

**MEETING OF THE MARINE RECREATIONAL
FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT PANEL**

June 2, 2014

Hanover, MA

Attendance:

Panel Members: Chuck Casella (chair), Bill Smith, Mark Amorello, Patrick Paquette, Mike Moss

Department of Fish and Game: Commissioner Mary Griffin

Division of Marine Fisheries: Director Paul Diodati, Dan McKiernan, Mike Armstrong, Kevin Creighton, Paul Caruso, Greg Skomal, Brad Chase, Ross Kessler, Elaine Brewer, Dave Martins, Nichola Meserve

Office of Fishing and Boating Access: Director Jack Sheppard, Doug Cameron

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Chairman Chuck Casella called the meeting to order at 1:00PM. Introductions were made. The Panel approved the agenda and draft minutes from the Panel's June 24, 2013 meeting without change. Chuck indicated that a point he was trying to make at the last meeting was that the Panel should not endorse funding for projects that the members were not fully supportive of or briefed on. Commissioner Mary Griffin reiterated that construction projects cannot occur without initial permitting and design expenses.

Update on CY14 Recreational Permitting

Kevin Creighton gave a presentation on permit issuance trends, donations to the Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Fund (Fund), and permit outreach and improvements. Permit issuance has increased over the first three years, reaching about 158,000 permits in 2013. Issuance for 2014 is tracking that for 2013. Donations have been relatively steady at about \$40,000 per year. Donations are not solicited, except that those applying for a permit by phone are asked if they would like to make a donation.

Permit outreach included participation in a Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) campaign to remind those with lapsed permits to renew, in which the Division's logo was included in about 75,000 postcards to anglers. The postcards targeted freshwater anglers because RBFF was interested in permit programs with at least five years of data. Once we have five years' worth of saltwater fishing permit data, the campaign will include separate postcards for salt and freshwater permit holders. Permit improvements included mobile optimization of the *MassFishHunt* permit website. Customers can more easily navigate the site on their mobile devices, see an inventory of their permits, and send a copy to their email account to store/display on the device.

Paul Diodati suggested that the Division share a map with the Panel that shows the geographic spread of our permit holders. He also noted that the oldest permit holder is 100 years young.

Fund Overview

Kevin's presentation continued with a financial summary of the Fund from FY11 to FY13 and the expectations for the Fund in FY14. The end-of-year Fund balance has increased from FY11 to FY13, and was just shy of \$2M to carry into FY14. For FY14, new revenue included \$1.19M from permit sales, \$40,000 in donations, and \$155,000 from NOAA Fisheries for the MRIP contract. The projected expenditures of \$951,000 are close (~91%) to the appropriated amount, meaning about \$100,000 will revert back to the Fund for future appropriations. The fringe assessment on the Fund was \$97,000. Overall, the Fund is starting with about \$2.3M in FY15. With revenue leveling off, Kevin stated that \$1.3M was a safe level for planned expenditures.

Mark Amorello asked about the amount of personnel costs included in the expenditures. Kevin responded that the amount was roughly \$370,000.

Free Fishing Days

Paul Diodati discussed the free saltwater fishing days (no permit needed), of which two are allowed by legislation. The Division has been mirroring the inland days thus far, which are the first Saturday and Sunday in June (June 7-8 for 2014). Paul suggested that later in the year might be better for saltwater fishing, when more people would be on the water, perhaps the weekend of Father's Day. While the days were locked in already for 2014, he asked for Panel input for 2015.

Mary Griffin commented that she liked the simplicity of mirroring the inland days but recognized that having different marine and freshwater days could expose newcomers to fishing twice. Patrick Paquette agreed that the saltwater dates should be later in the year, linked to a date that non-anglers would already be on/near the water and might give it a try, and expressed preference for the weekend of July 4. He noted that picking Father's Day weekend could raise the question of "Why not Mother's Day?" Paul suggested that the Division do a little more work to determine what the best weekend might be (such as contacting RBFF for any relevant data) but plan to bump back the free saltwater fishing days in 2015. The Panel agreed and Patrick encouraged the Division to pick the dates early enough (60 to 90 days in advance) so that they could be well circulated in the media.

Recap of FY14 Projects

Mike Armstrong called upon Dave Martins, Elaine Brewer, Ross Kessler, and Brad Chase to give a presentation on the FY14 achievements of the MRIP, Information & Education, Public Access, and Diadromous Fish Projects, respectively. See the attached copy of the presentation.

Following Dave's presentation on the MRIP Project, Patrick Paquette requested that more sampling effort target the fall months to better cover cod and haddock catches because he was highly suspicious of the veracity of the data used to develop the recent federal Gulf of Maine cod and haddock emergency measures. He felt that effort should be focused on those species that have big management decisions looming. Paul stated that the Division would continue to tailor its sampling effort to better address key species' management needs, but noted that while we can improve the data, we can't unilaterally determine how they are used.

Following Ross' presentation on the Public Access Project, Mike Moss raised concerns about using permit monies for the Scusset Pier improvements given that the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) was changing the fee structure for the pier's parking area and that free access for fishing would no longer be possible. The changes include a self-serve pay kiosk (\$7 parking fee unchanged), a new \$2 surcharge for the Scusset Trust Fund approved by the legislature, and a requirement for all cars to be tagged with a receipt when in the lot (making it no longer possible to avoid the parking fee by arriving at the lot prior to the DCR parking attendant or after the attendant's daily departure). He suggested that an adjacent parking area could be converted to free parking for anglers.

Patrick indicated that the change was part of a statewide standardization of parking area fees by DCR, and that his understanding was that the changes had not yet gone into effect and would not apply at all times and seasons. He supported the use of permit monies to improve the pier because of its high use by the fishing public, but would disagree with using any additional funds to secure more angler parking there.

Chuck asked that the Division look further into the specifics of the parking changes; Paul agreed to report back to the Panel. He noted that the money was already out the door and the project would be moving forward.

Mike Moss stated that his underlying concern was that the Division and Panel ought to have some say about access at areas where saltwater permit monies are invested.

Regarding the small grants program, Mark Amorello asked why three projects weren't funded. Ross responded that each had its own problem (wouldn't meet timeline, not enough detail, etc.), but that each could reapply for the next round of funding. Patrick asked that the Panel be advised of the selected projects further in advance in future rounds of funding.

Paul Diodati noted that one of the funded projects for some pier improvements included a webcam for interested individuals to check out the angling action or check the weather conditions before heading down. He liked this idea and thought the Division should consider installing webcams at a few of its most popular piers.

Following Brad's presentation, Chuck Casella asked how many river herring runs the state might be able to open to recreational harvest in the coming year. Brad indicated that the state had received town petitions to consider re-opening three runs, but that the Nemasket River was the only one that currently looked promising for opening in the near future. He noted that the Division's work to establish video and electronic counting at more runs would assist in the development of sustainable fishery plans required for the reopening of any rivers.

FY15 Budget Proposal

Mike Armstrong introduced the Division's spending plan for the FY15 Fund appropriation, expected to be about \$1.29 million. He indicated that most of the proposed plan is similar to last year's approved plan, and that he'd highlight the differences.

The Permitting Project is essentially the same with expenses for two tellers, postage, supplies, and show overtime totaling roughly \$99,000.

The MRIP Project has a higher cost for FY15 largely due to the cost of contract seasonals. They are being contracted through AIS rather than hired through the state; while more expensive, obtaining seasonals through AIS means a quicker hiring process (both prior to and mid-season), easier termination of non-performers, and limited administrative work. Adding in the coordinator's salary, supplies, uniforms, and mileage expenses, the project cost comes to roughly \$382,000, of which \$190,000 to \$200,000 will be reimbursed by NOAA Fisheries.

The Information & Education Project's budget is increased to roughly \$121,000 by several new line items. First is bringing on a year-round half-time staff member, whose primary responsibility would be administration of an angler education program.

Another new component for I & E is an Angler Education Small Grant Program which would offer competitive grants to fishing groups to hold fishing clinics or seminars (open to the public). This idea was suggested by Chuck, who saw the program as leveraging fishing groups' coordination and outreach to efficiently and inexpensively teach angling (and other fishing topics tailored to the area) to interested members of the public. He suggested that the maximum grant amount per applicant would be modest, perhaps \$500, money that would be used to cover the cost of a facility for the seminar or to bring in a guest speaker. Mary noted that there would be a number of state requirements that would need to be met by the program.

The third new line item would cover the cost of purchasing and maintaining gear and supplies for angler education programs run by the Division (such as the upcoming clinic in Yarmouth). Mark looked to confirm that these costs would be reduced by purchasing through the Pure Fishing partnership, which Elaine confirmed was the case. Patrick asked whether the Division had solicited gear donations. Elaine said she had been unsuccessful thus far, but would keep trying.

Other I & E costs include funding for the second recreational fishing promotion video, printing, supplies, and travel.

The Diadromous Fish Project budget is increased to roughly \$170,000 primarily by the addition of four 16-week seasonals to assist full-time staff during the height of the season. The Division's diadromous biologists' workloads are heavy, yet there is more work that can/should be done. The seasonals would be split two to the north shore and two to the south shore. They would also assist with fishway construction. Other status quo line items include the two full-time biologists, supplies and sampling gear, and video counting equipment (extending this sampling to new rivers each year). Some additional funds are proposed for conferences and publication costs.

Patrick asked how the expenditure from the Fund for the Diadromous Fish Project compared to the Division's total expenses on diadromous fish. Mike did a back of the envelope calculation and came up with at least half a million dollars in funding for diadromous fish work.

The Public Access Project will receive roughly \$430,000, or one-third of the expected budget. The Division plans to continue the Small Grants Program with \$50,000 in funding, given its

successful first year. After accounting for the coordinator's salary, general supplies, and the Craven's Landing seasonal, that leaves about \$310,000 for public access infrastructure projects. The bulk of this would be used to improve and enlarge the fishing pier at Cashman Park in Newburyport. Fund monies helped pay for the design and engineering costs for this project in FY14. Based on past projects of a similar size, the expected cost is \$250,000. Jack confirmed that if it cost more, the Office of Fishing and Boating Access would cover the additional expense. The remaining funds would be used to help finance design and permitting expenses for potential future projects, such as a new pier on Deer Island in Winthrop; improved parking access at the Onset Avenue Bridge in Wareham; new fishing platforms at Hoppy's Landing in Fairhaven; and repair or replacement of the pier at Salem Willows. Ross noted that the design and permitting expenses for all these projects would be above budget but it's improbable that all would be ready for this step in FY15, but each is included to provide enough options to draw from. Some funding might also be allocated to add-ons to the Oak Bluffs Pier (fillet table, solar lights), printing costs, and contracting-out the design of a mobile app for public access sites.

Regarding the Small Grants Program, Patrick asked if the Division had defined what types of projects were "appropriate" to fund or was looking for input from the Panel on establishing criteria. Mike responded that the review panel had used a rating sheet to determine the grant winners. Ross added that the grant announcement had provided general guidance, and that some criteria (e.g., that project sites remain open to all users) has been carried forward into the Memoranda of Understanding established with the towns. Mary suggested that the MOUs establish signage requirements. Bill asked if there was a requirement for cost-sharing. Ross indicated there was not, but that the ratings sheet had factored this in.

Patrick sought further clarification as to whether "open to all users" meant free to all users or whether the cost of access could differ between residents and non-residents. Ross indicated that the review panel had used some flexibility in the first round of grants; for example, if there was free street parking within a few blocks. Patrick thought that the amount of access should be considered (e.g., a town-only parking lot for 50 cars at a popular site is more valuable access than an open access parking lot for four cars in a less frequented site). Jack noted that OFB standard are very clear in requiring open and equal access, but that was for projects worth tens of thousands of dollars; he worried about losing interest from towns in the small grants if the criteria were too rigid. Patrick just asked that the standards be open, transparent, and equally applied within the Small Grants Program.

Several panel members noted their pleasure in seeing the Division move north for the next big infrastructure project. They thought the Cashman Park fishing pier would receive a lot of use. Chuck re-iterated that most of the remaining money would go towards design and permitting expenses where possible (lots of unknowns working with the towns and in getting permits, etc.). Jack stated that if some funding wasn't used, it could be rolled forward for a bigger project in the future, noting that a new pier at Salem Willows would likely cost \$750,000 or so. Mike noted that funding a large project like Salem Willows would require holding back on spending for several years and then getting the legislature to approve an appropriation worth several years' of money to fund it.

The Artificial Reef Project has the same dive pay, boat use, and equipment/supplies line-items, although the total expenses are lower than last year.

The spending plan proposes a new College Internship Program, under which the Division would bring in a four-month intern to work on a recreational fisheries related project(s) that might otherwise not be completed. Mike provided the example of analyzing recreational fisheries data that has already been collected and mapping it in GIS. Paul noted that the project would have to tie back to the student's academic courses, such as if the student were in an engineering program, the project might be in fishway design and construction. The Panel determined that it needed more details on the internship program before it could endorse it. Chuck asked Mike to develop a list of possible project subjects and responsibilities that the first intern could be assigned for the Panel to review at its next call or meeting this fall.

The spending plan also includes the Recreational Stock Assessment position approved by the Panel last year, but which has not yet been filled due to unexpected delays. The interview process was due to be wrapped up shortly; there were many promising candidates among the roughly 30 applicants.

Concerning the entire spending plan, the Panel gave its support, with the exception of requesting more information on the details of the College Internship Program for further consideration later in the year.

As there was no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting Documents

- ❖ June 2, 2014 Draft Meeting Agenda
- ❖ June 24, 2013 Draft Meeting Minutes
- ❖ FY 2015 Recreational Permit Revenue Spending Plan Proposal

Meeting Presentations

- ❖ Update on Recreational Permitting & Fund Overview
- ❖ FY14 Project Achievements (enclosed)
- ❖ FY15 Public Access Infrastructure Proposal

FY14 Project Achievements

Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Panel
June 2, 2014

MarineFisheries
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



FY14 Project Achievements

- MRIP Project
 - Dave Martins
- Information & Education Project
 - Elaine Brewer
- Public Access Project
 - Ross Kessler
- Diadromous Fish Project
 - Brad Chase



Slide 2



MRIP Project



Slide 3



Access Point Angler Intercept Survey

- DMF has sampled headboats since 2003
- In 2013, surveyed all modes



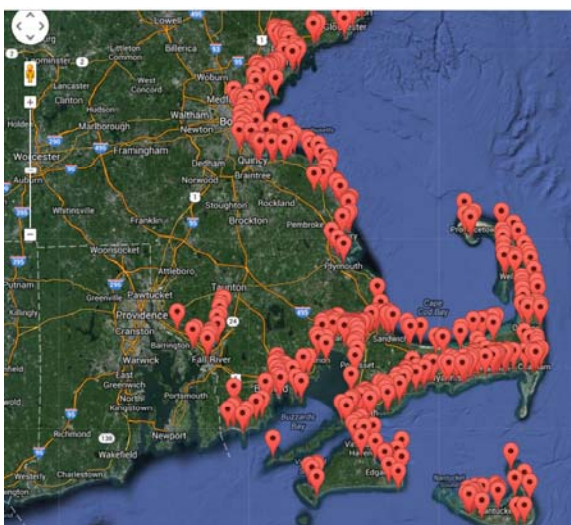
Slide 4



Sample Sites

497 registered sites

- boat ramps
- marinas
- docks
- piers
- jetties
- beaches



<https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/siteregister>



Slide 5



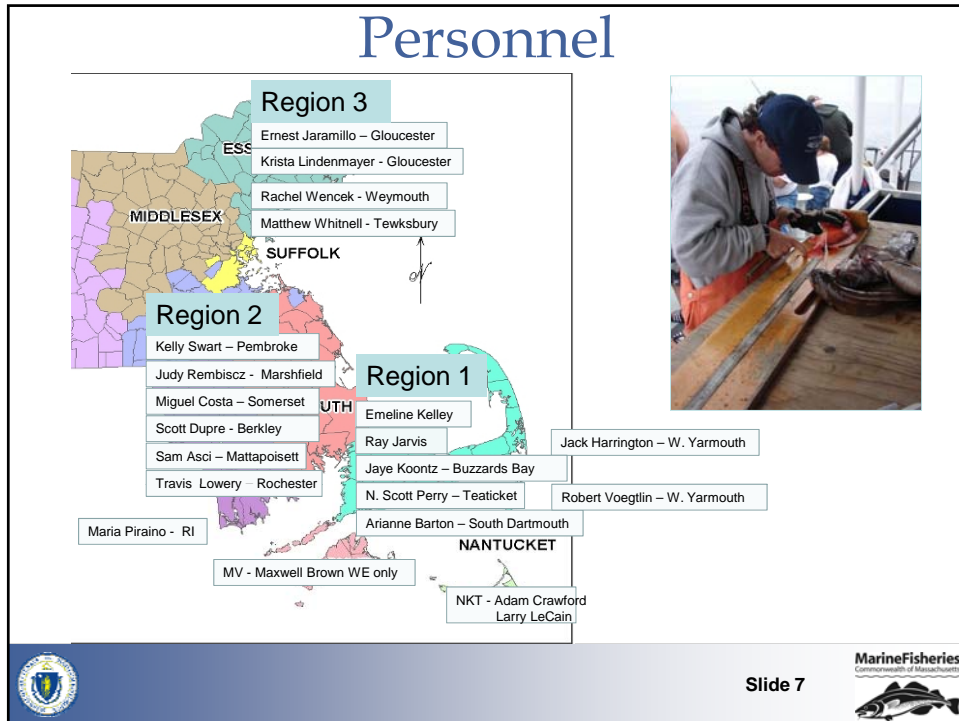
Sample Sites



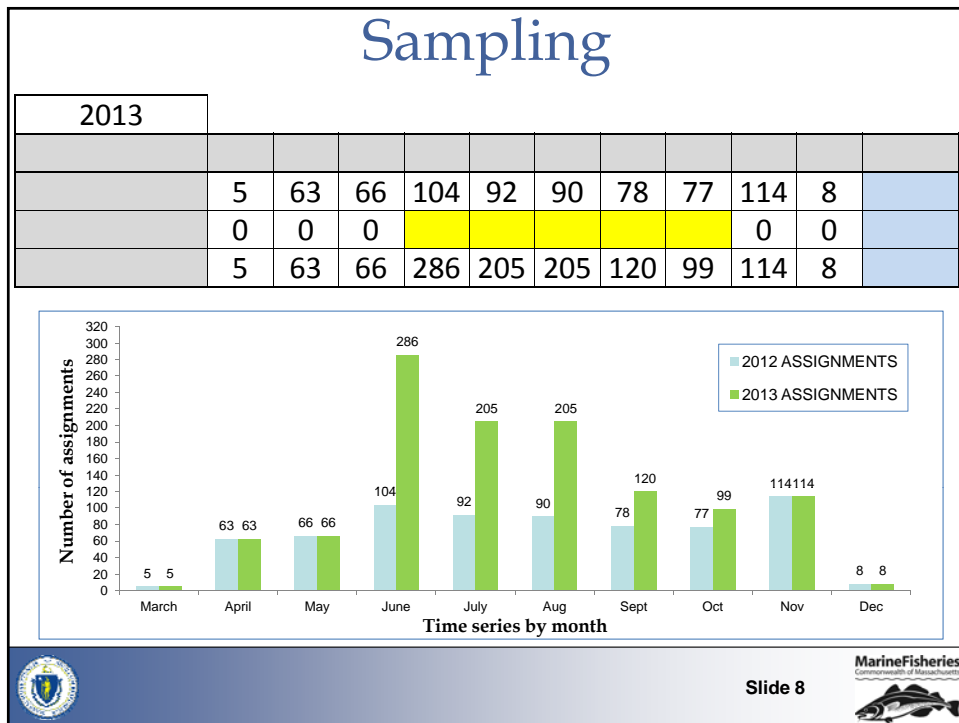
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Personnel

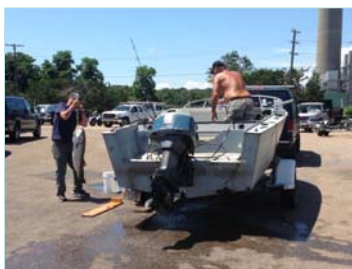


Sampling



Sampling

	648	1,091	68.4%
	2,570	4,977	93.7%

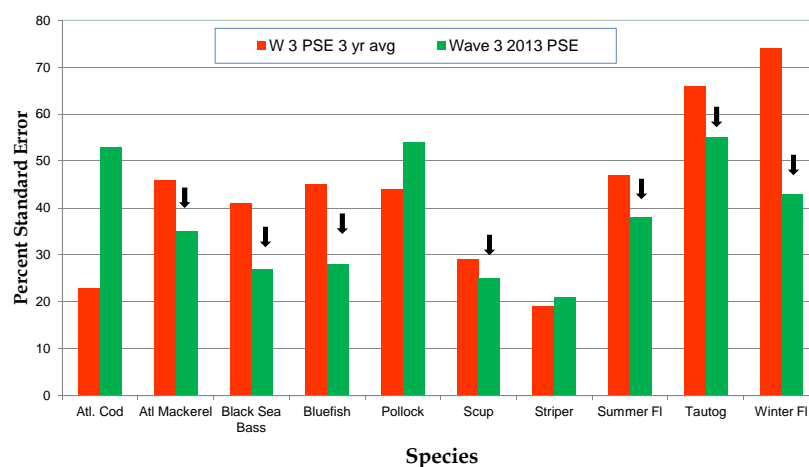


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Comparing PSEs

Wave 3 (May - June) 2013 Percent Standard Error (PSE) compared with 3 yr average

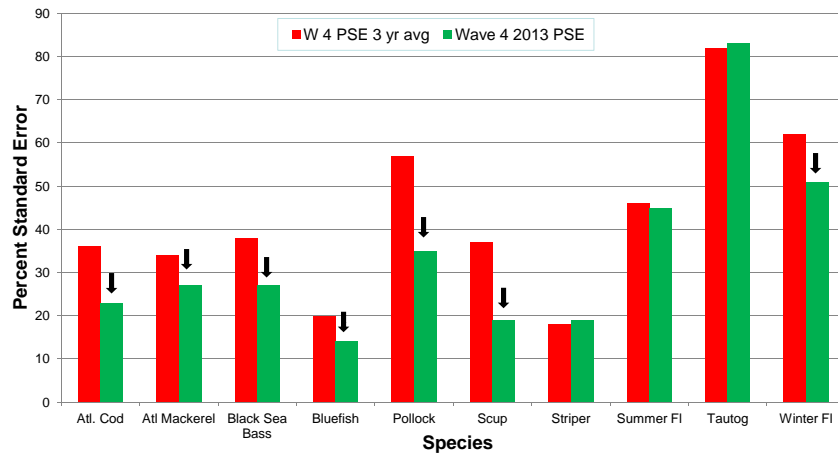


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Comparing PSEs

Wave 4 (Jul - Aug) 2013 Percent Standard Error (PSE) compared with 3 yr average

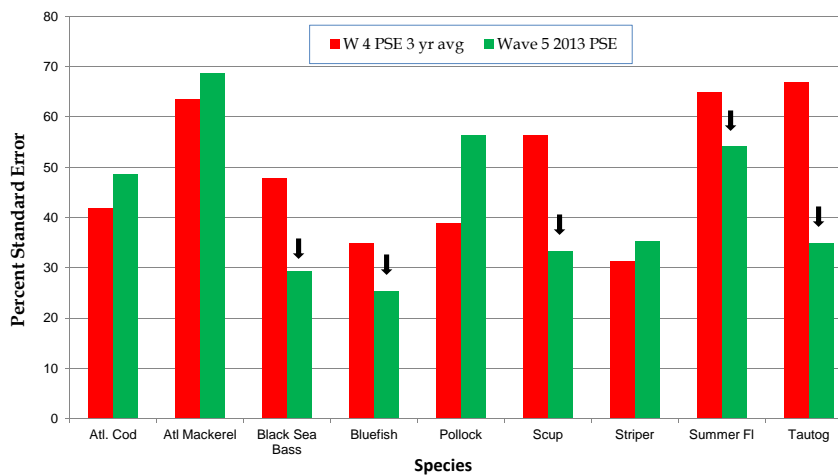


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Comparing PSEs

Wave 5 (Sep - Oct) Percent Standard Error (PSE) compared with 3 yr average



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I & E Project



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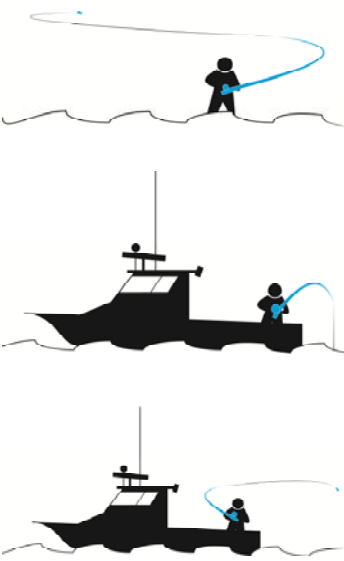
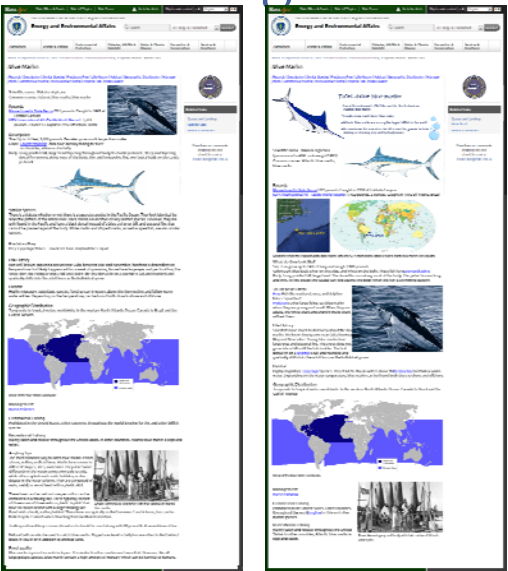
Informational Materials



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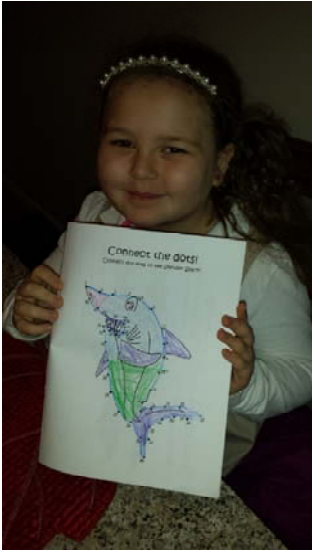
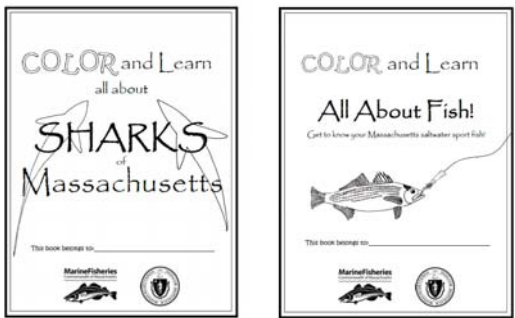
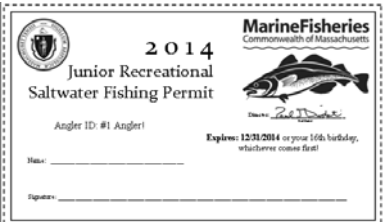
Species Profile Pages

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Marine Fisheries
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Coloring Books

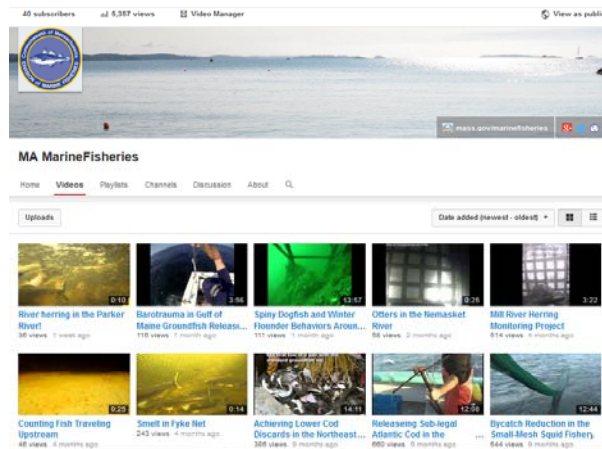




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Marine Fisheries
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Social Media

YouTube



21 videos, 40 subscribers, information storehouse

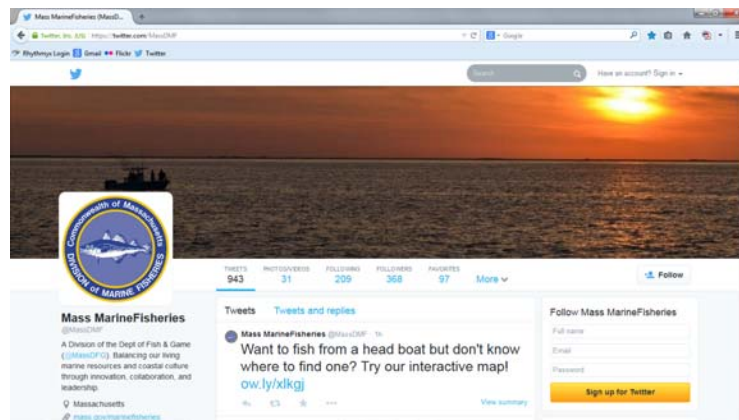


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Social Media

Twitter



950+ posts, 368 followers, reach of over 6,000 individuals per tweet

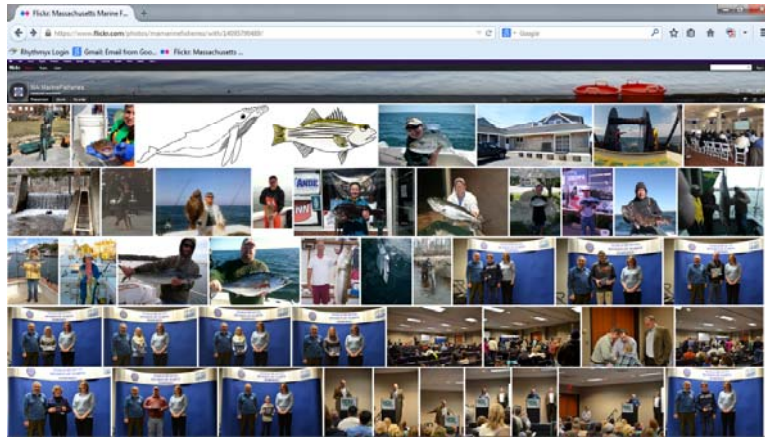


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Social Media

Flickr



72 images, information storehouse



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Fishing Clinics

Let's Go Fishing! Youth Fishing Clinic

August 12 (rain date August 13)
10:00 am to 1:00 pm
Bass River Fishing Pier, Yarmouth
Fishing is restricted to kids (7-15)
Family friendly activities throughout clinic

Eagle Claw is donating circle hooks

Member of the Pure Fishing Youth
and Aquatic Education Program



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Recreational Fisheries Promotional Videos

Northern Light Productions

Boston based company
25 years running
24 employees
Latest release: 9/11 Museum videos



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Public Access Project



Slide 22



Oak Bluffs Fishing Pier



Ribbon-cutting ceremony
June 19, 11AM



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Site Improvement Projects

- Craven's Landings, Sandwich
 - Parking lot improvements: done
- Westport Boat Ramp
 - Replacement of floats: done
- Popponesset Beach, Mashpee
 - Beach access stair replacement: work expected late spring/early summer
- Harbor Park, Marshfield
 - Car top access & parking: permitting/planning phase



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Site Improvement Projects

- Dogfish Bar, Aquinnah
 - Beach path & parking lot re-establishment: permitting & design nearing completion
 - MV Times Article
- Scusset Pier, Sandwich
 - Pier rehab with DCR: ISA in progress
 - CC Canal 100th Anniversary Celebration

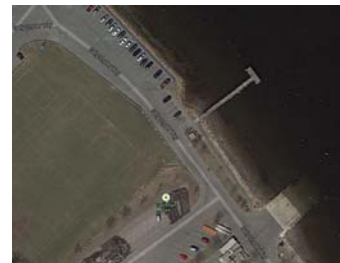


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Design & Permitting

- Cashman Park, Newburyport
 - Pier upgrade: design & engineering complete
- Deer Island, Winthrop: new pier
 - New pier: preliminary plan done, LMA in progress
- Blyman Canal, Gloucester
 - New pier: no LMA expected



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Small Grants Program

8 applicants, 5 awards granted (\$39,500)

1. Atlantic Path, Rockport: coastal foot trail clearing
2. Houghs Neck Boat Ramp, Quincy: correct damage due to erosion
3. Town Pier & Float Facility, Duxbury: fillet station, running water, lighting, web cam
4. Pearse Landing, Swansea: vehicle & bike parking, access route established, garbage receptacles
5. Taunton River Basin Boat Ramp, Fall River: lighting



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Outreach

- Mass Bass
- RISSA
- Springfield Fair
- Topsfield Fair
- NE Boat Show
- NE Fishing & Outdoor Expo
- Standish Sportsman's Assoc.
- Barnstable County League
- Plymouth County League
- MBBA
- Worcester Surfcasting Club
- Orleans OSV hearings



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Diadromous Fish Project



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- Diadromous Fish Passage and Habitat Restoration
- Diadromous Fish Biology and Management



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River Herring



- 48 MA Towns have river herring runs
- 78 river herring runs
- about 140 fishways



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Diadromous Fish in Massachusetts

- alewife
- blueback herring
- American shad
- American eel
- rainbow smelt
- white perch
- sea lamprey
- Atlantic tomcod
- sea-run trout
- striped bass



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Diadromous Fish Project Staff

Brad Chase , AB III -- project leader

John Sheppard , AB II -- river herring monitoring

Mike Bednarski , Ph.D., AB II -- river herring monitoring

Ben Gahagan, AB II -- river herring monitoring

Ed Clark, Fishway Crew -- fish passage construction



Diadromous Fish Monitoring

1. River herring counting and biological sampling
2. American shad monitoring in Charles River
3. Smelt fyke Net Stations
4. Glass eel trap stations



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River Herring - Monitoring

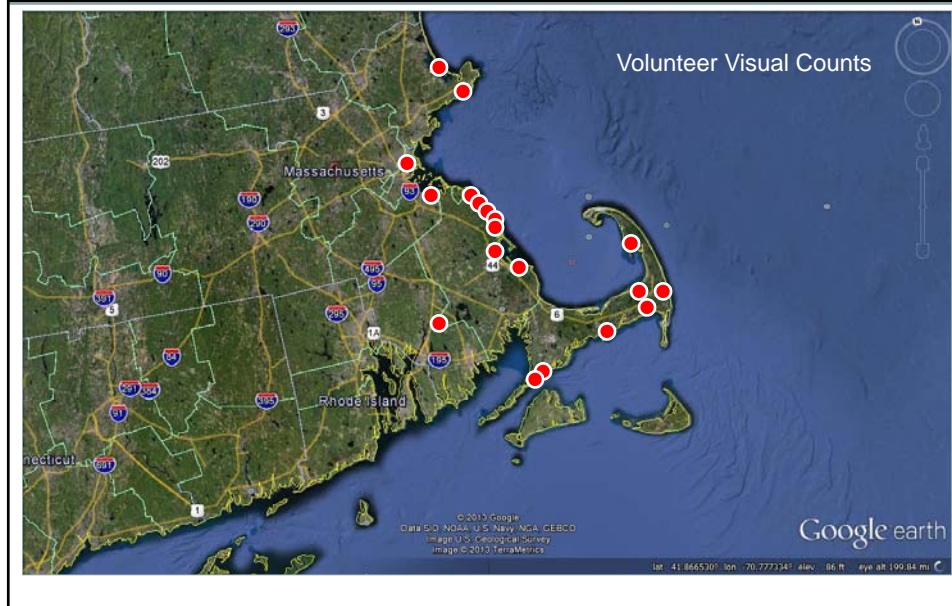
- 2013-2014: full implementation of new assessment techniques/technologies
 - 1) Otolith analysis
 - 2) 8 channel electronic counter
 - 3) Video counting system
- 2012-2014 Monitoring recorded improved run sizes in several rivers



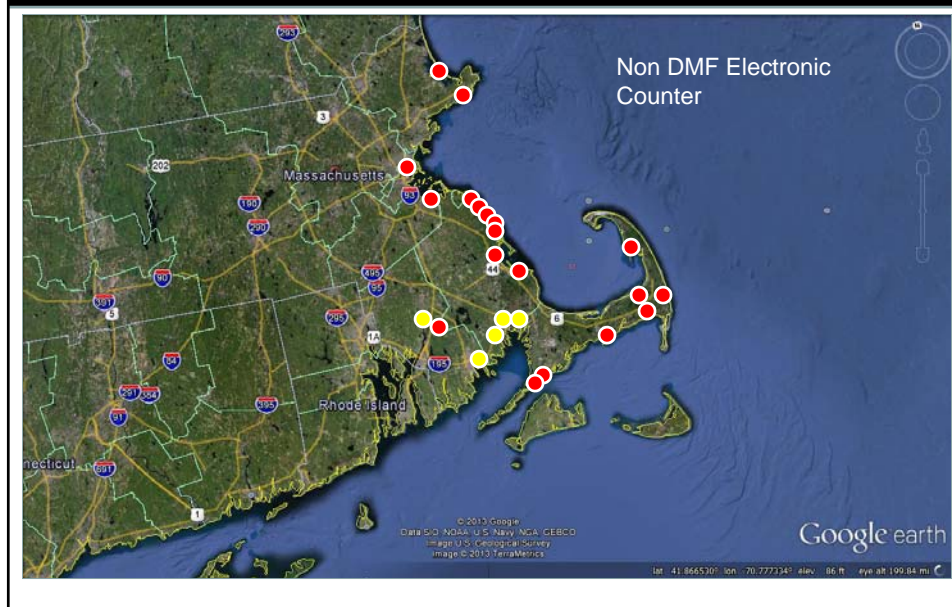
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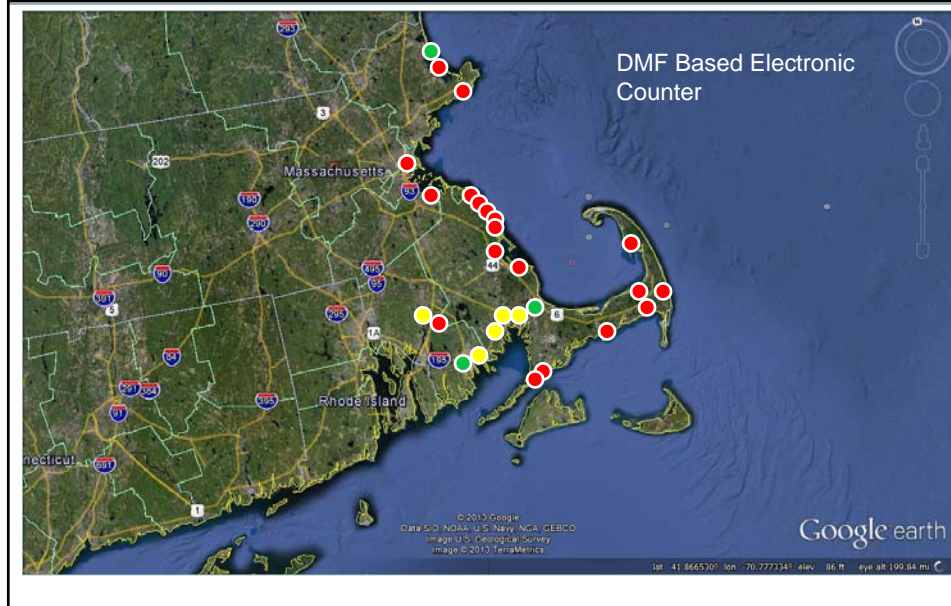
River Herring - Monitoring



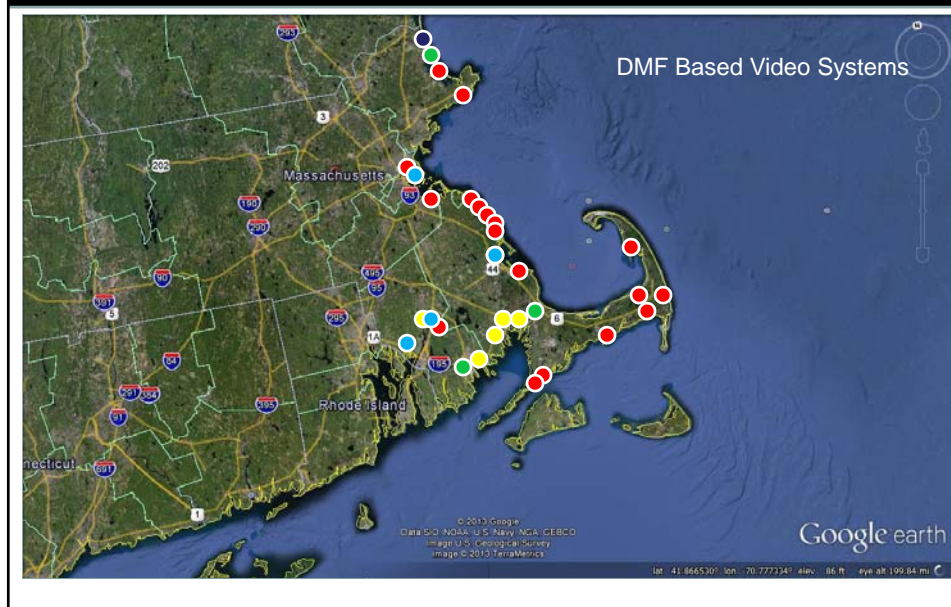
River Herring - Monitoring



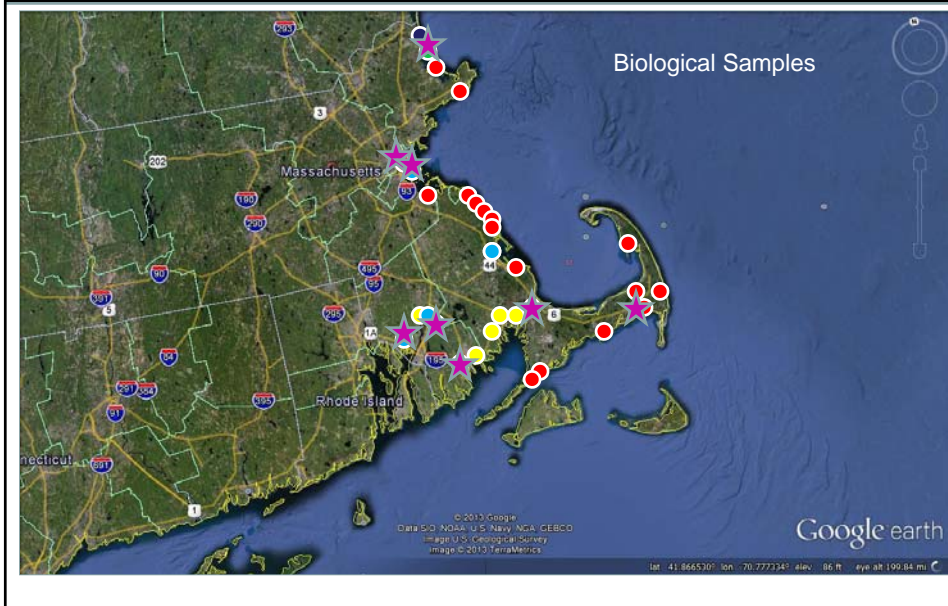
River Herring - Monitoring



River Herring - Monitoring



River Herring - Monitoring



River Herring – Video System

Nemasket River,
Middleborough



Charles River, Watertown Dam



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Mill River, Taunton



Herring River, Harwich



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Monument River, Bourne

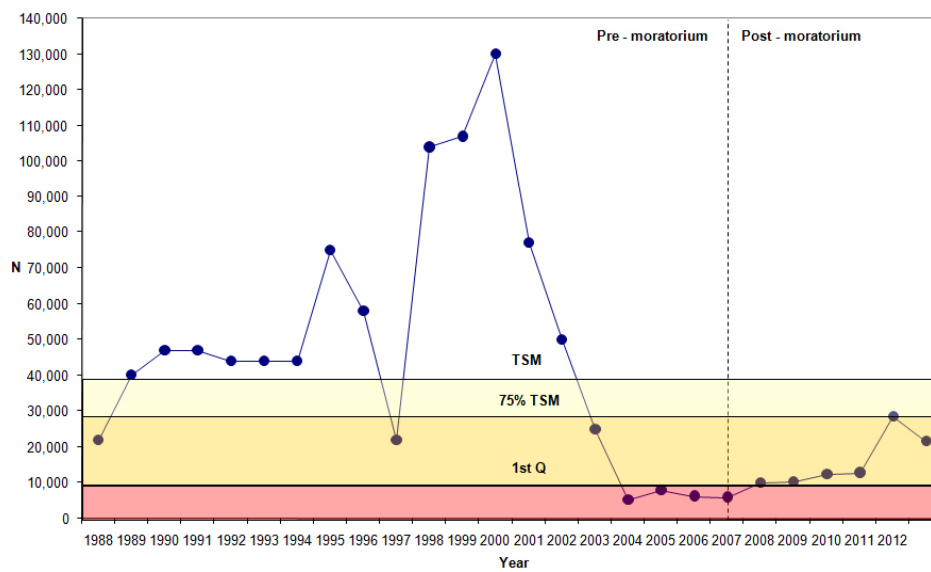
Parker River, Newbury



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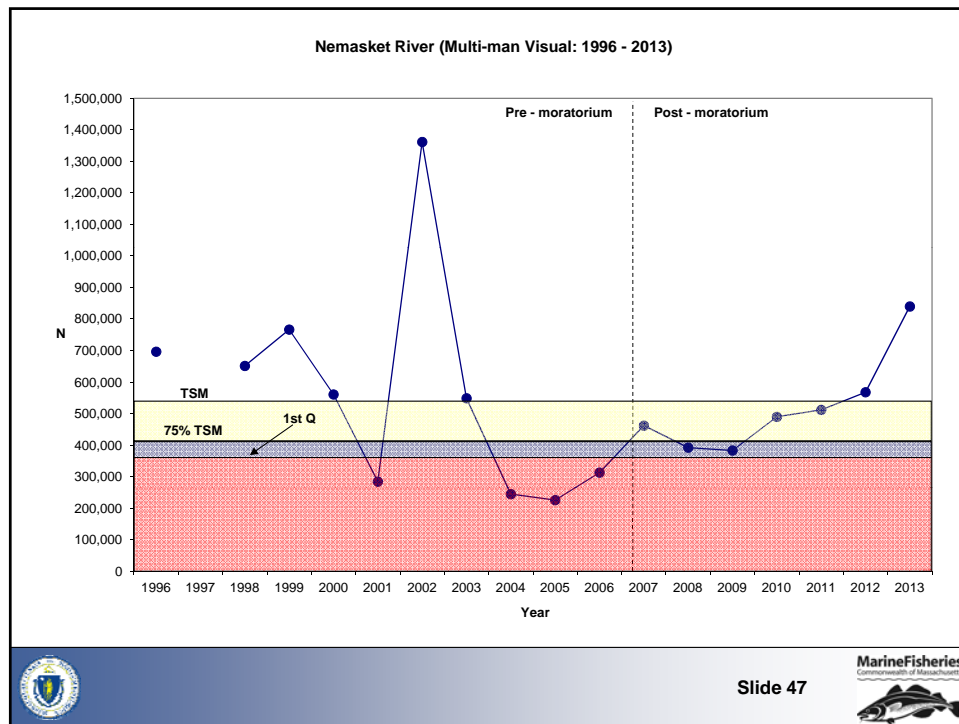


Mattapoisett River (Electronic: 1988 - 2012)



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Fish Passage and Habitat Restoration

1. DMF Fishway Crew work on small ladders
2. DMF Fishway construction via contracts
3. Fishway construction collaboration
4. Collaborations on eel passage, channel improvements, and dam removal



Fish Passage and Habitat Restoration

- River herring stocking
- Fishway maintenance
- Run channel restoration and maintenance
- Fishway O&M plans
- DMF Fishway Permit
- Passage feasibility studies



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Savory Bog, Barnstable



Lovers Lake, Chatham



Slide 50



Morey's Street Dam, Taunton



- 5 year cooperative project with DCR and MassDOT.
- Integrated, fish ladder, eel ramp and low flow channel



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Large Watershed Projects



Westport River



Fore River, Braintree



Jones River, Kingston



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Tom Matthews Pond, Yarmouth 2014



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Gorman Mill Pond, Herring Brook, 2014 Pembroke



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Mill Pond, West Tisbury

2014



Slide 55



Santuit Pond, Mashpee

2013



Slide 56



Stony Brook, Brewster

2013



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Smelt Spawning Habitat Restoration



Weir River, Hingham




Town Brook, Quincy



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NOV 25 2014



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Marine Fisheries
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

