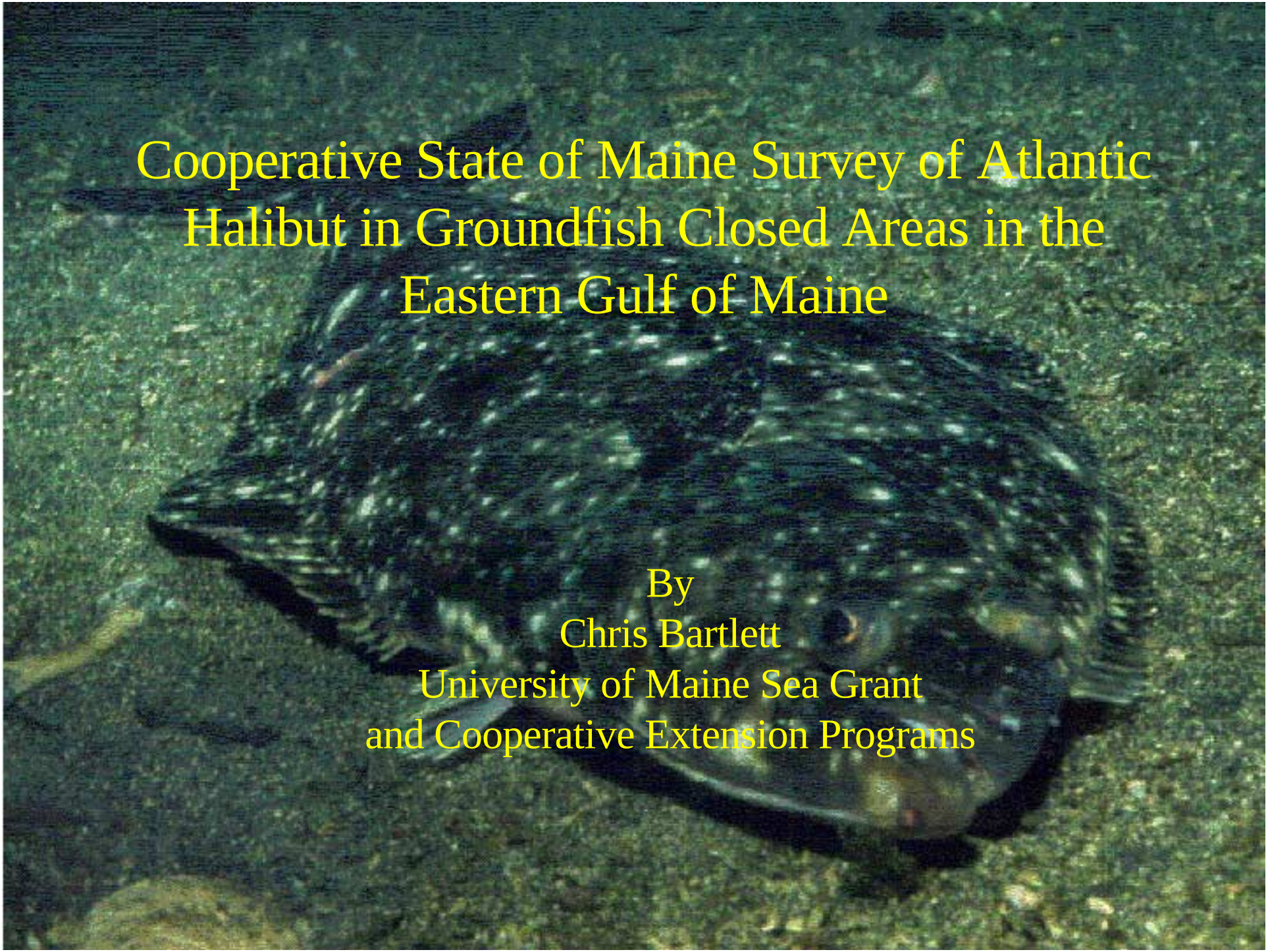

Cooperative State of Maine Survey of Atlantic Halibut in Groundfish Closed Areas in the Eastern Gulf of Maine

By
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University of Maine Sea Grant
and Cooperative Extension Programs

Experimental Halibut Fishery Goals

To contribute to the protection and rebuilding of Atlantic halibut by enabling the collection and analyses of basic biological and ecological data essential for long-term sustainable management of this species

Proposed time frame

April 15, 2000 - June 15, 2003

Experimental Halibut Study Coordinated by The Maine Dept. of Marine Resources

with Approval by The National Marine Fisheries Service

Collaborators include:

Participating fishermen

Northeast Fisheries Science Center

University of Maine

University of Massachusetts

International Pacific Halibut Commission

Study Protocols and procedures in yr. 2000

Three participating vessels

fishing season from

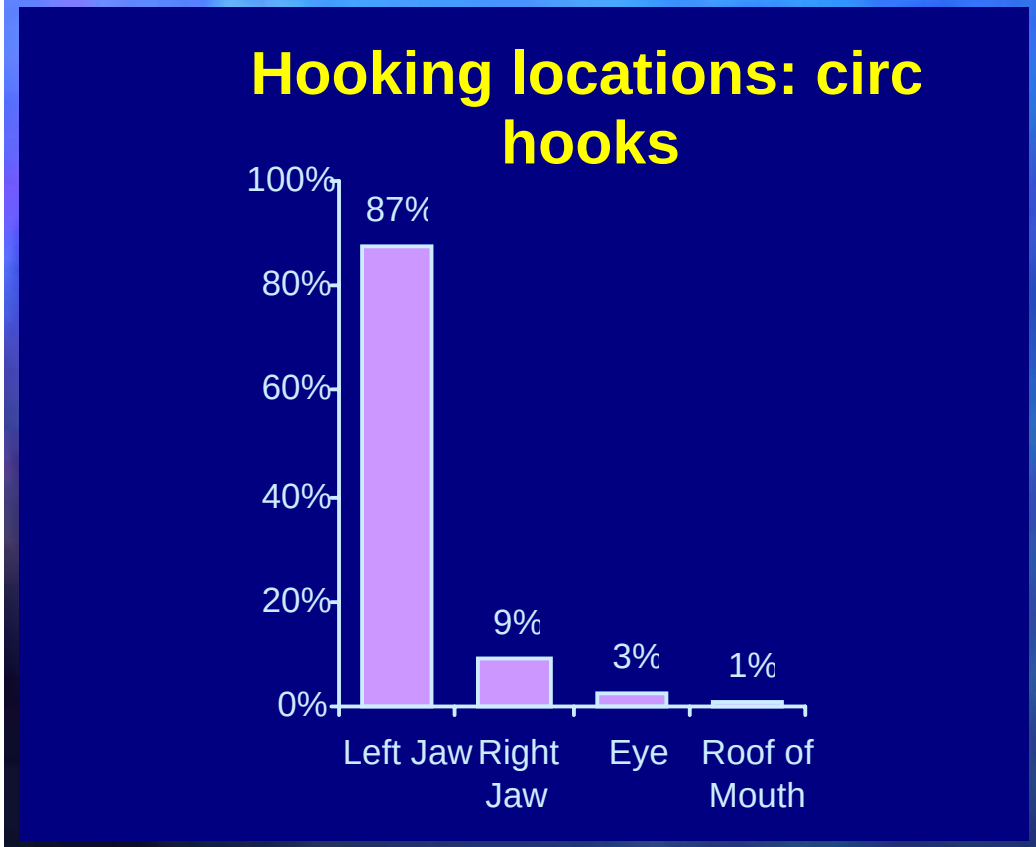
April 15 - June 15

Longline or tubtrawl limited to no more than 100 hooks per line

700 hooks maximum per boat

Hooks no smaller than 15oo and restricted to circle hook in design

Choice of hook size and type



Study Protocols and procedures continued

- Each vessel limited to no more than 6 fish per day, 36 inches or greater
- Fish less than legal size will be tagged and released
- Biological measurements and samples will collected for further analysis by participating scientists
- Holding of live halibut for UM CCAR
- Mandatory Log books for recording fishing effort, area fished, bycatch, etc…

Training

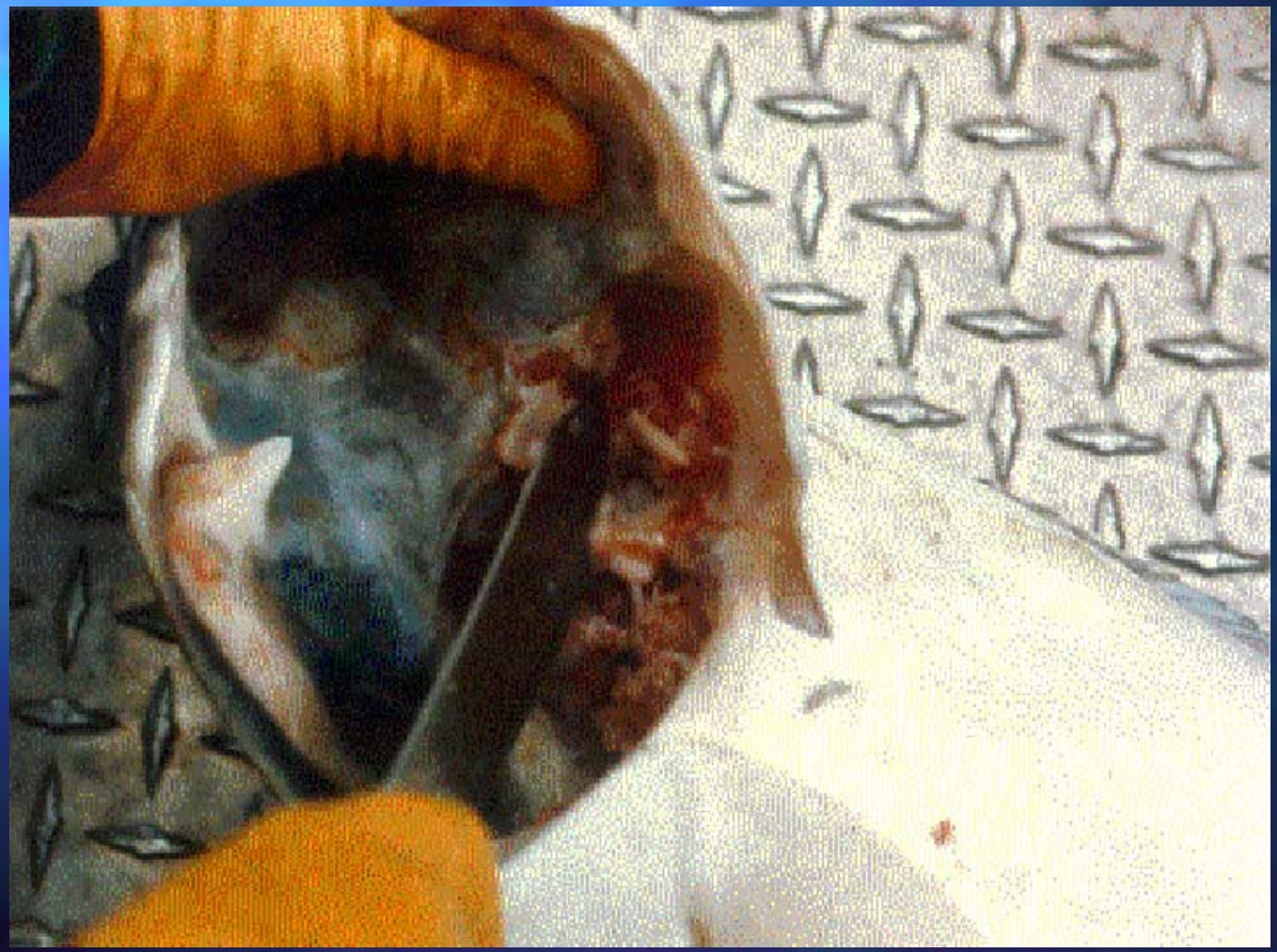
Collection of measurements and biological samples

Tag and release

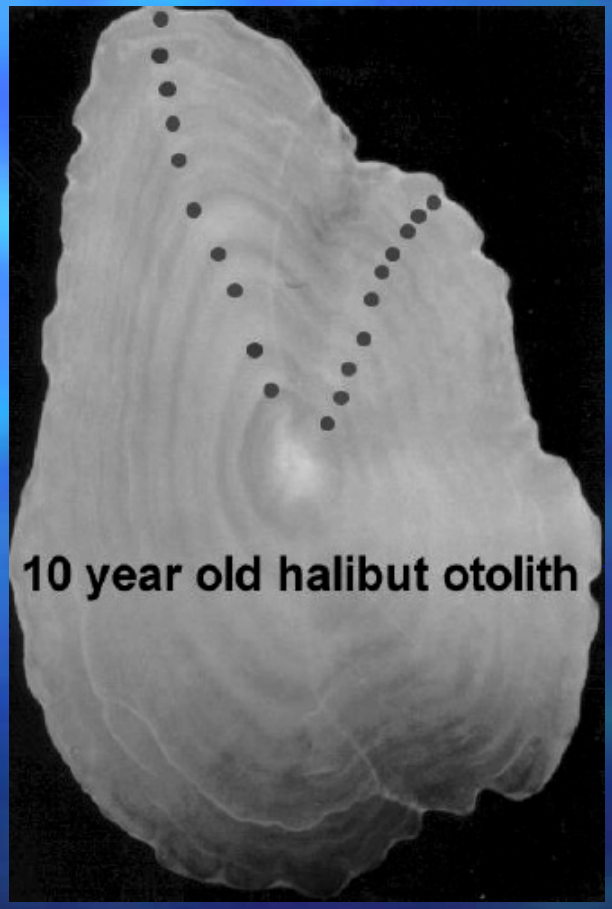
Holding of live fish

Tagging of fish under 36 inches

Otolith and scale collection



Determining age by looking at the otoliths



Data Summary

- 3 permitted harvesters collectively fished 70 days, or about 23 days apiece.
- Total of 500 sets with a total of 38, 275 hooks used.
- 98 sets in April, 304 in May, and 98 in June
- 234 halibut caught
- 60 fish caught in April, 143 in May, and 31 in June

Data Summary continued

72 released (70 tagged)

Length of released fish ranged from 23“ - 35”

31 transferred live to CCAR

131 dressed and sold

Ave wt of kept fish was 43 lbs, with a range from 17-109 pounds.