

# CFRF NEWSLETTER

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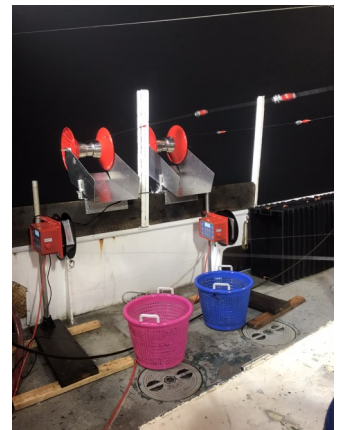
## Project Results: Planning a Ghost Gear Removal Program for Rhode Island



Ghost gear impacts in coastal waters are acknowledged as a serious problem, and ghost gear removal projects have been initiated worldwide. Rhode Island has an active commercial and recreational fishery with fishermen reporting thousands of abandoned traps and piles of ghost gear near Rhode Island fishing ports and coastal waters. With support from the Southeast New England Watershed Grants Program, we recently completed a project that developed a sustainable plan for removing abandoned or lost fishing gear, or ghost gear, from Rhode Island waters. In developing this plan, and increasing public awareness of ghost gear and the importance of a coordinated effort for removal and recycling/disposal, we developed a project website, held a stakeholder workshop and community meetings, and developed digital outreach materials. Following the procedures outlined in this planning document, we started successfully [removing ghost gear from Narragansett Bay](#) in February and March 2023 with support from 11th Hour Racing. You can read the full planning document [here](#).

## Project Results: Piloting a Low-Bycatch Automatic Squid Jig Fishery in Southern New England

CFRF partnered with The Town Dock and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council to pilot automatic jigging machines in Southern New England squid fisheries. We collaborated with the F/Vs Mattie and Maren, Miss Edi, and Hadley Ruth to test the gear on single and multi-night trips in 2021 and 2022. Thank you to the captains and crew for your help! The project team faced challenges troubleshooting the machine settings at-sea and understanding optimal environmental conditions for automatic jigging at night in conjunction with daytime trawling activities. Overall, the squid catch was very low, however, the jig-caught squid were of a high-grade quality. The project team concluded that more knowledge exchange and at-sea trials will be required to understand how to best apply this technology to local squid fisheries. This pilot project sparked interest from the fishing industry, so we are working to develop a gear lending program to allow vessels to borrow and test the jigging machines to further advance this knowledge!



This project was supported by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. For more information on this project, including photos of the jig machine set-ups on the vessels, please check out the [webpage](#).

## Project Update: South Fork Wind Farm Fish Pot Survey



The South Fork Wind Farm (SFWF) pre-construction fish pot survey began in June 2021 and was completed in January 2023. This survey utilizes a Before-After-Gradient sampling design targeting structure-associated finfish species such as black sea bass, scup, and tautog using ventless fish pots. This survey is investigating the spatial scale of the potential impacts on the abundance and distribution of fish species before, during, and post-construction of the SFWF wind turbines. Black sea bass and scup are the top two fish species that we caught, but we also frequently saw conger eels, cunner, and red hake. The construction phase of the SFWF fish pot survey is scheduled to begin June 2023.

Thanks to captain Joe Baker and his crew Evan Adams of the F/V Harvest Moon for their hard work and assistance throughout this survey! For more information, check out the [webpage](#).

## Introducing Our Newest Staff Members

We are excited to welcome our newest staff members at the CFRF, Tori Thomas, Doug Brander, and Erika Mincarelli!

Tori is leading the Whelk Research Fleet and assists with our Ghost Gear Removal, Salinity Maximum Intrusions, and Sea Scallop Social-Ecological System projects.

Doug is working on our Scallop Research Fleet and new citizen science scallop pilot project, as well as our South Fork Wind Farm Fisheries Monitoring Surveys.

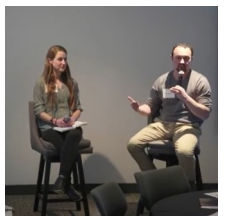
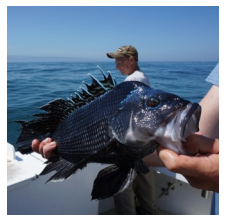
Erika is working on the Spider Crab Fishery pilot project as well as our South Fork Wind Farm Fisheries Monitoring Surveys.

Check out our [CFRF Staff webpage](#) to read their full bios!



## Education and Outreach

- In March, several staff members attended the [Maine Fishermen's Forum](#) in Rockport, ME. In addition to our general outreach booth, our director, David Bethoney, participated in panels regarding windfarm fisheries monitoring surveys and working with the fishing industry to collect environmental data. Susan Inglis also participated in a panel on working with fishermen to remove ghost gear from the ocean!
- In February and March, Susan Inglis and Tori Thomas, in collaboration with our partners from NMFS, University of Connecticut, and Rutgers University, hosted three workshops for our project to [assess the vulnerability of the Atlantic sea scallop community to climate change](#). These workshops were held in Newport News, VA, Barnegat Light, NJ, and New Bedford, MA. Thanks to all of the fishermen who participated!
- We are excited to share our newest scientific publication! We recently published a paper on our [Black Sea Bass Research Fleet](#) project in *Frontiers in Marine Science* titled, "Mobilizing the fishing industry to address data gaps created by shifting species distribution." Check out the [full paper](#) to learn more about our fishing industry-based Research Fleet and how this data is collected and used! Thank you to the 20 participating fishing vessels that have made this project possible!
- In case you missed it: David Bethoney recently participated in a panel regarding Cooperative Research in New England Fisheries for the Sustaining Our Seas Symposium at the Museum of Science! You can watch the full discussion online [here](#)!
- Don't forget to follow us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) for regular updates on our work!



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