

Foreword

The Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (SAW) process has three parts: preparation of stock assessments by the SAW Working Groups and/or by ASMFC Technical Committees / Assessment Committees; peer review of the assessments by a panel of outside experts who judge the adequacy of the assessment as a basis for providing scientific advice to managers; and a presentation of the results and reports to the Region's fishery management bodies. Starting with SAW-39 (June 2004), the process was revised in two fundamental ways. First, the Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) became smaller panel with panelists provided by the Independent System for Peer Review (Center of Independent Experts, CIE). Second, the SARC provides little management advice. Instead, Council and Commission teams (e.g., Plan Development Teams, Monitoring and Technical Committees, Science and Statistical Committee) formulate management advice, after an assessment has been accepted by the SARC. Starting with SAW-45 (June 2007) the SARC chairs were from external agencies, but not from the CIE. Starting with SAW-48 (June 2009), SARC chairs are from the Fishery Management Council's Science and Statistical Committee (SSC), and not from the CIE. Also at this time, some assessment Terms of Reference were revised to provide additional science support to the SSCs, as the SSC's are required to make annual ABC

recommendations to the fishery management councils.

Reports that are produced following SAW/SARC meetings include: An *Assessment Summary Report* - a summary of the assessment results in a format useful to managers; an *Assessment Report* - a detailed account of the assessments for each stock; and the SARC panelist reports - a summary of the reviewer's opinions and recommendations as well as individual reports from each panelist. SAW/SARC assessment reports are available online at <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/publications/series/crdlist.htm>. The CIE review reports and assessment reports can be found at <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/saw/>. The 59th SARC was convened in Woods Hole at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, June 2-5, 2015 to review benchmark stock assessments of scup (*Stenotomus chrysops*) and bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*). CIE reviews for SARC60 were based on detailed reports produced by NEFSC Assessment Working Groups. This Introduction contains a brief summary of the SARC comments, a list of SARC panelists, the meeting agenda, and a list of attendees (Tables 1 - 3). Maps of the Atlantic coast of the USA and Canada are also provided (Figures 1 - 5).

Outcome of the Stock Assessment Review Meeting:

Text in this section is based on SARC-60 Review Panel reports (available at <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/saw/> under the heading “SARC 60 Panelist Reports”).

For scup all of the ToRs were met and the assessment results can be used as a basis for management. The assessment was based on an age-structured population model (ASAP). In 2014 overfishing was not occurring and the stock was not overfished. The SARC Panel felt that the assessment represents a robust summary of scup population dynamics, but noted uncertainty regarding the steepness of the estimated rise in biomass since 2000, possible “cryptic” biomass, and in the accuracy of the Biological Reference Points. If trends in F or recruitment were to change in the medium term, further investigations are recommended to ensure that the stock does not become over-exploited. The Panel felt that attempts to incorporate environmental data into the assessment could be pursued

further, and do not yet provide adequate predictions of scup habitat use.

For bluefish all of the ToRs were met and the assessment results can be used as a basis for management. The assessment was based on an age-structured population model (ASAP), with the NEFSC survey index split in 2008/2009 to account for the change in research survey vessels. In 2014 overfishing was not occurring and the stock was not overfished. The Panel noted improvements made since the previous assessment regarding quality of age data and the splitting of commercial and recreational fleets. The Panel noted that the model is strongly driven by one index (MRIP) which provides the majority of the information on older ages, and recommended that an attempt be made to develop additional informative indices. The Panel accepted the continued use of MSY proxy reference points, and recommended basing bluefish stock status determination on spawning stock biomass instead of total biomass.

Table 1. 60th Stock Assessment Review Committee Panel.

SARC Chairman (MAFMC SSC):

Dr. Cynthia Jones
Old Dominion University
Email: cjones@odu.edu

SARC Panelists (CIE):

Dr. Norm Hall
Unit 2, 2 Wexford Street,
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Australia
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Dr. Sven Kupschus
Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences (CEFAS)
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Dr. Kevin Stokes
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Table 2. Agenda, 60th Stock Assessment Review Committee Meeting.

June 2-5, 2015

Stephen H. Clark Conference Room – Northeast Fisheries Science Center
Woods Hole, Massachusetts

AGENDA* (version: May 29, 2015)

TOPIC	PRESENTER(S)	SARC LEADER	RAPPORTEUR
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Tuesday, June 2

10 – 10:30 AM

Welcome
Introduction
Agenda
Conduct of Meeting

James Weinberg, SAW Chair
Cynthia Jones, SARC Chair

10:30 – 12:30 PM

Assessment Presentation (A. Scup)
Mark Terceiro

Larry Alade

12:30 – 1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 – 3:30 PM

Assessment Presentation (A. Scup)
Mark Terceiro

Chuck Adams

3:30 – 3:45 PM

Break

3:45 – 5:45 PM

SARC Discussion w/ Presenters (A. Scup)
Cynthia Jones, SARC Chair

Chuck Adams

5:45 – 6 PM

Public Comments

Wednesday, June 3

8:30 – 10:30 AM

Assessment Presentation (B. Bluefish)
Tony Wood

Jon Deroba

10:30 – 10:45 AM

Break

10:45 – 12:30 PM

Assessment Presentation (B. Bluefish)
Tony Wood

Jon Deroba

12:30 – 1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 – 3:30 PM

SARC Discussion w/presenters (B. Bluefish)
Cynthia Jones, SARC Chair

Brian Linton

3:30 – 3:45 PM

Public Comments

3:45 -4 PM	Break		
4 – 6 PM	Revisit with Presenters (A. Scup) Cynthia Jones, SARC Chair		Toni Chute
7 PM	(Social Gathering)		

TOPIC	PRESENTER(S)	SARC LEADER	RAPPORTEUR
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Thursday, June 4

8:30 – 10:30	Revisit with Presenters (B. Bluefish) Cynthia Jones, SARC Chair		Anne Richards
10:30 – 10:45	Break		
10:45 – 12:15	Review/Edit Assessment Summary Report (A. Scup) Cynthia Jones, SARC Chair		Alicia Miller
12:15 – 1:15 PM	Lunch		
1:15 – 2:45 PM	(cont.) Edit Assessment Summary Report (A. Scup) Cynthia Jones, SARC Chair		Mike Palmer
2:45 – 3 PM	Break		
3 – 6 PM	Review/edit Assessment Summary Report (B. Bluefish) Cynthia Jones, SARC Chair		TBD

Friday, June 5

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM SARC Report writing

*All times are approximate, and may be changed at the discretion of the SARC chair. The meeting is open to the public. During the SARC report writing stage on June 5, the public should not engage in discussion with the SARC.

Table 3. 60th SAW/SARC List of Attendees

NAME	AFFILIATION	CONTACT INFO
Jim Weinberg	NEFSC	james.weinberg@noaa.gov
Paul Rago	NEFSC	paul.rago@noaa.gov
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Jon Deroba	NEFSC	jon.deroba@noaa.gov
Loretta O'Brien	NEFSC	loretta.o'brien@noaa.gov
Paul Nitschke	NEFSC	paul.nitschke@noaa.gov

Research Area Maps

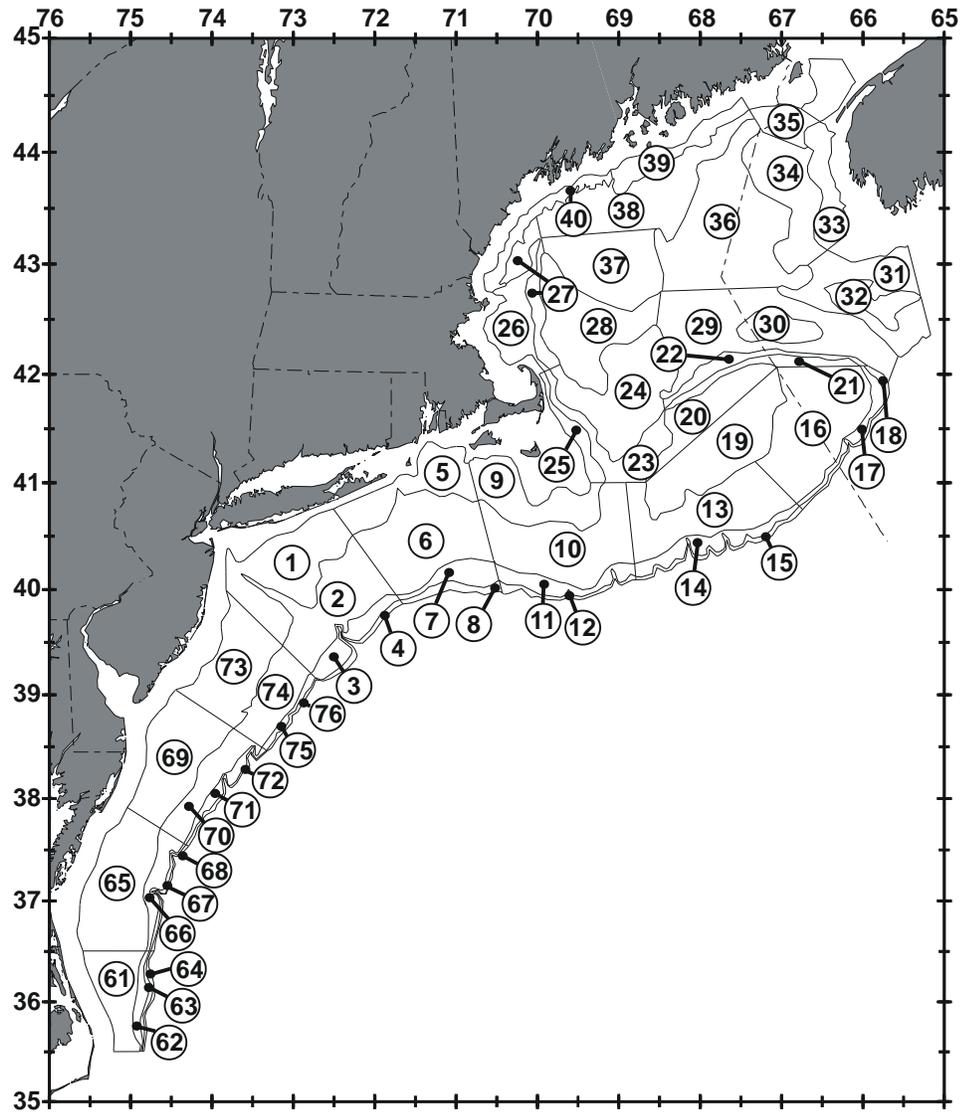


Figure 1. Offshore depth strata that have been sampled during Northeast Fisheries Science Center bottom trawl research surveys. Some of these may not be sampled presently.

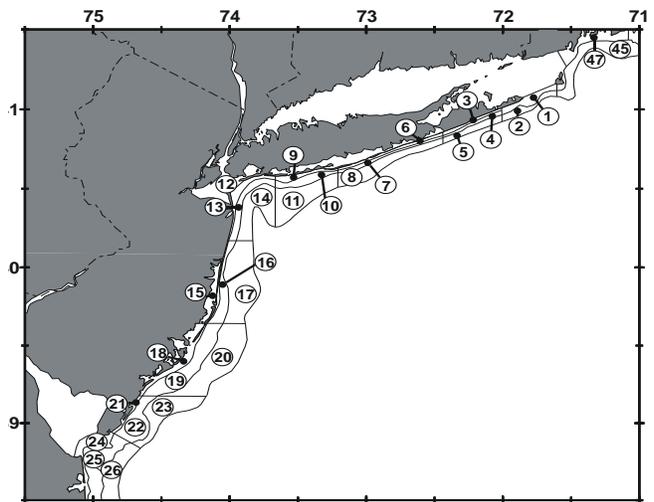
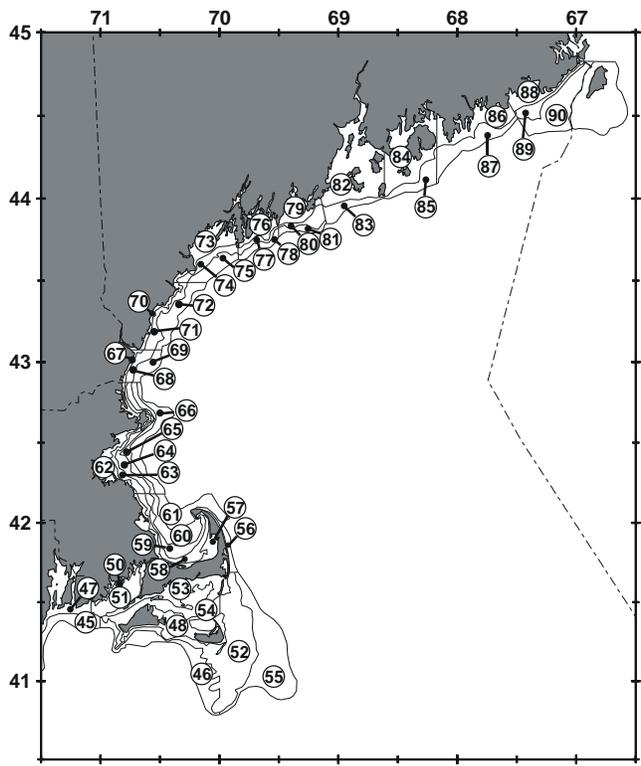
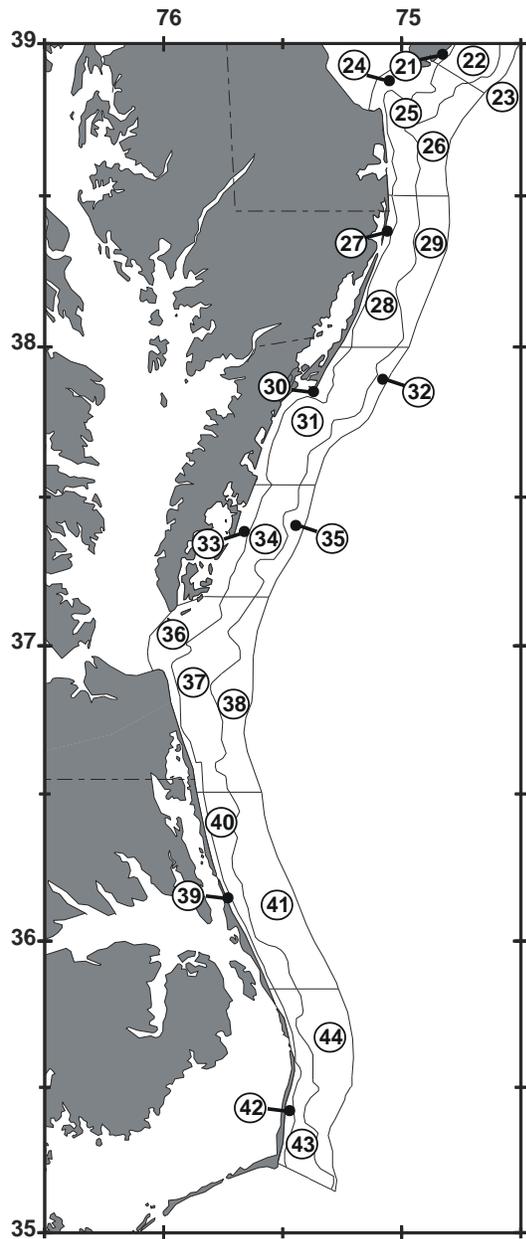


Figure 2. Inshore depth strata that have been sampled during Northeast Fisheries Science Center bottom trawl research surveys. Some of these may not be sampled presently.

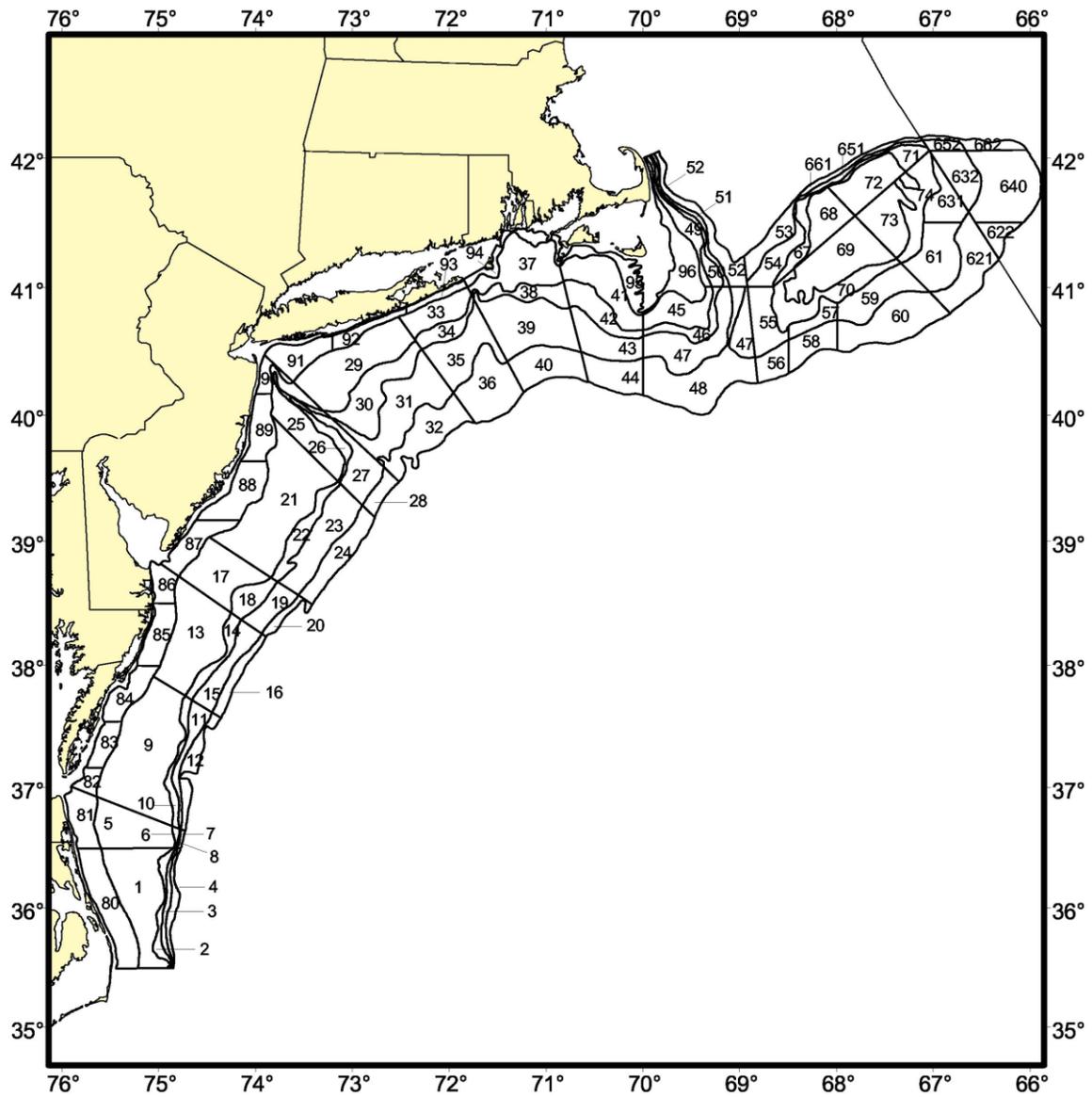


Figure 3. Depth strata sampled during Northeast Fisheries Science Center clam dredge research surveys.

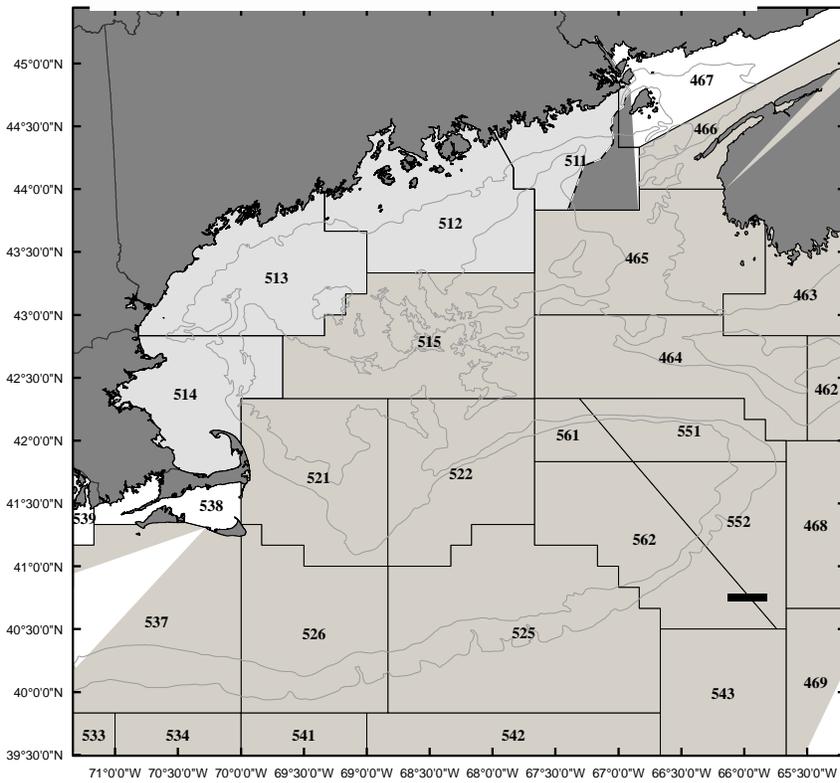
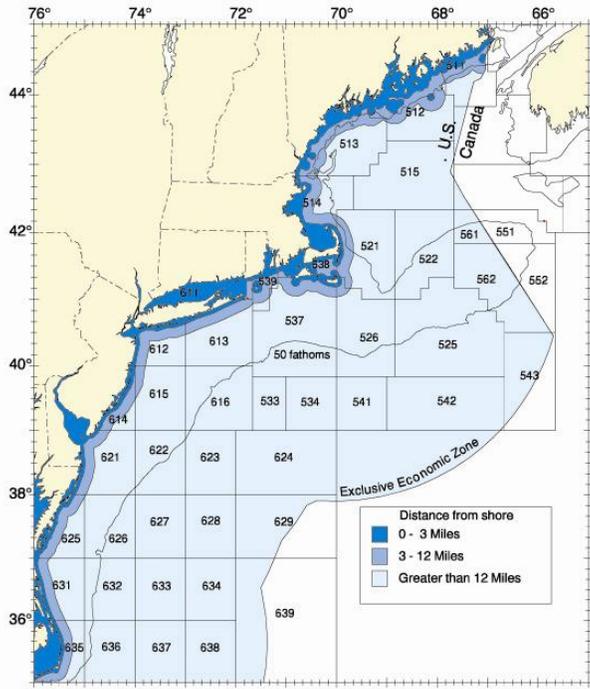


Figure 4. Statistical areas used for reporting commercial catches.

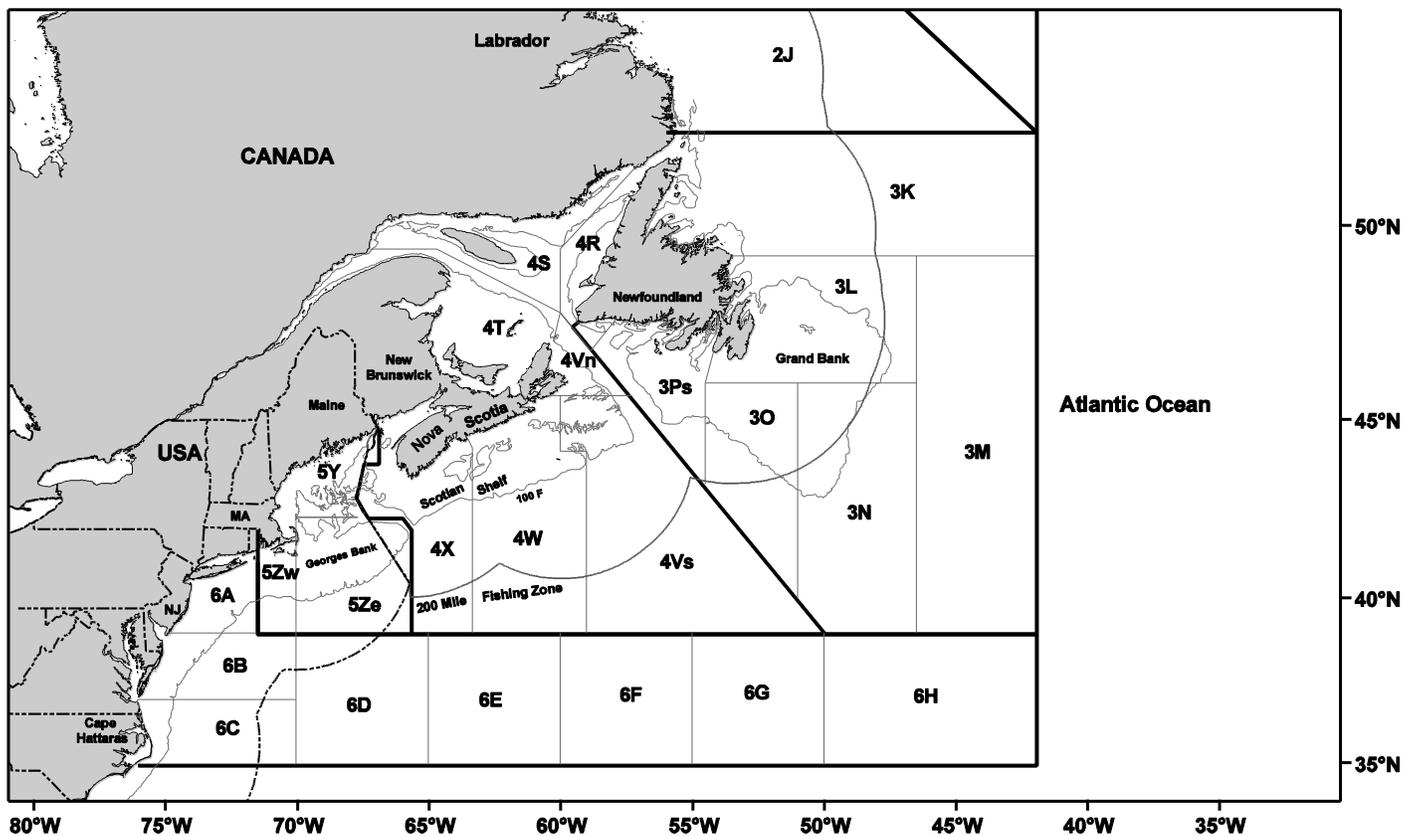


Figure 5. Catch reporting areas of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) for Subareas 3-6.