

Northeast Bottom 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 white-sided dolphins (Western North Atlantic [WNA] stock) in this fishery is greater than 1% and less than 50% of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level.

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

Estimated number of current participants: 1,052

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

Year added to the LOF: 1996

Category when originally listed: Category III

Basis for original classification on the LOF: This fishery was categorized as a Category III based on 1989-1993 observer data. The annual mortality and serious injury was more than 50% of PBR for striped dolphins, coastal bottlenose dolphins, and pilot whales. This fishery would have been a Category I; however, because the observer coverage was low and the fishery was so diverse, NMFS could not extrapolate observed interactions over the entire fishery (i.e., the estimated mortality and serious injury levels were statistically weak). NMFS anticipated obtaining additional information from other observer programs that could show that future reclassification was warranted.

Estimated number of participants when originally listed: 1,052

Past names, if any: "North Atlantic bottom trawl fishery" until 2005.

Gear description/method for fishing: This fishery uses bottom trawl gear.

Target species: This fishery targets species including, but not limited to: Atlantic cod, haddock, pollock, yellowtail flounder, winter flounder, witch flounder, American plaice, Atlantic halibut, redfish, windowpane flounder, summer flounder, spiny dogfish, monkfish, silver hake, red hake, white hake, ocean pout, and skate species.

Spatial/temporal distribution of effort: The fishery operates year-round, with a peak from May-July, from the U.S.-Canada border through waters east of 72° 30'W. long., primarily on the continental shelf and throughout the Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank, and Southern New England regions.

Levels of observer coverage each year[†]: From 1994-2007, estimated observer coverage (measured in trips) was 0.4%, 1.1%, 0.2%, 0.2%, 0.1%, 0.3%, 1%, 1%, 3%, 4%, 5%, 12%, 6%, and 6%, respectively.

* 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).

Management and regulations: This gear is managed by several federal and state FMPs that range from Maine to Connecticut. The relevant FMPs include, but may not be limited to: the Northeast Multi-species (FR 67, CFR Part 648); Monkfish (FR 68(81), 50 CFR Part 648); Spiny Dogfish (FR 65(7), 50 CFR Part 648); Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass (FR 68(1), 50 CFR part 648); Atlantic Bluefish (FR 68(91), 50 CFR Part 648); and Northeast Skate Complex (FR 68(160), 50 CFR part 648). These fisheries are primarily managed by TACs; individual trip limits (i.e., quotas); effort caps (i.e., limited number of days at sea per vessel); time and area closures; and gear restrictions.

History of Changes on the LOF

2010 LOF: Harbor porpoise (GME/BF) added to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery. The final 2008 SAR indicates that there have been several mortalities from 2003-2008 (included 1 dead in 2003, 4 in 2005, and 1 in 2006). Estimates have not been generated or reported in the SARs for the percentage of the stock's PBR taken in this fishery.

2009 LOF:

- Added harbor seal (WNA) to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery based on information presented in the 2007 Stock Assessment Reports (SARs) stating that two harbor seal mortalities were observed from 2001-2005.
- Removed harbor porpoise (GME/BF) from the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery. The inclusion of this stock was a typographical error. NMFS proposed to add the stock in 2005, but did not do so based on a public comment stating that the animal taken in the fishery was badly decomposed and the trawl duration was only 5 hours. NMFS has never considered this stock to be taken in this fishery; however, the stock inadvertently retained on the LOF.

2007 LOF: To correct a typographical error, the subscript "1" was removed from harp seal (WNA) on the list of species killed/injured (Table 2 in the LOF) because this stock does not drive the fishery's classification as a Category II.

2006 LOF:

- Deleted striped dolphin (WNA) and bottlenose dolphin (WNA offshore) from the list of species killed/injured in this fishery because no interactions were documented in the previous 5 years.
- Added a superscript "1" in Table 2 after white-sided dolphin (WNA) and harp seal (WNA), indicating that these stocks were driving the categorization of the fishery. (The "1" after harp seal was a typographical error corrected in the 2007 LOF.)

2005 LOF:

- Elevated the fishery from a Category III to a Category II based on documented interactions with Atlantic white-sided dolphins (WNA). There were 12 mortalities or serious injuries in this fishery during 2003, or 3.3% of the stock's PBR (PBR=364).
- Renamed the fishery from the "North Atlantic bottom trawl fishery" to the "Northeast bottom trawl fishery" to encompass similar bottom trawl fisheries operating in the region.
- Harp seals (GME/BF) added to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery based on interactions documented in a recent Stock Assessment Report (SAR).
- Proposed to add harbor porpoise (GME/BF) to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery based on a single mortality in 2003. Did not add this stock to the list based on a public comment that the observed mortality was a badly composed animal and trawl duration was only 5 hours; therefore, the animal was likely dead before entering the trawl. This was supported by the SAR.

1999 LOF: Common dolphin (WNA) added to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery based on three mortalities from 1991-1995 (as reported in the 1997 SAR, but was not explained in the 1999 LOF). The average annual mortality and serious injury was 28.4 animals/year, or 18.3% of PBR (PBR=155).