

HADDOCK

RECREATIONAL FISHING GUIDE



- ✓ Free Bathymetric Fishing Maps
- ✓ Download the Mobile App

- ✓ Haddock Fishing Tips
- ✓ Become a Citizen Scientist

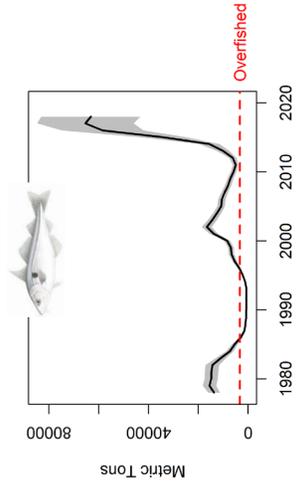
Photos by Steve De Neef

CATCH HADDOCK SAVE COD

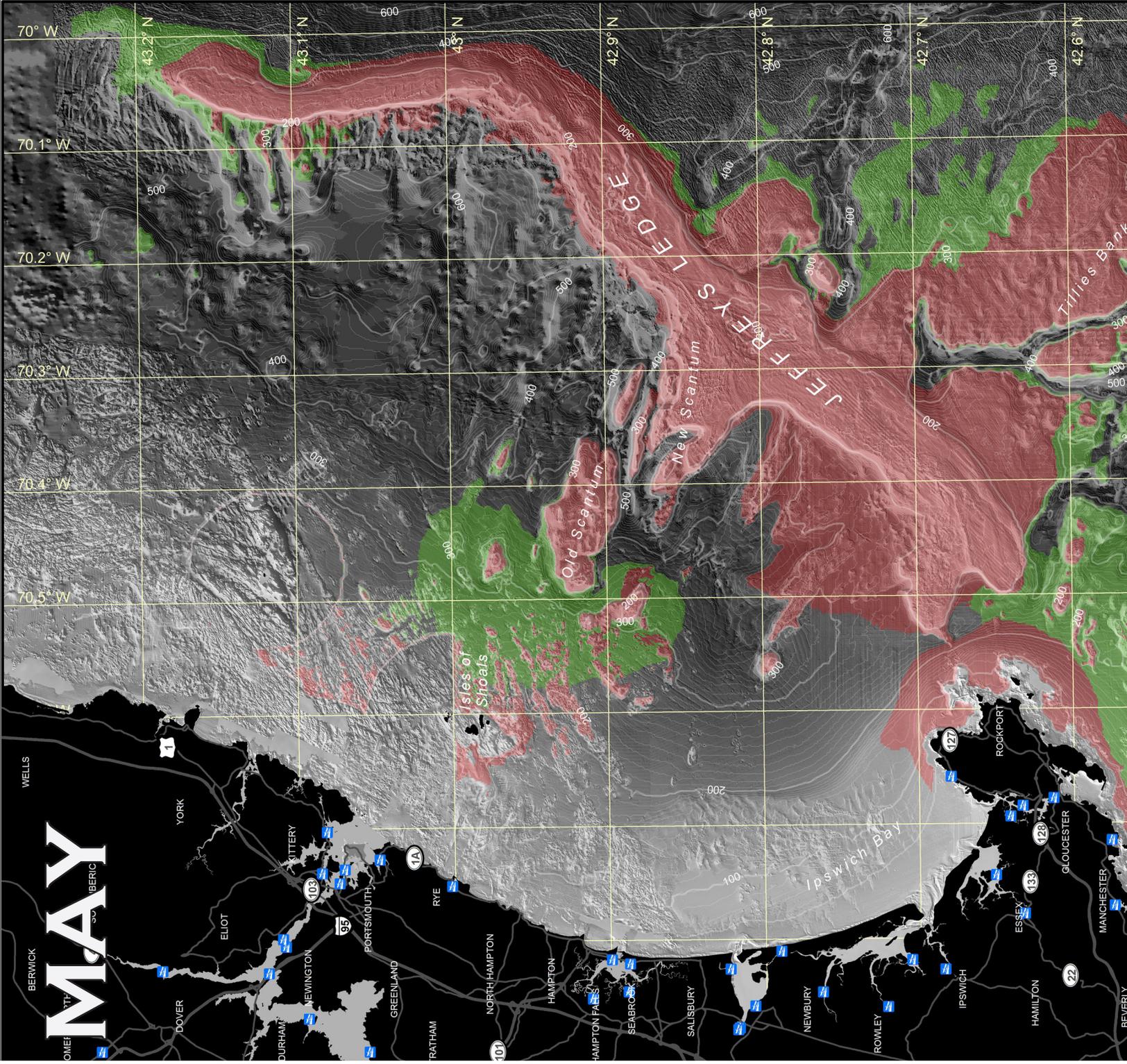
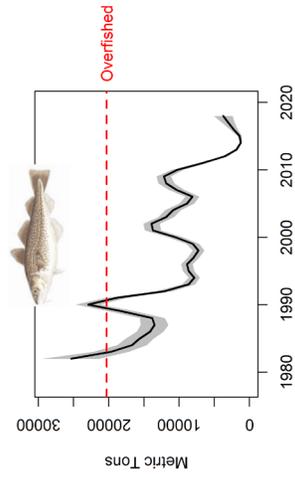
Despite the current restrictions on cod, incidental bycatch of cod by recreational haddock anglers is a leading source of cod mortality. This is why it is so important to try to avoid catching cod. If we don't work together to lower the amount of recreational cod bycatch, we run the risk of losing access to some of the best haddock fishing we've ever seen.

Currently the haddock biomass in the Gulf Of Maine (GOM) is at an all time high, unfortunately Atlantic cod stocks are at an extreme low.

Haddock



Cod

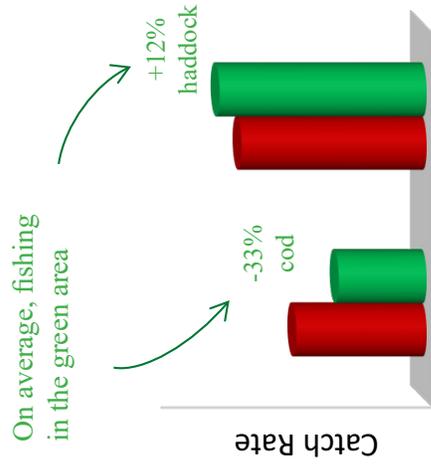


WHAT DO THE COLORS MEAN?

Red areas are more likely to have high cod bycatch.

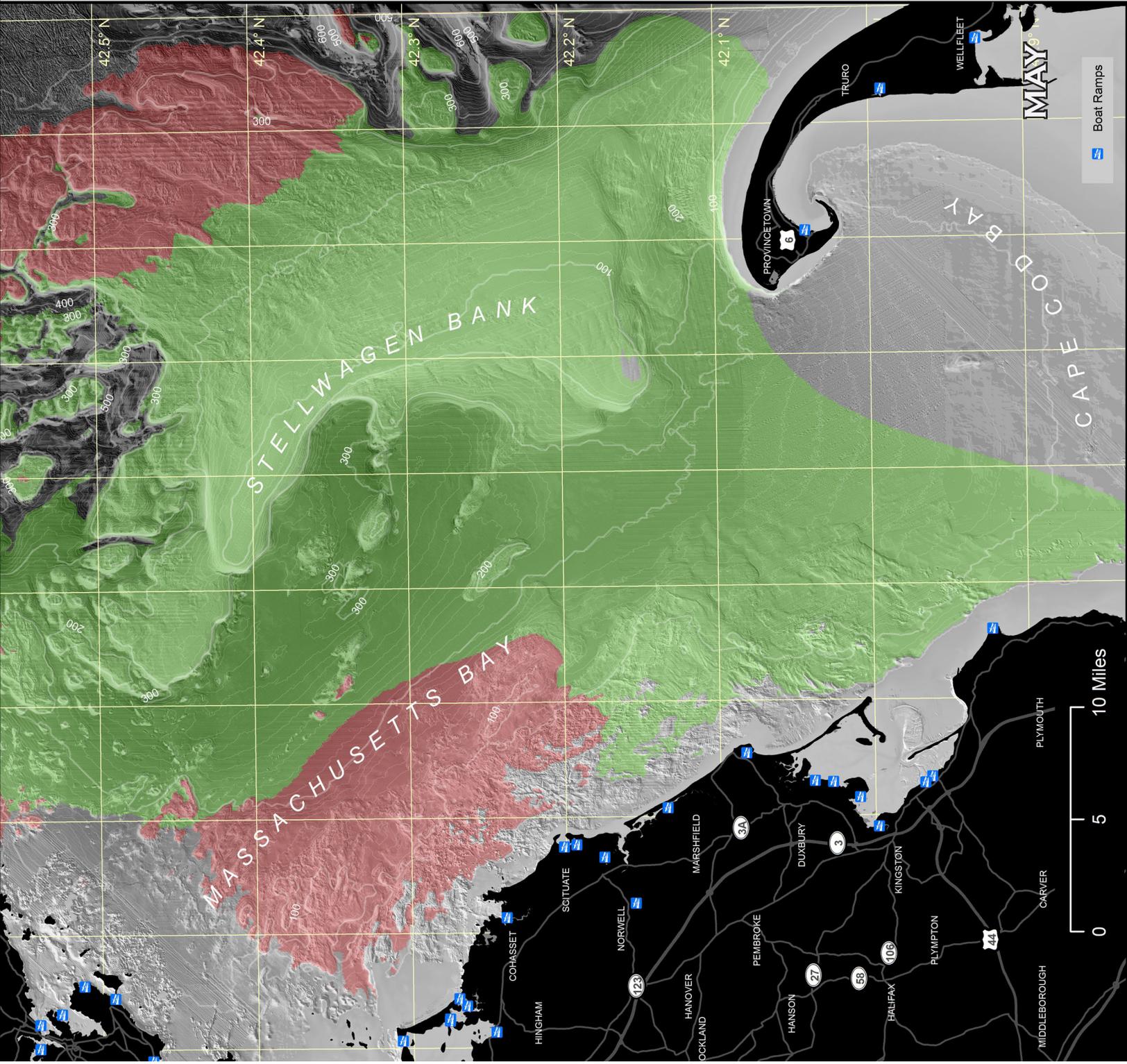
Green areas have lower cod bycatch, and a higher haddock catch rate.

Gray areas have a low catch rate of both cod and haddock.



Cod

Haddock



CAN I STILL FISH IN RED AREAS?

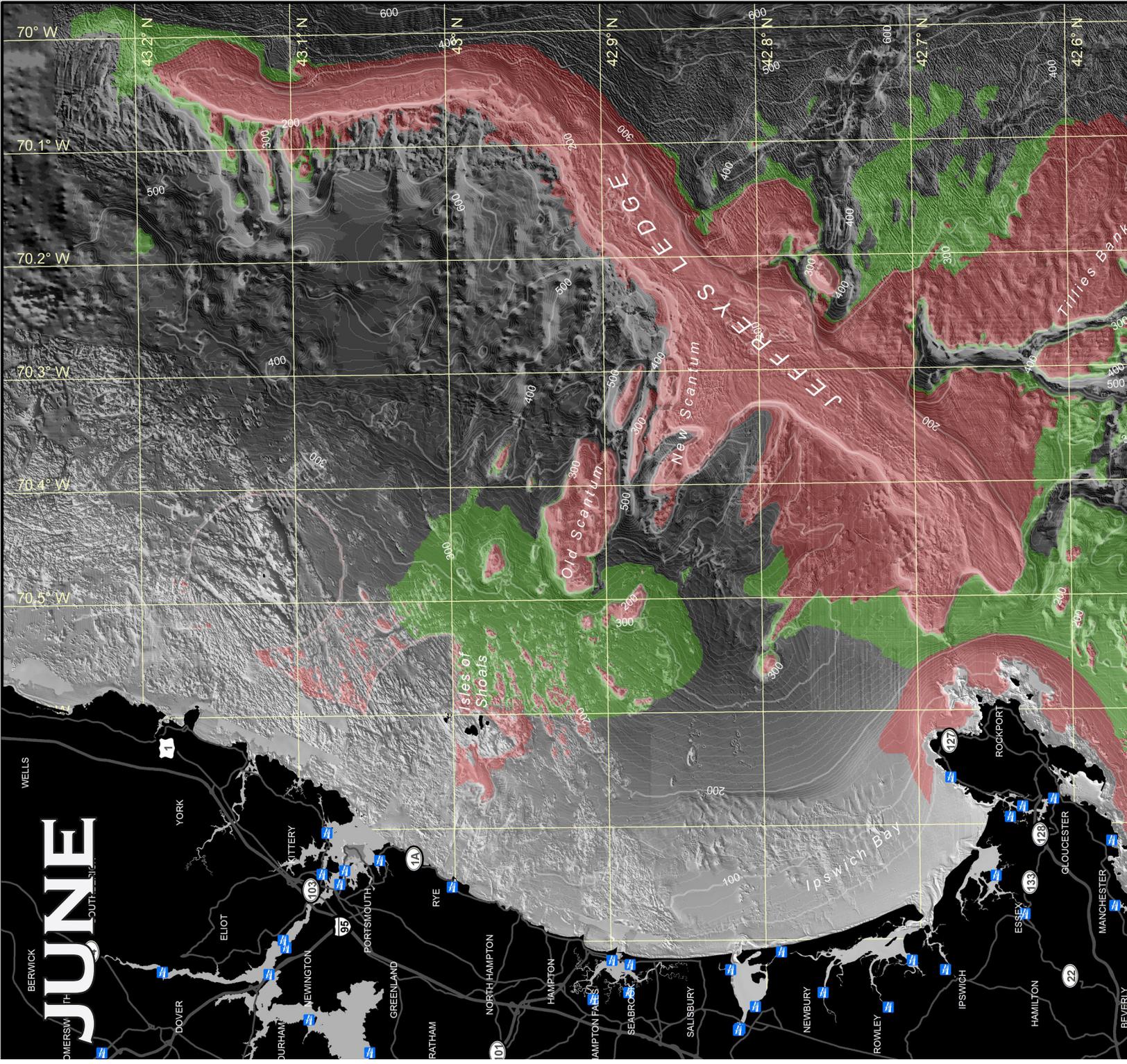
Yes! These maps are guidelines not regulations. In fact, many of the red areas still have good haddock fishing. However...

If You Start Catching Cod, MOVE!

Cod have a more patchy distribution than haddock and sometimes moving a short distance, as little as a ¼ mile, can make a big difference. Keep in mind that the more time you spend catching (and releasing) cod reduces your haddock catch rate. This is particularly important in areas where there is little “green” available, like Jeffreys Ledge and Tillies Bank.



Photo courtesy Joe Holbeche



FISH ID

One of the most fun and interesting parts of fishing for groundfish is that you never know what you might reel up from the depths. The fish listed below are all members of the Gadid family and are commonly caught together in the Gulf of Maine.

Atlantic Cod

Many spots on the body. White lateral line.



Haddock

Mostly silver with a dark "thumbprint" spot just behind pectoral fin. Lateral line black.



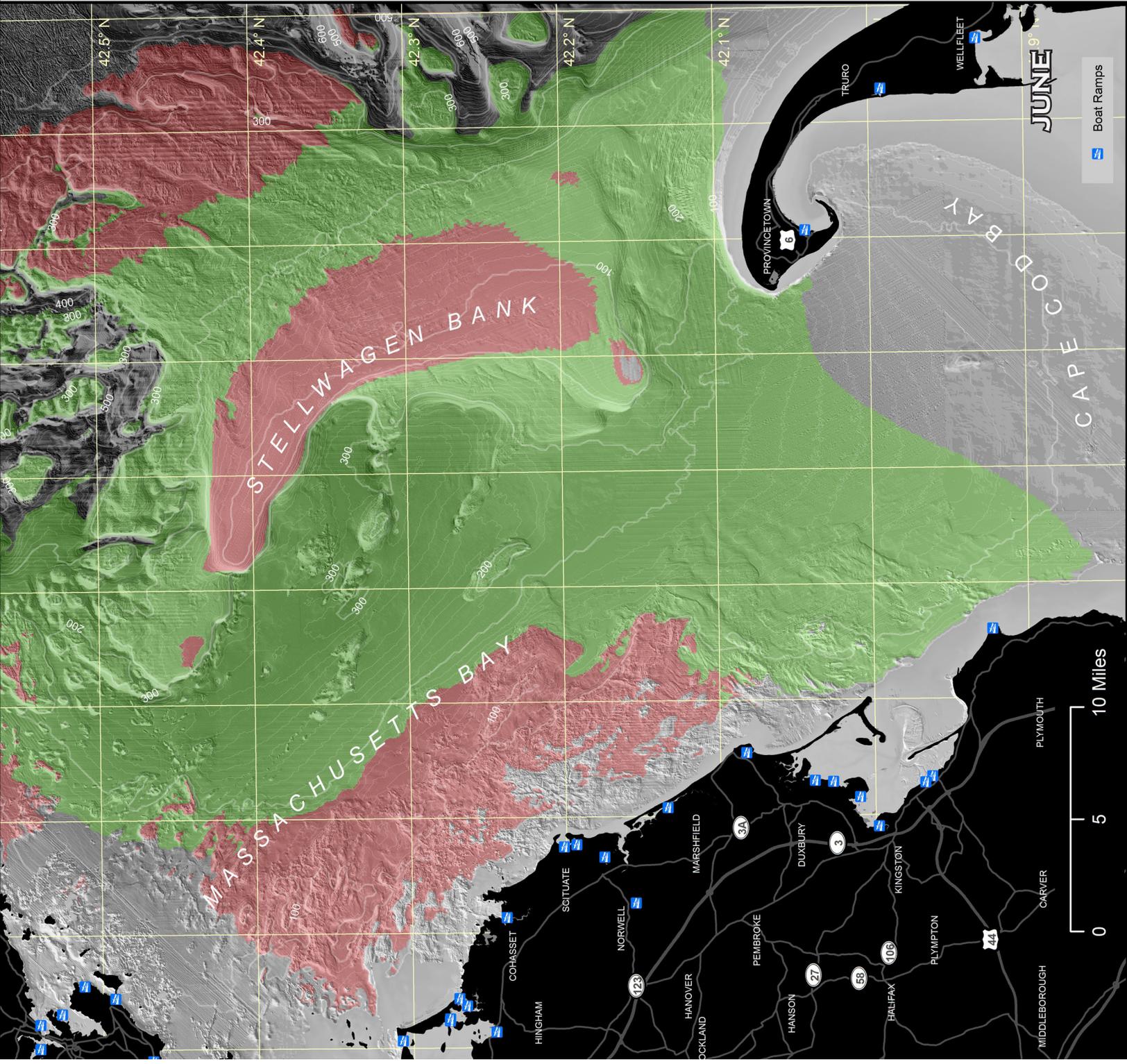
Pollock

Darker body color, no spots, white lateral line.



Cusk

One long continuous dorsal fin and anal fin. The edges of the fins are black with a white outline.



TACKLE TIPS



Use Braided Line

Braided line has less stretch than monofilament, making it easier to feel subtle haddock bites. Add a monofilament leader to make your rig easier to tie and less visible.

Use Bait, Not Jigs

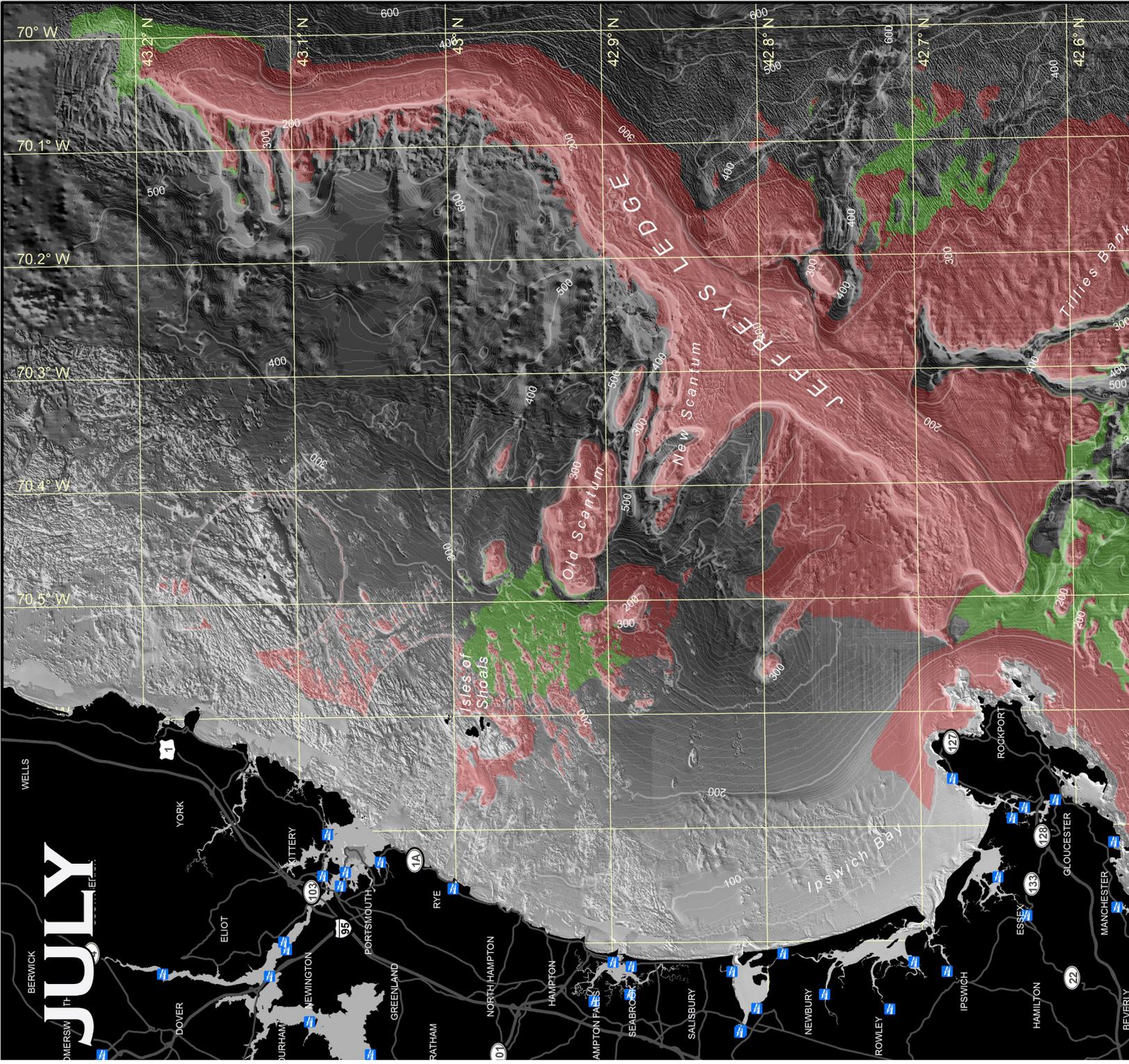
We tested a variety of tackle configurations and found that bait consistently caught more haddock than jigs. Jigs also cause far more injuries for discarded bycatch.

Use Circle Hooks

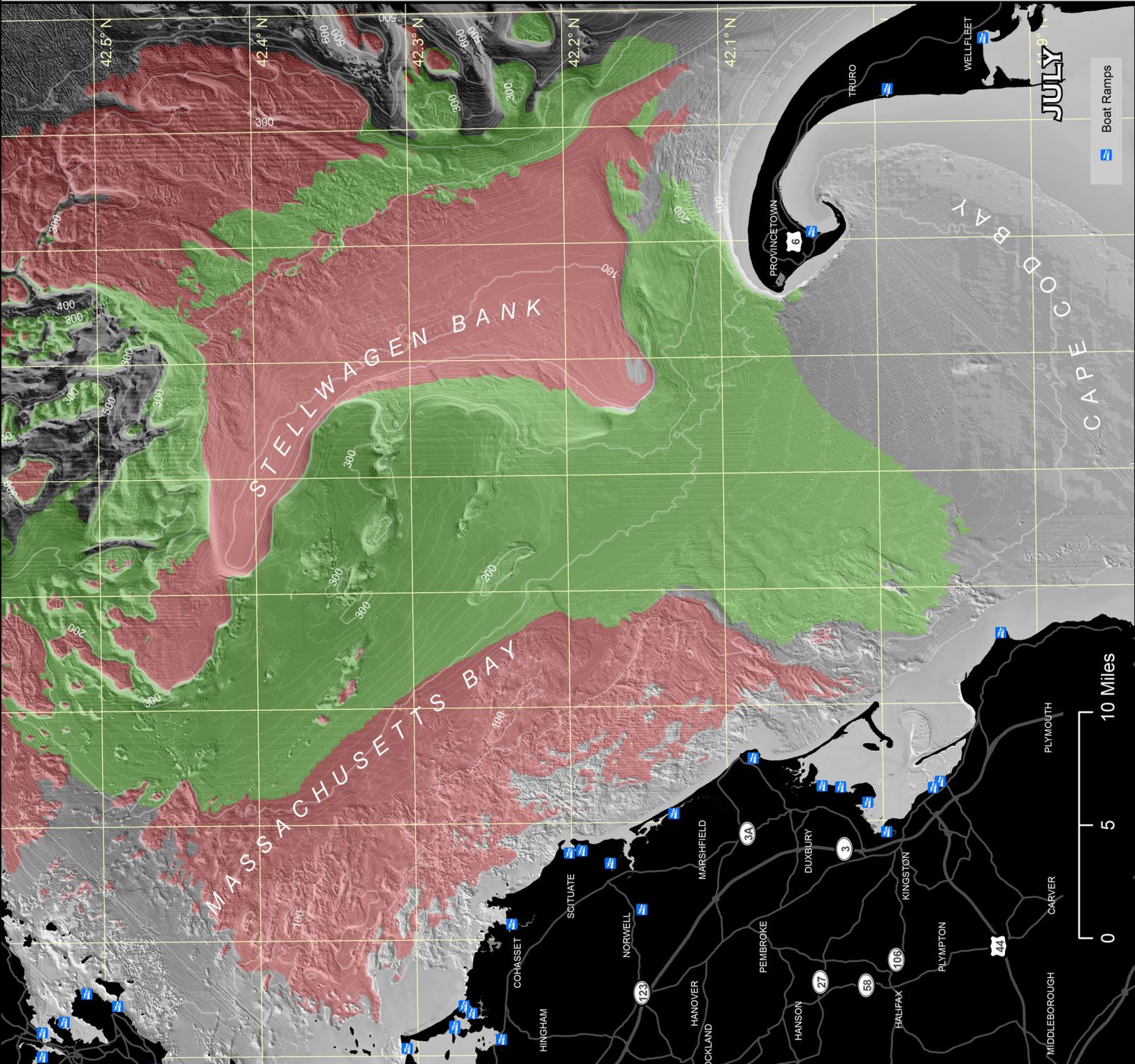
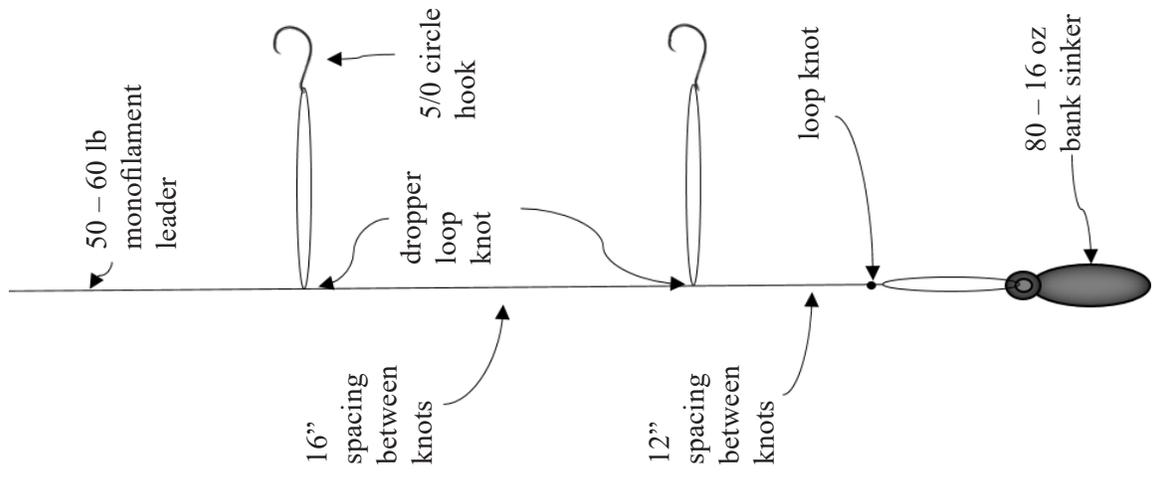
Both in-line and offset circle hooks had a significantly higher haddock catch rate than traditional “J”-hooks.

Use Squid for Bait

Haddock readily go for a variety of baits, including clams, squid, herring, and mackerel. Squid lasts longer on your hook, which means you spend less time reeling up to check & re-bait.



HOW TO TIE A HIGH-LOW RIG



TAKE CARE OF YOUR CATCH

Haddock are some of the best eating fish in the Gulf of Maine. Follow these steps to get the most out of your catch.

Fish ID

Identify your fish.

Measure and Check

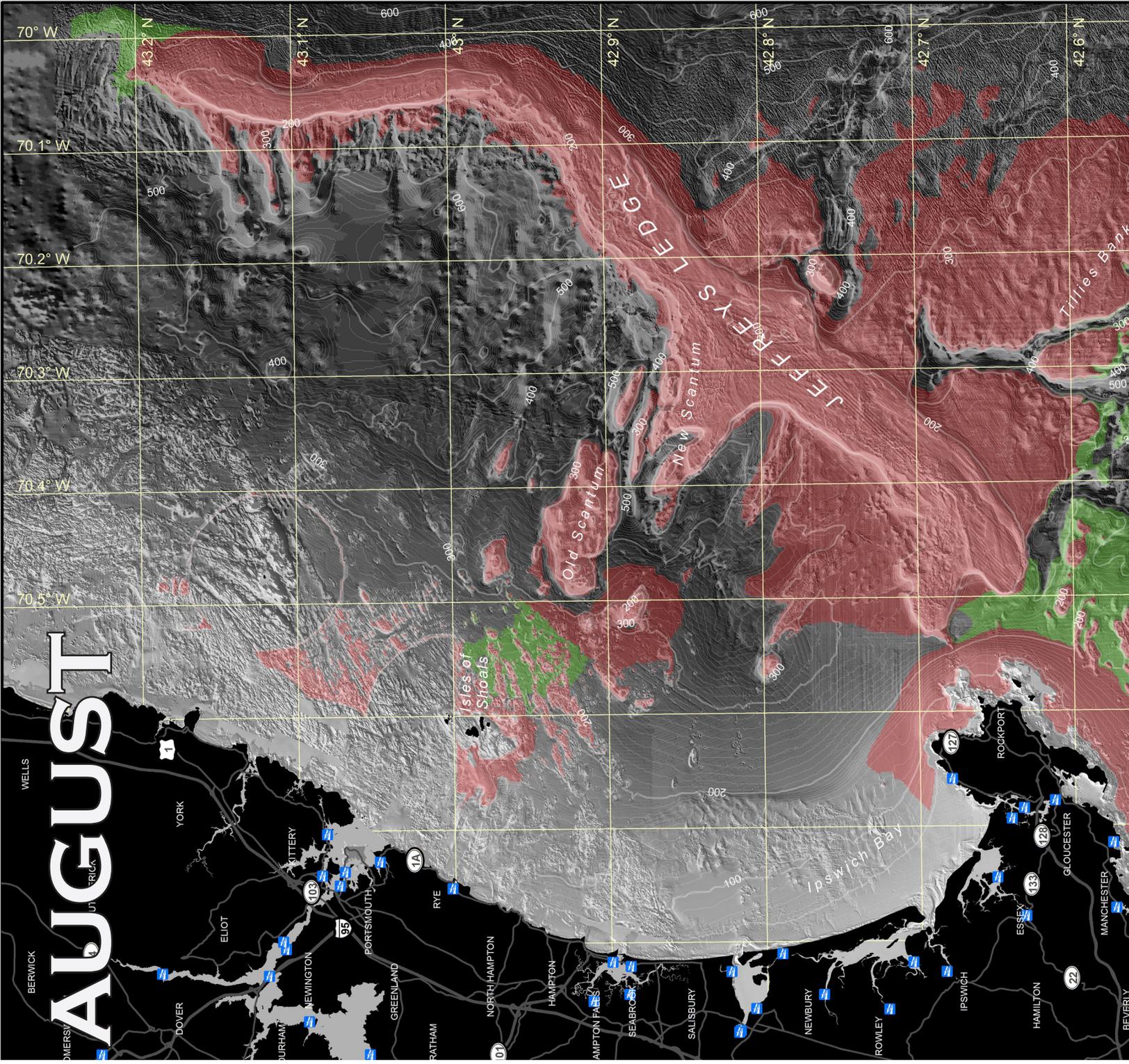
Make sure your fish is of legal size, within season, and you are within the possession limit. Visit Mass.gov/marinefisheries for the latest regulations.

Bleed

Bleed fish immediately by making an incision on the underside just behind the gills. (See photo below).

Ice

Put your fish in a mixture of ice and seawater, especially in the warmer months. Keeping your fish cold will make filleting easier and the fish taste better.



TAKE CARE OF YOUR BYCATCH

For the fish you don't intend to keep, most importantly cod, here are some handling and release tips to increase their chances of survival.

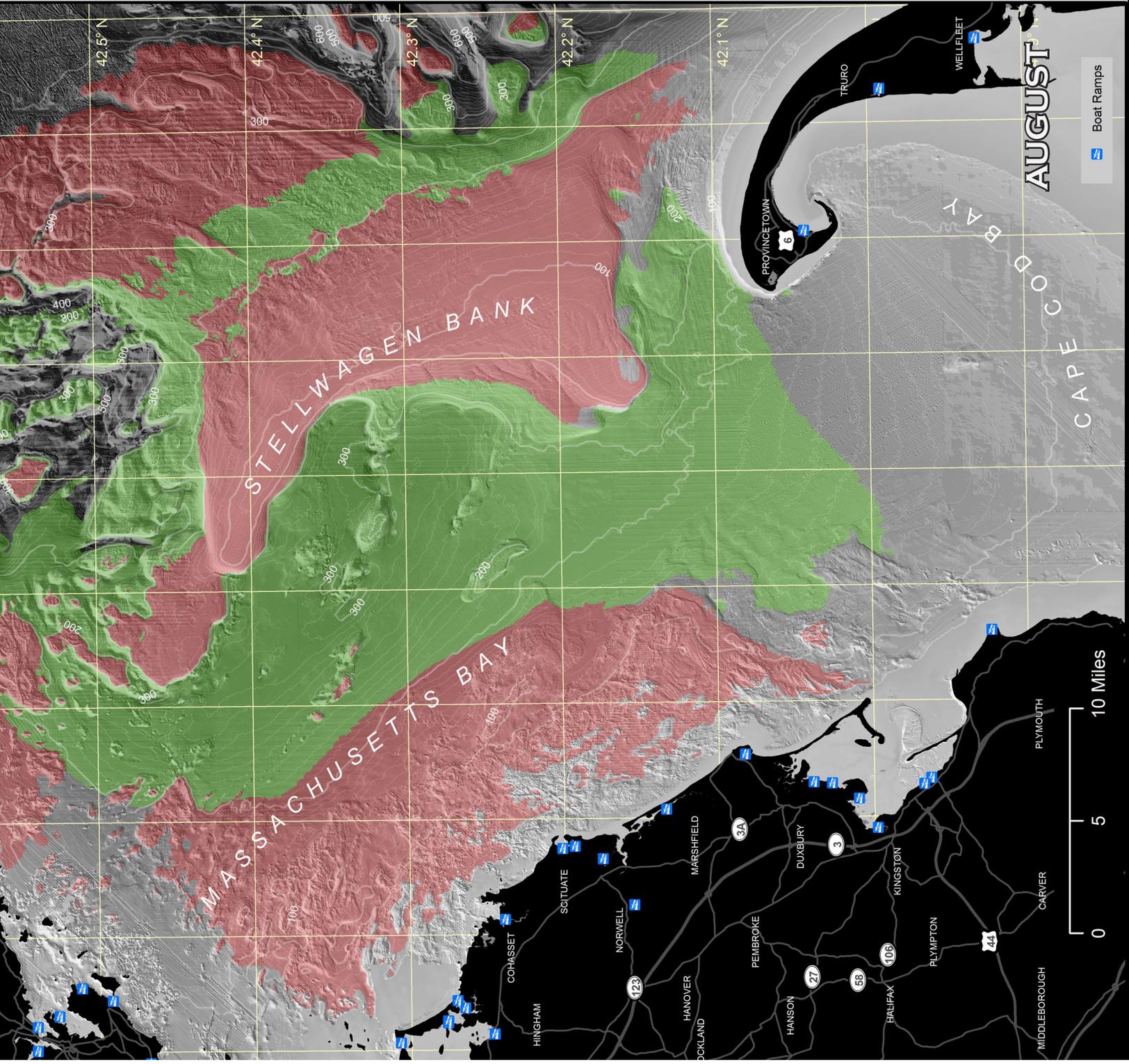
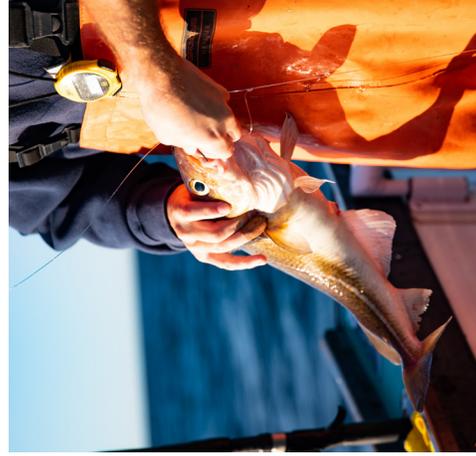
Pliers

Keep a pair of pliers close at hand for those hard to extract hooks.

Reduce Handling Time

Get the fish back in the water as fast as possible. This is especially important during the summer, because warmer air and surface temperatures can adversely affect survivability.

Our recent studies have shown that about 15% of cod will not survive post release. So it is important for us to make sure that when releasing cod we do everything that we can to ensure their survival.

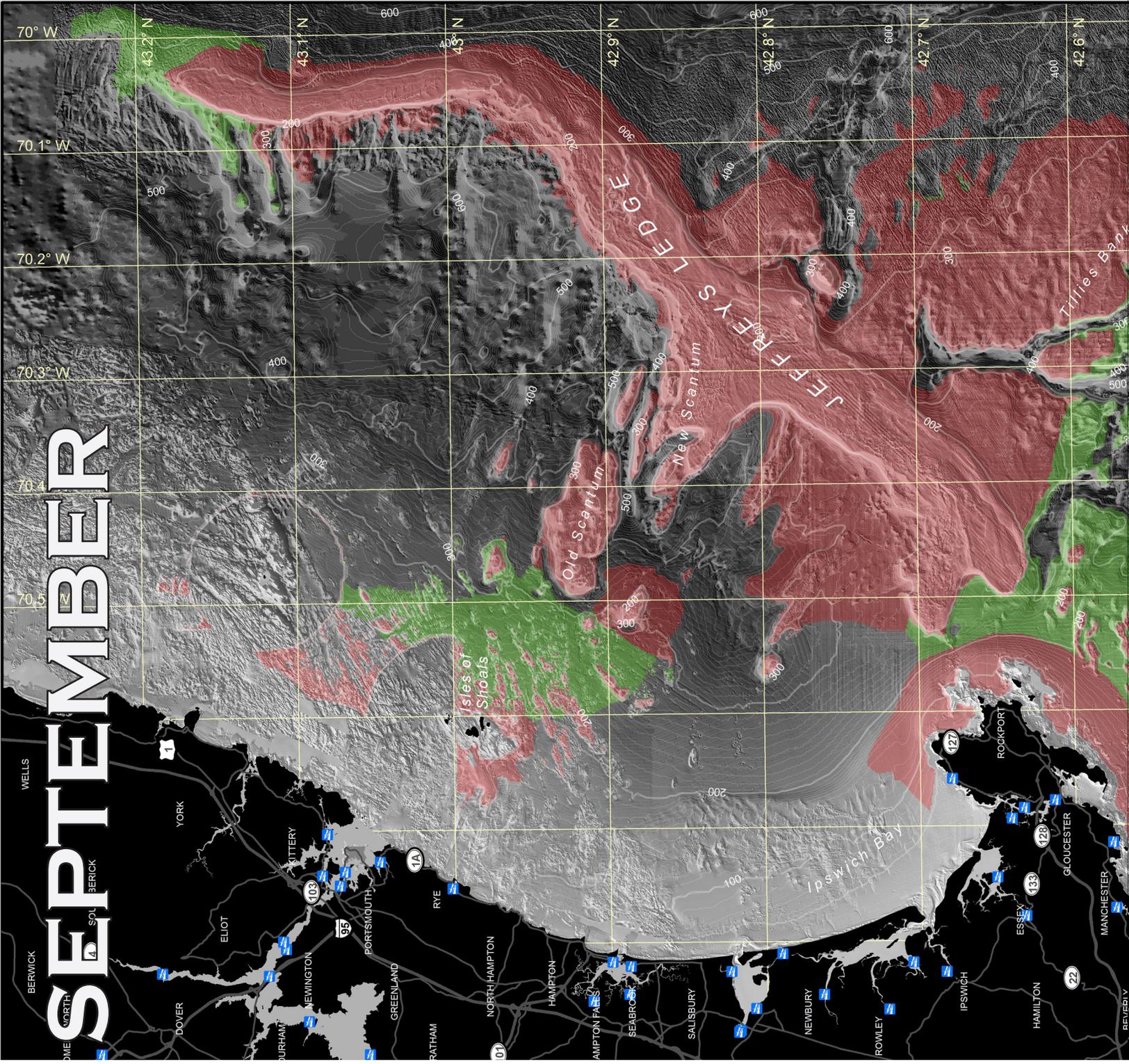


DOWNLOAD THESE MAPS ON YOUR SMARTPHONE!

Once downloaded, you will be able to find your location, zoom in, plot a course, track your drifts, and navigate, all within the app.

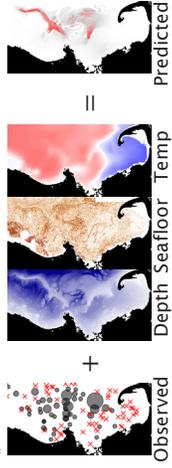
Follow the instructions below to download the maps on your smartphone or tablet:

1. Install the free "Avenza Maps" app from the App Store (iPhone) or Google Play (Android).
2. Open Avenza, click on "store".
3. Search for "Mass Haddock".
4. Select which month you want.



HOW WERE THESE MAPS MADE?

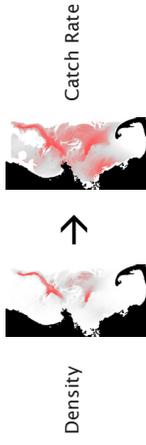
Step 1. We built monthly maps of cod and haddock density from trawl survey data, incorporating each species habitat preferences.



Step 2. We recorded catch rates at 600+ sites using standardized recreational fishing methods.



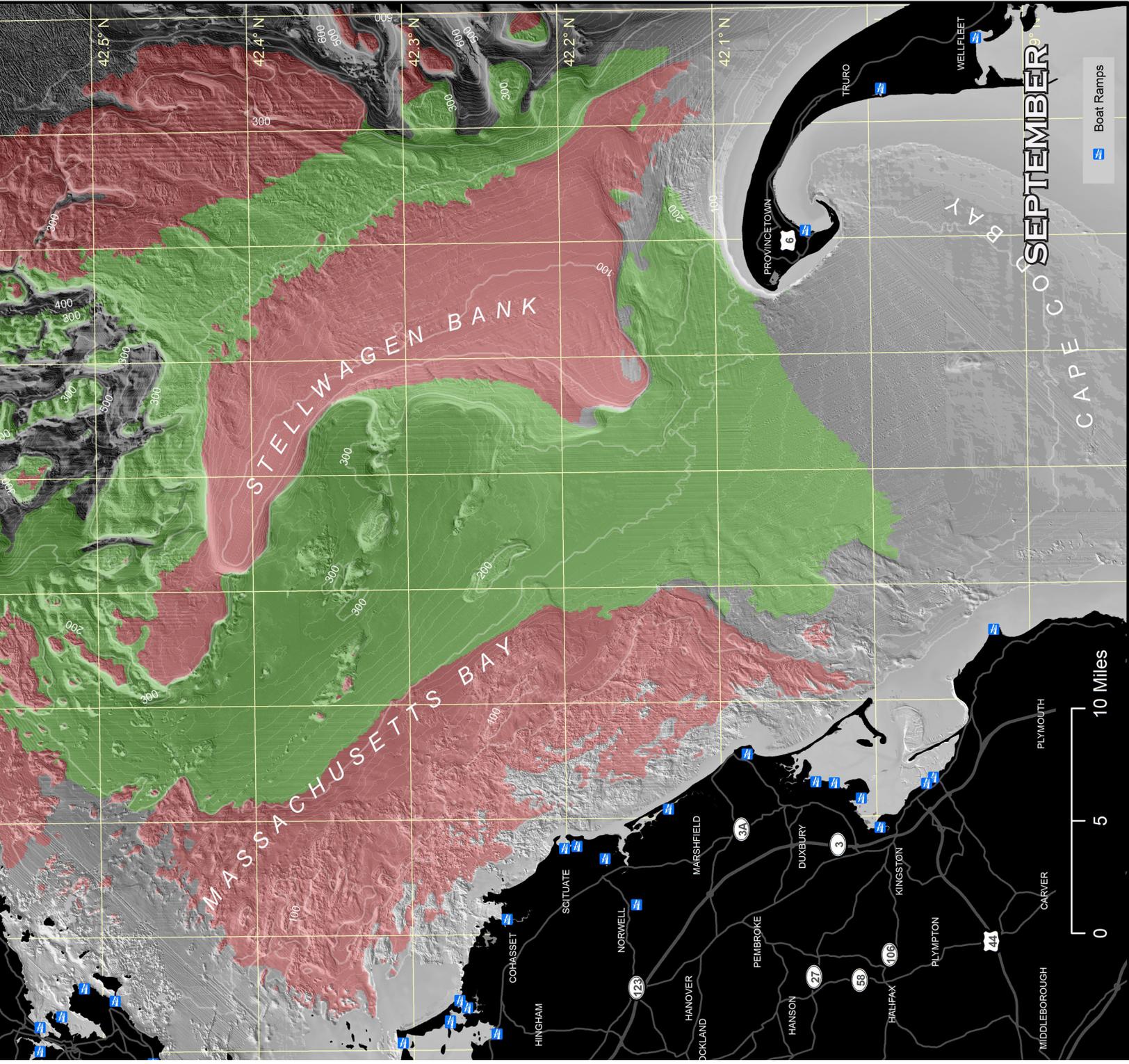
Step 3. We translated fish density into predicted recreational catch rates, accounting for depth, fish size, angler experience.



Step 4. We identified areas to target and avoid using the ratio of the predicted catch rates of cod and legal-haddock.



Step 5. We combined the guidance maps with a high-resolution map of the seafloor.



HELP US REDUCE COD BYCATCH AND DISCARD MORTALITY!



We need your help! Become a citizen scientist!

Win a YETI!



Because these maps were originally based on data from a trawl survey that ended in 2019, they will become less useful over time, as the distribution of cod and haddock change. That is, unless you help us update them! We're looking for volunteer anglers to report their groundfish catch, fishing time, and locations. The first 100 participants will get a free pair of fishing pliers, and each reported fishing trip will enter your name in a drawing for a YETI cooler. Go to www.mass.gov/haddock to sign up.

Free pliers!



Special thanks to our project partners!



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DOCKS



MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME