



New England Fishery Management Council

News Release

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2015 Sea Scallop Research Awards Announced

Newburyport, MA The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is pleased to again partner with NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) in Woods Hole, MA, as the Center announces that 10 new sea scallop research projects will be funded in 2015 through the Atlantic sea scallop research set-aside or RSA Program. Added to this are six two-year projects which received funding last year and are ongoing.

RSA projects are funded by selling a portion of the annual scallop quota that is "set aside" or reserved annually for this purpose. Administered by the NEFSC, the program includes a formal competition and awards process that, this year will support over \$10 million in new research.

Beginning in 2000, members of the scallop industry and the Council working through the fishery management plan process, set aside a portion of the total annual scallop catch to fund research that focuses on the most important informational needs of the scallop fishery. Since then, about two-percent of the total catch has been removed before fishermen harvest their allocations each year.

Research institutions partner with scallop fishermen and apply for a portion of the set-aside, which is caught and sold to fund the research. In recent years, a defined amount of 570 metric tons or 1.25 million pounds of scallops worth about \$15 million, depending on the price of scallops, has been removed annually to support the RSA program.

Commenting on this latest round of awards, New England Council Chairman Terry Stockwell said, "Scientists and fishermen invest a lot of their time and energy in the RSA program. The payoff has been targeted research that answers questions that benefit both industry and fishery managers alike. The results have been pretty impressive."

Research set-aside programs are used in several other fisheries in the Northeast, but the scallop program is the largest. Funded scallop projects have included annual resource surveys to provide timely information that helps set harvest levels, work to reduce flatfish bycatch, experiments on gear modifications to reduce the impacts of turtle/scallop gear encounters, and research that identifies concentrations of small scallops that require protection until they reach optimal harvesting size.

For more detailed information on this week's scallop awards, please see:

- The Northeast Fisheries Science Center's [full announcement and list of RSA Awards](#); and
- Learn more about other RSA programs in the Northeast
http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/coopresearch/rsa_program.html.

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