

Northern Expansion of the South Atlantic Deepwater Longline Survey 2023 Sampling Progress Report

A. Summary of Progress and Expenditures to Date:

1. Work Accomplishments:

a. Describe tasks scheduled for this period

We were scheduled to coordinate all procurement activities with SCDNR administrative staff, including bid solicitation, bid award, purchase order set-up, and payment for services provided by the industry participant in Region 1, which covered the historical northern portion of the SADL Survey as well as the northern expansion. All contracted activities of the collaborating industry participant in the northern expansion of the survey, from 36.5° N to 39° N were expected to be overseen as they carried out the SADL survey for 2023. This included preseason communication to ensure standardized methods were understood, ensure participants were included on required federal sampling permits, monitoring of fieldwork, providing guidance to observers and captains, initiating and downloading temperature loggers deployed during sampling, and assisting with invoice submission. Following the completion of the season after mid-October, we were to assist with debriefing of observer and captain in Region 1, take possession of life history samples collected from fish, and receive and utilize the data from the observer program provide input into data products.

b. Describe tasks accomplished this period.

Meetings were held with SEFSC partners, MAFMC staff, and Federal Observer Program coordinators throughout the season to coordinate efforts, discuss sampling strategies and logistics, and ensure the Region 1 commercial partner was following sampling protocols for the 2023 season. The contract with MAFMC was signed in June, but we were delayed until receiving funds from NOAA before the contracting process could start. Once funds were received from NOAA on July 11, the steps towards procuring participating commercial fishers began immediately following. Bids were awarded to 4 industry participants which were selected to cover each specific region, including Region 1, at the same time. We ensured participating commercial fisher for Region 1 was listed on letter of acknowledgement (LOA) for the SADL Survey. The Region 1 industry participant awarded the bid for the 2023 sampling season was included on the LOA from the previous year, so no changes were needed and they were able to

retain fish out of season, size limit, or catch limit. Additionally, we communicated with the Region 1 industry participant regarding sampling methodology, site selection, and standardized gear to ensure consistency among the regions. In conjunction with staff from the SEFSC and Federal Observer partners, we coordinated the Region 1 contracted industry participant’s sampling. For the 2023 sampling season, the Region 1 industry participant was assigned 6 stations per depth and spatial strata for a total of 60 stations (of which 30 were in the northern expansion) that were randomly selected and evenly distributed amongst latitude and depth zones. The Region 1 participant began sampling on 8/21/2023 and finished sampling on 9/20/2023. They completed all 60 stations, with 6 stations from all 10 strata. (Table 1). Temperature loggers were returned by captain or observer after each trip, the data were downloaded and archived, and the loggers were re-initiated and sent back to the vessel to ensure at least two loggers were onboard each vessel during sampling efforts. The Region 1 industry participant submitted invoices following completion of their assigned stations and payments have been received from SCDNR for the 2023 work. Since the conclusion of the season, we have been in contact with Federal Observer coordinators to ensure all data and biological samples are received in a timely manner. Life history samples were taken into possession by SCDNR on 12/5/2023 and data were received on 12/19/23. In Region 1, there was a total of 1,260 individual fish that were enumerated and measured for the 2023 sampling season (Table 2). The data and biological samples are currently undergoing QA/QC measures before processing can begin. Otoliths and reproductive samples will be fully processed from Region 1. Data were incorporated into the SCDNR Reef Fish Survey Database.

Table 1. Number of stations sampled by region, latitude zone, and depth zone during the 2023 SADLS season.

Region	Latitude (°N)	Depth Zone	
		Shallow	Deep
1	38	6	6
1	37	6	6
1	36	6	6
1	35	6	6
1	34	6	6
Totals		30	30
Overall Total		60	

Table 2. Catch during 2023 Region 1 sampling for the SADL Survey. Common name and number caught are included.

Species	Caught
Blueline Tilefish	521
Pale-Spotted Eel	144
Almaco Jack	89
Smooth Dogfish	72
Tilefish Golden	68
Black Sea Bass	63
Night Shark	59
Atlantic Sharpnose Shark	38
Snowy Grouper	26
Blackline Tilefish	25
Scalloped Hammerhead Shark	24
Chain Catshark	19
Spotted Hake	19
Lesser Amberjack	16
Greater Amberjack	15
Snakefish	10
Conger Eels	7
Cobia	6
Red Porgy	6
Silver Hake	5
Tiger Shark	3
Blunthead Puffer	2
Crabs	2
Red Snapper	2
Sandbar Shark	2
Sea Stars	2
Silky Shark	2
Skates And Rays	2
Clearnose Skate	1
Dolphinfish	1
Flame Box Crab	1
Great Barracuda	1
Jonah Crab	1
Oyster Toadfish	1
Queen Triggerfish	1
Sea Urchins	1
Spider Crabs	1
Striped Searobin	1
Vermilion Snapper	1
Grand Total	1,260

c. Explain special problems, differences between scheduled and accomplished work, etc.

There were no special problems or differences between scheduled and accomplished work.

2. Expenditures:

a. Describe expenditures scheduled for this period.


Expenditures for salaries and associated costs of fringe and indirect, as well as the contracted industry participant, were scheduled for this period.

b. Describe actual expenditures this period.

No significant delays in expenditures were encountered. Invoices for work elements have been submitted. The Region 1 industry participant submitted invoices and payments have been received from SCDNR for the 2023 work.

c. Explain special problems, differences between scheduled and actual expenditures, etc.

No special problems were encountered.

Prepared By: 

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Signature of Principal Investigator

12/20/2023
Date