



**National Fish and Wildlife Foundation  
Final Programmatic Report**



**RHODE ISLAND LARGE WHALE CONSERVATION PLAN**

**#2005-0326-001**

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Cover Photo: Offshore sea sampling trip on F/V Barbara Ann at Hudson Canyon

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**Project Name and Number:** Rhode Island Large Whale Conservation Plan#2005-0326-001

**Recipient Organization/Agency:** Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management,  
Division of Fish & Wildlife

**Recipient Organization Web Address:** april.valliere@dem.ri.gov

**Date Submitted:** 9/25/2009

## 1) Summary of Accomplishments

RI's Principal Investigator has been a member of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (ALWTRT) since the team was first convened. Substantial efforts to work with commercial fishermen to address entanglements and mortalities in fixed gear throughout the Northeast region have been ongoing. In 2005, The Rhode Island Division of Fish & Wildlife (RIDFW) applied for funding assistance from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to conduct a fixed gear survey to assess the number and configuration of fishing gear utilized by Rhode Island (RI) fishermen that are likely to adversely impact endangered whales. The grant award was received in April of 2006, funding was received in October of 2006 and the project was initiated.

Surveys were mailed out to all RI commercial fishermen (n=1080) who possessed a license which allowed them to fish fixed gear (pots & gillnets) in 2006 regulated under the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP), to determine primary gear type, level of activity and gear characteristics.

Additionally, RIDFW incorporated sea sampling efforts onboard lobster and gillnet vessels to gain further information on these fisheries in RI nearshore waters and the offshore lobster pot fishery in Hudson Canyon. RI catch & effort harvester logbooks and the National Marine Fisheries Service Vessel Trip Reports were also analyzed to quantify number and types of gear.

## 2) Project Activities & Results

### Activities

#### Phase I

RIDFW developed a survey to reflect local fixed gear fisheries and areas of gear concern as identified by the ALWTRT which were distributed to Rhode Island Fishermen in all ports. Under the RI license structure, one of the categories of licenses issued allows fishermen to fish multiple gear types, and prosecute multiple regulated species and fisheries. Therefore, it was difficult to obtain fine-scale data on fishing activity and specific gear types. Gear surveys (Attachment 1) were developed specifically for lobster, gillnet and fish pot fisheries, to characterize participation in each fishery and mailed to all RI license holders who were licensed to potentially fish those gear types. 1,080 surveys were mailed, the response rate was 45% for lobster/fish pot holders, and 22% for gillnet license holders.

Additionally, RIDFW targeted lobster fisheries by port and gillnet fisheries thru sea sampling. Four offshore lobster trips(Area 3), 25 inshore (Area 2) lobster trips and 4 gillnet trips were sea sampled during the initial year of this grant.

Outreach to gillnet fishermen was held in conjunction with the NMFS Harbor Porpoise TRP workshop held 11/1/06. Interviews with lobstermen and gillnetters continued in local forums, including the RI Marine Fisheries Council advisory panels and dockside visits.

## **Phase 2**

Gillnet, lobster and fish pot surveys entered were entered into an Access database and results compiled. To validate the consistency of survey replies, RIDFW continued sea sampling observations each year (Table 1)

The Principal Investigator continued to work with industry on an informational basis on the ALWTRP specifics and providing information on required configurations and timelines. Industry continued to ask for financial assistance in order to become compliant due to the high economic burden, however to date RI fishermen have not received any compensation. It is worth noting that many RI fishermen are not fishing their full allocations as they have only been able to convert a small portion of their gear to comply with the April 2009 floating groundline prohibition.

RIDFW continued to work cooperatively with lobster industry organizations (Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association, RI Lobstermen's Association, Sakonnet Point Gillnet Association), NOAA, NFWF & Covanta establishing a "Fishing for Energy" partnership in RI for a cooperative recycling program for floating line and derelict gear. Rhode Island is home for a large commercial fishing fleet, landing over 72 million pounds of fish and shellfish and lobster valued at \$66 million dollars in 2008. Point Judith and Newport host the largest fishing fleets, with over 250 commercial fishing vessels operating out of Point Judith and 47 commercial vessels operating out of the port of Newport. Multiple gear types are fished out of each port, including lobster & fish pots, otter trawl, gillnet and dredges. Wharf space and storage for gear not in use is extremely limited, and over the years large quantities of unused gear have accumulated along the docks. With the implementation of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, all floating groundline were required to be replaced by April of 2009 to reduce the risk of entanglement of whales, which required numerous Rhode Island based vessels to bring in all ground lines from offshore waters. The amount of rope that could be recycled thru this initiative is enormous, and along with the recycling of other allowable gear, would work towards the goal of cleaning up the ports and assist the industry in responsible disposal of unwanted, unusable or prohibited gear. The ports of Newport and Point Judith were targeted to set up containers for fishermen to bring their gear in. Several containers of floating line were removed from Newport initially, and a massive cleanup followed in Point Judith with RIDEM/DFW providing substantial logistical and physical support in each endeavor.

**Table 1: Total number of observed lobster trips to document gear type & configuration**

| Date       | Region | Area | Total Pots Allocated | Pots Hauled | Groundline Type |
|------------|--------|------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1/20/2006  | 539    | NBE  | 800                  | 272         | SINK            |
| 1/24/2006  | 539    | RIS  | 800                  | 192         | SINK            |
| 2/15/2006  | 539    | NBW  | 500                  | 154         | SINK            |
| 2/23/2006  | 616    | C    | 1229                 | 1179        | FLOAT           |
| 3/7/2006   | 539    | UB   | 800                  | 265         | SINK            |
| 3/8/2006   | 539    | RIS  | 323                  | 323         | SINK            |
| 3/9/2006   | 539    | NBE  | 600                  | 168         | SINK            |
| 4/6/2006   | 539    | UB   | 800                  | 509         | SINK            |
| 4/17/2006  | 539    | NBW  | 550                  | 316         | SINK            |
| 5/6/2006   | 616    | C    | 2053                 | 1682        | FLOAT           |
| 5/23/2006  | 539    | RIS  | 755                  | 240         | SINK            |
| 5/23/2006  | 539    | NBE  | 700                  | 200         | SINK            |
| 6/14/2006  | 539    | UB   | 800                  | 293         | SINK            |
| 6/21/2006  | 539    | NBW  | 800                  | 214         | SINK            |
| 7/6/2006   | 539    | NBE  | 800                  | 167         | SINK            |
| 7/17/2006  | 539    | RIS  | 600                  | 209         | SINK            |
| 8/16/2006  | 539    | UB   | 800                  | 267         | SINK            |
| 8/24/2006  | 616    | C    | 2061                 | 1762        | FLOAT           |
| 8/25/2006  | 539    | NBW  | 800                  | 228         | SINK            |
| 9/15/2006  | 539    | NBE  | 800                  | 286         | SINK            |
| 9/25/2006  | 539    | RIS  | 800                  | 300         | SINK            |
| 10/4/2006  | 539    | RIS  | 800                  | 270         | SINK            |
| 10/4/2006  | 539    | NBW  | 700                  | 260         | SINK            |
| 10/13/2006 | 539    | RIS  | 350                  | 144         | SINK            |
| 10/23/2006 | 539    | UB   | 800                  | 339         | SINK            |
| 11/6/2006  | 539    | NBE  | 600                  | 170         | SINK            |
| 11/9/2006  | 616    | C    | 1853                 | 1853        | FLOAT           |
| 11/27/2006 | 539    | RIS  | 299                  | 195         | SINK            |
| 12/7/2006  | 539    | UB   | 800                  | 280         | SINK            |
| 12/11/2006 | 539    | NBW  | 800                  | 334         | SINK            |
| 1/9/2007   | 539    | NBE  | 800                  | 300         | SINK            |
| 1/24/2007  | 539    | RIS  | 800                  | 207         | SINK            |
| 2/20/2007  | 539    | UB   | 800                  | 248         | SINK            |
| 2/28/2007  | 539    | NBW  | 525                  | 221         | SINK            |
| 3/4/2007   | 616    | C    | 1760                 | 2248        | SINK            |
| 3/21/2007  | 539    | RIS  | 800                  | 160         | SINK            |
| 3/22/2007  | 539    | NBE  | 800                  | 165         | SINK            |

|            |     |     |      |      |       |
|------------|-----|-----|------|------|-------|
| 4/4/2007   | 539 | NBW | 800  | 164  | SINK  |
| 4/10/2007  | 539 | UB  | 800  | 130  | SINK  |
| 5/7/2007   | 539 | NBE | 500  | 235  | SINK  |
| 5/22/2007  | 539 | RIS | 800  | 91   | SINK  |
| 6/25/2007  | 539 | NBW | 650  | 264  | SINK  |
| 6/27/2007  | 539 | UB  | 800  | 440  | SINK  |
| 7/18/2007  | 539 | RIS | 750  | 199  | SINK  |
| 7/26/2007  | 539 | NBE | 800  | 300  | SINK  |
| 8/7/2007   | 539 | NBW | 800  | 270  | SINK  |
| 8/15/2007  | 539 | UB  | 800  | 315  | SINK  |
| 9/7/2007   | 539 | NBE | 720  | 285  | SINK  |
| 9/10/2007  | 539 | RIS | 800  | 190  | SINK  |
| 10/5/2007  | 539 | UB  | 800  | 264  | SINK  |
| 10/23/2007 | 539 | NBW | 780  | 248  | SINK  |
| 11/21/2007 | 539 | RIS | 260  | 143  | SINK  |
| 11/26/2007 | 539 | NBE | 600  | 275  | SINK  |
| 12/5/2007  | 539 | UB  | 800  | 100  | SINK  |
| 12/13/2007 | 539 | NBW | 800  | 270  | SINK  |
| 1/24/2008  | 539 | RIS | 540  | 280  | SINK  |
| 1/29/2008  | 539 | NBE | 800  | 323  | SINK  |
| 2/17/2008  | 539 | NBW | 480  | 425  | SINK  |
| 2/25/2008  | 616 | C   | 1810 | 1810 | SINK  |
| 3/4/2008   | 539 | UB  | 700  | 372  | SINK  |
| 3/13/2008  | 539 | NBE | 800  | 319  | SINK  |
| 3/24/2008  | 539 | RIS | 420  | 249  | SINK  |
| 4/15/2008  | 539 | UB  | 800  | 429  | SINK  |
| 4/25/2008  | 539 | NBW | 670  | 173  | SINK  |
| 5/6/2008   | 539 | RIS | 630  | 300  | SINK  |
| 5/13/2008  | 616 | C   | 2091 | 2436 | FLOAT |
| 5/19/2008  | 539 | NBE | 800  | 360  | SINK  |
| 6/12/2008  | 539 | NBW | 625  | 227  | SINK  |
| 6/17/2008  | 539 | UB  | 800  | 225  | SINK  |
| 7/10/2008  | 539 | RIS | 500  | 185  | SINK  |
| 7/16/2008  | 539 | NBE | 800  | 400  | SINK  |
| 8/8/2008   | 539 | NBW | 650  | 224  | SINK  |
| 8/12/2008  | 537 | CL  | 750  | 380  | SINK  |
| 8/16/2008  | 616 | C   | 2003 | 2003 | SINK  |
| 8/19/2008  | 539 | UB  | 800  | 292  | SINK  |
| 9/11/2008  | 539 | NBE | 710  | 245  | SINK  |
| 9/22/2008  | 539 | RIS | 800  | 340  | SINK  |
| 10/8/2008  | 539 | UB  | 800  | 143  | SINK  |
| 10/15/2008 | 539 | NBW | 600  | 204  | SINK  |

|                  |                                |                |      |      |       |
|------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|------|------|-------|
| 11/5/2008        | 539                            | NBE            | 780  | 182  | SINK  |
| 11/12/2008       | 539                            | RIS            | 800  | 340  | SINK  |
| 11/18/2008       | 616                            | C              | 2001 | 1497 | FLOAT |
| 12/6/2008        | 539                            | CL             | 400  | 278  | SINK  |
| 12/9/2008        | 539                            | UB             | 800  | 520  | SINK  |
| 12/11/2008       | 539                            | NBW            | 800  | 168  | SINK  |
| 1/6/2009         | 539                            | NBE            | 740  | 300  | SINK  |
| 1/12/2009        | 539                            | RIS            | 800  | 209  | SINK  |
| 1/29/2009        | 539                            | UB             | 800  | 341  | SINK  |
| 2/10/2009        | 539                            | NBW            | 800  | 230  | SINK  |
| 2/10/2009        | 539                            | NBE            | 800  | 264  | SINK  |
| 2/15/2009        | 537                            | CL             | 610  | 479  | SINK  |
| 2/17/2009        | 539                            | RIS            | 526  | 326  | SINK  |
| 3/5/2009         | 539                            | RIS            | 580  | 308  | SINK  |
| 3/13/2009        | 539                            | UB             | 800  | 318  | SINK  |
| 3/14/2009        | 539                            | NBE            | 800  | 315  | SINK  |
| 4/22/2009        | 539                            | NBW            | 800  | 294  | SINK  |
| 4/23/2009        | 539                            | RIS            | 500  | 90   | SINK  |
| 4/24/2009        | 539                            | NBE            | 800  | 225  | SINK  |
| 5/8/2009         | 539                            | UB             | 600  | 280  | SINK  |
| 5/11/2009        | 539                            | NBE            | 665  | 260  | SINK  |
| 5/20/2009        | 539                            | RIS            | 570  | 135  | SINK  |
| 5/30/2009        | 537                            | A2<br>OFFSHORE | 640  | 385  | FLOAT |
| 6/17/2009        | 539                            | RIS            | 600  | 99   | SINK  |
| 6/25/2009        | 539                            | NBE            | 785  | 220  | SINK  |
| 6/25/2009        | 539                            | NBW            | 500  | 285  | SINK  |
| 7/10/2009        | 539                            | NBE            | 800  | 280  | SINK  |
| 7/20/2009        | 539                            | NBE            | 800  | 209  | SINK  |
| 7/23/2009        | 539                            | RIS            | 600  | 170  | SINK  |
| 8/7/2009         | 539                            | NBW            | 800  | 276  | SINK  |
| 8/7/2009         | 539                            | NBE            | 785  | 260  | SINK  |
| 8/27/2009        | 537                            | A2<br>OFFSHORE | 780  | 166  | COMBO |
|                  |                                |                |      |      |       |
|                  |                                |                |      |      |       |
| Area Designation | Offshore, LMA 3                |                |      |      |       |
|                  | West Passage, Narragansett Bay |                |      |      |       |
|                  | East Passage, Narragansett Bay |                |      |      |       |
|                  | Rhode Island Sound             |                |      |      |       |
|                  | Upper Bay                      |                |      |      |       |

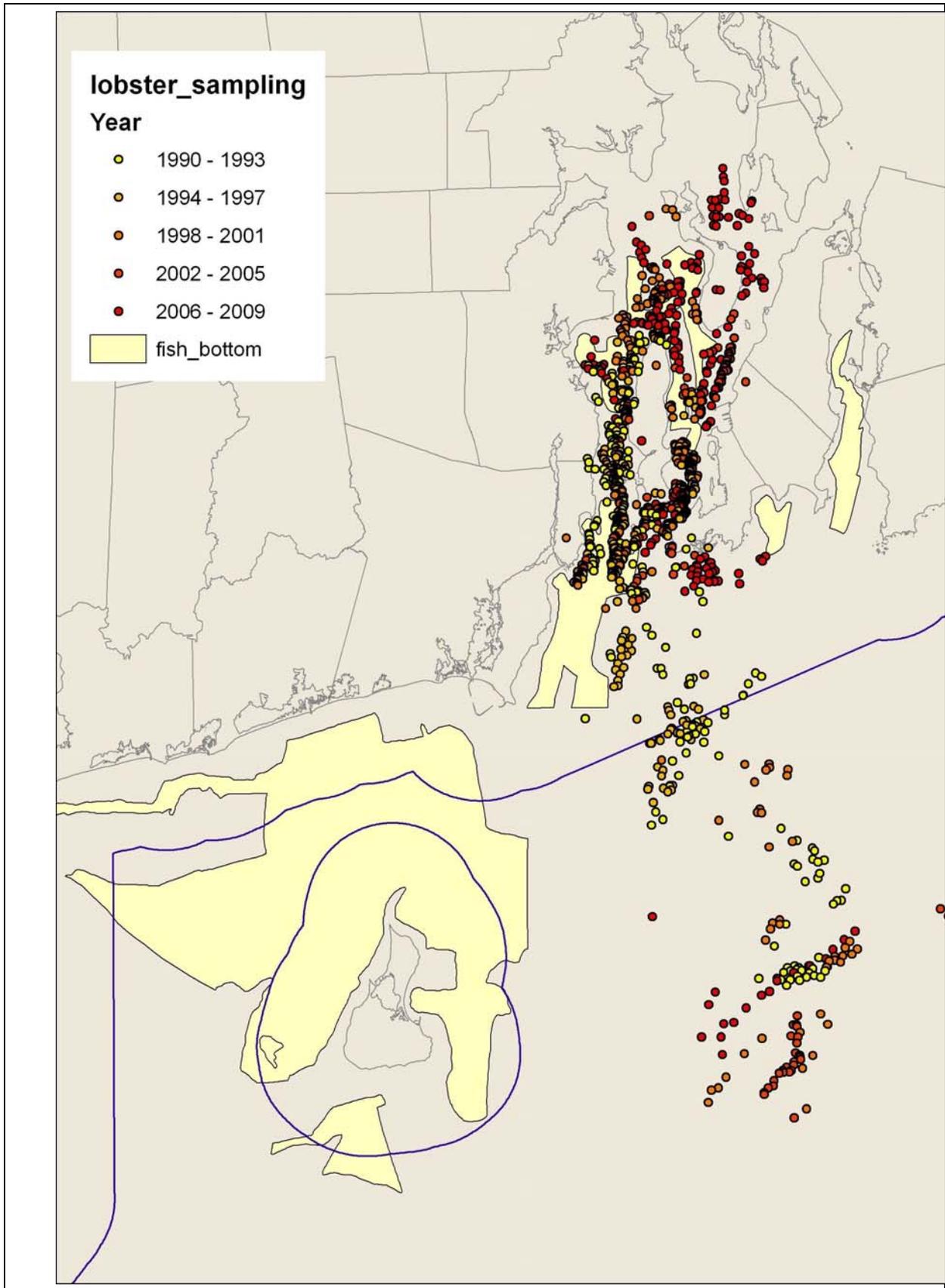


Figure I RI STATE WATERS OBSERVED HAULS

RIDFW had adequate staff support to conduct an extensive inshore and offshore sea sampling program in concert with the RI Lobster Research & Management Project . Gillnet sampling was done under a contractual basis, and the contracted observer had great difficulty getting cooperation to conduct sea sampling trips. Only 4 trips were observed in 2007, after which the contract expired and the resources to continue observations were lost.

Due to the state financial crisis starting in 2007, contracts were not allowed to be renewed and new retirement criteria for state personnel and subsequent reorganization forced the departure of 50% of RIDFW marine fisheries staff. Short staffed and overburdened with mandated fisheries plan regulations and compliance, research projects and state/federal partnerships, finalization of the grant was delayed until recently when additional resources were hired and permitted the PI to finalize the report..



**Center for Coastal Studies works with RI lobsterman in disentangling a juvenile humpback whale. Lobsterman had participated in a disentanglement training course hosted by RIDFW and CCS at Fish Expo. Significant outreach efforts on whale identification, behavior and procedures when encountering an entangled whale have led to better communication between the Northeast Marine Mammal Stranding Network and industry.**



**Severely decomposed Humpback whale washed into Sakonnet harbor in August, 2009. Floating fish trap fishermen secured the whale until the Northeast Stranding Network could arrive to perform necropsy. Another example of industry cooperation and collaboration in efforts to document causes of endangered whale mortalities.**

**RESULTS**

**Table 2**

**Lobster & Fish Pot Survey Results**

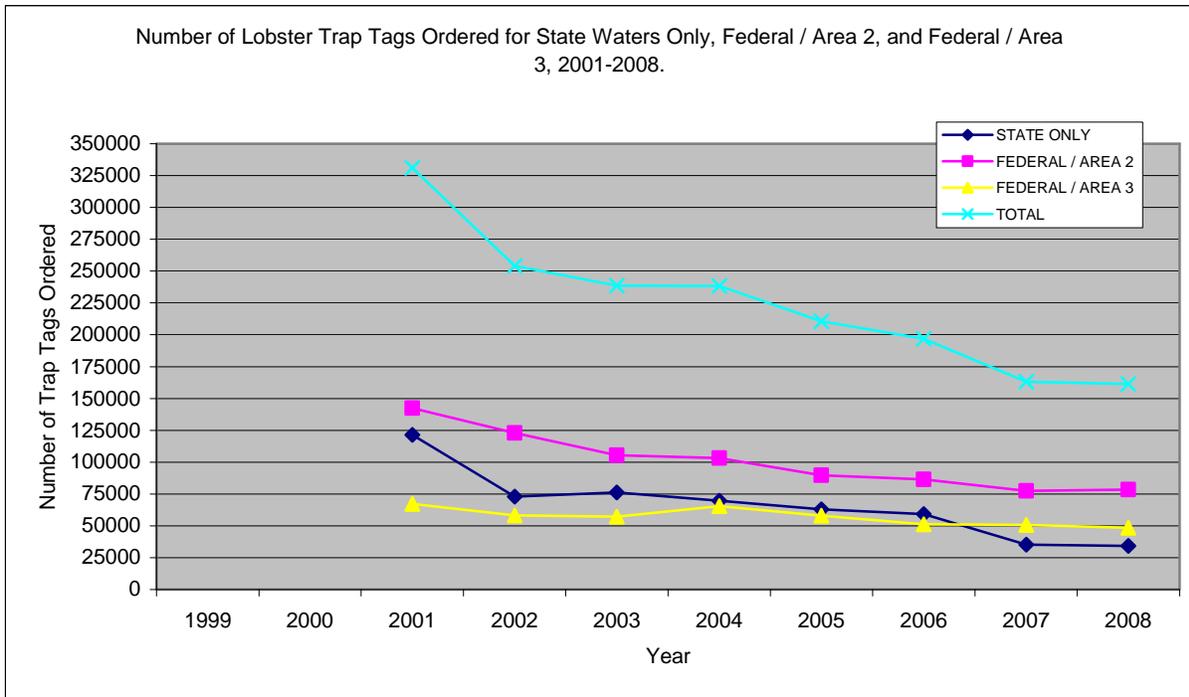
|   |     |                          |
|---|-----|--------------------------|
| <b># of survey returns</b>  | 485 |                          |
| # of application returns that are actively fishing lobster                  | 201 |                          |
| % of app. Returns that are actively fishing lobster                         | 41% |                          |
|   |     | % of total apps received |
| # of app returns fishing scup pots  | 129 | 27%                      |
| # of app returns fishing sea bass pots                                      | 100 | 21%                      |
| # of app returns fishing conch pots   | 63  | 13%                      |
|   |     | % of total apps received |
| # of app returned that actively fish lobster and scup                       | 82  | 17%                      |
| # of app returned that actively fish lobster and sea bass                   | 66  | 14%                      |
| # of app returned that actively fish lobster and conch                      | 33  | 7%                       |
| # of app returned that actively fish lobster and (all 3)                    | 13  | 3%                       |
|   |     | % of total apps received |
| # of app returned that reported fishing with a buoy                         | 210 | 43%                      |
| # of app returned that reported fishing with a highflyer                    | 36  | 7%                       |
| # of app returned that reported fishing with a polyball                     | 18  | 4%                       |
| # of app returned that reported fishing with a polyball and highflyer combo | 12  | 2%                       |
| # of app returned that reported fishing with a buoy and highflyer combo     | 34  | 7%                       |
|   |     | % of total apps received |
| # of apps received that reported a knot buoy attachment                     | 181 | 37%                      |
| # of apps received that reported a splice buoy attachment                   | 18  | 4%                       |
| # of apps received that reported a "other" buoy attachment                  | 7   | 1%                       |
| # of apps received that reported a unknown buoy attachment                  | 2   | 0.4%                     |
| # of apps received that <b>did not</b> report a buoy attachment type        | 277 | 57%                      |
| # of app received with reports of floating groundline                       | 24  |                          |
| # of app received with reports of sinking groundline                        | 112 |                          |



**Table 5**

| TOTAL AREA 2 + AREA 3 TRAPS REPORTED FISHED |         |
|---|---------|
| 1999  | 246,895 |
| 2000  | 225,786 |
| 2001  | 207,589 |
| 2002  | 173,842 |
| 2003  | 158,529 |
| 2004  | 132,844 |
| 2005  | 130,778 |
| 2006  | 137,439 |
| 2007  | 136,248 |
| 2008  | 0       |

**Figure 2**



# OFFSHORE LOBSTER TRIP SUMMARY

## Gear Survey

Vessel: Barbara Ann

Trip Dates: 3/3/07-3/10/07

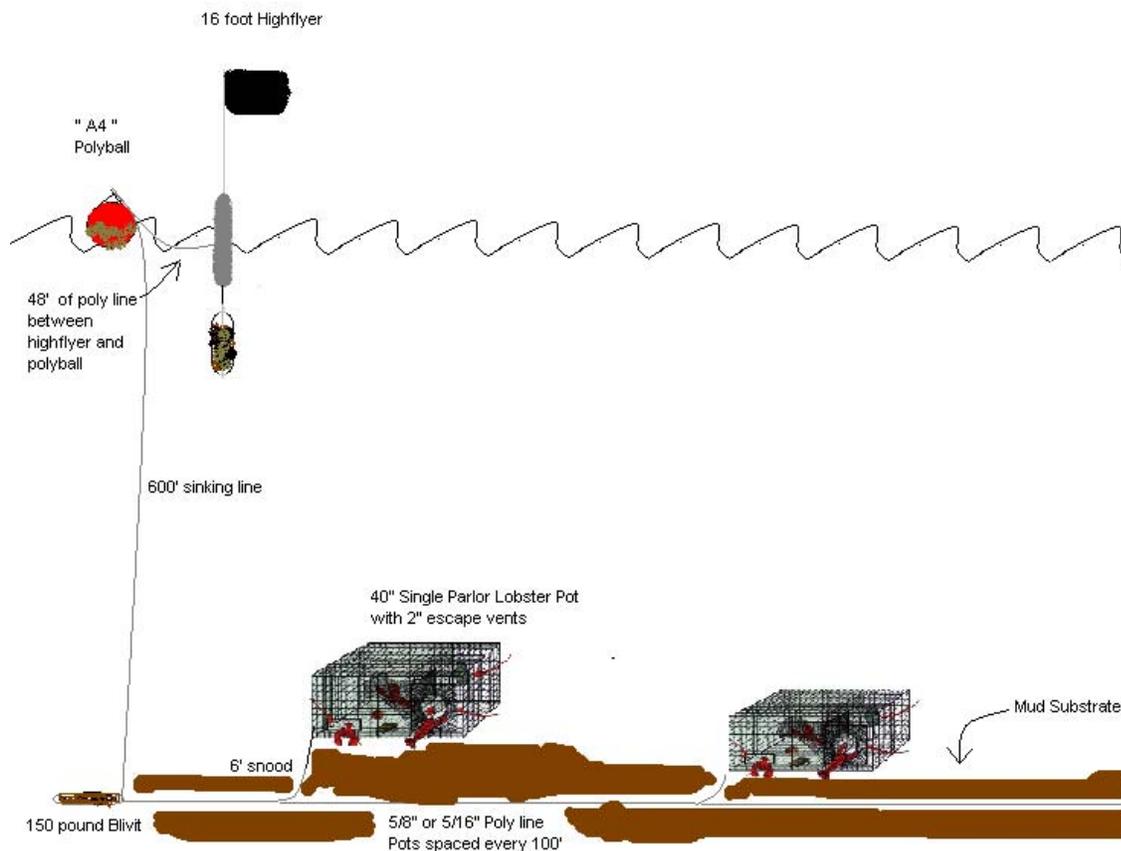
NMFS Stat Area: 616 (Hudson Canyon)

Fishery: *Homarus americanus*, American Lobster

Over the five day hauling period a total of 56 trawls consisting of 2248 pots were sampled. These pots yielded a total of 2571 lobsters of which 991 were legal and kept for market. Upon arrival at market the Barbara Ann landed 1450 pounds, the total weight was used to calculate the average weight per lobster which was 1.46. There were also 11,000 pounds of Jonah Crab, *Cancer borealis*, landed. These were not sampled.

## Gear Configuration

The surface identification markers for each trawl consist of an "A4" polyball and a 16 foot highflyer. In certain areas two polyballs are used where the current and tide are strong. There is 48 feet of floating line between the highflyer and polyball, this is attached to a swivel on the polyball and tied with a double sheet bend and spliced in. From the polyball 600 feet of 3/8" or 1/2" sinking line is used as the endl ine. This is spliced into 5/8" or 11/16" (heavy) poly which is used as ground line. On the bottom, which was classified as mud or hard mud in the sampling areas, an anchor or "blivit" is used to secure the trawl in place. The blivit is large pieces of steel weighing approximately 150 pounds. The pots in the trawls consisted mostly of 36 and 40 inch single parlor configuration with 2" escape vents, on average there were 40 pots in each trawl. The bridal on the pots was tied with a sheet bend and a splice to the gangion or "snood" which is 6 feet long. The gangion is then spliced into the groundline spaced every 100 feet.

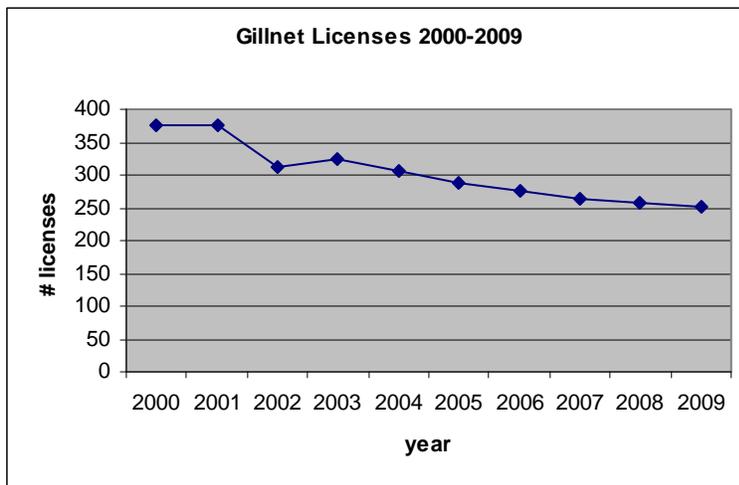


### Gillnet Fishery Survey Results

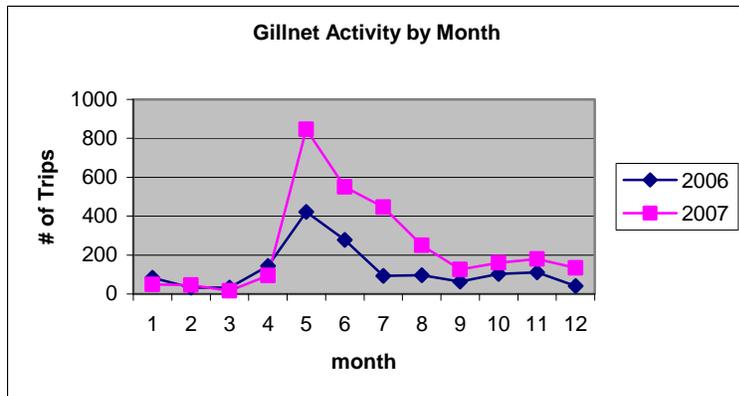
Gillnet license endorsements have been under a moratorium since July, 2000 and license renewals have been declining since that time (Figure 3). At the height of the gillnet activity, RI fishermen typically targeted codfish and monkfish seasonally. In recent years, due to groundfish management measures and the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan restrictions, effort on those species has dwindled and shifted primarily to, summer flounder, skates and winter flounder, along with seasonal directed fisheries for tautog, scup and sea bass.

Survey response was 22%, with 54% of the respondents reporting they actively fished. All used 2 anchor weights and average soak time was 24 hours. Number of nets fished varied widely, from 1 which was typically a net set for bait, and ranged from 4 to 100 nets. The 4 sea sampled gillnet trips all had an eight net configuration per string. Figure 4 shows gillnet activity by month, denoting the trip was landed in a RI port. Note there are trips landed during the month of March, when the Southern New England Harbor Porpoise TRP requires that no gillnets be set within the defined closure. The assumption is made that these trips set their gear outside of the closed area.

**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**



**Table 6**  
**Gillnet data**

|  |        |                               |
|--|--------|-------------------------------|
| # of applications returned that are <b>actively</b> fishing gillnets     | 32     |                               |
| # of applications returned that are <b>NOT-actively</b> fishing gillnets | 27     |                               |
| <b>% of Gillnet Returns</b> that are actively fishing Gillnets           | 54.24% |                               |
|  |        | % of total Active gillnetters |
| <b>*** Contains overlapping data</b>                                     |        |                               |
| # of active gillnetters using a highflyer                                | 4      | 12.50%                        |
| # of active gillnetters using a polyball                                 | 10     | 31.25%                        |
| # of active gillnetters using a bullet buoy                              | 25     | 78.13%                        |

|                            |       |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Most common target species | Fluke |
|----------------------------|-------|

|   |    |                               |
|---|----|-------------------------------|
| Endline Attachments of active gillnetters |    | % of total Active gillnetters |
| not specified                             | 4  | 12.50%                        |
| knot                                      | 22 | 68.75%                        |
| splice                                    | 6  | 18.75%                        |

|  |    |        |
|--|----|--------|
| # of active gillnetters that use an anchor | 30 | 93.75% |
|--|----|--------|

|  |    |                               |
|--|----|-------------------------------|
| <b>Weak links</b>                            |    | % of total Active gillnetters |
| # of active gillnetters that use a weak link | 23 | 71.88%                        |
| <b>type of weak link</b>                     |    |                               |
| Unspecified                                  | 13 | 40.63%                        |
| Swivel                                       | 8  | 25.00%                        |
| Hogrings                                     | 1  | 3.13%                         |
| Breakaway line                               | 10 | 31.25%                        |

|                            |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Average Weak link strength | 735lbs. |
| Min                        | 400     |
| Max                        | 1100    |

## ATTACHMENT 1: Gear Sureys

To: RI Licensed Fishermen

Subject: Gear Survey

From: April K Valliere  
Principal Marine Fisheries Biologist

Date: 10/18/06

Attached is a gear survey questionnaire being distributed to all fixed gear fishermen. Two surveys are being sent out, one specific to lobster/pot gear, and the other specific to gillnet gear. You have received this survey because you are currently in possession of one of the above licenses.

The purpose of this survey is to collect data on the number and different configurations of fixed gear types in RI nearshore waters (Area 2). The National Marine Fisheries Service is in the process of preparing a final rule to amend the current Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, which currently lists allowable gear modifications expected to reduce risk to whale entanglement. The new proposed rule lists the prohibition of floating groundline as one alternative, and the agency has indicated the next area of focus will be potential modifications to endlines.

I have served on the NMFS Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (TRT) since it was created in 1994, in an effort to mitigate interactions between endangered whales and fixed gear. During this time, fishermen (2 from RI), scientists, state and federal representatives, along with environmental organizations have been developing regulations to reduce the risk of entanglement of whales. Your RI representatives on the TRT have consistently pointed out that floating groundlines are not widely used in RI nearshore waters; a small percentage of fishermen do use floating groundline due to bottom conditions. We have pointed out the attrition from the lobster fishery, and the changes in the gillnet fisheries in response to management measures. However, we have not been able to quantify the number of fishermen using floating groundline, number of endlines, endline configurations (% sink vs. float line) and buoy configurations. We also do not have definitive data to present on the number of active gillnetters or other active pot fisheries.

In order to prepare for the next round of deliberations with the TRT, we are sending this survey out to compile baseline information on those gear types that may be subject to further regulation. We would like to be able to document the gear types that are already low risk to whale entanglement, whether it be by rope type, gear configuration or seasonality of the fishery. We are asking for your help so that we may develop a plan that is viable to both fishermen, operationally safe and sound, and provides options for the mandated protection of endangered whales.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. Please return the survey **as soon as possible**, but no later than Friday, November 17, 2006.

**2006 LOBSTER TRAP FISHERY GEAR SURVEY**

Boat Owner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Vessel Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Actively fish lobster pots YES ( ) NO ( ).

Other pot fisheries & number of pots fished (scup/sea bass/conch)\_\_\_\_\_

**If you do not fish lobster pots, stop here and return survey**

Lobster Management Area / Statistical Area Fished: \_\_\_\_\_

1. BUOYS AND HIGHFLIERS:

- Use a highflier? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Use a polyball? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Use a buoy? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Attach to buoy? KNOT ( ) SPLICE ( ) OTHER ( ) UNKNOWN ( )

2. ENDLINE:

- Endline material and size:
- Line type used: FLOATING ( ) SINKING ( )
  - Combo of floating and sinking line? YES ( ) NO ( )
  - If yes, please give the ratio of floating to sinking line\_\_\_\_\_
- Use a toggle? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Use a swivel? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Use a Weak Link? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Weak Link type?
- Weak Link Strength?
- Attachment method? KNOT ( ) SPLICE ( )

3. GROUNDLINE:

- Fish singles? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Number of singles?
- Fish trawls? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Number traps/trawl?
- Distance between traps:
- Groundline material (note floating or sinking) and size:

4. GANGION:

- Use a gangion? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Gangion Length? Gangion line size and material:

COMMENTS:

RIDFW 2006 GILLNET FISHERIES GEAR SURVEY

Boat Owner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Vessel Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Statistical Area Fished: \_\_\_\_\_

Target Species: \_\_\_\_\_

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**1. BUOYS AND HIGHFLIERS:**

- Use a highflier? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Use a polyball? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Use a bullet buoy? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Other buoy (describe): \_\_\_\_\_
- Attach to buoy? KNOT ( ) SPLICE ( ) OTHER ( ) UNKNOWN ( )
- Surface system (combination of buoys) YES ( ) NO ( )
  - If yes, please describe (e.g., line type, length, size, etc.) and/or sketch:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Number of buoys used \_\_\_\_\_

**2. ENDLINE:**

- Endline material and size: \_\_\_\_\_
- Line type used: FLOATING ( ) SINKING ( )
  - Combo of floating and sinking line? YES ( ) NO ( )
  - If yes, please give the ratio of floating to sinking line: \_\_\_\_\_
- Range of depths fished: \_\_\_\_\_
- Scope typically used (ratio of line used compared to water depth): \_\_\_\_\_
- Use a toggle? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Use a swivel? YES ( ) NO ( )
  - If yes, where is the swivel located? \_\_\_\_\_
- Use a Weak Link? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Weak Link type? \_\_\_\_\_
- Weak Link Strength? \_\_\_\_\_
- Attachment method? KNOT ( ) SPLICE ( )

**3. GROUNDLINE:**

- Groundline material and size: \_\_\_\_\_
- Anchor used? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Number of anchors: \_\_\_\_\_
- Weight of anchors: \_\_\_\_\_
- Distance between anchor net: \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of nets fished: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. GILLNET FLOATLINE

- Net panel weak links:
  - Do you use net panel weak links? YES ( ) NO ( )
  - Number used: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Location: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Breaking strength: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 6. SEASONALITY

- What is your average soak time? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is all your gear fished year-round? YES ( ) NO ( )
- Describe how much of your gear is in the water and in what months.  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### 7. HABITS

- How often do you haul your gear? \_\_\_\_\_
- How often do you replace:
  - Endlines
  - Groundlines
  - Gillnets

INSHORE (RI STATE WATERS, AREA 2) TRAWL: Sinking line,



# Required Gear Modifications to Reduce Risk of Entangling Large Whales

## REGULATIONS FOR ALL LOBSTER POT/ FISH POTS/ TRAPS AND GILLNET FISHERIES

No floating line at the surface (except between two buoys on the same buoy line or between a high flyer and a buoy).

No wet storage of inactive gear (**gear must be ended at least once every 30 days**).

All gear must be marked with a designated color that identifies the area in which it was set;



Photo by Center for Coastal Studies

- **Inshore Pots:** Buoy lines marked **red**
- **Offshore Pots:** Buoy lines marked **black**
- **Gillnets:** Buoy lines marked **green**
- No single pots in federal waters
- \* Exemption lines from requirements in RI state waters are north of the COLREGS line and all coastal pond inlets



### LOBSTER, FISHPOTS, and CONCHPOTS

**Inshore & Nearshore Waters:** Includes the state waters of Rhode Island and Area 2

- All buoys attached to the buoy line with a weak link having a maximum tensile strength of 600 pounds (weak links may include swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate diameter, ho grings, or rope stapled to a buoy stick).

**Effective April 5, 2009**, all groundlines must be made of sinking and/or neutrally buoyant line

#### **Offshore Waters:**

- All buoys attached to the buoy line with weak link having a breaking strength of no more than 1500 pounds

**Effective April 5, 2009**, all groundlines must be made of sinking and/or neutrally buoyant line

### GILLNETS

- All net panels must contain weak links with a breaking strength no greater than 1,100 pounds, each net panel must be configured with 5 or more weak links
- All buoys attached to the buoy line with a weak link having a maximum tensile strength of 1,100 pounds.
- All gillnets required to be anchored with the holding power of at least a 22 pound Danforth style anchor at each end of the net string; (must be burying anchor, no dead weights)
- **Effective April 5, 2009**, all groundlines must be made of sinking and/or neutrally buoyant line.

**These are only summary regulations; for additional information on trap/pot or gillnet requirements, including information on gear configurations and weak links, visit the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) website at (<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp/>)**

### HARBOR PORPOISE GILLNET REGULATIONS

- Pingers are required seasonally— no gill nets in the water for the month of March.
- For more information visit [www.nero.noaa.gov/pr/ot\\_res](http://www.nero.noaa.gov/pr/ot_res)