



New England Fishery Management Council

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 John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 15, 2019
TO: Scallop Committee
FROM: Vincent Balzano, Scallop Committee Chair
SUBJECT: **Purpose for Scallop Committee meeting on May 23, 2019**

There is a Scallop Committee meeting at the Hilton in Providence, RI on Thursday, May 23, 2019 at 9:00 AM. The Scallop AP will convene on Wednesday May 22, 2019 at that same location. Paper copies will not be mailed to you before the meeting. Documents for this meeting will be e-mailed to you as they become available.

Purpose: The main goals of the Committee meeting are to:

- 1) Provide input on potential harvest of small scallops in the NLS-S-deep
- 2) Review Amendment 21 scoping comments and recommend next steps to the Committee
- 3) Develop recommendations on 2020/2021 Scallop RSA research priorities
- 4) Develop recommendations on next steps for the RSA Program review
- 5) Provide input on approaches to mitigate impacts on yellowtail flounder
- 6) Other Business

The full Council is scheduled to meet in South Portland, ME from June 11 to June 13, 2019. The Scallop Report is scheduled for the afternoon of Tuesday June 11, 2019.

Meeting Materials: Paper copies of the documents listed below will be provided at the meeting. A PDF of each document will be posted to www.nefmc.org. Staff will provide copies of any additional meeting materials that are not included in this package. If you have any questions about the documents, please contact Jonathon Peros (jperos@nefmc.org; 978-465-0492 ext. 117).

Documents:

1. Meeting Agenda
 - a. Staff presentation (*to be provided*)
 - b. Meeting Memo from Committee Chair, Mr. Vincent Balzano
2. Amendment 21
 - a. Summary of all Amendment 21 scoping Comments
 - b. Summaries of Amendment 21 Scoping Meetings (Oral comments)
 - c. Written comments for Amendment 21 scoping
 - d. Amendment 21 scoping document
 - e. Draft Amendment 21 Action Plan
 - f. Summary of SARC 65 Gulf of Maine reviewer comments
 - g. Staff presentation on Amendment 21 scoping comments

3. RSA Program Review
 - a. RSA Program Review
 - b. Program Review presentation (Ms. Deirdre Boelke presentation)
 - c. Draft Scallop PDT input on Program Review Findings (May 9, 2019)
 - d. RSA Program Review Findings and Recommendations Table (blank – FILL IN!)
4. 2020/2021 Scallop RSA
 - a. Summary of Recent RSA Awards
 - b. 2019/2020 Scallop RSA award announcements (NEFMC)
 - c. Input from Scallop PDT – 2020/2021 Research Priorities
 - d. 2019/2020 Scallop RSA Federal Funding Opportunity
 - e. 2019 – 2023 Council Research Priorities - Scallop Priorities
5. PDT Meeting Summaries
 - a. April 4, 2019 Conference Call
 - b. May 9, 2019 Conference Call
6. Materials for NOAA Update
 - a. Shell stock compliance guide
 - b. Clarification of vessel replacement policy
7. Correspondence

Additional materials may be added, and presentations will be shared as they become available.

Start of 2019 FY & 2020/2021 Scallop Specifications – Nantucket Lightship

Recent Activity: As part of the annual allocation cycle, the Council has closely tracked billions of small, slow-growing scallops in the deep water of the Nantucket Lightship South area. Through support of the Scallop RSA, researchers from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) gathered growth and condition data on animals in the NLS-S in July 2018, October 2018, January 2019, and May 2019. The AP will review preliminary findings of the on-going VIMS survey work in the NLS-S at the May 21st, 2019 meeting (i.e. AP/PDT meeting, RSA share day).

Next Steps/Anticipated Outcomes:

- Council staff will report on feedback from the AP on how the 2019 FY is proceeding.
- The Committee may wish to consider potential approaches for managing the small, slow growing scallops in the NLS-S-deep. The group could consider a motion or consensus statement that signals support (or lack of support) to the Council for developing a management approach to utilize these scallops. This could be support (or lack of support) for incorporating the NLS-S-deep scallops in specifications for FY2020.

Amendment 21 to the Scallop FMP

Recent Activity: The Council conducted 10 scoping meetings to gather input for Amendment 21 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop FMP to address three specific issues: 1) measures related to the Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) Management Area, 2) Limited Access General Category (LAGC) individual fishing quota (IFQ) possession limits, and 3) ability of Limited Access vessels with LAGC IFQ to transfer quota to LAGC IFQ-only vessels. The Council heard oral comments at all 10 scoping meetings and received written comments.

Next Steps: Council staff will summarize information gathered through the Amendment 21 scoping process. The AP and Committee will have the opportunity review the document at their meetings. The Council is expected to consider scoping comments document at its June meeting in South Portland, ME. To keep Amendment 21 moving forward, the Council will likely identify goals and objectives for each element of the action (1, 2, 3 listed above), and recommend the development of alternatives to support/achieve the goals/objectives. As part of this process, the AP and Committee may wish to consider the vision statements developed as part of Amendment 11. If the Committee and Council do not identify goals and objectives or task the PDT with developing alternatives at this meeting, the timeline presented in the Amendment 21 action plan would likely be extended. While some progress on Amendment 21 should be expected this fall, the Council will also be developing specifications which can be very time consuming.

Anticipated Outcomes from this Meeting:

Please Review A21 Draft Scoping Summary and be ready to address the following issues.

1. Is the Council's vision for the LAGC component different now than it was in Amendment 11? Part of the vision statement from Amendment 11, which transitioned the General Category component to a limited access fishery and IFQs was:
 - a. "a fleet made up of relatively small vessels, with possession limits to maintain the historical character of this fleet and provide opportunities to various participants including vessels from smaller coastal communities."
2. The AP and Committee should consider developing goals and objectives for the issues being addressed in Amendment 21. These can be used to help guide the development of alternatives. The preliminary rationale for action that is described in the Amendment 21 scoping document (i.e. which was approved at the January 2019 Council meeting), included:
 - a. Northern Gulf of Maine:
 - i. Support a [growing] directed scallop fishery in federal waters in the NGOM.
 - ii. Prevent unrestrained removals from the NGOM management area.
 - iii. Allow for orderly access to the scallop resource in this area by the LAGC and LA components.
 - iv. Establish mechanisms to set allowable catches and accurately monitor catch and bycatch.
 - b. Increase LAGC IFQ possession limits & allow the one-way transfer of quota from LA vessels with IFQ to LAGC IFQ-only vessels:
 - i. Improve overall economic performance of the LAGC IFQ component.
 - ii. Help ensure that the LAGC IFQ component remains profitable (promote profitability in the LAGC IFQ component of the fishery)
 - iii. Continued participation in the General Category fishery at varying levels.
3. Recommend that the Council recommend the development of alternatives designed to address the issues being considered in Amendment 21. The AP and Committee may wish to consider using the themes identified in the summary of scoping document.

2020/2021 Scallop RSA Research Recommendations

Recent Activity: The Scallop PDT developed input on research recommendations for the 2020/2021 Scallop RSA program over two meetings (April 4, 2019 & May 9, 2019), and through correspondence. The 2019/2020 Scallop RSA awards were announced on May 7, 2019.

Next Steps: Council staff will present information on the RSA program, recent awards, and input from the PDT and Scallop RSA Share Day.

Anticipated Outcomes. The AP may wish to recommend scallop RSA research priorities for 2020/2021 at this meeting. The Council will make final recommendations for the 2020/2021 cycle during the Scallop Report at the June Council meeting in South Portland, ME.

Research Set-Aside Program Review

Recent Activity: In April, the Council received a report of the RSA program that included findings and recommendations. The Council is planning to discuss next steps for the program review on June 11, 2019 (5pm agenda item). The Scallop PDT developed input through correspondence ahead of its May 9, 2019 PDT call. Dr. Michael Sissenwine (Review Chair) and Ms. Deirdre Boelke (Council staff) will participate in a discussion of RSA program review at the RSA Share Day on May 21, 2019.

Next Steps/Anticipated Outcomes:

- Council staff will present input on the program review recommendations that was gathered from the RSA Share Day.
- Identify issues/recommendations from the report that we think the Council should (or should not) consider working on (motions).

Action to Mitigate Impacts on Yellowtail Flounder

Recent Activity: The Council has recommended that the Scallop Committee work on an action to mitigate impacts on yellowtail flounder. In January, the Committee tasked the Scallop PDT with analyzing the options for reducing bycatch of Georges Bank yellowtail flounder, including seasonal closures and reduced hanging ratio requirements. The PDT reviewed analyses that was prepared in FW29 during the development of flatfish AMs. The PDT supported forwarding time/area closure analyses to the Scallop AP and Committee for consideration in an upcoming action.

Next Steps: Council staff will summarize the PDT's recommendation from its April 4th, 2019 meeting. The PDT has invited researchers from the Coonamessett Farm Foundation to their July 23, 2019 meeting to present findings from a recent Scallop RSA project that investigated the utility of a dredge modifications for reducing flatfish bycatch.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- The AP and Committee may wish to task the PDT with developing time/area closure alternatives in an upcoming action. The FW29 option was a closure of CAII and CAII ext from Nov. 16 – Dec. 31.

Update from NOAA on Shell Stock Compliance Guide and Vessel Replacement Policy

Recent Activity: On April 30, 2019, GARFO released a compliance guide for landing and possessing in-shell scallops. NOAA has developed a handout that describes scallop possession limits under the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan to help captains and dealers when possessing and landing in-shell scallops (shell stock). This includes meat weight and in-shell limits and examples of how to measure what vessels have onboard and at time of landing.

Next Steps: GARFO staff will present and field questions on both topics at your meeting.

Other Business

Anticipated Outcomes: Additional items and issues may be taken up under other business.

Please review all documents before the meeting.

If you have any questions about these enclosures please contact Jonathon Peros (978-465-0492 ext. 117).