



Paul J. Diodati
Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

251 Causeway Street, Suite 400

Boston, MA 02114

(617) 626.1520

Fax (617) 626.1509



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Marine Fisheries Advisory

**MARINE FISHERIES SEEKS FISHERMEN'S COOPERATION -
Third year (2005/2006) of the Industry-Based Survey for Gulf of Maine Cod Pilot Study**

The Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) is seeking assistance from fishermen to clear designated areas of fixed gear as *Marine Fisheries* begins its third year of the Industry-Based Survey (IBS) on Gulf of Maine Cod Pilot Study on November 16, 2005. The IBS is designed to collect information regarding the distribution of Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod through a collaborative effort between the commercial fishing industry, *Marine Fisheries*, Maine Department of Marine Resources, New Hampshire Fish and Game, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center. It is funded through the Cooperative Research Partners Program.

The purpose of the pilot study is to design a detailed survey of cod populations to complement existing state and federal surveys. Although the primary species of concern is GOM cod, additional data will be collected to enhance the sustainable management of other groundfish and lobster stocks within the GOM. The Massachusetts component of the survey will occur in Massachusetts' territorial and near-coastal waters from Chatham, MA northward to the New Hampshire border and from 10 to 75 fathoms.

The survey vessels will be completing tows that are 200 feet wide and 1.5 NM long and as close as possible to the designated stations. Many of the tows are not straight line tows rather they follow an edge or substrate type. **Marine Fisheries requests fishermen to voluntarily assist by clearing the tow lines to be temporarily free of fixed gear** during the given time period. If a tow has yet to be established coordinates for a single point has been given and it is also requested that fishermen voluntarily assist by clearing a 1.5NM diameter circle around the single point to be temporarily free of fixed gear during the time period. (Detailed survey information is available on the *Marine Fisheries* website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries. Survey information will be updated regularly throughout the survey so check back often).

The survey includes the same four otter trawl vessels that were used as sampling platforms in the previous two years of work. These vessels can be reached on **VHF Channel 16 and/or 13** or vessel cell phone number shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Otter Trawl Vessels for the IBS for GOM Cod

Vessel	Homeport	Doc #	Hull Color	Owner	Captain	Cell Phone
Jocka	Cundy's, Harbor, ME	939745	Green	Terry Alexander	Steven York	(207) 729-2473
Lisa Ann II	Newburyport, MA	1139403	Black	Jim Ford	Jim Ford	(978) 479-7014
Titan	Portland, ME	1051164	Green	Michael Love	Russell DesJardins	(207) 749-8750
Lady Jane	Gloucester, MA	608078	Blue	Russell Sherman	Russell Sherman	(508) 783-2621

Please note that the survey schedule may be affected by adverse weather conditions. If you do not have access to the internet, maps and coordinates of tows can be mailed on request. Maps and tables that outline tow locations, coordinates for the stations, survey schedules, and updates identifying when the tows at each station have been performed are available from the following resources:

- *Marine Fisheries* website (www.mass.gov/marinefisheries)
- Bill Hoffman at *Marine Fisheries* at (978) 282-0308 ext. 106
- Fishing vessels involved in the survey who can be contacted via VHF or cell phone

Data and results for the survey will be made available to the public through a GIS-based website. Results for the 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 survey are available at www.gmamapping.org/trawl.

Marine Fisheries thanks all fishermen who observed the request for the removal of fixed gear in the tow locations during last year's survey. As you know, efforts to increase the data regarding GOM cod distribution will assist in better management of this species. All fishermen are encouraged to view this information, as it is anticipated to contribute to the management of the GOM cod fishery in the future.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation during the third year of the IBS for GOM cod pilot study.