

# Moving Midwater Trawlers Offshore

“Letting a fishery of this magnitude into the inshore area to take that biomass of food out of the ecosystem when there are so many species that are in rebuilding stages is excessive.”

“The main sustenance for many of the fish we catch is herring. Midwater trawlers are too efficient; the fish don’t have a chance. When they fish close to shore, they take away the food, and the fish we target leave our waters.”

### Fishermen’s Commentary

Taken from letters submitted by commercial fishermen to the New England Fishery Management Council.

## GIANT GEAR, GIANT CONSEQUENCES

Sea herring are an important source of food for whales, birds and larger fish. The industrial midwater trawl fleet that targets herring often fishes close to shore. These industrial-scale ships are easily recognized because they usually fish in pairs, towing a small-mesh net the size of a football field between them that catches everything in its path.

### Problem 1: Bycatch

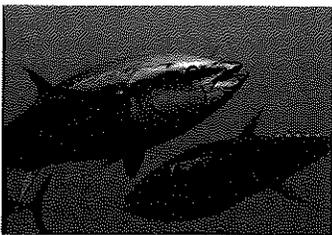
While these vessels fish for sea herring, they indiscriminately catch other fish, including striped bass, juvenile haddock, river herring and sometimes even marine mammals. This is called bycatch, and it either gets dumped overboard dead, or mixed in with herring sold as bait.

### Problem 2: Fishery Impacts

When midwater trawlers remove entire schools of herring from nearshore areas, cod, tuna, and other fish have to move offshore in search of food. Not only does this disrupt the entire marine food chain, but it leaves small-boat fishermen with nothing to bring to shore for our dinner plates.

### Our Solution

We want these boats to move farther offshore and protect Cape Cod’s fish, bird and marine animal populations. Then, there will be abundant herring in our coastal waters for other fish to eat, and our small-boat, coastal fisheries can thrive.



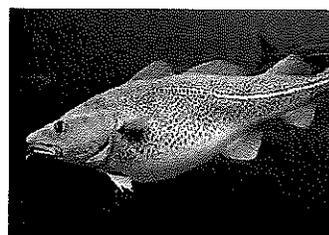
### Atlantic Bluefin Tuna

These impressive predators migrate thousands of miles across the Atlantic Ocean to feed on schools of herring in Cape Cod’s coastal waters. When the midwater trawlers clean out inshore areas of herring, the tuna leave to find food elsewhere.



### Juvenile Haddock

Young haddock are the same size as herring and are common bycatch for midwater trawlers. When midwater trawlers catch baby haddock, they take away from haddock fishermen’s future ability to make a living.



### Atlantic Cod

Lack of herring could also be impacting the ability of cod and other groundfish to rebuild their populations. For cod populations to increase, they’ll need abundant food. If there are no forage fish for codfish to eat in inshore waters, they may never return there.



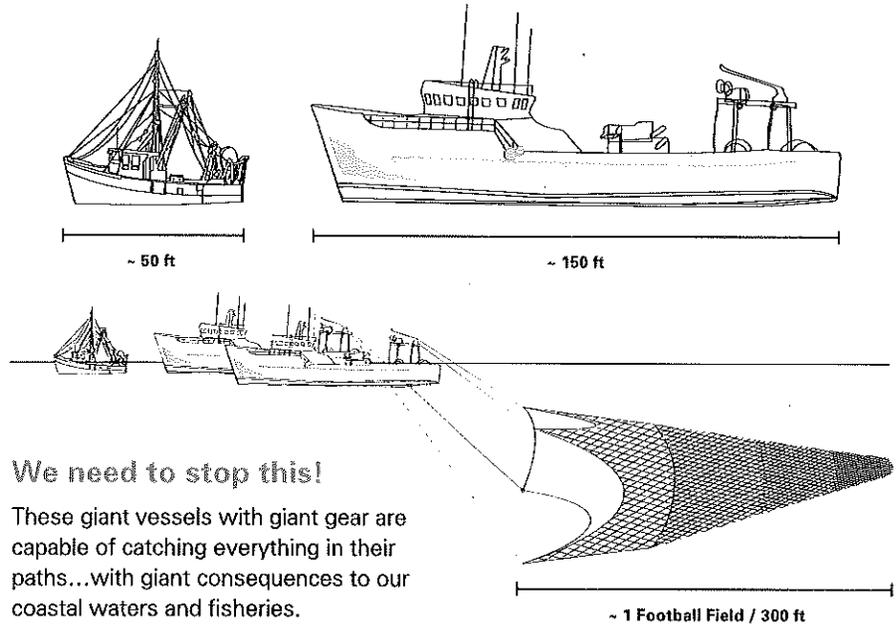
### Striped Bass

Commercial and recreational fishermen have reported many malnourished stripers in recent years. Stomach contents that used to be full of herring are now empty, and fishermen are concerned.

## What is the solution?

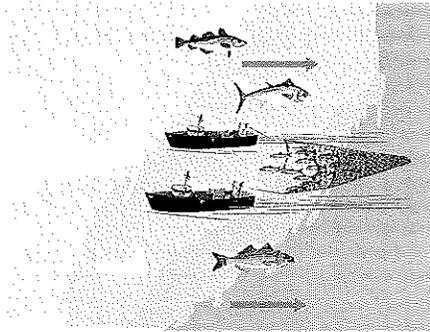
- Establish a buffer zone along the backside of Cape Cod to eliminate large-scale industrial herring fishing in nearshore waters.
- In 2007, the New England Fishery Management Council created a buffer zone prohibiting industrial midwater trawling for herring in the inshore waters of the Gulf of Maine for nine months each year. Marine life has rebounded dramatically because of this buffer zone.

## Local Trawler vs. Midwater Trawler



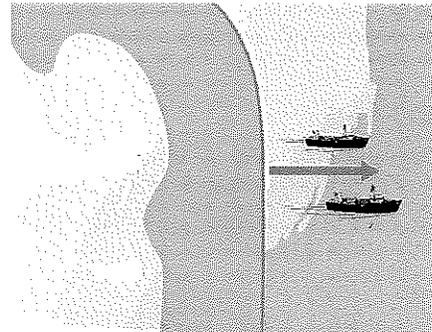
### We need to stop this!

These giant vessels with giant gear are capable of catching everything in their paths...with giant consequences to our coastal waters and fisheries.



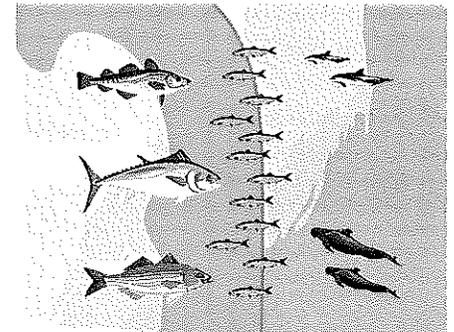
**Midwater trawlers remove forage fish, leaving little for other animals to eat.**

A healthy, balanced ecosystem is supported by an abundance of bait fish such as herring.



**Small-boat fishermen are working hard to create buffer zones to prevent this.**

These areas would be "no-midwater-trawl zones," closed to industrial fishing operations, but open to small-boat fishermen.



**Pushing the midwater trawl fleet offshore will help Cape Cod return to a healthy ecosystem.**

This is an important step in improving Cape Cod's marine life and rebuilding inshore fisheries.



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**Help protect herring in our coastal waters so other fish have food to eat and our small-boat fisheries can thrive.**

Join our fight to push the midwater trawl fleet offshore. This is critical to the future of all fisheries; now is the time to get out there and tell the Council and NOAA Fisheries how important this is.

Contact the Fishermen's Alliance about upcoming meetings, opportunities for comments and public hearings at 508.945.2432 or email info@capecodfishermen.org