

NORTHEAST CONSORTIUM Annual Report

Project Title: Archival Tagging Study of Monkfish, *Lophius americanus*

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Project objectives and scientific hypotheses

The primary objectives of this project are (1) to investigate movements of monkfish (including deepwater excursions) among the southern and northern U.S. management regions and Canadian waters, and (2) to validate aging methods for monkfish. Additional objectives are to learn about monkfish behavior, including off-bottom excursions that may be related to transport on ocean currents and/or spawning behavior; activity rhythms in relation to tidal cycles; and habitat (depth-temperature) associations. We hypothesize that monkfish move extensively and that there is exchange between fishery management areas and a possible deepwater excursion by maturing females from the southern area.

Major Accomplishments and Milestones

We have taken 5 day-trips to release DST-tagged monkfish in the Gulf of Maine and southern New England:

Date	Vessel	Tagging Location	Captain	Number Tagged	
1/13/2009	Gertrude H	So. New England	Ted Platz	16	
7/23/2009	Gertrude H	So. New England	Ted Platz	26	
10/16/2009	C.W. Griswold	W. Gulf of Maine	Tim Caldwell	6	
10/26/2009	C.W. Griswold	W. Gulf of Maine	Tim Caldwell	43	
11/10/2009	Gertrude H	So. New England	Ted Platz	54	
Total DSTs released					
			W. Gulf of Maine	49	
			So. New England	96	
			Total	145	
				Tags remaining	45

We have begun outreach efforts, including increased web presence (<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/read/popdy/monkfish/Survey2009/taggingstudy.htm>), press releases to be released in late January, and a cover article scheduled to appear in Commercial Fisheries News in late January.

We have prepared dissection and sample collection kits and protocols to be followed when monkfish are returned with DSTs.

Some photos from the tagging trips can be found at the end of this report.

Project Alterations

The work under this project has been supplemented by a 2008 monkfish RSA grant awarded to Grabowski and Sherwood (GMRI), which increased the number of tags to be released in each site.

Next Steps (6 months)

We will release the remaining 45 tags in the Gulf of Maine and continue with our outreach efforts. We will focus on outreach during April and May, when catches of monkfish begin to increase during the spring onshore migration.



Figure 1. Tagging set-up with holding tank in foreground and tagging apparatus in background.



Figure 2. Apparatus for tagging monkfish while keeping them submerged. Note incision on monkfish ready for tag insertion. Measuring board is embedded in base of box.



Figure 3. Tagged monkfish showing location of data storage tag and pink external tags



Figure 4. Monkfish being released after tagging operation.

Cooperative Monkfish Tagging Study

Have you caught a monkfish with **pink** tags?
If so, you are eligible for a...

\$500 REWARD


These fish have been implanted with electronic data storage tags to help us investigate large-scale monkfish movements and behaviors.


To Claim Your Reward:
You must **SAVE THE ENTIRE FISH*** and report capture date and location.

To report a tagged fish or for more information:
visit: <http://www.gmri.org/tagging> or
<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/read/popdy/TagReporting/TagReporting.htm>
email: monkfishtagging@gmri.org (subject monkfish)
call toll-free: 1-866-447-2111

*Please store on ice or freeze if necessary.

Contact us for instructions on where to send the fish and to receive your reward.

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Figure 5. Poster for outreach for archival tagging study.