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FISHERIES

Lobster Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology

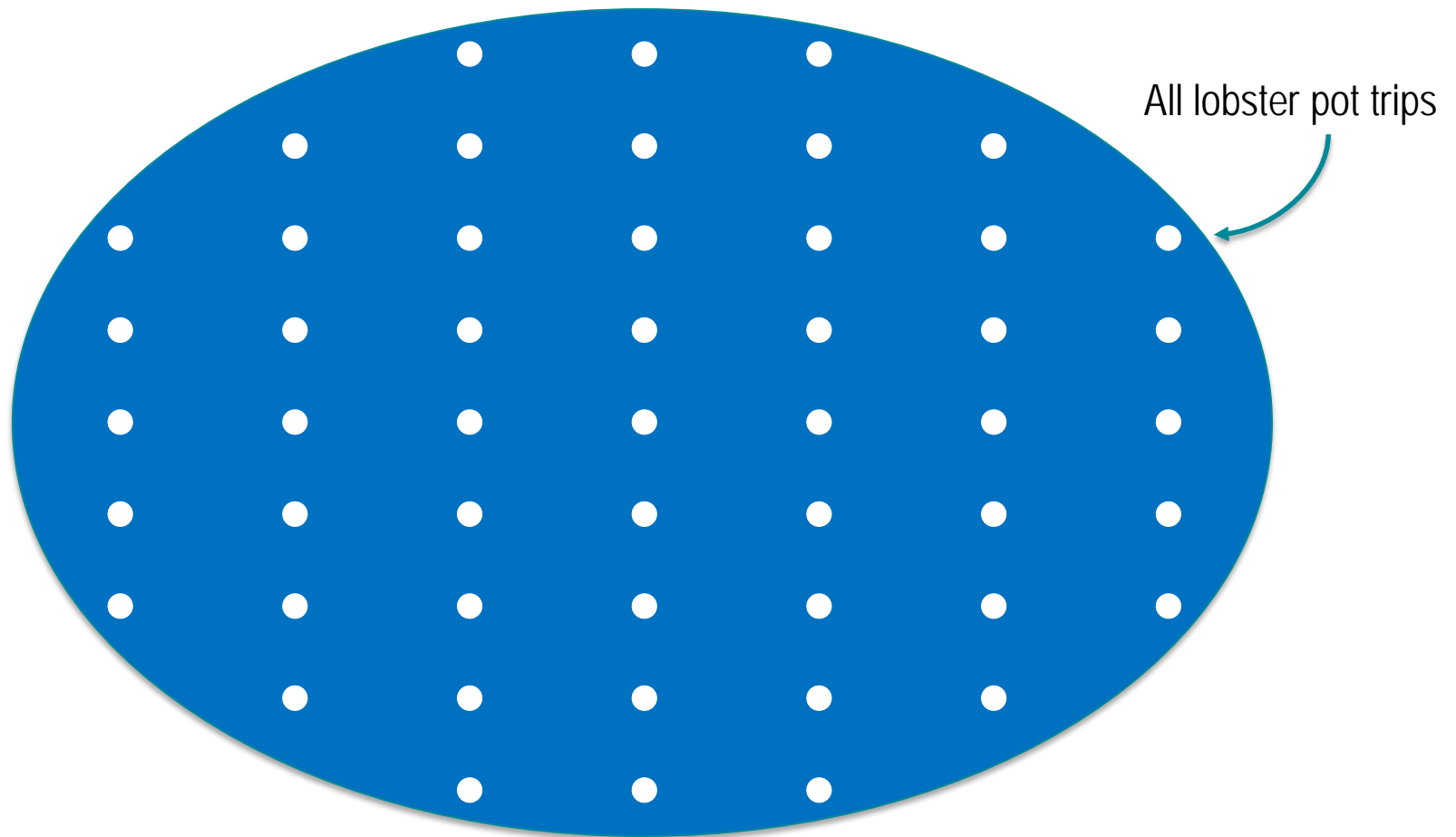
Omnibus Framework Adjustment: Meeting 1

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council - June 6, 2017
New England Fishery Management Council – June 22, 2017

Background

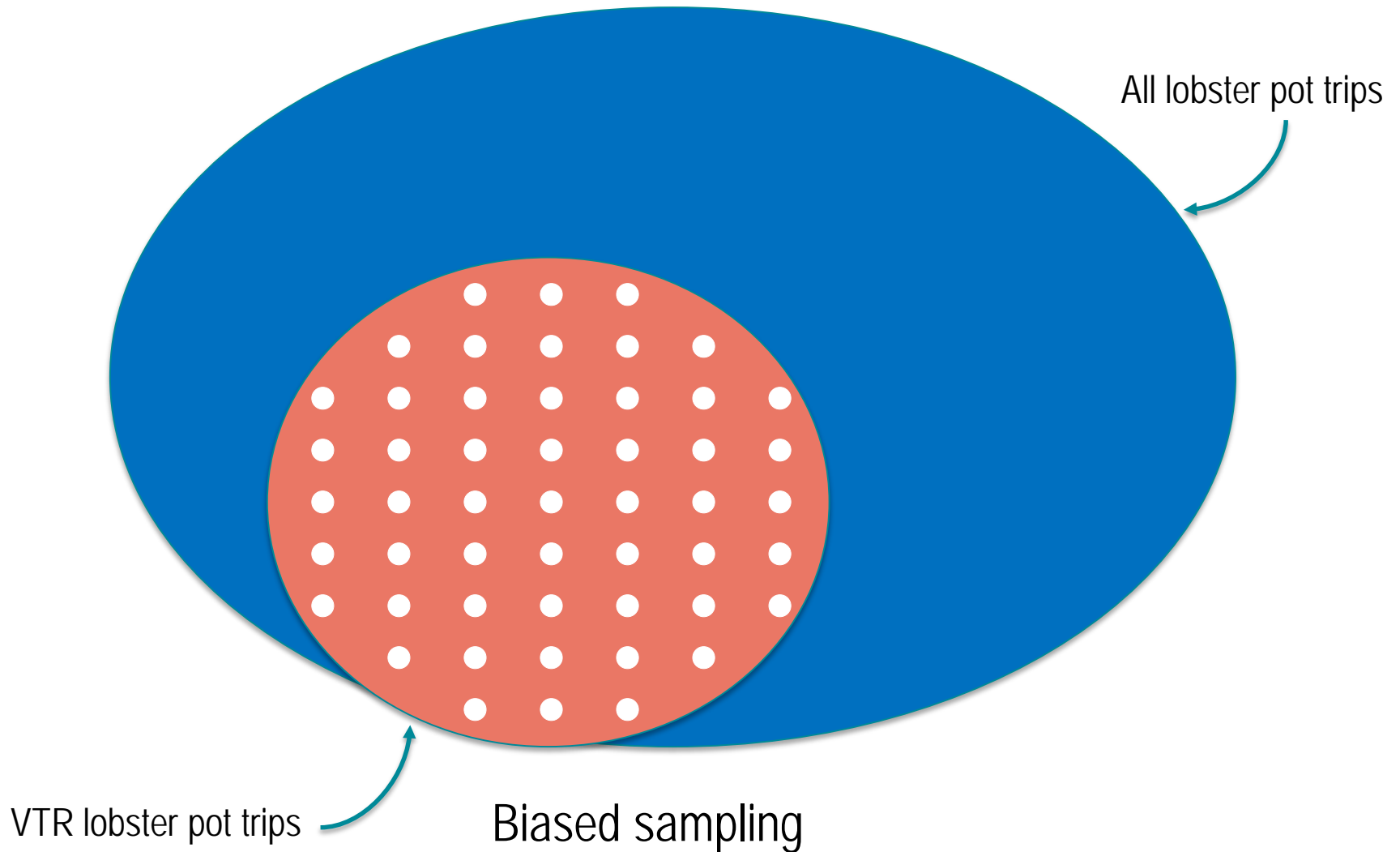
- SBRM uses VTR data to measure activity.
- Federal lobster permit does not require VTR.
- Only lobster boats with another federal permit are in the SBRM.
- May not reflect the lobster pot fishery as a whole.
- Increased sea days in 2015 highlighted this issue.

Potential Bias in Sampling Frame



Unbiased sampling

Potential Bias in Sampling Frame



Background

- ASMFC, NEFSC, States, and GARFO staff developed expanded sampling frame using permit and dealer data to address issue.
- But SBRM Omnibus Amendment specifically says it does not apply to lobster-only boats without VTR.
- Return to original sampling frame until we implement a permanent solution through the public process.

Proposed Goal

- To better meet the Magnuson-Stevens Act requirement for FMPs to establish a standardized reporting methodology to assess the amount and type of bycatch occurring in the fishery.
- This action would reduce potential sources of bias in sampling and discard estimates for the New England and Mid-Atlantic lobster pot fleets, as soon as practical, while minimizing the administrative burden on these vessels.

Proposed Actions/Solutions/Alternatives

- No Action.
- Stipulate the SBRM lobster pot fleets include all active vessels that fish with this gear in Federal waters. *(Could use the expanded sampling frame already devised, and could be modified in the future without further Council action.)*
- Require all Federal lobster vessels to submit VTRs for all trips. *(May not be consistent with the proposed goal of this action.)*

Likely Impacts

- Action is administrative.
- Effectively removes the conflicting sentence from the SBRM Amendment.
- Clarifies the Councils' intent to include all active Federal lobster pot vessels in the SBRM.
- Would not increase or decrease the number of observer sea days.
- Spreads coverage over a larger number of vessels.
- Lobster permit holders already required to carry an observer.
- Therefore, this action is not anticipated to result in any changes to the operation of the lobster pot fishery, including where, when, or how they fish.

Likely Impacts - Example

2017 expected lobster pot effort for vessels that submit VTRs vs. lobster-only permits:

	Vessels	Trips
MA - VTR	46	1,484
MA – lobster only	4	77
NE - VTR	406	27,956
NE – lobster only	1,080	89,048

Timeline

- June 2017 – Framework meeting #1. Councils review/approve proposed action plan, goals, and alternatives for consideration.
- August/September 2017 – Councils take final action.
- Fall/Winter – GARFO completes any remaining analysis and rulemaking.
- April 2018 – 2018 NEFOP observer year begins, using sea day schedule based on new sampling frame.



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Questions