Geographic Range and Intertidal Microhabitat Selection of the Rock Gunnel (*Pholis gunnellus*)

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The rock gunnel (*Pholis gunnellus*, Figure 1) is a small, eel-like fish found in the coastal waters and intertidal of the north Atlantic, and is an important food source of a variety of larger animal predators. This summer’s work sought to (1) investigate the characteristics of intertidal microhabitat used by the rock gunnel, (2) determine the southernmost extent of its intertidal presence along the east coast of the United States, and (3) examine its subtidal distribution and density, both spatially and temporally. To determine preferred microhabitat, quadrat surveys were employed in the intertidal along the waterline at the Coastal Studies Center, several Bailey Island sites, state parks, and other locations in the midcoast Maine area. Analysis using logistic regression is still pending, but fish were primarily found low in the intertidal beneath rocky cobbles on various substrata. Intensive searches were conducted in various rocky sites down the coast from Maine to Long Island Sound to determine the limits of the rock gunnel’s intertidal range. Lastly, long-term datasets from trawl surveys conducted by state and federal government organizations (such as NOAA) are under examination for information on the rock gunnel’s subtidal range and density.

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