The NOAA FISHERIES NAVIGATOR

Farming Sea Scallops in Maine

Fishermen are facing numerous threats, including climate change. Aquaculture offers a solution. Farming sea scallops in Maine offers an opportunity to diversify the seafood harvesting business and increase resiliency for coastal communities built around seafood production. The sea scallop aquaculture community is unique to Maine and composed of a variety of people and organizations, including fishermen farmers, marine extension programs, community development financial institutions, and research and outreach foundations.

NOAA Fisheries and Coastal Enterprises, Inc. recently visited with Marsden and Bob Brewer, operators of PenBay Farmed Scallops, and Andrew Peters, co-owner of Vertical Bay Scallops. CEI is a community development financial institution in Maine that has a long history of supporting fishing and aquaculture. Both of these aquaculture farms are examples of opportunities for marine livelihoods that shellfish farming is providing in Maine.

Meet The Farmers

Marsden Brewer is a fourth-generation fisherman who still fishes for lobster. However, reduced fish stocks and an increase in commercial fishing regulations have led to a decrease in fishing opportunities. Marsden's son, Bob, wanted a career working on the ocean; Marsden looked for other opportunities and saw the potential in sea scallop farming. Marsden said, "In order for a waterfront to stay alive, you gotta be having something to sell. You gotta be landing in product. You gotta bring new money into your community. And this does it, same as lobsters." Together, Marsden and Bob created their company, and have reached the point of making weekly deliveries throughout Maine coastal communities. They have plans to expand production to further meet existing demand.

NOAA Fisheries photo

Hugh Cowperthwaite, CEI Senior Program Director for Fisheries and Aquaculture, holds up a lantern net while describing the method of scallop farming with lantern nets hung vertically in the water.

Andrew Peters spent years as a sternman on commercial lobster vessels while planning to pursue a license to fish lobsters on his own vessel. He learned of the extensive wait time to receive a license and the uncertainty of the process. This led Andrew to search for other ways to expand and solidify his marine career. He discovered the possibility of sea scallop farming.

"A huge reason why we picked scallops to farm over other species was the amount of support from interested parties," said Andrew. Since founding Vertical Bay farms in 2017 with his wife Samantha, they have expanded their knowledge of farming scallops, accompanied by increasing sales. They have applied for additional authorizations from Maine to expand production. Andrew now sees a future where sea scallop farming is profitable and will allow him to work on the ocean full time.

Sea Scallop Farming Creates a Unique Product

Sea scallop farming will serve a specialty market within the seafood industry, allowing consumers to buy scallops at different sizes, ranging from petite to jumbo. The buyer could even have the opportunity to purchase the whole animal instead of the more commonly available sea scallop adductor

See MAINE FARM, page 4

Join the Cooperative Research Study Fleet

In March 2023, we will be accepting quotes for our public solicitation for vessel support for the Cooperative Research Study Fleet Program.

What Is the Study Fleet?

The Study Fleet, composed of approximately 50 fishing vessels in the Northeast, began in 2006 as a way to engage fishermen in collecting high resolution catch, effort, and environmental data to address science and management needs. The Study Fleet captains and crews use specialized software, automated oceanographic sensors, and real-time data transmission to collect detailed data on every commercial fishing tow. They receive training and compensation for participating.

Who Are We Looking For?

We are recruiting new Study Fleet vessels that participate in the longfin squid, shortfin squid, mackerel, butterfish, scup, black sea bass, summer flounder, whiting, haddock, and tilefish fisheries.

These fisheries have been identified as our priority for the collection of long-term, tow-by-tow data using our Fisheries Logbook Data Recording Software, automated oceanographic sensors, and real-time data transmission. We will award contracts in the spring of 2023.

How Are Study Fleet Data Used?

Study Fleet data have been used for many purposes, including:

- Estimating fishery footprints
- Developing catch-per-unit-effort indices for stock assessments
- Understanding the potential impact of offshore wind on fishing operations

Developing thermal niche (statistical associations between catch and temperature) models

- Informing oceanographic models

The fine scale data provided by the Study Fleet help managers make informed decisions about the fisheries we care about.

Where Do Vessel Owners Apply?

A request for quotes notice will post on the System for Award Management website in March 2023. Contact Katie Burchard with any questions: katie.burchard@noaa.gov.

For more information, visit <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/event/join-cooperative-research-study-fleet>.

THIS SUPPLEMENT PROVIDED BY NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE'S GREATER ATLANTIC REGIONAL OFFICE

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The NOAA FISHERIES NAVIGATOR

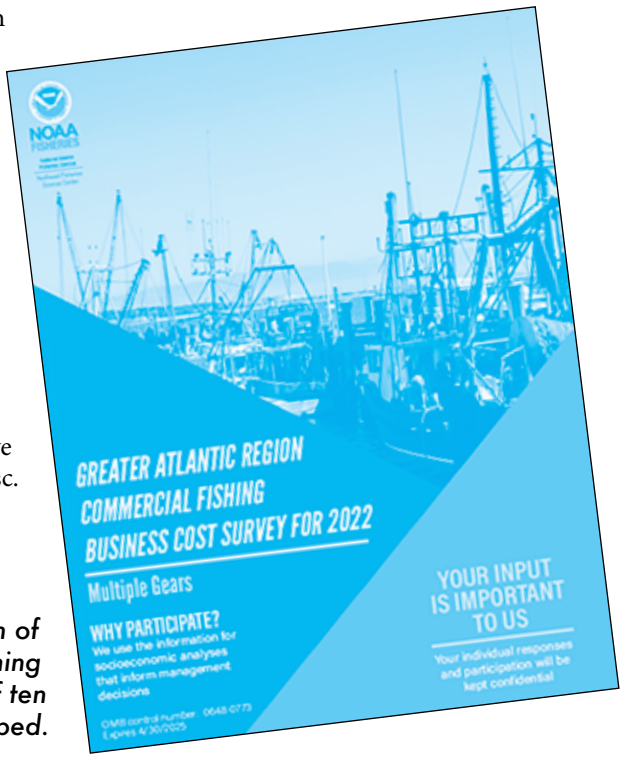
Looking for Commercial Vessel Owners to Complete a Voluntary Cost Survey in March-April

Economists within the Social Sciences Branch of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) will send a voluntary cost survey to federally-permitted commercial fishing vessel owners this March-April. The survey collects information about costs incurred by fishing vessel owners during the 2022 calendar year such as information on repair and maintenance, upgrade and improvements, insurance, mooring fees, and business overhead costs. This survey was last conducted in 2016 and is the only source of regional cost information collected by NOAA Fisheries. This information is used to track trends in costs over time, assess economic fishery performance, and ultimately inform management decisions.

Since the last survey, NEFSC economists have worked to make the survey easier to complete by decreasing the survey length, creating versions based on gear type to more accurately reflect how vessel owners track their cost information and increasing the number of options for taking the survey. In addition, a cost data visualization tool has been created to summarize survey results collected from previous years.

Vessel owners should be on the lookout in March and April for information on how to participate in the upcoming survey. When the survey is open for participation, vessel owners can respond either online, through a hard copy mail survey (postage prepaid), or through a virtual interview with a NEFSC staff member. The cost information can only be used in management decisions if more industry members take the survey.

For more information on the Greater Atlantic Region Commercial Fishing Business Cost Survey for 2022, please see our website https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/cost-survey. To use our interactive cost visualization tool, please go to https://apps-nefsc.fisheries.noaa.gov/socialsci/cost-data



Cover for the multiple gear version of the Greater Atlantic Commercial Fishing Business Cost Survey. This is one of ten gear-based surveys developed.

Stock Assessment News

The 2024 research track stock assessment working groups for golden tilefish, yellowtail flounder, and Atlantic sea scallop have kicked off. They continue to meet virtually. Meeting schedules and links are available on each stock's webpage.

The Yellowtail Flounder Working Group will hold a Stakeholder Engagement meeting on March 9, 2023. Visit the website for more information and registration.

For information on all assessments visit:

- Individual Research track Stock Assessment webpages
- NRCC 2022-2026 Stock Assessment Schedule
- The NOAA Fisheries Event Calendar

For questions, please contact Michele Traver at <michele.traver@noaa.gov>.

September 2nd due (run dates Oct)

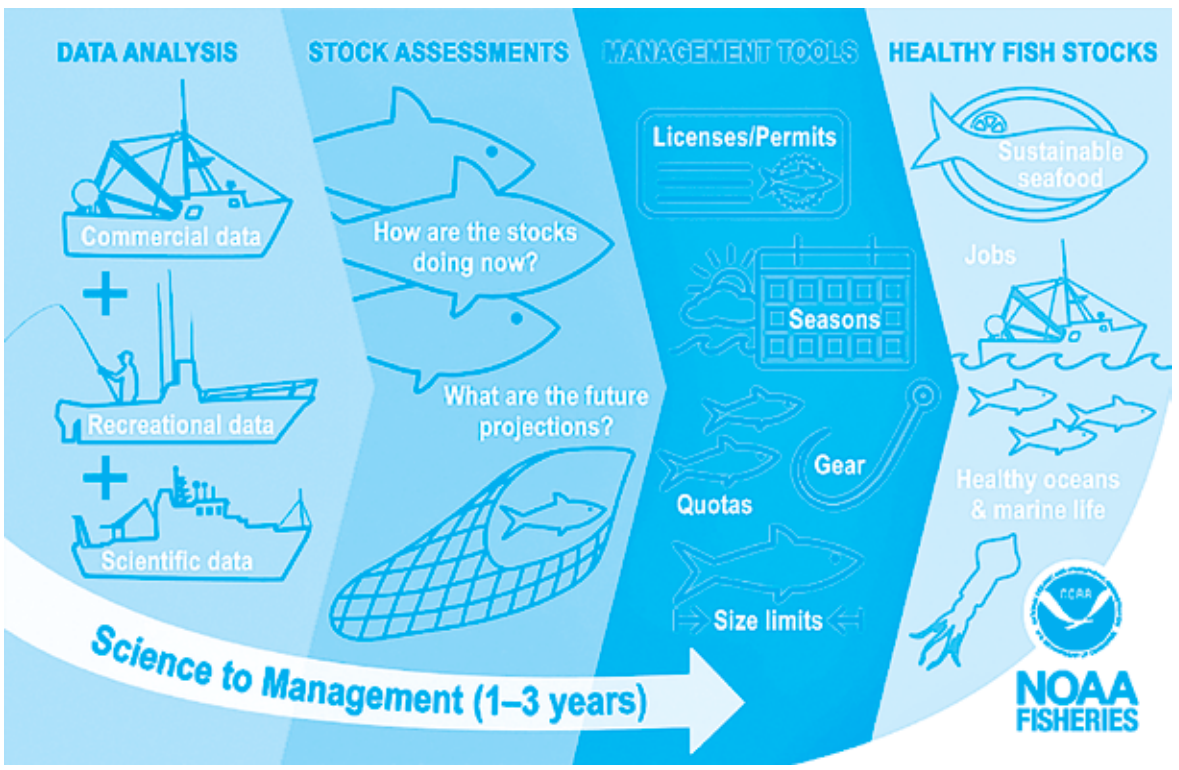
NRCC Meeting - Oct. 24-25, 2022

2024 research tracks for *** stocks have been formed. The Working Golden Tilefish

Yellowtail Flounder will hold it's kick off meeting on Tuesday, October 4, 2022 from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

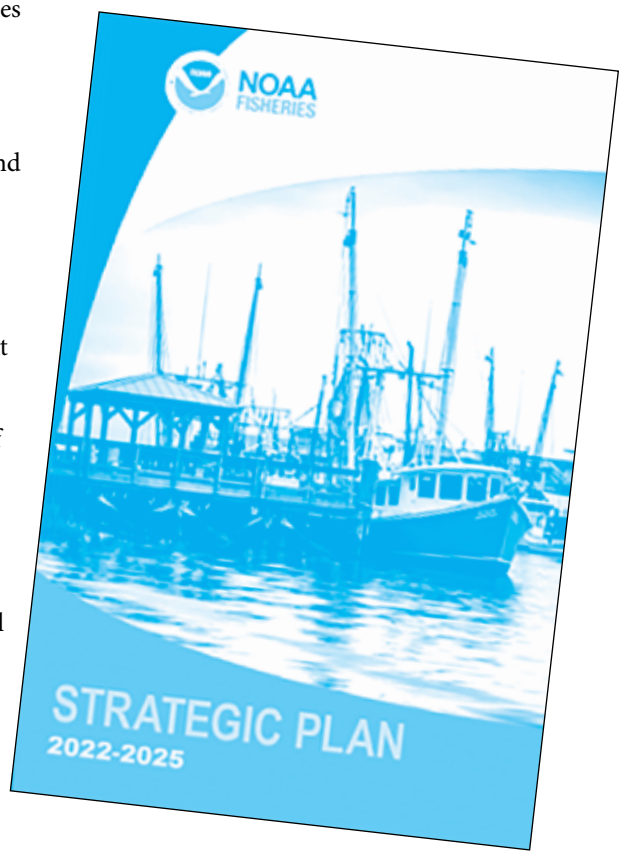
August due for Sep.
Upcoming Stock Assessments for the Northeast Region Coordinating Council

See STOCK, next page



Strategic Plan Announced

We are pleased to introduce NOAA Fisheries Strategic Plan for 2022–2025. The plan tiers from the Department of Commerce Strategic Plan, which has one overarching vision: helping the American economy grow. It sets out NOAA Fisheries' strategic goals and key strategies and informs the public about our important work.



The goals of this plan are focused on key statutes and the priorities of this Administration, including:

- Building a climate-ready nation, including resilient fisheries and coastal communities
- Ensuring the sustainability and competitiveness of U.S. fishing and seafood industries
- Recovering and protecting marine species
- Continuing to build a mission-oriented, diverse workforce and to promote equity and environmental justice

More specifically, at NOAA Fisheries, we are focused on:

- Confronting climate change, expanding our science capabilities, supporting conservation initiatives, including America the Beautiful
- Protecting and conserving our marine resources
- Advancing equity and environmental justice

This plan defines our role as we confront the growing effects of climate change impacts on our conservation and management mission.

As we confront these immense challenges, we will provide scientific information, tools, and capacity for resource managers and stakeholders to assess and reduce impacts, increase resilience, and help adapt to changing ocean conditions.

Offshore wind energy development also plays an important role in U.S. efforts to combat the climate crisis and build a clean energy economy.

In support of the Interior Department's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, NOAA Fisheries will continue to play an important regulatory role. We will focus on minimizing the impacts to ocean resources, critical habitats, and fishing opportunities throughout the planning, siting, and development stages.

Our mission is critical and consequential to the health and vitality of our communities. Increasing the competitiveness of the U.S. seafood industry to help make it more resilient to future market and environmental shocks. It will support domestic production and jobs and help ensure food security.

We will prioritize equity and environmental justice by promoting programs, policies, and activities to address the disproportionately high and adverse human health, environmental, climate-related, and other cumulative impacts on disadvantaged communities.

Stock assessment

Continued from page previous page

The Northeast Region Coordinating Council developed a collaborative stock assessment process that involves two assessment types: management track and research track. Assessments are scheduled years in advance to allow for better planning.

Management track assessments provide routine, scheduled, and updated advice to directly inform management actions. These assessments are designed to be simple, quick, efficient, and flexible and are able to incorporate new information on a regular cycle.

Research track assessments are complex scientific efforts that are designed to be carried out over several years. They focus on research topics or individual stocks, evaluate new issues or models that could apply to those stocks; and consider extensive changes in data, model, or stock structure.

All assessment related meetings are open to the public and invited to attend. To find out more visit
- Individual Research track Stock Assessment webpages
- NRCC 2022-2026 Stock Assessment Schedule
- The NOAA Fisheries Event Calendar

Upcoming stock assessment meetings

- August 3, 2022 - Assessment Oversight Panel Meeting for American Plaice
- September 19-23, 2022 - September Management Track Peer Review Meeting for haddock, American plaice, monkfish, and multiple groundfish stocks

For questions, please contact Michele Traver at <michele.traver@noaa.gov>.

Renew Your 2023 Vessel Permits Using Fish Online

Filling out and submitting the vessel permit renewal via Fish Online is fast and efficient. You can apply for all your permits at once, and once your renewal package is approved, you can print your permits at home. As a reminder, Fish Online is the only way to renew your vessel permits.

We no longer send or accept paper applications or mail issued permits to owners. Vessel owners will need to apply for and print their permits from their secure Fish Online user account. A valid paper vessel permit is required to be present and maintained on the vessel at all times.

Fish Online is our secure online system that allows vessel owners a way to login using their own username and password, which is associated with their email address. Additionally, this system allows owners to give access, or "entitlements," to their fleet managers, family members and other trusted people so they can submit and manage a vessel's information through their own account.

To renew your permits, you will need to have your valid U.S. Coast Guard documentation or state registration available; however, you do not have to provide scanned or paper copies of these documents. You will also need to verify that all of your required electronic vessel trip reports (eVTRs) have been submitted to be eligible to renew your permits.

Please also note that we are increasing our vessel and dealer reporting compliance monitoring. As a reminder, vessels are required to provide their eVTR serial number to dealers and dealers are required to report the same eVTR serial number in their weekly dealer reports to NOAA Fisheries. Missing eVTR serial numbers significantly delay both vessel and dealer permit issuance and we ask for your support in providing this information as required. To renew or make changes to an existing permit, visit Fish Online at <https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/apps/login/>.

Questions? To check your VTR compliance status: (978) 281-9246. For assistance with your permits, call our Permits Office: (978) 282-8438 or email <NMFS.GAR.Permits@noaa.gov>. Your local Port Agent can also assist with these topics. For technical issues, call our IT Help Desk: (978) 281-9188.

The NOAA FISHERIES NAVIGATOR

Broken Fishing Trips: Reporting Requirements

How do you report to NOAA Fisheries when you return to port earlier than anticipated from a fishing trip? A "broken trip" is when a vessel ends a trip earlier than expected, due to weather, mechanical or technical failures, or other circumstances. This article provides practical guidance on the VMS, eVTR, and Northeast Fisheries Observer Program reporting requirements that owners and operators should be aware of when they break a trip, but it is not a substitute for the regulatory requirements.

Sections A through C explain how an operator should report on their eVTR and VMS unit if they experience a broken trip and travel inside the VMS demarcation line without offloading their catch. In this circumstance, we strongly recommend operators contact appropriate state authorities as states may have their own regulations related to broken trips.

A. Follow these steps for a broken trip where the vessel stays on anchor and does not hit the dock:

1. A vessel operator should send in a VMS pre-landing/end hail report consistent with the fishery declared in their initial trip declaration when the vessel is at least an estimated 6 hours from port, is fishing less than 6 hours from port, or is "laying up" anywhere inside the VMS demarcation line as soon as safely possible.

Please keep in mind that trips that cross the VMS demarcation line, but don't end, may be stitched together so a single trip is not broken up into multiple segments. This occurs because of the irregular boundary of the VMS demarcation line. Trip stitching prevents trips from closing immediately after crossing the demarcation line. Trip stitching also has days-at-sea accounting and VMS declaration implications, which varies by fishery. Please contact the VMS support team for fishery/declaration specific trip stitching information.

2. If you are declared into a fishery that requires daily catch reports, continue to send in those reports by 9 a.m. each day.
3. Complete the current effort and leave open the eVTR for that trip.

When the vessel heads to sea on the next leg of their trip, the operator should start a new effort for that trip. The eVTR should be completed when the vessel hits the dock to offload and submitted to NOAA Fisheries within 48 hours.

B. Follow these steps on a broken trip where the vessel hits the dock:

1. Follow step 1 in section A, and submit the required VMS pre-landing and end trip hails.
2. If you tie up to the dock, that trip is over and the eVTR should be completed and submitted to NOAA Fisheries within 48 hours.

If no gear was set prior to returning to port, the operator will fill out a "No Effort" eVTR. If gear was set, but there was no catch, the operator simply needs to record "NC, no catch" in the "add catch" section of the eVTR. Otherwise, catch should be recorded in the offload section of the eVTR as "4 Retain for future sale" if the operator intends to go back out fishing or simply transit to another port to offload.

C. Follow these steps when returning to sea and completing the second leg of a broken trip:

1. Operators should properly declare a new trip in VMS if they are participating in a VMS managed fishery and begin a new eVTR or new effort as appropriate.
2. Operators must submit VMS daily catch reports as required, if that is a requirement for the fishery the operator declared.
3. If not on a transit declaration, operators should follow the same procedure they followed when returning to port from the first leg of a broken trip (see step 1 in section A).

On scallop declarations, the operator should correct the previous preland with updated dates, port, and amount of scallops. This is accomplished by starting a new scallop pre-landing notification, then selecting "Yes" in the check box when prompted by the software to indicate the report is a "Correction of a prior report". The operator will also be prompted to indicate the "Date of the prior report" if they select "Yes" for correction. This is the date the operator submitted the previous pre-landing notification.

4. Operators should follow all other VMS and eVTR end of trip procedures in the same manner they would for an unbroken trip.

After offloading, the catch recorded in the offload section of the eVTR saved for the first leg of the broken trip as "4 Retain for future sale", can then be updated to reflect the offloading dealer and port and then resubmitted to NMFS. This should be done as soon as possible so NMFS can link both eVTR's to the dealer report on record for that offload. Similar to the eVTR completed for the first leg of a broken trip, the operator will have 48 hours to submit an eVTR created for the second leg of a broken trip.

Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Requirements

In general, an observer or At Sea Monitor (ASM) will continue to observe the second leg of a broken trip if they participated in the first leg. Similarly, trips waived for observer or ASM coverage on the first leg of a broken trip, will continue to be waived in the second leg.

Prior to beginning the second leg of a broken trip, please follow these fishery specific instructions on who to contact:

For the Industry-Funded Scallop Observer Program <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/commercial-fishing/industry-funded-scallop-observer-program-call-guide>, please contact the Vessel Call-In Coordinator at (508) 560-3550.

For groundfish trips, vessels retain their selection status for all portions of a broken trip. Vessels should communicate any broken trips with their assigned observer and/or provider, if a portion of the trip was observed. Vessels should reach out to the Pre-Trip Notification System (PTNS) team at (855) 347-4371 or <nefsc.ptns@noaa.gov> with any questions.

For all other fisheries, follow the guidance listed above for groundfish, but instead of contacting the PTNS team, please contact your observer provider.

For additional questions regarding VMS reporting requirements for broken trips, contact the Office of Law Enforcement at (978) 281-9213, option 1. Our National VMS Support Center is also available Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., at (888) 219-9228. For eVTR reporting assistance, contact the vessel reporting help desk at (978) 281-9188, <nmfs.gar.reporting@noaa.gov>, or your local Port Agent: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/contact/port-agents-greater-atlantic-region>.

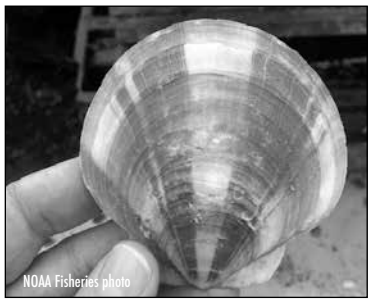
If you are heading to the dock and offload your catch on a normal (unbroken) trip, please reach out to our VMS support team (see contact information, above) for specific VMS reporting instructions. Specific eVTR reporting instructions may be found online: <https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2022-04/eVTRReportingInstructions08Apr2022-GARFO.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery>.

Maine Farm

Continued from page 1

muscle meats. Part of the interest in farmed scallops relates to the traceability of the product from farm to market. This is especially important because they are promoting the freshness that comes from distribution to markets within 24 hours of harvesting. PenBay Scallops created a cookbook to help consumers, chefs, and wholesalers understand what the products are, where they come from, and how to use them.

Sea scallop farming in Maine will not compete with wild scallop harvesting volumes in New England. It will also not impact the trends for demand and prices of wild harvested sea scallops due to the differences in harvest and distribution scales, market demands, and production costs. "A farmed scallop is not meant to compete or displace wild fishery scallops. It's simply a different product offering," states Hugh Cowperthwaite, CEI Senior Program Director for Fisheries and Aquaculture.



A farmed sea scallop during sorting on the vessel.

With the support of many people and organizations in Maine for sea scallop farming, the future looks good for both farmed and wild markets to grow and expand. For questions on sea scallop aquaculture in Maine, contact kevin.madley@noaa.gov, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office Aquaculture Coordinator.