

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 Statistics 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 52nd SARC was convened in Woods Hole at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, June 6-10, 2011 to review benchmark stock assessments:

of three winter flounder (*Pseudopleuronectes americanus*) stocks in the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA), Georges Bank (GBK), and Gulf of Maine (GOM) regions. CIE reviews for SARC52 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 Stock Assessment Review Meeting:

Based on the Review Panel reports (available at <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/saw/> under the heading "SARC 52 Panelist Reports"), the SARC review committee concluded that for the **SNE/MA** winter flounder assessment all Terms of Reference were addressed satisfactorily. The statistical catch-age model used for SNE/MA assessment is considered to be a scientifically credible approach and provides a reasonable basis for

fisheries management advice. In 2010, this stock was overfished but overfishing was not occurring.

The Terms of Reference for the **GBK** winter flounder assessment were satisfactorily addressed. The VPA model used was a scientifically credible approach and provides a reasonable basis for fisheries management advice. A statistical catch-age model should be considered for the GBK stock as there may be more uncertainty here associated with catch and discards than would be appropriate for the assumption of true known catches as is made in a VPA analysis. In 2010 the GBK winter flounder stock was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring.

The Terms of Reference for the **GOM** winter flounder assessment were partially addressed. The GOM statistical catch-age model could not account for conflicting trends in the catch and survey information, and was not accepted. However, the accepted fall back analysis of the area-swept method provides a reasonable gauge of overfishing status and provides time trends in biomass. Overfishing does not appear to

be taking place in 2010. It was not possible at the meeting to determine whether or not the stock is overfished.

For all of these assessments, the SARC felt that the discussion of stock vulnerability could have addressed biological issues more directly (e.g., life history, longevity, fecundity, productivity, or whether the species or stock is overly susceptible to fishing or environmental conditions). While the length-based calibrations between vessels were informative and appeared appropriate, this method might be considered for additional peer review. A method was developed for combining information on winter flounder across regions to help inform the spawner-recruit relationships used in developing projections and biological reference points (for details on the method see the Review Panel Summary Report and the Appendix of the Stock Assessment Report).

CIE review reports can be found at <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/saw/> under the heading “SARC 52 Panelist Reports”.

Table 1. 52nd Stock Assessment Review Committee Panel.

SARC Chairman (NEFMC SSC):

Dr. Patrick Sullivan
Dept. of Natural Resources
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
E-mail: pjs31@cornell.edu

SARC Panelists (CIE):

Dr. John Casey
Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences (CEFAS)
Pakefield Road Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 0HT UK
Email: john.casey@cefas.co.uk

Dr. Cynthia Jones
Director, Center for Quantitative Fisheries Ecology
A.D. and Annye L. Morgan Professor of Sciences
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia, USA
Email: cjones@odu.edu

Dr. Noel Cadigan
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Science Branch
Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Center
80 East White Hills Road
St. John's, NL, Canada. A1C 5X1
Email: noel.cadigan@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Table 2. Agenda, 52nd Stock Assessment Review Committee Meeting.

**52nd Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (SAW 52)
Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) Meeting**

June 6-10, 2011

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

AGENDA (version: 3 June 2011)

TOPIC	PRESENTER(S)	SARC LEADER	RAPPORTEUR
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Monday, June 6

1 – 1:15 PM

Welcome	James Weinberg , SAW Chair		
Introduction	Patrick Sullivan , SARC Chair		
Agenda			
Conduct of Meeting			

1:15 – 3:15	Assessment Presentation (A. SNE Winter flounder)	Mark Terceiro	TBD		Tony Wood
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3:15 – 3:30	Break
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3:30 – 5:30	SARC Discussion w/ presenters (A. SNE Winter flounder)	Pat Sullivan , SARC Chair			Tony Wood
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Tuesday, June 7

8:30-10:30 AM	Assessment Presentation (B. GBK Winter flounder)	Lisa Hendrickson	TBD		Toni Chute
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10:30-10-45	Break
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10:45 – 12:30	SARC Discussion w/ presenters (B. GBK Winter flounder)	Pat Sullivan , SARC Chair			Toni Chute
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12:30 - 1:45	Lunch
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1:45 – 3:45	Assessment Presentation (C. GOM Winter flounder)	Paul Nitschke	TBD		Jessica Blaylock
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3:45 – 4:00	Break
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4:00 – 5:45	SARC Discussion w/ presenters (C. GOM Winter flounder)	Pat Sullivan , SARC Chair			Jessica Blaylock
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(Evening Social/Dinner – Probably at BBC, Falmouth, 7pm)

Wednesday, June 8

8:45 – 11	Revisit w/ presenters (A.) Pat Sullivan, SARC Chair	Tony Wood
11 - 11:15	Break	
11:15 – 12:30	Revisit w/ presenters (B.) Pat Sullivan, SARC Chair	Toni Chute
12:30 – 1:45	Lunch	
1:45 – 2:45	cont. Revisit w/ presenters (B.) Pat Sullivan, SARC Chair	Toni Chute
2:45 - 3	Break	
3 – 5:15	Revisit w/ presenters (C.) Pat Sullivan, SARC Chair	Jessica Blaylock

Thursday, June 9

8:45 – 11	Review/edit Assessment Summary Report (A.) Pat Sullivan, SARC Chair	Tony Wood
11 - 11:15	Break	
11:15 – 12:30	Review/edit Assessment Summary Report (B.) Pat Sullivan, SARC Chair	Toni Chute
12:30 – 1:45	Lunch	
1:45 – 2:45	cont. Review/edit Assessment Summary Report (B.) Pat Sullivan, SARC Chair	Toni Chute
2:45 - 3	Break	
3 – 5:15	Review/edit Assessment Summary Report (C.) Pat Sullivan, SARC Chair	Jessica Blaylock

Friday, June 10

9:00 - 5:30 PM SARC Report writing. (closed meeting)

*All times are approximate, and may be changed at the discretion of the SARC chair. The meeting is open to the public, except where noted.

Table 3. 52nd SAW/SARC, List of Attendees

Name	Affiliation	Email
James Weinberg	NEFSC	James.weinberg@noaa.gov
Paul Rago	NEFSC	Paul.Rago@noaa.gov
Pat Sullivan	Cornell University	pjs31@cornell.edu
Cynthia Jones	Old Dominion University	cjones@odu.edu
Noel Cadigan	DFO-CIE	noel.cadigan@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
John Casey	CEFAS	john.casey@cefas.co.uk
Mark Terceiro	NEFSC	mark.terceiro@noaa.gov
Greg DeCelles	SMAST	gdecelles@umassd.edu
Tom Nies	NEFMC	tnies@nefmc.org
Liz Brooks	NEFSC	Liz.brooks@noaa.gov
Jessica Blaylock	NEFSC	Jessica.blaylock@noaa.gov
Susan Wigley	NEFSC	Susan.wigley@noaa.gov
Kiersten Curti	NEFSC	Kiersten.curti@noaa.gov
Lisa Hendrickson	NEFSC	Lisa.hendrickson@noaa.gov
Michele Traver	NEFSC	Michele.traver@noaa.gov
Ian Conboy	NEFSC	Ian.conboy@noaa.gov
Brian Gervelis	NEFSC	Brian.gervelis@noaa.gov
Mike Palmer	NEFSC	Michael.palmer@noaa.gov
Joanne Pellegrino	NERO	Joanne.pellegrino@noaa.gov
Jon Deroba	NEFSC	Jonathan.deroba@noaa.gov
Amy Schueller	SEFSC	Amv.schueller@noaa.gov
Julie Nieland	NEFSC	Julie.nieland@noaa.gov
David McElroy	NEFSC	Dave.mcelroy@noaa.gov
Steve Cadrin	SMAST	scadrin@umassd.edu
Chris Legault	NEFSC	Chris.legault@noaa.gov
Greg Power	NERO	Greg.power@noaa.gov
Rich McBride	NEFSC	Richad.mcbride@noaa.gov
John Lake	RIDFW	John.lake@dem.ri.gov
Gary Shepherd	NEFSC	garv.shepherd@noaa.gov
Larry Alade	NEFSC	Larry.alade@noaa.gov
Tom Warren	NMFS-SFD	Thomas.warren@noaa.gov
Tony Wood	NEFSC	Anthony.wood@noaa.gov
Anne Richards	NEFSC	Anne.richards@noaa.gov
Fred Serchuk	NEFSC	Fred.Serchuck@noaa.gov
Jon Hare	NMFS-NEFSC	Jon.hare@noaa.gov
Evan Lindsay	Student-UMES	elindsay@imap.wh.who.gov
Paul Nitschke	NEFSC	paul.nitschke@noaa.gov
Dvora Hart	NEFSC	Deborah.hart@noaa.gov

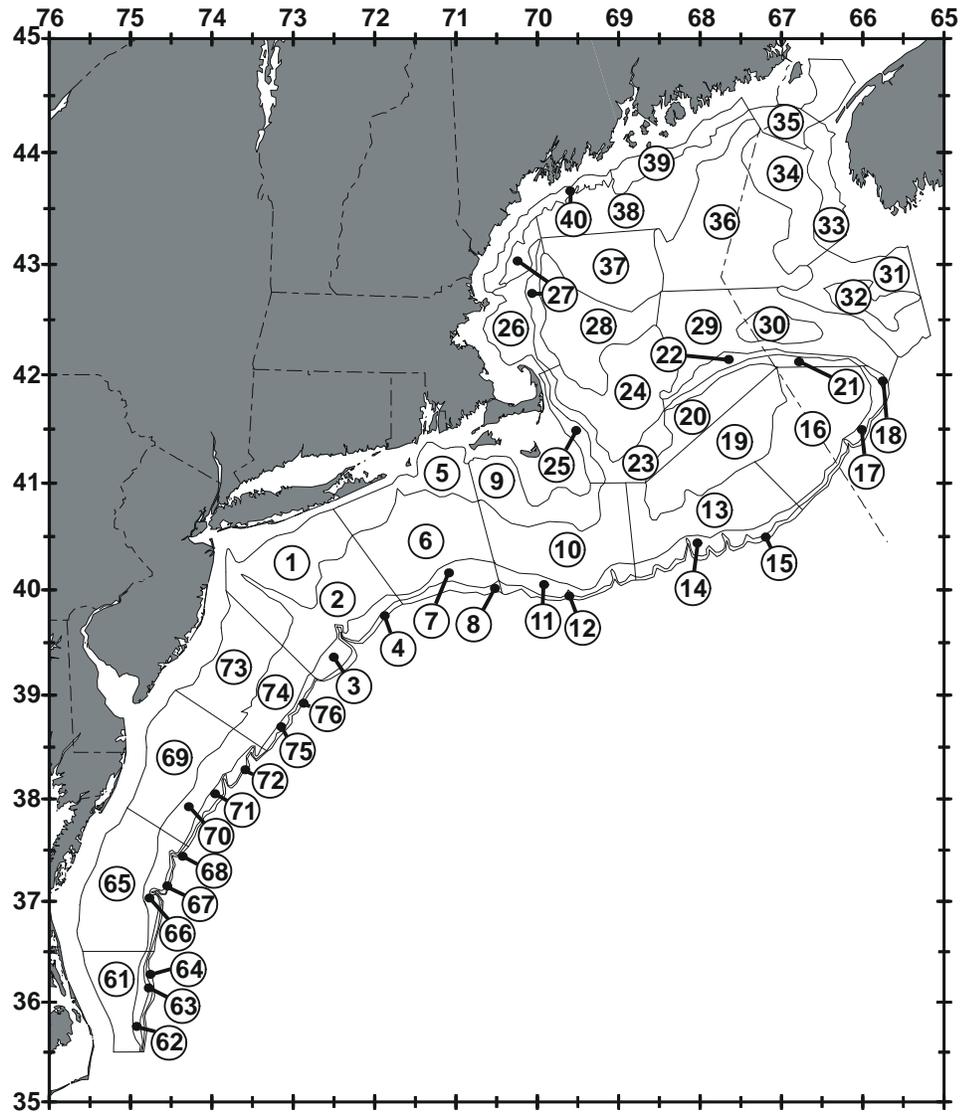


Figure 1. Offshore depth strata sampled during Northeast Fisheries Science Center bottom trawl research surveys.

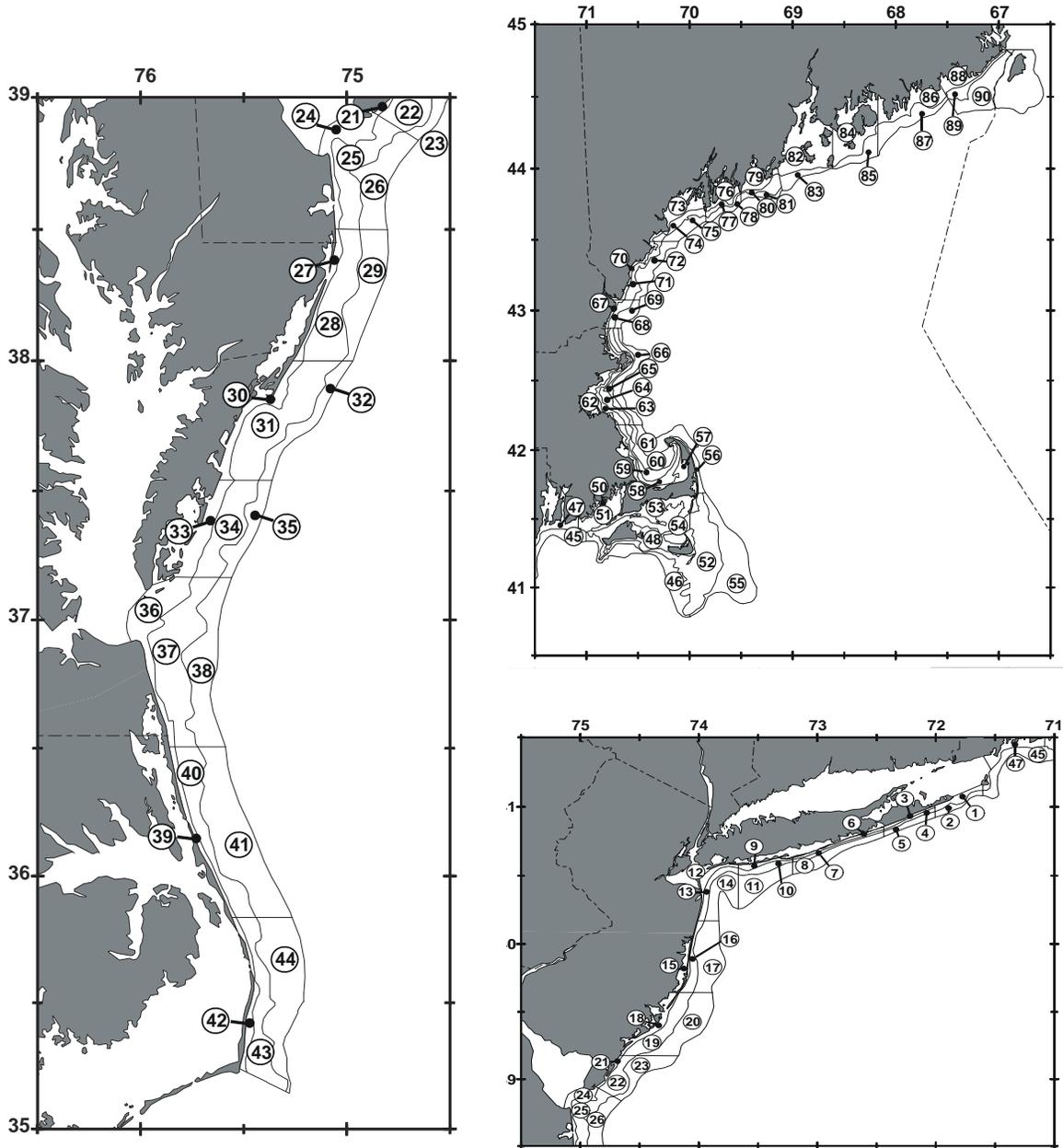


Figure 2. Inshore depth strata sampled during Northeast Fisheries Science Center bottom trawl research surveys.

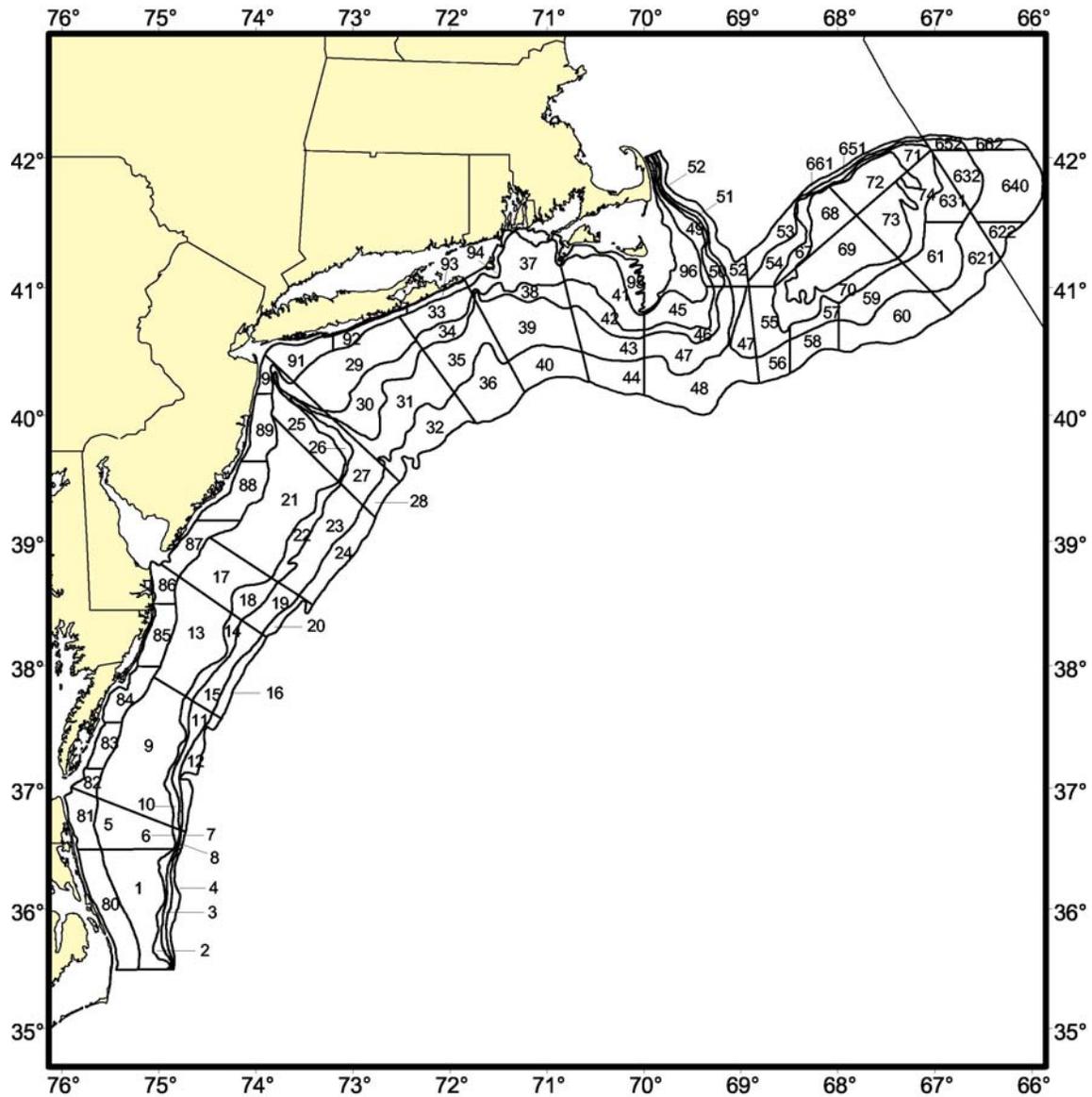


Figure 3. Depth strata sampled during Northeast Fisheries Science Center clam dredge research surveys.

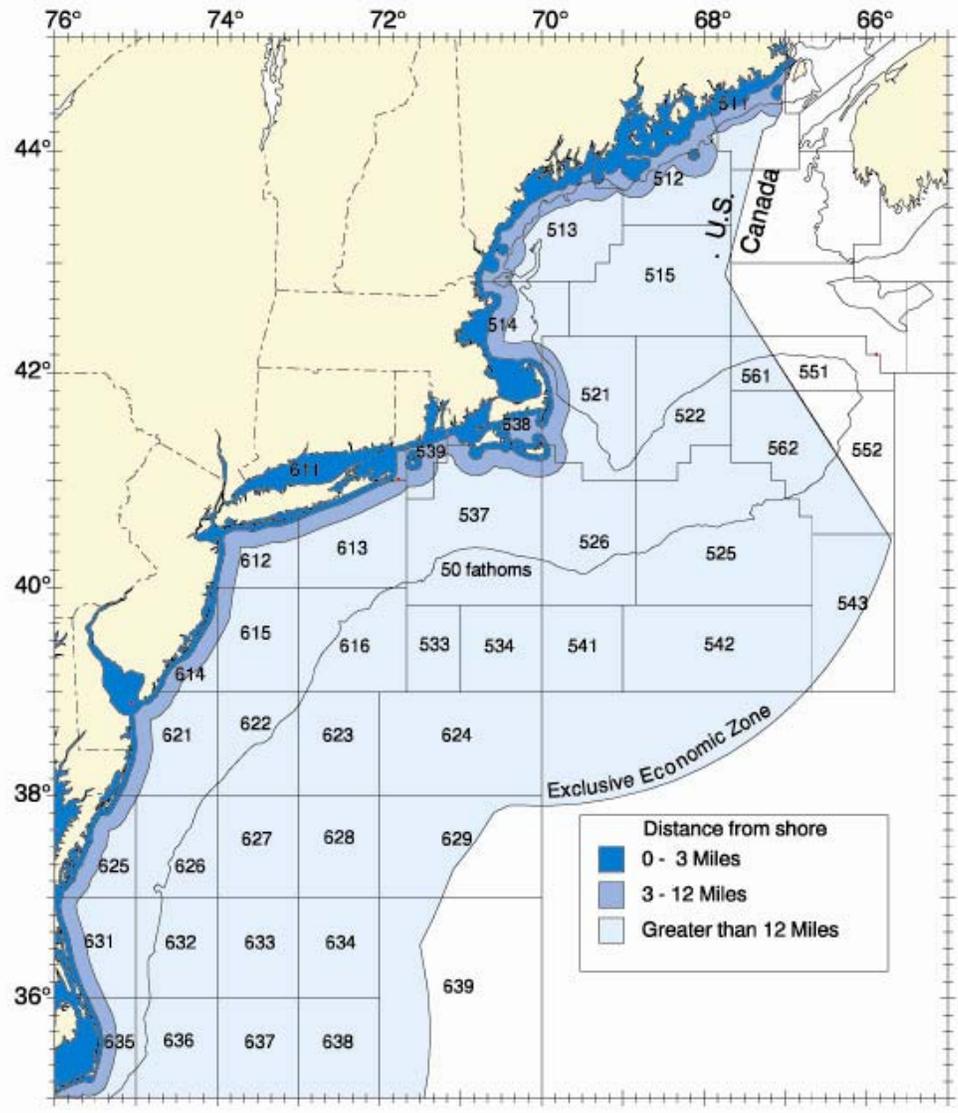


Figure 4. Statistical areas used for reporting commercial catches.

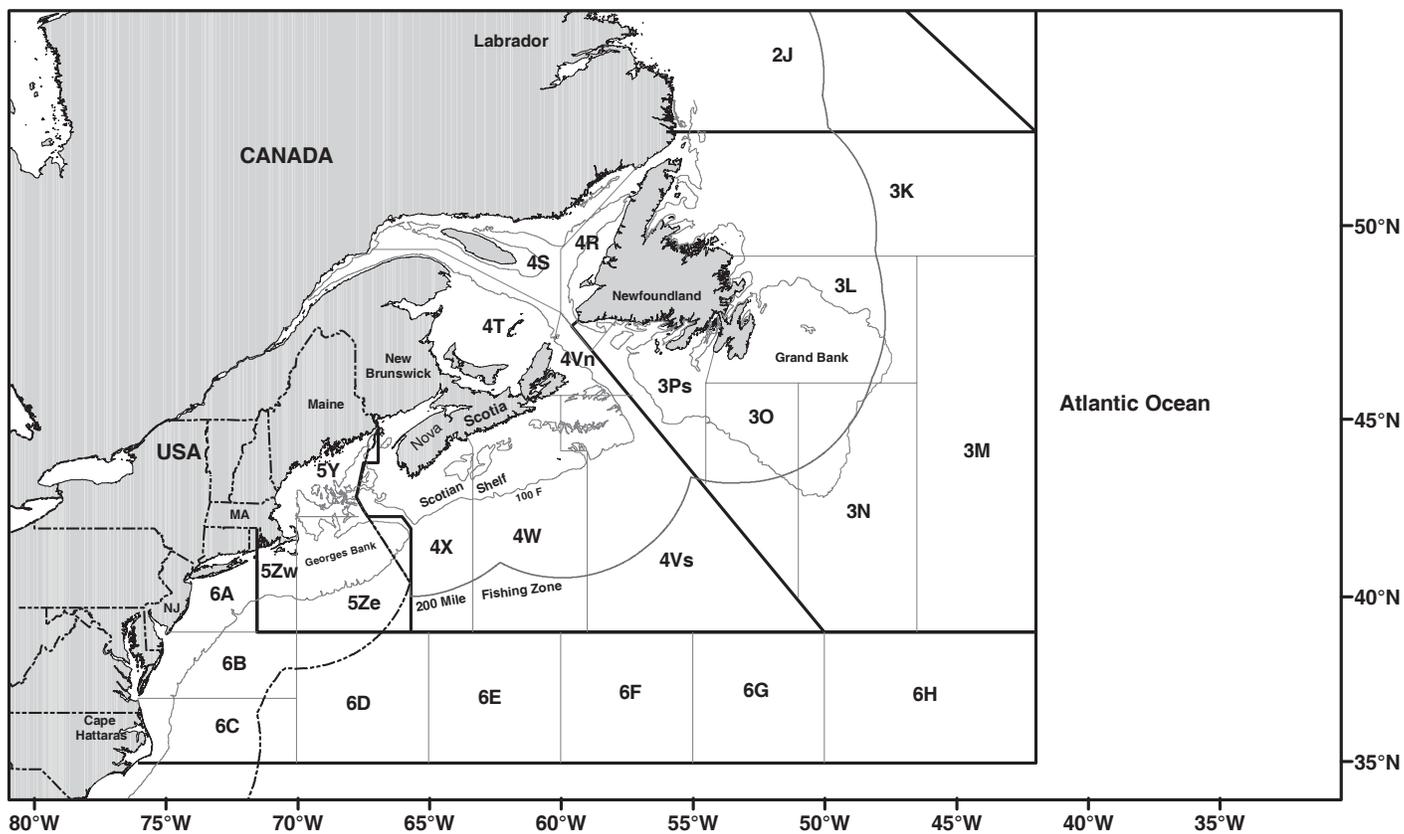


Figure 5. Catch reporting areas of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) for Subareas 3-6.