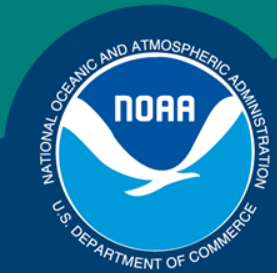


Science, Service, Stewardship



NMFS Gulf of Maine Cod Interim Action: Presentation for Groundfish Oversight Committee

Michael Ruccio
Groundfish Policy Analyst
Greater Atlantic Regional Office



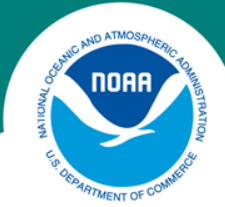
**NOAA
FISHERIES
SERVICE**

NOAA



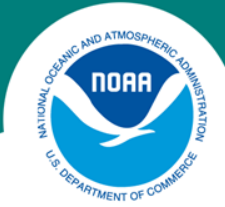
TWO PART PRESENTATION:

1. Overview of Interim Rule Measures (outlined in Monday Town Hall Meeting)
2. Overview of Analyses that may be useful for Framework Adjustment 53 Discussions



Part 1: Interim Action Measures

- Considered but rejected
 1. Closing the Gulf of Maine to all fishing
 2. Zero commercial possession of cod
 3. Selective gear requirements
 4. More extensive measures that would delay action



Part 1: Interim Action Measures

- Goals and Objectives
 1. Reduce overfishing by reducing catch
 2. Provide protection to spawning aggregations and spawning activities
 3. Minimize take of cod from areas where concentrated
 4. Develop and implement action quickly



Part 1: Interim Action Measures

1. Commercial and recreational fishery area closures
2. Commercial trip limits
3. Zero recreational possession
4. Declaration change for Gulf of Maine trips
5. Day gillnet sector exemption increasing number of nets revoked

Interim rule comment period is 30 days



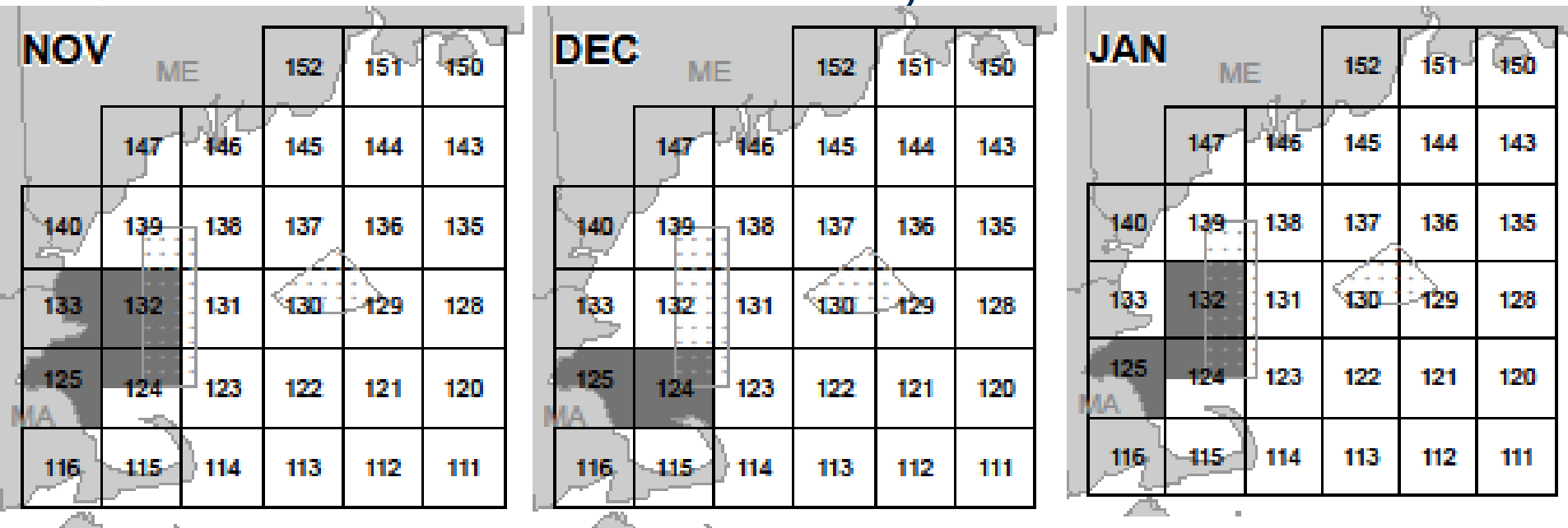
Commercial and recreational fishery area closures

- Existing seasonal rolling closures replaced by these measures
- Apply to vessels using certain commercial and recreational gear capable of catching cod (meaning gear other than "exempted gear," and most gear exempted from rolling closure areas).
- Western Gulf of Maine (WGOM) Closure Area not closed by the 30-minute squares remain accessible for federally permitted party and charter vessels through a Letter of Authorization.
- Implementation of closures is effective when the rule publishes; a 2-week grace period for fixed gear retrieval (Trip limits apply; not intended for extended fishing opportunity).
- Closed area transit/gear stowage provisions apply



Area Closures--November through January

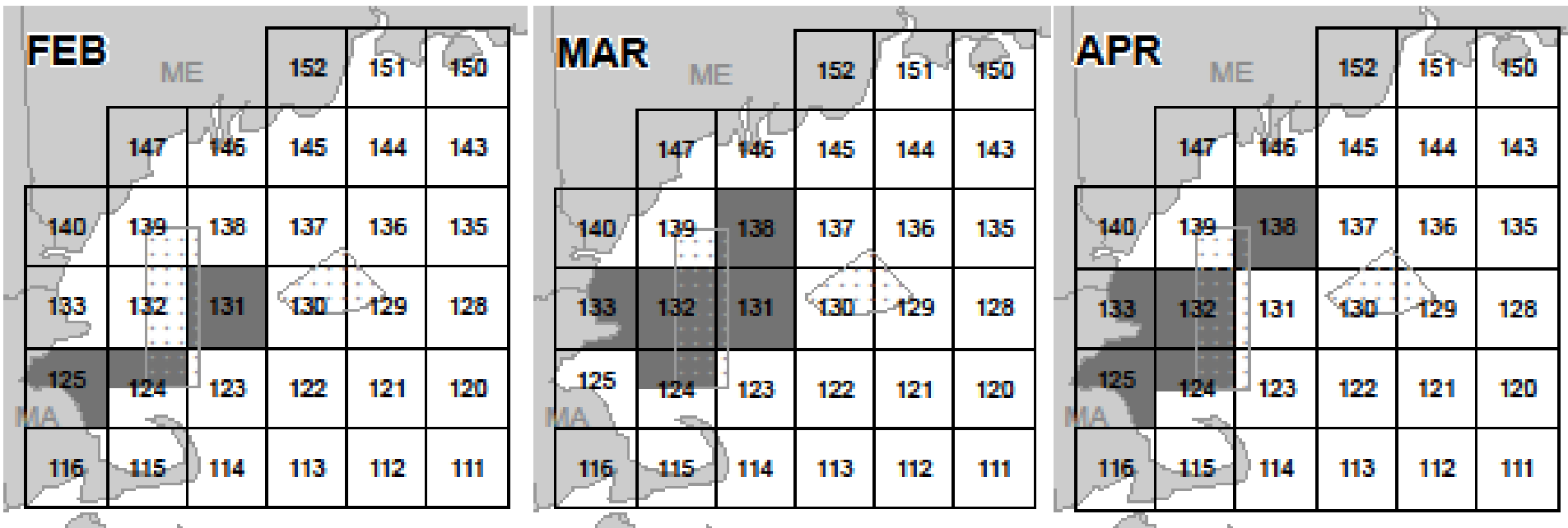
Commercial and recreational fishery area closures





Area Closures--February through April

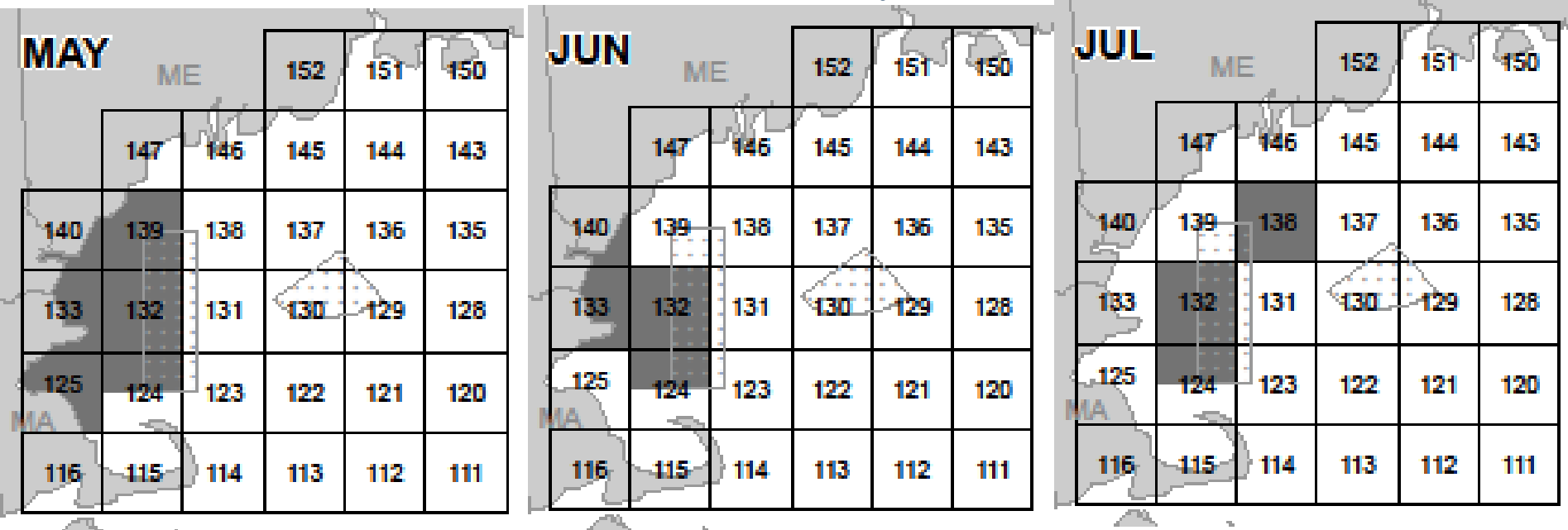
Commercial and recreational fishery area closures





Area Closures--May through July

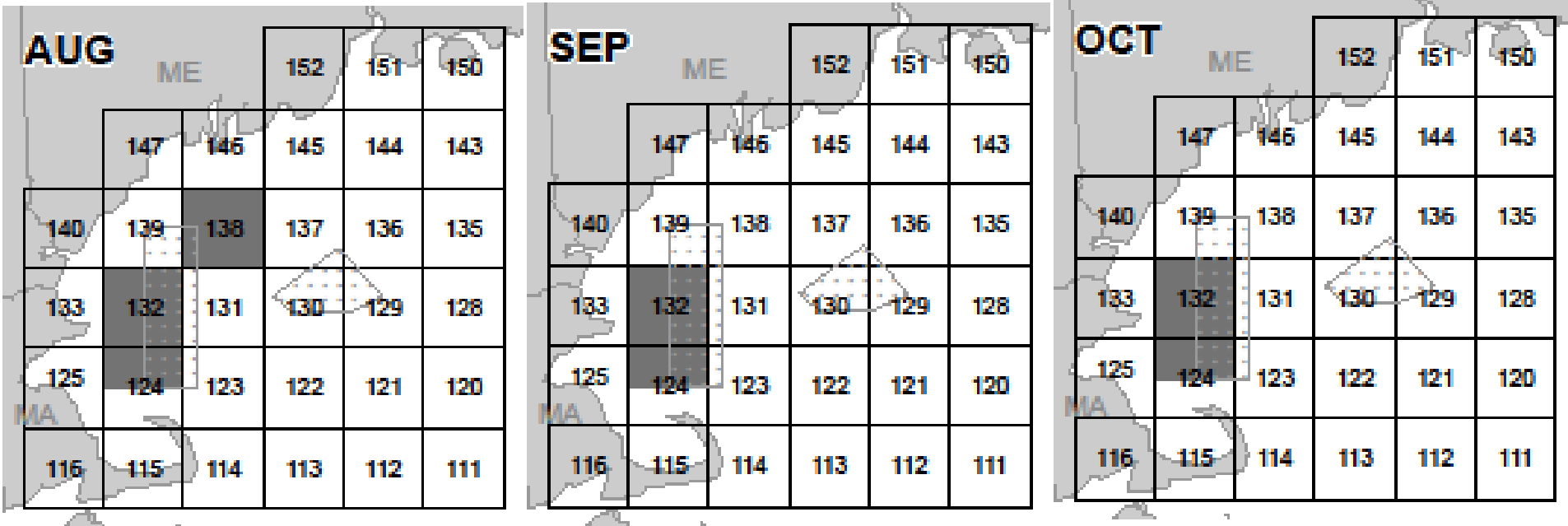
Commercial and recreational fishery area closures





Area Closures--August through October

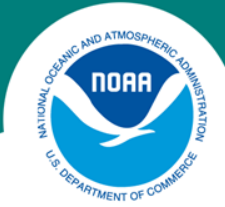
Commercial and recreational fishery area closures





Commercial Trip Limits

- 200 pounds per trip for all common pool categories and sector enrolled vessels. Sector ACE remains unchanged and in effect for remainder of year
- Designed to discourage catch of cod in areas not closed by interim measures.
- Analysis of fishing year 2013 data indicated that 75 percent of trips from open areas took 200 pounds or less of cod
- Temporary measures; Cod catch limits will likely be constraining in fishing year 2015



Prohibition on Recreational Possession

- All cod caught in recreational fisheries must be returned to the sea
- Applies to all trips in EEZ; to federally permitted vessels in state waters
- Encourage good handling and release practices to minimize discard mortality
- Preliminary field studies indicated mortality reductions possible when cod are taken on baited hooks



Commercial Declaration Change—GOM only trips

- Trips declaring GOM may only fish in that Broad Stock Area for the duration of the trip
- Applies irrespective of if trip is monitored or observed at-sea
- Designed to improve catch attribution to stock area
- Insufficient time in interim development to consider Council discussed inshore declaration approach
- Overarching potential bias issue and monitoring resource concerns associated with monitoring requirement for multiple area trips discussed by Council



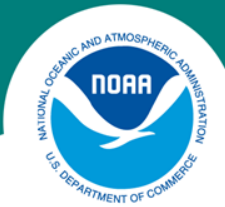
Day Gillnet Sector Vessel Exemption Change

- Evaluated all current exemptions; will evaluate 2015 exemption requests as well
- Concerned about amount of gear in water, spawning aggregation effects, and potential 'wall effect' along closed area boundaries
- Day gillnet vessels will be subject to no more than 100 gillnets of 300 feet, or 50 fathoms in length.
- No more than 50 gillnets may be rigged for roundfish (i.e., gillnets that are constructed with floats on the float line and that have no tie-down twine between the float line and the lead line).
- Gillnets in the GOM regulated mesh area must be tagged with two tags per net.



Part 2: Analyses

- Detailed Environmental Assessment Prepared for Action
- Available on Regulations.gov. Search docket number: NOAA-NMFS-2014-0125 to find the interim action
- Also posted on GARFO website:
<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/stories/2014/gomcodfy2014interimactioneassessment.pdf>



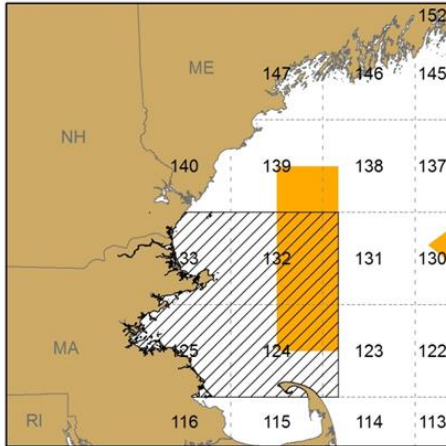
Part 2: Analyses

- Area closure evaluations
 1. Started with existing closures and Council alternatives under consideration for Framework Adjustment 53
 2. Evaluated if additional closures were necessary to protect spawning activities
 3. Evaluated if additional areas were needed to further reduce catch
 4. For expediency, worked with existing available data sources

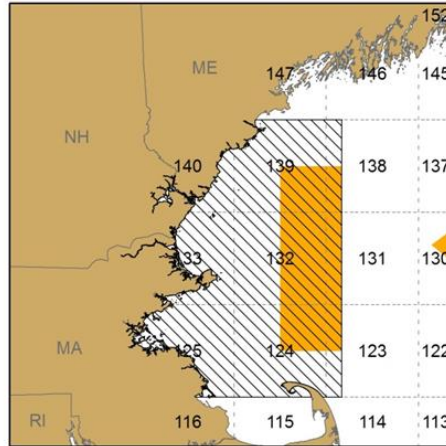
Hybrid Option for Rolling Closures

Groundfish Closed Area

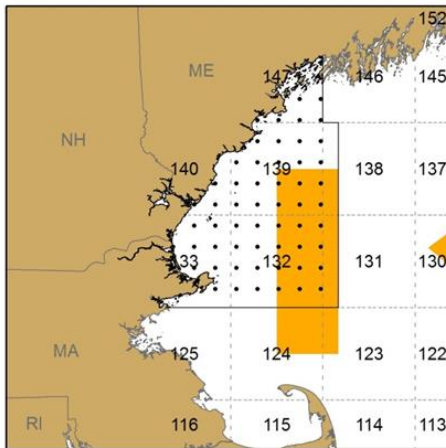
March - April



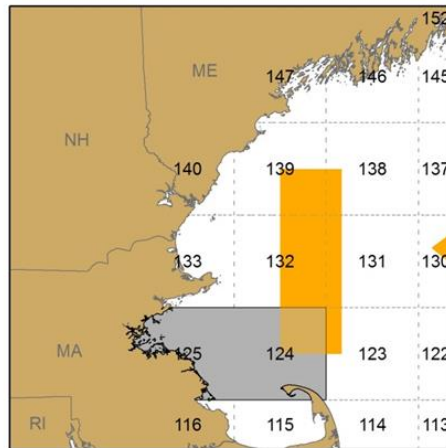
May



June



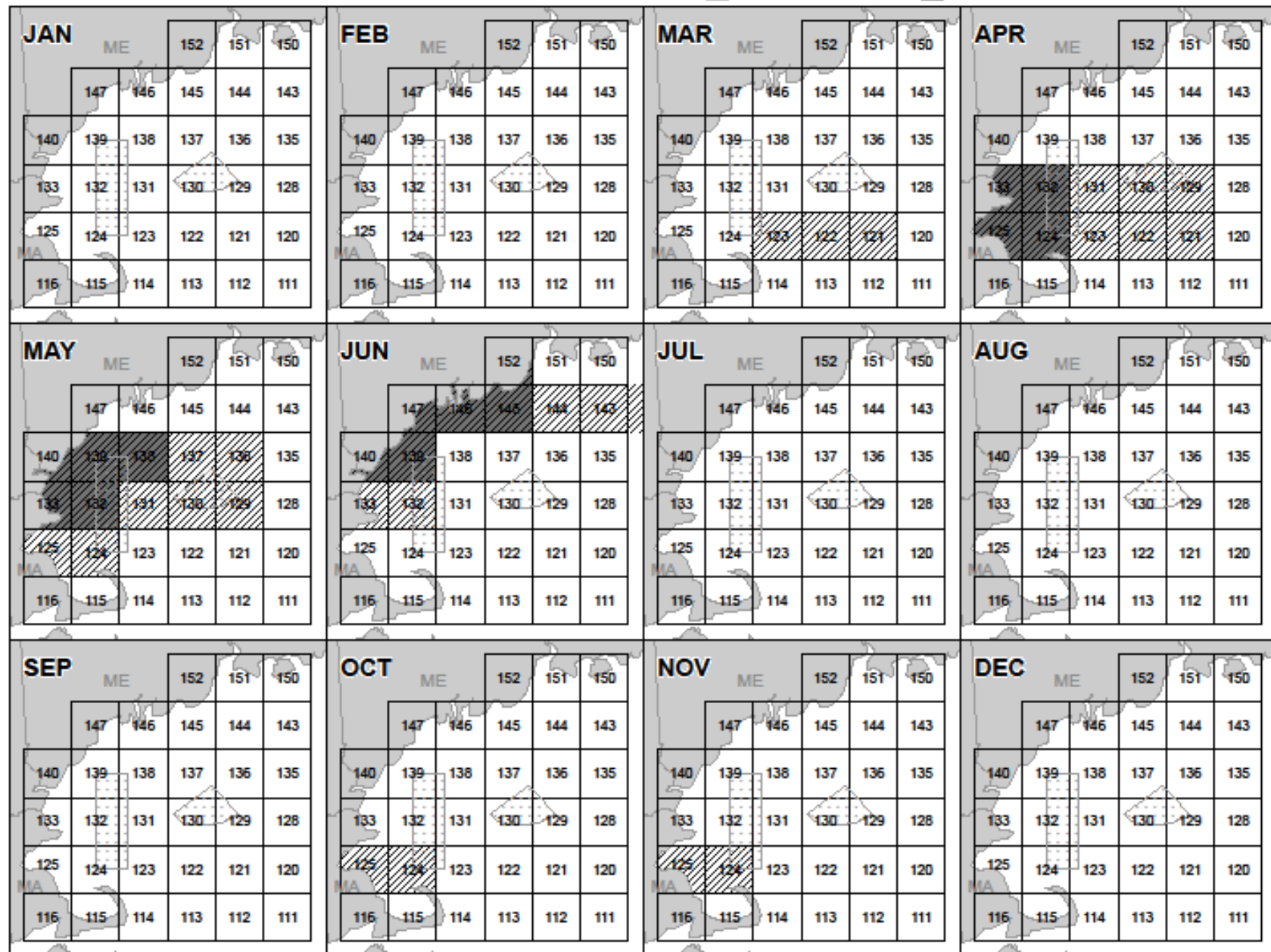
November - January



4.2.1.2 Option 2; Sub-Option A from Draft Framework Adjustment 53 Document

Status Quo Seasonal Closures

-  30 Minute Square
-  Groundfish Closure
-  Common Pool Rolling Closure
-  Sector Rolling Closure





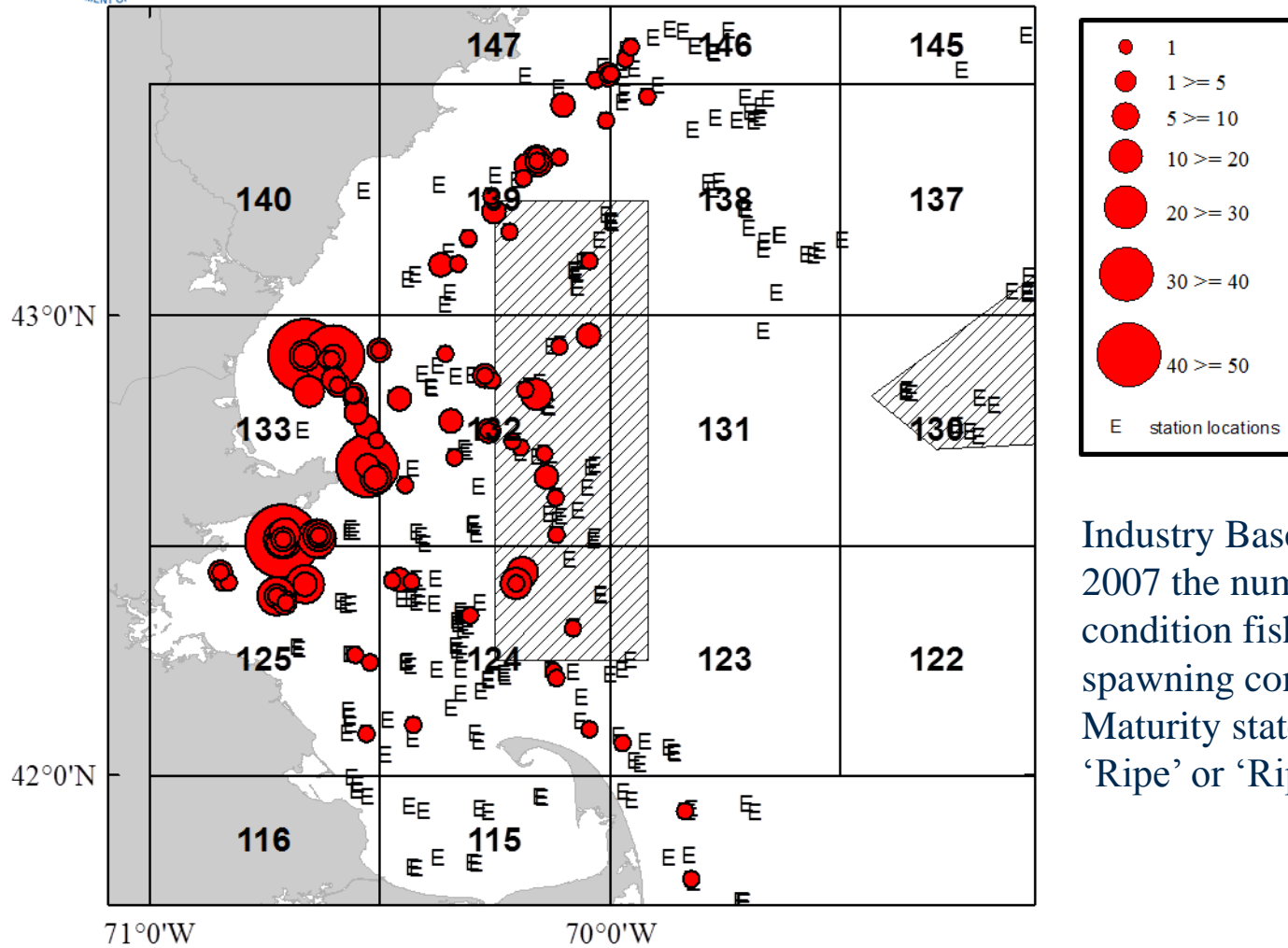
Part 2: Analyses

- Spawning related information data sources
 1. Industry Based Survey (2003-2007)
 2. Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries Research
 3. Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2
 4. Scientific Literature

Note: Many of these same data sources are being evaluated by the PDT for Framework Adjustment 53 (e.g., Dean and Correia FW 53 appendix)



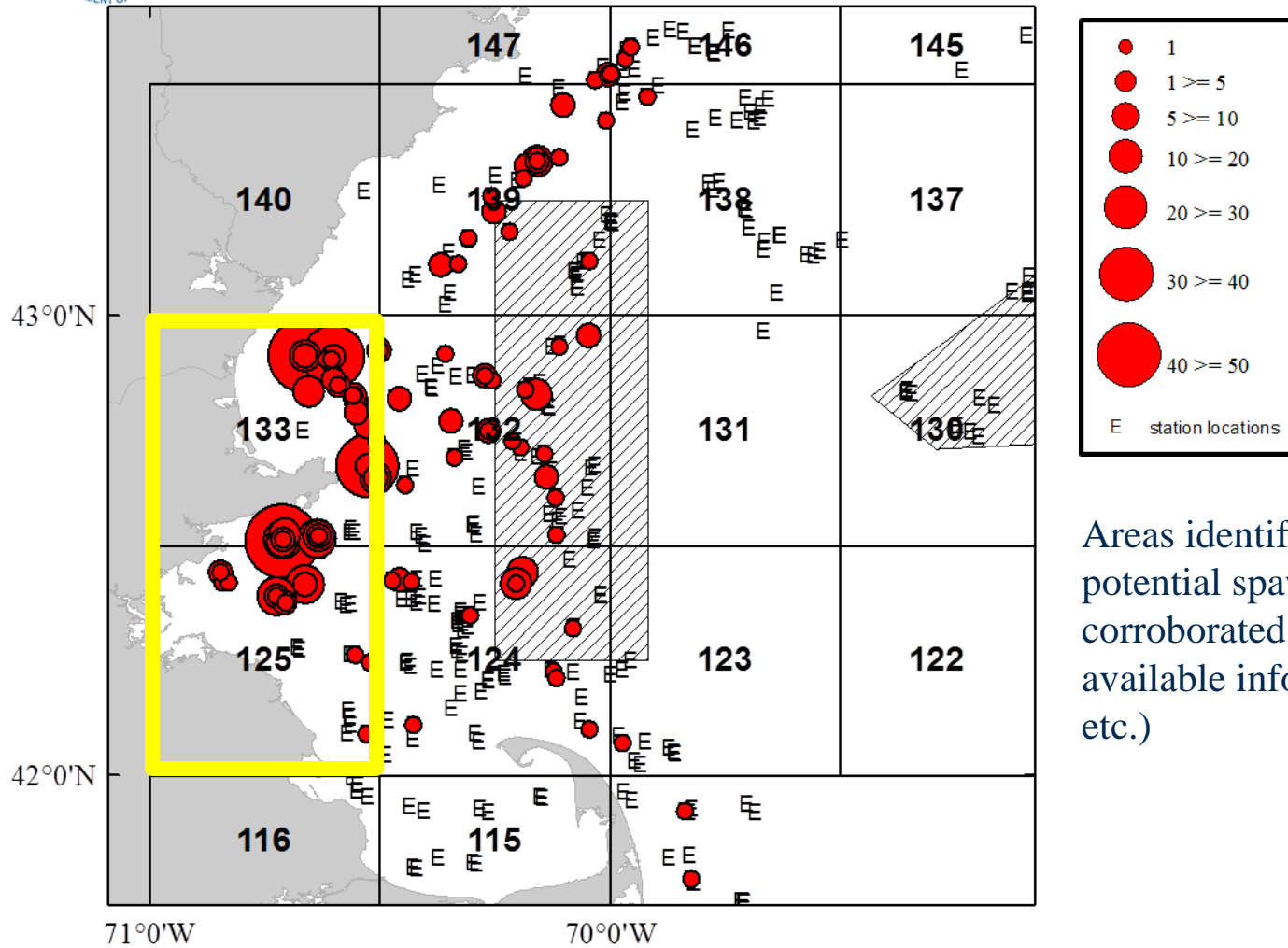
Part 2: Analyses



Industry Based Survey, 2003-2007 the number of spawning condition fish (all sexes) in spawning condition in **May**. Maturity state recorded as 'Ripe' or 'Ripe and Running'



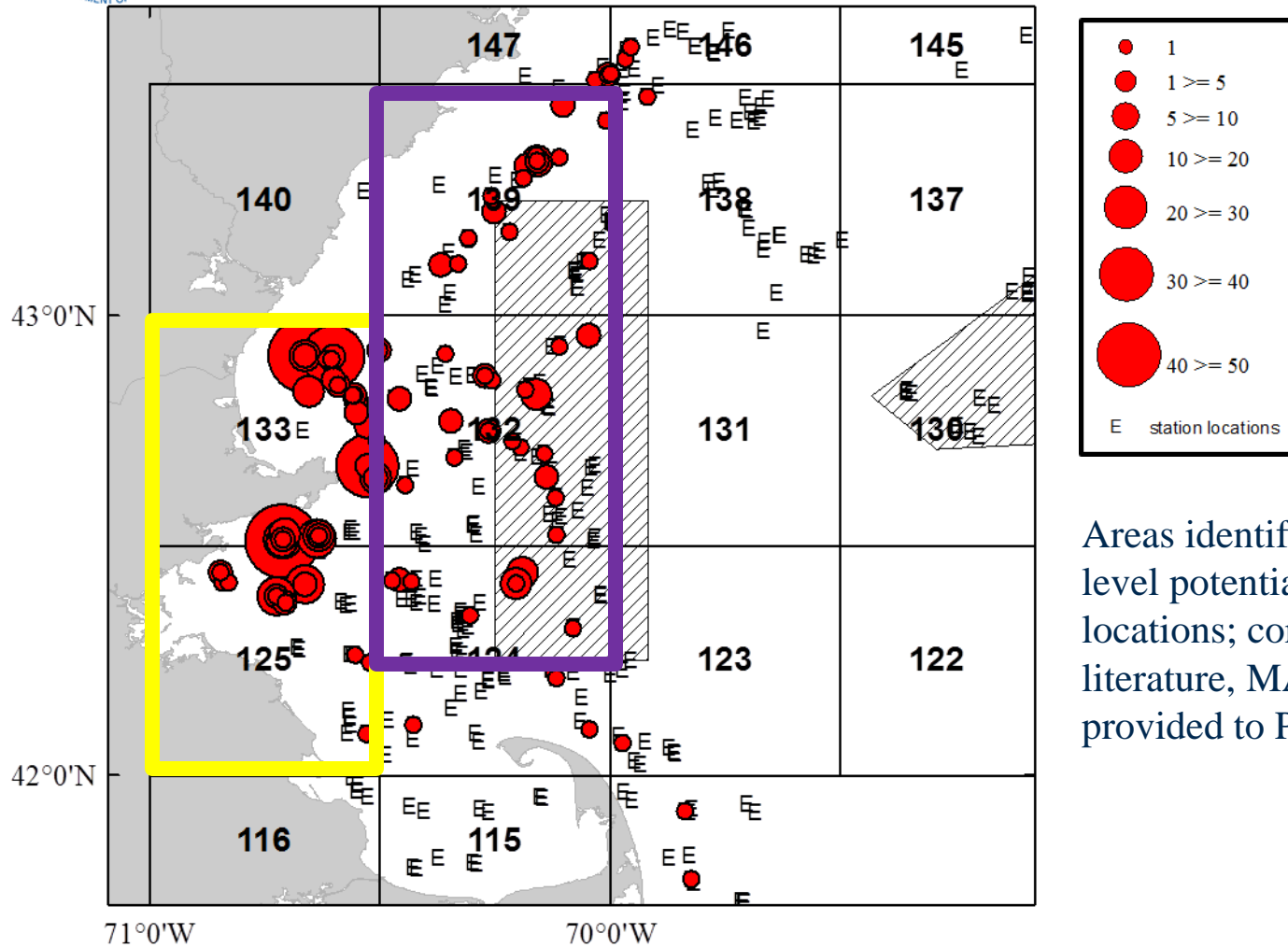
Part 2: Analyses



Areas identified as important potential spawning locations; corroborated by additional available information (OHA2; etc.)



Part 2: Analyses



Areas identified as secondary level potential spawning locations; corroborated by literature, MA DMF analyses provided to PDT

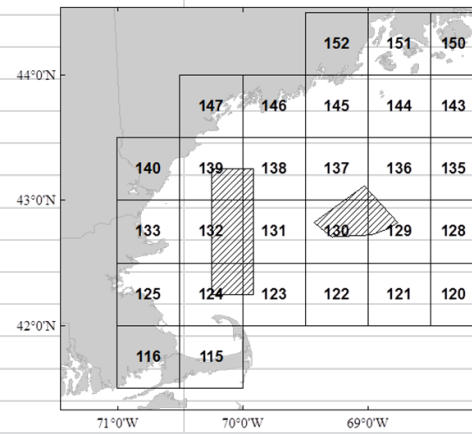


30 Minute Spawning Blocks, by Month

Interim Area Seasonal Closure GOM Cod Spawning Evaluation, by Month, and Data Source.

Month	Interim Area Closures	Spawning Identified Blocks			
		NMFS Analysis: Industry Based Survey	Dean and Corriea (PDT): Industry Survey (Alt. A PDT discussion presentation)	Dean and Corriea (PDT): Skewed sex ratio (Alt. A PDT discussion presentation)	OHA 2 (Deese 2005)
Nov	124, 125, 132, 133	124, 125, 132, 133	124,125	124,125,139	115,125,133,139
Dec	124**, 125	124**, 125	124,125	124,125,139	115,125,133
Jan	124, 125, 132	124, 125, 132	124,125	124,125,139	115,125,133
Feb	124, 125, 131	125	124,125		132,133
Mar	124, 131, 132, 133, 138		124,125,132,133	124,125,132,133	
Apr	124, 125, 132, 133, 138	125,133,132	124,125,132,133	124,125,132,133	
May	124, 125, 132, 133, 139	125,124,133,132,139	124,125,132,133, 139,140	124,125,132,133	132,133,139,140,147
Jun	124, 132, 133		132,133,139,140,147	124,125,132,133	
Jul	124, 132, 138				
Aug	124, 132, 138				
Sep	124, 132				
Oct	124, 132				

** indicates entire 30-minute block: 124 partially open in all months except December



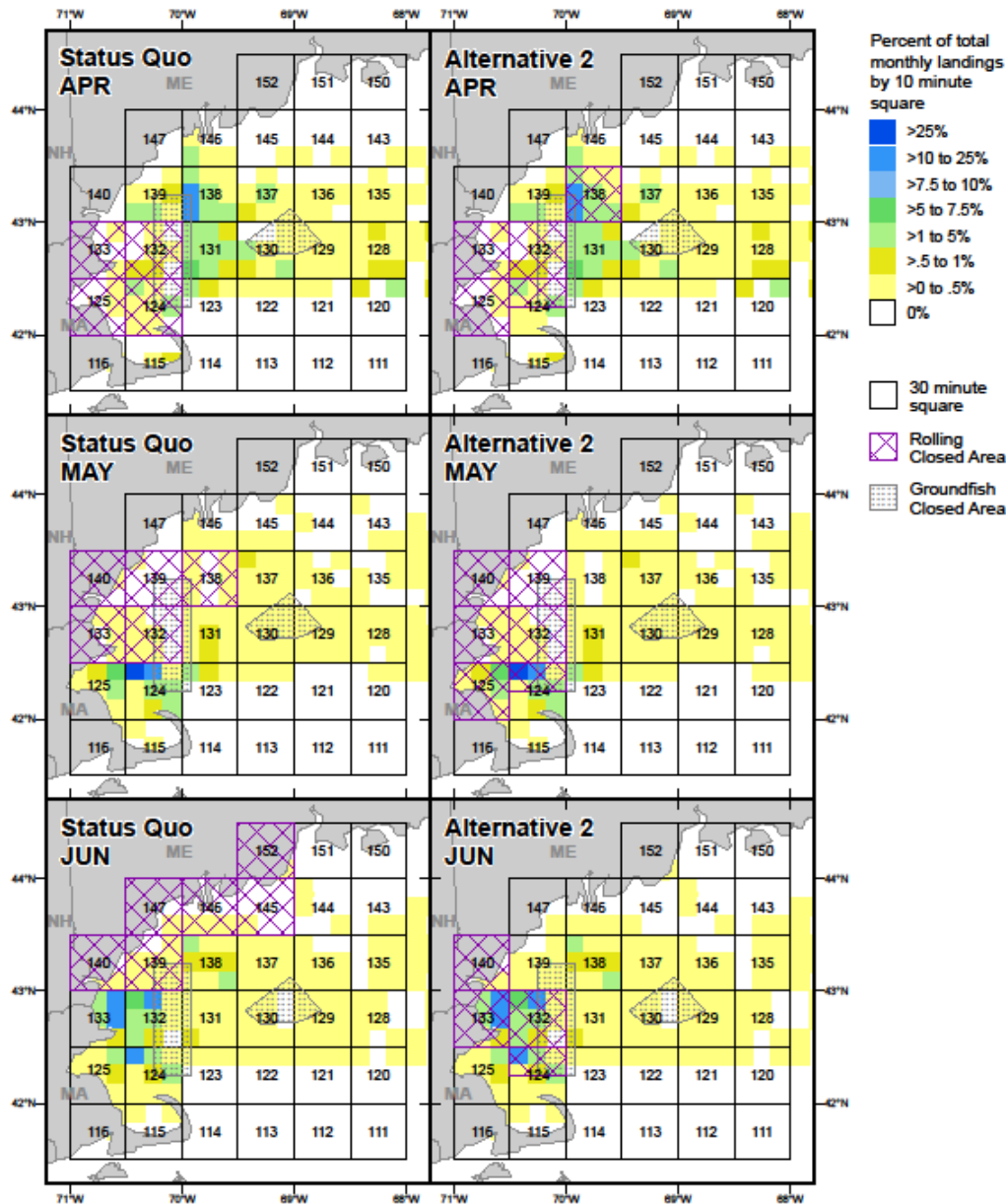
Additional literature used:
 Siceloff and Howell (2012)
 Berlinsky (2009)
 Morin (2000)
 Howell et al. (2008)
 Ames (2004)



Part 2: Analyses

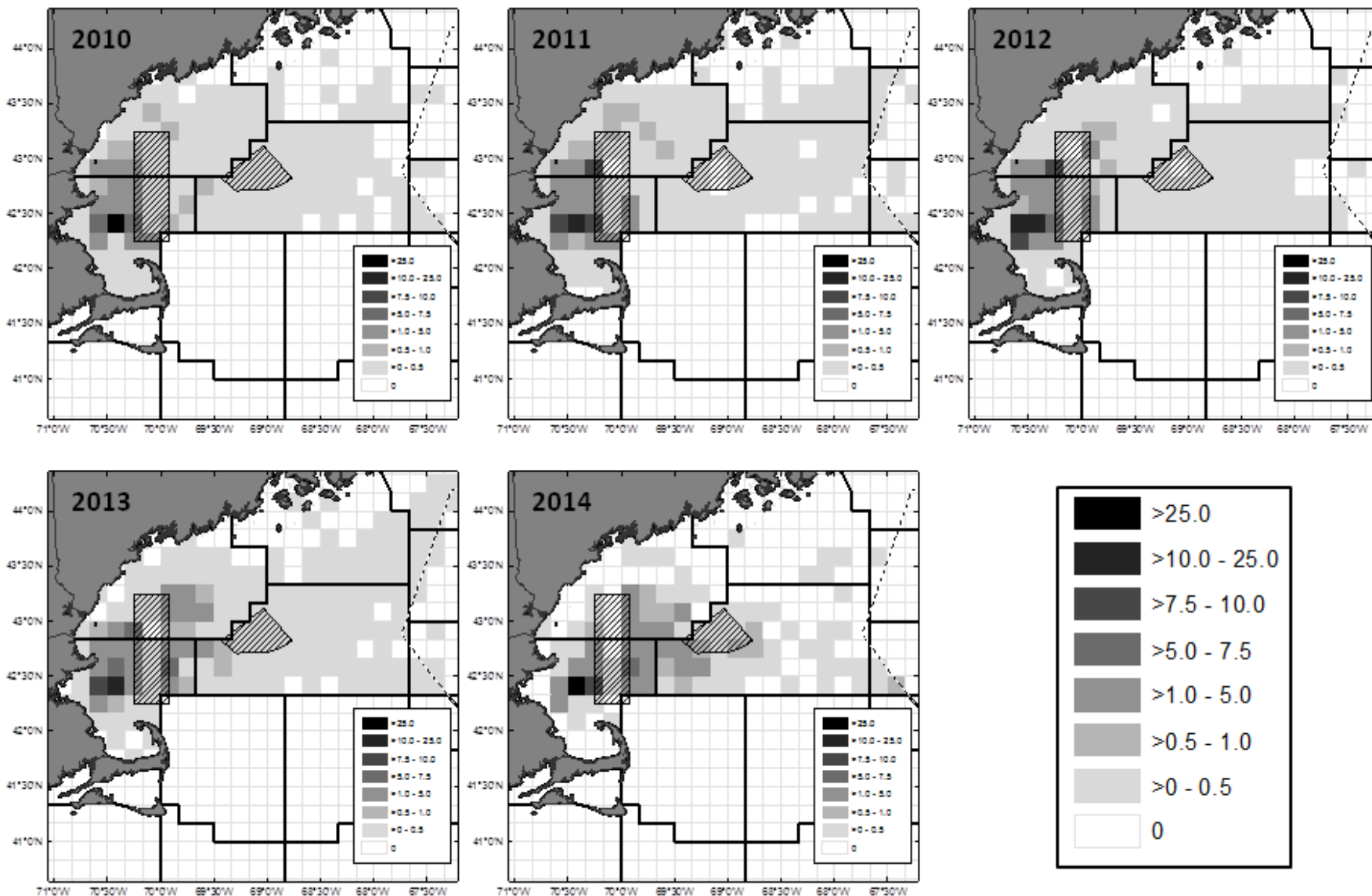
- Catch evaluation
 1. Amount of cod taken by 10 minute squares, 2010-August 2014 and in individual years
 2. Amount of other regulated species by 10 minute squares, 2010-August 2014
 3. Commercial and recreational vessel trip report data used

Gulf of Maine Cod Monthly Commercial Landings April - June (2010-2014)

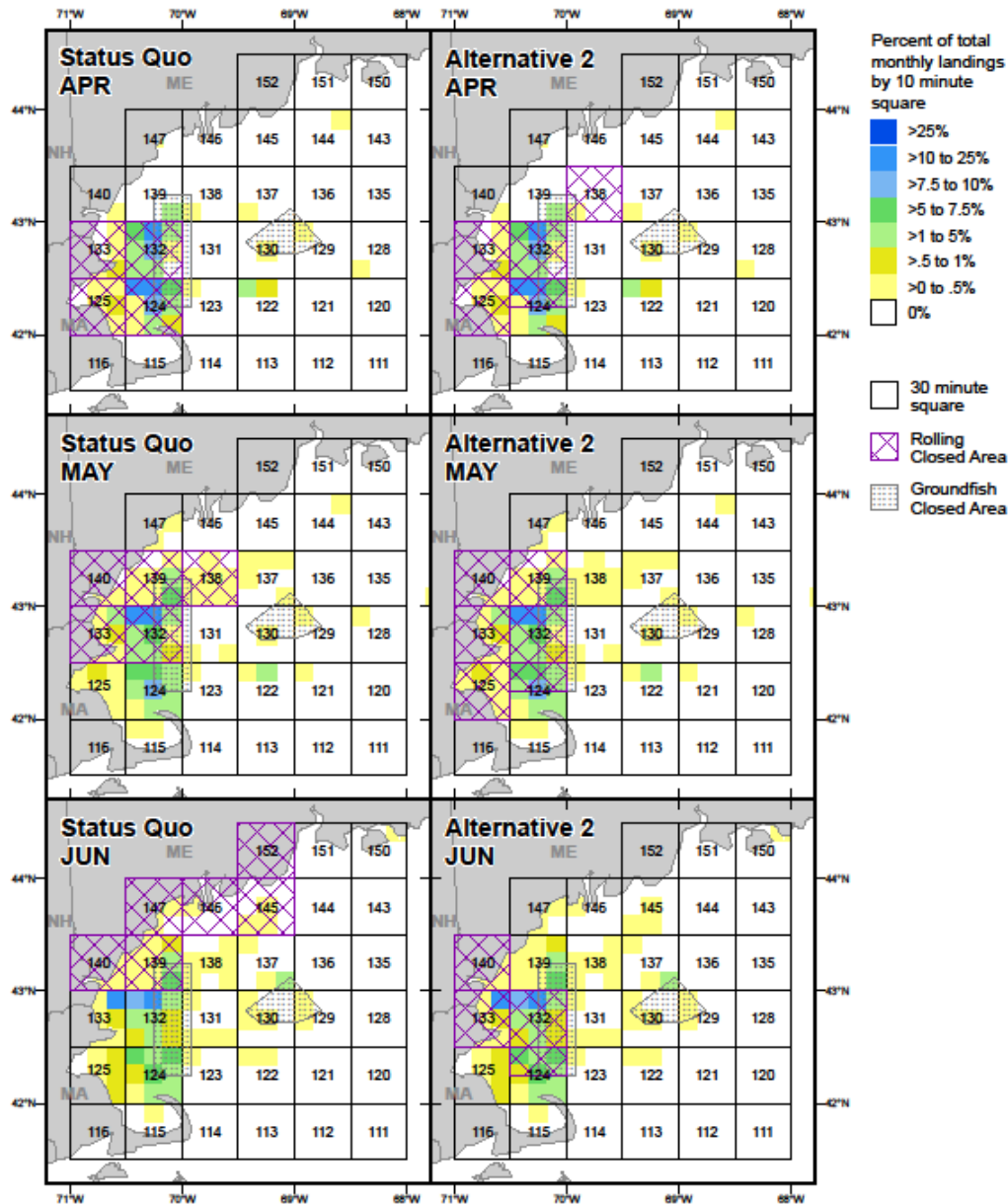


Proportional commercial catch by 10-minute square evaluation of GOM cod catch under status quo and interim measures, by month.

- Annual percentage of commercial Gulf of Maine cod landings by ten minutes square from 2010-2014*
 - *2014 is a partial year (this plot only contains data through July)

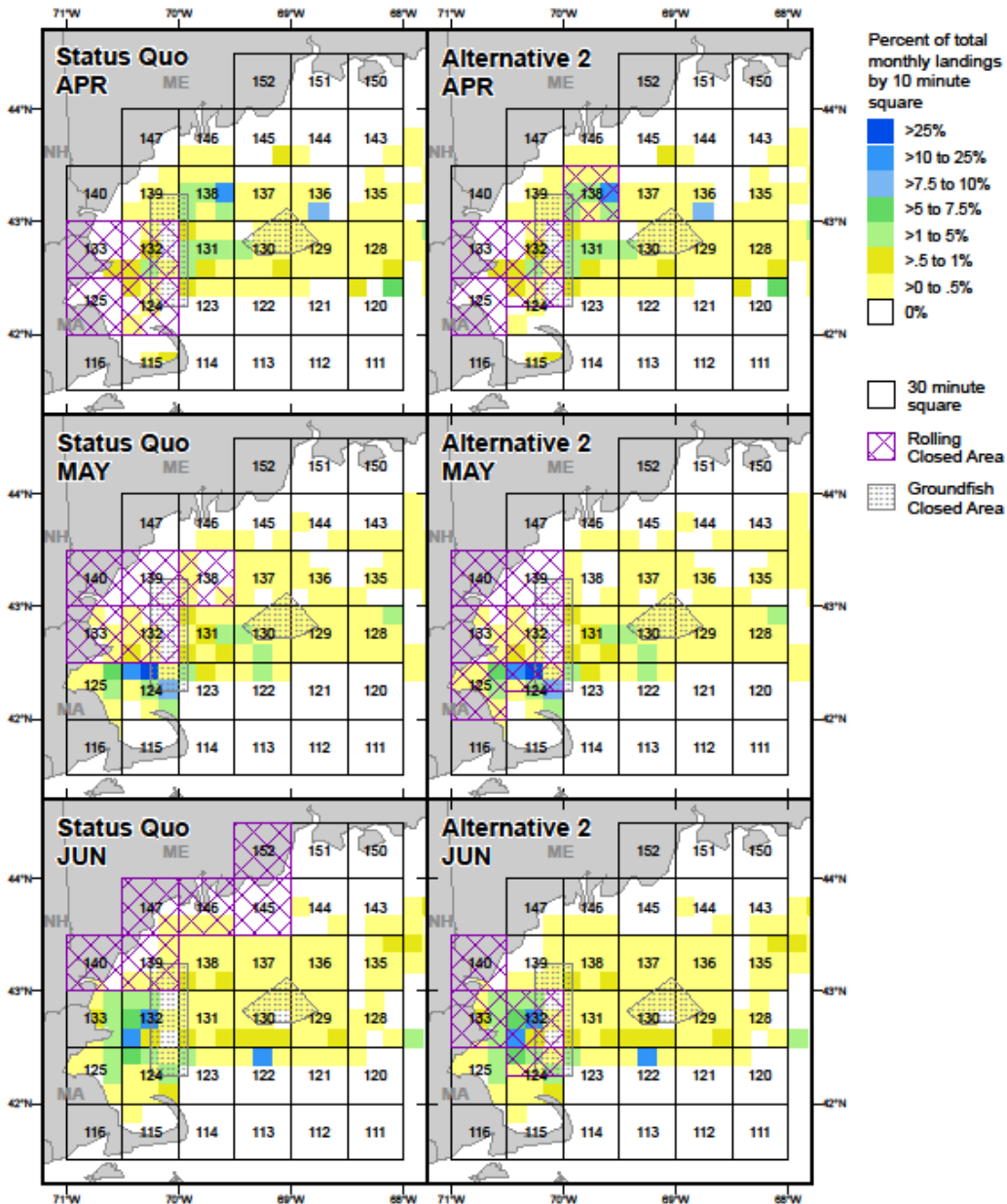


Gulf of Maine Cod Monthly Recreational Landings April - June (2010-2014)



Proportional recreational catch by 10-minute square evaluation of GOM cod catch under status quo and interim measures, by month.

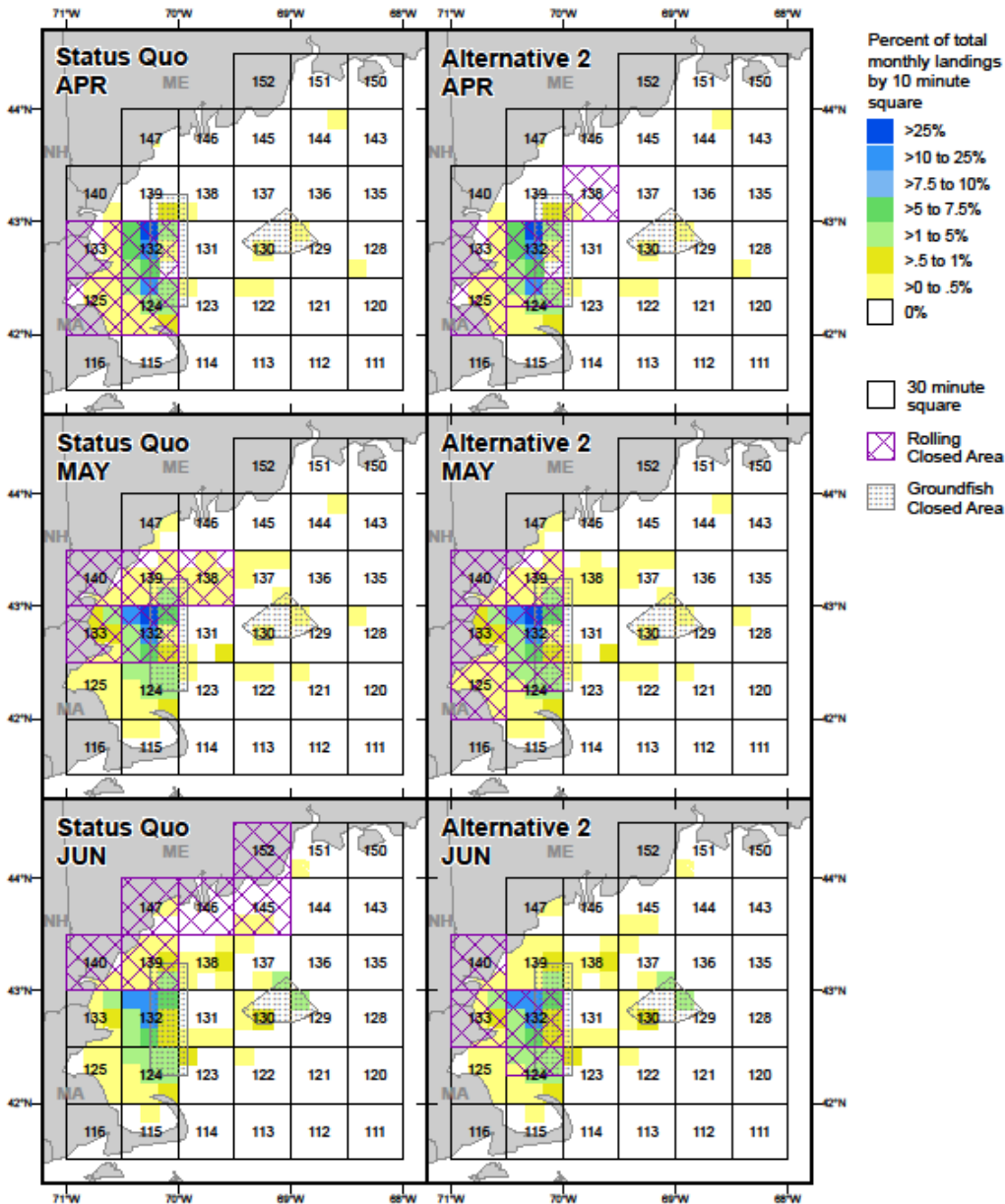
Gulf of Maine Haddock Monthly Commercial Landings April - June (2010-2014)



Proportional commercial haddock catch by 10-minute square evaluation under status quo and interim measures, by month.

Similar evaluations for white hake, pollock, redfish, flatfish, etc.

Gulf of Maine Haddock Monthly Recreational Landings April - June (2010-2014)



Proportional recreational haddock catch by 10-minute square evaluation under status quo and interim measures, by month.



Additional Consideration Exempted Gears

- Our action carried forward the gears exempted by definition as well as those previously exempt under seasonal rolling closures
- Insufficient time to evaluate effort for those gears exempt to rolling closures
- Ongoing analyses initiated in the last week to evaluate scope and scale of effort and potential for spawning disruption; considering exemptions similar to those for whaleback area
- Important topic for public comment submission on rule



Questions