

#9

Fishery Monitoring and Research Division Update

New England Fishery Management Council Meeting
June 23, 2026

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Outline

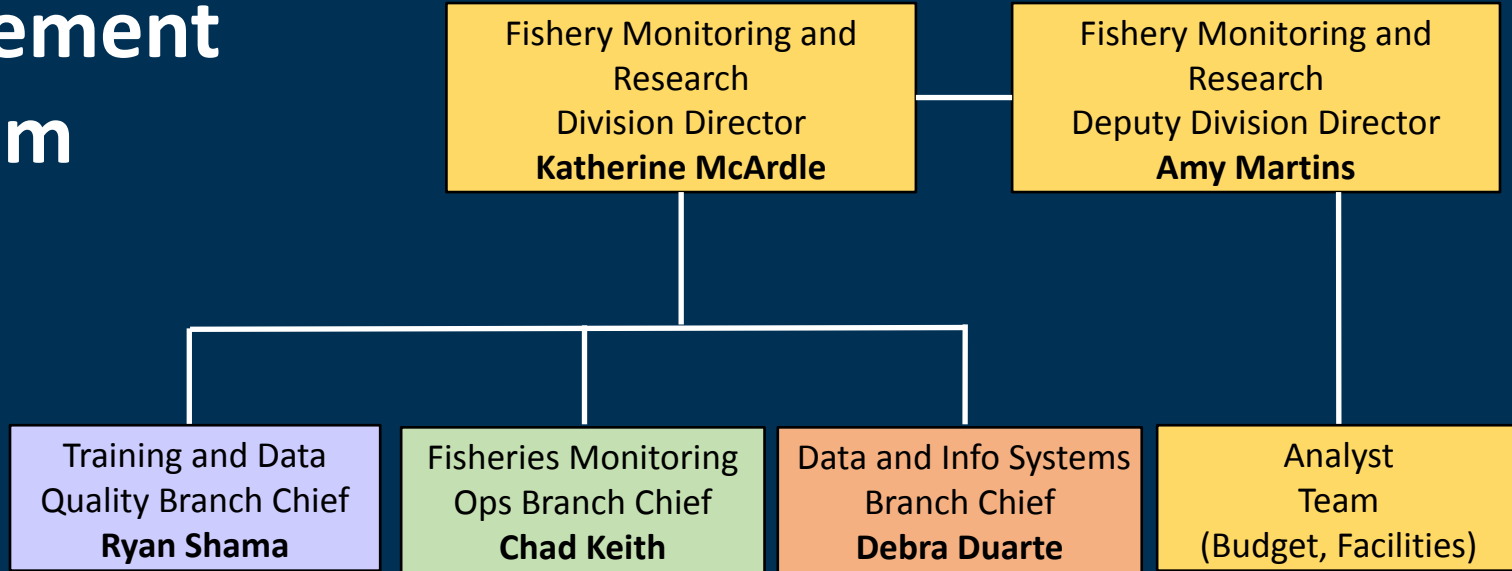
- Introduction to FMRD
- SBRM Overview
- Sea Day and Coverage Rate Accomplishments
- At-Sea Monitoring Spend Plan
- Biological Port Sampling & NEFOP Contract Merge
- Data Consolidation and Modernization

Introduction: Mission and Organization

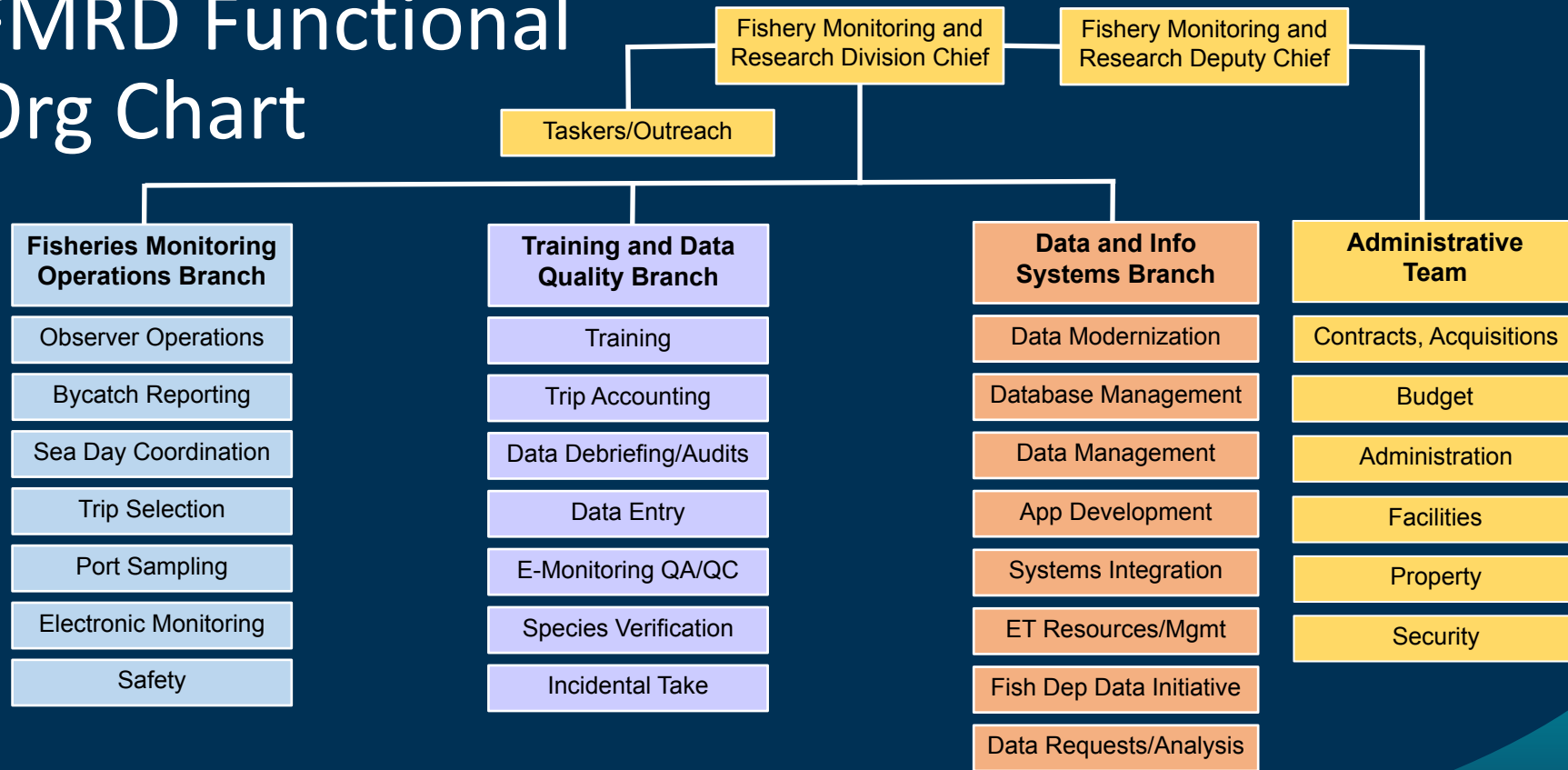
Our Division's Mission

- We collect information from commercial fisheries and support the use of that information to inform fisheries science and management.
- We bring the fisherman's perspective into the Federal process through collaboratively producing scientific information.
- We strive to be a trusted presence among the fishing, scientific, and management communities.
- Our FMRD Annual Strategic Plan guides division priorities and initiatives.

Management Team



FMRD Functional Org Chart



Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM) Overview

SBRM Overview

- The SBRM Omnibus Amendment for all NEFMC and MAFMC FMPs was implemented in February 2008. A revised SBRM Omnibus Amendment was implemented in July 2015.
- The SBRM amendment requires an annual discard report utilizing information obtained from the NEFOP and IFS Programs for 14 federally managed species groups and sea turtles.
- Each year, discard estimates and variability are derived from the prior year data to inform observer coverage needs for the upcoming year.

SBRM 2025 Highlights

- **SBRM Sea Days (4,372)**
 - 64 uniquely identified fleets in the July 2023 through June 2024 data set examined.
 - 4,372 days allocated, 2,326 are agency-funded and 2,046 are industry-funded.
- **Marine Mammal Protection Act Days (350+43)**
 - Limited gillnet coverage achieved across multiple gillnet fleets in New England and the Mid-Atlantic region to document protected species interactions.
 - Additional funding for 43 seadays added in September, NOAA Office of Protected Resources/Marine Mammal Protection Act funds for Bottlenose dolphin monitoring.
- **Endangered Species Act Annual Determination Days (6)**
 - Funding was allocated to monitor for sea turtle interactions in the Mid-Atlantic gillnet fishery with the fleet's relisting in 2023.
 - Days are specific to state waters in order to fill gaps in observer coverage as NEFOP SBRM tasked days only cover federally permitted vessels.

SBRM 3-Year Review Update

A standard, full analysis will be conducted for the upcoming SBRM 3-Year Review (2026). This differs from the pared down SBRM 3-Year Review from 2023 that was limited due to the COVID-19 waiver of Observer deployments.

- 2026 3-Year Review Years: SBRM annual reports 2024-2026 using data from July 2022 - June 2025
- Temporary FMAT/PDT formed to complete work
 - Organizations involved: NEFMC, MAFMC, ASMFC, NEFSC and GARFO
 - Timeframe: Summer 2026 - Winter 2027
- Report will be published by NEFSC

SBRM 3-Year Review Elements

- A review of the recent levels of observer coverage in each applicable fishing mode;
- A review of recent observed encounters with each species in each fishery (or by gear type for turtles), and a summary of observed discards by weight;
- A review of the CV of the discard information collected for each fishery;
- A review of recent estimates of the total amount of discards associated with each fishing mode (these estimates may differ from estimates generated and used in stock assessments, as different methods and stratification may be used in each case);
- An evaluation of the effectiveness of the SBRM at meeting the performance standard for each fishery;
- A description of the methods used to calculate the reported CVs and to determine observer coverage levels, if the methods used are different from those described and evaluated in the amendment;
- An updated assessment of potential sources of bias in the sampling program and analyses of accuracy; and
- An evaluation of the implications of the discard information collected under the SBRM.

Sea Day and Coverage Rate Accomplishments



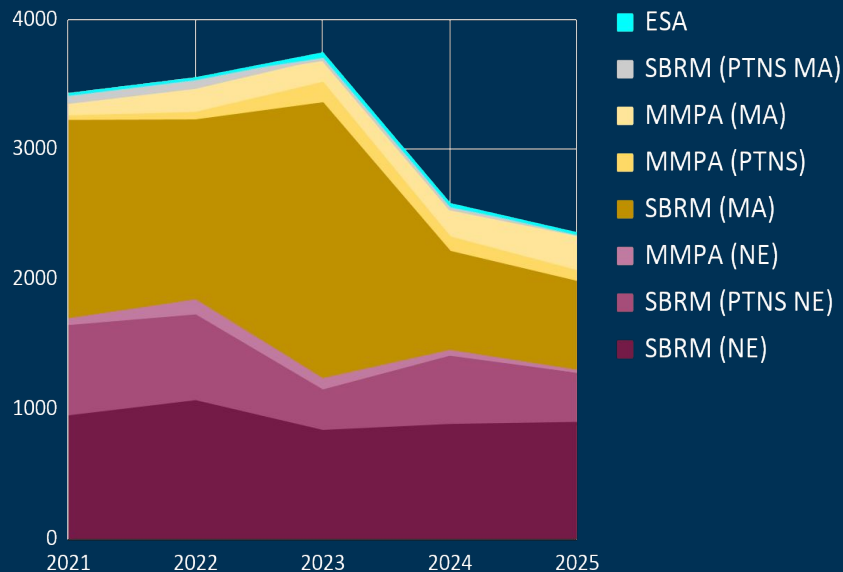
NEFOP Coverage Summary 2025

<i>Coverage Type</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Yearly Sea Days Tasked</i>	<i>Yearly Sea Days Accomplished</i>	<i>Difference</i>
SBRM	New England	896	991	
	Mid-Atlantic	684	685	
	TOTAL	1580	1676	+96
SBRM PTNS	New England	372	262	
	Mid-Atlantic	0	0	
	TOTAL	372	262	-110
MMPA	New England	23	31	
	Mid-Atlantic	244	141	
	TOTAL	267	172	-95
MMPA PTNS	New England	83	75	
	TOTAL	83	75	-8
ESA	Mid-Atlantic	6	6	
	TOTAL	6	6	0
OPR	Mid-Atlantic	43	2	
	TOTAL	43	2	-41
Grand Total		2,351	2,193	-158

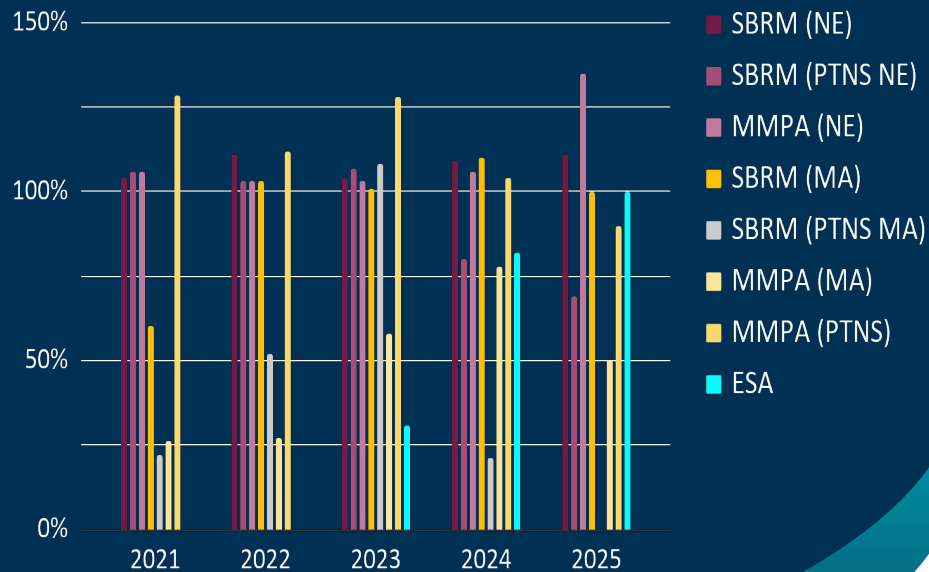


SBRM 2021-2025 (SBRM Fishing year: Apr 1 – Mar 31)

Tasked Sea Days by Category



Percent Accomplished by Category



SBRM Fishing Year

SBRM Fishing Year

Industry Funded Scallop (IFS)

- IFS program meets the SBRM standard and the data is used in the annual discard analysis of the 14 FMP species.
- IFS at-sea industry costs are offset by a compensation from the observer set-aside.
- In FY 2025, sea days were targeted in lieu of a target coverage rate.
 - Total tasked sea days for FY 2025 were 2,046 days
- PTNS Notifications in FY 2025
 - 85% notification compliance rate with an 78% self-service rate
 - For more information on the PTNS, please visit our [webpage](#).

Industry Funded Scallop Coverage 2025

(April 1 – March 31)

Permit Type	Area	Gear	Est. Sailed Trips	Observed Trips	Est. Coverage Rate	Observed Days	Days Tasked	Percent Accomplished
Limited Access	Area I	Dredge	346	19	5.5%	161	141	114%
Limited Access	Area II	Dredge	435	18	4.1%	218	199	110%
Limited Access	Georges Bank Open	Dredge	871	117	13.4%	1146	1350	85%
Limited Access	Mid-Atlantic Open	Dredge	188	3	1.6%	35	106	33%
General Category	Area I	Dredge	543	13	2.4%	43	42	102%
General Category	Area II	Dredge	0	0	—	0	0*	—
General Category	Northern Gulf of Maine	Dredge	5121	83	1.6%	116	91	128%
General Category	Georges Bank Open	Dredge	1065	29	2.7%	65	62	105%
General Category	Mid-Atlantic Open	Dredge	466	11	2.4%	22	32	69%
General Category	Mid-Atlantic Open	Trawl	65	3	4.6%	3	23	13%

Note: Estimated Sailed Trip counts are based on the best available data from VMS. This data is subject to change during QA/QC processes.

*Area II tasked sea days reallocated to Area I due to commercial effort.

ASM Coverage Update 2025

- ASM target coverage was set at **100%** on May 1, 2025, the start of the fishing year.
- ASM realized coverage from May 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026 is **~81%**. There is a spread in coverage across groundfish sectors (72-93%). These are preliminary estimates of coverage based on PTNS data.
- ASM target coverage was set at 100% on May 1, 2026. As of 5/27, the estimated realized coverage rate was 90%.

ASM 2018-2025

(Fishing year: May 1 – Apr 30)



Fishing Year	Target Coverage Rate	Realized Coverage Rate (NEFOP + ASM)
2018	15%	15%
2019	31%	23%
2020	40%	12%
2021	40%	32%
2022	80%	60%
2023*	90%	81%
2024	100%	86%
2025	100%	81%
2026	100%	Currently 90%

ASM Coverage Update 2026

- Challenges:
 - Vessels which are not safe for observers to deploy on.
 - Vessels in this category may continue to sail on groundfish trips without observer coverage.
 - Recruitment and retention of trained ASMs.
 - PTNS notification compliance by fishing vessels.
- Solutions:
 - A majority of active sectors have contracted with more than one ASM provider, which has helped increase realized coverage levels.
 - FMRD continues to offer opportunities to train new observers and cross train existing observers.

Electronic Monitoring Program Update

At-sea monitoring requirements for sector vessels

“Maximized retention electronic monitoring and audit electronic monitoring models ... may be used in place of at-sea monitoring to ensure a sector's monitoring programs may be approved. Other types of electronic monitoring may be used ... if the technology is deemed sufficient by NMFS, in a manner consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act....”

- Approved Models: Audit and Maximized Retention (MREM)
- Participating vessels: 35 vessels selected EM as monitoring tool
- Service providers: 9 vendors approved to supply EM services
- Vessel Coverage: 100% EM coverage (random sampling review rate based on level of vessel experience)

Electronic Monitoring Program Update (Participation)

- FY26: Currently 35 vessels enrolled
 - FY25: 43 vessels enrolled in the Audit Model EM program.
 - FY24: 36 vessels enrolled in the Audit Model EM program.
 - FY23: 25 vessels enrolled in the Audit Model EM program.
- The primary gear type of participating EM vessels is Bottom Otter Trawl.
- Increase in multi-day vessel enrollment.

Electronic Monitoring Program Update (Machine Learning)

- Over the course of a year, 600 hours of video was collected from four sampling stations. The dataset contains 45 million bounding boxes around individual fish, labeled by species using ground truth data from Scientific Computing System (FSCS), and it pairs each fish image with corresponding metadata.
- The goal is to develop algorithms that automate components (fish identification, length estimation) of video review and streamline the efficiency of video review processes.
- Next steps include share fish images and the algorithms with approved EM service providers as part of a pilot study to integrate machine learning into video review software platforms.

What's Next for EM:

- EM Video Reviewer (maintain and refine current data quality standards) - 1 affiliate
- EM Data Auditor (reviewer training, refine support materials, EM integration) - 1 affiliate
- Data Analyst (QA/QC routines, refine data auditing process, analyze existing processes) - 2 affiliates
- Database Developer (database objects, post-processing initiatives, data integrity) - 2 affiliates
- Applications Developer (accept AI-generated EM, database integration) - 2 affiliates
- EM Operations (DSM development, program and operations support) - 1 affiliate

How EM Data are Used

- Year End Reconciliation Process
 - EM data are integrated into the year end reconciliation process to finalize data from the completed fishing year.
- Final Catch Estimates & Rulemaking
 - EM discard data are essential for generating final catch estimates and assessing sub ACL utilization.
 - This data informs the annual adjustment rule for sectors, ensuring accurate carryover distribution and accounting for overages.
- Quota Monitoring & Management
 - EM data are used throughout the fishing year for weekly quota monitoring.
 - The delta model is used to recalculate cumulative discards, increasing confidence in the data over time.
 - Through SIMM, managers can access EM data to monitor sector quota management.
- Stock Assessments & Quota Monitoring
 - EM data are used in stock assessments for groundfish discards.

At-Sea Monitoring Spend Plan

ASM Funding Sources FY18-25

<u>Activity</u>	<u>FY18</u>	<u>FY19</u>	<u>FY20</u>	<u>FY21</u>	<u>FY22</u>	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY24</u>	<u>FY25</u>
Congressional ASM Funding Line	\$10.3M	\$10.3M	\$10.3M	\$10.3M	\$10.3M	\$10.3M	\$10.3M	\$10.3M
Non-directed Observer Funding Increases	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0.4M	\$0.9M	\$0.9M	\$0.9M
Use of Prior Year Funding to Support Industry Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1M	\$0	\$0	\$0M
Total ASM Funding	\$10.3M	\$10.3M	\$10.3M	\$10.3M	\$11.7M*	\$11.2M	\$11.2M	\$11.2M

**Prior year funds used to meet \$5.5M industry cost allocation*

ASM Spending Plans FY18-25

<u>Activity</u>	<u>FY18</u>	<u>FY19</u>	<u>FY20</u>	<u>FY21</u>	<u>FY22</u>	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY24</u>	<u>FY25</u>
Industry Sea Day Costs Allocated	\$6.263M	\$4.1M	\$4.125M	\$3.425M	\$5.5M*	\$5.5M	\$5.5M	\$5.5M
Shoreside Support (Program Operations)	\$1.212M	\$2.7M	\$3.425M	\$3.425M	\$3.3M	\$3.1M	\$3.4M	\$3.4M
Shoreside Support (Electronic Technologies)	\$1.225M	\$1.5M	\$1.95M	\$1.95M	\$1.7M	\$1.4M	\$1.1M	\$1.1M
Additional ASM Training		\$0.6M		\$0.6M	\$0.3M	\$0.3M	\$0.2M	\$0.2M
Other Total (Obs. Equipment)	\$0.9M	\$0.7M	\$0.1M	\$0.2M	\$0.2M	\$0.2M	\$0.3M	\$0.3M
Mission Support	\$0.7M	\$0.7M	\$0.7M	\$0.7M	\$0.7M	\$0.7M	\$0.7M	\$0.7M
Total	\$10.3M	\$10.3M	\$10.3M	\$10.3M	\$11.7*	\$11.2M	\$11.2M	\$11.2M
Coverage Target by Fishing Year (May 1-April 30)	15%	31%	40%	40%	80%	90%	100%	100%
Realized Coverage Level	14.6%	21.9%	11.6%	33.5%	62%	82%	87%	81%

Prior Year Funds Remaining

FY Approp	Mechanism	Funds Obligated	Funds Remaining as of 05/29/2026	Comments
2018	Grant	\$6.3M	\$0	Award ends June 30, 2023 with 1-year NCE expected (June 2024) Can be used for industry reimbursement for human or electronic monitoring (ASM)
2019	Contract	\$2.4M	\$0	Expired September 30 2021 Can be used for industry reimbursement for human or electronic monitoring operational expenses (spent all funds by expiration date)
2019	Grant	\$1.7M	\$0	Award ends June 30, 2023 with 1-year NCE expected (June 2024) Can be used for industry reimbursement for electronic monitoring equipment and installation as well as sector administrative costs
2020	Contract	\$2.1M	\$0	Expires September 30 2022. Can be used for industry reimbursement for human or electronic monitoring
2020	Grant	\$2M	\$0	Award ends June 30, 2023 with 1-year NCE expected (June 2024) Can be used for industry reimbursement for electronic monitoring equipment and installation as well as sector administrative costs
2021	Contract	\$3.425M	\$0	Expires September 30 2023. Can be used for industry reimbursement for human or electronic monitoring operational expenses
2022	Contract	\$4.5M	\$0	Funds do not expire. Can be used for industry reimbursement for human or electronic monitoring operational expenses. Funds have been moved onto a vehicle.
2023	Contract	\$5.5M	\$0	Funds do not expire. Can be used for industry reimbursement for human or electronic monitoring operational expenses. Funds will be moved onto a vehicle.
2024	Contract	\$5.5M	\$0	Funds do not expire. Can be used for industry reimbursement for human or electronic monitoring operational expenses. Funds will be moved onto a vehicle.
2025	Contract	\$5.5M	\$5.1M	Funds do not expire. Can be used for industry reimbursement for human or electronic monitoring operational expenses. Funds will be moved onto a vehicle.
	Total	\$38.925M	\$5.1M	

ASM Contract Funding Overview

- All funds obligated through FY25 onto sole source contract with ASMFC to reimburse costs of ASM/EM
- Current obligated funds remaining on contract: \$5.1M
- FY26 funds: \$5.5M (not yet obligated)
 - Once FY26 funds are obligated - total of \$10.6M will be available.
 - These funds are estimated to last through the fall of 2027.

Biological Port Sampling & NEFOP Contract Merge

NEFOP Contract Update

Why Merge the NEFOP and NEPBSP Contracts?

- We reviewed program goals and logistics, management organization, and cost structure. Both programs are inherently complex in nature and require varying degrees of staff training, field support, working knowledge of fishing fleets, and coordination.
- At the foundation, the contracts share common ground in that they are both fisheries ***biological sample-based programs***.
- The merge focused on this shared component and explored potential efficiencies (travel, hourly, training, and sampling costs) that could be achieved.

NEPBSP and NEFOP Contract Merge

- GARFO and NEFSC worked on aligning the end and start of various NEFBSP and NEFOP contract actions (fall 2025) to ensure the continuity of the biological port sampling program.
- The NEFOP contract awarded September 2025. To maximize funding, we decided to operate both contracts concurrently.
- GARFO and NEFSC are co-managing the biological port sampling program for the duration of the remainder of the GARFO contract (July 2026).
- Co-managing allows the NEFSC to gain program knowledge from GARFO, while allowing the program to expand. Maximizing both contracts to streamline effort and increase sampling.
- August 1, 2026, NEFSC will manage one succinct sampling contract.

Operations and Field Support

- FMRD working directly with AIS, GARFO, and POPDY assessment staff on program coordination.
- Tracking accomplishments weekly and developing a verification process for sample reconciliation.
- FMRD Project Manager building foundation for successful communication across the NEFSC.
- Working with states and other stakeholders to facilitate data sharing and to coordinate activities.
- Working with POPDY on a public Sample Request List (SRL) and supporting methodology documentation.
- Communicating with the fishing industry regarding increased sampling of kept catch on observer deployments.
- Understanding the dynamics of at-sea sampling, limitations of exclusive sampling (only at-sea or at dock), and days allocated (PTNS, SBRM seaday schedule) on sampling events.



Samplers by Region

Last updated May 6, 2026

Hampton, NH

NEPBSP: 0 | BPS: 1

Kennebunkport, ME

NEPBSP: 1 | BPS: 0

Gloucester, MA

NEPBSP: 0 | BPS: 3

New Bedford, MA

NEPBSP: 1 | BPS: 1

Long Island, NY

NEPBSP: 1 | BPS: 0

Point Judith, RI

NEPBSP: 1 | BPS: 1

Point Pleasant, NJ

NEPBSP: 1 | BPS: 0

Ocean City, MD

NEPBSP: 0 | BPS: 1

Virginia Beach/Lynn, VA

NEPBSP: 1 | BPS: 0

Wanchese, NC

NEPBSP: 0 | BPS: 1



NEPBSP Samplers



NEFOP Sampler

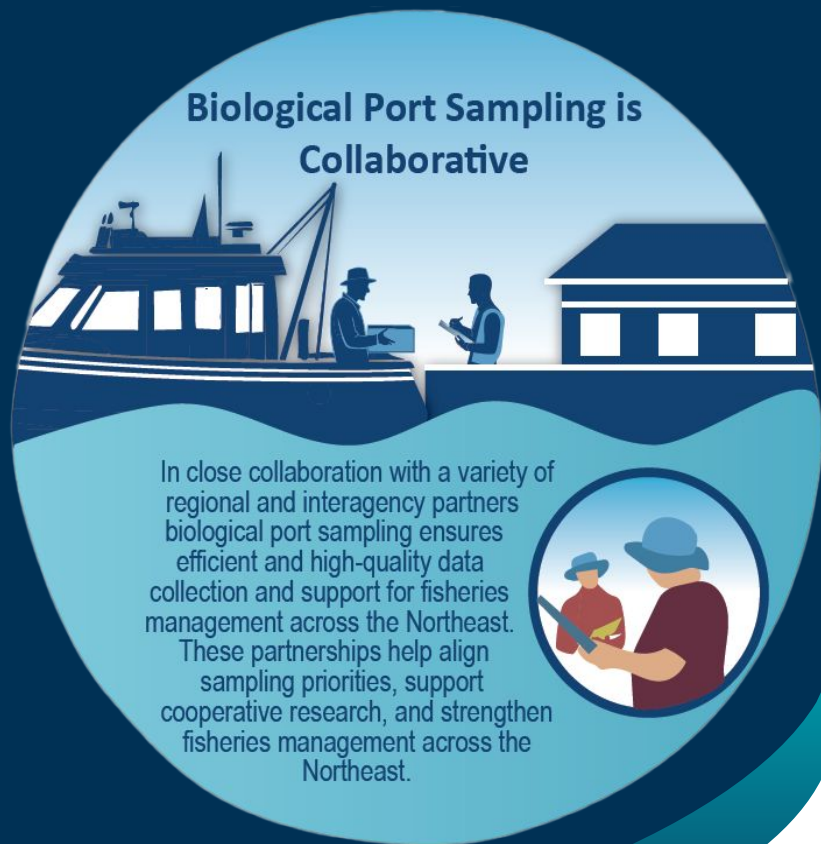
Totals (all ports)

NEPBSP: 6

NEFOP: 8

BPS Outreach Efforts

- In person outreach conducted at 15 dealers to communicate change in program management and reinforce program goals.
- Established connections with new dealers to increase sampling for “hard to find” species.
- Provided updates to Atlantic Herring technical committee (March 2026), and collaborating with the committee to share information.



BPS Outreach in 2026

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MAY

2026

1 JAN 6, 2026



GLOUCESTER, MA

- GAPE ANN SEAFOOD EXCHANGE
- INTERSHELL
- OCEAN CREST
- CAPE SEAFOODS INC
- FISHERMANS WHARF

3 JAN 8, 2026



NEW BEDFORD, MA

- BASE (WHALING CITY AUCTION HOUSE)
- SEA WATCH INTERNATIONAL
- NORPEL
- TICHON SEAFOOD
- ATLANTIC RED CRAB CO
- ATLANTIC CAPES FISHERIES INC

5 FEB 17, 2026



POINT JUDITH, RI

- SEAFREEZE
- NEWPORT LOBSTER SHACK
- TOWN DOCK
- NARRAGANSETT BAY LOBSTER
- DAVE HANDGROANS SEAFOOD INC

7 MAY 16, 2026



MONTAUK, NY

- MONTAUK FISH DOCK INC
- DOCK TO DISH LLC

2 JAN 7, 2026



BOSTON, MA

- REDS BEST
- ATLANTIC COAST

4 JAN 15, 2026



CHATHAM, MA

- CHATHAM HARVESTERS

6 FEB 18, 2026



STONINGTON, CT

- AMERICAN SEAFOOD LLC

8 MAY 17-19, 2026



NEW JERSEY

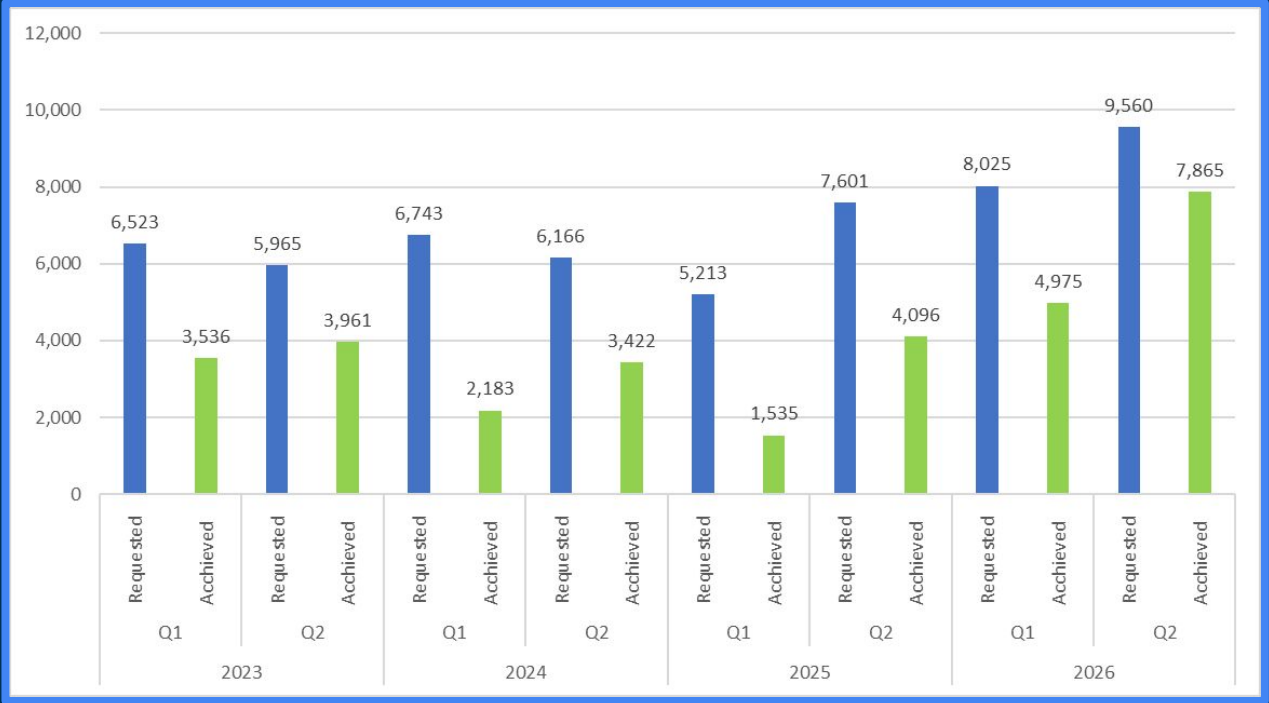
- BELFORD SEAFOOD CO-OP
- FISHERMEN'S DOCK COOPERATIVE
- VIKING VILLAGE INC
- BARNEYS DOCK
- LUND'S

2023-2026 Portside Length Accomplishments for Q1 & Q2



Year	Quarter	Accomplishments
2023	Q1	79%
	Q2	83%
2024	Q1	51%
	Q2	64%
2025	Q1	56%
	Q2	67%
2026	Q1	69%
	Q2	89%

2023-2026 Portside Age Accomplishments for Q1 and Q2



Year	Quarter	Accomplishments
2023	Q1	54%
	Q2	66%
2024	Q1	32%
	Q2	55%
2025	Q1	29%
	Q2	54%
2026	Q1	62%
	Q2	82%

At-Sea Sampling Program Developments

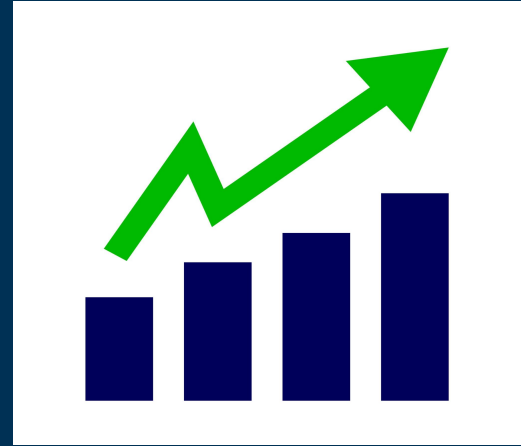
- We continue our commitment to finding efficiencies to the sampling program. Expanding to at-sea sampling remains an option and is only possible because of the contract merge.
- Current at-sea species include; Spiny Dogfish and Red Hake.
 - At-sea sampling started March 5, 2026.
 - Goal: Investigate which stock would be best sampled at sea.
 - Priority 1 status for observers at-sea collecting lengths.
 - These species are sampled at-sea (NEFOP) and at the port (NEPBSP)
- Current at-sea initiatives are focusing on species with no market categories.

Program Challenges

- Mutlistock sampling
- “Historic landing” samples included on the SRL can be difficult to track and find (infrequent, landings in low quantities, regions have shifted, etc.).
- Challenges accessing samples due to low landings driven by seasonality and changes in fishing activity.
- Specialized handling of select species impacts availability (e.g., Winter flounder packed and shipped quickly, cannot access samples fast enough).
- NEPBSP and NEFOP observer and sampler attrition (repercussions of the sinking of the F/V Lily Jean).
- Contract and program merger learning curve.

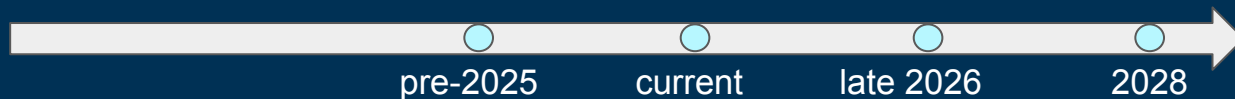
Future Initiatives

- Merge time frame for NEPBSP SRL to align with the SBRM NEFOP seaday schedule (April - March) to create more routine in sample collection (April 2027).
- Collaboration with POPDY to better communicate how the SRL and stock assessments are developed to increase transparency.
- Continue to work with POPDY to consider options for expanding the BPS program through at-sea observer collection.
- Work closely with states to streamline sampling efforts and increase coordination.
- Research how to explore efficiencies and flexibilities as it relates to samples from split stock-area trips and samples that require market category (port collected vs. at-sea collected samples).



Data Consolidation and Modernization

Project Compass



Compass will consolidate multiple legacy systems related to data entry and processing into one modernized system, while minimizing impacts on data users.

Dates are targets and subject to change.

Processing Step	System Used			
Observer data entry (ASM full + NEFOP/IFS preliminary)	OASIS	OASIS	Compass	Compass
Data editing	Editing tool	Editing tool		
Data auditing	TripTesting	Compass		
In-office data entry (NEFOP/IFS)	SeaSamp			
Data presentation	OBDBS	OBDBS	OBDBS + Compass	
Port sampling data entry (BPS)	n/a	BLISS	BLISS	
Catch estimation	manual calculation	manual calculation	manual calculation	automatic calculation

Data Modernization

- All applications being upgraded to modern design frameworks
- All data and servers being moved to the cloud (target Dec 2026)
- Completed species code standardization to use ITIS with market and grade
 - Keeping current species coding as is until transition to Compass presentation views complete
- Analyzing results of a recent software survey sent to users
 - Will help guide next set of priorities

Questions?

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