

Three Decade Long Mass. Div. of Marine Fisheries Annual Seine Survey Database from Six Cape Cod Estuaries

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MDMF) has carried out an annual seine survey in six Cape Cod estuaries (including Waquoit Bay) since the mid-1970s with the primary mission of assessing the new young of the year winter flounder population. The results are used to assess recruitment of winter flounder to feed into its overall stock assessment for this valuable commercial and recreational species. While carrying out this regular survey, MDMF has also recorded detailed data on a number of other species as well including Blue Crab and Green Crab. In 2005-2006, WBNERR Research Intern, Erin Shields, was assigned to help MDMF staff, Jeremy King and Vincent Manfredi, create a digital database for this 30 year dataset that was previously only in hard copy. The new database records information for each seine site (about 60 in total) and each species recorded, providing a detailed catalog of statistical biological information. Interestingly this database spans a period of notable habitat decline, particularly a major reduction in eelgrass, within most of these Cape Cod estuaries. The dataset represents the longest, most detailed, and most rigorously maintained biological record of estuarine species for Cape Cod.