

Northeast Mid-Water Trawl (including pair trawl) Fishery

Fishing gear type: Trawl

Current category: Category II*

Basis for current classification on the LOF: The total annual mortality and serious injury of long-finned pilot whales (Western North Atlantic [WNA] stock) and short-finned pilot whales (WNA stock) in this fishery is greater than 1% and less than 50% of the stocks' Potential Biological Removal (PBR).

Current list of marine mammal species/stocks injured/killed (a ⁽¹⁾ indicates those stocks driving the fishery's classification): Harbor seal, WNA; Long-finned pilot whale, WNA ⁽¹⁾; Short-finned pilot whale, WNA ⁽¹⁾; White-sided dolphin, WNA.

Estimated number of current participants: 953

Take Reduction Teams/Plans that affect this fishery: Atlantic Trawl Gear Take Reduction Team (ATGTRT).

Year added to the LOF: 1999

Category when originally listed: Category II

Basis for original classification on the LOF: This fishery was listed as a Category II by analogy with the Category II "Atlantic squid, mackerel, butterfish trawl fishery". NMFS had no evidence of interactions with marine mammals, but this fishery uses the same midwater trawl gear used in other Category II fisheries known to take several species of cetaceans, and operates at times and in areas of high marine mammal abundance (particularly the Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy stock of harbor porpoise). This fishery includes vessels that were participating in the "Gulf of Maine, U.S. mid-Atlantic, coastal herring trawl fishery," which was removed from the LOF because there was little difference between vessels or gear fishing coastal waters or offshore waters.

Estimated number of participants when originally listed: 17

Past names, if any: "Atlantic herring mid-water trawl (including pair trawl) fishery" until 2005.

Gear description/method for fishing: This fishery uses primarily mid-water (pelagic) trawls (single and paired), which is trawl gear designed, capable, or used to fish for pelagic species with no portion designed to be operated in contact with the bottom.

Target species: This fishery targets Atlantic herring with bycatch of several finfish species, predominantly mackerel, spiny dogfish, and silver hake.

Spatial/temporal distribution of effort: The fishery occurs primarily in Maine state waters, Jeffrey's Ledge, southern New England, and Georges Bank during the winter months when the target species continues its southerly migration from the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank, into mid-Atlantic waters.

Levels of observer coverage each year[†]: From 1997-2007, estimated observer coverage (trips) was 0%, 0%, 0.73%, 0.46%, 0.06%, 0%, 2.25%, 11.48%, 19.9%, 3.1%, and 8.04%, respectively. A U.S. JV mid-water (pelagic) trawl fishery was conducted on Georges Bank from August-December 2001, with 3 foreign vessels and 7 U.S.

* The fishery is classified based on mortalities and serious injuries of a marine mammal stock greater than 1% and less than 50% (Category II) of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level.

[†] Observer coverage levels include the latest information reported in the most current final Stock Assessment Report (SAR).

vessels. NMFS maintained 74% observer coverage (243 hauls) on the JV transfers and 100% observer coverage (114 hauls) on the foreign vessels.

Management and regulations: The fishery is managed jointly by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

History of Changes on the LOF

2011 LOF:

- Updated the fishery description to include the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council as another body that jointly governing this fishery.
- Estimated number of participants updated from 17 to 953. This estimation may be an inflation of actual effort; however, it represents the potential effort for the fishery, given the multiple gear types several state permits may allow for.

2006 LOF: Added a superscript “1” in Table 2 after long-finned pilot whales (WNA) and short-finned pilot whales (WNA), indicating that these stocks are driving the categorization of this fishery.

2005 LOF:

- Fishery renamed from the “Atlantic herring midwater trawl (including pair trawl) fishery” to the "Northeast mid-water trawl (including pair trawl) fishery" to appropriately classify all similar mid-water trawl fisheries operating in the Northeast region (home ports between Connecticut and Maine), that might be interacting with marine mammals.
- Long-finned pilot whale (WNA), short-finned pilot whale (WNA), and white-sided dolphin (WNA) added to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery based on interactions documented in recent SARs. The 2003 SAR reported that the average annual mortality and serious injury of pilot whales was 11 animals/year (or 3.8% of PBR [PBR=239]) and of white-sided dolphins was 2 animals/year (or 0.5% of PBR [PBR=364]).

2001 LOF: Harbor seal (WNA stock) added to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery. The 1999 SAR stated that there were high levels of interaction between this stock and deep water trawls on the Grand Banks..

1999 LOF: Listed fishery on LOF as Category II.

1998 LOF: NMFS considered adding this fishery to the LOF as a Category II under the name "Atlantic pelagic mid-water herring trawl fishery," because it utilized the same gear as the Category II "Atlantic squid, mackerel, butterfish trawl fishery." Also, because it utilized different gear, and fished at different times and in different locations (with high harbor porpoise abundance) than the Category III coastal "Gulf of Maine, Southern North Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico coastal herring trawl fishery." NMFS did not include the fishery on the 1998 LOF in order to allow for sufficient opportunity for public comment. NMFS planned to continue to monitor observer data and to propose a categorization in the 1999 LOF, and continued to use its authority to add observers to vessels operating in this fishery under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.