

Development of Protocols to Monitor Submerged Aquatic Vegetation in North Carolina's Estuaries

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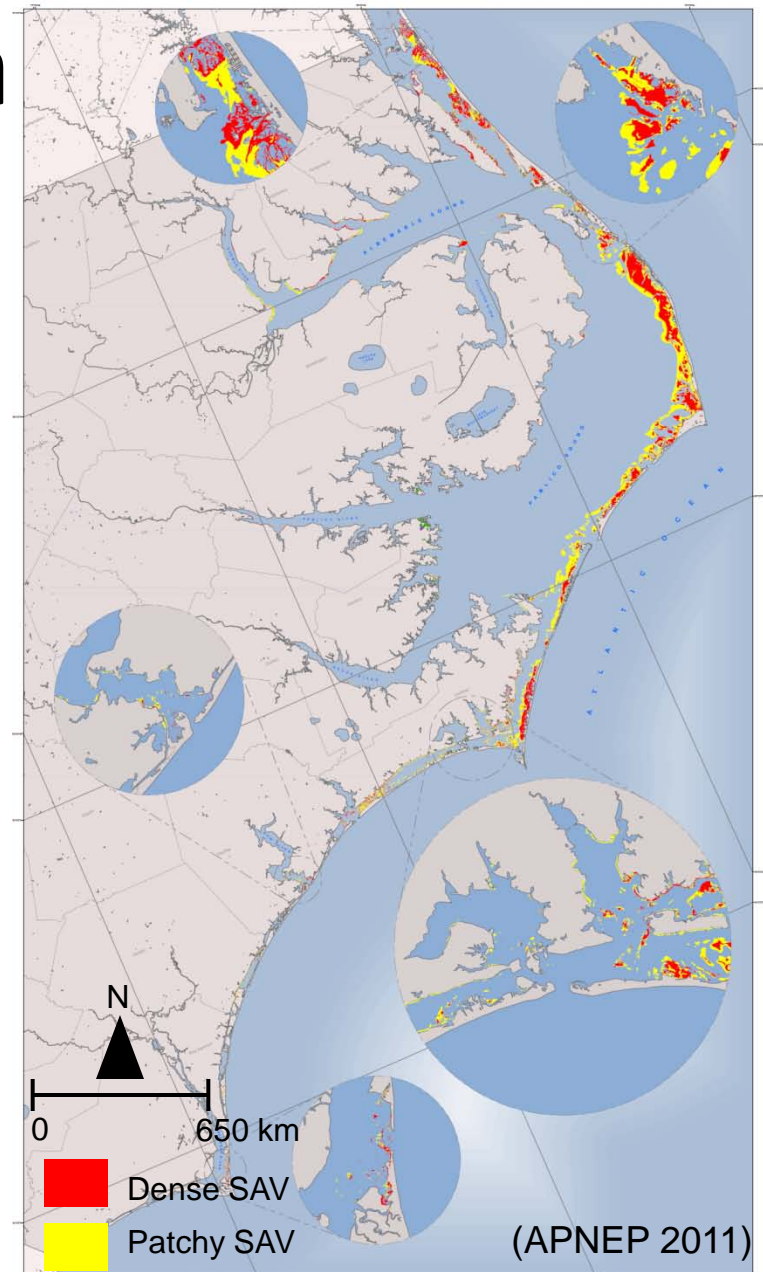
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Wild Celery, Vallisneria americana
Sandy Point, Albemarle Sound July 2009

SAV in North Carolina

- The Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine System (APES) is the 2nd largest estuarine system in U.S.
- 3rd largest area of SAV in the U.S.
 - 138,626 acres or 561 km²
 - likely to be underestimated
- Challenges:
 - Aerial surveys only see in clear water (behind OBX)
 - Turbid regions must be surveyed on-the-ground (“invisible grass”)
 - SAV is located in high and low salinity areas
 - SAV is highly seasonal
 - N. limit of *Halodule wrightii*
 - S. limit of *Zostera marina*

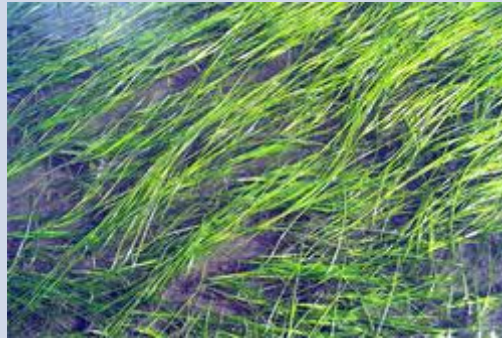
NORTH CAROLINA SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION



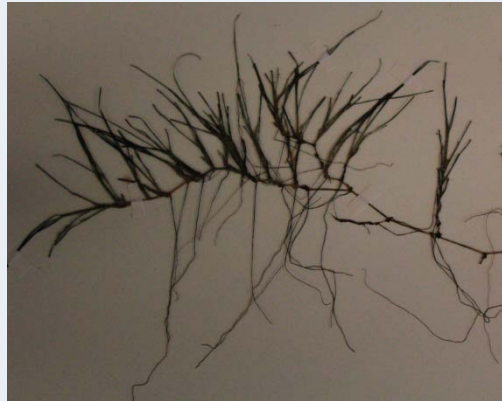
Marine species

Photos

Saltwater Eelgrass
Zostera marina











Widgeon grass
Ruppia maritima



Shoal grass
Halodule wrightii



Low-salinity species	Photos	Low-salinity species	Photos
<p>Wild celery (Freshwater eelgrass) <i>Vallisneria americana</i>,</p>		<p>Wideon grass, <i>Ruppia maritima</i></p>	
<p>Southern naiad <i>Najas guadalupensis</i>,</p>		<p>Eurasian watermilfoil, <i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i></p>	
<p>Redhead grass <i>Potamogeton perfoliatus</i></p>		<p>Sago Pondweed <i>Stuckenia pectinata</i></p>	
<p>Coontail, <i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i></p>		<p>Horned pondweed <i>Zannichellia palustris</i>,</p>	

Motivation for the Study

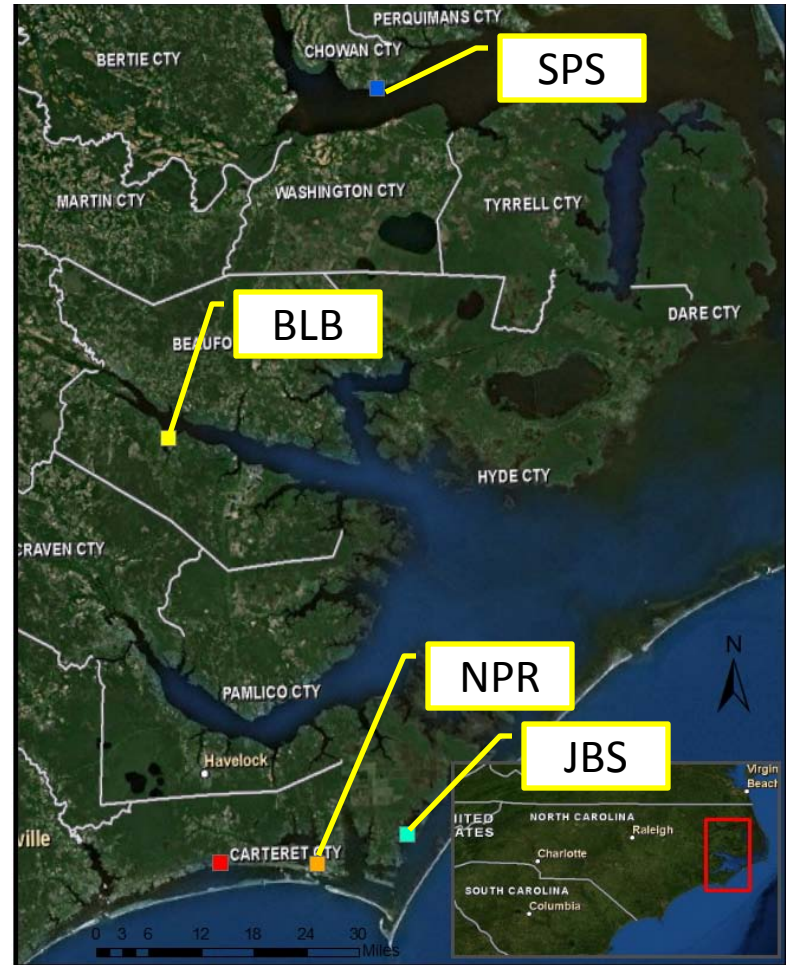
- SAV can be killed or coverage reduced by harmful algal blooms, phytoplankton blooms, nutrient pollution, sediment plumes, dredging events, propellers, pesticides, storms, climate change, and natural agents (birds, rays, manatees).
- How much does the SAV change from year-to year?
- Is it growing, shrinking, or staying the same?
- Areal coverage can be obtained from imagery and ground truth, but what is the variation?
- Probability estimates must be attached to the area estimates to understand a *significant* change.

Objectives

- 1) Develop and test a sampling protocol for a long-term, in-the-water probabilistic based method to monitor the distribution and change in SAV habitat in coastal waters statewide, and evaluate the relationship between environmental conditions and SAV distribution.
- 2) Determine the feasibility of developing a protocol with a performance measure capable of detecting at least a 10% inter-annual change in SAV abundance.
- 3) Compare a point-intercept visual census technique using low-light underwater cameras with a hydro-acoustical technique to determine the most appropriate method of monitoring and data acquisition.
- 4) Draft a long-term statewide monitoring plan for SAV.
- 5) Originally, there was a fifth goal incorporating an outreach effort to disseminate information and educate and inform resource managers and the public on the value and status of SAV and the critical role of monitoring and conserving SAV habitat. This goal was not funded in the first years of the project. This outreach is still needed – people should know the value SAV (at least \$12,000 per acre in ecosystem services).
- 6) SAV is worth about \$1.66 billion in NC!

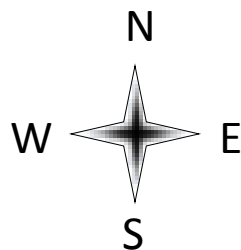
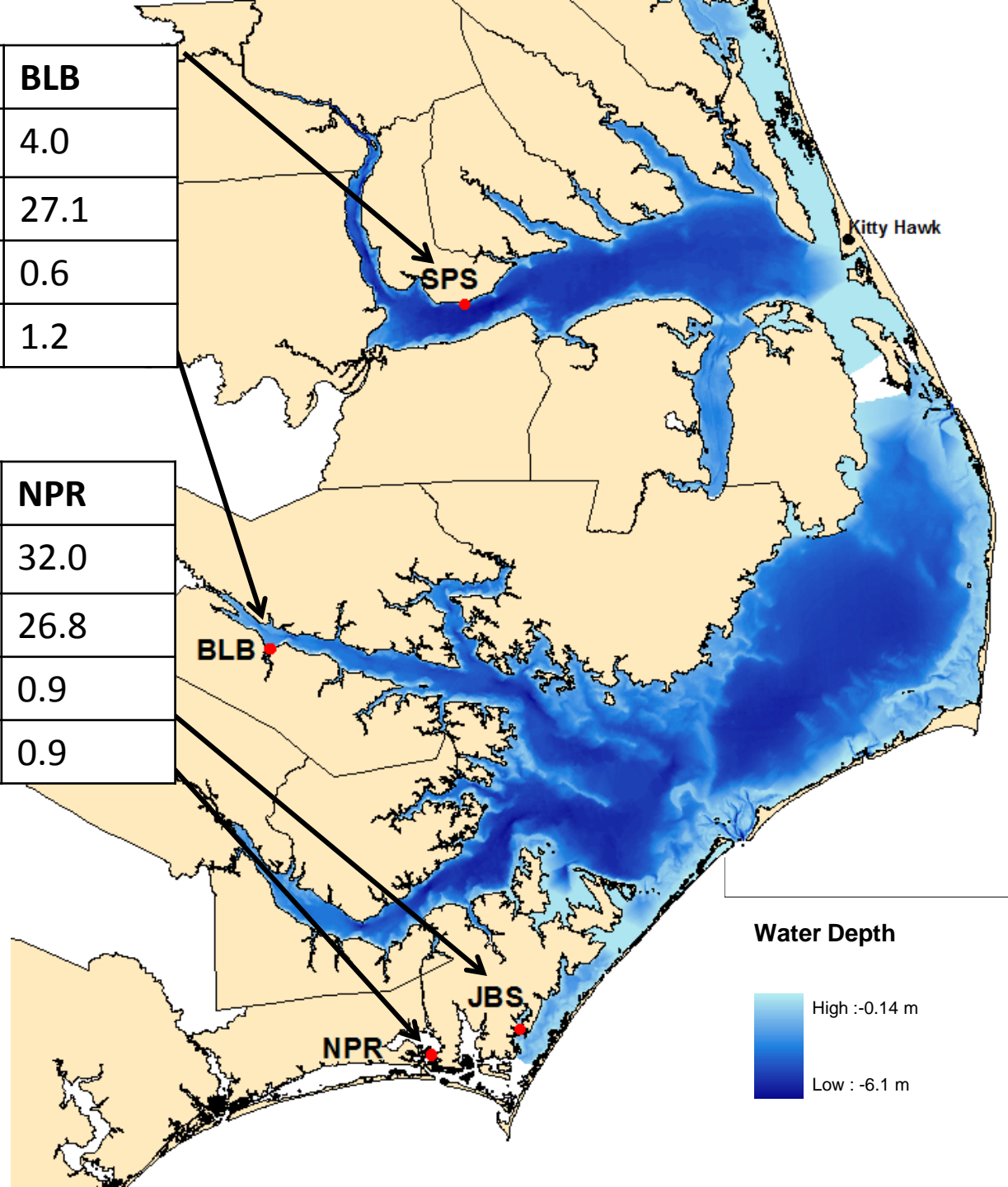
Methods

- Seagrass video surveys, acoustic surveys, and quadrat ground-truthing surveys were conducted in May - Sep 2010 at four sites throughout the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine System.
- Two of the sites were high-salinity (>30 ppt): located in Newport River (NPR), Jarrett Bay (JBS)
- Two of the sites were low-salinity (<10 ppt), one located at Sandy Point (SPS) and the other at Blount's Bay (BLB).
- One experimental satellite image (WorldView) was ground-truthed at Jarrett Bay

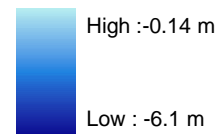


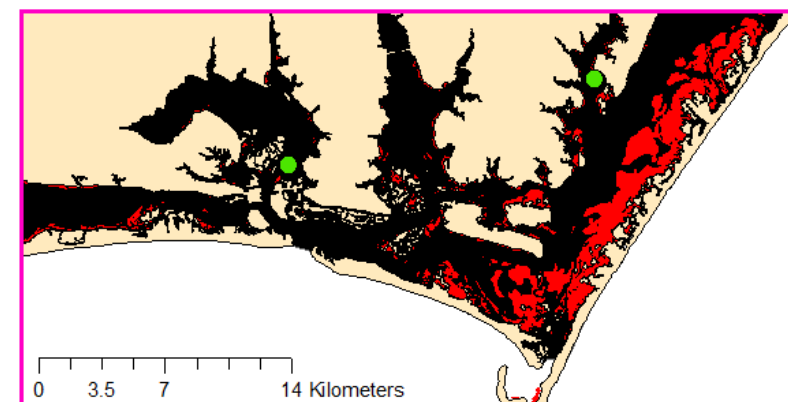
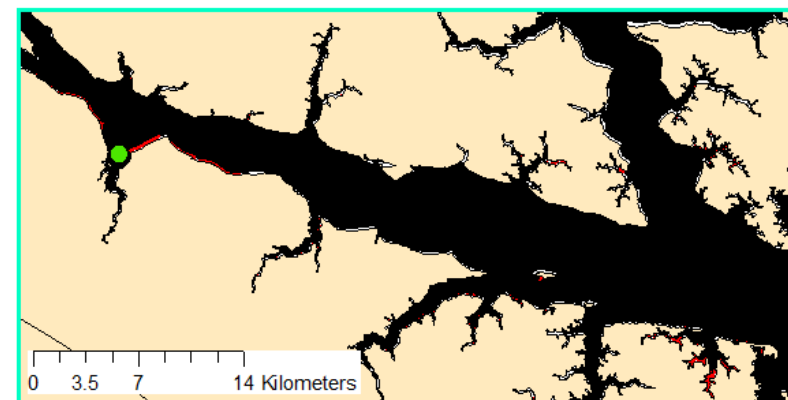
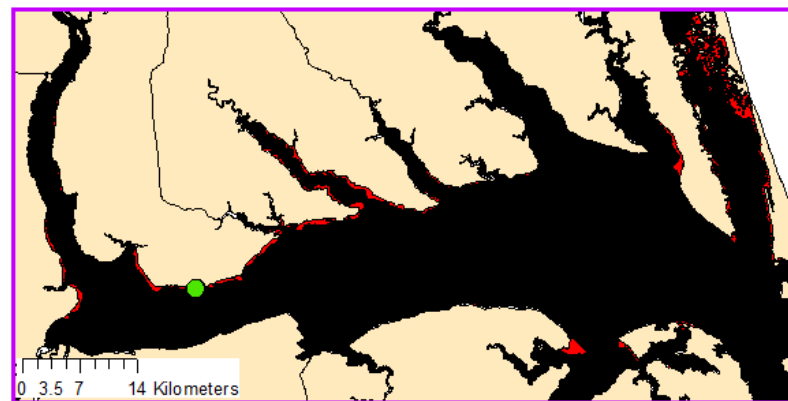
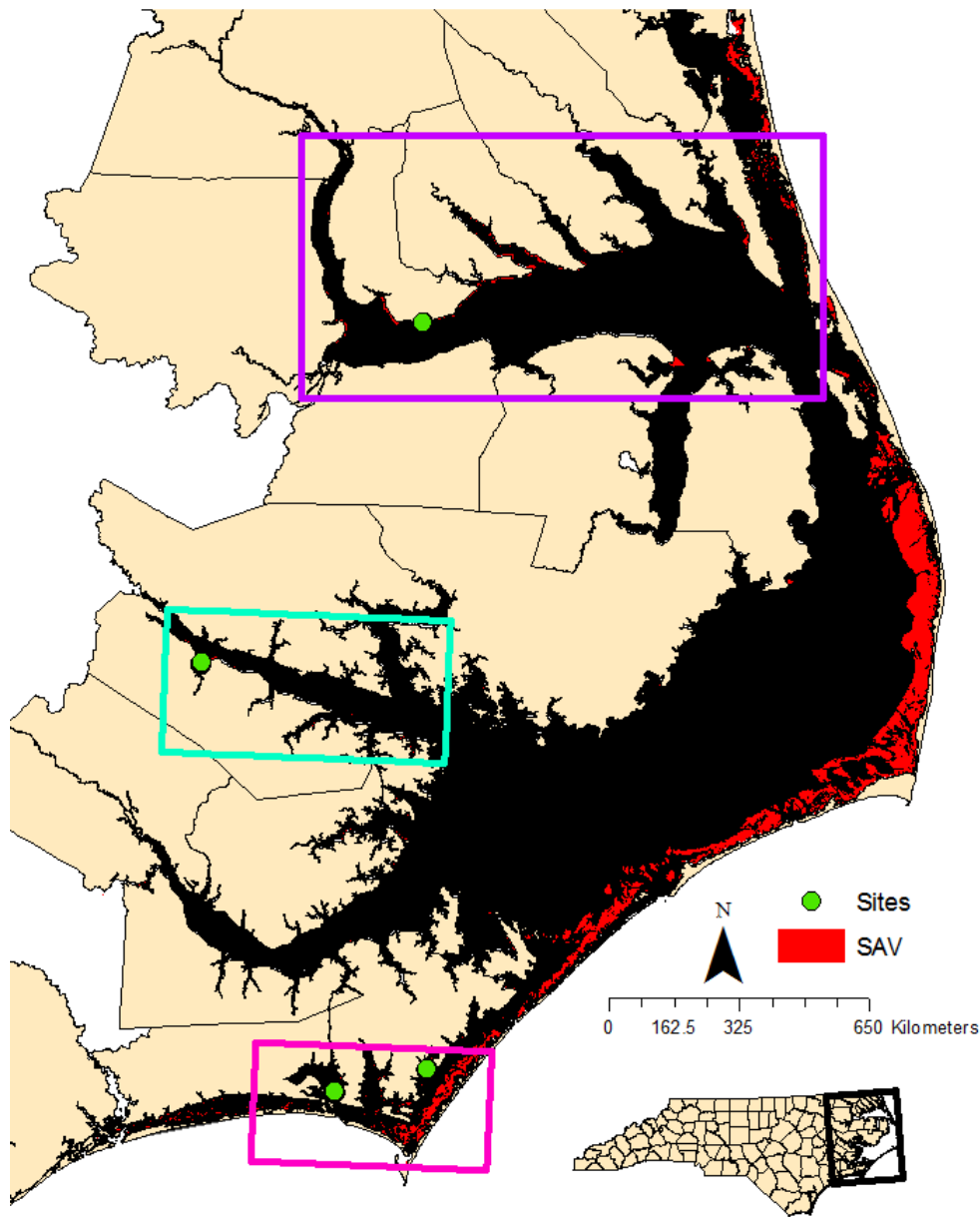
	SPS	BLB
Salinity (ppt)	0.4	4.0
Temp (°C)	26.7	27.1
Secchi Depth (m)	1.1	0.6
Average Depth (m)	1.6	1.2

	JBS	NPR
Salinity (ppt)	32.0	32.0
Temp (°C)	28.4	26.8
Secchi Depth (m)	0.8	0.9
Average Depth (m)	0.8	0.9

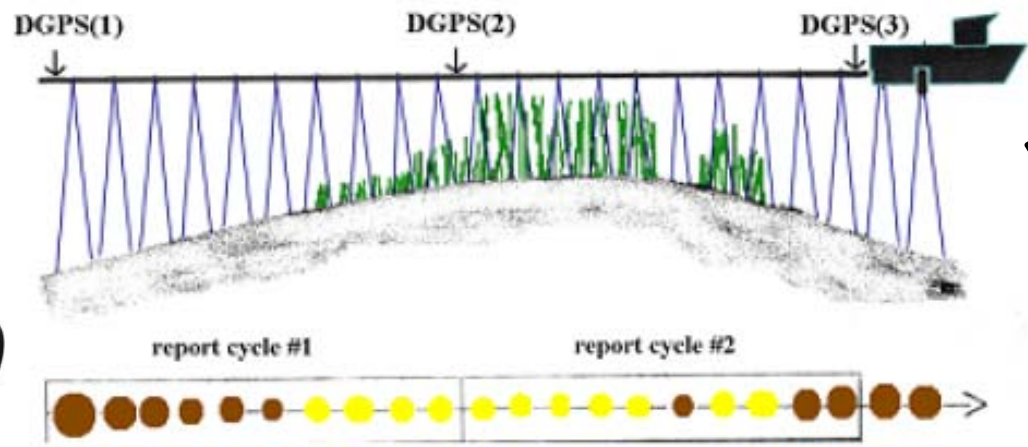


Water Depth

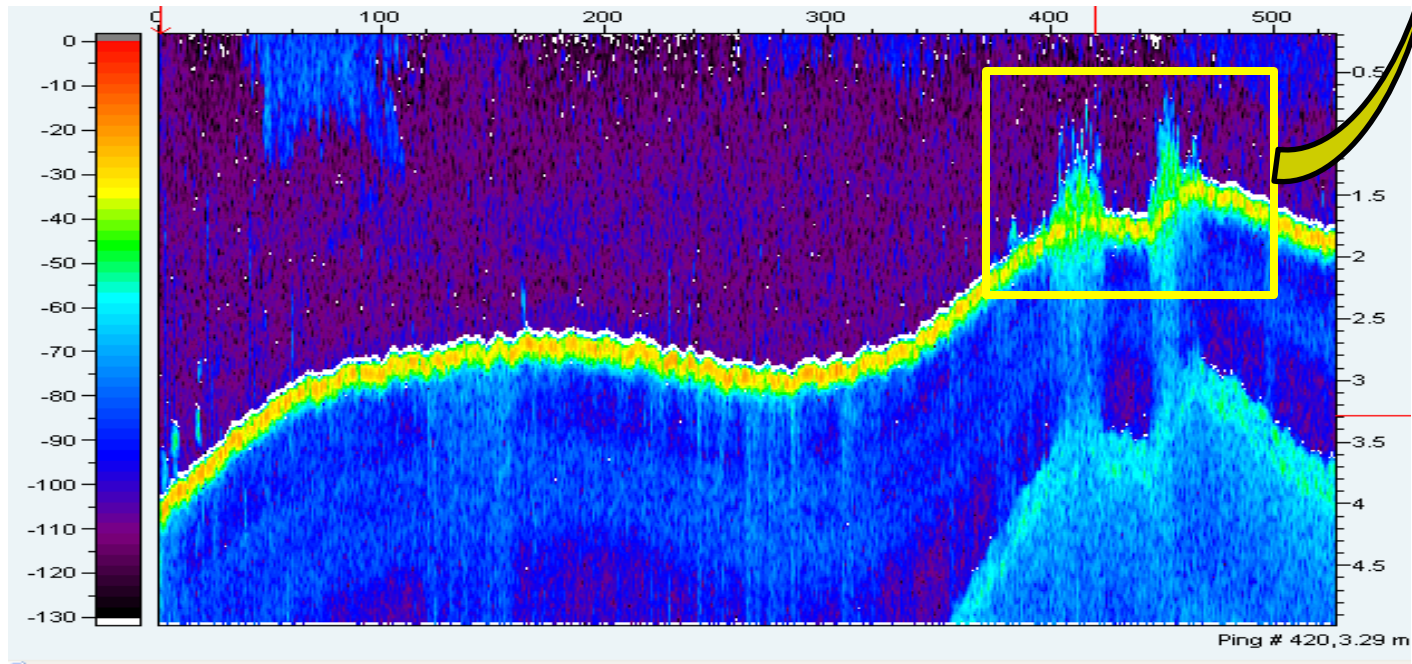




Acoustic (Single-beam SONAR) Method



Target Strength (dB)



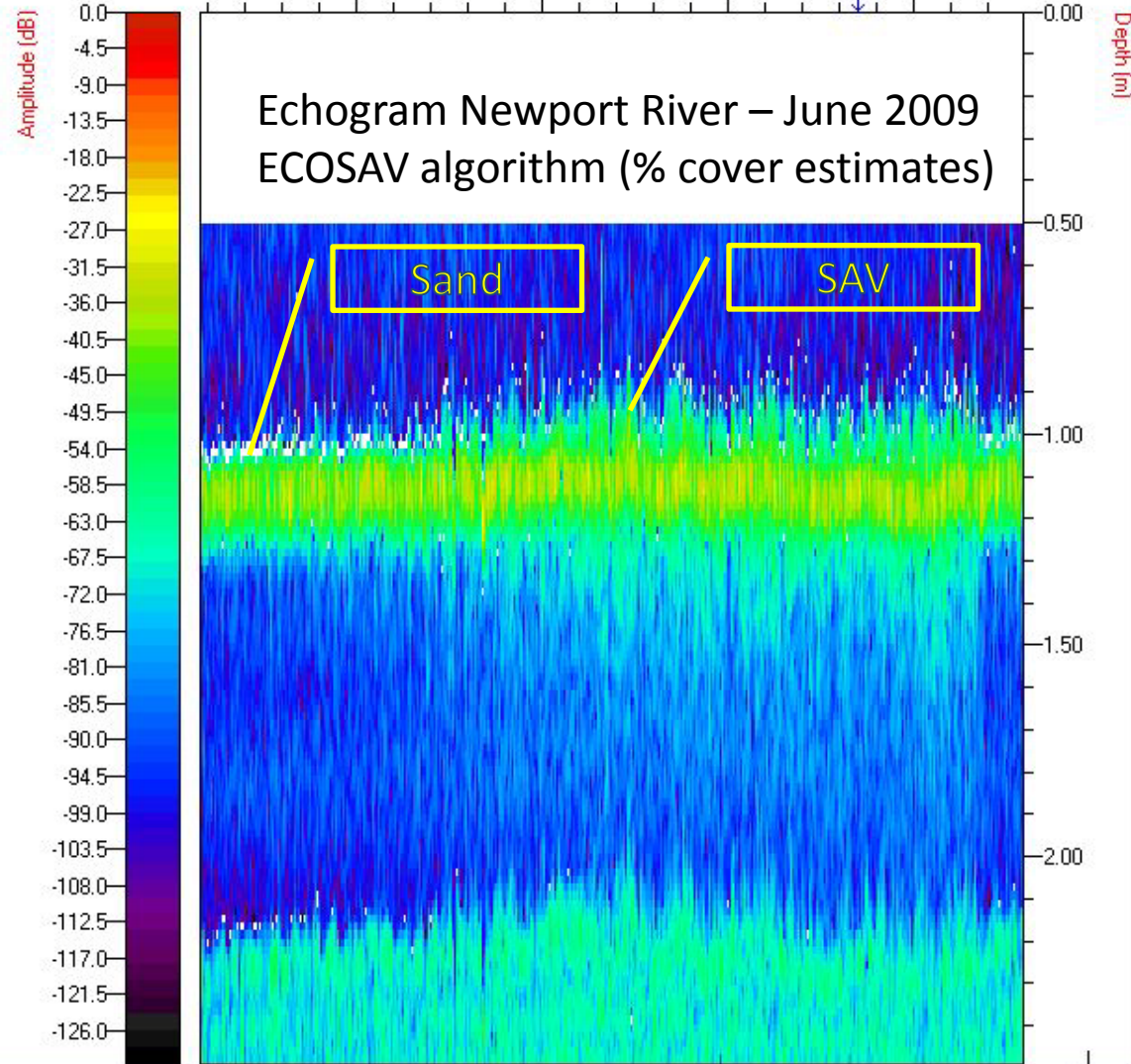
Depth (m)



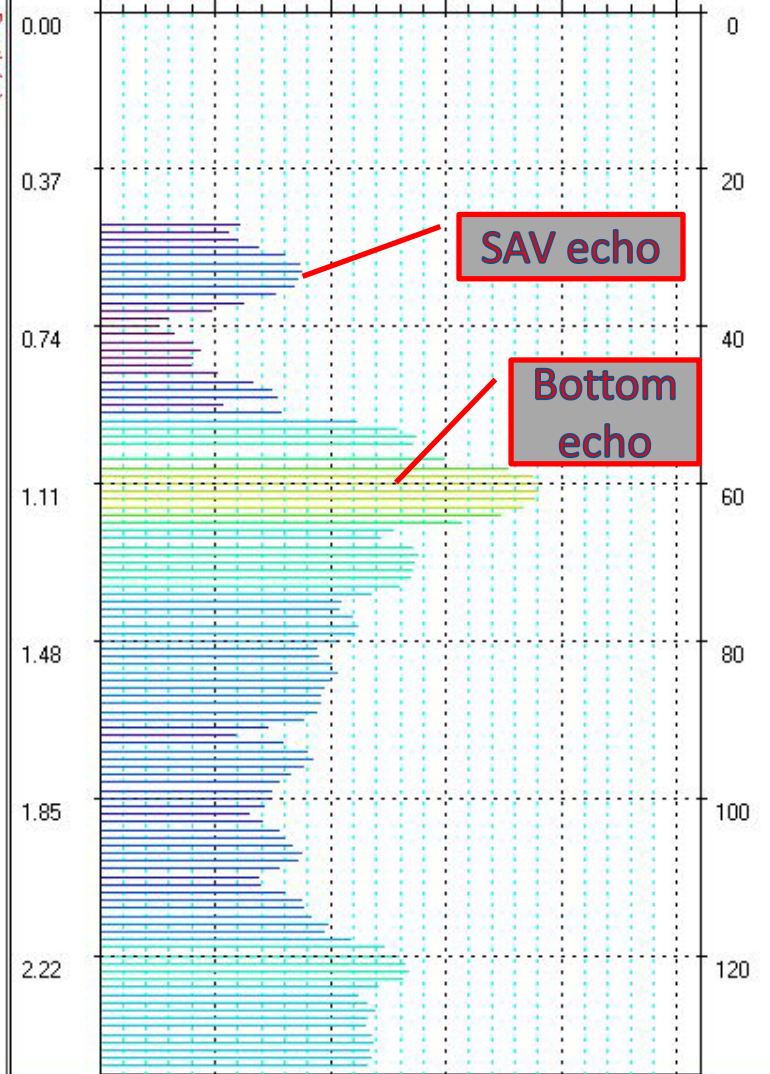
INIT DTX CONFIG DTX CONFIG VALUES START ALL START PINGS PAUSE PINGS LOG DATA MARK EVENT CLOSE FILE ABOUT DTX

PINGING OFF LOGGING OFF

Ping Number
500 600 700 800



5.00 dB Interval
-130 -105 -80 -55 -30 -5

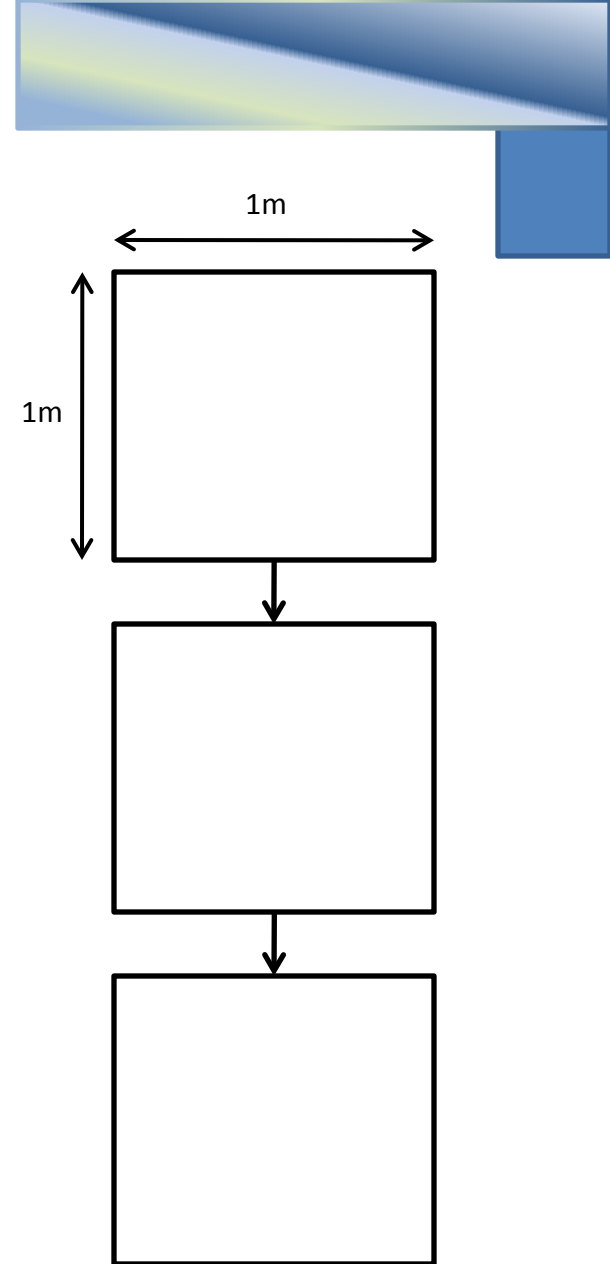




Video Method

- High resolution low light camera
- Differential GPS
- Continuous stamped video – date, time & location
- Camera fixed 13cm above bottom
- Frame size $\sim 0.25\text{m}^2$
- Individual frames classified for SAV presence/absence

The Quadrat Method



Satellite Remote Sensing Approach

WorldView-2 Imagery

- 9 spectral bands:
 - 5 optical (400-450 μm blue band)
 - 3 Infrared bands
 - 1 panchromatic band
- 1.8-m spatial resolution
- 11-bit radiometric resolution
- 1.1-day temporal resolution
- Off-nadir capabilities



Methods and Analysis

- A 300 x 300 m sampling box was overlain on each seagrass site
 - Shore-normal boat transects with video and sonar methods were obtained on or near the same day
- Data were analyzed as SAV presence/absence for comparison
- Fraction of SAV (F_{SAV}) was calculated for video and SONAR

$$F_{SAV} = \frac{N_{SAV}}{N_{Total}}$$

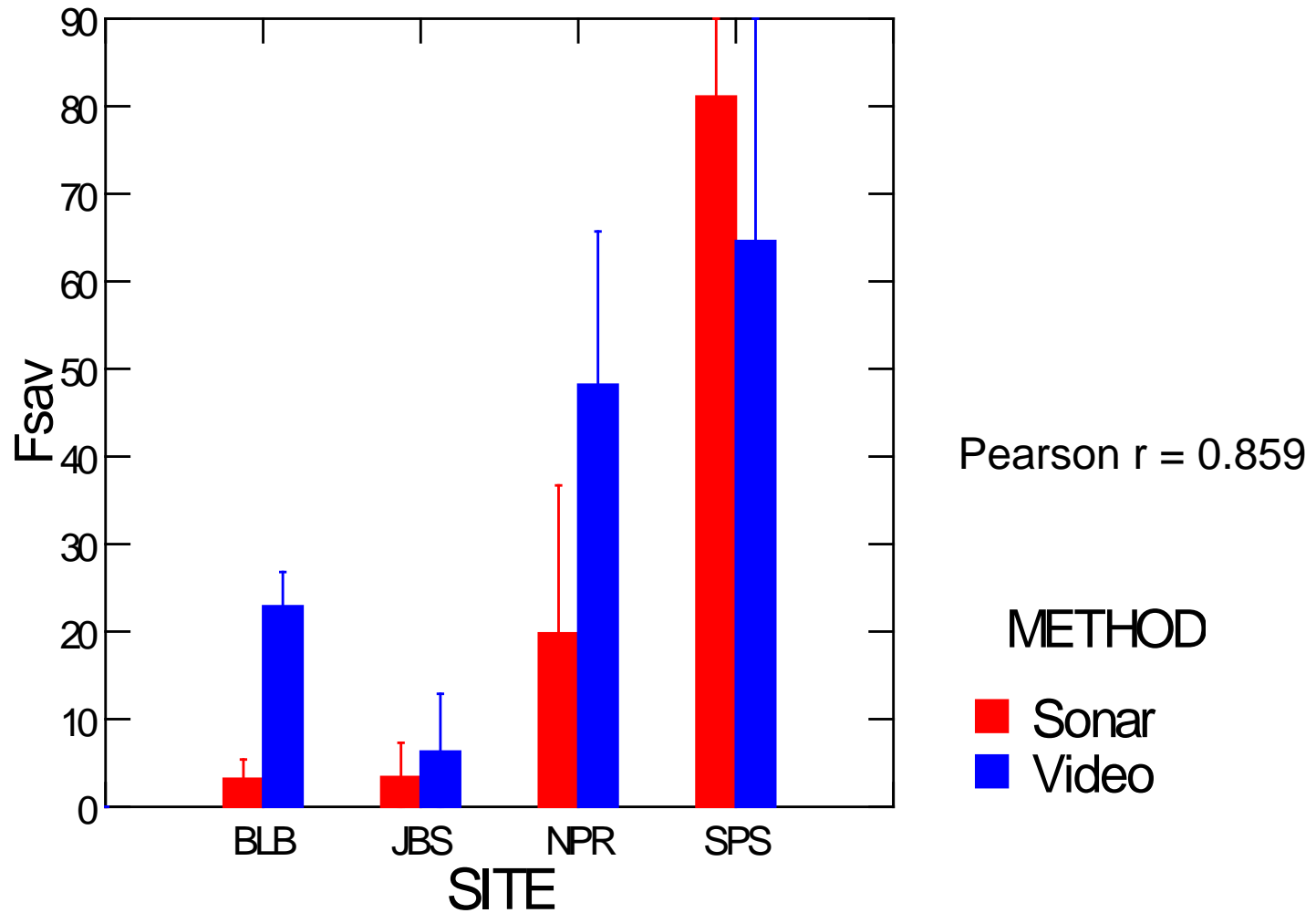
- F_{SAV} is the fraction of SAV present on a transect
 - N_{SAV} is the number of video images or SONAR report with SAV present
 - N_{Total} is the total number of video images analyzed or SONAR reports
- Mean F_{SAV} and SD's were calculated from transects for each site and method
- Power analyses completed with Systat 13 ($\alpha = 0.05$, 2-sample t-test)
 - Desired: $\Delta = 10\%$, with a power of 0.8

Co-Kriging applied to SONAR

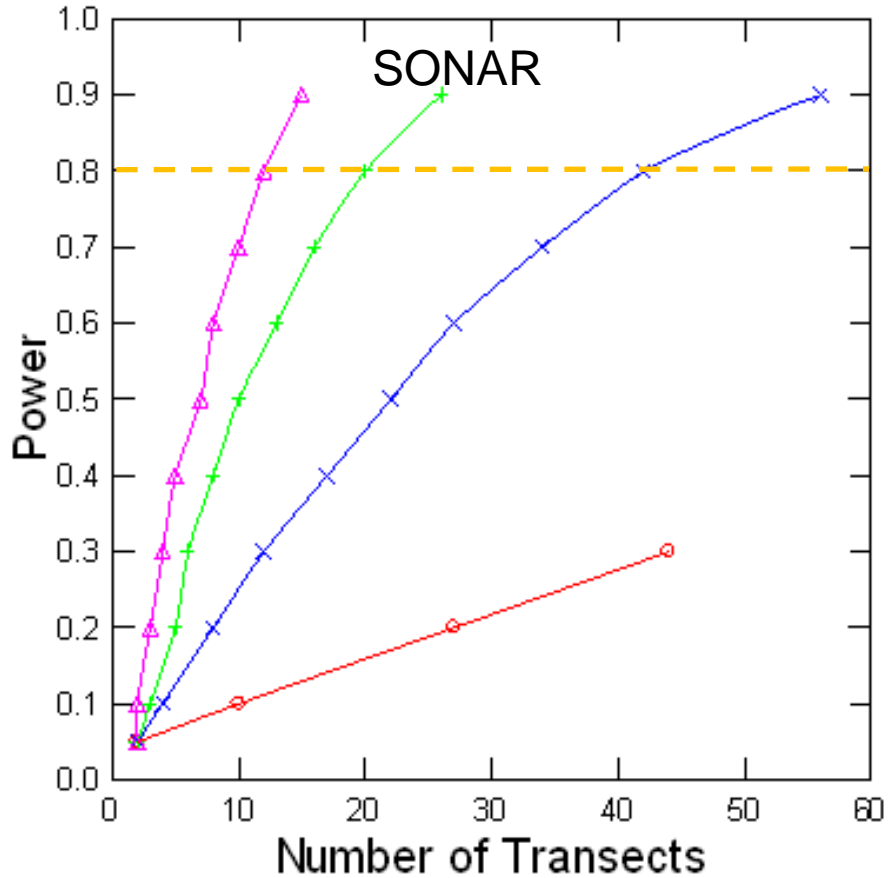
- ARC Map GIS geostatistical software used
- Predicts % cover values at locations where no data exists by using nearby known values
- Uses two correlated variables to improve prediction (% cover and depth)
- Produces Standard Error of predicted surface
- Standard Error increases as distance from known points increases

RESULTS

F_{sav} as quantified by Video & SONAR



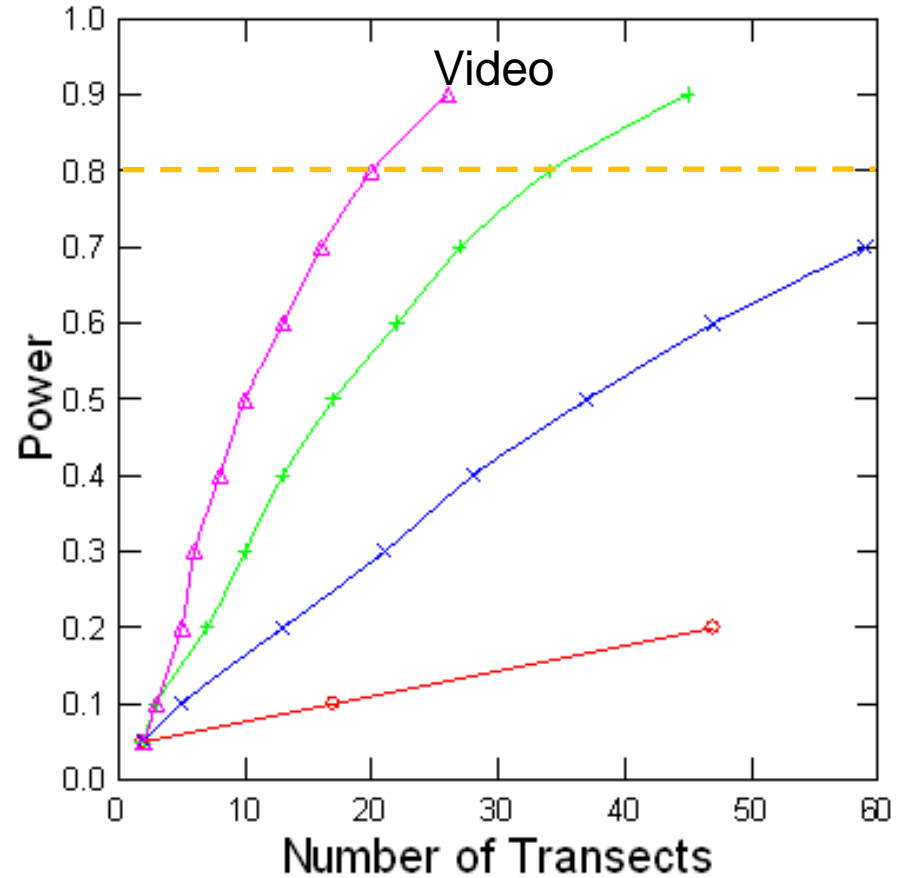
All Sites



Change in F_{sav}

Mean $F_{sav} = 26.9$

- 10% $F_{sav} = 24.2$
- × 20% $F_{sav} = 21.5$
- + 30% $F_{sav} = 18.8$
- △ 40% $F_{sav} = 16.1$



Change in F_{sav}

Mean $F_{sav} = 35.5$

- 10% $F_{sav} = 32.0$
- × 20% $F_{sav} = 28.4$
- + 30% $F_{sav} = 24.9$
- △ 40% $F_{sav} = 21.3$

$\alpha = 0.05$

Site	type	Date	Original Transect #	# Transects Needed $\beta = 0.9$		
				10%	20%	30%
BLB	SONAR	20100626	44	992	249	112
BLB	Video	20100609	5	62	17	8
SPS	SONAR	20100827	44	46	13	7
SPS	Video	20100824	7	551	139	63
JBS	SONAR	20100730	34	2762	691	308
JBS	Video	20100729	9	2303	576	257
NPR	SONAR	20090603	15	1527	384	171
NPR	Video	20090608	15	278	71	32
ALL	SONAR	NA	137	221	56	26
ALL	Video	NA	36	390	99	45

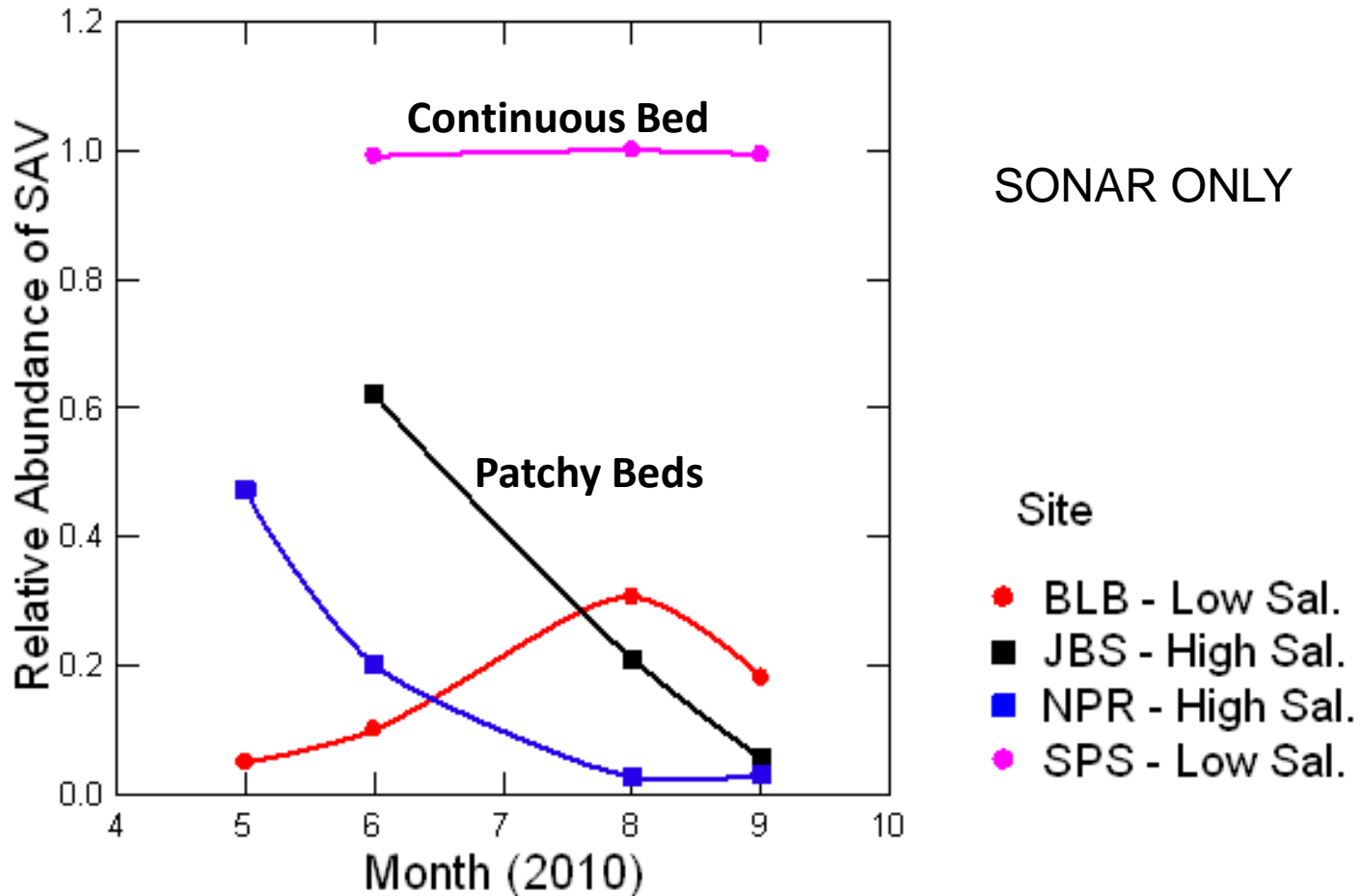


High-salinity sites



Low-salinity sites

Seasonal Change in SAV Area

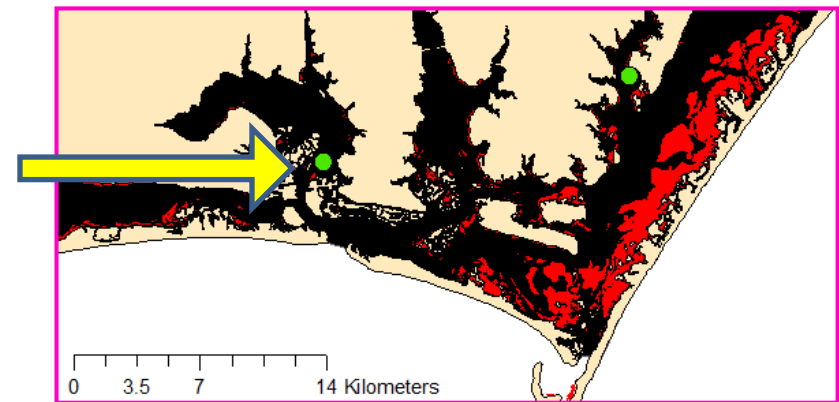
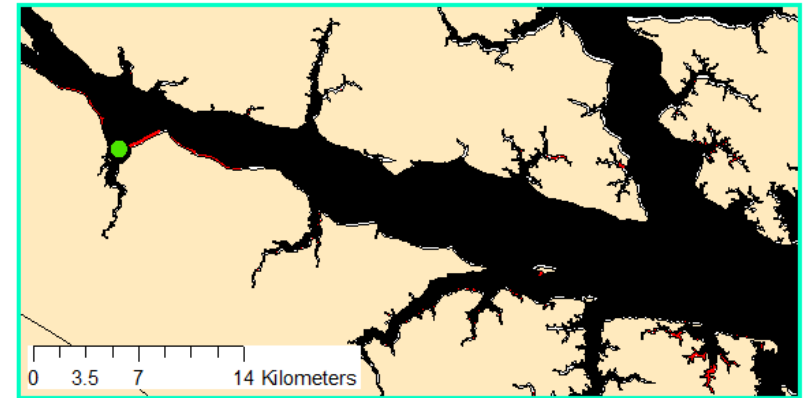
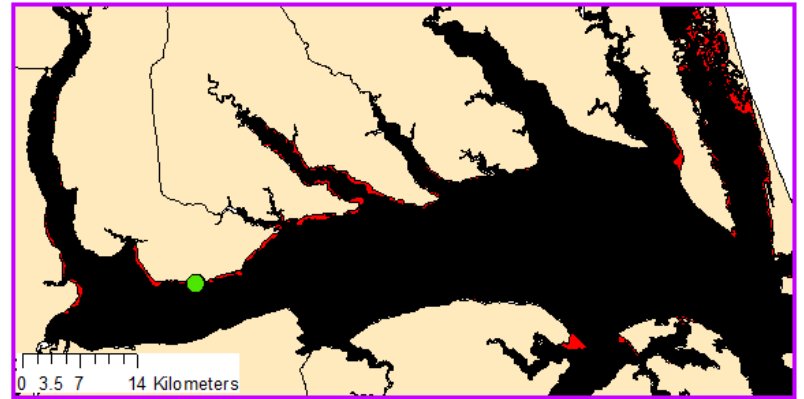


Sonar, video, quadrat remote sensing methods

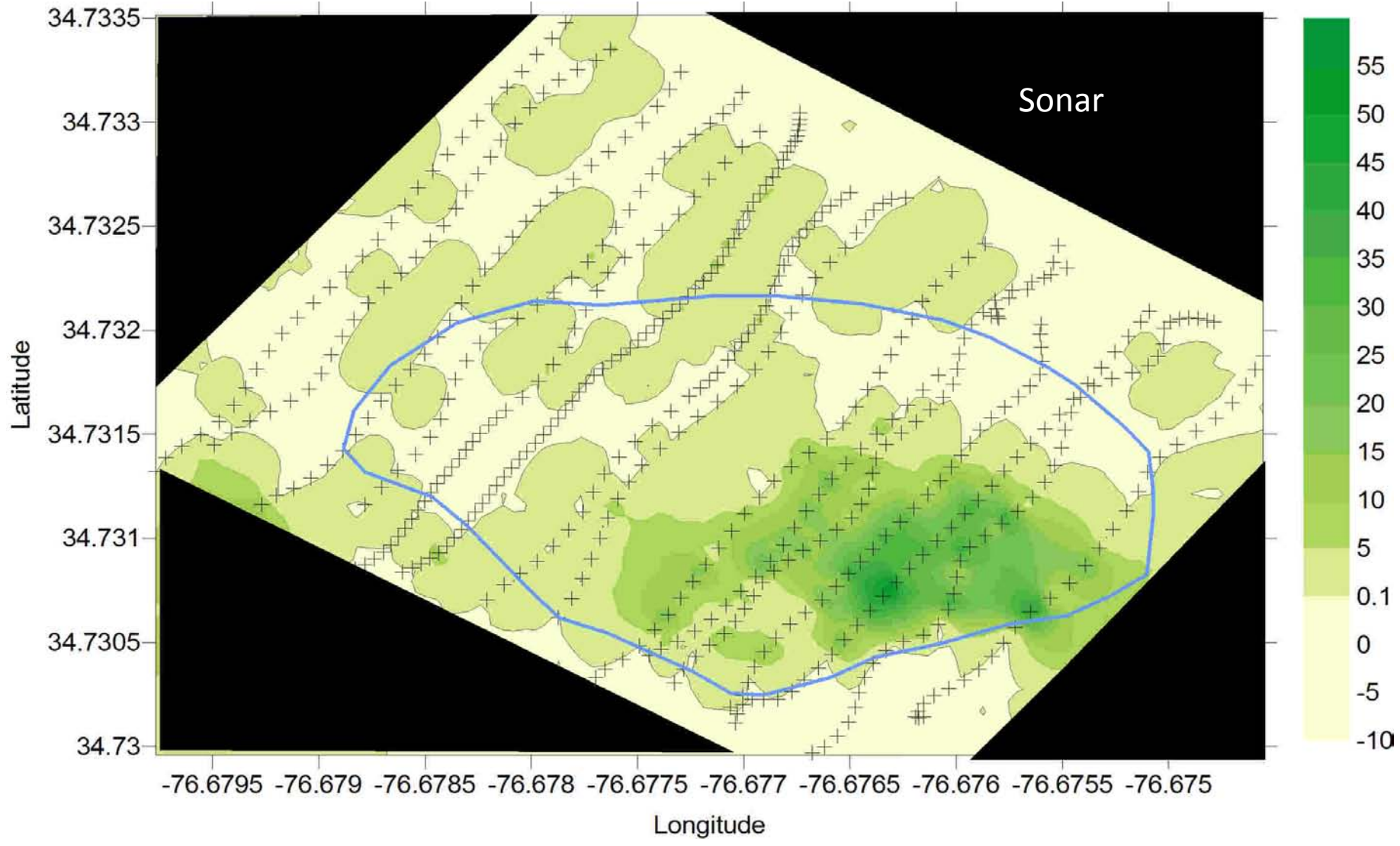
HIGH SALINITY AREAS

Beaufort NC

NEWPORT RIVER



NPR Shore-Normal June 2009



NPR 2010

Deep

September
August

Legend

Quadrat Mean % Cover

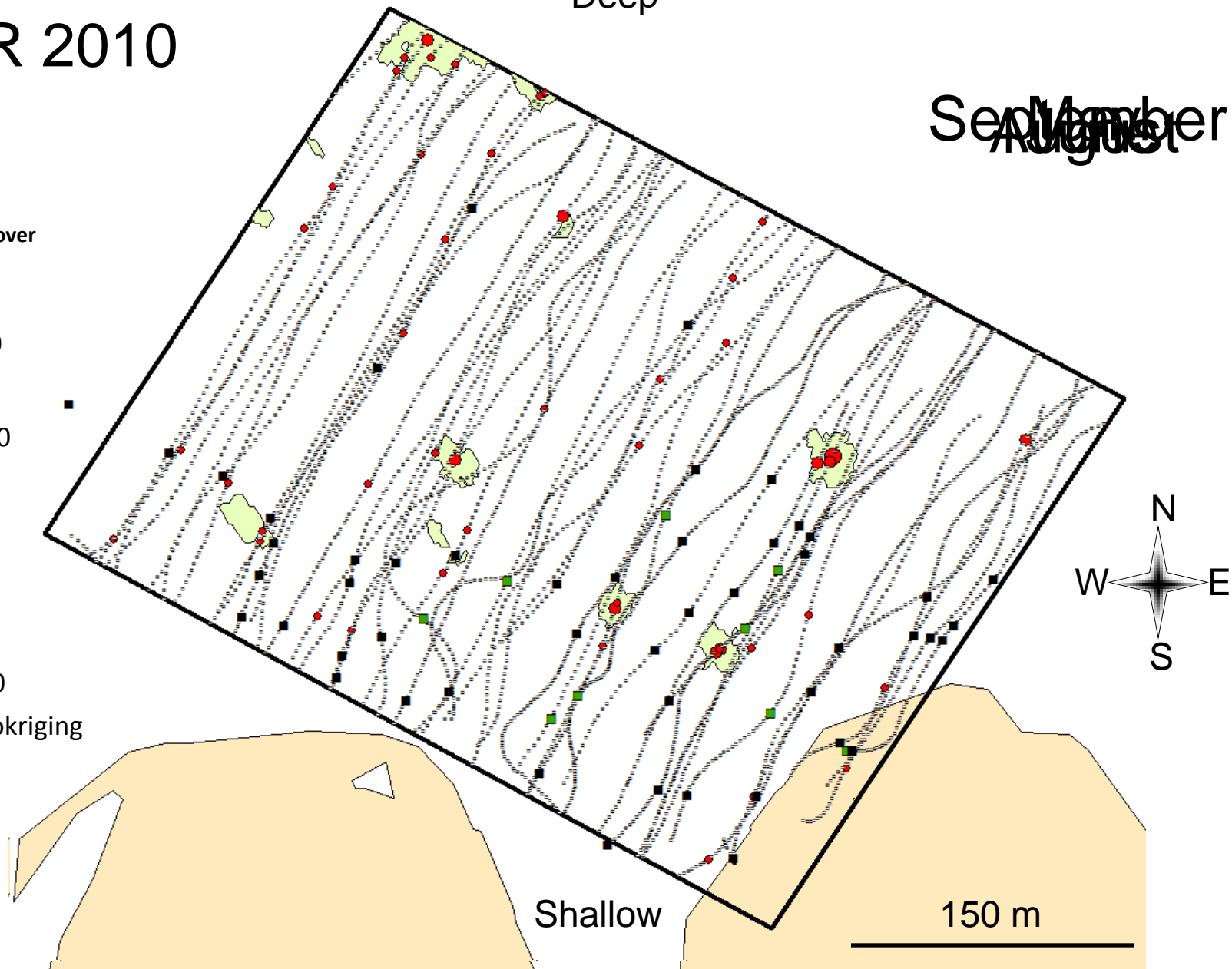
- 0
- 0.1 – 10.0
- 10.1 – 30.0
- 30.1 – 50.0
- 50.1 – 80.0
- 80.1 – 100.0

EcoSav2 % Cover

- 0
- 0.1 – 10.0
- 10.1 – 30.0
- 30.1 – 50.0
- 50.1 – 80.0
- 80.1 – 100.0

EcoSav2 Cokriging

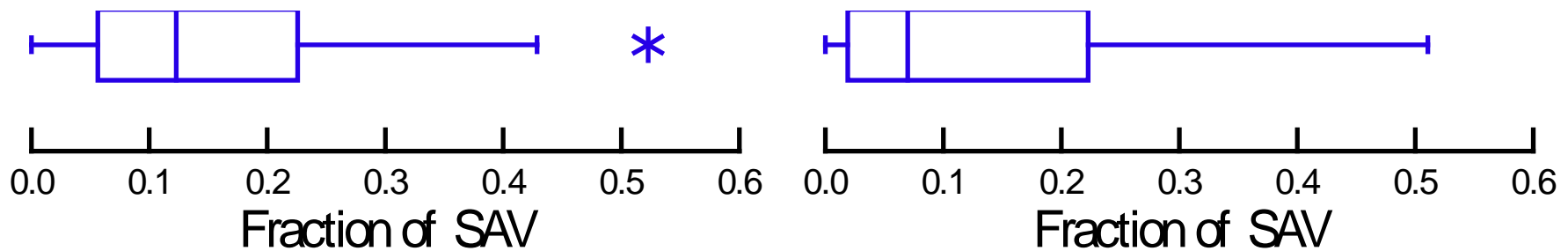
Study Area



NPR Comparison of 2009 and 2010 SONAR data

Mean $F_{sav} = 16.2$
N = 25 transects
3 June 2009

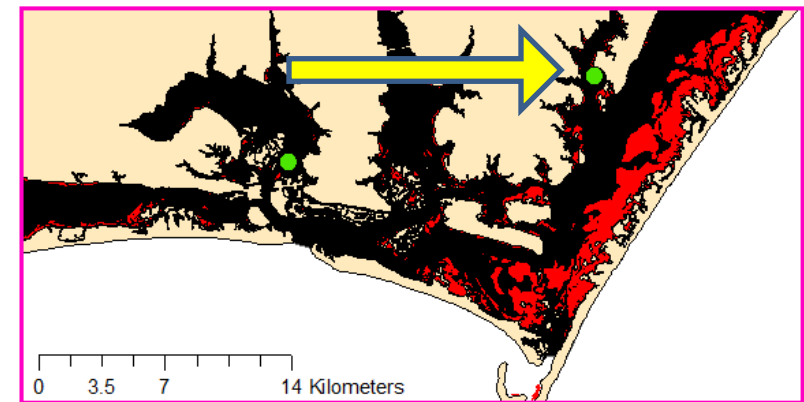
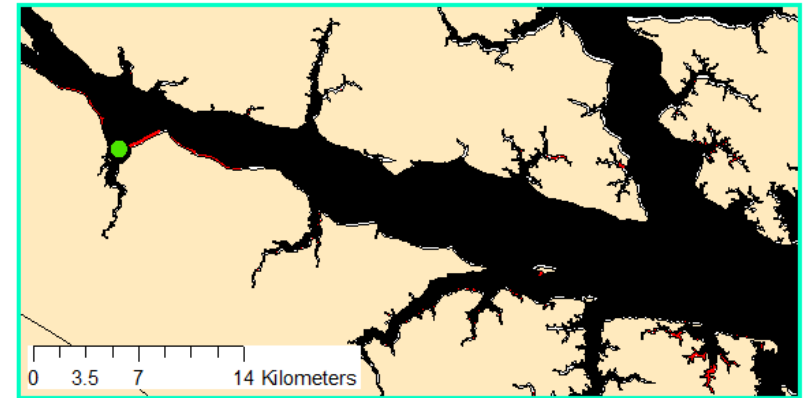
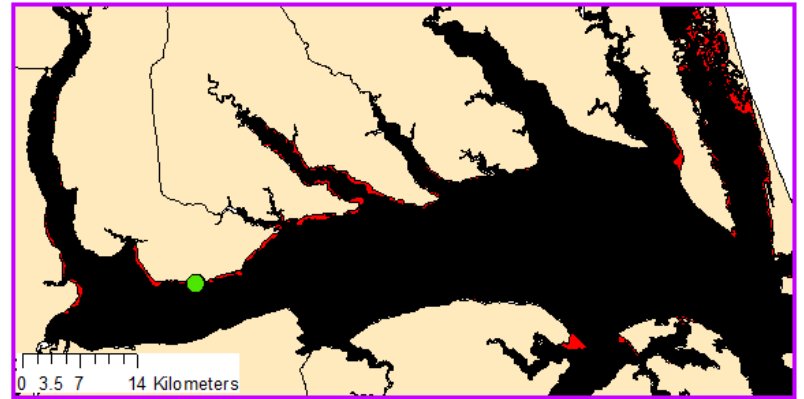
Mean $F_{sav} = 12.1$
N = 72 transects
27 May 2010



Two-sample t-test:
 $t=1.309$, $df=95$, $P = 0.194$

Sonar, video, quadrats, remote sensing

JARRETT BAY






WorldView-2 Image
September 2010

0 150 300 600 Meters

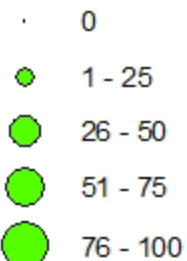


Acoustic Estimate of SAV Coverage Jarrett Bay, June 2010

 June SAV Cover

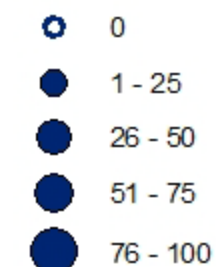
June Acoustics


% Cover



June Quadrats

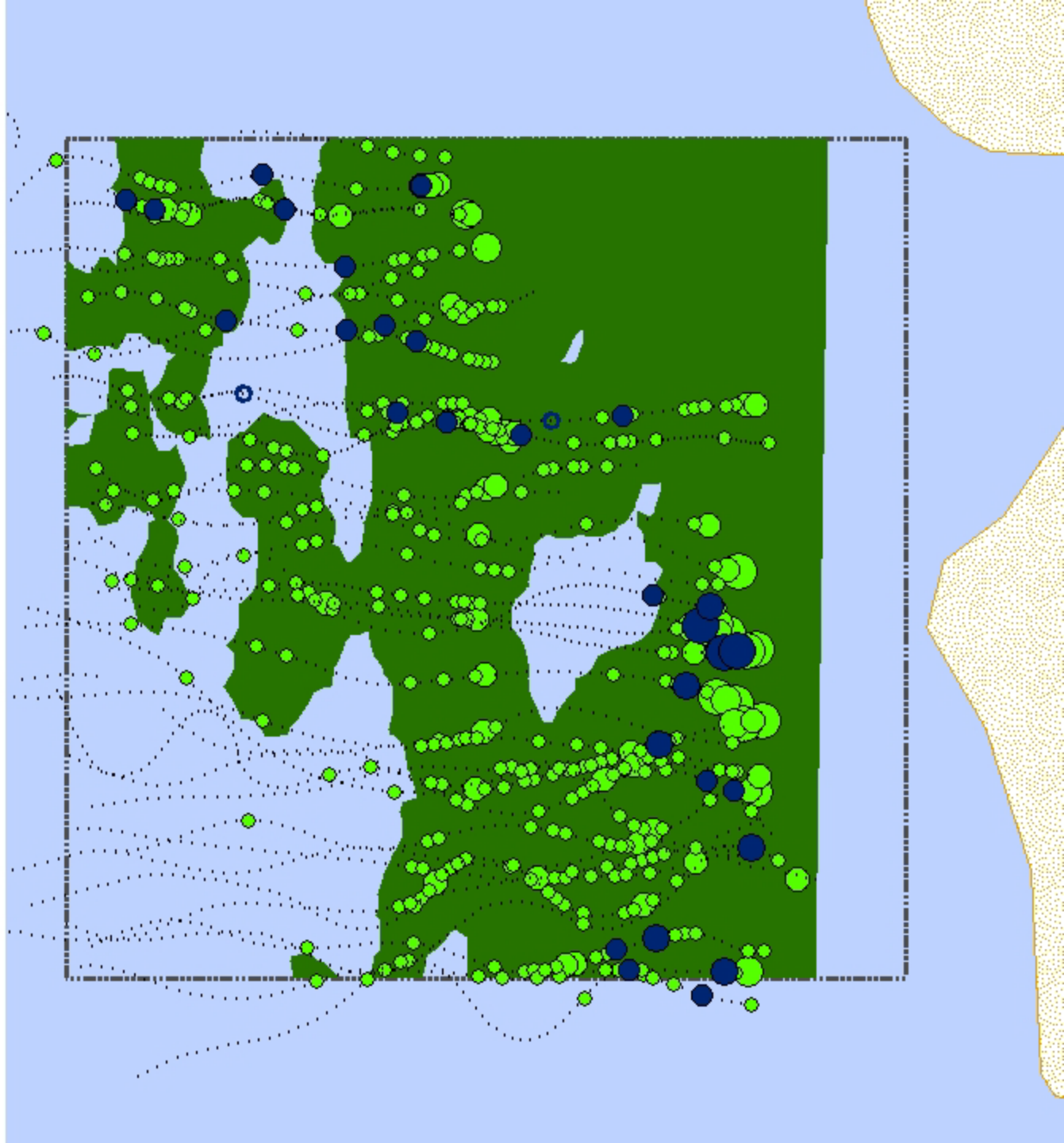
Mean % Cover




 Study Site



0 25 50 100
Meters

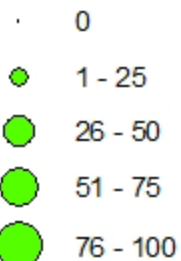


Acoustic Estimate of SAV Coverage Jarrett Bay, July 2010

 July SAV Coverage

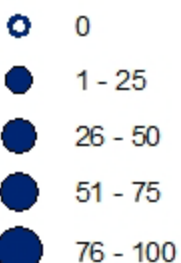
July Acoustics


% Cover

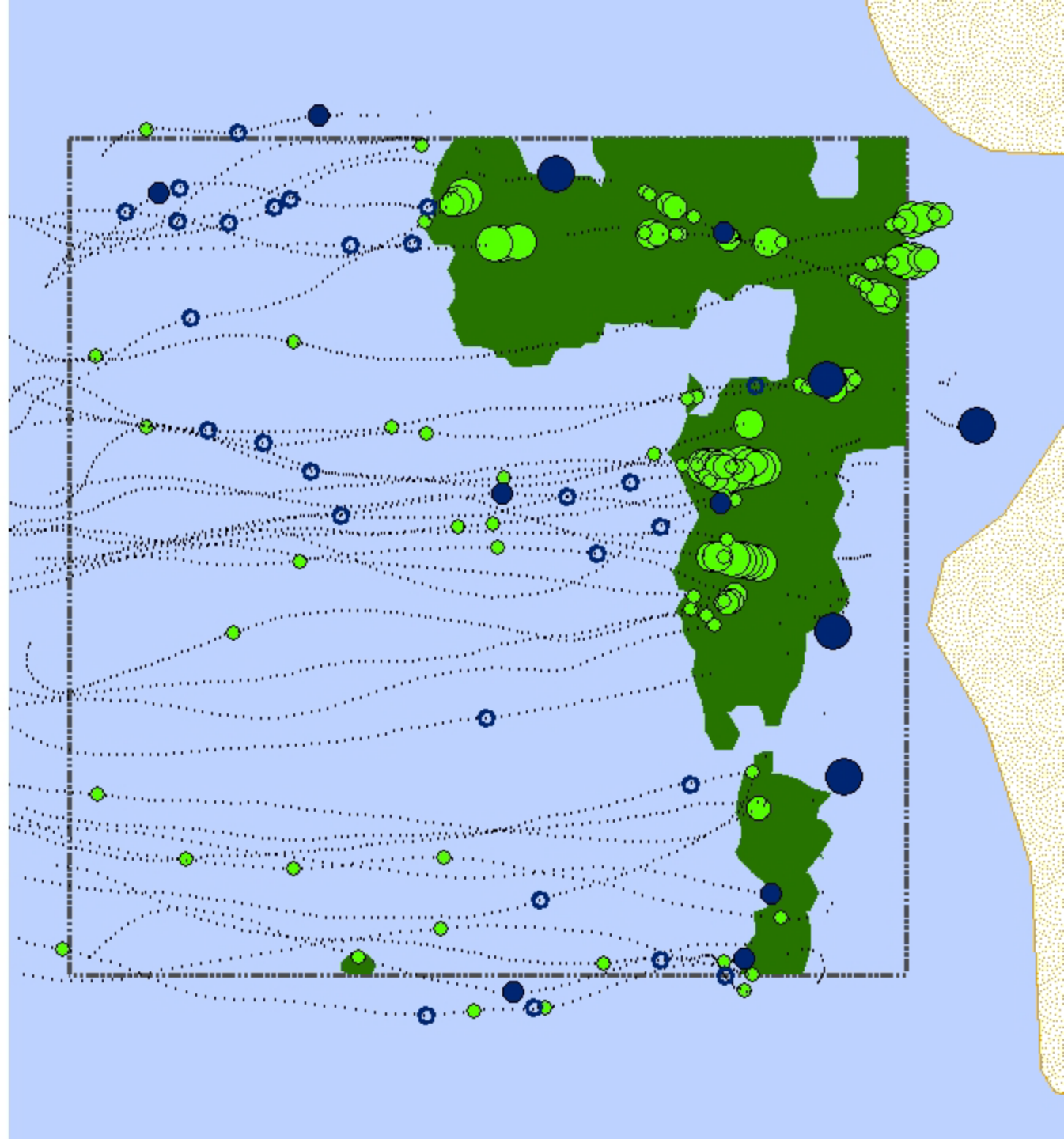
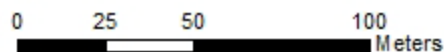


July Quadrats

Mean % Cover




 Study Site








Acoustic Estimate of SAV Coverage

Jarrett Bay, September 2010

 Sept. SAV Coverage






Sept. Acoustics


% Cover

-  0
-  1 - 25
-  26 - 50
-  51 - 75
-  76 - 100

Sept. Quadrats

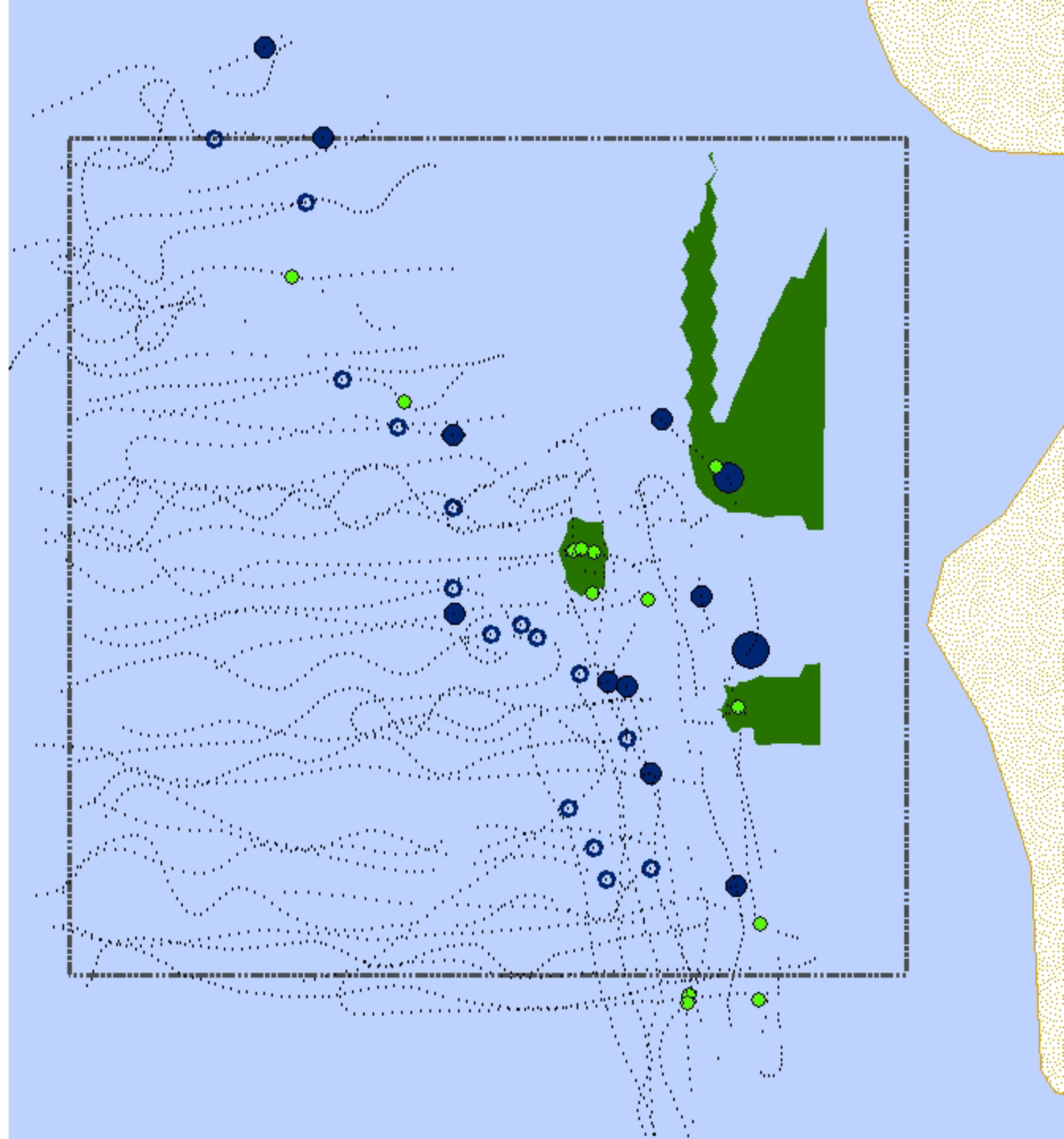
Mean % Cover

-  0
-  1 - 25
-  26 - 50
-  51 - 75
-  76 - 100

 Study Site



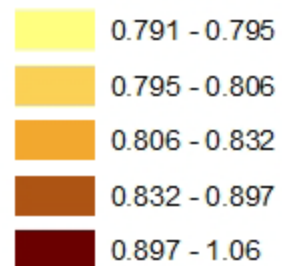
0 25 50 100
Meters



Prediction Standard Error Map

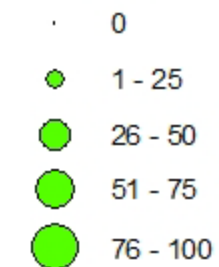
Jarrett Bay, September 2010


Prediction Standard Error Map Filled Contours



Sept. Acoustics

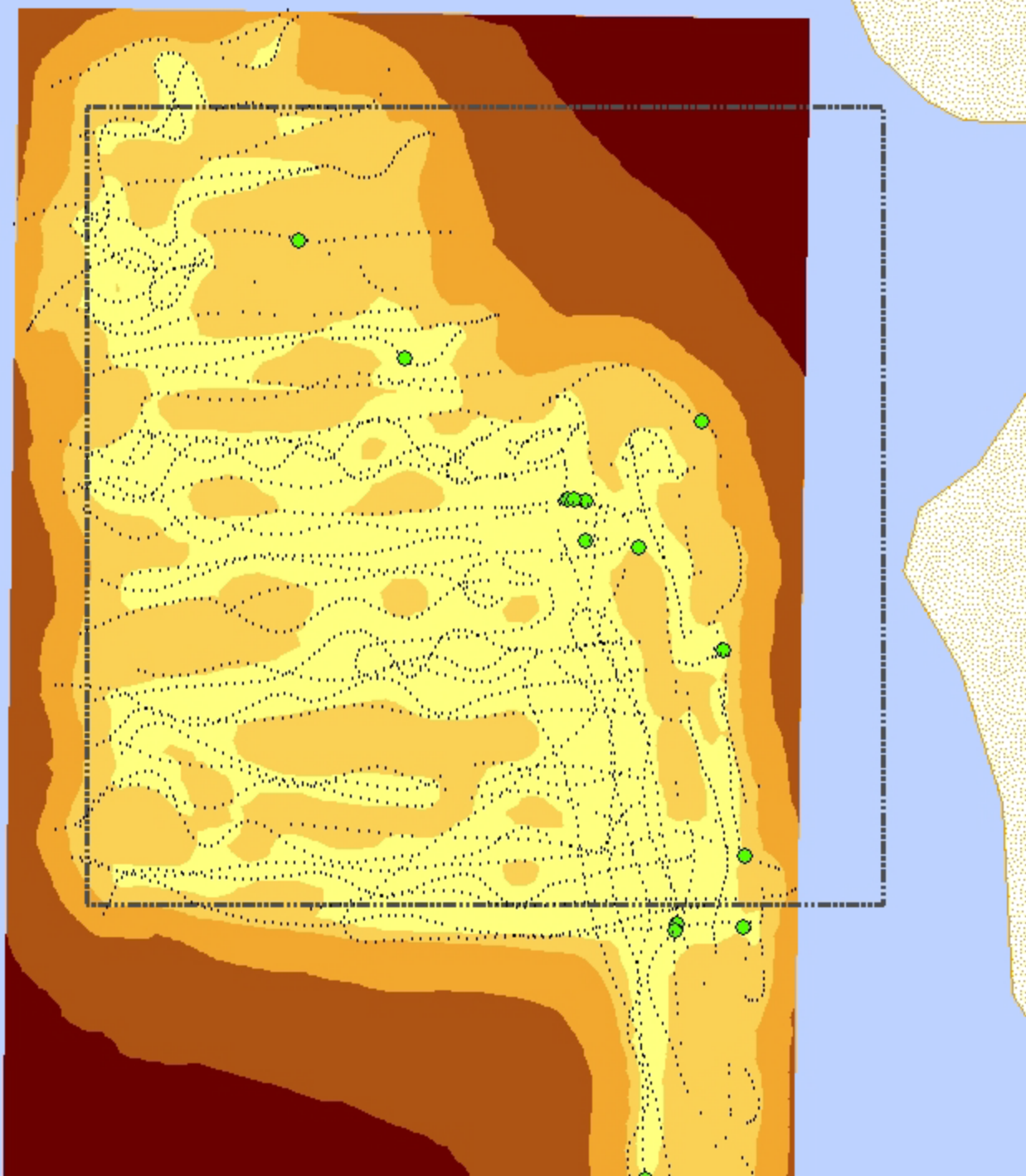
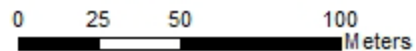
% Cover

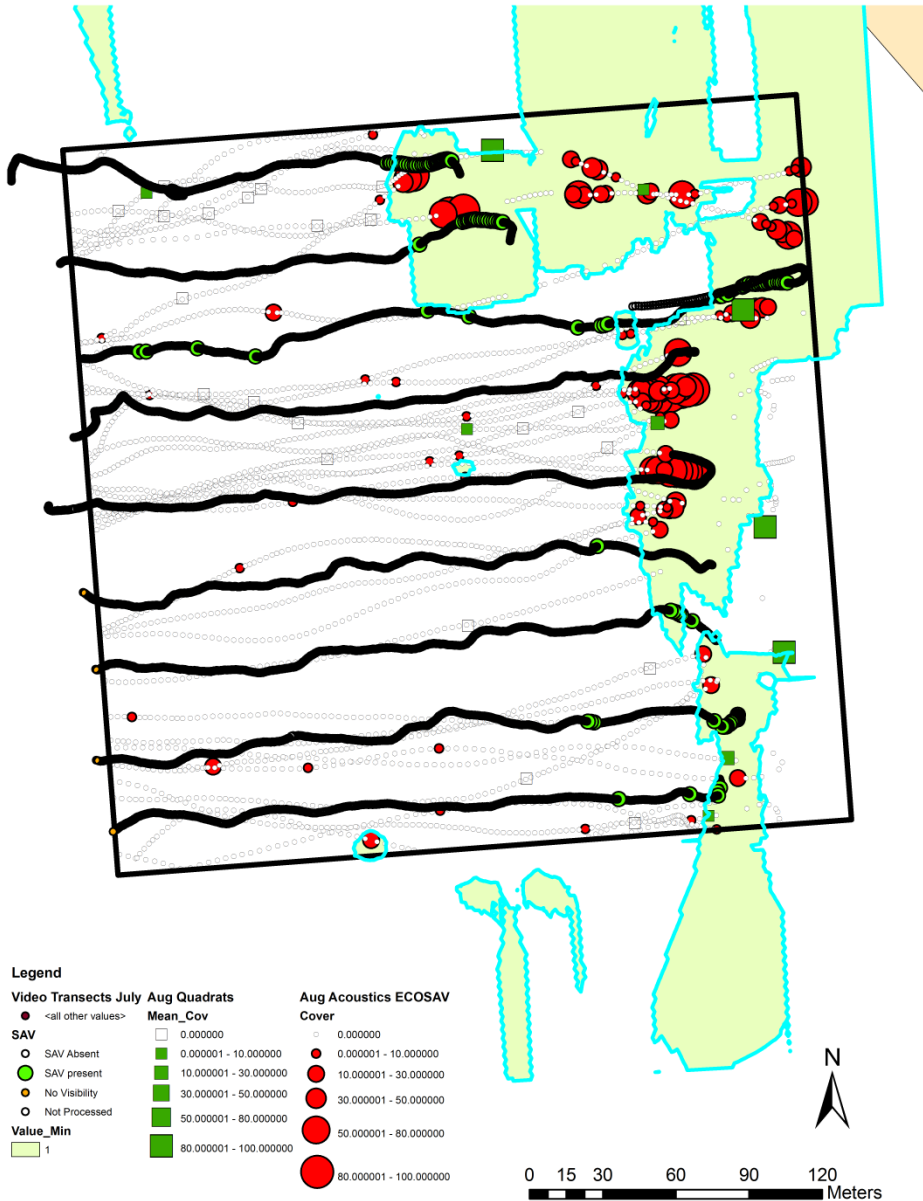


 Study Site



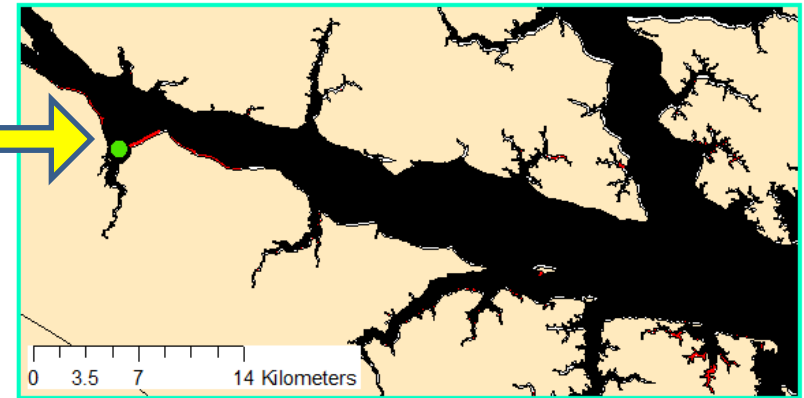
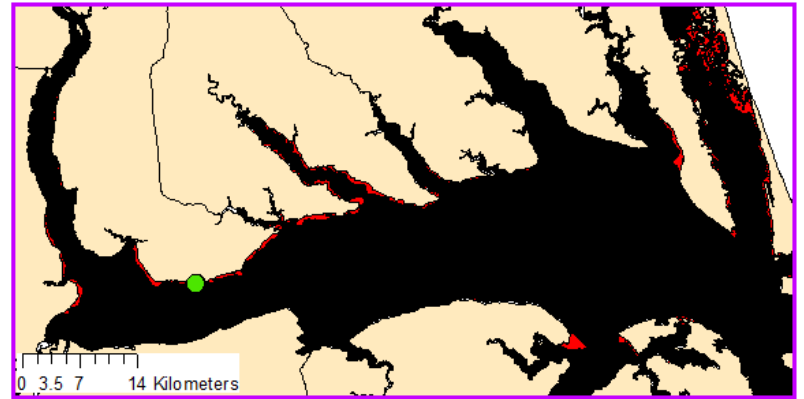
0 25 50 100
Meters





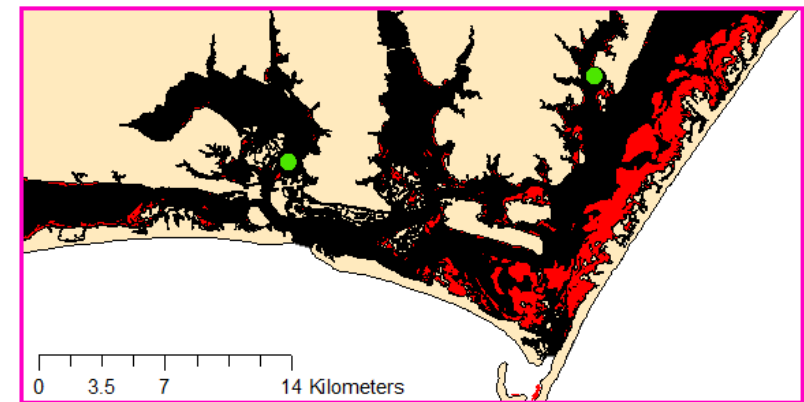
Sonar, video, and quadrats

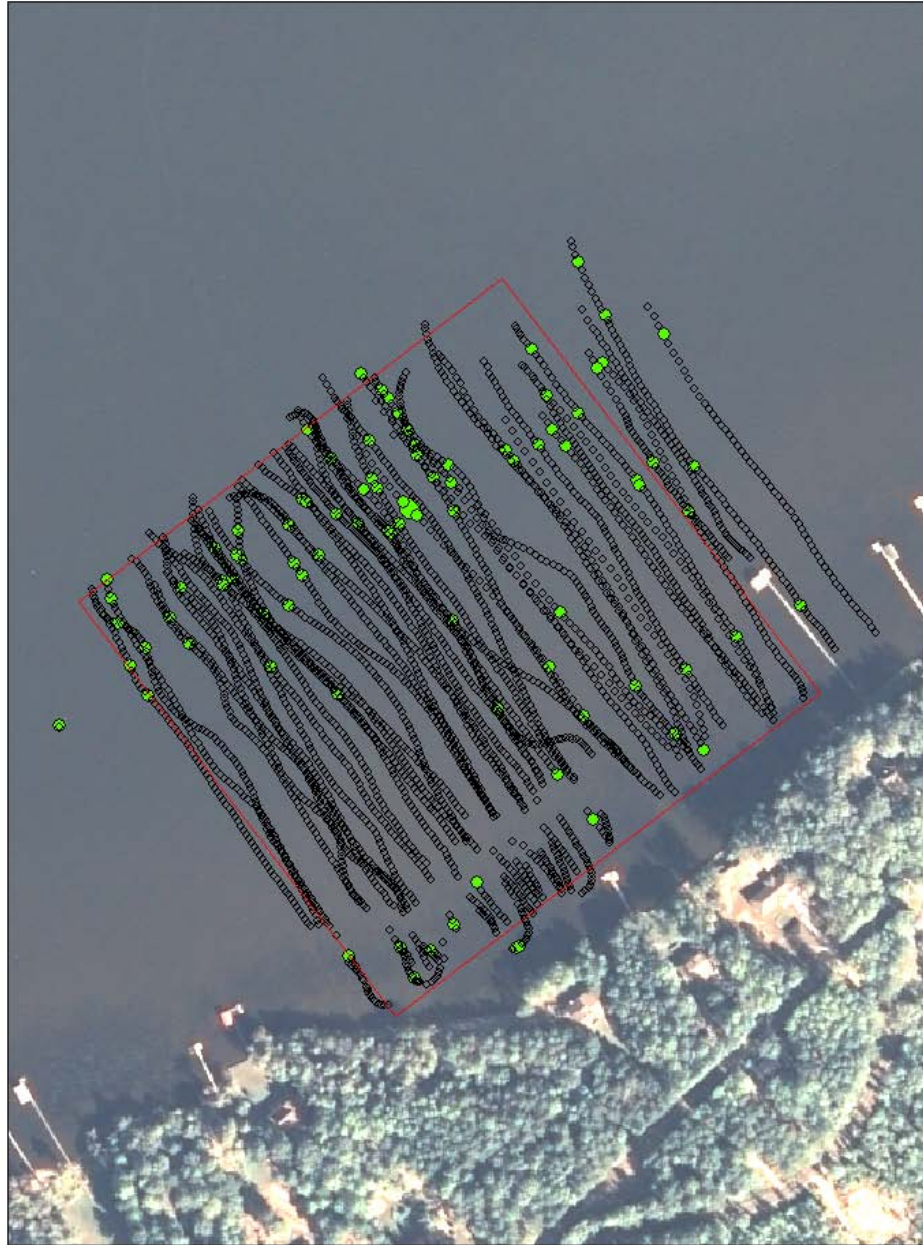
LOW SALINITY AREAS



Pamlico River

BLOUNT'S BAY





Blount's Bay May

BLB May Acoustic

% Cover

- 0
- 1 - 25
- 26 - 50
- 51 - 75
- 76 - 100

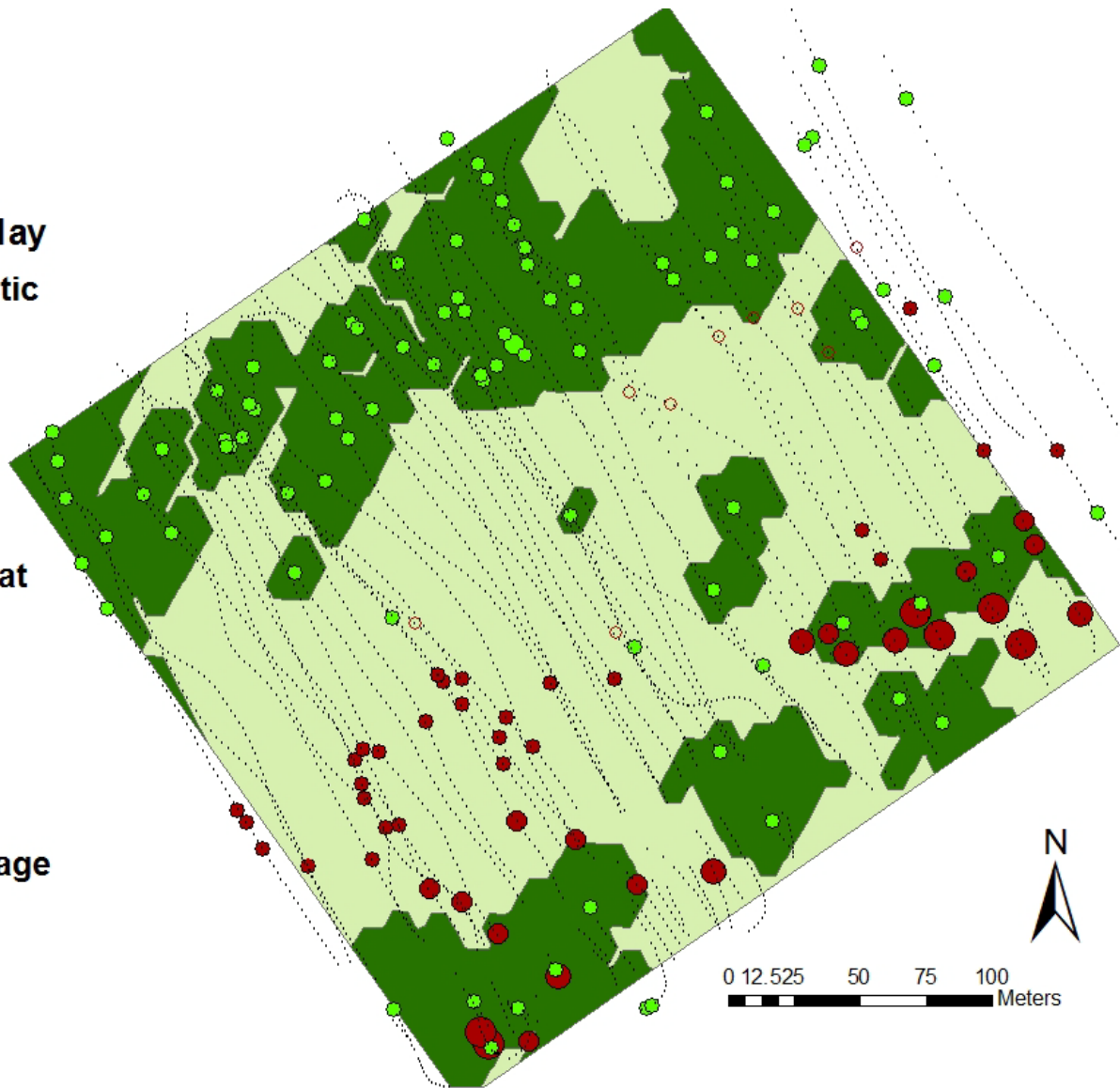
BLB May Quadrat

Mean % Cover

- 0
- 1 - 25
- 26 - 50
- 51 - 75
- 76 - 100

BLB May Coverage

- Absent
- Present



Blount's Bay June

BLB June Quadrat

Mean % Cover

- 0
- 1 - 25
- 26 - 50
- 51 - 75
- 76 - 100

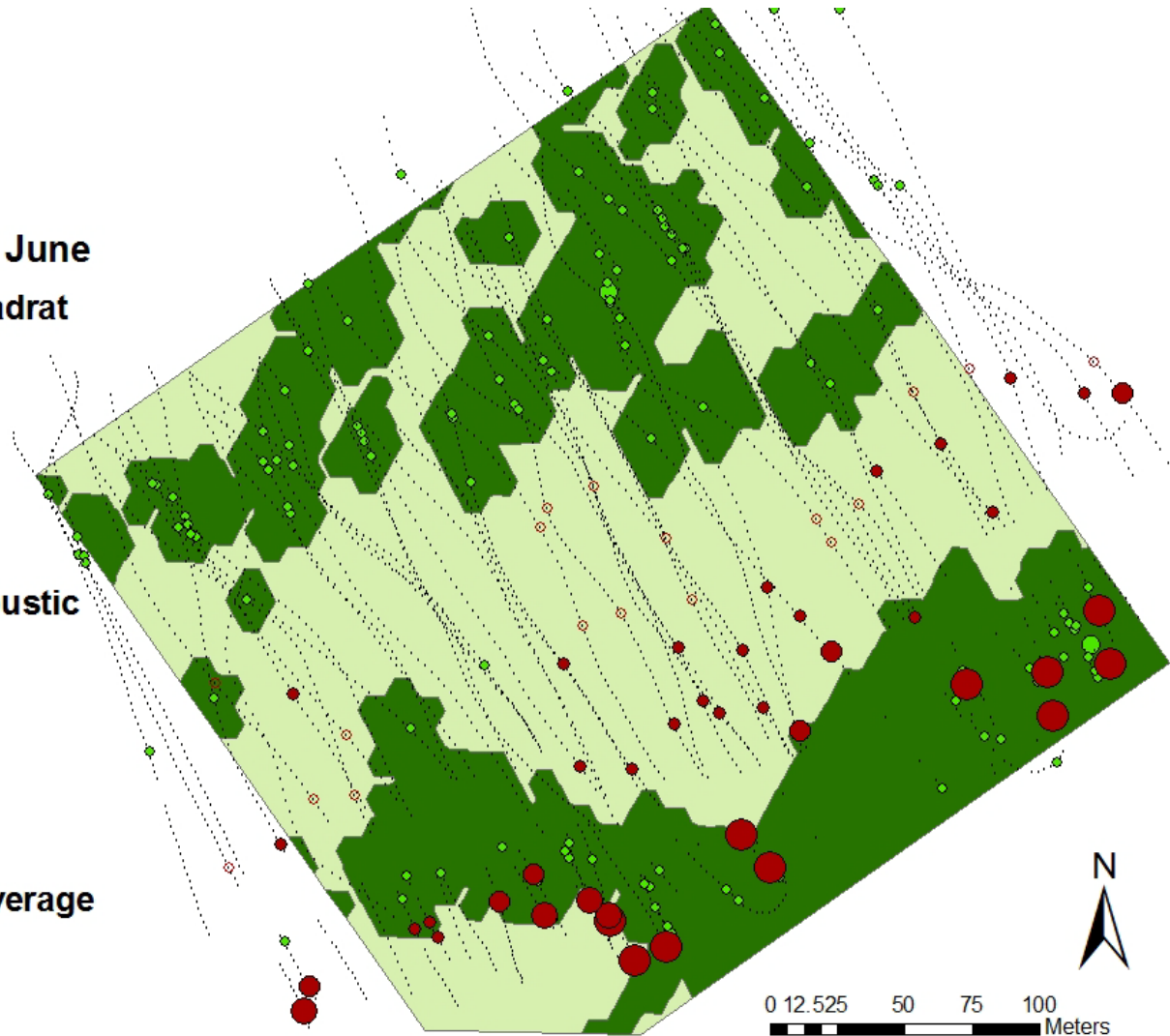
BLB June Acoustic

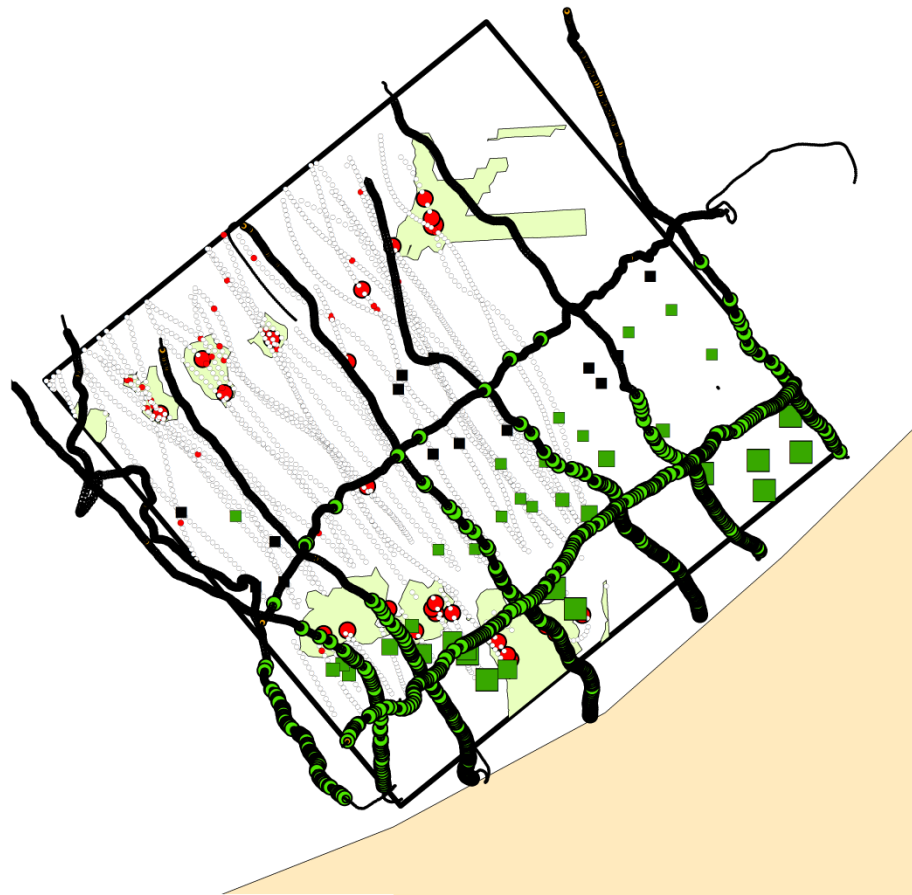
% Cover

- 0
- 1 - 25
- 26 - 50
- 51 - 75
- 76 - 100

BLB June Coverage

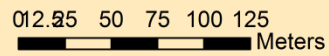
- Absent
- Present

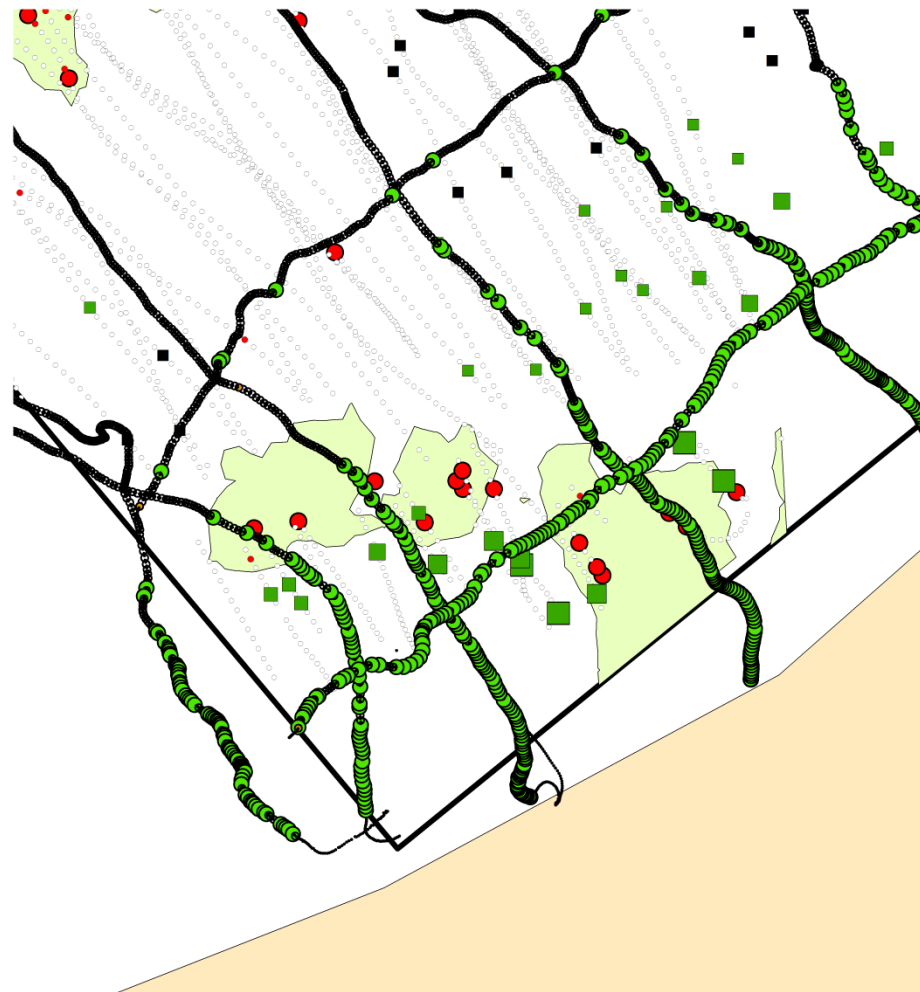




Legend

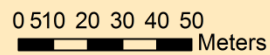
Video Transects	June Quadrat Samples Mean_Cov	June Acoustics ECOSAV Cover
● <all other values>	■ 0.000000	○ 0.000000
○ SAV absent	■ 0.000001 - 10.000000	● 0.000001 - 10.000000
● SAV Present	■ 10.000001 - 30.000000	● 10.000001 - 30.000000
○ Not Visible	■ 30.000001 - 50.000000	● 30.000001 - 50.000000
● Not processed	■ 50.000001 - 80.000000	● 50.000001 - 80.000000
	■ 80.000001 - 100.000000	● 80.000001 - 100.000000
		■ Co-Kriging SAV+ Depth





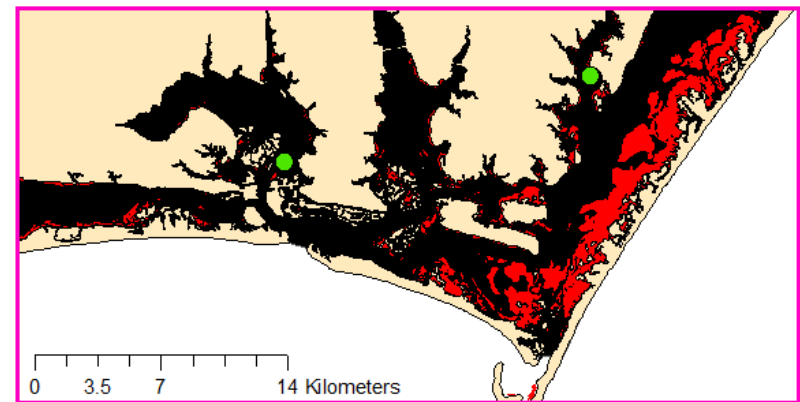
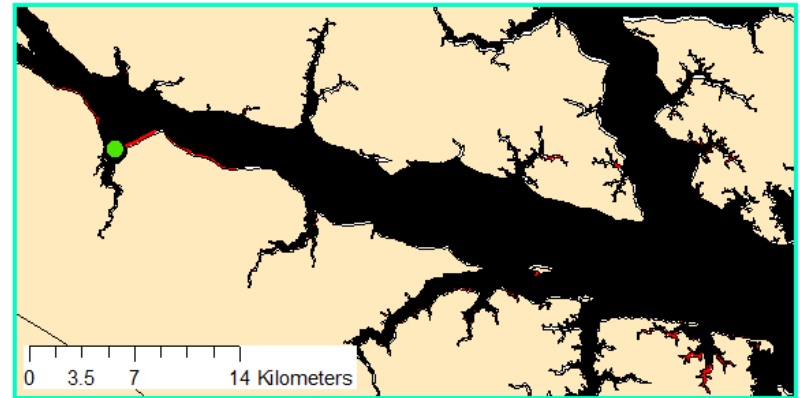
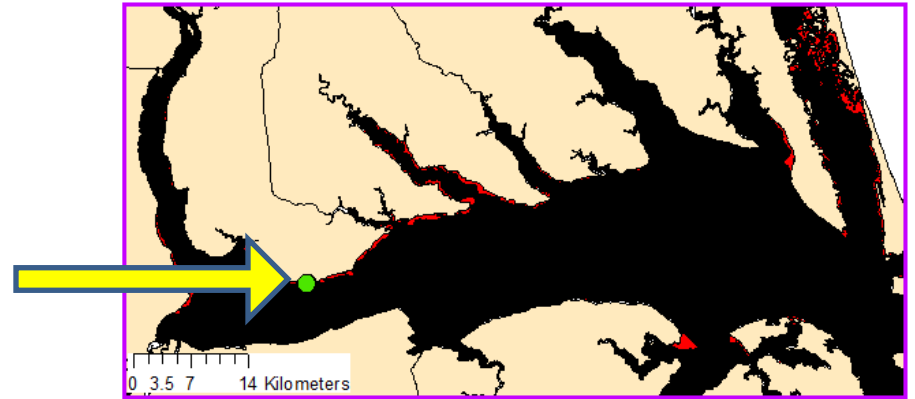
Legend

Video Transects	June Quadrat Samples Mean_Cov	June Acoustics ECOSAV Cover
● <all other values>	■ 0.000000	○ 0.000000
○ SAV absent	■ 0.000001 - 10.000000	● 0.000001 - 10.000000
● SAV Present	■ 10.000001 - 30.000000	● 10.000001 - 30.000000
○ Not Visible	■ 30.000001 - 50.000000	● 30.000001 - 50.000000
● Not processed	■ 50.000001 - 80.000000	● 50.000001 - 80.000000
	■ 80.000001 - 100.000000	● 80.000001 - 100.000000
		■ Co-Kriging SAV+ Depth



Albemarle Sound

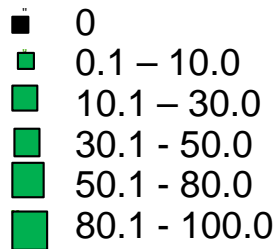
SANDY POINT



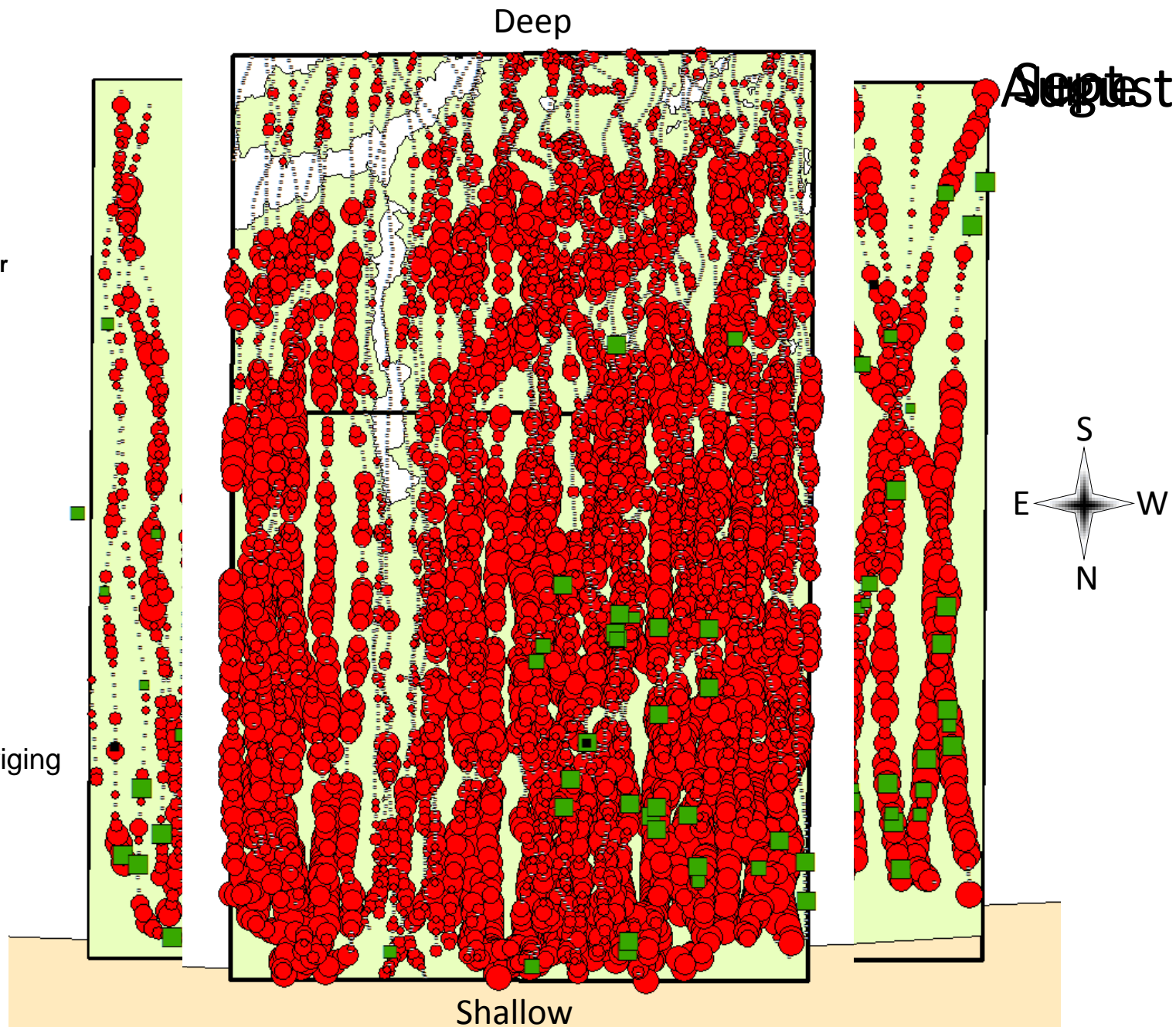
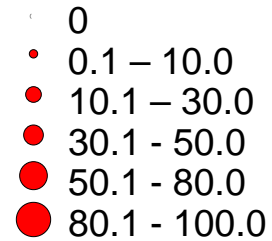
SPS 2010

Legend

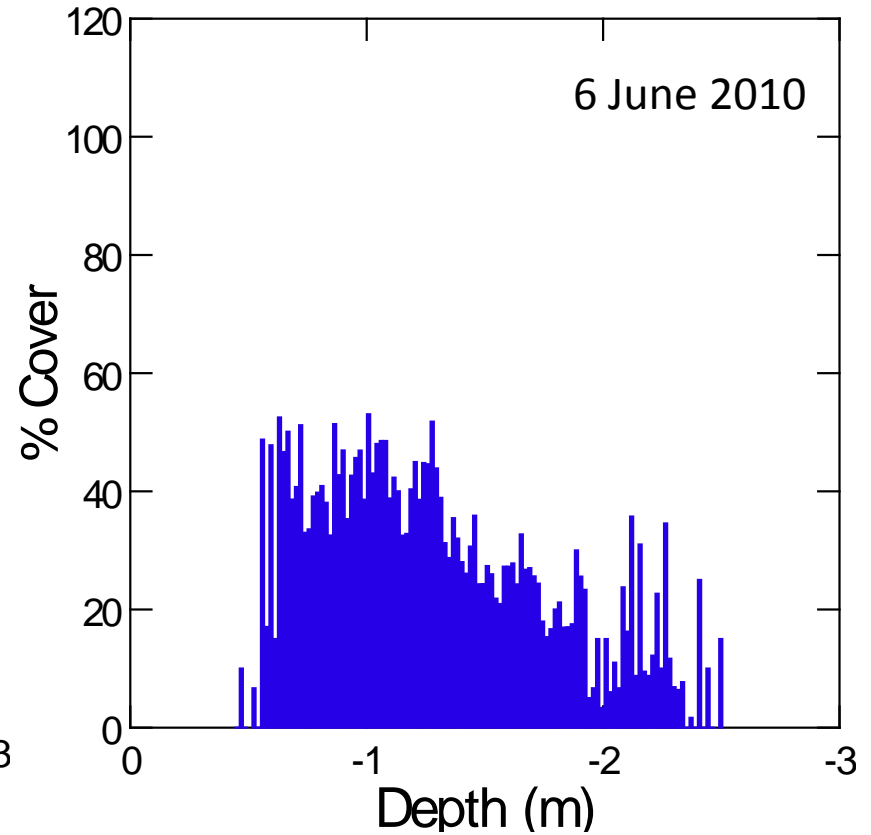
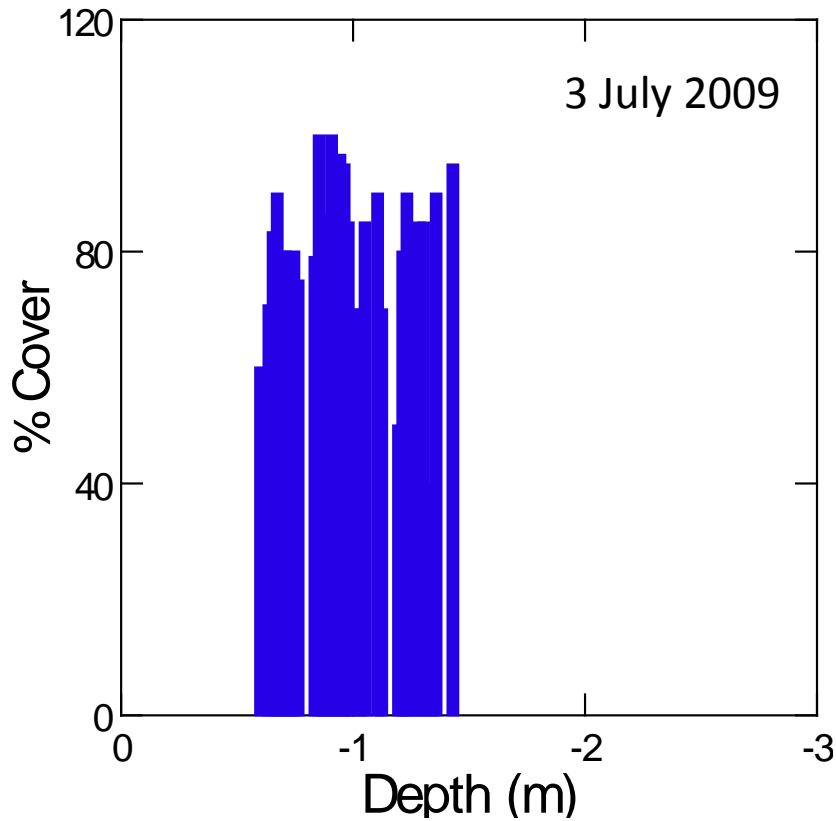
Quadrat Mean % Cover



EcoSav2 % Cover



SPS Comparison 2009 and 2010

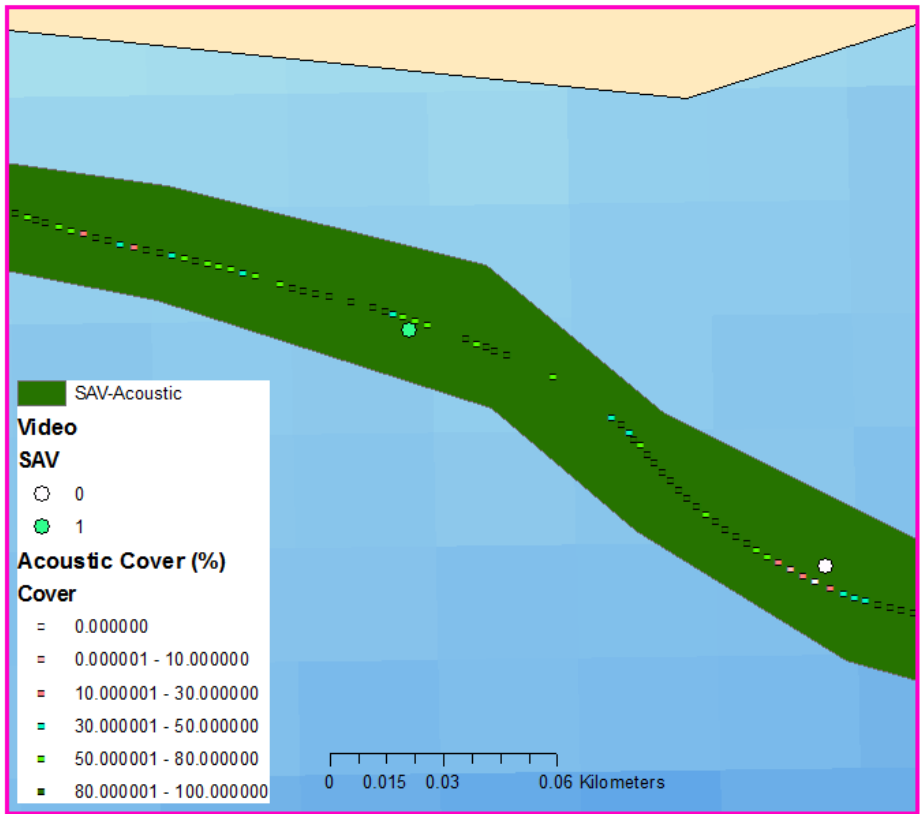
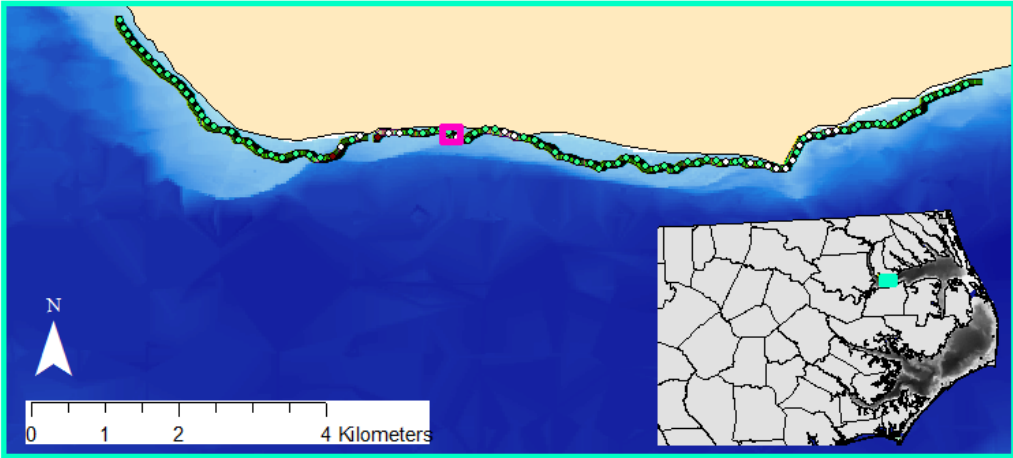


Accuracy of SONAR

- 6 sites (Percent Accuracy)
 - 2 in the Albemarle Sound (82%, 98%)
 - 2 in the Pamlico River (78%, 98%)
 - 1 in the Bay River (96%)
 - 1 in the Neuse River (95%)

Overall Accuracy

	SAV-Absent	SAV-Present
SONAR	520	218
Video	574	164
Accuracy		93% (684/738)





Discussion

- Tremendous seasonal and between-year variability
 - Will require high sampling effort to detect a 10% change, may be unrealistic
 - Up to 70% change within a year is natural
- All sites with current effort, to detect a change:
 - SONAR: 20% change in F_{sav} ($\alpha = 0.05$, power ≥ 0.8)
 - Video: 40% change in F_{sav} ($\alpha = 0.05$, power ≥ 0.8)
- May need to stratify sampling by bed-type: continuous vs. patchy
 - Continuous: we can detect a 10% change with our current sampling effort ($\alpha = 0.05$, power = 0.9)
 - Patchy: With current sampling effort, we can detect 20-40% change in F_{sav} ($\alpha = 0.05$, power ≥ 0.8)
- Video and SONAR methods show similar trends in F_{sav}
 - Differences in methods related to depth, SAV density, plant height
 - Sparse SAV not easily detected with SONAR
 - SONAR has plant height threshold (SAV ≥ 4 cm) limit
 - Video may under-sample tall plants (SPS area)

SONAR Pros and Cons

- Cons of SONAR:
 - Water depth limit: > 0.8 m
 - SAV height limit: > 4 cm but does detect smaller
 - Can't tell species of SAV
 - Bottom type: mud, algae may give false positives
- Pros:
 - Fast (90,000 m² area, set-up acquisition and analysis is do-able in 1 d/site, 30 transects/site)
 - Good for finding deep edge of SAV
 - Bathymetry is obtained simultaneously
 - Can estimate SAV change over a large area on a short (weeks/months) or long (years) time scale

Video Pros and Cons

- Cons of Video:
 - Water depth limit: > 0.5 m
 - Turbidity is a problem in some areas
 - Acquisition and analysis takes a long time (~120 h/site (3 weeks), 30 transects/site)
 - Will limit sampling to fewer transects/site
 - Presence/absence data
- Pros:
 - Good accuracy, larger estimates of SAV area
 - Species identification possible (algae vs. SAV)
 - Sensitive to sparse and small plants

Final Protocol for SAV Monitoring

- **We suggest using multiple methods:**
 - Aerial digital imagery (DMC) is best for shallow ($\leq 1\text{m}$) water environments
 - Large area of coverage (whole NC coast)
 - Still problems with turbid areas, sun angle, and cloud cover
 - Will miss the “invisible grass” in rivers
 - SONAR and video together can be used to ground truth digital imagery at water depths $\geq 1\text{ m}$ at **sentinel sites**
 - Smaller total area, with 50 sites/region
 - Monitor in peak biomass season
 - May, June for high-salinity regions
 - Sep for low-salinity regions

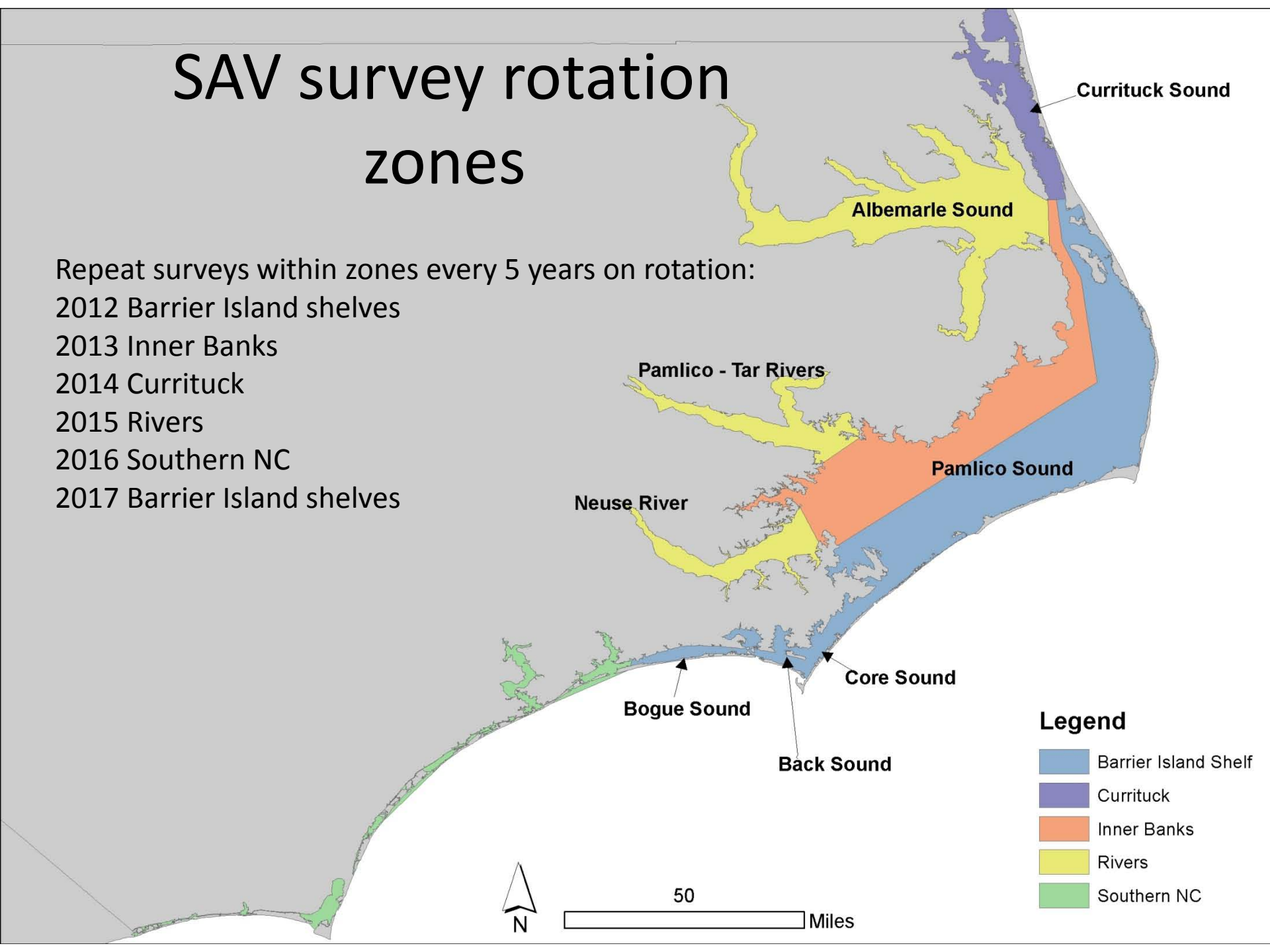
Stratify by Geographical Regions

- Five regions, with X sites/region
 - Barrier Islands (polyhaline 18-35 ppt)
 - Southern NC (polyhaline 18-35 ppt)
 - Rivers and sounds (oligohaline 0-10 ppt: Albemarle, Pamlico R., Neuse R.)
 - Currituck Sound (oligohaline 0-10 ppt)
 - Inner Banks (mesohaline 10-18 ppt)
- X will be determined from new power analysis based on site-to-site variation (shore-parallel transects).
- Randomly select X new 300 m x 300 m polygons from each strata every 5 years.
- OR select sentinel X sites within each region, visit once every 5 years

SAV survey rotation zones

Repeat surveys within zones every 5 years on rotation:

- 2012 Barrier Island shelves
- 2013 Inner Banks
- 2014 Currituck
- 2015 Rivers
- 2016 Southern NC
- 2017 Barrier Island shelves



Make new GIS Map for site selection

- Depths $< 0.8\text{m}$ is do-able by optical remote sensing (either World-View 2 or DMC)
- Depths $> 0.8\text{ m}$ must be visited by boat and video or acoustic survey done, with diver quadrat surveys
- Video transects with 10 shore-normal transects/300 m (30 m spacing)
- Sonar transects with 30 transects/300 m (10 m spacing)

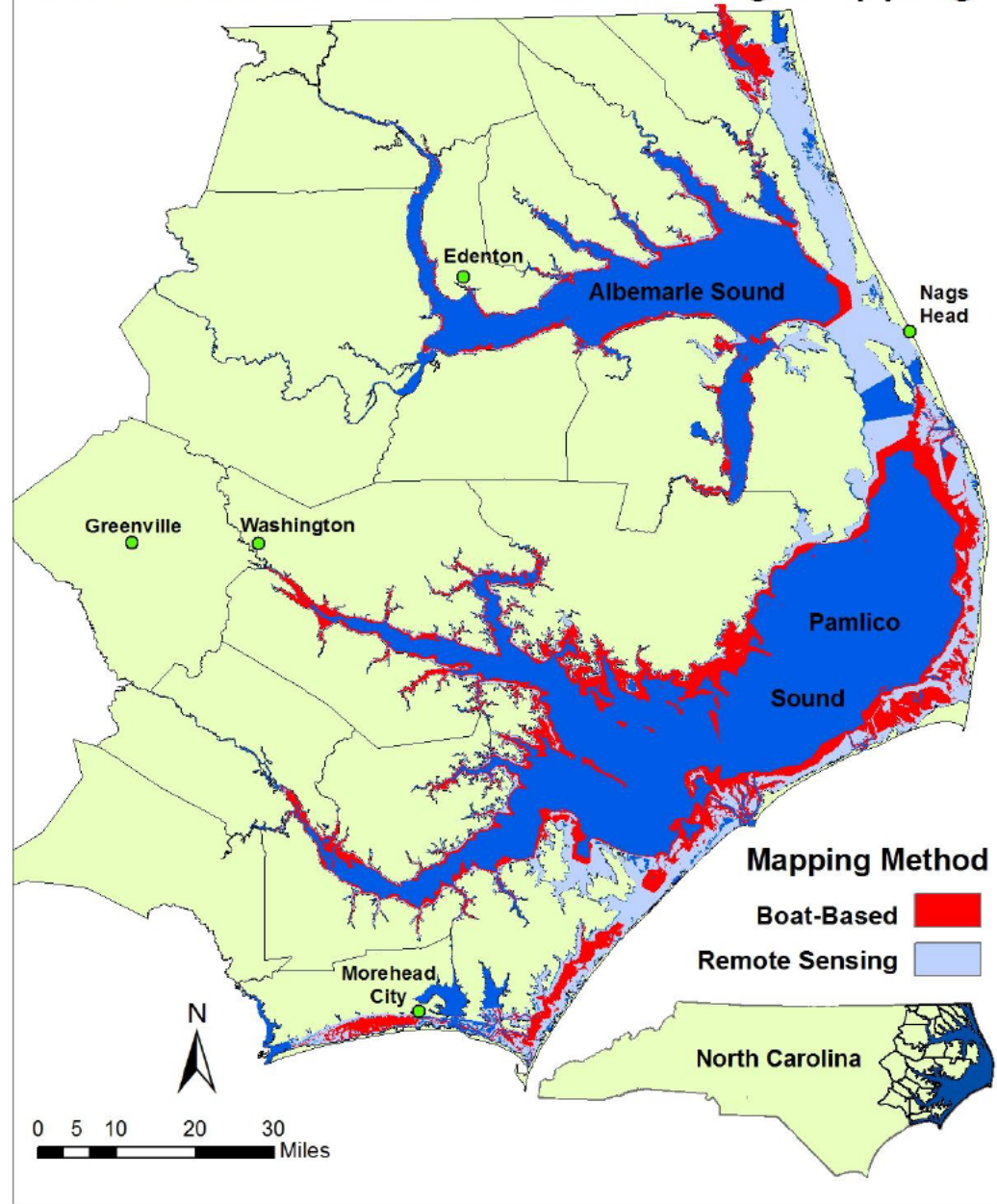
Potential Areas to Employ Boat-Based and Remote Sensing Mapping

This map is based on
Rich Curran's thesis
Figure 13

Boat-based
Min = 0.8 m
Max = 2.0 m

Remote sensing had
High accuracy < 0.8 m
(90% accuracy)

Boats can't easily work in
< 0.8 m (true for video and
acoustic methods)



Cost estimates

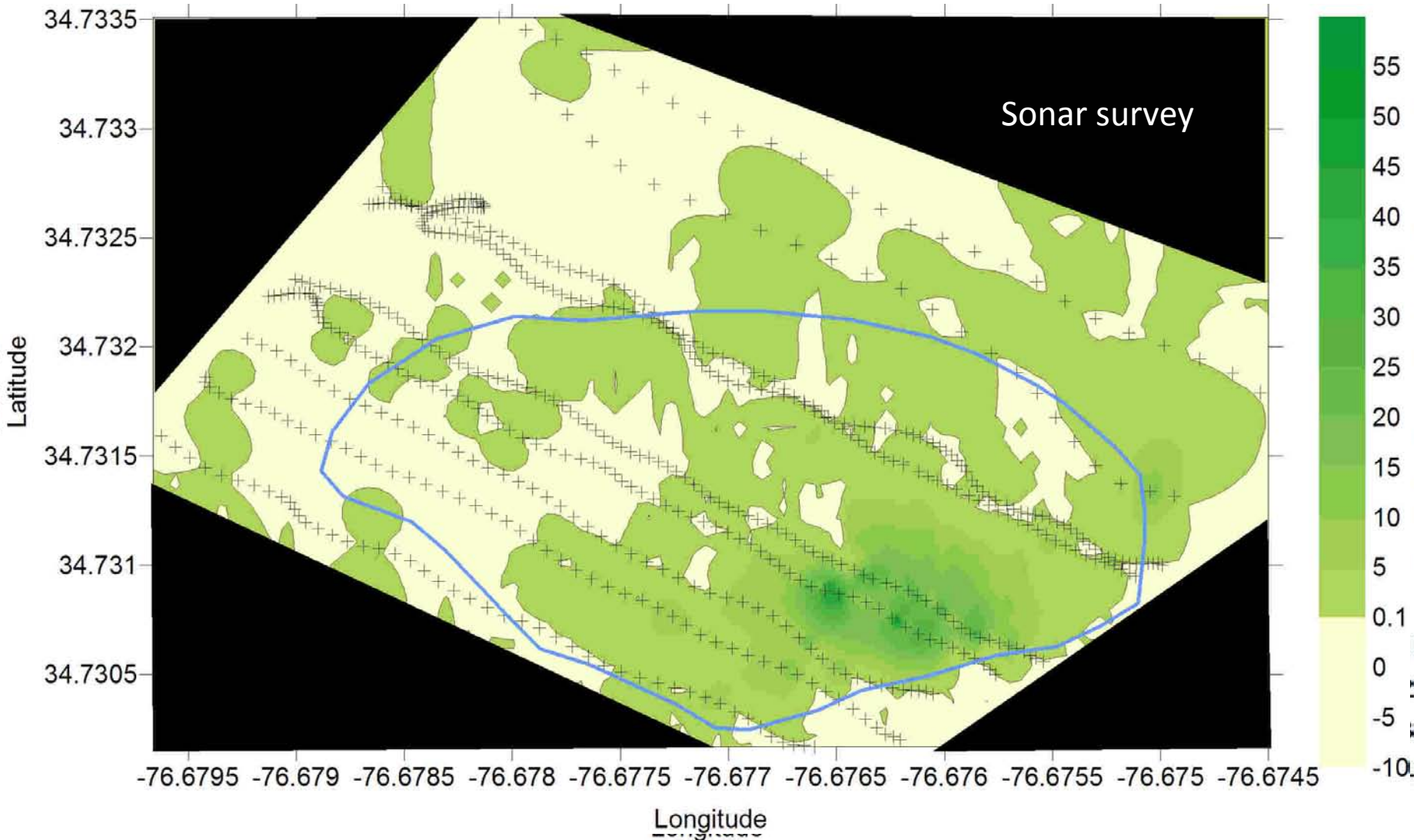
- Aerial photography costs:
 - Digital Mapping Camera of entire NC coast:
~\$250,000 (every 5 years)
 - Photo interpretation: ~\$90,000 (every 5 years)
 - Total: ~\$340,000 (~\$68,000 per year)
- Cost Per site (set up, acquisition, analysis):
 - Video: \$1500, if $X = 50$ sites/region, ~\$75,000
 - SONAR: \$500, if $X = 50$ sites/region, ~\$25,000
- **\$168,000 per year (Aerial + Boat-based)**

Thank You!

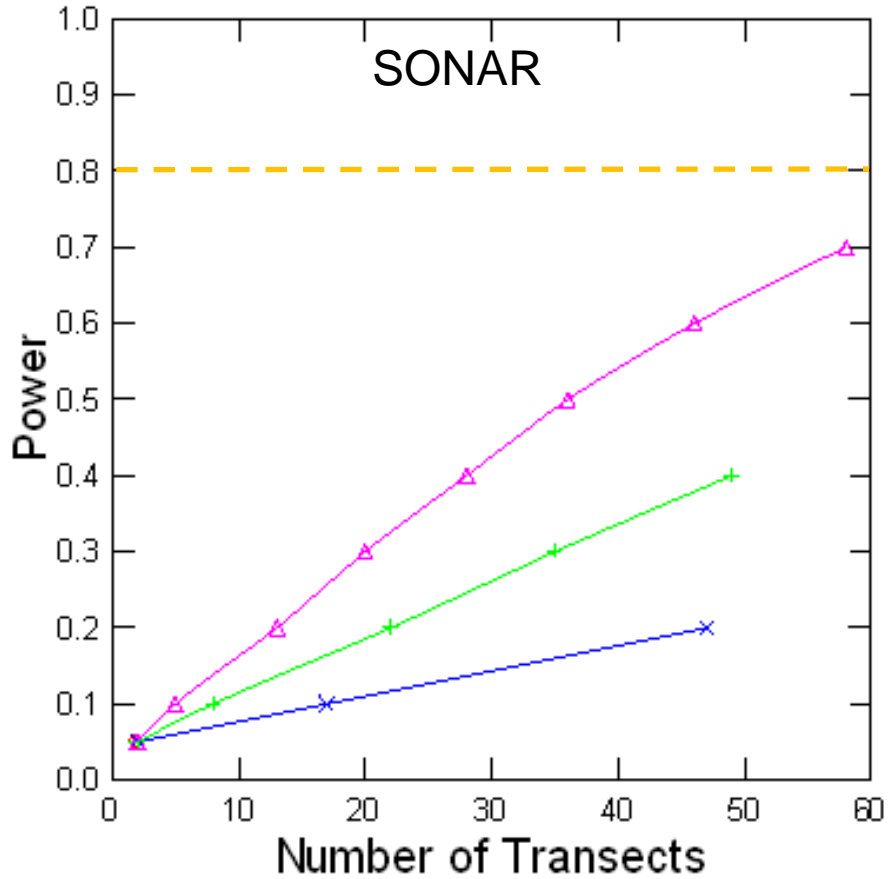
Allison Ballance
Lyndell Bade
Jill Paxson
Casey Smith
Becky Deehr
Devon Eulie
Kay Evans
David Knowles
Greg Meyer
Katherine Spears



NPR Shore-Parallel June 2009



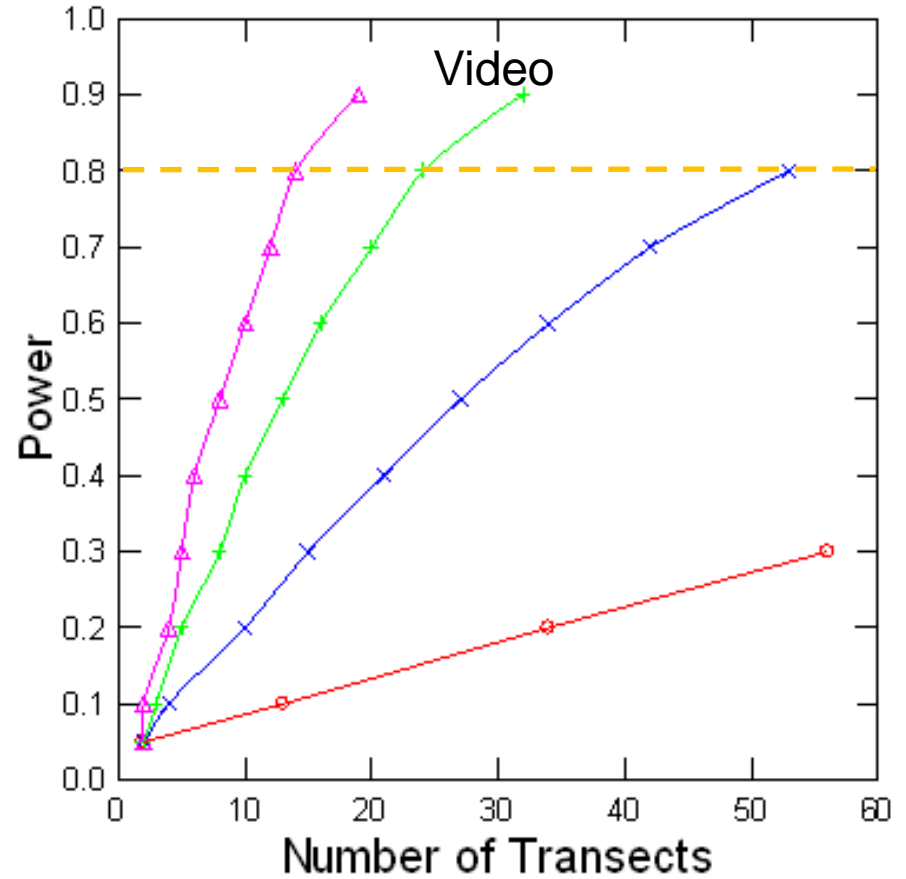
High Salinity (Patchy) - June NPR 2009



Change in F_{sav}

Mean $F_{sav} = 19.8$

- 10% $F_{sav} = 17.8$
- × 20% $F_{sav} = 15.8$
- + 30% $F_{sav} = 13.9$
- △ 40% $F_{sav} = 11.9$



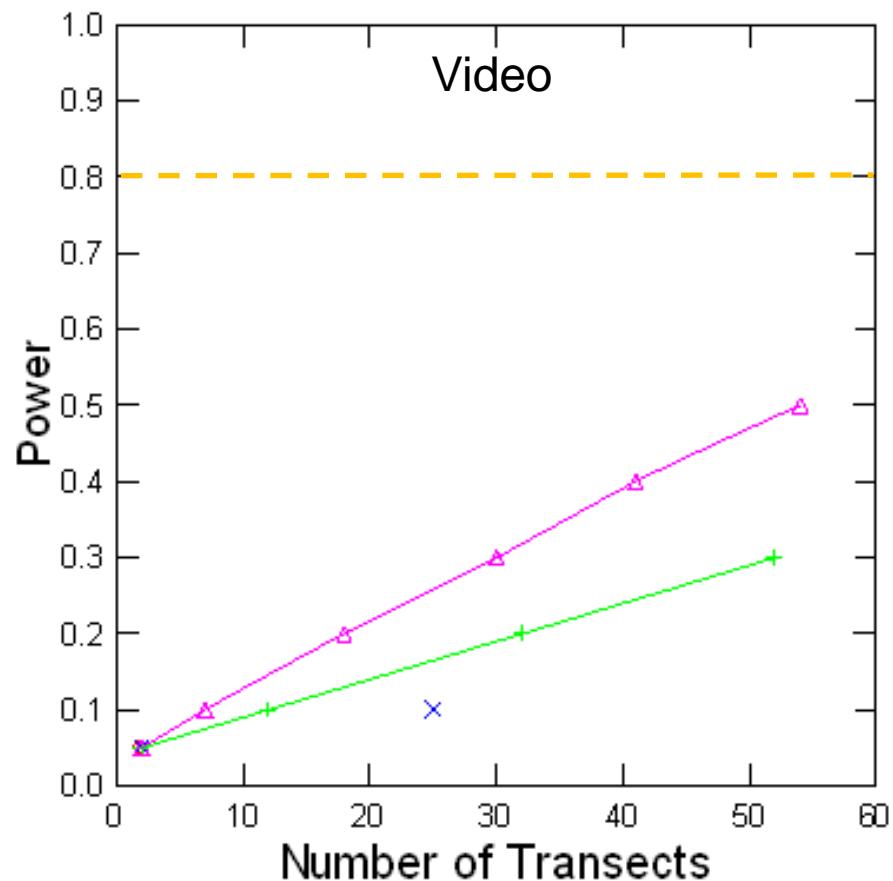
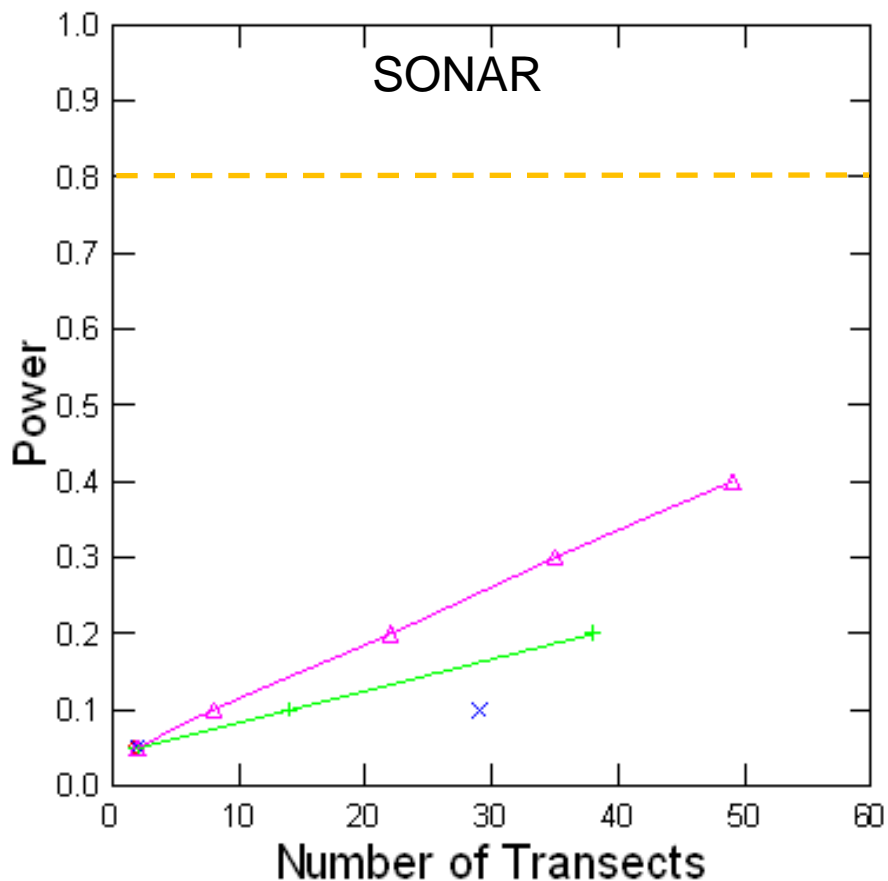
$\alpha = 0.05$

Change in F_{sav}

Mean $F_{sav} = 48.2$

- 10% $F_{sav} = 43.4$
- × 20% $F_{sav} = 38.6$
- + 30% $F_{sav} = 33.7$
- △ 40% $F_{sav} = 28.9$

High Salinity (Patchy) - July JBS 2010



JBS Accuracy Assessment

Confusion Matrix

		Predicted		Row Total
		Present	Absent	
Actual	Classification			
	Present	15	11	26
	Absent	3	60	63
Column Total		18	71	89

Overall Accuracy: 84%

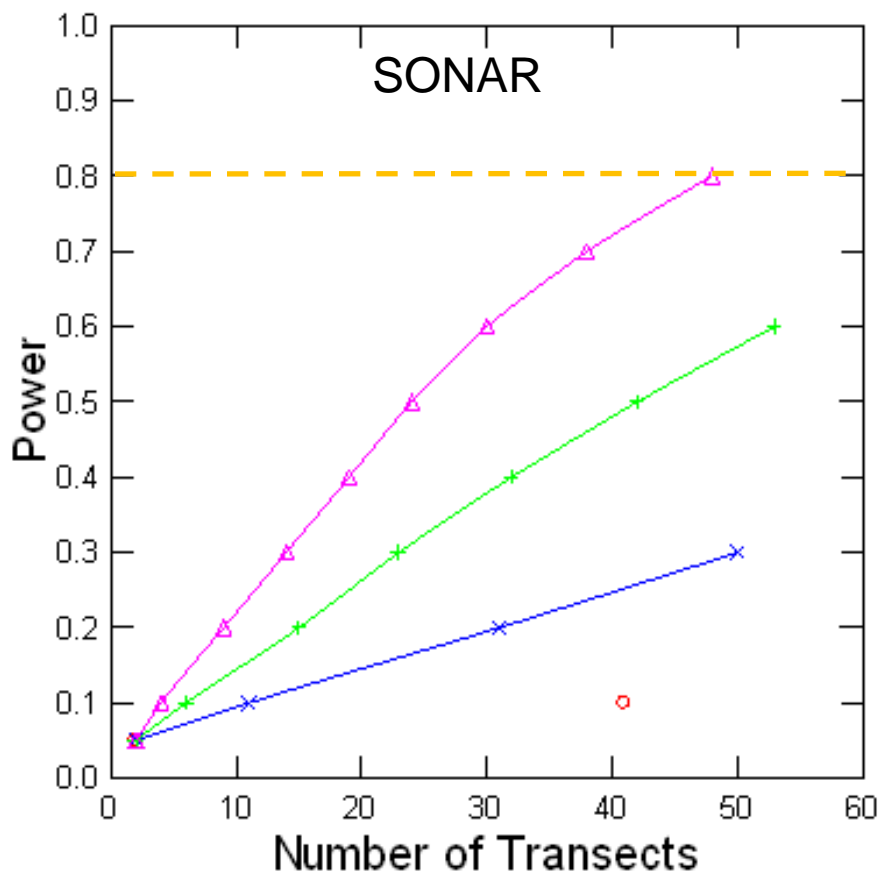
Producer's accuracy and omission error	User's accuracy and commission error
Present (accuracy) = 83% 17% omission error	Present (accuracy) = 58% 42% commission error
Absent (accuracy) = 85% 15% omission error	Absent (accuracy) = 95% 5% commission error

K hat Coefficient of Agreement: 28%

JBS Comparison

- Acoustic September
 - Area Cover: 4,752 sq. m
 - % Cover: 5.3%
 - % Change: 76.3% decrease
- Satellite RS Classification September
 - Area Cover: 17,577 sq. m
 - % Cover: 19.5%
 - % Change: 12.4% decrease

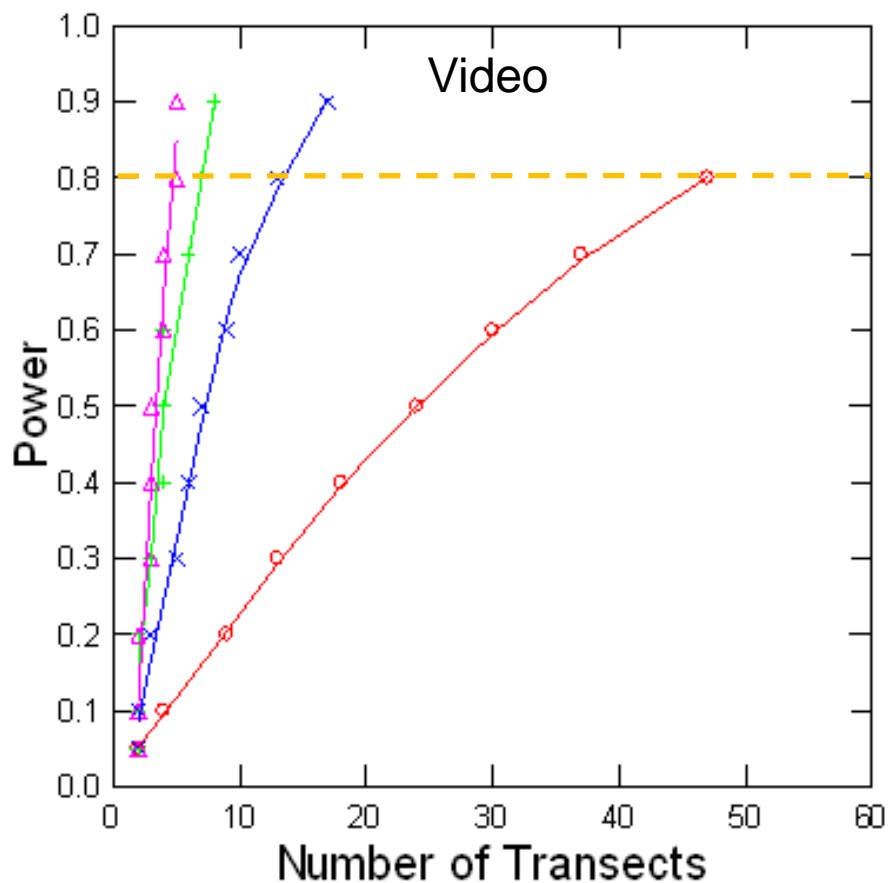
Low Salinity (Patchy) - June BLB 2010



Change in F_{sav}

Mean $F_{sav} = 3.2$

- 10% $F_{sav} = 2.9$
- × 20% $F_{sav} = 2.6$
- + 30% $F_{sav} = 2.2$
- △ 40% $F_{sav} = 1.9$



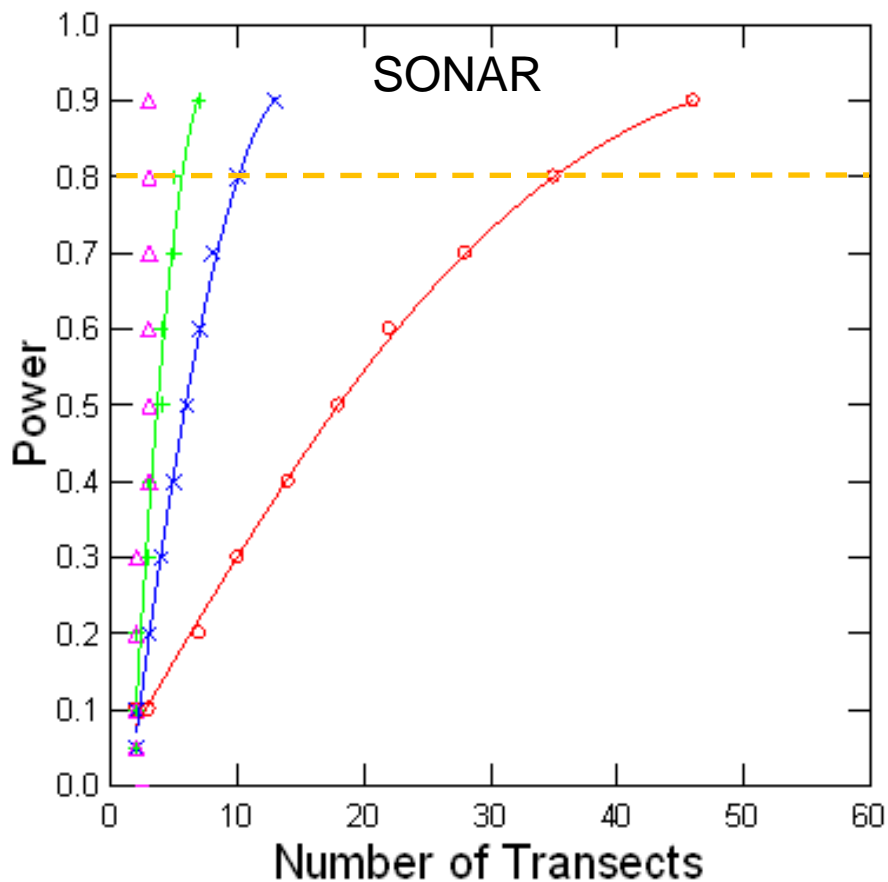
Change in F_{sav}

Mean $F_{sav} = 22.9$

- 10% $F_{sav} = 20.6$
- × 20% $F_{sav} = 18.3$
- + 30% $F_{sav} = 16.0$
- △ 40% $F_{sav} = 13.7$

$\alpha = 0.05$

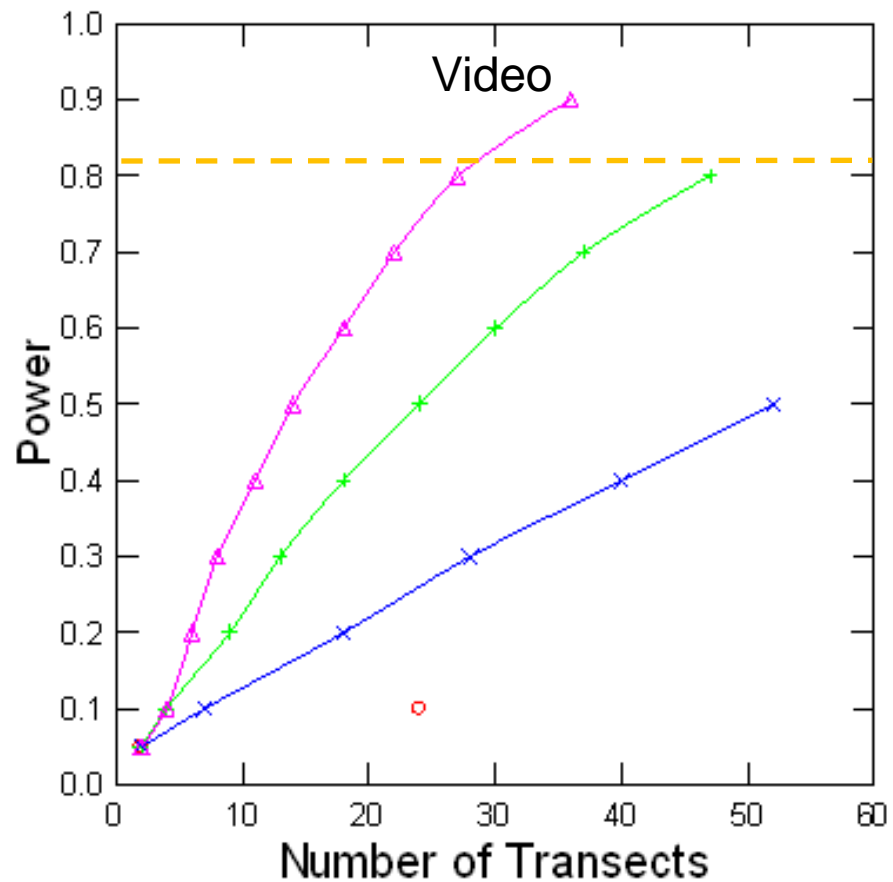
Low Salinity (Continuous) - August SPS 2010



Change in F_{sav}

Mean $F_{sav} = 81.1$

- 10% $F_{sav} = 73.0$
- × 20% $F_{sav} = 64.9$
- + 30% $F_{sav} = 56.8$
- △ 40% $F_{sav} = 48.7$



Change in F_{sav}

Mean $F_{sav} = 64.6$

- 10% $F_{sav} = 58.1$
- × 20% $F_{sav} = 51.7$
- + 30% $F_{sav} = 45.2$
- △ 40% $F_{sav} = 38.8$

$\alpha = 0.05$