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The gill net fishery is an important commercial fishery in the Gulf of Maine region. The fleet is made up of small inshore "day boats" spread the region. Gill nets have some characteristics that make them an appealing method of fishing: They can be fished from a small vessel (25 feet to 45 feet); they are size-selective, with very little fish bycatch; and they do little damage to the habitat. They do, however, cause entanglements with marine mammals. In 1990 gill net fishermen were told at the Maine Fishermen's Forum that several conservation groups were going to file a petition asking that harbor porpoise be placed on a threatened or endangered list. These groups felt there was a decline in the harbor porpoise population due to large numbers of animals being killed in gill net interactions. After this meeting, Bob MacKinnon, a gill net fisherman, and David Willey, senior scientist for the International Wildlife Coalition, invited a group of people together to talk about the problem. Included in this group were fishermen, scientists, conservationists, fishery managers, fishery engineers, and educators. The group called itself the Harbor Porpoise Working Group. Its goal was to reduce the take of harbor porpoise with as little impact as possible on fishermen. Any decisions the group made were by consensus. This process was new to most members and caused a great deal of frustration and anxiety, but the results have been extremely positive. One of the most important accomplishments of the Harbor Porpoise Working Group was its "pinger" research. Experiments with pingers on gill net vessels in 1992, 1993, and 1994 showed a in entanglements between nets with pingers and nets without pingers. The 1994 experiment was conducted according to a more structured rigid scientific protocol, with results more statistically significant than those of the earlier years (DBO).