

Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel Report

New England Fishery Management Council
Gloucester, MA
September 23, 2025

Recent Meetings

- July 17, 2024: NTAP full panel meeting – New Bedford
- Regular Scheduled NTAP Working Group meetings (1 hour, ~ every 3 weeks)
 - August 2024 – June 2025 → meetings focused on the Regional Industry-Based Trawl Survey (RIBTS) goals/objectives and planning for the phase 1 pilot project
 - August 2025 – present/future → meetings focus on implementation of RIBTS phase 1 and planning for the phase 2 pilot project

NTAP Full Panel Meeting – New Bedford

- Center/survey updates
- NEFSC trawl survey update
- Moulton Task Force
- NTAP Working Group update on RIBTS
- Discussion on surveys and scientific fishing in and around wind lease areas – current/past trawl monitoring programs for OSW

NTAP Full Panel Meeting – New Bedford

- **NEFSC Survey**

- Spring 2025 BTS survey mostly a success
- Spring 2025 Gulf of Maine longline survey a success
- Fall 2025 surveys on track to begin as scheduled

- **Pisces Update**

- Will fill in for Bigelow Spring 2026
- On track but concerns with getting contracts for wet lab

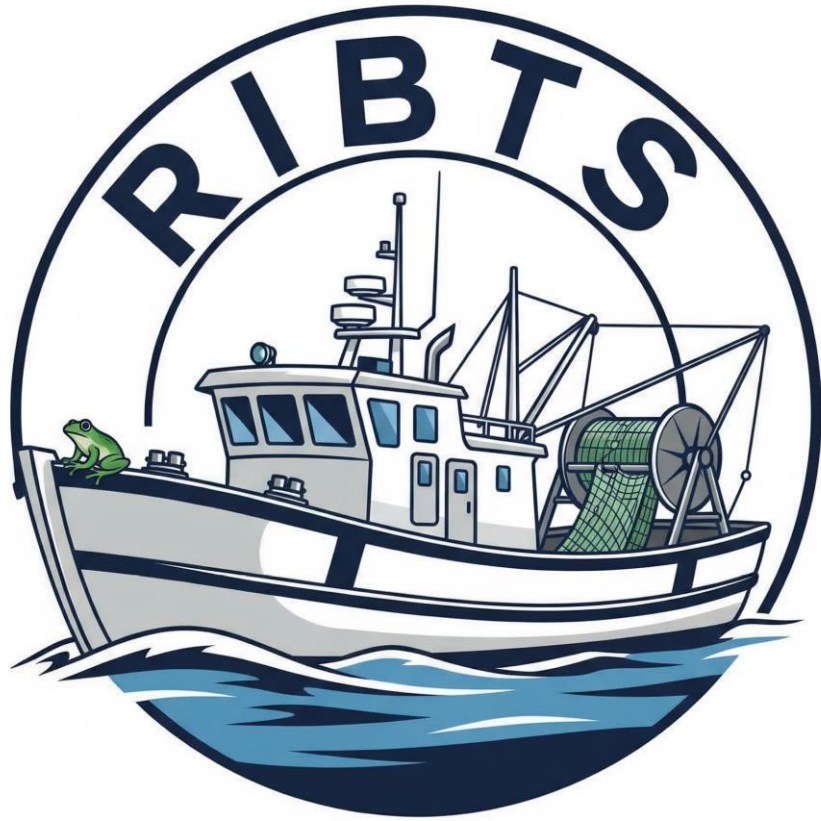
- **Offshore Wind Mitigation**

- Currently drafting the program including final plans and cost
- Includes 19 surveys – existing and “new” surveys
- Peer reviewed by joint SSC sub-group last year

- **NEAMAP spring 2025 trawl surveys (VIMS, ME/NH & Mass DMF)**

- High success rate with good coverage and minimal station loss

NTAP Working Group - RIBTS



Name Change!

*Previously referred to as Industry-Based Survey (IBS) is now the **Regional Industry-Based Trawl Survey (RIBTS)***



NTAP Working Group - RIBTS

- **Survey Development Components:**

- Program Management
- Operations
- Statistical Design
- Communications

- **Three Phase Approach:**

- Phase 1 Pilot: One experienced vessel, ~1 week, focused on operations to inform design
- Phase 2 Pilot – more than one vessel & broader time and area scope, focused on operations, assessing full range of sampling protocols
- Phase 3 - Start of long-term survey
- *Finalize statistical design between Phase 1 and 2*

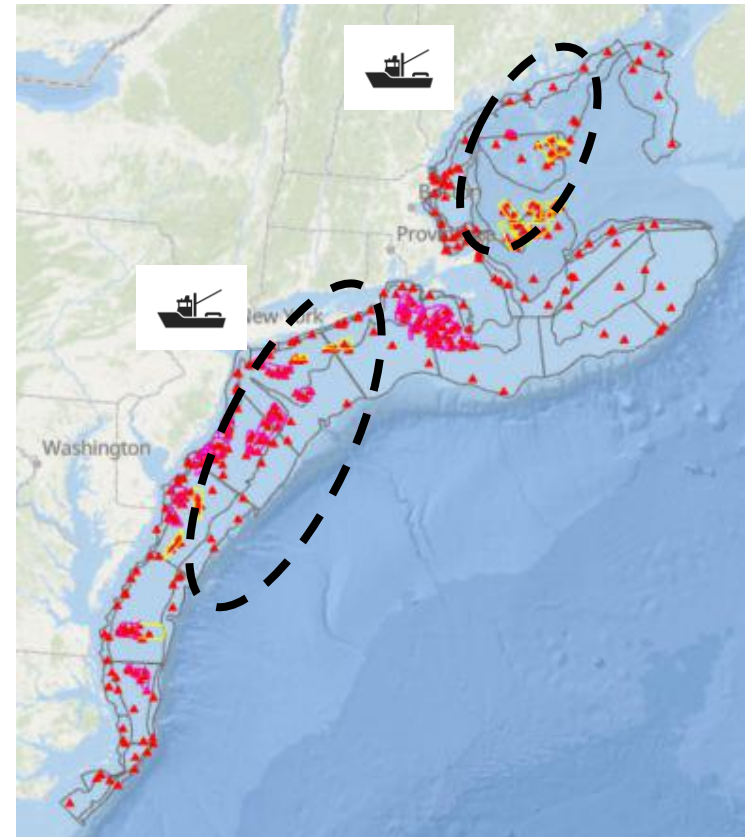
NTAP Working Group – RIBTS Phase 1

- Finalized Phase 1 design in June 2025
- Total funding secured by NEFSC - \$360,000
- Request For Proposal announced on 8/13 with deadline of 9/5
- Target date for field work - late fall 2025/early spring 2026
- SOPs and Best Practices Published: 6 months after field work is complete
- A small group of NEFSC staff and NTAP WG members reviewed and selected applicant on September 11
- And the winner is.....

NTAP Working Group – RIBTS Phase 2

Goal: Inform the development of a full-scale survey, with focus on operational feasibility on multiple vessels and across a wider geographic area

- Pilot survey in GOM and SNE/Mid-Atlantic aboard 2 F/Vs
 - Trawl, oceanography, biological sampling operations
- Use NEFSC data acquisition system: FSCS
- Purchase some survey gear, equipment, and supplies
- Products:
 - Establish vessel staging SOPs: Consider differences among ports/vessels
 - Define staffing needs: Number/expertise needed for staging and sea-going on multiple vessels
 - Establish gear and instrumentation SOPs
 - Define efficiency with proposed survey density/design
 - Define long-term vessel requirements to support scientific operations
- Approximate budget: \$2 million (no funding identified yet)



Acknowledgements

- **Kathryn Ford – NEFSC NTAP lead**
- **Anna Mercer – NEFSC NTAP WG lead**
- **Wes Townsend – former MAFMC Co-Chair**
- **Hannah Hart – MAFMC staff**