



New England Fishery Management Council

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E.F. "Terry" Stockwell III, *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

February 5, 2015

Mr. Emerson Hasbrouck
Principal Investigator
Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program
423 Griffing Avenue
Riverhead, NY 11901

RE: Recommendations for Additional Analysis on Large Mesh Belly Panel Reports

Dear Mr. Hasbrouck:

In response to your presentation at the Research Steering Committee meeting on December 3, 2014, including the final report on research done using a large mesh belly panel to reduce flatfish bycatch on Southeast Georges Bank (SEGB) in the small mesh fisheries, and the draft report for the research done on Cultivator Shoal (CS), the Research Steering Committee reached the following consensus: (1) the report received sufficient technical review; (2) the project accomplished its goals and objectives; (3) the reports should provide more details on the net configuration, to allow for regulatory description/specification and scalability of the gear for use with smaller or larger nets; and (4) additional analysis would help to alleviate some concerns raised during the meeting. The summary of that meeting is also attached.

To improve the report's usefulness to the Council, the Committee requests that the following analysis be provided at the next Research Steering Committee meeting:

- As in the SEGB report, analyze in the CS report the day/night effect on research results (are the catch results different between the day and night tows, and if so, please address its effect on the efficiency of the gear to reduce flatfish bycatch).
- Identify and quantify any difference in catch results between the port and starboard control/experimental net configuration, and whether that effect would alter the efficiency of the gear to reduce flatfish bycatch. (Provide the results of left/right analysis that appeared in the draft SEGB report and include similar analysis in the CS final report).
- For both project components, provide appropriate analysis on the catch of target and bycatch species as a function of control and experimental net spread.

Also, the RSC would like you to include additional data in Table 4 (SEGB final report) and Table 3 (CS draft report) that would include the date/time of each tow, the day/night classification as used in the analysis, port/starboard net configuration, and such control/experimental net spread data as are available or in an additional table if necessary.

Thank you very much for the work you have done so far; the Committee appreciates all of your valuable work.

If you have any questions, please contact Council staff member Maria Jacob at (978) 465-0492, extension 124. You also may contact Committee Chair Mark Alexander at (860) 447-4322.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Thomas A. Nies". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'T' and 'N'.

Thomas A. Nies
Executive Director

Enclosure (1) December 3, 2014 RSC Meeting Summary
cc: Mark Alexander, Chris Kellogg, and Terry Stockwell.