

NEC Annual Report

1. Project title and contract number

Application of broadband sonar technology for fisheries assessment and research

2. PI contact information

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To be transferred to Dr. Graham Sherwood, GMRI, gsherwood@gmri.org, 207.228.1644

3. List of project participants with contact information

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Dr. Timothy Stanton, WHOI, Applied Ocean Physics and Engineering, Mailstop 11,
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Dr. Thomas Weber, UNH, Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping, 24 Colovos Road,
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4. Major accomplishments and milestones

We have secured funding from the Maine Technology Asset Fund (\$532,000) to purchase acoustic equipment and outfit lobster boats with the equipment. We just received notification (June 27, 2011) from NMFS that they will provide \$400,000 for operational funding, therefore the project will become active in July 2011.

5. Unexpected difficulties and project alterations

- We were awaiting the passage of the FY11 federal budget to secure remaining required funding for the overall project. We received notification on June 27, 2011, that this funding is available.
- Our acoustic survey will take the form of outfitting ten lobster boats across the coast of Maine with Simrad ES70 single beam, dual-frequency systems rather than using a single broadband system. This strategy allows much greater spatial and temporal coverage of Area 1A for herring assessment and engages the lobster industry in the survey process. These changes have been discussed with Chris Glass.

6. Next steps

Submit NEPA questionnaire and apply for LOA to sample herring during spawning closures during acoustic surveys. Once the NEPA hurdle is cleared, we will purchase acoustic equipment and other necessary gear, hire graduate student, contract lobster boats, outfit lobster boats, finalize survey design, and begin execution of surveys in August 2012.

7. Impacts of the project to fishermen/fishing community and scientist/science community

The acoustic instrumentation, coupled with our community-based survey design in Area 1A, will provide direct and quantitative estimates of herring critical for informed management decisions that balance conservation needs for sustaining herring populations and economic needs of the Northeast.

8. Signed and dated

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Stockwell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Jason Stockwell, Ph.D.
July 4, 2011