

Continuation of the Maine-New Hampshire Inshore Trawl Survey

Progress Report, Dec. 1, 2006

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SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TO DATE

The project timeline for this contract is as follows:

January 2006 – purchased NetMind™ through-hull transducer

April 2006 – prepared spring survey tows and mailings

May/June 2006 – conducted spring survey, using NetMind™ through-hull transducer

June-August 2006 – Data entry and QA/QC for Spring 2006 survey data

September 2006 – prepared fall survey tows and mailings

October/November 2006 – conducted fall survey

As of this report date, this contract is on schedule with no deviations.

The spring 2006 survey began on May 1st in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and finished on June 5th, completing 109 tows out of the scheduled 115. This translated to a 95% completion rate. There were no unexpected difficulties or project alterations. Data from the spring survey were entered into the Maine DMR's Oracle database in June and July, and quality assurance and editing were completed by the end of August. Analysis of the spring data is still continuing. Overall catches were comparable with previous surveys if not somewhat larger. Average bottom temperatures were near 5 degrees Celsius at the start of the spring survey which is about 1.5 degrees warmer than the previous spring. Sea herring, alewife, lobsters, and plaice were the most abundant species

The fall 2006 survey began in Portsmouth, New Hampshire on October 2nd and ended on November 11th. Out of the scheduled 115 tows, 85 were completed, translating into a 74% success rate. This was our second-highest success rate for a fall survey since its inception in 2000. The fall survey faced the usual difficulties of bad weather and high proliferation of lobster gear. Nevertheless, the survey was completed and all obstacles were sufficiently overcome to not compromise the overall integrity of the survey or survey quality. Data from the fall survey are currently in the process of being entered.

During the next 6 months data entry and quality assurance and editing will be conducted. Posters presenting trawl survey results will be presented at the Northeast Consortium's Project Participants' Meeting in December 2006 and the Maine Fishermen's Forum in March 2007. A final report on the 2006 survey season will be provided to the Northeast Consortium by the end of June 2007.

Project Impacts

The primary impact of the Maine-New Hampshire Inshore Trawl Survey is the provision of data and information for 80% of the nearshore waters of the Gulf of Maine. Prior to this project's inception in 2000, information and data from this area of water was not incorporated into any stock assessment. No contemporary information existed on which to assess populations, trends and distributions. With six years now complete and a seventh in progress, the survey will strengthen the ability of managers to begin stock assessments of this area and develop more effective management strategies, benefiting both the stocks and the fishermen who rely on them.