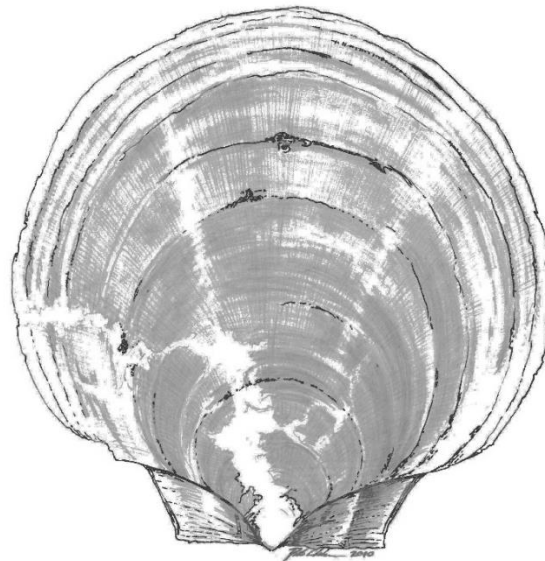


DISCUSSION DOCUMENT
for
2019 Scallop Work Priorities

Council Copy (1/24/19, version 1.2)



Scallop Report
Portsmouth, NH
January 29, 2019

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1. 2019 Scallop Priorities

In December 2018 the New England Council approved a list of 2019 work items for the Atlantic sea scallop FMP that was recommended by the Council’s Executive Committee.

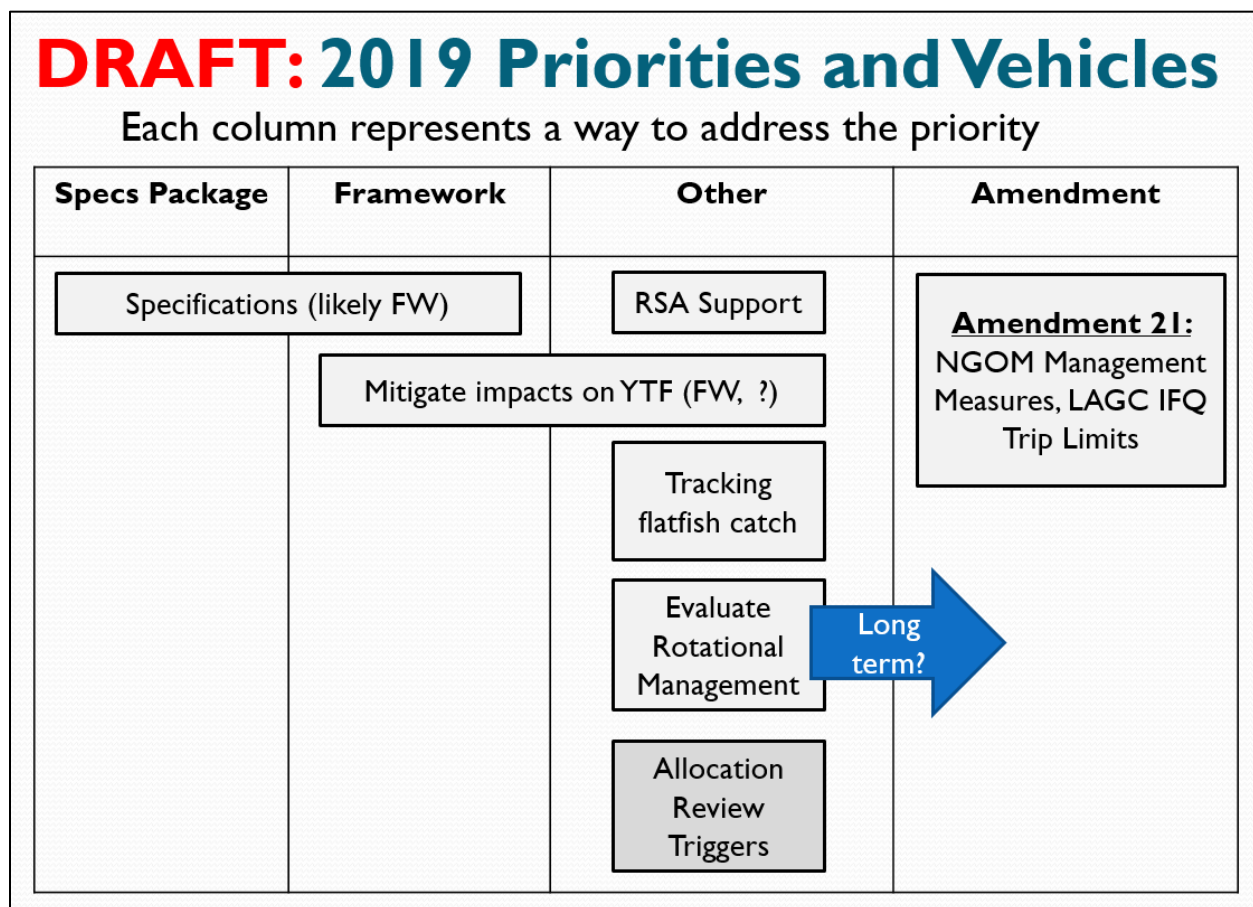
See full list of 2019 Council priorities here:

https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/190102_2019_Final_Priorities.pdf

Table 1 - 2019 Scallop Priorities Binned By Regulatory Requirements and Elective Work for 2019.

Regulatory Requirements	Other 2019 Work Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifications for FY2020 and FY2021 (default) • Support annual Scallop RSA process • Estimate flatfish bycatch (ongoing) • Specify allocation review triggers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOM Scallop Management & LAGC IFQ trip limits • Evaluate rotational management program • Action to mitigate impacts on YT flounder

Figure 1 - Potential ways for the Council to address the 2019 scallop work priorities



2. Anticipated Action by Council at the January Meetings:

1. **Amendment 21: Northern Gulf of Maine and LAGC IFQ Possession Limits**
 - a. Provide feedback on contents of the draft scoping document.
 - i. Does the document cover the full range of issues that you think should be considered?
 - ii. Are there issues that should be added or removed?
 - b. Provide feedback on the anticipated range and locations of scoping hearings.
 - c. Consider a motion for the Council to approve the Amendment 21 scoping document.
2. **Review a Committee motion asking NOAA and the US Coast Guard to expedite the processing of key documentation.**

3. Evaluation of Rotational Management Program

Council: On January 9, 2019 the PDT discussed this work item. To facilitate the discussion the group considered “what are the important questions to ask when evaluating rotational management? What data sets and analyses (past and future) would be important to consider?” The PDT developed comments and a range of key questions.

Next Steps: *At the direction of the Scallop Committee, the PDT will continue to develop background information and questions on this issue.*

PDT Input from January 9, 2019 Conference Call:

- The Primary objective of A10 was to maximize yield per animal. Animals were being harvested when then reached 80mm, and a goal was to leave those scallops in the water for a few more years to grow out and produce larger meats. The partial approval of the Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2 provided more areas for the scallop fishery to operate, and represents a new regime of spatial management (for scallops and habitat).
- At the time of Amendment 10, the scallop fishery had just recovered, and there had been a recruitment event in the Mid-Atlantic. Since that time, there have been several large recruitment events, and the market for scallops now favors larger animals (price premium for larger market grades). The Council has recommended changing management areas (SAMS areas) to target these large animals.
- The PDT developed a set of potential questions that the Council could use to guide work and make progress toward this priority.
 - a. Potential Questions to ask to address the evaluation of rotational management:
 - i. Did we achieve the primary objective (maximize yield)?
 - 1. Consider this question on varying time scales. There would be a need to define the time scale of each. The PDT recognized that there have been instances when it may be appropriate to harvest animals that still have growth potential.
 - a. Long term
 - i. Also - Look at long-term yields spatially.
 - b. Medium term
 - c. Short term
 - 2. This is a question that we can test (look at performance vs. the A10 criteria for rotational management, such as 30%/15% growth thresholds).
 - a. A retrospective MSE could be informative.
 - ii. Did anything get in the way of this objective (disease, too many animals)?
 - 1. Gray meats, nematodes
 - 2. Exceptional recruitment events, multiple year classes in the same access area.
 - iii. Where is the scallop biomass relative to management areas?
 - 1. Look at a map with only the biomass – no spatial boundaries. See what areas light up.
 - a. Consider varying time scales (long, medium, short)

- b. Are the current closed areas the best way to manage scallops on GB?
 - iv. Did we leave the areas closed long enough to maximize yield?
 - 1. How long were closures in place from when recruitment was detected?
 - v. Did all openings perform as managers expected?
 - 1. Look at the instances when access area allocations did not pan out.
 - a. EX: Hudson Canyon opening, CAI opening
 - b. Consider how the managers responded to these outcomes.
 - vi. Why has the PDT and Council move away from the A10 criteria?
 - 1. Review Amendment 10 criteria used to structure area rotation
 - 2. What has changed over time (amount of data, kinds of data, policy objectives)?
- The PDT also discussed a range of issues they felt were relevant to this topic:
 - a. Potential outcomes/future approaches to rotational management:
 - i. The Council could consider protecting spawning adults (scallops that have already recruited to the fishery).
 - 1. A substantial number of adult animals were protected by former habitat closures (Closed Area I N-HMA, NLS-HMA).
 - ii. The PDT supports temporal management to maximize yield.
 - 1. Delayed opening to allow harvest when meats are at their largest.
 - a. Example: In the NLS (June/July vs. April)
 - b. As time has passed, managers have used rotational management has been a tool to stabilize or increase landings. For example, landings of 20/30s in the MAAA and in the NLS-W in recent years. Similarly, managers have used access areas as a tool to maximize yield in rotational areas. In recent Council actions, increasing the proportion of landings from rotational areas has been a tools to give the open bottom some rest (lower LA DAS) following several years of poor recruitment.
 - c. Rotational management has become less dynamic over time. In general, the Council is not identifying new areas, but instead working from a set of legacy areas or former habitat areas.
 - i. There could be good reasons to deviate from the current approach of rotating the existing legacy areas or modify management boundaries.
 - 1. Closed Area I is an example of a static area that has not produced recently.
 - 2. The NLS – a different design would be better, but in the past had to follow the boxes for GF closures and Habitat closures.
 - 3. Some SAMS boundaries follow groundfish or habitat management areas. It may be appropriate to rethink SAMS area boundaries based on scallop biology. (CAI-N)
 - ii. Could use market forces (price premiums) to direct rotation.
- Consider how RSA can be used to support this work item. The PDT recommends an evaluation of how survey work is prioritized through the RSA. For example, should the

Council change where we are surveying in 2020/2021 RSA? Spatial management should be flexible.

- In 2019, re-evaluate the names of SAMS areas to be more intuitive and not follow old management areas. Add to next Agenda.

Catalogue how area rotation has evolved over time. (Council staff have a spreadsheet)

- a. How have rotational management areas changed?
 1. EX: DMV, ET, HC → MAAA
 2. Legacy areas like VB and DMV not producing
 3. Several NLS configurations
 4. More survey information available now vs. A10
 5. Annual specifications?

4. Mitigate Impacts on Yellowtail Flounder

Council: The Committee passed the following motion at their January 18, 2019 meeting.

Mitigate impacts on Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder

Motion #4: Hughes/Patterson

The Committee tasks the PDT with analyzing the options for reducing bycatch of Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder. This should include evaluating:

- Seasonal closures
- Analyze hanging ratios down to 1.5:1

Rationale: Given the poor status of Georges Bank yellowtail founder, there is a need to continue to find ways to reduce bycatch to mitigate impacts on the stock.

The motion carried on a show of hands: (11/0/0)

Notes from January 9, 2019 Scallop PDT meeting:

Anticipated Outcomes:

1. Potentially develop goals/objectives or a problem statement that would guide the Scallop PDT's work on this item. (see some suggested questions/areas of focus below)
 - a. Provide a timeline to the Scallop PDT on when it would be most helpful to see progress. Does the Committee want to see progress by the May/June meetings, ahead of TRAC and TMGC?
 - b. How should the PDT/Council be evaluating progress toward mitigating impacts? Are there indicators that would suggest management changes are helping?
- 1) Goals and Objectives?** What does the Committee hope to achieve through an action to mitigate impacts on yellowtail flounder?
- a) Which stocks? Focus only on Georges Bank Yellowtail?
 - (a) On Georges Bank there are also windowpane issues to think about.
 - b) *Potential goals/objectives:*

- i) Rebuild Georges Bank yellowtail flounder? (The stock is in a rebuilding plan)
- ii) Reduce potential impacts on the groundfish fishery from scallop bycatch?
- iii) Further reduce scallop fishery discards of GBYT?
- iv) Maintain scallop discards of GBYT at recent levels?
- v) Reduce impacts on/catch of animals in spawning condition?
- vi) Evaluate fishery performance relative to sub-ACL (exceeding sub-ACL? Negotiated TAC? Transferring fish back to groundfish? Increase scallop sub-ACL from 16%?)
- vii) Mitigate impacts on the scallop fishery from a low sub-ACL of Georges Bank yellowtail flounder?

2) Additional input and ideas:

- i) Is there data from scallop fishery that could help the TRAC/SSC as they consider the status and condition of GBYT?
 - (1) For example, the scallop fishery collects fishery dependent and fishery independent data in the US/Canada area. Last year, the SSC recommended dropping the spring trawl survey because of low catch. Additional data sources would be useful – if only as sensitivities and comparisons.
 - (a) CFF seasonal bycatch survey may have data (timeseries of catch)
 - (b) VIMS dredge survey timeseries in CAII (TRAC working paper in 2018)
- ii) A review of US catch data suggested that the US catch (all sources of catch) has not exceeded the negotiated TAC since 2010.
 - (1) Is the GBYT bycatch in the scallop fishery a biological problem? (What is the baseline?)
 - (a) Relative to the TACs being set by SSC/Negotiated with Canada – No, since catches are at or near all time lows, and the catch does not exceed the overall TAC.
 - (b) If all F/M is (are) detrimental to the stock rebuilding, then collective US/Canada catch is impacting recovery.
 - (i) SSC has indicated that removals are not the primary factor of this stock not meeting rebuilding targets.
 - (c) The PDT projected that the scallop fishery would catch around 10.4 mt of GBYT flounder in CAII if a 5 million pound scallop allocation (15,000 lb trip limit) in FY 2019. Based on these projections, the PDT did not feel that the scallop fishery was likely to catch the entire US share of the negotiated TAC.
- iii) How should the PDT/Council be evaluating progress toward mitigating impacts of GBYT? Are there indicators that would suggest management changes are helping?
 - (a) The scallop PDT noted that the SSC has debated the impact of F vs. M on this stock. The SSC has also suggesting that environmental change may be impacting GBYT. The PDT noted that setting the TAC for this stock has become increasingly challenging for the SSC.
- iv) The PDT suggested that the baselines for this stock have shifted over the last 10 years (and since the allocation was done). It appears that stock productivity has changed, but scallop fishery is limited by its history and the 16% share of the US TAC.

3) Potential outcomes and work items:

- a) Develop and implement management measures in a Framework in 2019 that are designed to mitigate impacts on yellowtail.
- b) Provide analyses for SSC meeting re: Georges Bank yellowtail flounder ([SSC request](#))
- c) Evaluate the timing of the yellowtail transfer from scallops to groundfish. Is January 15 still the appropriate date since the start of the fishing year has moved forward to April 1?

4) Past and present measures aimed to reduce impacts on Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder:

- a) Prohibit landings of yellowtail flounder by the scallop fishery
- b) Bycatch cap and in-season closure of Closed Area II (past)
Economic impact on the scallop fishery.
- c) Seasonal Closure of Closed Area II:
 - i) Past: Feb. 1 – June 15
 - ii) Present: August 15 – November 15
- d) Gear modifications:
 - i) Increase the twine top
 - ii) Set a maximum number rows in apron/hanging ratio
- e) Bycatch Avoidance system run by SMAST (past)
- f) Restrict RSA compensation fishing in Closed Area II
- g) Accountability measures for Georges Bank Yellowtail:
 - i) Past: Time area closure (past - never triggered)
 - ii) Present: Gear modification (FW29, 2018)

5. Amendment 21: Northern Gulf of Maine Management Measures and LAGC IFQ Trip Limit Issues

Council staff are in the process of drafting a scoping document that will be reviewed by the Advisory Panel, Committee, and Council.

The Council has signaled that the focus of this action will be on the development of Northern Gulf of Maine Management Measures, and increasing the LAGC IFQ trip limit.

Council staff are in the process of planning a series of scoping hearings.

6. “Five Meeting Outlook”

DRAFT and subject to change	Expected progress on priorities <u>relative</u> to upcoming Council meetings				
Council Meeting:	Jan-19	Apr-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-10
NO REPORT					
Regulatory Requirements and Ongoing Work					
Specifications for 2019/2020	Submit preliminary EA for FW30	New specs in place April 1?	2019 Survey cruises on the water	Review survey data, preliminary OFL/ABC projections	Final Action
Support Scallop RSA Program	Consider input from RSA program review	Announce 2019/2020 awards; RSA Share day (May)	Council votes on 2020/21 Priorities	FFO Published	Proposals Due, Reviews begin
In-season catch accounting	Evaluate YT transfer to GF				
Specify Allocation Review Triggers	Executive Committee/Council provide more direction				
Other Issues for 2019					
<u>Amendment 21</u> : NGOM and LAGC IFQ trip limits	Begin work	Scoping hearings	Present Scoping Comments	Approve Range of Alternatives	
Mitigate impacts on Yellowtail Flounder	Begin work		Address SSC request for additional data (Aug. 23, 2018 memo); develop measures	Review potential management measures (draft alternatives)	Final Action
Evaluate Rotational Management Program	Phase 1: PDT reviews criteria developed through A10 and its use?				