

FISHERIES SCIENCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Fishing Gear Technology Workgroup

Committee Name: Fishing Gear Technology Work Group (FGTWG)

Active Subcommittees: Several teams assigned to evaluating several priority fishery gears; the FGTWG has 8 members representing four of the Atlantic coast states and NMFS.

Purpose: The Commission's ISFMP Policy Board requested the Management and Science Committee (MSC) investigate the need to reconvene the Conservation Engineering Committee (CEC). The CEC was formed in the mid-1980s to provide recommendations to the states regarding bycatch technology and other clean gear modifications. The committee was instrumental in the development of the Nordmore Grate, turtle excluder devices (TEDs), and bycatch reduction devices (BRDs). The committee also conducted survey design workshops and produced an annual report of gear-related activities along the coast. The following tasks were given to the FGTWG:

- Identify and evaluate studies of fishing gear selectivity, bycatch reduction, gear effects on habitat, and impacts of a single gear used in multispecies fisheries (ecosystem planning).
- Develop comprehensive report of gear work along the coast, evaluate the work to see if it is ready to be implemented in the management process and identify research recommendations.
- Determine the transferability of such studies to other species and geographical areas. This includes identifying relevant studies from outside the Atlantic Coast and evaluating gear adaptations for their applicability to Commission species.

Membership: Each state and federal partner agency may have a representative on the FGTWG; however, representation is not limited to state and federal gear experts. In addition, regional representatives from the Councils and federal partners (NOAA and USFWS) are welcomed. The Work Group appoints the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Codifying Document: The ISFMP Policy Board approved the creation of the Fishing Gear Technology Work Group in November 2005.

Type & Frequency of Meetings: The FGTWG meets as needed to complete tasks from the Policy Board and MSC. The group has been idle since September 2009.

Primary activities: Evaluate current and ongoing gear work along the coast and internationally for applicability to Atlantic coast fisheries. Provide recommendations to the Management and Science Committee regarding use of new gear adaptations in Commission managed fisheries.

Major accomplishments: Development of the FGTWG Fishery-Gear Evaluation Matrix and Priority Fisheries List (December 2007); completion of a comprehensive report on evaluations of gears that may be applied to Atlantic coast fisheries (December 2008). After Board Approval, the report was made available on the web at:

<http://www.asmfc.org/researchStatistics/fishingGearTechnologyWG/2008FinalReportJul09.pdf>

History of Chairmanship:

Current Chair & Vice-Chair (present – 9/07): Dr. Joseph DeAlteris (University of Rhode Island) is Chair; Vice Chair is vacant.

Prior Meetings: The inaugural meeting was held September 2007; June 2008; September 2009. Follow-up discussions to finalize the report were conducted via e-mail and conference calls.

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