

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation is a non-profit, private research foundation founded and directed by members of the commercial fishing industry. The CFRF's primary mission is to conduct collaborative research and education projects that assist in the achievement of sustainable fisheries and vibrant fishing communities.

MESSAGE CORNER:

Recently, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission highlighted how the CFRF's collaborative research initiatives have filled data gaps and supported fisheries science and management efforts, with focus on the CFRF's Research Fleets (see Fisheries Focus February/March Issue at www.asmf.org). The CFRF currently operates four Research Fleets (Lobster and Jonah Crab, Black Sea Bass, Quahog, and Shelf) that seek to implement a cost effective method to collect critically needed biological and environmental data. The CFRF's Research Fleets involve over 40 fishermen, each using specially-designed apps to collect data that is used by fisheries scientists and oceanographers, and owned by the fishing industry. The success of these projects and the recent recognition by ASMFC could not be achieved without the dedication, diligence, and passion of the CFRF's Executive Director and superlative staff, and the zealously committed fishermen and scientists that the CFRF partners with. It is all about building relationships and trust and the team at CFRF is leading the way.

Fred Mattera, CFRF President

PROJECT UPDATE: SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND COOPERATIVE VENTLESS TRAP SURVEY – PHASE II

Building upon a project that was originally conducted in 2014 – 2015, the CFRF is collaborating with Dr. Jeremy Collie at the University of Rhode Island to launch Phase II of the Southern New England Cooperative Ventless Trap Survey (SNECVTS). Over 650 square miles of ocean have been leased for offshore wind energy development in the Northeastern United States, but there is uncertainty surrounding how fisheries resources will be impacted by the installation, operation, and decommissioning of offshore wind turbines and power cables. This project, which is funded by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, will collect baseline data on lobster and Jonah crab abundance and distribution in the Rhode Island/Massachusetts Wind Energy Area, which is centered on Cox's Ledge. Members of the commercial lobster fleet will be working with CFRF and URI biologists to survey and tag lobsters and Jonah crabs and characterize seafloor habitats from May to November 2018. A monetary reward system will be in place for any tagged lobsters which are caught and reported, so keep your eyes out for tagged lobsters this year! Once wind turbines are constructed and in operation, the baseline data collected by this project will be used to assess the impacts that offshore wind energy development has had on these species. In mid-March, the CFRF hosted the SNECVTS kickoff meeting to bring all the project participants together. Our sampling gear is getting prepared, crews and samplers are being trained, and we're almost ready to set our traps in the coming weeks! If you'd like to find out more about SNECVTS, visit the CFRF website: <http://www.cfrfoundation.org/snecvts/>.



PROJECT UPDATE: ASSESSING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RHODE ISLAND'S FISHING INDUSTRY



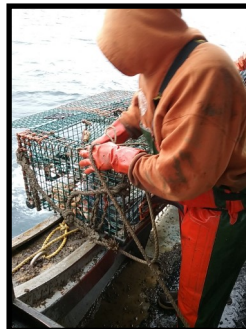
Over the past year, the CFRF has worked with Dr. Tom Sproul at the University of Rhode Island to collect and aggregate economic information about fishing businesses in the state, from harvesters and processors to gear suppliers and equipment retailers. This data collection phase was the first step towards developing a robust and replicable estimate of the economic impact of Rhode Island's fishing industry. Dr. Sproul's team at URI is now hard at work cleaning and merging data, running statistical analyses and mathematical modeling, and producing and verifying results. The economic estimates generated by this work will be released in summer 2018 and will advance informed economic policy for the natural resource-based economy in Rhode Island. Rhode Island leaders have expressed strong interest in developing Rhode Island's seafood economy and the CFRF believes that this work will provide the information and motivation

needed to initiate action. To learn more about this project, please visit: www.cfrfoundation.org/economic-impact-of-fisheries-in-rhode-island. Thank you to all of the fishing businesses who made the effort to submit a survey for this project!

PROJECT UPDATE: BLACK SEA BASS RESEARCH FLEET

Even in the face of this winter's inclement weather, the Black Sea Bass Research Fleet has sampled over 1,000 black sea bass since November. Such a sampling feat is nothing short of extraordinary considering that the Research Fleet, like the black sea bass fishery, is comprised mostly of seasonal vessels and shrinks by half over the winter months. Here at the CFRF we have been busy advocating for the Research Fleet and pushing for the data to be incorporated and used in management. In December, the ACCSP incorporated all the Research Fleet's data into the biosamples database for black sea bass, the federal repository for data used in the black sea bass stock assessment. The CFRF has also been sharing the approaches and successes of the Research Fleet at a variety of scientific and industry events, including the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association annual meeting, Southern New England Chapter of the American Fisheries Society winter meeting, and Maine Fishermen's Forum. Even more, we are organizing a black sea bass symposium for the annual American Fisheries Society meeting in August.

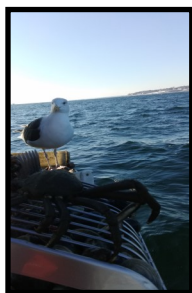
In other news, we are pleased to announce that the Black Sea Bass Research Fleet has officially been funded for a second year through ACCSP! This is a vital step towards ensuring maximum impact of the project, as multi-year time series of fishery and biological data are the most useful for assessments and management. In anticipation of a second year of sampling, the CFRF welcomed the newest member of the Research Fleet this winter: F/V Lady Clare, Point Judith, Rhode Island. The F/V Lady Clare is the only offshore lobster vessel in the Black Sea Bass Research Fleet and provides critically needed data during winter months. More information and current project updates and photos can be found at www.cfrfoundation.org/black-sea-bass-fleet.



PROJECT UPDATE: QUAHOG RESEARCH FLEET



Despite the less-than-cooperative weather this winter, the Quahog Research Fleet has been out and sampling in full force. Since November, the Research Fleet has conducted nearly 200 new transects and sampled over 8,000 quahogs! The CFRF and RI DEM have been working closely to incorporate the Research Fleet's data into the new quahog stock synthesis model, which will be used to develop management measures for the fishery going forward. Outside of the quahog stock assessment, the Research Fleet's data has been used by RI DEM to develop potential management strategies for the upcoming opening of the Providence River. Specifically, the Research Fleet data has been used to estimate catch rates from specific areas and times of year. In addition to crunching data, the CFRF



has also been busy sharing the approaches and results of the working partnership that the Quahog Research Fleet has forged between the scientific community, management, and the quahog industry at the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation conference, Southern New England Chapter of the American Fisheries Society winter meeting, and the National Shellfish Association annual meeting. There is a lot of interest in using the Quahog Research Fleet as a model for engaging the fishing community to develop better management strategies in other shellfisheries across the country (and world!).

The CFRF is pleased to announce the Quahog Research Fleet has officially received funding through Rhode Island Sea Grant for a second year of data collection! Creating a multi-year time series of quahog catch and effort data will be invaluable for maximizing the utility of the Research Fleet data in the new quahog stock assessment. To get a better feel for the approach and value of this project, check out the newly released Quahog Research Fleet documentary at www.cfrfoundation.org/quahog-research-fleet!

PROJECT UPDATE: LOBSTER AND JONAH CRAB RESEARCH FLEET

The CFRF is excited to announce that this June will mark 5 years of data collection for our Lobster and Jonah Crab Research Fleet! Since 2013, the Research Fleet has collected biological data from more than 107,000 lobsters and 47,000 Jonah crabs, helping to fill major gaps in areas and times of year not covered by other surveys. In total, the Research Fleet has characterized over 3 million pounds of lobster landings from over 85,000 square miles of fishing grounds! The data collected by the Research Fleet are incorporated into the lobster and Jonah crab biosamples databases at the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program and used extensively in the lobster stock assessment and Jonah crab management plan. This is a major accomplishment and we are grateful to our industry, science, and management partners for making this project so successful – it takes a village!

Over the winter, the CFRF has been working with our programming team and Research Fleet participants to pilot Bluetooth calipers to expedite lobster and Jonah crab data collection (check out the photo of Jay Swoboda using them!). We demonstrated the new Bluetooth calipers at the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association Annual Weekend and Maine Fishermen's Forum, and presented project approaches and results at the Southern New England American Fisheries Society winter meeting and the National Shellfisheries Association Meeting. Follow along on CFRF's Facebook and website to stay up to date with the project's progress: www.cfrfoundation.org/jonah-crab-lobster-research-fleet/.

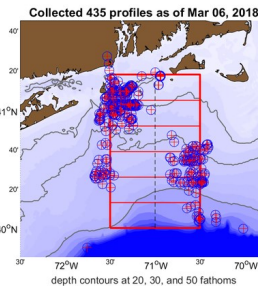


PROJECT UPDATE: SHELF RESEARCH FLEET

The Shelf Research Fleet (a partnership with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution) has collected oceanographic data from across the continental shelf south of Rhode Island since 2014, using wireless Conductivity, Temperature and Depth instruments deployed from commercial fishing vessels. To date the Shelf Research Fleet has collected over 435 water column profiles from 10-70 fathoms south of Rhode Island. These data have helped oceanographers better understand ocean processes and how they impact resource species, as highlighted in the journal *Oceanography* – check out the article on the project website: www.cfrfoundation.org/shelf-research-fleet!

On April 18th, the CFRF hosted an interactive workshop with WHOI to discuss historic and current oceanographic conditions in Southern New England and discuss how fisheries resources are responding. Dr. Glen Gawarkiewicz from WHOI reviewed the oceanographic data collected by the Shelf Research Fleet and Dr. Al Plueddemann from WHOI provided an update on the Ocean Observatories Initiative's Pioneer Array. Please visit our website or follow us on Facebook to learn more!

This summer, the CFRF will be hosting an exhibit about the Shelf Research Fleet at the One Ocean Volvo Race in Newport, RI (May 18-20th). Please stop by our booth to learn more about how changing ocean conditions can impact our valuable fisheries resources!



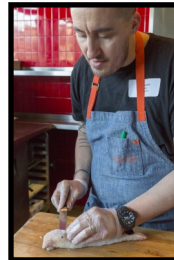
PROJECT UPDATE: ELEVATING SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD IN THE OCEAN STATE

On March 6th, the CFRF hosted the “Sourcing Rhode Island Seafood” workshop in collaboration with Chef Derek Wagner from Nick’s on Broadway and Chef’s Collaborative. Over 50 chefs, food professionals, fishermen, and seafood distributors attended the event, which included informational presentations, panel discussions, seafood demonstrations and tastings, and networking. As one participant reflected “it was informative, fun, and delicious!” Even more importantly, the event resulted in a number of new procurement relationships between distributors and users of Rhode Island seafood. Check out more photos from the event at cfrfoundation.org/ri-seafood

Right now, over 95% of the seafood that is harvested in Rhode Island is exported. For fishermen, this represents narrow markets and lower value for their catch. For chefs and consumers, this represents a



limited ability to access fresh, healthy, sustainable seafood. The CFRF is committed to growing a community that appreciates and demands the seafood that is caught along our coastlines and a food system that ensures access and encourages producer-consumer relationships. Stay tuned as we launch the first-ever RI Seafood access map and highlight local species on seafoodri.com!



WELCOME TO CFRF'S NEW STAFF:

Michael Long, Research Associate: Mike received a Bachelor's Degree in Aquaculture and Fisheries Technology from URI in 2014 and continued his fisheries research as a Masters student at UMass Amherst. Mike has experience working with the fishing industry in the New England area both at-sea and shore-side. Mike's work at CFRF focuses on implementing the Southern New England Cooperative Ventless Trap Survey.

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HIGHLIGHT: CFRF Invites Fishermen to Weigh In On Changing Ecosystems & Fishing Businesses

This winter the CFRF hosted seminars at the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association Annual Meeting and the Maine Fishermen's Forum to discuss how recent changes in the Southern New England ecosystem have impacted fishing businesses and what fishermen can do to maximize resiliency. The CFRF presented recent research on species of emerging importance (Jonah crab and black sea bass) and a panel of fishermen that collaborate with CFRF discussed how they have become engaged in research to better understand these species and adapted their businesses to changes in species availability, market opportunities, and fisheries management. Hundreds of fishermen, scientists, and managers attended these events and the group discussions that followed were full of ideas and opportunity!



"The CFRF gives us the ability to get this information to management. Through the Foundation we have a voice. Our data is backed up by scientists, managers, etc. It gives us credibility. We have a mechanism and the tools to collect real time data and create change. That is the key to fisheries management. They are a fisherman run organization which means the research foundation owns that data. It doesn't get hidden, and it does not get used in a way that it is not meant to be used. This is raw real-time data that the fishermen own. I think that data is invaluable. It can be a pain collecting the data sometimes, but it is satisfying. You have to do it."

— Norbert Stamps, F/V Debbie Ann, Point Judith, RI

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

MAY 18-20, 2018 ONE OCEAN
VOLVO RACE AT FORT ADAMS
IN NEWPORT, RI



AUGUST 19-23, 2018 AMERICAN
FISHERIES SOCIETY MEETING IN
ATLANTIC CITY, NJ



OCTOBER
17-18, 2018

**COMMERCIAL
MARINE EXPO**
2018 | Providence, RI



**COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
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