



New England Fishery Management Council

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MEETING SUMMARY

Scallop Committee Meeting

November 12, 2020

Webinar Meeting

The Scallop Committee met via webinar on November 12, 2020 to: 1) receive an update on 2020 survey results and projections for the 2021 & 2022 fishing years, 2) receive an update on recent Council actions, including Amendment 21 and 2021 Council work priorities, and 3) discuss other business.

MEETING ATTENDANCE:

Vincent Balzano (Scallop Committee Chair), Jonathon Peros (Plan Coordinator), Sam Asci (Council staff), Eric Reid, Matt Gates, Emily Gilbert, Mark Godfroy, Melanie Griffin, Peter Hughes, John Pappalardo, Alan Tracy, John Quinn, Mike Sissenwine, Melissa Smith, and Peter deFur.

James Gutowski (AP Chair) was in attendance on the webinar along with approximately 36 members of the public.

The meeting began at 9:04 AM. Scallop Committee Chair Vincent Balzano welcomed the Committee and members of the audience to the webinar. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all Council related meetings have been transitioned to webinars including the Scallop Committee and Council meetings. Staff reviewed instructions for participating in the webinar and gave an overview of the goals and objectives for the day's meeting. Mr. James Gutowski (AP Chair) provided a brief overview of the November 10, 2020 Advisory Panel meeting including discussion and motions related to the development of Framework 33.

Key Outcomes:

- The Committee made initial recommendations on FY2021 specifications measures for development in Framework 33.

2020 Scallop Assessment Update and 2020 Survey Results

Council staff presented an overview of the 2020 scallop assessment update, the 2020 scallop survey results, recent fishery data, and the initial SAMS projections for the 2021 and 2022 (default) OFL and ABC. The first iterations of the PDT “base run”, No Action, and Status Quo SAMS runs for FY2021 were also presented. The Committee discussed variability in survey estimates from year-to-year and reasons for recent biomass projections likely being overestimated. As was noted in the 2020 scallop assessment update and in more recent PDT discussions, growth projections used in SAMS were higher than observed growth between the 2019 and 2020 surveys – this led to projections for the 2020 fishing year to be overly optimistic in most cases when compared to survey data, and also means that realized fishing mortality for

the current fishing year is likely higher than what was projected. Variability in survey estimates is expected year-to-year and the PDT works through data treatment issues thoroughly before combining survey estimates from the dredge, drop camera, and HabCam to be used in the SAMS model.

There was some discussion around scallops in the southern extent of the resource (i.e., DMV, Virginia Beach). Biomass in these areas continues to decrease and recruitment observed in annual surveys tends to not pan out. Generally, the scallops in the southern extent of the resource have not survived to recruit into the fishery for several years.

For the MAAA, a Committee member noted the fishing mortality (F) associated with two trips in FY2021 seemed to be high, and suggested that reducing the trip limit might help reduce F in FY2021. Using lower trip limits had been raised at the PDT and AP in the past; however, industry members seem to prefer using the 18,000 pound trip limit and allocating partial trips as a way to reduce effort.

Motion 1: Hughes/Reid

Task the PDT to develop open area DAS options for consideration in FW33 that would:

- Complete model runs using the reduced LPUE estimate from the PDT of 1,799 lbs (BASE Run – Low LPUE estimate).
- Set FT LA DAS at 20
- Set FT LA DAS at 22
- Set FT LA DAS at 24
- Set FT LA DAS at 28
 - The PDT may consider a range of options to capture the impacts of opening CLOSED AREA I (Sliver and AA).

Rationale: Range of DAS options to evaluate at the next meeting. These will build off of the BASE Run that was presented on Nov. 12, 2020. All runs have NLS-West open bottom, one run (24 DAS) has CAI Open. This is for analysis purposes only, not to be measures in the FW33 at this time. Adding 20 DAS adds a wider range of options to review in December. The Committee sought more information about the impacts of making CAI an open area on the LA and LAGC IFQ components.

	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse
Scallop Committee				
Vincent Balzano, ME (Chair)				
Melanie Griffin, MA (VC)	YES			
Matt Gates, CT	YES			
Cheri Patterson, NH	YES			
Mark Godfroy, NH				
Melissa Smith, ME	YES			
John Pappalardo, MA	YES			
Emily Gilbert, GARFO	YES			
Dr. Michael Sissenwine, MA	YES			
Dr. John Quinn, MA				

Eric Reid, RI	YES			
Alan Tracy, ME	YES			
Peter Hughes, MAFMC	YES			
Peter deFur, MAFMC	YES			
TOTAL VOTE	11	0	0	0

Discussion on Motion 1: Overall, the Committee was supportive of analyzing the range of open area days-at-sea options outlined in Motion 1. There was some discussion around how Closed Area I might be accessed in FY2021 given the low biomass in this area. Some on the Committee and several AP members on the call felt that Closed Area I should be evaluated as part of the open bottom in FY2021, and others alluded to the potential of Closed Area I being made available as an access area to the LAGC component. While the Committee did not come to consensus on this issue, they agreed that it is worth analyzing both options to inform a future discussion at the next Committee meeting.

Motion 2: Griffin/Pappalardo

Task the PDT to develop AP recommended runs 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 for consideration in FW33 that would allocate the following Access Area trips:

	AP1	AP2	AP 4 - Modified	AP 5	AP 6
FT LA trip limit	18000-lbs.	18000-lbs.	18000-lbs.	18000-lbs.	18000-lbs.
MAAA	1.5 trips (27,000-lb)	1.5trips (27,000-lb)	1.5 trips (27,000-lb)	2 trips (36,000-lb)	1 trip (18,000-lb)
MAAA/NLS-S Flex	0.5 trip (9,000-lb)				
CAII-Ext/MAAA Flex		0.5 trip (9,000-lb)			1 trip (18,000-lb)
CAII-SW	1 trip (18,000-lb)	1 trip (18,000-lb)	1 trip (18,000-lb)	0.5 trip (9,000-lb)	1 trip (18,000-lb)
CAII-Ext				0.5 trip (9,000-lb)	
NLS-S	1 trip (18,000-lb)	1 trip (18,000-lb)	1.5 trips (27,000-lb)	1 trip (18,000-lb)	1 trip (18,000-lb)

Trips may be exchanged in ½ trip (9,000-lb) increments. Task the PDT to consider a range of options to capture the impacts of retaining Closed Area I for LAGC IFQ access area fishing only.

Rationale: Consider CAI access to LAGC component in light of the likely CAII allocations. These runs capture varying levels of access in the Mid-Atlantic, NLS-S, and in Closed Area II.

The motion carried 10-0-1.

Roll call vote on Motion 2:

	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse
Scallop Committee				
Vincent Balzano, ME (Chair)				
Melanie Griffin, MA (VC)	YES			
Matt Gates, CT	YES			
Cheri Patterson, NH	YES			
Melissa Smith, ME	YES			
John Pappalardo, MA	YES			
Emily Gilbert, GARFO	YES			
Dr. Michael Sissenwine, MA	YES			
Dr. John Quinn, MA				
Eric Reid, RI	YES			
Alan Tracy, ME	YES			
Peter Hughes, MAFMC			Abstain	
Peter deFur, MAFMC	YES			
TOTAL VOTE	10	0	1	0

Discussion on Motion 2: The Committee and members of the public that commented on Motion 2 were in support of the range of specifications alternatives tasked for development, but there were several comments that did not support designating Closed Area I as an access area for only the LAGC component. Industry members and industry representatives did not support special access to a rotational area for only part of the fishery, and felt that reverting Closed Area I to open bottom would be more equitable in that both the LA and LAGC components would have access to it. Several Committee members felt that analyzing options that allow LAGC access to CAI made sense because there is not enough biomass to support access by the FT LA fleet, and noted the importance New England general category fishermen having access to a rotational area close to home.

Motion 3: Smith/Patterson

Task the PDT to evaluate F rates equal to 0.18, 0.20 and 0.25 for the NGOM TAC.

Rationale: Without seeing survey information, this range will allow for a wide array of options and is consistent with previous evaluations of the area.

	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse
Scallop Committee				
Vincent Balzano, ME (Chair)				
Melanie Griffin, MA (VC)	YES			
Matt Gates, CT	YES			
Cheri Patterson, NH	YES			

Melissa Smith, ME	YES			
John Pappalardo, MA	YES			
Emily Gilbert, GARFO	YES			
Dr. Michael Sissenwine, MA	YES			
Dr. John Quinn, MA				
Eric Reid, RI	YES			
Alan Tracy, ME	YES			
Peter Hughes, MAFMC	YES			
Peter deFur, MAFMC	YES			
TOTAL VOTE	11	0	0	

Discussion on Motion 3 was brief. It was noted that there is not currently an estimate of Fmsy in the NGOM, but that this is something the PDT will discuss in more detail following the implementation of Amendment 21 and when a longer time series of data exists. Other comments clarified that the scallop closure on Stellwagen Bank is expected to continue through FY2021.

Motion 4: Hughes/Pappalardo

Task the PDT to identify options for allocating default access area trip(s) in FY 2022.

The motion carried on unanimous consent.

Discussion on Motion 4: There was some clarifying discussion around the current regulations around crew limits in the Nantucket Lightship South (i.e., two additional crew allowed when fishing this area in FY2020). A member of the AP noted that they did not weigh in on which areas should support default measures in FY2022 because it was unclear how much effort would be directed in access areas in FY2021 – they felt that input from the PDT regarding the tradeoffs of allocating default trips to different access areas would help with future discussions on this topic.

Motion 5: Hughes/Sissenwine

Move to develop alternatives in FW33 that keep the NLS-Triangle closed for another year for supporting the ongoing sea scallop transplant research.

Rationale: The Council will need tools to use down the road if enhancement can be shown to benefit the resource. Another 12-month closure is would give more time to evaluate the transplant work that has been done.

The motion carried on unanimous consent.

Discussion on Motion 5 was brief. A member of the public commented on past scallop transplanting efforts in and felt that continuing transplanting research in the NLS-Triangle would provide the scallop industry with a tool that could help scallop production in the future.

2021 Priorities

Council staff presented a brief overview of the 2021 Council work priorities. A Committee member noted the several avenues that could be followed to address the “evaluation of rotational management” priority, such as a qualitative approach that summarizes the history of rotational management and how it has progressed over time, or, a quantitative evaluation of actual outcomes of rotational management with respect to landings, revenue, yield, and conservation (i.e., a focus on resource optimization). Other comments noted that this work priority could be complementary to a review of the SAMS projection model.

Other Business

Motion 6: Hughes/

Move that the Committee ask the Council to consider re-allocating the unharvested pounds from NLS-W (FY 2019 allocation) to the NLS-S Access Area for FY2022-2023.

The motion failed for a lack of a second.

There was no discussion on Motion 6.

Under other business, a representative of the Scallopers Campaign referenced recent correspondence sent to the Council, which requested the Council revisit the list of 2021 work priorities for the Scallop FMP and to include a priority for listening sessions for a leasing program in the limited access fleet.

The meeting ended at 1:58 pm.