



Atlantic Sturgeon Gillnet Gear Study

Barnegat Light, New Jersey

Accuracy, Integrity, Service

Client:

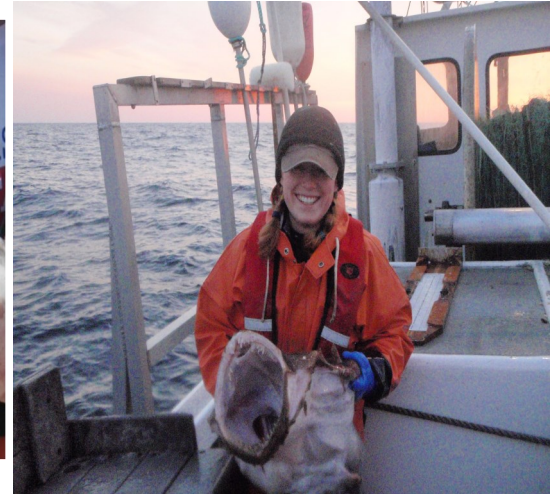
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD
Tel: 301-713-2328

Performance Period:

November - December 2010 and
November -December 2011

Key Services Provided:

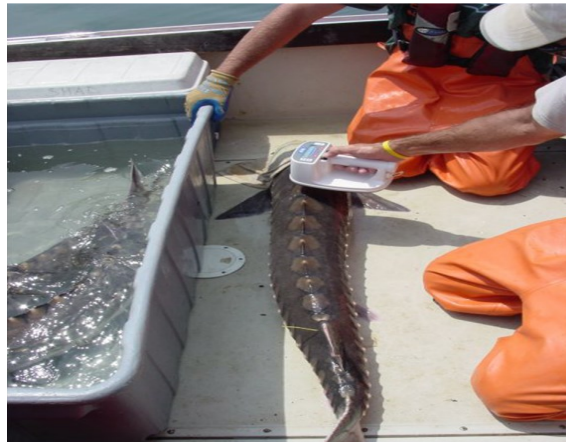
- Project Planning and Study Design
- Trained and Experienced Field Biologists
- Management and Logistical Support for Field Staff
- Data Editing and Dissemination



Kevin Wark, the owner and operator of the Fishing Vessel Dana Christine of Barnegat Light, New Jersey, contracted A.I.S. Inc. (AIS) to provide project planning, at-sea data collection, and field staff support during a gillnet gear study funded by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The study was designed to test the effects of gear modifications on the catch rates of commercially important species such as monkfish and skates and the bycatch rates of Atlantic Sturgeon in the Mid-Atlantic Monkfish Fishery.

AIS was responsible for consultation during the planning phases of the study, providing trained fisheries biologists during the data collection phase, and field staff support throughout the study. The biologists assigned to this project were deployed on commercial fishing vessels, which set and hauled the NMFS experimental gear. The two-year study tested the effects of tie downs and net height. The biologists collected information pertaining to gear characteristics, morphometric data on all retained and discarded commercially important fish, and identification / documentation of incidentally caught marine mammals and sturgeon. They were also responsible for tagging incidentally caught sturgeon, obtaining tissue samples for genetic analysis and searching for the presence of Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tags. AIS provided the necessary

data forms, equipment, and ensured that all data, samples and digital images were transmitted to the Project Manager within the required timeframe.



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