



New England Fishery Management Council

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PRESS CONTACT: Janice Plante
(607) 592-4817, jplante@nefmc.org

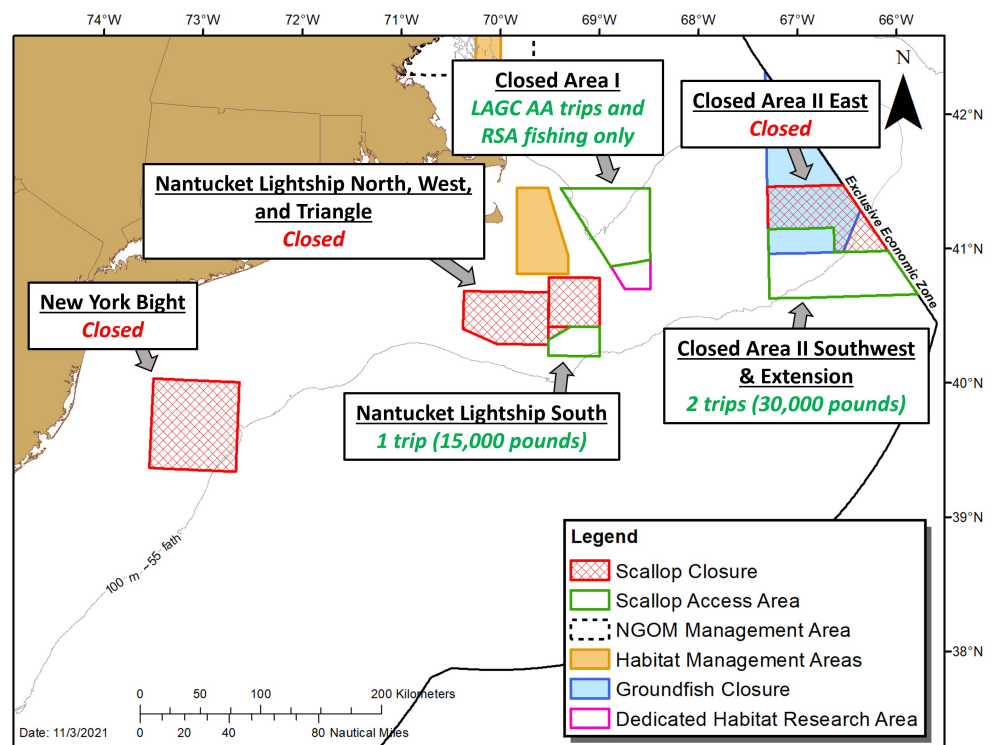
Council Signs Off on 2022 Scallop Fishing Year Specifications in Framework 34, Folding in Approved Amendment 21 Measures

The New England Fishery Management Council selected final measures for Framework Adjustment 34 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan when it met by webinar for its [December 7-9, 2021 meeting](#). The Council also voted to send the framework to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS/NOAA Fisheries) for review and implementation. The target implementation date is April 1, 2022, the start of the new scallop fishing year.

In short, the framework contains five distinct actions:

1. Updated overfishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) specifications for the 2022 and 2023 fishing years as recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee in this [report](#);
2. Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) Management Area measures and a total allowable landings limit for the NGOM area;
3. 2022 specifications for the scallop fishery, including allocations of access area trips, days-at-sea, and LAGC IFQs, plus 2023 default specifications;
4. Fishing trip allocations into available scallop access areas for limited access general category (LAGC) individual fishing quota (IFQ) permit holders; and
5. Designations for where fishing can take place in 2022 under the Scallop Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. ~ The complete list of alternatives considered by the Council is available in [this document](#). ~

Fishing Year 2022 Scallop Access Areas and Closed Areas (Trip Allocations for Full-Time Limited Access Permit Holders in Green)





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The Council considered the status of the resource and results from the [2021 scallop survey season](#) before making its allocation decisions. The Atlantic sea scallop resource is healthy. The stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. However, the biomass has declined from its record high levels, as was expected to occur, now that the exceptionally strong 2012 year-class on Georges Bank and the 2013 year-class in the Mid-Atlantic Access Area are at the end of their life cycles. Recruitment of new scallops in the Mid-Atlantic has been below average since 2013.

Currently, the highest densities of harvestable scallops within access areas are in Closed Area II on Georges Bank and in the Nantucket Lightship South, which still harbors the last of the 2012 year-class. The highest concentrations of harvestable scallops on “open” bottom are on the Northern and Southern Flank of Georges Bank and in the Great South Channel.

As such, the Council supported the following allocations for the 2022 scallop fishing year.

- **Full-Time Fleet – Three Access Area Trips, 24 Open Area Days:** Vessels with full-time limited access permits will be allowed to fish two trips in the Closed Area II Southwest Extension and one trip in the Nantucket Lightship South (see map on page one). The possession limit for access area trips is 15,000 pounds. Vessels will be allocated a total of 45,000 pounds – 30,000 pounds of which can be fished in Closed Area II and 15,000 pounds in Nantucket Lightship South. These allocations can be exchanged in 7,500-pound increments. Full-time vessels fishing a Nantucket Lightship South trip will be allowed to carry two extra crew, bringing the maximum crew size to 10. This is due to the increased effort needed to shuck the smaller, slow-growing scallops in the area. Additionally, full-time permit holders will receive 24 open area days-at-sea.
- **Part-Time Fleet – Two Access Area Trips, 9.6 Open Area Days:** Vessels with part-time limited access permits will be allowed to fish one trip in Closed Area II and one trip in the Nantucket Lightship South. The possession limit is 9,000 pounds. Part-time vessels will be allocated 18,000 pounds total with 9,000 pounds fishable in each available access area. Vessels will be able to exchange pounds between areas in 9,000-pound increments on a one-for-one basis. The maximum crew size in the Nantucket Lightship South will be eight.

Fishing year 2022 landings under Framework 34 are projected to total roughly 34 million pounds, generating an estimated revenue of \$437 million using 2021 price data.



Scallops harvested on a 2019 trip in Nantucket Lightship South conducted under the Scallop Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. – VIMS photo



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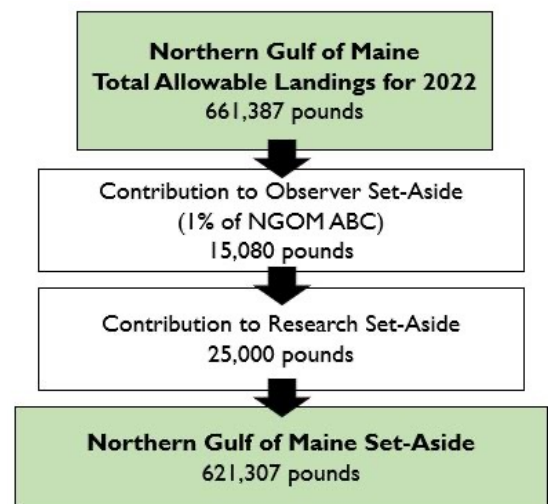
- **Hudson Canyon/Elephant Trunk:** Vessels that have remaining 2021 allocations for the Mid-Atlantic Access Area will be able to fish their remaining allocations for the first 60 days of the 2022 fishing year, meaning through May 30, 2022. Then, the Mid-Atlantic Access Area, which currently encompasses the Hudson Canyon and Elephant Trunk areas, will revert to open bottom on May 31, 2022.
- **New York Bight:** Framework 34 includes a new scallop closure area in the New York Bight. Closing this area to protect recruitment observed in the 2021 surveys will ultimately enhance scallop fishing in the New York Bight in future fishing years when the area is reopened for commercial harvest. Also, the closure is expected to produce favorable conditions for downstream recruitment in historically productive areas further south.
- **Nantucket Lightship West:** The 2021 surveys also discovered a large set of young-of-the-year scallops in Nantucket Lightship West. The Council opted to close this area to protect these scallops, which are less than 40 millimeters in size, to give them a better chance of growing and contributing to the fishery down the road. The Nantucket Lightship North and the small Triangle portion also will be closed.
- **Closed Area I:** The Closed Area I Access Area will be available only for compensation fishing under the Scallop Research Set-Aside Program and for LAGC fishing of access area trips.

Amendment 21 Components in Framework 34 – LAGC Fishing, NGOM Area

During the first week of December, NOAA Fisheries informed the Council that the agency had approved [Amendment 21](#) to the federal scallop plan and expected the measures to be implemented by the April 1 start of the 2022 fishing year. Framework 34 includes the [new Amendment 21 measures](#).

The Council now will begin accounting for scallop biomass in the Northern Gulf of Maine Management Area in the same flowchart it uses to calculate the OFL and ABC for the rest of the resource.

To determine NGOM total allowable landings for the 2022 fishing year, the Council factored in the exploitable biomass only from Stellwagen Bank, which is where fishing in the NGOM area is expected to occur. The new Amendment 21 process specifies that once total allowable landings for the NGOM area are determined, deductions are made to support monitoring (observer coverage) and research. The resulting number is the Northern Gulf of Maine set-aside. Vessels with limited access general category NGOM permits



NGOM Allocations Under Amendment 21: After the total allowable landings level is determined, deductions are made off-the-top to support monitoring and research. Of what's left, the first 800,000 pounds goes to the NGOM set-aside. Anything above 800,000 is shared with the limited access and LAGC IFQ components of the fishery. The breakdown for 2022 is shown above. The 800,000-pound sharing trigger was not reached.



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can fish the NGOM set-aside under a 200-pound-per-day limit. Any set-aside above 800,000 pounds is subject to a sharing agreement with the limited access and LAGC IFQ components of the fishery. The 800,000-pound sharing agreement threshold was not triggered for the 2022 fishing year.

**** Read this [important announcement](#) from NOAA Fisheries about mandatory participation by the NGOM fleet in the [industry-funded observer program](#) under Amendment 21. ****

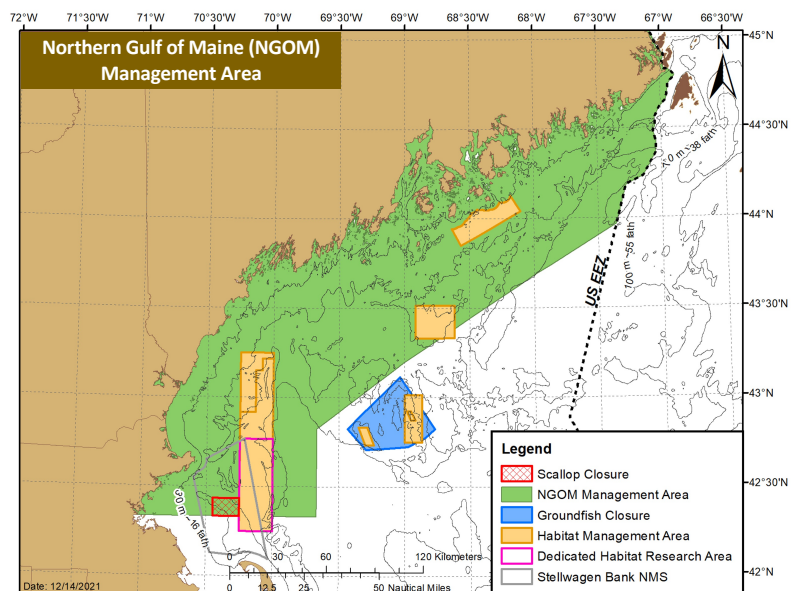
Stellwagen Bank Closure Lifted: The closure currently in place in the NGOM area on Stellwagen Bank will be reopened to fishing under Framework 34 (see map below). The area has been closed for the past two fishing years, but small scallops within the area have had a chance to grow into harvestable biomass to contribute to the fishery. This is the premise behind the scallop fishery's rotational management program.

Limited Access General Category Individual Fishing Quota (LAGC IFQ) Access Area Trips: Amendment 21 increased the access area trip limit from 600 pounds to 800 pounds for LAGC IFQ permit holders. Framework 34 reflects the increased possession limit in the LAGC IFQ access area allocation. LAGC IFQ permit holders do not receive individual allocations for access areas. Rather, this component of the fishery works under a fleet-wide allocation that is equivalent to 5.5% of the access area allocation to the full-time limited access component of the fishery. Given the three access area trips for full-time permit holders for the 2022 fishing year, the LAGC IFQ component will receive 1,071 trips collectively to fish in access areas.

Steaming to Closed Area II can be challenging for LAGC IFQ vessels, which tend to be smaller in size and have smaller crews. Therefore, the Council opted to redistribute the fleet's Closed Area II trips to Closed Area I. Under this provision, LAGC IFQ vessels will be able to fish 357 trips in the Nantucket Lightship South Access Area and 714 trips in Closed Area I.

Scallop RSA Program: For many years running, 1.25 million pounds of scallops have been "set aside" annually to support research under the RSA Program. Amendment 21 folded in the Northern Gulf of Maine, which now adds an additional 25,000 pounds to the RSA set-aside, bringing it up to 1.275 million pounds.

Overall, Framework 34 will allow RSA compensation fishing on open bottom and in Nantucket Lightship South, Closed Area II, Closed Area I, and, to a limited degree, within the NGOM area.



*The Stellwagen Bank Scallop Closure Area (red hatching in the map above) has been in place within the Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) Management Area (shown in green) for the past two fishing years. **The closure area will reopen to fishing in 2022 under Framework 34.** More information about the framework can be found in the [December 2021 meeting materials](#). – New England Fishery Management Council graphic*