



**Successes and Challenges
working with the Atlantic Large
Whale TRT**

**Patrice McCarron
Maine Lobstermen's Association**

Challenging issue – Maine context

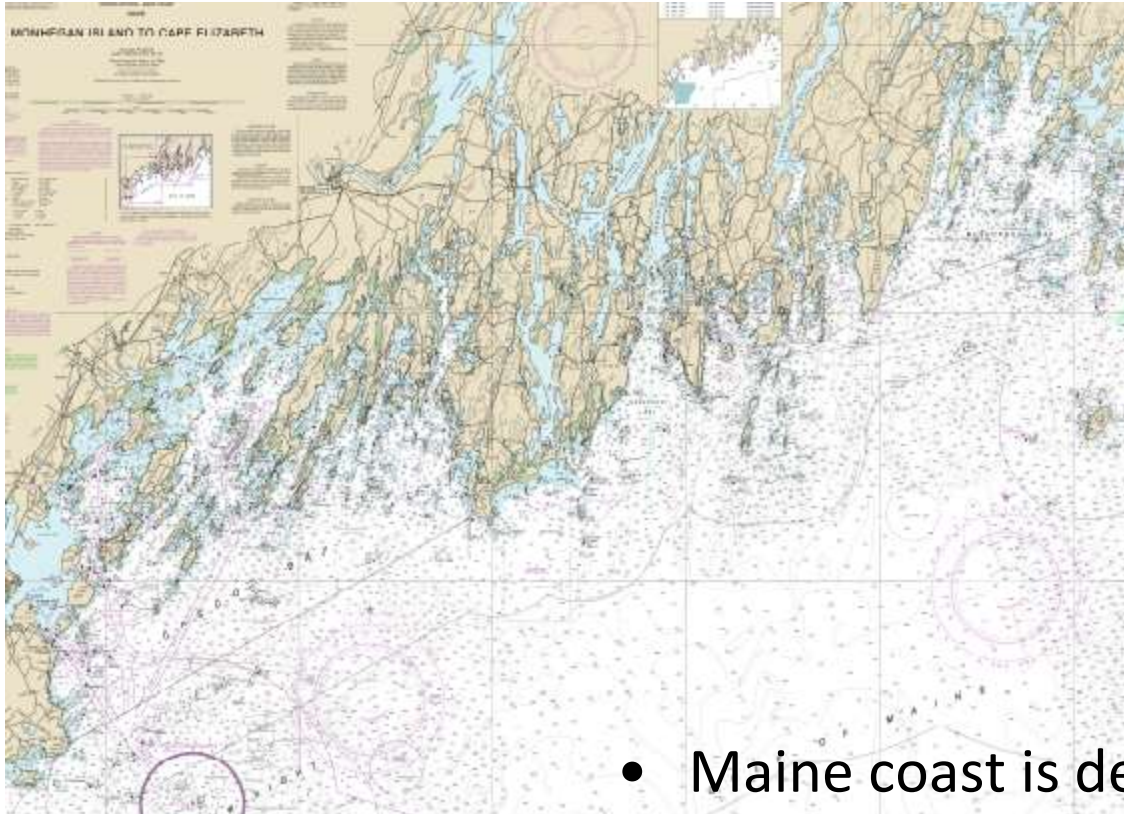
- Few lobstermen have ever seen a right whale
- Inshore – a lot of gear and few whales
- Offshore – little gear and more whales
- Gulf of Maine is warming, whale patterns changing
- Little is known about entanglements in fishing gear:
 - Which fishery
 - Where it happens (country, state, region)
 - Which gear component
 - How whale gets entangled

Challenging Issue

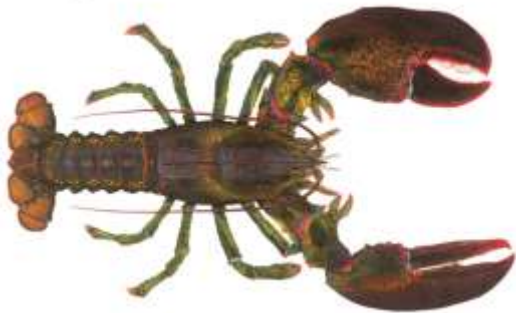
- Regulated community
 - feel like they have everything to lose
- Management has a cost
 - no guarantee that measures will solve the problem



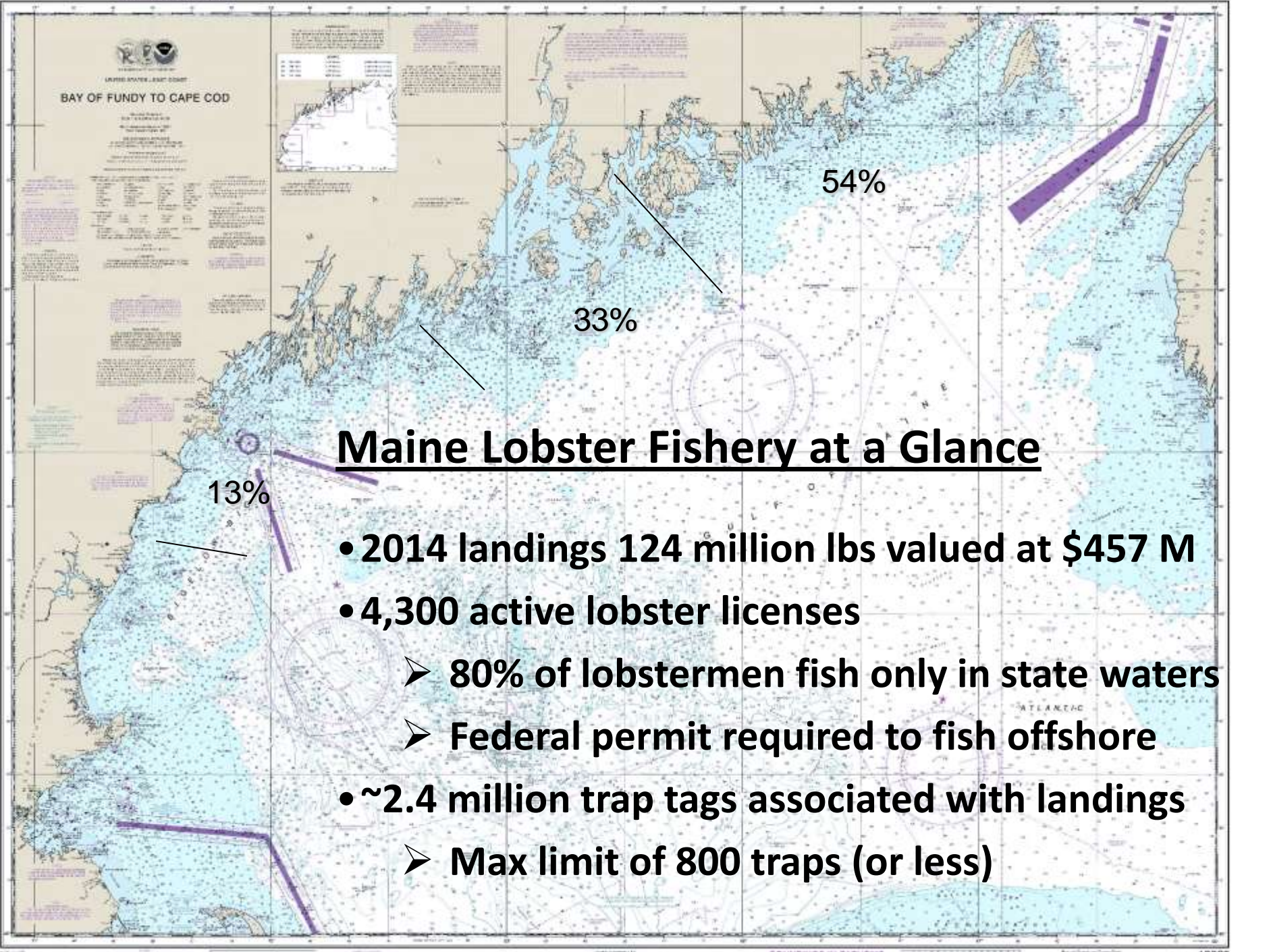
Maine Lobster Industry.... Billion + \$ industry



- Maine coast is dependent upon lobstering
- Maine lobstermen live along 3,500+ mile coastline in small, rural communities
- Our communities are located on remote peninsulas and 15 year- round islands



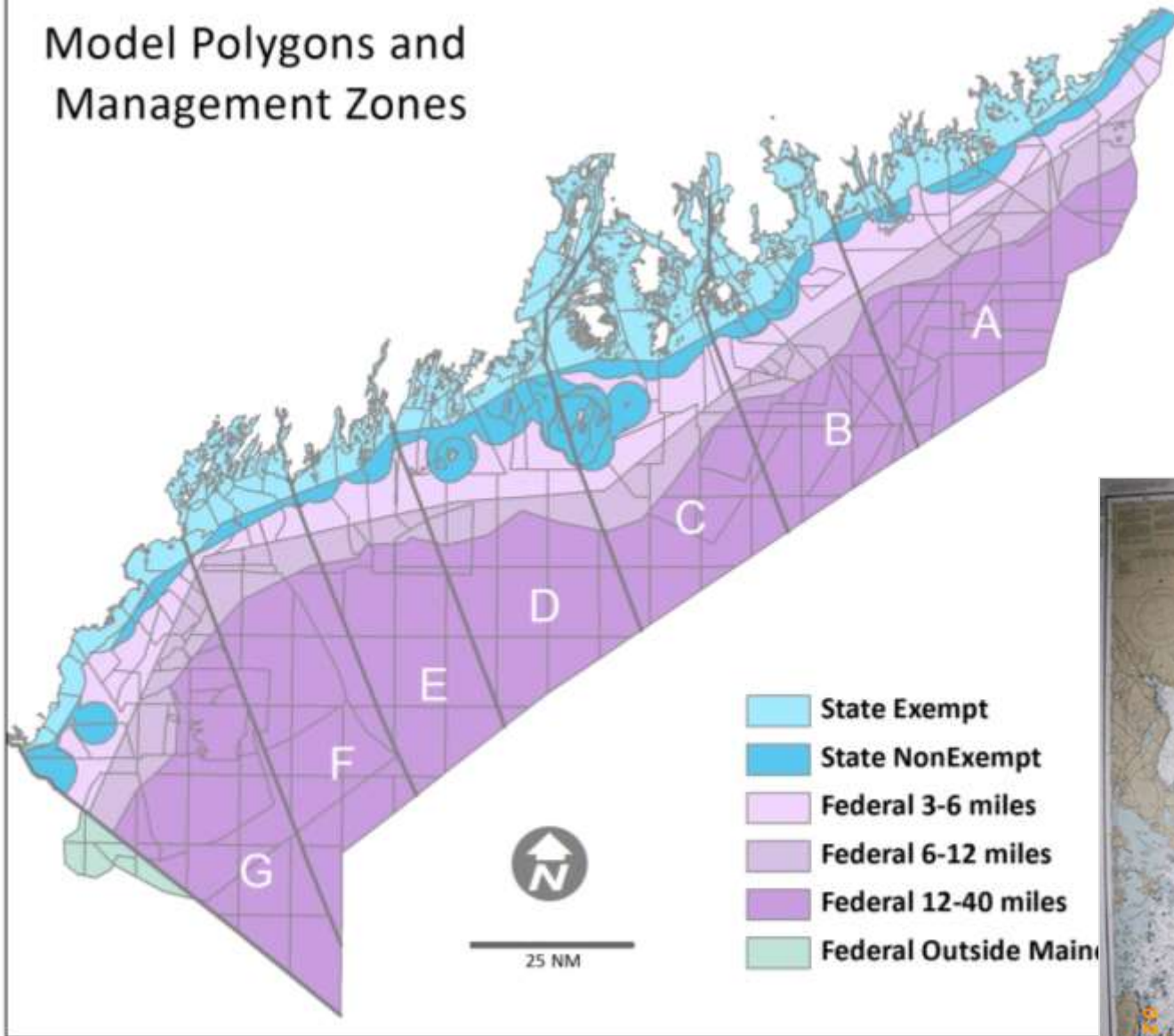
BAY OF FUNDY TO CAPE COD



Maine Lobster Fishery at a Glance

- 2014 landings 124 million lbs valued at \$457 M
- 4,300 active lobster licenses
 - 80% of lobstermen fish only in state waters
 - Federal permit required to fish offshore
- ~2.4 million trap tags associated with landings
 - Max limit of 800 traps (or less)

Model Polygons and Management Zones



Chris Brehme Keene State College



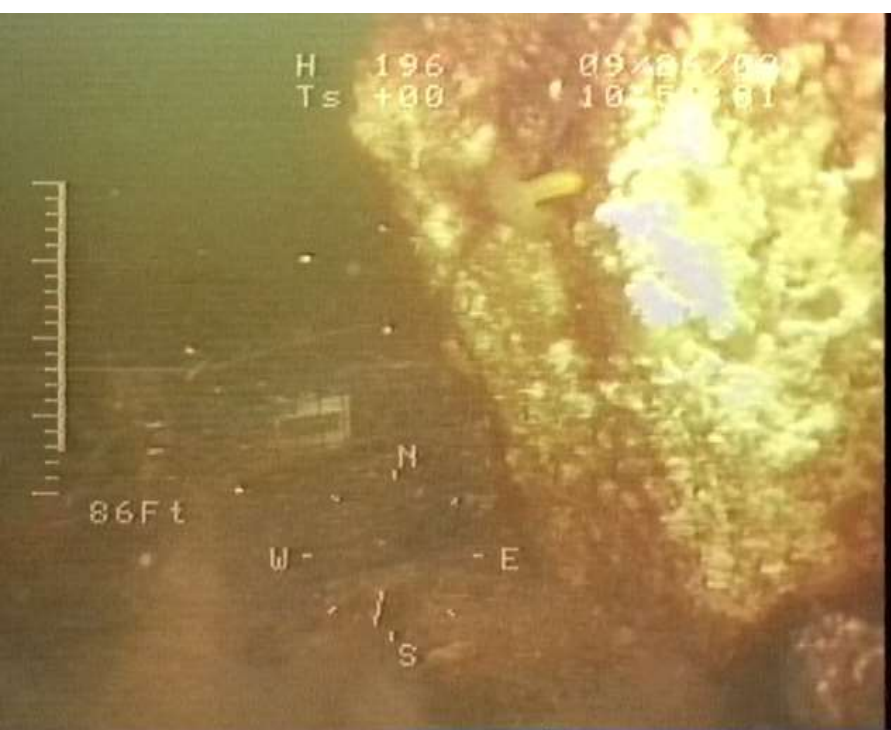
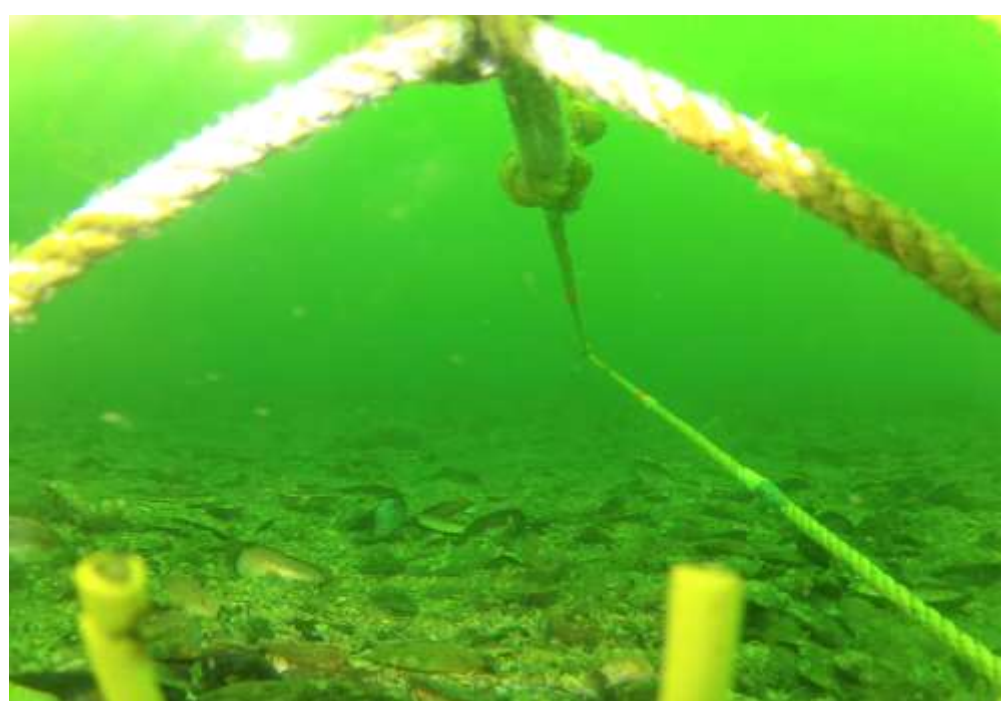
Challenging Culture

- Proud stewards of the resource
 - many do not believe there is a problem
- Many do not trust government or science
- Coast, bathymetry and fishery vary widely
- Fishing styles and conditions vary significantly along the coast
 - Vessel size, # of traps, gear configuration, age, inshore vs offshore, etc.
- Lobstermen don't like change, period
- Maine lobstermen don't agree
 - no single solution will work in Maine



Tools of the Fishery





ZONE A OFFSHORE

3-15 Traps Per Trawl*

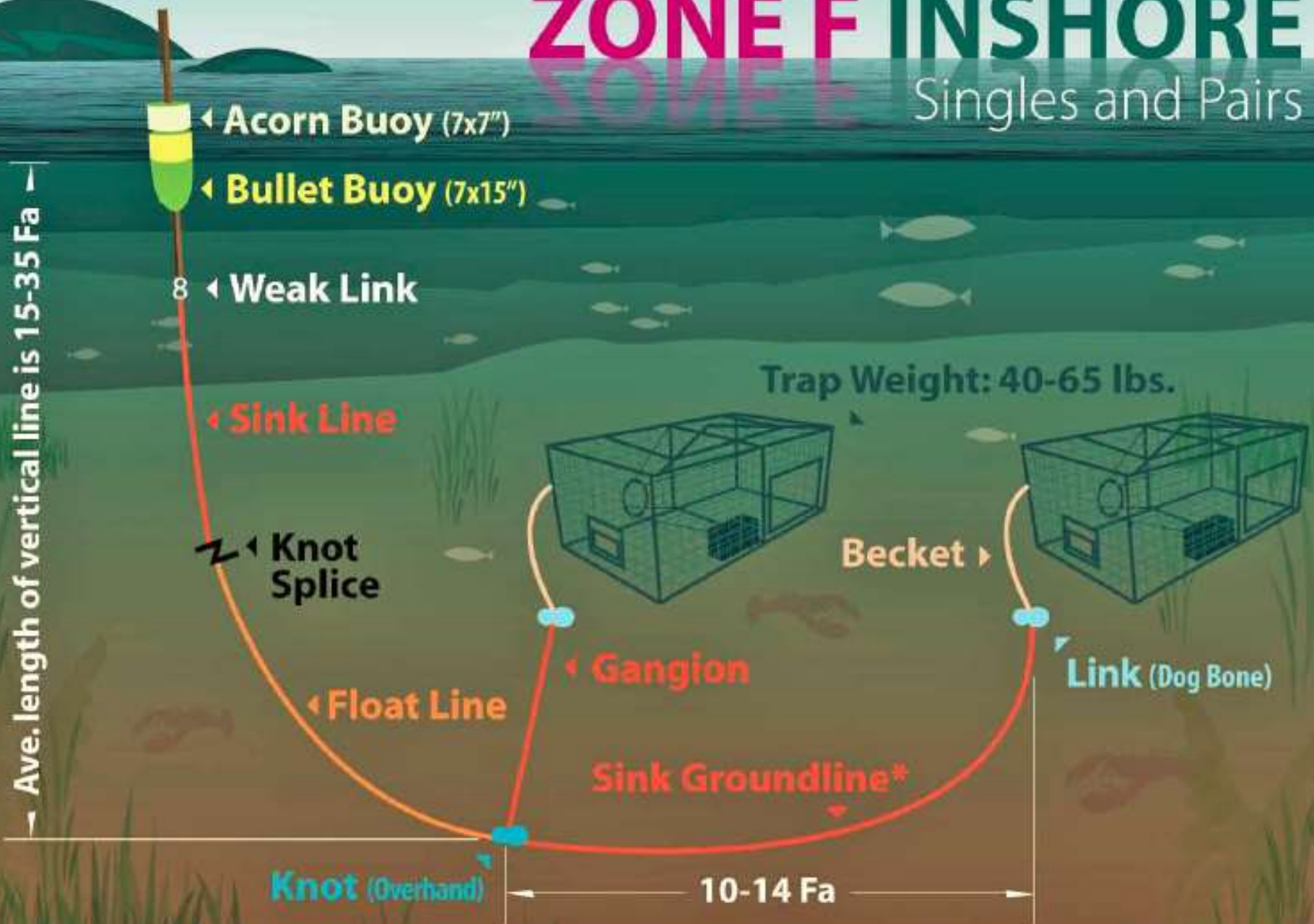
*Anchors not used in Western Zone A.

Bullet Buoy (5x11")



ZONE F INSHORE

Singles and Pairs



*Groundline may be comprised of float or sink rope depending on it's deployment relative to the exemption line

Overarching Challenges

- It's a challenging issue to solve, regardless of which management process
- Mandate is difficult
 - Is it achievable with right whales?
- Inadequate data to inform the process



Dwight Carver, Beals Island lobsterman, TRT member

Challenges with TRT

- Atlantic Large Whale Team is very large
- Covers large geographic area and many different fisheries
- TRT members have diverse constituencies
- It requires compromise



Maine TRT members, Lobstermen Jim Tripp and Dwight Carver

Challenges with TRT

- Process is intimidating for fishing community
- A lot of technical science and policy information
- Many TRT members are experts in their field
- Requires compromise; you can't get what you want



Stevie Robbins III, Stonington lobsterman, TRT member

Successes with TRT

- Tremendous progress has been made
- Right whale population is growing
- Management measures in place for ground and vertical lines, gear marking
- Process has been responsive and become more flexible



Pat While, York lobsterman, former TRT member

Successes with TRT

- Leadership is essential
 - TRT members must be able to represent constituency and negotiate
- NMFS staff are very accessible and responsive
- Facilitators ensure that all have an equal voice



Jim Tripp (left), Spruce Head lobsterman and TRT member

Successes with the TRT

- Realistic expectations
 - timeframe for rule development
 - monitoring plan to guide next steps
- Large group size provides perspective
 - i.e., gear marking
- Finding compromise and consensus can be rewarding



Successes with the TRT

- Flexibility
 - Good balance of formal meeting time and downtime to caucus
 - Creation of subgroups and working groups
 - Create management measures by area
 - Create a process to make changes to rules



Mike Myrick, Cushing lobsterman, former TRT member



Thank you