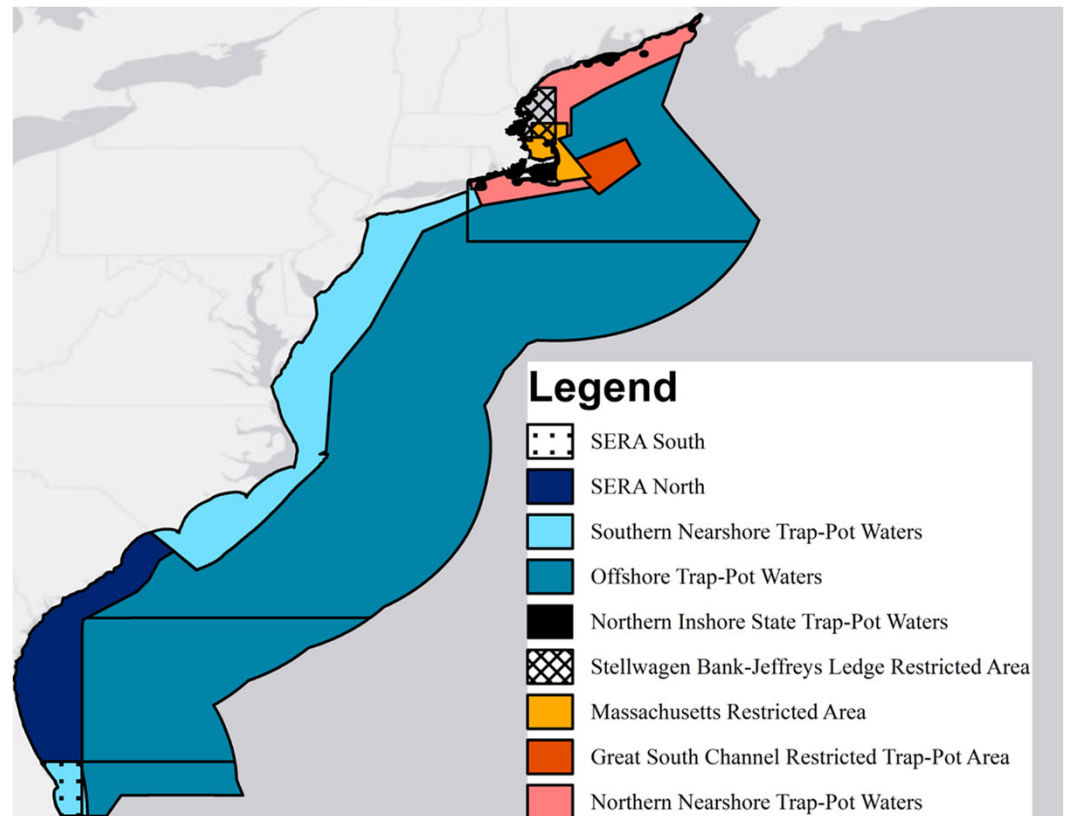
Change minimum traps/trawl

- Increase minimum traps/trawl (not in SE calving area)
- SE: Singles only with weaker gear

Trap caps

- Fish pots, blue crab, whelk
- Any fisheries with no cap

Extend Final Rule from Phase I to other trap/pot fisheries



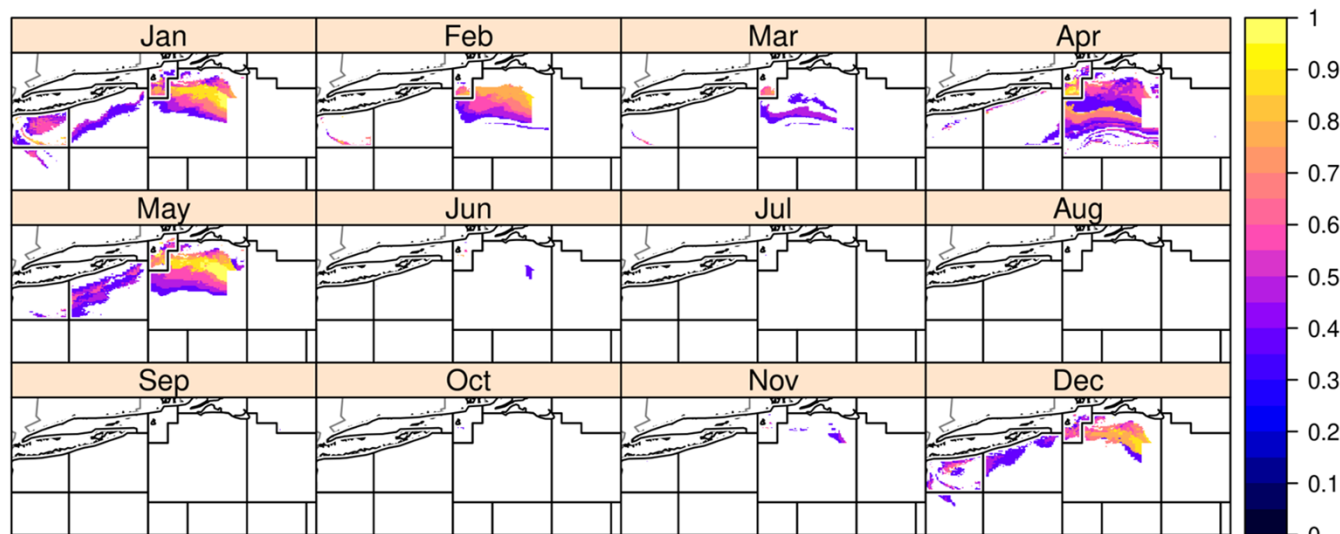
Phase 2: Scoping topics for restricted area risk reduction

Reevaluate existing restricted areas:

- Allow ropeless testing
- Reevaluate boundaries/timing
- Include BSB closures in SE in Plan

New areas based on hot spots:

- Rolling area restrictions in Mid-Atlantic
- Southern New England restricted

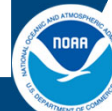
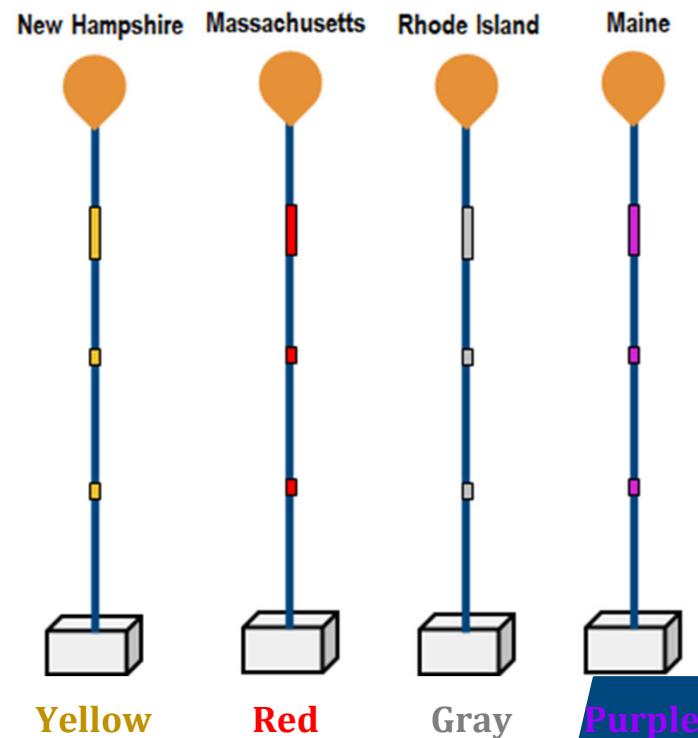


Phase 2: Scoping topics for gear marking

Modify gear marking to show greater resolution between:

- Different States
- State and Federal Waters
- U.S. vs. Canada
- Gear type

State-specific marks in state waters in proposed rule



NOAA
FISHERIES

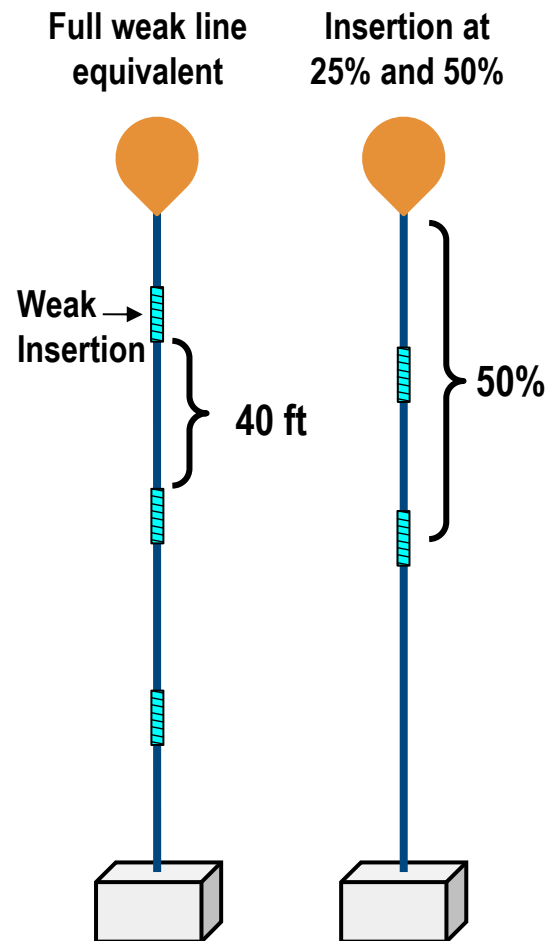
Phase 2: Scoping topics involving fishery effort management

- Cap latent effort in gillnet fisheries
- Consider limited entry for open access fisheries, e.g. skate fishery
- Challenges determining effort and managing unmanaged fisheries (eg. striped mullet, blue catfish caught in gillnets)
- Trap caps
- Reduced soak times
- Minimum/maximum number of nets on a string



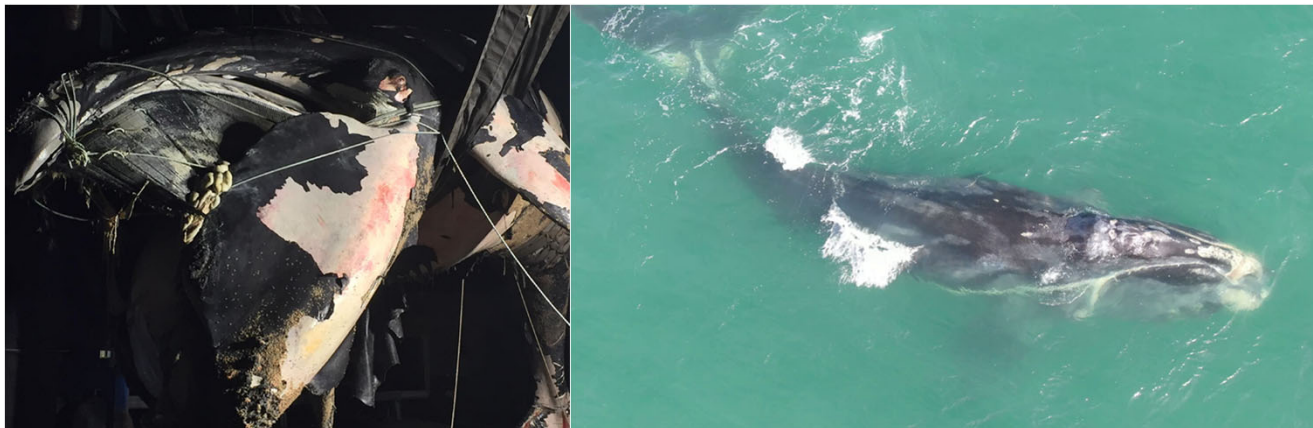
Phase 2: Scoping topics for gear strength

- Require maximum 1,700 lb breaking strength rope or regular inserts in buoy line (40-60 ft)
- Cap line diameter ($\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{5}{8}$ in. max to differentiate from Canada)
- Expand gear modifications such as weak inserts in gillnets to year round in the mid Atlantic
- Weaker weak inserts with a smaller anchor in gillnet panels



Phase 2: Next Steps - Fall 2021 Scoping

- MAFMC input requested, particularly for MAFMC fisheries
 - Latent effort characterization, access issues if any
- Scoping season: September & October
 - Seven region-specific meetings, some by gear type (gillnet and trap/pot, Northeast Atlantic, Southeast). Can support state scoping if useful
- Bring results of scoping back to Team to develop recommendations



Questions

