Consortium Project Review:

Identifying current best lobster fishing practices as they relate to whale conservation.

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Maine Lobstermen's Association

MAINE Lobstermen's Association
www.mainelobstermen.org

Consortium for Wildlife Bycatch Reduction

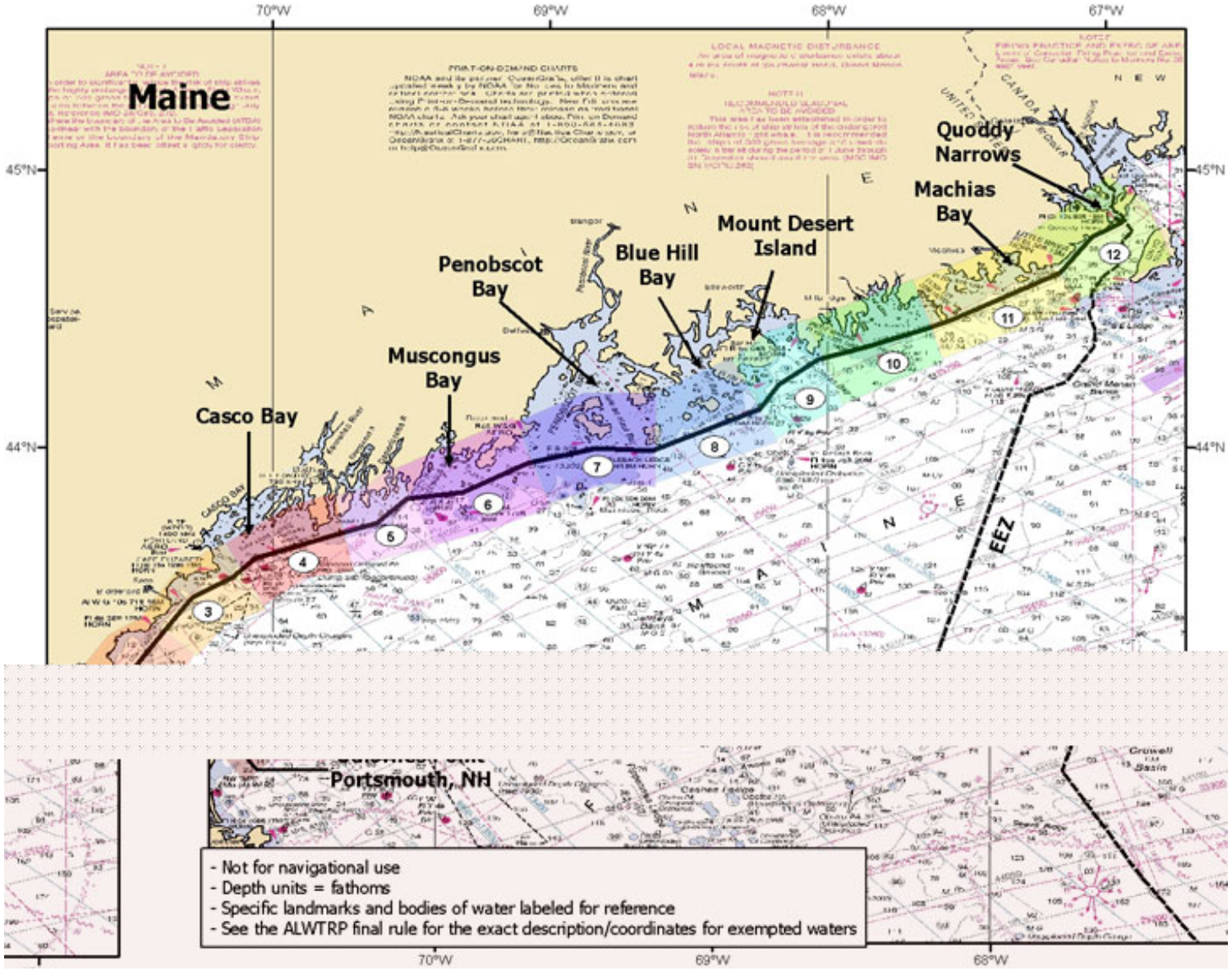
Objectives

- Characterize the full range of lobster fishing gear and methods in the Gulf of Maine
- Identify “best practices” which show promise to reduce severe entanglements with large whales.
- Better understand how different fishing gear and methods are appropriate to different environmental conditions and how they perform under such conditions.
- Create productive discussions among lobstermen as to the most promising types of “whale-friendly” gear.

Methodology

- Meet with lobstermen throughout the Gulf of Maine
- Outreach included mailing and phone calls
- Identify the full range of lobster gear used in the Gulf of Maine lobster fishery, inshore and nearshore
- Prepare a detailed and comprehensive characterization of ropes, traps, gear deployment methods, methods of rigging, gear configuration, vessel configurations, etc., on an area basis
- Develop visual depictions of gear by area, season and under certain environmental conditions.

Area Surveyed



Work to date

- Interviewed small groups of lobstermen representing 95% of the harbors in Maine
- Collected information on gear configuration by area and season on NOAA charts
  - did not restrict lobstermen to respond by management boundaries (zones, sliver, state, etc)

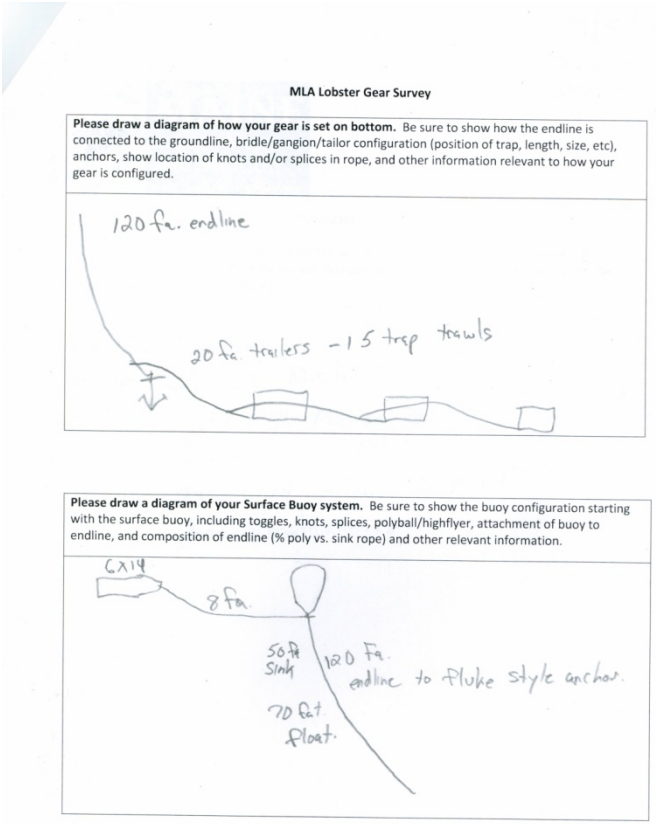
Work to date

- Collected drawings of gear configurations
- Charts to Keene State College for digitizing
- Final meetings late fall/early winter; need to fill in for offshore

Data Collected

- Gear Deployment
- Area Fished (mapping exercise)
- Seasons fished, seasons not fished
- # of traps fished-area specific average, not individual # of traps
- Vessel configuration (drawings if necessary)
- Length
- Width
- Deck space dimensions (open stern)
- Height of Transom
- Steaming speed
- Hauler description (drawings if necessary)
- Diameter rope hauler can handle
- Trap configuration/Gear deployment methods
- # of end lines/trawl
- Length of end line (average)
- Diameter of end lines
- Brand of end lines
- Diameter of ground line
- Brand of ground line
- Average soak time
- Average depth fished
- Bottom type (rock, mud, sand or cobble)
- Environmental conditions

Gear& Buoy Configuration
Surveys completed by interview participants



MLA Lobster Gear Survey

Please draw a diagram of how your gear is set on bottom. Be sure to show how the endline is connected to the groundline, bridle/gangion/tailor configuration (position of trap, length, size, etc), anchors, show location of knots and/or splices in rope, and other information relevant to how your gear is configured.

120 fa. endline

20 fa. trailers - 1 5 trap trawls

Please draw a diagram of your Surface Buoy system. Be sure to show the buoy configuration starting with the surface buoy, including toggles, knots, splices, polyball/highflyer, attachment of buoy to endline, and composition of endline (% poly vs. sink rope) and other relevant information.

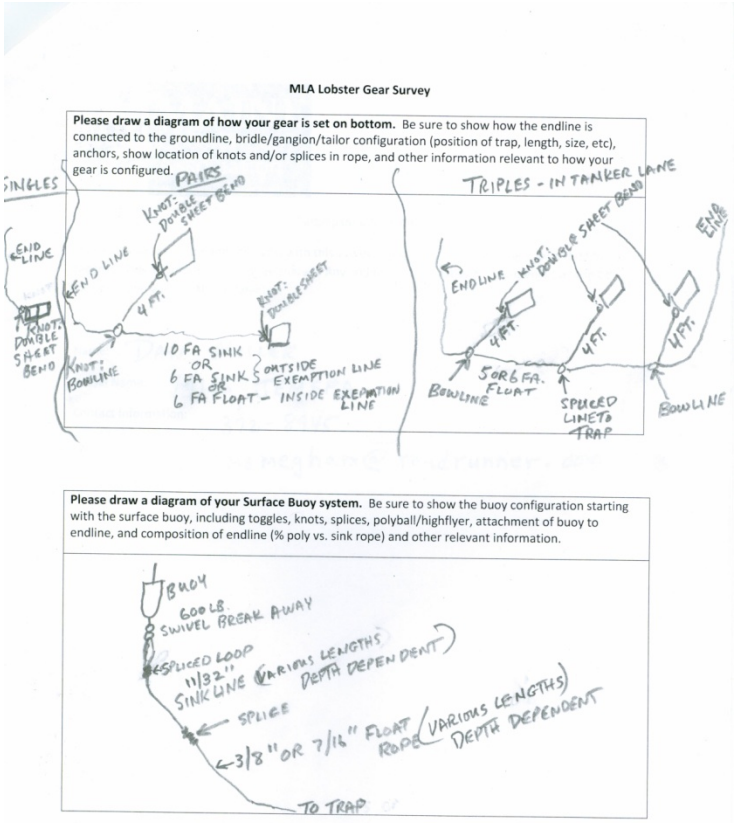
CX14

8 fa.

50 ft Sink

120 Fa. endline to fluke style anchor.

70 fet float.



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SINGLES

PAIRS

TRIPLES - IN TANKER LANE

END LINE

KNOT: DOUBLE SHEET BEND

4 FT.

KNOT: BOWLINE

10 FA SINK OR 6 FA SINK } OUTSIDE EXEMPTION LINE

6 FA FLOAT - INSIDE EXEMPTION LINE

ENDLINE

5 OR 6 FA. FLOAT

SPLICED LINE TO TRAP

Please draw a diagram of your Surface Buoy system. Be sure to show the buoy configuration starting with the surface buoy, including toggles, knots, splices, polyball/highflyer, attachment of buoy to endline, and composition of endline (% poly vs. sink rope) and other relevant information.

BUOY

600 LB SWIVEL BREAK AWAY

SPLICED LOOP

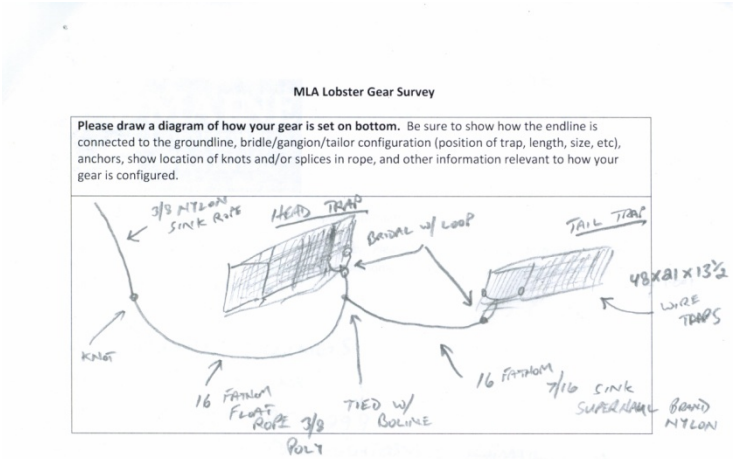
11/32" SINK LINE (VARIOUS LENGTHS DEPTH DEPENDENT)

SPLICE

3/8" OR 7/16" FLOAT ROPE (VARIOUS LENGTHS DEPTH DEPENDENT)

TO TRAP

Gear & Buoy Configuration
Surveys completed by interview participants



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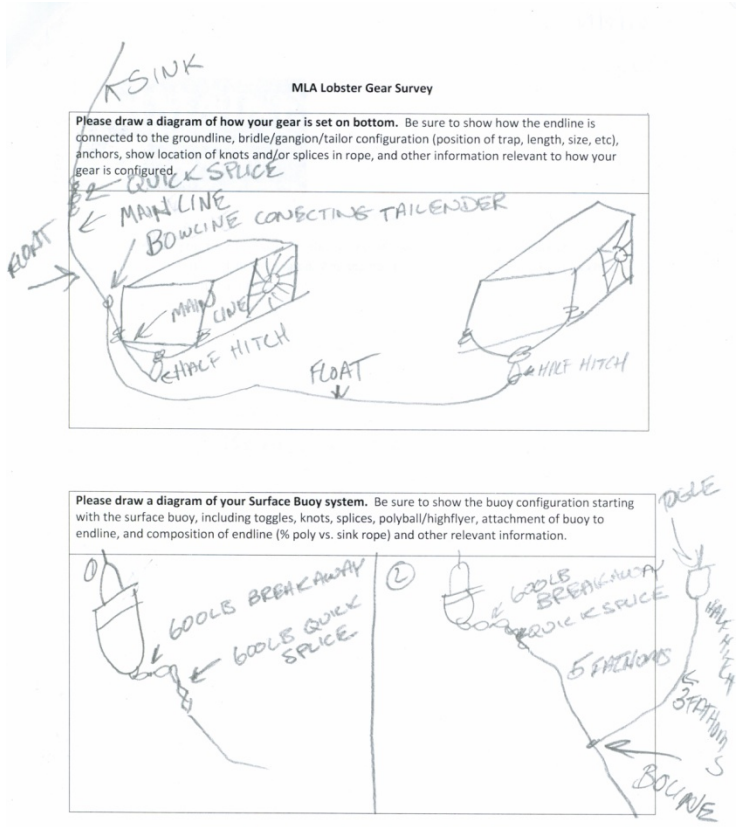
3/8 NYLON SINK ROPE
HEAD TRAP
BRIDAL W/ LOOP
TAIL TRAP
48x81x13½
WIRE TRAPS
KNOT
16 FATHOM FLOAT ROPE 3/8 POLY
TIED W/ BOWLINE
16 FATHOM 7/16 SINK SUPERBRAID
BRAID NYLON

Please draw a diagram of your Surface Buoy system. Be sure to show the buoy configuration starting with the surface buoy, including toggles, knots, splices, polyball/highflyer, attachment of buoy to endline, and composition of endline (% poly vs. sink rope) and other relevant information.

7x14" BUOY
32 FATHOM 50/50 SINK FLOAT
BREAKAWAY LINK
16 FATHOM 3/8 NYLON
8" LOOP BACK SPLICED
16 FATHOM 3/8 POLY



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SINK
QUICK SPLICE
MAIN LINE
BOWLINE CONECTING TAILENDER
FLOAT
MAIN LINE
DEHALF HITCH
FLOAT
HALF HITCH

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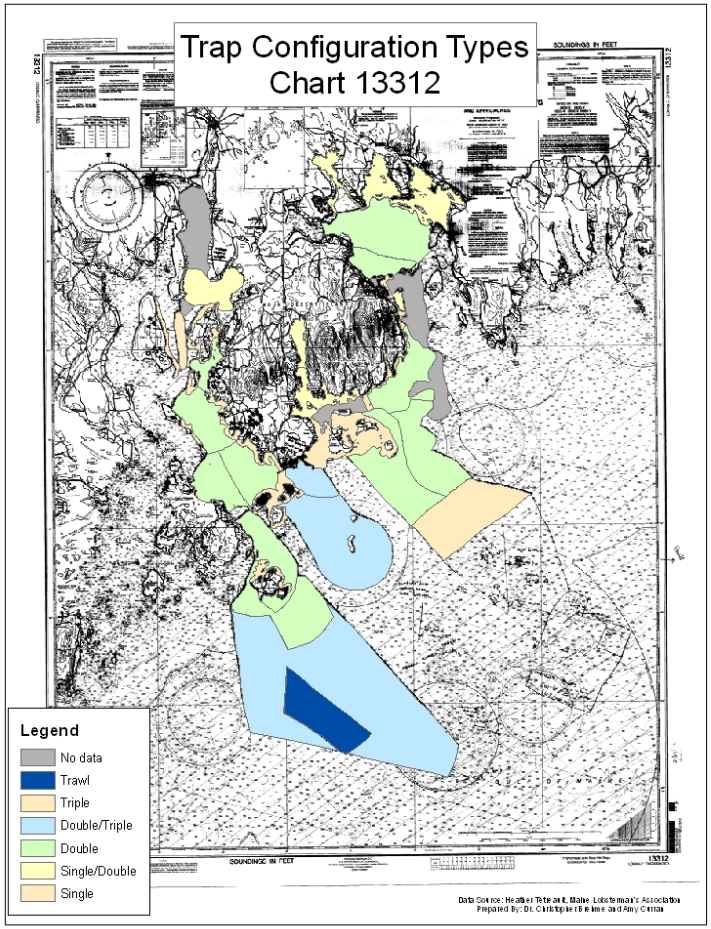
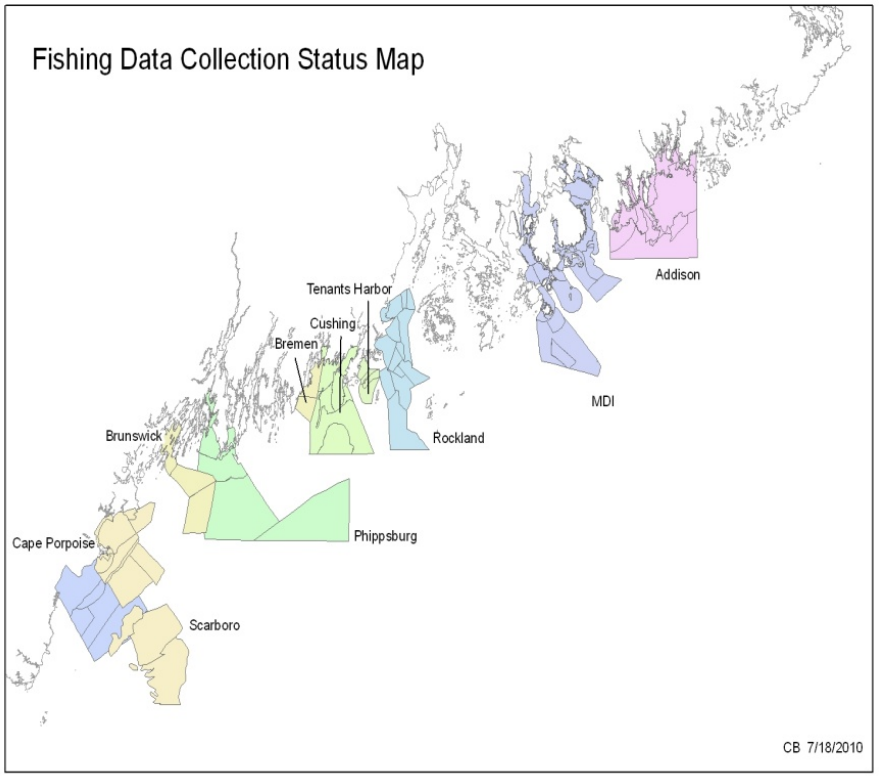
600LB BREAKAWAY
600LB QUICK SPLICE
600LB BREAKAWAY
QUICK SPLICE
5 FATHOMS
3 FATHOMS
BOWLINE

Sample Results

Maps of digitized survey areas





Next Steps

- Schedule workshops to present results to industry – 3 in Maine, 1 NH, 1 MA
- Discuss differences in fishing practices and identify “best practices”
  - shortening groundlines, stiff buoy lines, etc.
- Finalize report characterizing fishing methods