New England Fishery Management Council
News Release

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Northeast Consortium/NEFMC Announce Funded Collaborative Research Projects

Newburyport, MA Following a 2014 request for proposals (RFP) to conduct collaborative research on New England groundfish stocks, the Northeast Consortium, under contract to the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC), announces projects that have received funding. Awards have been made to four groups that each involve partnerships among fishermen, scientists, and other stakeholders who have organized to address outstanding fisheries research questions in the Gulf of Maine and Southern New England areas. Details are provided below.

- **Northeast multispecies flatfish bycatch avoidance program**; the co-principal investigators are Steven Cadrin and Catherine O'Keefe, both of UMass Dartmouth's School of Marine Science and Technology. The project's focus is the development of real time bycatch avoidance approaches to be used by groundfish fishermen for Georges Bank flatfish during the 2015 fishing year.
- **Small Mesh Fishery Bycatch Reduction in the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Windowpane Stock Area**; the principal investigator is Emerson Hasbrouck Jr. of the Cornell University Cooperative Extension Marine Program. The project's focus is to determine the performance of fishing gear outfitted with a large mesh belly panel to avoid windowpane flounder bycatch in Southern New England's small mesh fisheries.
- **Determining the post-release mortality rate and "best capture and handling" methods for haddock discarded in the Gulf of Maine recreational fisheries**; the four co-principal investigators are John Mandelman of the New England Aquarium, Micah Dean and William Hoffman of the MA Division of Marine Fisheries, and Douglas Zemeckis and Steven Cadrin of the UMass – Dartmouth School of Marine Science and Technology. The project focuses on the use of passive acoustic telemetry and condition indexing to estimate post-release mortality and derive best capture and handling techniques for haddock discarded by the recreational rod and reel fisheries in the Gulf of Maine.
- **Assessing recreational haddock discard mortality on Jeffreys Ledge through an industry-led collaborative mark/recapture tagging program**; the principal investigators are Lester Eastman Jr. and Philip Eastman of Eastman's Fishing Fleet. The focus of this project is to develop a discard (release) mortality estimate for the recreational haddock fishery in the Gulf of Maine that could be used in future haddock stock assessments.

The NEC oversaw an open competition which produced the above results, including a merit-based process and finalist recommendations from an advisory panel consisting of scientists, researchers, fishermen, and management representatives. The distribution of the $450 thousand in awards and project oversight also will be conducted by the NEC. Projects are expected to begin as soon as possible.

In a continuation of the 2014 partnership established between the NEFMC and the NEC, a supplemental Council-funded/Consortium RFP seeks new collaborative research proposals that improve the understanding of groundfish spawning. The deadline is today. For more information about this second RFP, please refer to the NEC's website www.northeastconsortium.org.

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