

Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel Meeting

~ Meeting notes/summary ~

Wednesday, July 13th, 2022

1:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

I. Participants

A. NTAP Members:

Name	Affiliation
Dan Salerno	NEFMC Member
Dustin Gregg	MAFMC Scientist
David Goethel	NEFMC Stakeholder
Jim Gartland	MAFMC Scientist
Kathryn Ford	NEFSC Lead
Frank Mirarchi	NEFMC Stakeholder
Michael Sissenwine	NEFMC Co-Chair
Philip Politis	NEFSC
Pingguo He	NEFMC Scientist
Tim Miller	NEFSC
Wes Townsend	MAFMC Co-Chair
Mike Pol	NEFMC Scientist
Emerson Hasbrouck	MAFMC Stakeholder
Robert Ruhle	ASMFC Representative
Dan Farnham	ASMFC Representative

B. Other Participants:

Name	Affiliation
Katie Burchard	NEFSC
Hannah Hart	MAFMC
Kelly Whitmore	Mass DMF
Alex Dunn	NEFSC
Jason Didden	MAFMC
Gareth Lawson	CLF

II. Summary Discussion Points by Agenda Topic:

(Action items identified in red)

Welcome, Introductions, Logistics (W. Townsend)

- **Introductions**
 - Wes introduces Hannah as the new staffer for the MAFMC that will assist NTAP
 - Went through Attendees introductions
- **Meeting summary from last meeting accepted**
 - Pending **fix of Jon Grabowski affiliation**

Center Updates (K. Ford)

- **Survey Updates (Phil Politis)**

- Spring survey 364 of 377 planned stations complete including fixed gear closure area- less fixed gear than typically.

- **Update on recent studies (Tim Miller)**

- The catch efficiency study paper is out for review with a scientific journal
 - Continues to be used in index-based assessments
- Wingspread study discussed at Assessment Oversight Panel
- Letter was drafted to send to Council describing how the research is being used in stock assessments

- **Wind**

- SSEE workshop – two reports posted on the [SSEE website](#)
- Gulf of Maine Planning Area, Survey Mitigation Implementation Strategy
- Have a couple of state of the science publications that will be published in the next couple months

- **Data Management**

- FRIMS update – improving fishery-independent data model so it's more efficient. Ongoing with a couple more years of work.
- Log archiving project – Paper Survey Logs from trawl survey being brought to National Archive.

- **Comms with assessment scientists (Alex Dunn)**

- Alex Dunn new NEFSC NTAP participant – his primary function is working with the stock assessments and communication with the councils and Commission. He shared the [stock assessment calendar](#) tool

Questions/Comments:

- **Are survey stations on rough bottom representative because of presence of fixed gear?** Not easy to answer. In small strata sampling frequency is quite high so yes, but Downeast Maine difficult place to survey due to fixed gear inshore. Once we get offshore, we don't have the same challenges with fixed gear. Fishing in Canadian waters has become more challenging in the fall where we need to stay half a mile away from fixed gear.
- **Albatross could sample in shallower water; we have calibration factors between Bigelow and Albatross. Any consideration to do analysis to formally describe the depth the ship sampled to get a rough gauge what the magnitude of the problem might be.** For the assessments where there was a shift in strata covered by Bigelow, the Albatross data was restricted to the strata covered by both surveys so there is consistency across those years.
- **Are there other sources of data used for waters too shallow for the Bigelow, like the Maine and New Hampshire trawl survey?** Stock assessment scientists using best data for a given assessment.
- **Have you thought of using Bottom Long Line to get more into that strata?** BLL covers same depth strata as Bigelow survey and is also stratified by bottom type.

Follow up: send map with strata for ME/NH and for BLLS; add depth of strata to orientation document FAQ section; provide information about what assessments use what datasets

NTAP Orientation Document (D. Gregg)

- The objective of the document is to serve as a reference that compiles everything NTAP but be interactive with clickable hyperlinks to help navigate to additional information, reports, publications.
- Ownership of the document will be NTAP admin support of MAFMC and NEFSC.
- Audience is future NTAP membership.
- Dustin stepped through the outline of the document.
- Plan to get a final draft to full panel in September for discussion at Winter NTAP Meeting with finalizing in March of 2023.

Working Group Report (D.Gregg, R. Ruhle)

- **Update on June 2022 survey work (Restrictor Rope Research)**
 - sampled full suite of data elements intended as laid out in the project planning- adding turbidity as suggested by the panel at the last meeting.
 - Modified site selection based on survey catches
 - High catch variability regardless of spatial distribution
 - Lengthened from trial tows (~29m doorspread, <12.99 wingspread)
 - Warp +5fm on restricted tows Warp
 - Tow tracks set off by ¼ mile
 - Additional 30 seconds to get restrictor on board to typical operations
 - Discussed and shared gear trawl metrics collected, wingspread, door spread, bridal angle
 - Bridle angle is an important metric to monitor due to its herding effect.
 - Bridle angle consistent
 - Restrictor rope shows little to no chafe
 - Respectable sample size of pairs of most target species
 - Exceeded spring target pair count
 - Go Pro footage attempted- not useful, no visibility/too dark
- **Survey September 2022**
 - Timing was planned for prior to fall NEAMAP- would be about September 10, 2022

Questions/Comments:

- **Did you avoid the South Shore of Long Island?** We didn't have what we needed to field overnight staffing for those stations further from shore.
- **How many tows 25 meters or deeper?** Majority of tows 120-145 feet, shallower than 25 fathoms
- **The NTAP survey was conducted daytime only?** Yes, mindful of comparing one tow with its matched tow, we were cautious about not fishing too close to sun-up or sun-down.
- **Very impressive operations both vessel and scientific crews. All the i's were dotted and t's crossed. The panel can be confident in the data that was collected.**
- **Is this study going to go into the NTAP orientation document to reference down the road?** Yes.
- **Interested in panels thoughts on instead of using ABBA change the approach.** Use Lewy method instead? This led to long discussion, concerns about changing design mid-stream. Decision was to hold a working group call to discuss in more detail. Meeting needs to be held before the next survey

- **We did collect acoustic data so in the future can look at what the abundance levels were for each tow.**
- **Door spread much lower with restrictor rope. So doors are not spreading. Be more interested in how much we can vary that warp so that the restrictor rope is restricting. Curious how we can tighten up that variation.** By lengthening it we tried to account for what you would normally account for as a catenary which doesn't allow it to spread to its fullest potential. The length of the restrictor is not what you would expect for the spread of your doors. Tried to look for a snatching effect on GoPro. Not sure how we can stretch that restrictor cable completely each tow. Discussion about tautness of the restrictor rope, impact of door size, changes in spreading force due to many factors.
- **Will there be any analysis done on first leg of data before fall leg?** Depends on how soon the working group meeting is.

Follow up: Add restrictor rope research to orientation document; plan working group conversation before fall restrictor rope field work to decide on ABBA vs Lewy designs

Future priorities for NTAP (Kathryn Ford)

- **Survey results**
 - Brief review of how we got to the survey
 - Survey more focused on needs of NTAP than on specific studies
 - 37% response rate
 - Top 3 priorities indicated for each question
 - Dr. Ford stepped through the results of the survey

Questions/Comments:

- **Seeing some common themes.**
- **Need to consider what is the study or action to accomplish? Is it doable and what is the impact of doing? Have sub-teams work on this.** Agreement to this point, not a lot of interest in revisiting priorities, focus on how to accomplish them.
- **Bring it to both the councils to see if they have anything to add.** Agreement to having a product for the Councils.
- **Are we going to change strata due to wind? Is that an NTAP responsibility?** How we will survey the areas impacted by wind farms is yet to be determined; several projects underway looking at this, including Scallop Survey looking at different ways of stratification. Decision making process needs to be outlined. Get feedback from the panel on survey changes expected. NTAP can help define these questions that need to be asked. Years where we don't hit deep pockets of strata, combination of allocation and stratification. NTAP can be working to define these out. ROSA meeting with BOEM-BOEM very receptive to using NTAP as an overarching mechanism for surveys.
- **Next steps for ranking priorities discussed.** Bring to Councils, discuss more definite/specific ideas in the winter. If goal is to find resources, bring to Councils. Put a stake in the ground and build momentum. But more detail needed to actually get resources – so far too vague.

- **How did restrictor cable research rise to the top?** Based on vote, influenced by amount of money available. Ranking projects and having price tags is our best way of going forward. Nice to have a shelf of projects we can run with if funds become available.
- **Next steps:** NEFSC Lead and co-chairs will meet and discuss moving from more general priorities to something more specific.

Follow up: make decision making process for survey changes available to NTAP (note: this is something NEFSC is working on, hasn't been finalized)

Other Business (W. Townsend)

- **Next Meeting**
 - Working group?
 - Discuss Tow Approach
 - Send out a doodle poll to the working group. Very latest would have to be the first week of September to change anything for next leg.
- **Timing for next full panel meeting**
 - There is funding for an in-person meeting
 - Hybrid meeting suggested
 - Virtual meeting in November to discuss orientation doc
 - Hybrid research priorities meeting in January
 - MAFMC will follow-up on working group scheduling and new members
- **Membership discussion**
 - Mike Sissenwine's last meeting is today
 - Check with executive directors and ask New England to confirm and modify membership