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SECOND INDUSTRY-BASED YELLOWTAIL SURVEY TO BEGIN OCTOBER 1, 2003

Two Point Judith, RI-based fishing vessels, the F/V Heather Lynn and the F/V Mary Elena, will begin their second phase of assessing Southern New England yellowtail flounder distribution and abundance. The fall survey is the second phase of the Cooperative Partners Research Initiative (CRPI), which was spearheaded by funding from Congress in 2000 to promote cooperative research efforts on New England groundfish species. The CRPI includes members from the commercial fishing industry, the RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM), the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Massachusetts Division of Marine fisheries. The project is being managed by DEM's Division of Fish & Wildlife.

The first phase of the pilot study was conducted in April-May of 2003. Survey vessels completed over 300 tows throughout the Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic area, collecting biological information on length frequencies, sex, maturity stages, stomach samples, and collecting scales for age and growth studies. Data was collected on over 10,000 individual yellowtails throughout the duration of the 16 day survey and will be analyzed to determine species abundance and distribution. Onboard observers also collected detailed data on winter flounder, another groundfish species vital to the Southern New England commercial fishing industry. All fish and shellfish species caught were identified and recorded from every area the vessels towed.

For the first time since the Nantucket Lightship area was closed to protect concentrations of juvenile yellowtail flounder in 1994, intensive sampling was conducted within the area to determine the abundance and size structures of yellowtails. Distribution of yellowtails in the spring 2003 survey appears to be patchy, with the largest concentrations found within the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area, south and southeast of Block Island, and

According to DFW's Principal Marine Biologist April Valliere, the fishing industry was intensely involved in designing this survey and getting it off the ground. "Numerous vessel captains from New Bedford to Cape May supplied tow information based upon their historical observations, while gear manufacturers raced to complete net construction to meet the deadline for the spring survey. Fred Mattera, a CRPI member and captain of the Travis & Natalie, coordinated the collection of industry tows and hangs, procured additional insurance coverage, as well as overseeing electronic needs and survey protocol. The captains and crews of the Heather Lynn and the Mary Elena were outstanding in their onboard activities, eagerly switching from a directed fishing mode to scientific sampling platforms. While a few snags were encountered in the initial survey, overall, the data collected is remarkable and we look forward to continued collaborative research with the goal of collecting better data for the benefit of the resource, the industry, and fisheries managers and scientists."

A map and table of tow locations for the fall survey is available online at DEM's website under Marine Fisheries**.** The survey is expected to start the first week of October and take approximately three weeks. Weather, unexpected breakdowns or tear-ups may alter the length of the survey. Vessel captains Steve Follett or Kevin Jones will captain the Heather Lynn, while Scott Westcott will captain the Mary Elena. They can be contacted via VHF radio, channel 16. For further information, contact project leader April Valliere at the Marine Fisheries section of DEM at 401-423-1939 or email avallier@dem.state.ri.us.

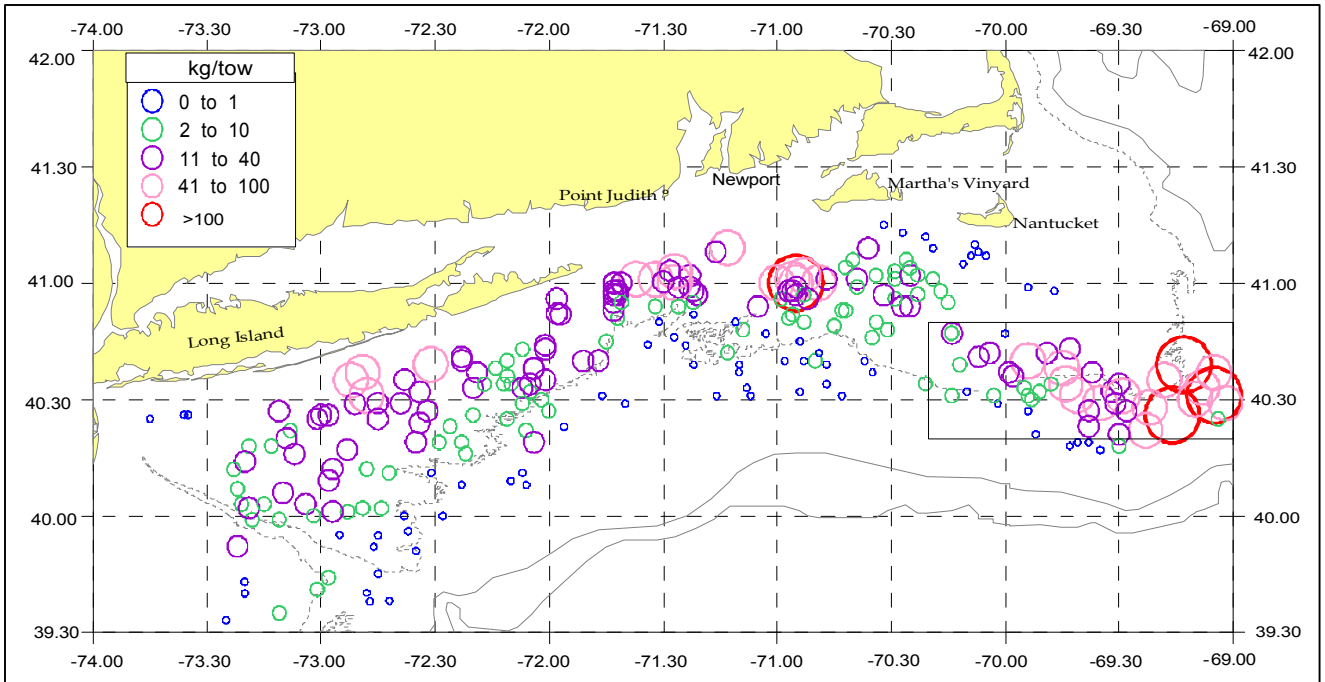
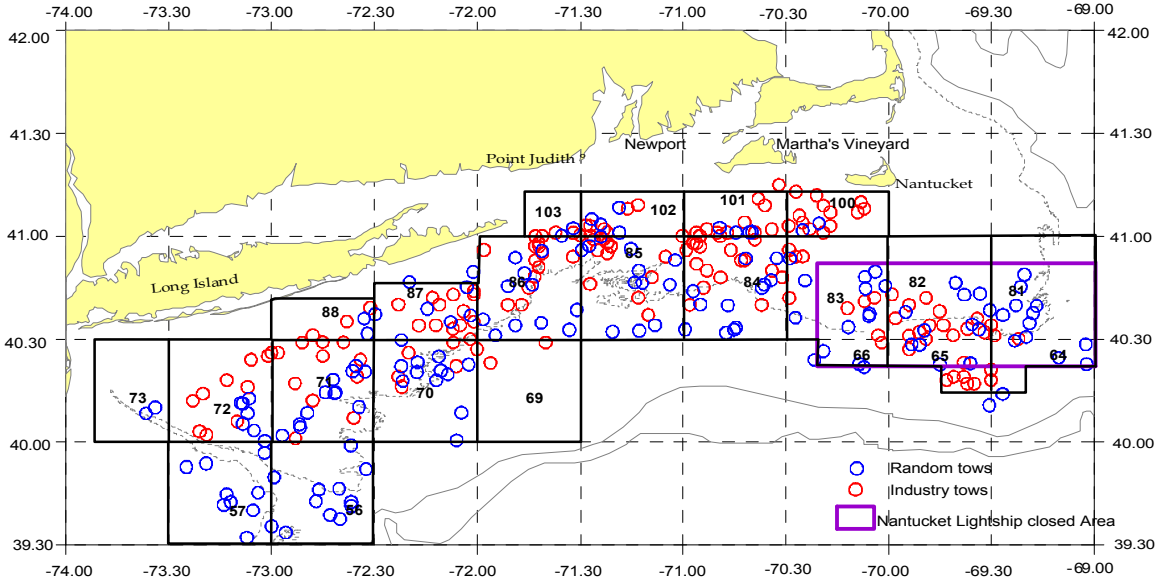


Figure 1: Distribution of the abundance of Yellowtail Flounder for spring 2003.



Tow locations for Fall 2003 Industry Based Yellowtail Survey

FALL 2003 YELLOWTAIL SURVEY TOW LOCATIONS

	Latitude		Longitude		
Tow	Degrees	Minutes	Degrees	Minutes	Box
1	39	58	72	36	56
2	39	42	72	36	56
3	39	46	72	46	56
4	39	52	72	32	56
5	39	41	72	36	56
6	39	46	72	40	56
7	39	42	72	47	56
8	39	49	72	59	56
9	39	37	72	40	56
10	39	33	72	55	56
11	39	38	72	42	56
12	39	44	73	13	57
13	39	32	73	7	57
14	39	45	73	3	57
15	39	42	73	11	57
16	39	35	73	0	57
17	39	53	73	19	57
18	39	41	73	13	57
19	39	40	73	5	57
20	39	56	73	2	57
21	39	52	73	24	57
22	40	22	69	2	64
23	40	29	69	23	64
24	40	24	69	10	64
25	40	28	69	2	64
26	40	13	69	26	64

35	40	23	69	38	65
36	40	28	69	50	65
37	40	22	69	45	65
38	40	22	69	36	65
39	40	28	69	53	65
40	40	10	69	30	65
41	40	21	70	7	66
42	40	23	70	21	66
43	40	22	70	8	66
44	40	26	70	18	66
45	40	29	71	40	69
46	40	23	71	56	69
47	40	19	72	23	70
48	40	27	72	0	70
49	40	29	72	7	70
50	40	26	72	20	70
51	40	16	72	22	70
52	40	22	72	6	70
53	40	17	72	21	70
54	40	23	72	17	70
55	40	18	72	11	70
56	40	22	72	22	70
57	40	29	72	22	70
58	40	22	72	2	70
59	40	24	72	11	70
60	40	8	72	4	70
61	40	19	72	8	70
62	40	0	72	6	70
63	40	20	72	10	70
64	40	20	72	17	70
65	40	19	72	35	71
66	40	24	72	34	71
67	40	25	72	45	71
68	40	29	72	51	71
69	40	29	72	45	71
70	40	29	72	39	71
71	40	7	72	36	71
72	40	1	72	53	71
73	40	17	72	53	71

81	40	4	72	51	71
82	40	5	72	51	71
83	40	15	72	41	71
84	40	22	72	35	71
85	40	20	72	36	71
86	40	20	72	32	71
87	40	26	72	58	72
88	40	26	73	0	72
89	40	25	73	1	72
90	40	24	73	6	72
91	40	18	73	13	72
92	40	14	73	20	72
93	40	12	73	23	72
94	40	16	73	7	72
95	40	3	73	21	72
96	40	2	73	19	72
97	40	6	73	10	72
98	40	0	73	1	72
99	40	11	73	8	72
100	40	8	73	7	72
101	40	11	73	9	72
102	40	12	73	6	72
103	40	5	73	8	72
104	40	3	73	5	72
105	40	10	73	33	73
106	40	8	73	36	73
107	40	31	69	29	81
108	40	30	69	22	81
109	40	37	69	26	81
110	40	39	69	22	81
111	40	48	69	20	81
112	40	37	69	17	81
113	40	34	69	18	81
114	40	45	69	21	81
115	40	39	69	16	81
116	40	30	69	19	81
117	40	43	69	59	82
118	40	42	69	49	82
119	40	40	69	54	82

127	40	34	69	44	82
128	40	31	69	41	82
129	40	33	69	37	82
130	40	32	69	32	82
131	40	36	69	34	82
132	40	38	69	30	82
133	40	42	69	37	82
134	40	26	69	40	82
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137	40	43	69	33	82
138	40	32	69	49	82
139	40	34	69	35	82
140	40	29	70	2	83
141	40	31	70	3	83
142	40	39	70	12	83
143	40	41	70	7	83
144	40	42	70	4	83
145	40	54	70	25	83
146	40	54	70	27	83
147	40	56	70	29	83
148	40	44	70	6	83
149	40	48	70	6	83
150	40	49	70	3	83
151	40	45	70	0	83
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153	40	35	70	11	83
154	40	36	70	5	83
155	40	47	70	24	83
156	40	37	70	5	83
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161	40	52	70	56	84
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174	40	59	70	39	84
175	40	43	70	57	84
176	40	45	70	36	84
177	40	53	70	32	84
178	40	32	70	59	84
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224	40	56	71	41	86
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256	40	36	72	33	88
257	40	31	72	32	88

265	41	2	70	23	100
266	41	4	70	25	100
267	41	6	70	26	100
268	41	1	70	19	100
269	41	3	70	29	100
270	41	7	70	17	100
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