



Industry profile: Yankee's Bob Campbell

Bob Campbell has been running the Yankee Fishermen's Cooperative in Seabrook Harbor, NH for about 15 years. The co-op, a federally permitted business that can accept and sell fish from federally permitted commercial fishing vessels, is comprised of approximately 60 day-boat fishermen who catch mainly groundfish, lobsters, tuna, and shrimp.

Located on Route 1A about a quarter mile south from the drawbridge that separates Hampton Beach and the town of Seabrook, the co-op is comfortably nestled between grass-covered dunes and a large estuary along the picturesque New Hampshire seacoast.

After graduating in 1977 from Salem State College with a degree in psychology, Bob took his first full-time crew position on board the tuna fishing vessel Ho Hum II out of Plum Island and continued commercial fishing for the next decade or so.

In 1990, he came ashore and became a manager of the Tri-Coastal Seafood Co-op. Once located in downtown Newburyport, MA on the waterfront behind the Starboard Galley restaurant, this facility merged with the Yankee Co-op in the mid-1990s. Bob has been the general manager there ever since.

Part of Bob's success is his interest in and willingness to promote many of the commercial species available in his region. For instance, in addition to various groundfish species such as cod, pollock, haddock, and flounders that are landed throughout the year, the co-op also buys whiting from trawlers participating in the Gulf of Maine small mesh fishery in the fall.

As the whiting fishery begins to taper, *Pandalus borealis*, or northern shrimp, begin to congregate nearshore where fishermen can harvest them. Bob buys these shrimp and partially supports this fishery during the winter months by selling them at a number of local farmers' markets. In the late summer and fall, the co-op deals in dogfish and bluefin tuna. Local lobstermen also are frequent clients.

In addition to running a successful business, Bob promotes marine research related to issues and species native to the Gulf of Maine. Several years ago, he partnered with three biologists in a collaborative research project that examined the distribution and abundance of bluefin tuna.

Bob and others collected more than 3,082 observations of the physical conditions of individual tunas during a 15-year period that were used for this study. Project results were presented in the article "Decline in Condition of Northern Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) in the Gulf of Maine," which was published in the August 2007 Fisheries Bulletin.

NOAA Fisheries Service's port agent Caleb Gilbert notes that he's known Bob for about six years and has always found him to be a pleasure to work with.

"Bob understands many of the issues facing the commercial fishing industry and few can duplicate his level of expertise," Gilbert said. "I also greatly appreciate his ability to mix intelligent sarcasm with

constructive criticism."

Recently, there have been significant regulatory changes in the way that commercial fisheries are managed. In an effort to help fishermen and the general public understand these changes, Bob is participating in a new outreach pilot program by NOAA Fisheries Service.

NOAA Fisheries is establishing Fisheries Information Centers at several ports throughout the region to increase the opportunities that fishermen and the public have to interact with NOAA Fisheries staff and to get their specific questions answered.

Bob will be hosting the first event on Wednesday, March 23, from 2 pm to 5 pm at the co-op, which is located at 725 Ocean Boulevard in Seabrook. For more information about this outreach program, call Olivia Rugo, NOAA Fisheries Service fisheries outreach coordinator, at (978) 675-2167 or e-mail her at <olivia.rugo@noaa.gov>.



Becky Zeiber/NH Sea Grant photo

Accurate Seafood Dealer Reporting Key to Fishery Management Success

NOAA Fisheries Service relies on the reports submitted by federal seafood dealers as the authoritative source of landings data. The agency uses these data for, among other things stock assessments, quota monitoring, sector Annual Catch Entitlement and Individual Transferable Quota monitoring, and annual landings compilations.

These data also are used as the primary sources of information in determining a federal vessel's fishing history for qualification or allocations in federal limited-access fisheries.

Because so much relies on these data, NOAA Fisheries views the accuracy and timeliness of these reports to be extremely important. Vessel owners can help by reviewing and validating their dealer-reported landings using our Fish-on-Line website found at <www.nero.noaa.gov/NMFSlogin>.

While overall seafood dealer reporting is good, there are several problems common to many dealers throughout the region. We are working with individual dealers and fishing vessel owners/operators to address these issues.

Here are some of the more common ones we see:

- **Timeliness** – Reports are due by midnight each Tuesday for all purchases or receipts from the preceding week. Currently, only 70% of the reports are received on time. This is not sufficient for most of our monitoring purposes and requires us to make estimates to account for

missing landings.

- **Vessel Trip Report Serial Numbers** – This number is used to link information from a fishing trip with our monitoring programs. Without this number, a vessel owner may not receive the proper credit for his/her landings, or the landings may be attributed to the wrong harvest area. By providing dealers with accurate serial numbers, these issues can be avoided.
- **Vessel Identification** – Vessel identification errors, such as out-dated permit numbers or mismatches between a vessel's name, permit, and hull numbers or no vessel information at all, may lead to landings being credited to the wrong vessel or to no vessel at all. Dealers should ensure that this information is accurate by working with vessel owners and/or operators and by validating the lists of vessels they are using in their reporting system.
- **Consolidation of Trips** – Sometimes dealers report multiple trips as a single transaction. This occurs primarily in day-boat fisheries when vessel operators may hold their catch for several days. Each trip needs to be reported separately by vessel operators and as a separate transaction by dealers.

For more information, contact Greg Power, Fishery Statistics Office, NOAA Fisheries Service, (978) 281-6304 or <greg.power@noaa.gov>.



How to Navigate the NEPA Process to Make Your Voice Heard

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is our country's basic national charter for environmental responsibility. NEPA requires federal agencies, such as NOAA Fisheries Service, to consider the potential effects of their actions on the environment.

To promote informed choices, working NEPA documents are used during the development of fisheries actions and are completed prior to taking final action. Federal actions prompting review under NEPA can include approving a fishery management plan, amendment, or framework.

Fisheries actions are typically evaluated for impacts to habitat, target species, bycatch/discards, protected resources, and human communities. The human communities component focuses on social and economic impacts of an action to fisheries participants and ports. NEPA also assesses potential cumulative impacts that a fisheries action may have when combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future fishing and non-fishing actions.

For fisheries actions in the Northeast Region, the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils work with NOAA Fisheries Service to complete NEPA documents.

Frameworks or amendments to fishery management plans are typically prepared using either an

environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS).

An EA is prepared to determine whether a proposed action will "significantly affect the quality of the human environment." The EA will either make a "Finding of No Significant Impact" determination or recommend the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS). An EIS provides greater in-depth investigation of environmental impacts than an EA through a more thorough examination of suitable alternatives and/or mitigation measures, and increased interaction with interested agencies as well as the public through formal comment periods.

To enable better decision making, public involvement is a key part of NEPA. There are several opportunities for the public to comment on a regulatory action.

- Draft EA – Comments on the draft EA can be made in conjunction with comments submitted as part of the proposed rulemaking process.
- Notice of Intent (NOI)/Scoping (30-day comment period) – When a fishery management action is initially developed, an NOI is published in the Federal Register with a description of the proposed action and associated scoping process, meeting

information, and agency contacts. Fishery management councils often hold public scoping meetings to determine the range of issues to be addressed. Comments at this stage help develop potential alternatives.

- Draft EIS (45-day comment period) – Comments at this stage should focus on whether the document sufficiently identifies and analyzes a proposed action's environmental impacts and adequately discusses ways in which they may be avoided or mitigated. And,
- Final EIS (30-day comment period) – This is the final opportunity to comment on an EIS action before a Record of Decision is issued explaining why the agency has taken a particular course of action.

Your comments during the NEPA process assist the councils and NOAA Fisheries Service in the development of actions and play an important role in the fisheries management process.

You can stay informed about proposed NEPA actions by:

- Reviewing the Federal Register or agency/council websites;
- Contacting the councils or NOAA Fisheries Service to receive announcements regarding council actions that include the NEPA process; and
- Obtaining copies of NEPA documents that are typically available for public comment on the council or NOAA Fisheries Service websites or from staff members.

For more information about the NEPA process and how you can become involved, contact NOAA Fisheries Service's NEPA program at (978) 281-9226 or visit <www.nero.noaa.gov/nepa>.

Rewards Offered for Tagged Spiny Dogfish

In January, NOAA Fisheries Service's Northeast Fisheries Science Center launched a cooperative initiative to tag spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*) in the Gulf of Maine, Southern New England, and Georges Bank. This project is an effort to answer long-standing questions about stock structure, movement patterns, and life history of the species in order to update and improve dogfish stock assessments.

Over a two-year period, a minimum of 33,000 dogfish will be tagged during the winter and summer months from three commercial vessels. Some of these fish will be double tagged for a tag retention study. Some also will be injected with oxytetracycline (OTC) for an age validation study.

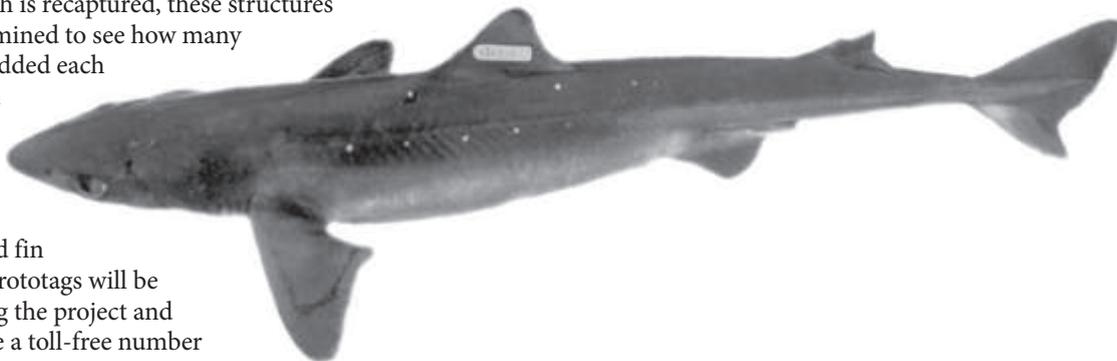
Fish age is often measured by counting the growth rings on certain calcified structures in the fish. To verify that these rings develop every year, OTC, a common antibiotic, is used to leave a permanent mark on structures such as the vertebrae or spines. When a tagged fish is recaptured, these structures can be examined to see how many layers are added each year, which provides a verified aging method.

Standard fin tags called rototags will be used during the project and will include a toll-free number for reporting required recapture

information – tag number, fork length, date, and location. Anyone with a dogfish permit who captures a tagged fish and returns complete information can earn either a \$20 cash reward for one of the 27,000 white tags or a \$100 cash reward for one of the 3,000 "high reward" orange tags.

Recaptures of fish injected with OTC and fish with two tag types – a rototag and a dart tag – will require return of the whole fish for a \$100 cash reward (3,000 green tags). This will ensure that the OTC-marked vertebrae and spines are received and allow the condition of the tag in the fish to be examined. Whole fish to be returned should be iced or frozen. Shipping instructions will be provided upon contact.

To report the capture of tagged spiny dogfish, call toll free (877) 826-2612, report online at <www.nefsc.noaa.gov/sharktagreport>, or e-mail <sharkrecap@noaa.gov>.



VMS Software Updates Coming in April

Northeast vessel owner/operators who must use a vessel monitoring system (VMS) will receive updated software from their VMS vendor in April 2011.

This updated software complies with all Northeast regulatory changes for fishing year 2011. Owner/operators must be using the new software by May 1, 2011.

In March, the NOAA Fisheries Service Northeast Region will send out a permit holder letter announcing the software release with details on how to use the new VMS forms. NOAA Fisheries Service also will be providing training opportunities on the new software in March and April.

Updates on the software release will be posted on the Northeast VMS webpage at <www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/fishermen/multispecies/gom/VMSRegs.htm>.

For more information, call the Northeast VMS Team at (978) 281-9213.

Update on Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan

In November, NOAA Fisheries Service convened the Northeast Subgroup of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (ALWTRT) in Providence, RI to continue developing a plan to reduce the risk of large whale entanglements in commercial fishing gear.

The ALWTRT is composed of fishing industry, environmental, scientific, and state and federal management representatives.

Following the 2009 implementation of the sinking groundline requirement, NOAA Fisheries Service and ALWTRT are addressing additional entanglement risks associated with vertical lines (endlines) from fixed commercial fishing gear such as traps/pots and gillnets. Discussions focused on strategies for reducing the number of vertical lines in the water.

NOAA Fisheries Service presented results from a co-occurrence model that uses gear density and whale abundance data to identify areas where the two overlap. The model will be used to assess management options for reducing risk of large whale entanglements in vertical line. NOAA Fisheries Service is refining the model through discussions with team members to ensure that the best available information on whale abundance and gear density are incorporated.

The Mid-Atlantic/Southeast Subgroup of the ALWTRT will meet in April in Baltimore, MD to discuss results of the co-occurrence model in those regions.

For more information on current gear requirements, contact a NMFS Gear Research Team member: John Higgins, (207) 677-2316; John Kenney, (401) 294-0443; or Glenn Salvador (757) 414-0128.

For more information on the ALWTRP, call ALWTRP Coordinator Kate Swails, (978) 282-8481, or visit <www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp>.

ALWTRP restrictions in management areas for trap/pot and gillnet fishermen

Date	Area	Fishery	Management Measure
Jan. 1 - May 15	Cape Cod Bay Restricted Area	Gillnet	Closed
Jan.1 - May 15	Cape Cod Bay Restricted Area	Trap/Pot	*Gear modification required
April 1 – June 30	Great South Channel Restricted Trap/Pot Area	Trap/Pot	Closed
April 1 - June 30	Great South Channel Restricted Gillnet Area	Gillnet	Closed

*Cape Cod Bay Restricted Area Gear Modifications (January 1-May 15) include:

Compliance with Universal Requirements—No buoy line floating at the surface, No wet storage of gear (all gear must be hauled out of the water at least once every 30 days), and fishermen are encouraged, but not required, to maintain knot-free buoy lines.

Compliance with Gear Marking Requirements – Trap/pot surface buoys to be marked to identify the vessel or fishery with one of the following: the owner's motorboat registration number and/or U.S. vessel documentation number; the federal commercial fishing permit number; or whatever positive identification marking is required by the vessel's home-port state. When marking is not already required by state or federal regulations, the letters and numbers to mark gear must be at least 1 inch (2.5cm) in height, block letters or Arabic numbers, in a color that contrasts with the color of the buoy, and buoy lines to be marked with one 4-inch (10.2 cm), RED, mark midway along the buoy line.

All buoys, flotation devices and/or weights must be attached to the buoy line with a weak link having a breaking strength of no greater than 500 lb;

All buoy lines must be made of sinking line, except for the bottom 1/3 which may be floating line;

Only multiple traps are permitted (no single traps or 3-trap trawls) where trawls are to be set in a 2-trap string or a trawl of 4 or more traps (2-trap strings can have only one buoy line); and

All groundlines must be made of sinking line.

Historic Herring Run Restoration a Milestone

In November 2010, the NOAA Restoration Center, the town of Brewster, MA, and several partners, including the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration, the Association for the Preservation of Cape Cod, the Mass Bays Program, and the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, completed major construction on the Stony Brook Salt Marsh and Fish Passage Restoration Project.

The project, which received \$1.36 million in American Reinvestment and Recovery Act funds through NOAA, replaced a failing undersized pipe, or culvert, that conveyed Stony Brook beneath State Route 6A with a much larger culvert.

The new 18' concrete box culvert was sized to restore natural tidal flow to a 20-acre degraded salt marsh and to enhance migratory fish access to 386 acres of spawning ponds. The culvert has re-established the normal tidal range to the marsh and provides improved conditions for the passage of river herring to access their spawning ponds.

Completion of this project also marks a major milestone for coastal restoration in the commonwealth of Massachusetts – more than 1,000 acres of wetlands have been restored to date.

Historically, Stony Brook was a stream with extensive surrounding salt marsh. Human development altered the habitat. The first water-powered grist and woolen mill in the country was built on the brook in the late 1600s.

Downstream, roads and culverts divided the salt marsh and constricted water flow between Cape Cod Bay and Stony Brook. Prior to the restoration project, the former undersized and failing culvert beneath

Route 6A restricted approximately 40% of the tide from reaching the upstream marsh, and forced migrating river herring to enter a small, dark culvert with high water velocities.

Today, Stony Brook is an unusual watershed on Cape Cod because it supports a large coastal wetland and river herring run and provides 386 acres of spawning habitat for river herring. The watershed also contains more than 900 acres of protected open space as well as the historic Stony Brook mill.

Tidal wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems on earth and their productivity directly supports commercial and recreational fisheries. The healthier marshes are, the better they can serve as nurseries for a host of fish, such as winter flounder, striped bass, sticklebacks, and mummichogs.

Also, river herring mingle with American herring, which are a primary bait source for commercial fishing. Healthy river herring stocks could eventually reduce a potential need for protective closures and preserve access to American herring.

"Salt marsh continues to be one of the most critical coastal habitats under the greatest threat from water pollution, aging infrastructure, development, invasive species, and sea level rise," said Northeast Regional Supervisor of the NOAA Restoration Center John Catena. "We are thrilled that the Stony Brook project helped push Massachusetts past the 1,000-acre mark for restored wetlands."

The NOAA Restoration Center is dedicated to restoring the nation's coastal ecosystems and preserving diverse and abundant marine life. Through its strong commitment to restoration and by promoting



Dr. Jo Ann Muramoto, Association to Preserve Cape Cod photo



Steve Block, NOAA Restoration Center photo

partnerships and local stewardship, its programs inform and inspire people to act on behalf of a healthier coastal environment. For more information about the NOAA Restoration Center, visit <www.restoration.noaa.gov>.

Groundfish ACL-Monitoring Changes for FY '11

NOAA Fisheries Service monitors the Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) for commercial groundfish vessels using vessel trip reports, dealer purchase reports, NOAA Fisheries Service Observer Program data, and vessel monitoring system information.

The most up-to-date information on common pool and sector catch is available online at <www.nero.noaa.gov/ro/fso/MultiMonReports.htm>.

Sector Monitoring

NOAA Fisheries Service monitors sector catch for each allocated groundfish species – what is referred to as a sector's Annual Catch Entitlement (ACE) – using the most up-to-date information available.

Because of the time delay in receiving, processing, and auditing catch and landings data, NOAA Fisheries Service relies on a calculated estimate to determine catch and discards for any trips where not all of the information is available.

Sectors are responsible for monitoring catch and discard information, and for submitting weekly reports to NOAA Fisheries Service. After the end of the 2010 fishing year (FY) on April 30, the sector will have up to two weeks into FY 2011 to transfer additional FY 2010 ACE, unless otherwise instructed by NOAA Fisheries Service.

After the final trading for FY 2010 has been

Vessel operators in the common pool should be aware that some level of differential DAS counting is likely at the start of FY 2011.

completed, if an overharvest exists, the sector must account for the overage in FY 2011. If in FY 2011 the sector has insufficient ACE to account for the FY 2010 overharvest, or the sector disbands, Potential Sector Contribution or days-at-sea (DAS) reductions (for FY 2010 sector members) will be used to account for the overage.

If additional time is needed to reconcile final sector ACE balances with the NOAA Fisheries Service data base, NOAA Fisheries Service may extend the two-week

deadline for sectors to transfer ACE. NOAA Fisheries Service will withhold 20% of a sector's FY 2011 ACE for each stock for up to 61 days to allow time to process ACE transfers and to apply any applicable overage penalties if necessary.

Common Pool Monitoring

In FY 2010, NOAA Fisheries Service took several in-season actions to adjust possession limits and the DAS counting rate for vessels fishing under the common pool regulations. These actions were necessary to prevent the common pool fishery from exceeding its allocations of certain stocks and to allow continued harvest of stocks that had not been fully harvested.

NOAA Fisheries Service is considering adjusting some of the current trip limits in time for the start of FY 2011. These changes to initial possession limits would help avoid some of the rapid in-season adjustments that were necessary in FY 2010 and may provide more predictable conditions for vessel owners and operators.

Although new possession limits were not available at the time this insert was prepared, NOAA Fisheries Service will alert vessel operators of any changes through a permit holder letter prior to the start of the fishing year.

Vessel operators in the common pool should be aware that some level of differential DAS counting is likely at the start of FY 2011.

Amendment 16 required that if the common pool exceeded its catch limit for any stock, differential DAS counting would be implemented in the following FY. As of this writing, harvest of at least one stock (witch flounder) has exceeded the FY 2010 common pool catch limit.

The new differential DAS counting rate and the area(s) that rate applies to will be determined by the stock(s) whose harvest exceeded the allocation and the extent of the overage. Details of differential DAS counting will be provided in a permit holder letter prior to the start of FY 2011.

For more information, call NOAA Fisheries Service's Sustainable Fisheries Division at (978)281-9315.

Fishermen's Help Needed for Bluefin Study

Atlantic bluefin tuna are managed as two stocks: a western stock that spawns in the Gulf of Mexico and an eastern stock that spawns in the Mediterranean Sea. Restrictive harvest measures have been in place for western fisheries in the US and Canada since the international rebuilding plan was adopted in 1998.

Simultaneously, small tuna have been harvested in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea at relatively high rates. There is some mixing between the two stocks, and the harvesting of small tuna in the east could be impeding the recovery of the western Atlantic bluefin tuna stock.

To address this issue, NOAA Fisheries Service is participating in a comprehensive sampling program of western Atlantic bluefin tuna fisheries. This project relies on the cooperation of bluefin tuna dealers, commercial fishermen, and recreational anglers.

The purpose of the study is to improve scientific knowledge about bluefin tuna in what are considered to be the two areas of greatest need – age structure of the stocks and the extent of mixing between eastern and western stocks.

To help gather data, local tuna dealers are notifying port agents from the NOAA Fisheries Service's Northeast Regional Office of commercial bluefin landings so that samples, including carcass tag data, can be collected.

To characterize landings in the commercial fishery, port agents are collecting otoliths, dorsal spines, caudal vertebrae, and tissue samples. Located in the head area, otoliths are structures that fish use for hearing and orientation in the water column. Scientific analyses of otoliths provide information on the origins of the fish –

whether they are from the eastern or western Atlantic – as well as the age of the fish. Scientists also study otoliths to estimate both the number of spawning fish present in a particular stock as well as future numbers of juveniles. This information will greatly improve the ability of NOAA Fisheries Service scientists to track the abundance of fish at different ages and to assess the overall status of the bluefin tuna stocks. It also is critical to the development of effective federal and international bluefin management strategies.

Here are three steps commercial tuna fishermen and dealers can take to support these sampling efforts when the bluefin return this spring.

- Retain the tuna's head, even if it is removed at sea, so it can be sampled once it's landed.
- Ensure that the head can be linked to the commercial landing tag number so data, such as length and weight, can be tied to the otoliths. For example, a piece of paper with the tag number and/or vessel name can be inserted into the fish's mouth so it remains with the head and is available when the otoliths are removed. And
- When landing, contact your local port agent or Greg Power at <greg.power@noaa.gov> or (978)281-6304.

The recreational portion of the study will start soon in association with the Large Pelagic Biological Survey, led by the NOAA Fisheries Service's Office of Science and Technology in Silver Spring, MD.

For more information on the bluefin study, call Greg Power, Fishery Statistics Office, NOAA Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office, at (978) 281-6304 or e-mail him at <greg.power@noaa.gov>.



Katie Almeida photo



The NOAA FISHERIES NAVIGATOR