

Scallop Committee Report



**NEFMC Meeting
December 3, 2025
Newport, Rhode Island**

Scallop Report

- **Framework 40:**
 - Part I: Review options and draft impacts of FW40
 - Part II: Select preferred alternatives for FW40 (Sections 4.1 – 4.4)
 - Part III: Motion to submit Framework 40 to NMFS.
- **Scallop Long-Term Strategic Plan**
- **Outlook:**
 - “Decision Draft” submission of FW40 in December.
 - Delay in Final Action by adding new measures that have not been analyzed will delay the Framework.

Framework 40 Actions

1. Overfishing limit and acceptable biological catch (Section 4.1)
2. Northern Gulf of Maine total allowable landings in FY 2026 and FY 2027 (Section 4.2)
3. Fishery specifications for FY 2026 and FW 2027 (default), including access area and DAS allocations (Section 4.3)

Council: Refer to Document 2a (FW40 Decision Document)

Framework 40: Purpose and Need

- **Need:**

- Prevent overfishing
- Improve yield per recruit
- Manage total removals from NGOM

- **Purpose:**

- Set Specifications, including Annual Projected Landings
- Set landings limits from NGOM based on biomass

Section 4.1 – OFL and ABC

Committee Preferred Alternatives (NOV 2025)

Action 1. OFL and ABC (Sec. 4.1)

Alternative 1: No Action
Default OFL and ABC for FY 2026

Alternative 2:
Updated OFL and ABC for
FY 2026 and FY 2027



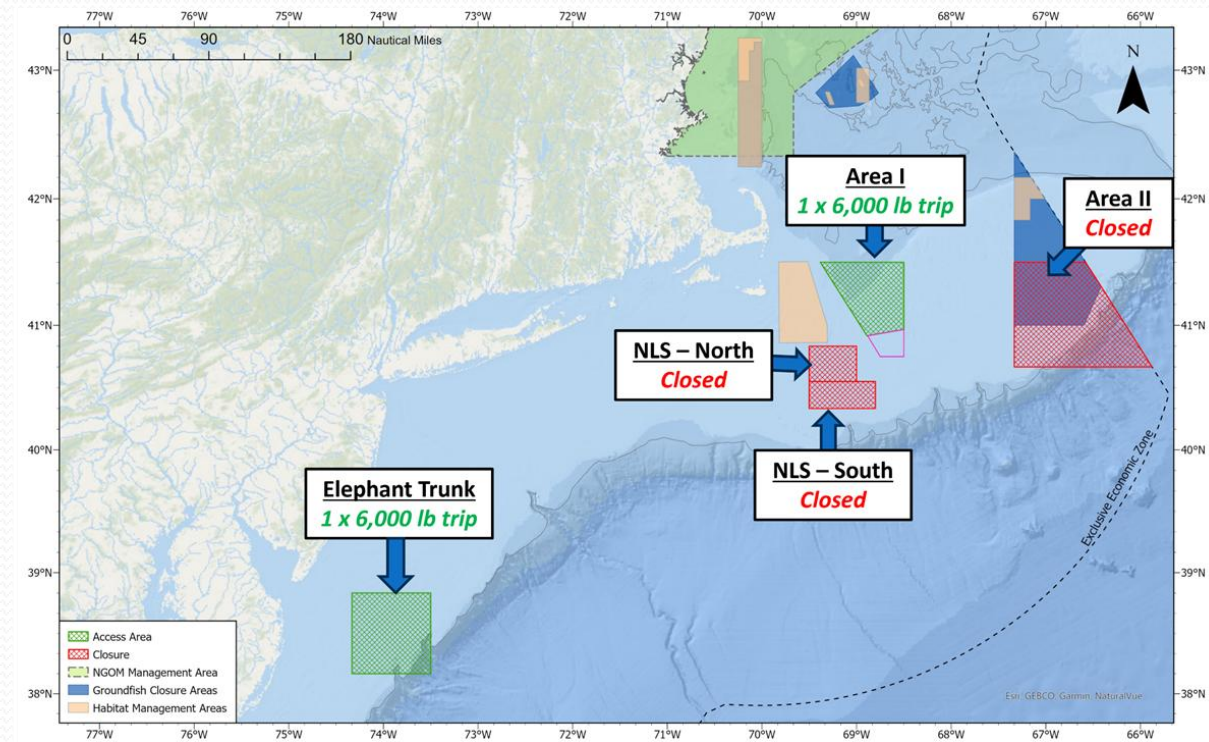
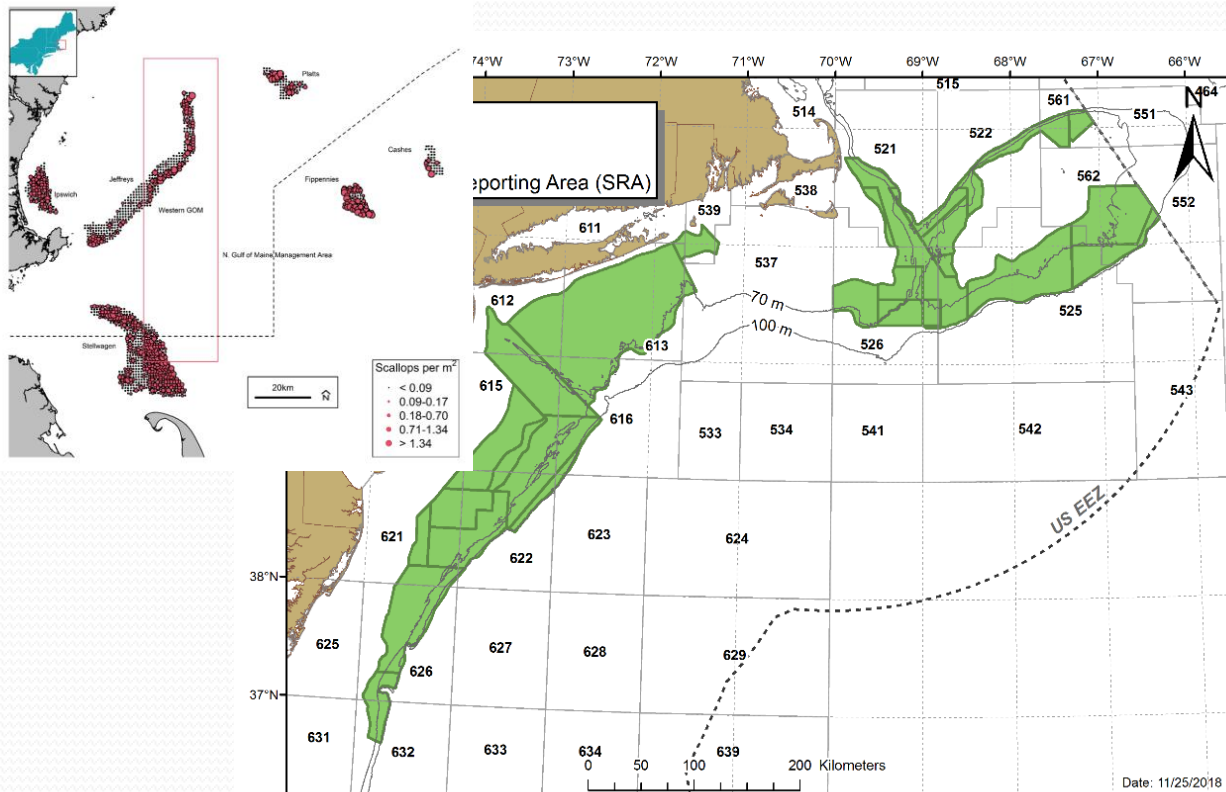
- The Atlantic sea scallop resource is considered healthy; the stock is not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring. Research Track Assessment completed in April 2025.
- 2025 survey biomass lowest recorded since 1999.
- Large decrease in the OFL and ABC in 2025, decline in biomass and lower reference points from the 2025 assessment.
- 54% of the biomass on Georges Bank, 38% in the Mid-Atlantic, 8% in Gulf of Maine
 - Continued growth of large year class in Nantucket Lightship South – 47% of total scallop abundance and 27% of total scallop biomass.
- 71% of the scallops are on Georges Bank, 27% in the Mid-Atlantic, 2% in the Gulf of Maine
 - Majority of animals 3 – years old, not fully exploitable
- Environmental change likely increasing mortality of scallops, especially at the southern end of the range.

Proposed FY 2026 ABC/ACL ($F=0.36$)

34 million lbs

Spatial Management FY 2026 Possible Landings

16.2-17.1 million lbs



Section 4.2.1 – NGOM Management and TAL

- Year 5 of TAL sharing arrangement, set-asides for observers, research, LAGC.
- Decision points: F rates, consider where fishing is likely to occur.
 - Majority of biomass on Stellwagen (9yo)
- CTE Preferred (Status Quo management) would decrease the NGOM Set-Aside for LAGC compared to 2025 → Lower revenue and economic benefits.
- Revenue estimates range from ~\$3.72 to ~\$9.22 million. Committee preferred expected to result in \$6.78 million & 1,864 trips.

Committee Preferred Alternatives (Nov 2025)

Action 2. Northern Gulf of Maine TAL Setting (Sec. 4.2.1)

Alternative 1: No Action;
NGOM Set-Aside: 507,063 lb
No 2027 Default

Alternative 2: TAL set using $F=0.25$ on Stellwagen only
TAL = 255,047 lb;
NGOM Set-Aside = 204,694 lb
2027 Default = 102,347 lb

Alternative 3: TAL set using $F=0.18$ on all areas
TAL = 417,642 lb;
NGOM Set-Aside: 372,756 lb
2027 Default = 186,378 lb

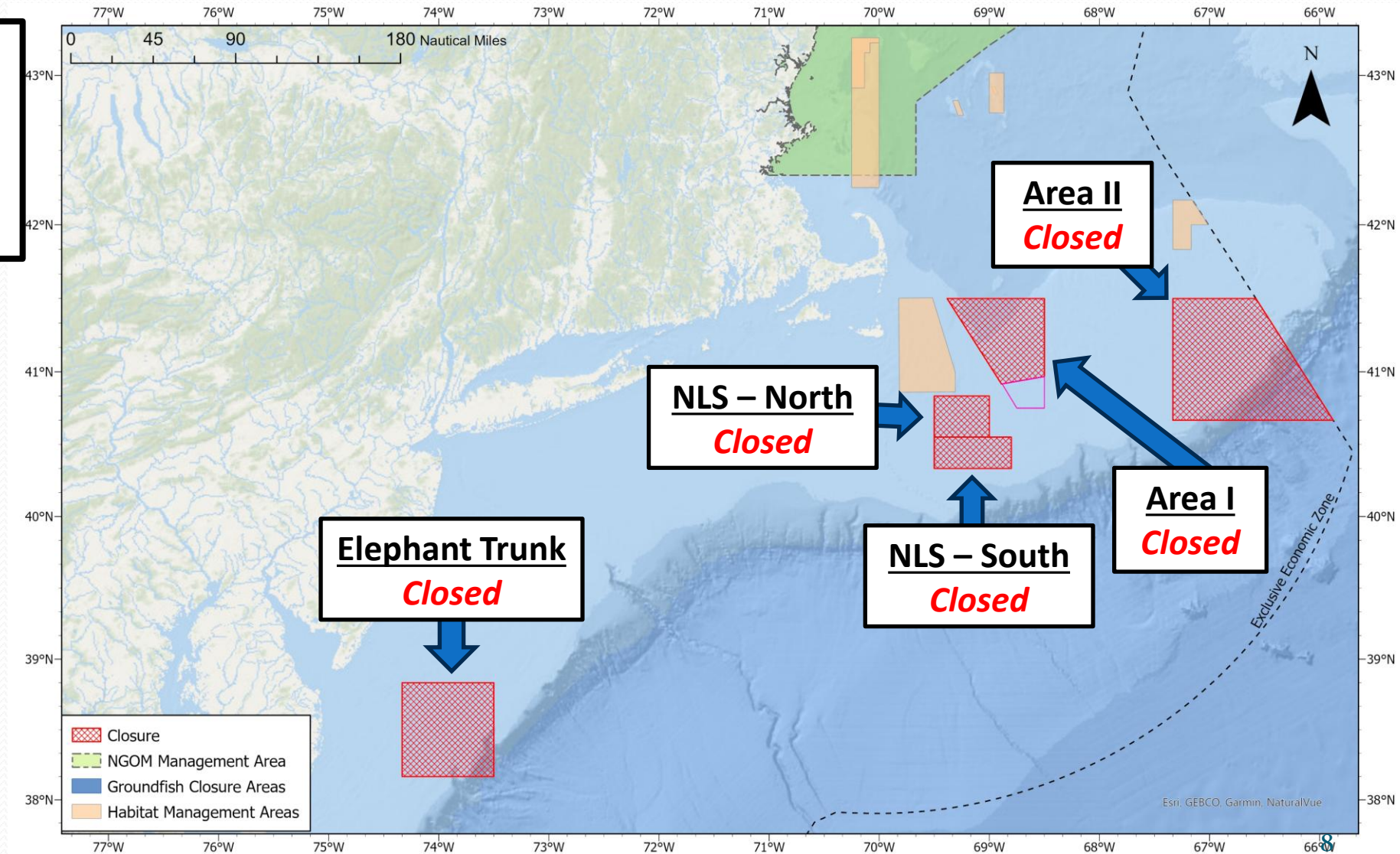
2027 Default based on 50% of 2025 NGOM Set-Aside

Section 4.3 – Specification Alternatives

4.3.1 – Alternative 1 (No Action)

18 DAS

*Landings: 8.8 million pounds
IFQ (5.5%): 744k pounds*



Section 4.3 – Specification Alternatives

4.3.3 – Alternative 2

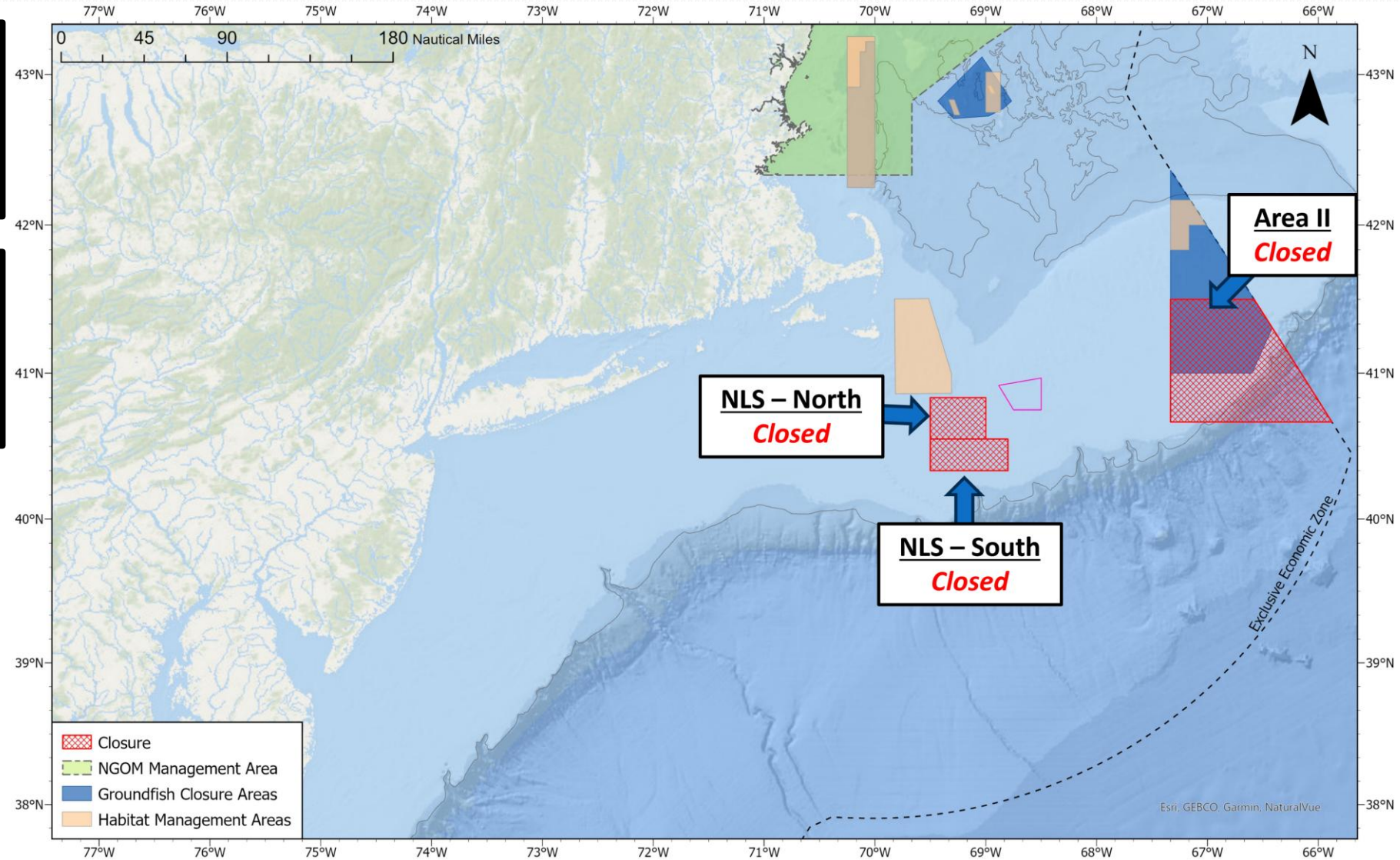
34 DAS

*Landings: 16.2 million pounds
IFQ (5.5%): 888k pounds*

4.3.4 – Alternative 3

36 DAS

*Landings: 17.1 million pounds
IFQ (5.5%): 921k pounds*



Part-Time Limited Access

- **Alternative 2:** 13.6 DAS

FY2027 Default Measures

- **Alternative 2 and 3:** LA – 75% of DAS, LAGC IFQ – 75% of 2026 allocations, and no default FY 2027 access area trips allocated

Opportunity to Fish AA Trips in FY 2026

- **Alternatives 2 and 3:** FY 2025 trips in Area I would be available for the first 60 days in FY 2026. There would be no delayed opening of Area I from April 1 – May 15.
- Action 4 would specify distribution of LAGC IFQ access area trips. Currently no alternatives with AA allocation, so Action 4 not needed or presented today

Committee Preferred Alternatives (Nov 2025)

Action 3. Specifications (Sec. 4.3)

Alternative 1: No Action
Default Measures from FW39

Alternative 2: 34 DAS
No Access Area Allocation
Landings: 16.2 million lb

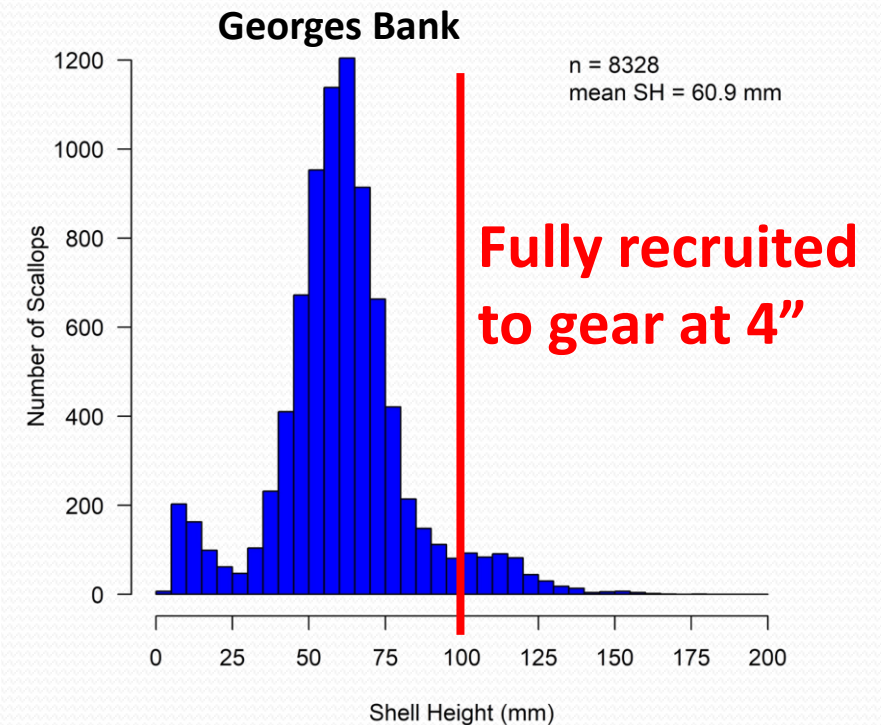
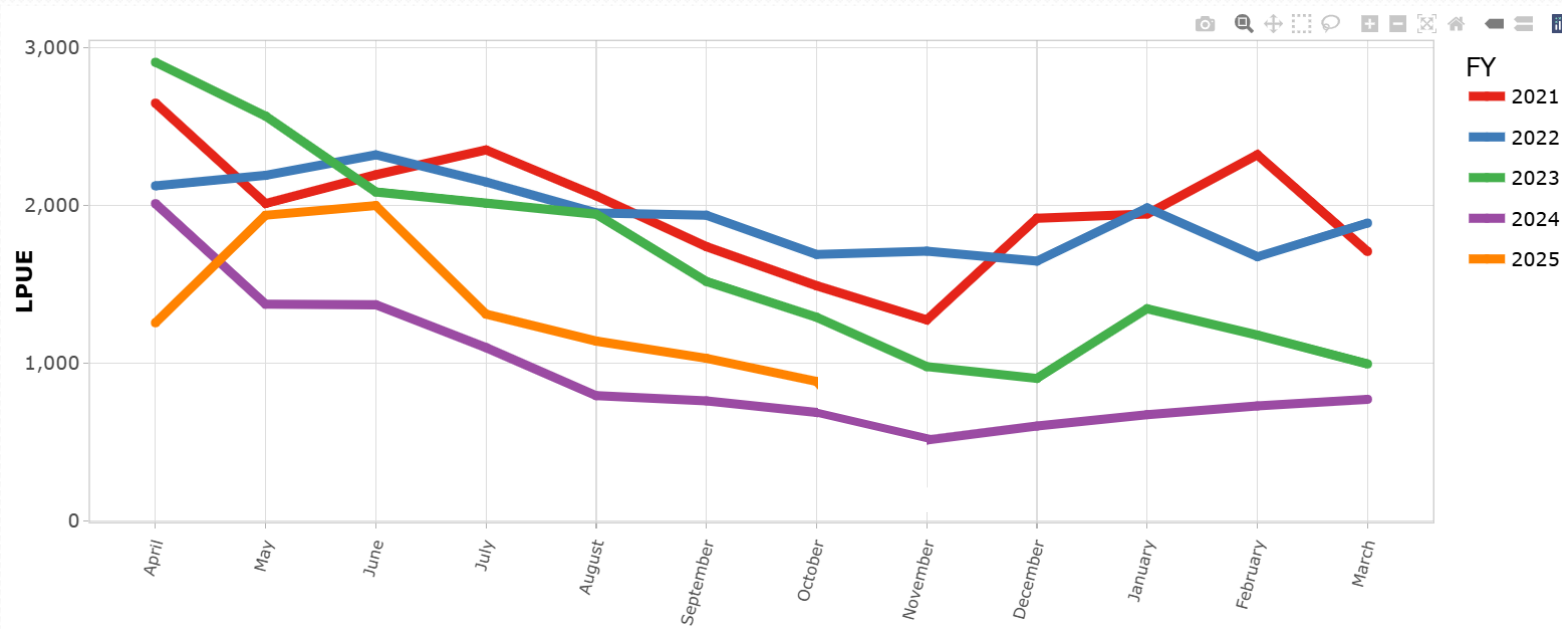
Alternative 3: 36 DAS
No Access Area Allocation
Landings: 17.1 million lb

Scallop RSA Set-Aside in FY 2026

- With 2026 NOFO publication uncertain, Council could consider whether to reduce the RSA set-aside in 2026.
 - 1.275 million pounds
 - 538,714 for multi-year awards
 - 736,286 pounds remaining.
- **Council:**
 - **No Action required**
 - The PDT does not recommend a lower RSA set-aside amount given current uncertainty
 - Unawarded RSA Set-Aside could be used to expand 2026 survey efforts to cover potential short-falls.

FY 2025 Fishery Performance

- **FY 2025 average LPUE = 1,493 lb per day** (FY 2024 average = 1,047 lb per day)
- Elevated natural mortality in Area I from predation, poor yields
- Recruitment present in Nantucket Lightship, but not exploitable before 2027



Summary of Biological, Social, and Economic Impacts

Committee Preferred Alternatives (Nov 2025)

Alternatives/Options		4.3.1	4.3.2	4.3.3	4.3.4
Economic Variables		No Action	34 DAS	36 DAS	24 DAS 2x12k
	Units*	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Status Quo
Landings	Mil lbs	8.83	16.15	17.10	18.35
Revenue	Mil \$	\$148.08	\$263.59	\$278.09	\$296.95

- Overall F under **Alternatives 2 and 3**: $F=0.237 - 0.253$ (ABC set at $F=0.36$).
- Risk of overfishing is low for all alternatives under consideration.
- Majority of biomass now found on Georges Bank, majority of resource made up of 3-year old cohort. Uncertain outlook for scallop resource in the Mid-Atlantic (environmental change).
- Revenue estimates under **Alternatives 2 and 3**: \$264 - \$278 million dollars.
- **Alternatives 2 and 3** would have positive social impacts relative to No Action, but slight negative relative to Status Quo

Non-Target Impacts: Flatfish bycatch

- Will analyze FY 2026 non-target species impacts when bycatch projections are available.
- Closure of Area II = likely decreased bycatch of Georges Bank yellowtail
 - Catch of northern windowpane may continue to exceed sub-ACL.
- Expect slight increase in effort in SNE/MA yellowtail and southern windowpane flounder stock areas.
- While catch rates of some allocated flatfish stocks may increase, area swept would decline under all alternatives relative to Status Quo – likely slight positive impact to non-target species relative to Status Quo.

Protected Resources

- Fewer PR interaction concerns on Georges Bank (i.e., turtles or sturgeon) vs. Mid-Atlantic.
- Effort expected mostly on GB
 - Slightly more effort in Mid-Atlantic compared to recent levels.
- ↑ open bottom DAS under all alternatives
- Overall ↓ in days fished.
- NGOM fishery effort likely to decrease
 - Season likely to conclude before mid-May (i.e., prior to sea turtles migrating into the area).

EFH Impacts

- Will analyze FY 2026 EFH when additional projections available (area swept, habitat efficiency)
- With spatial management focusing on spreading out the fleet on DAS, habitat efficiency and area swept will be lower relative to Status Quo.

Questions?

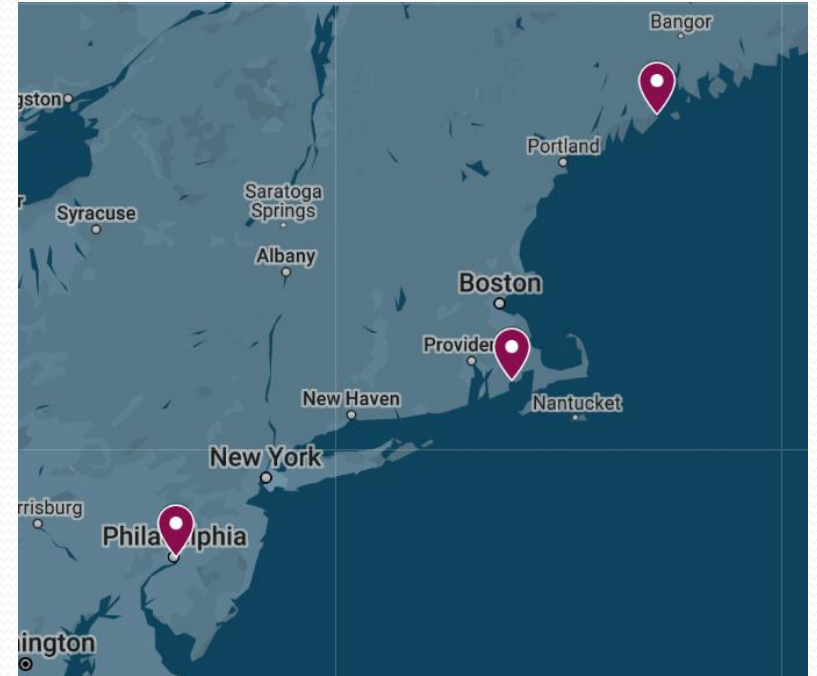
Long-Term Strategic Plan

Long-Term Strategic Plan

- Defining a 3-5 year vision for the fishery, and the actions that would be needed to achieve that vision.
 - Where are we going and how will we get there?
 - Final action to approve the plan in December 2025 → align the plan with the start of any new projects in 2026.
- Long-Term Strategic Plan (Document 4a)
 - 9 objectives and 29 strategies, developed through:
 1. Information assembled from recent scallop-related projects (e.g. Evaluation of Rotational Management, Scallop Survey Working Group), Council discussion, and public correspondence.
 2. Public input from 4 visioning sessions in Rockport, ME; New Bedford, MA, Philadelphia, PA, and by webinar.
 3. Continuous input from Scallop PDT, AP, and Committee throughout 2025.
 - SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) assessment, focusing on the scallop resource, the fishery, and the environment developed by the Scallop PDT

Long-Term Strategic Plan

- Document reflects real public input and real industry needs
 - February 27, Maine Fishermen's Forum, Rockport, ME **~60 attendees**
 - March 4, New Bedford, MA **~65 attendees**
 - March 13, Philadelphia, PA **~30 attendees**
 - March 24, Webinar **~50 attendees**



Long-Term Strategic Plan

- Appendix I: Goals and Objectives of the Scallop FMP & Subsequent Actions (Document 4b)
 - Strategic Plan does not supplant overall management objectives, but works as an action plan for achieving them.
 - Reference document for Council consideration.
- Appendix II: Evaluation Criteria (Document 4c)
 - Propose an annual 'benchmarking' exercise to evaluate whether the Council is achieving the outlined objectives of the Strategic Plan, and serving as a check-in before Council develops next year's work priorities.

Strategic Plan Objectives

1. Improve management capacity, flexibility, and responsiveness in a changing environment
2. Improve the reliability of annual projections of scallop biomass and abundance
3. Expand opportunities in the Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) fishery while maintaining conservative management approaches
4. Improve rotational management performance and access area fishing opportunities
5. Improve fishing practices to minimize incidental scallop mortality, bycatch, and impacts on habitat and protected resources
6. Maintain the economic viability of the scallop fleet
7. Maintain a dynamic Scallop Research Set-Aside (RSA) program to fund scallop research and resource surveys
8. Develop the regulatory, management, and funding infrastructure to support a scallop enhancement program
9. Improve scallop industry engagement at meetings of the Council's Scallop Plan Development Team, Advisory Panel, and Committee

5. Improve fishing practices to minimize incidental scallop mortality, bycatch, and impacts on habitat and protected resources

Strategy 5.4 - Regulate best fishing practices, such as restrictions on high-grading, deck-loading, and excessive tow-times, and monitoring using deck cameras as part of an electronic monitoring (EM) program.

Possible management measures	Develop regulations or incentives to support a voluntary, industry-led EM program
	Develop an EM program to be managed and supported by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
Management action required	Framework
Type of NEPA analysis expected (CE/SIR/EA/EIS)	EA
Possible analyses	Identify cost burden and indirect behavioral impacts on fishing vessels.
	Identify potential funding sources
	Evaluate capacity of scallop industry or GARFO to administer an EM program
Data or research needs	Consider incentive structures used in other fisheries, such as Bering Sea pollock.
Work led by	Scallop PDT or outside contractor
Expected duration of work	1 year
Potential challenges	Very limited ability to enforce gear modifications, fishing practices. Use of voluntarily collected EM may pose data sharing challenges that could require data-use agreements.
Ongoing work	None
Other notes	Consider alongside Strategy 5.3 – Increase use of other gear modifications.

Implementation

- **Purpose of the Strategic Plan:** Organize possible work priorities earlier in the year and coordinate work

1) Promote efficiencies

- Some of the objectives need additional research or infrastructure from outside of the Council process (e.g. Electronic Monitoring).
- Track ongoing work related to important Strategic Plan objectives even when those topics are not part of current year's work priorities
- Batch related strategies into single work priorities to support multiple Strategic Plan objectives.

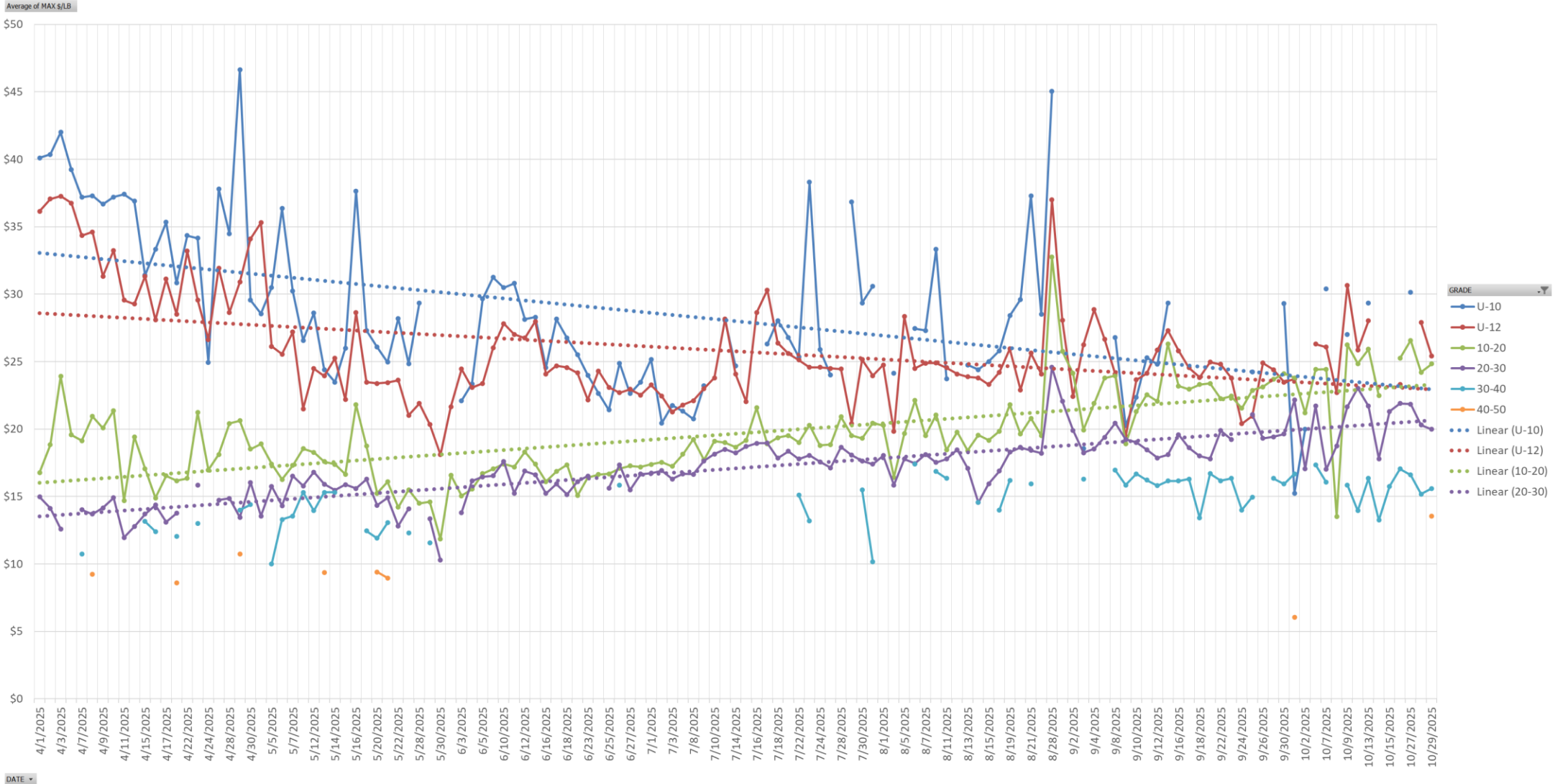
2) Guide long-term decision-making

- Identify what work needs to begin in 2026 to reach 2030 goals
- A longer runway will help make more time for tackling larger, more complex issues in the fishery given current resource-constrained environment.

Questions?

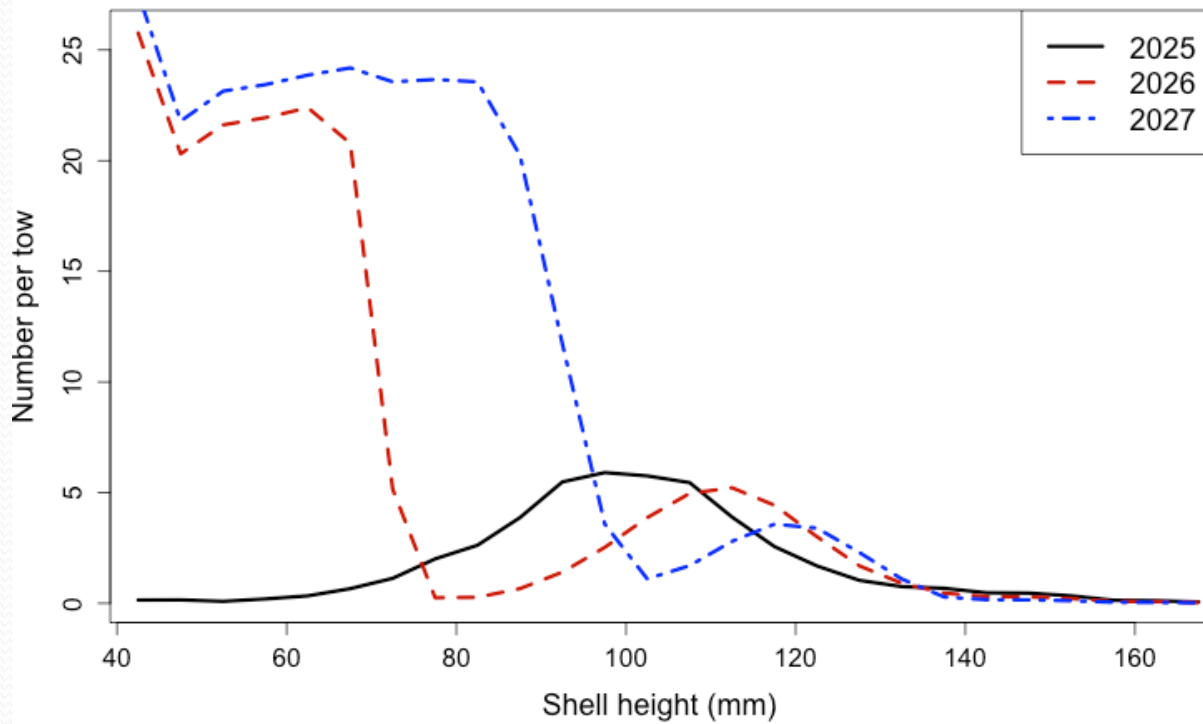
Back Pocket

Row Labels	Landings (lb)							Proportion by grade							Total Landings (lb)	Total Proportion by grade
	Area I	Area II	Channel	Georges Bank	Gulf of Maine	Mid-Atlantic	New York Bight	Area I	Area II	Channel	Georges Bank	Gulf of Maine	Mid-Atlantic	New York Bight		
U-10	14,156	186,092	70,338	25,701	150,610	21,801	16,799	0.79%	8.72%	1.92%	1.73%	38.39%	4.23%	9.63%	485,497	4.78%
U-12	116,737	359,841	473,766	103,244	206,587	97,581	12,952	6.53%	16.87%	12.91%	6.95%	52.66%	18.91%	7.43%	1,370,708	13.49%
10-20	626,026	1,234,860	2,562,222	574,805	33,388	261,467	98,464	35.00%	57.89%	69.83%	38.70%	8.51%	50.68%	56.47%	5,391,232	53.07%
20-30	930,230	333,273	528,762	689,222	1,716	107,867	46,145	52.01%	15.62%	14.41%	46.41%	0.44%	20.91%	26.47%	2,637,215	25.96%
30-40	101,227	19,191	33,135	86,085		27,175		5.66%	0.90%	0.90%	5.80%	0.00%	5.27%	0.00%	266,813	2.63%
40-50	211		904	6,090		54		0.01%	0.00%	0.02%	0.41%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	7,259	0.07%
Grand Total	1,788,587	2,133,257	3,669,127	1,485,147	392,301	515,945	174,360	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	10,158,724	100.00%

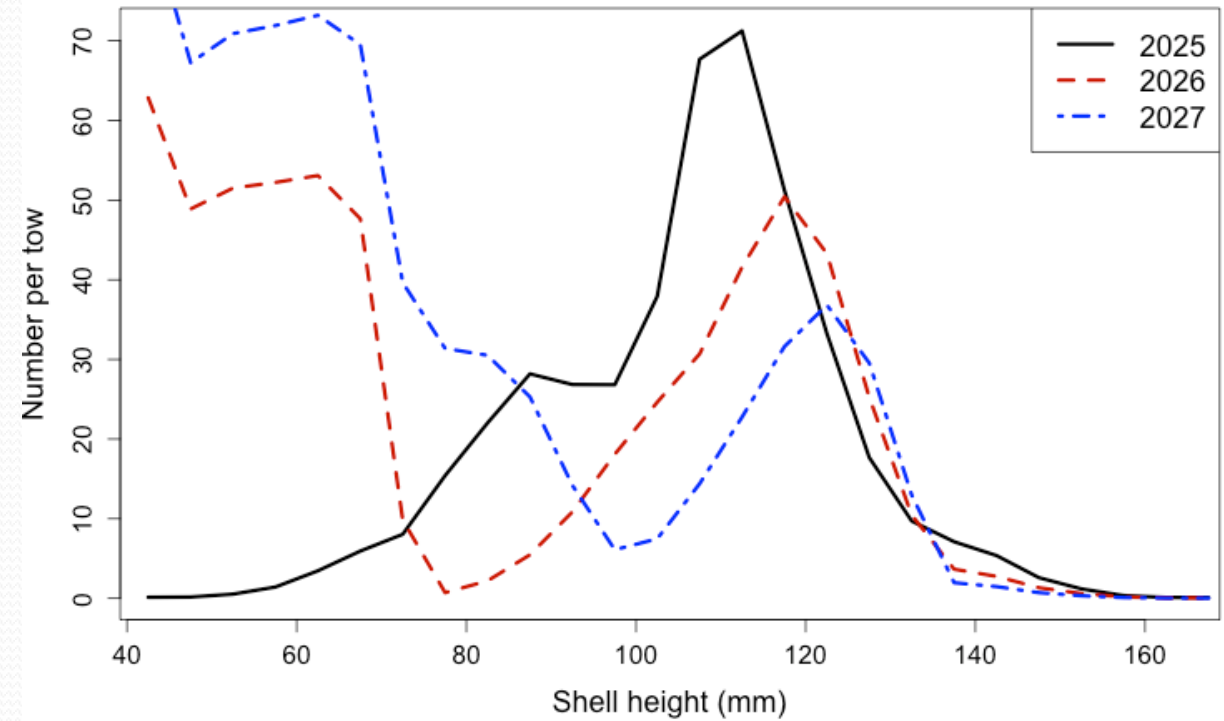


GSC and Area I - Sliver

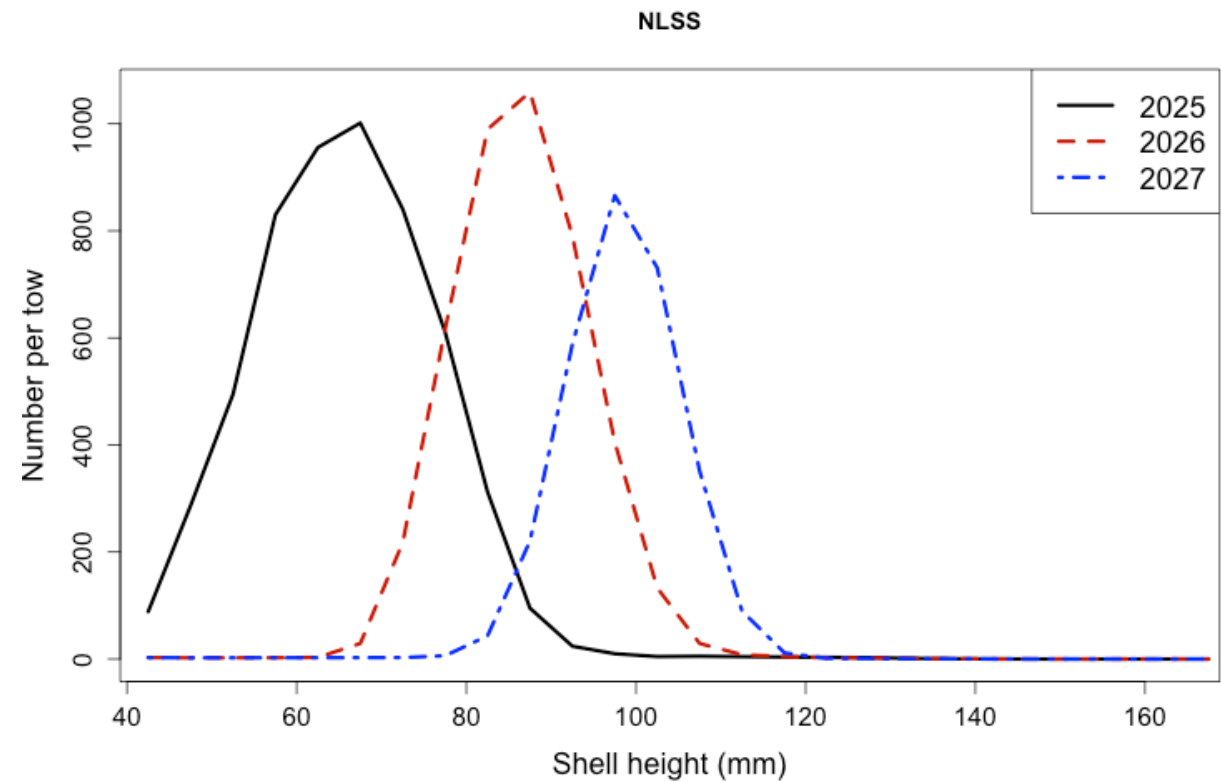
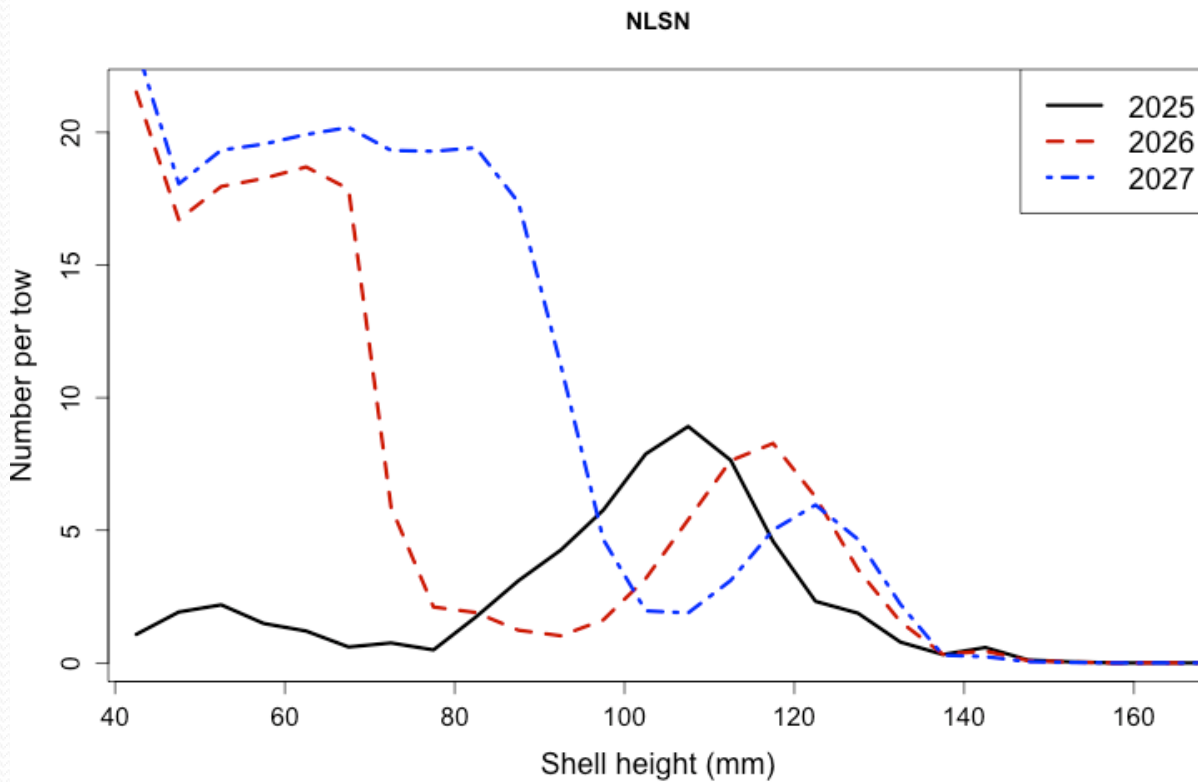
GSC



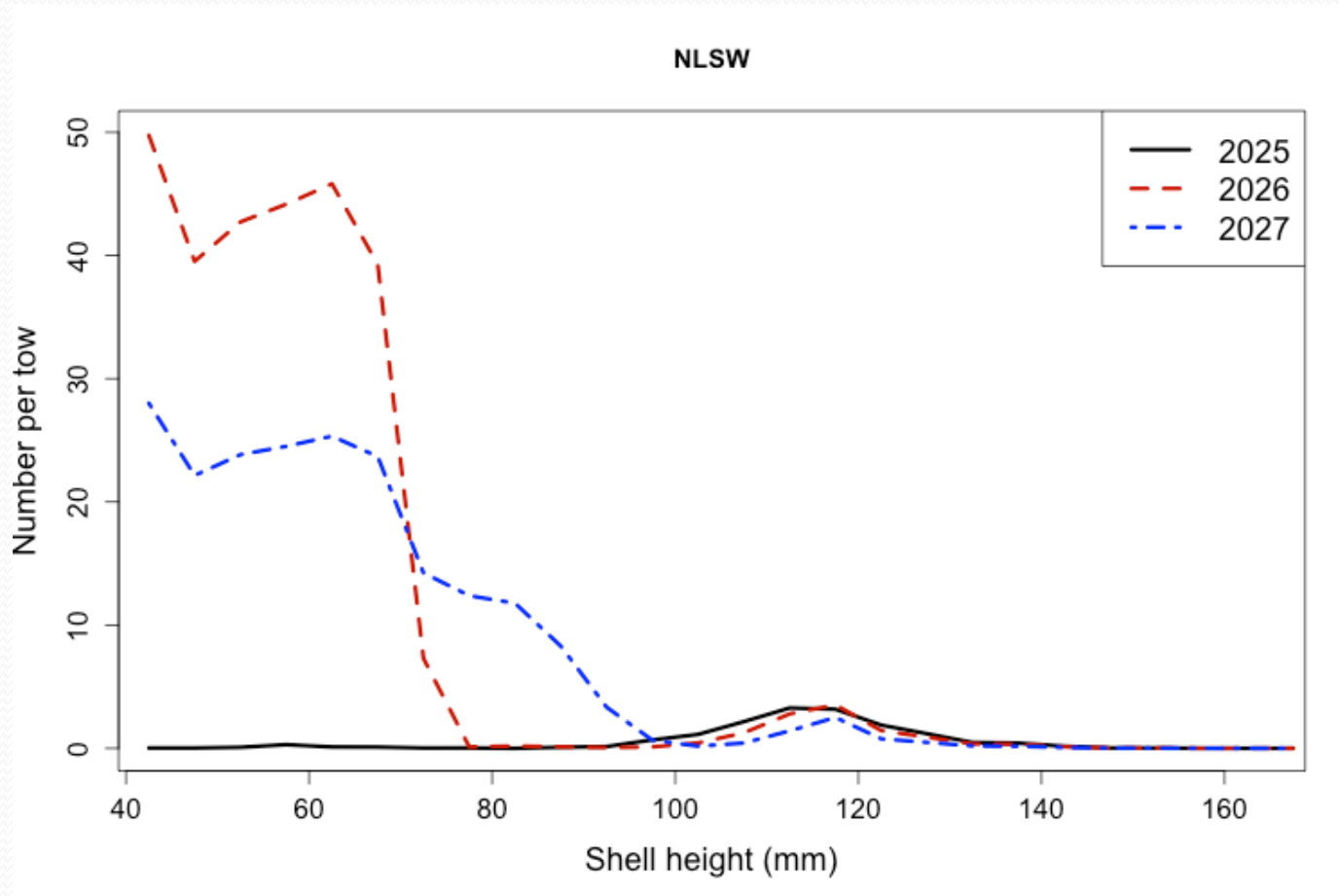
C1N



Nantucket Lightship – North and South

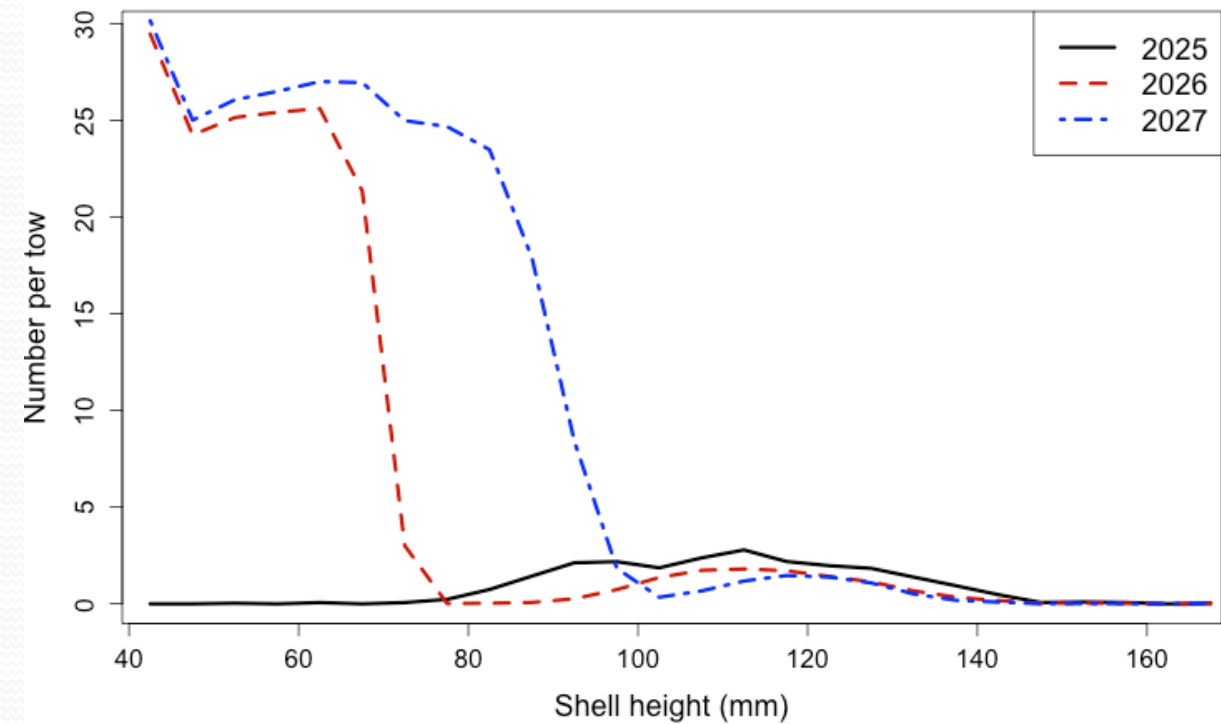


Nantucket Lightship - West

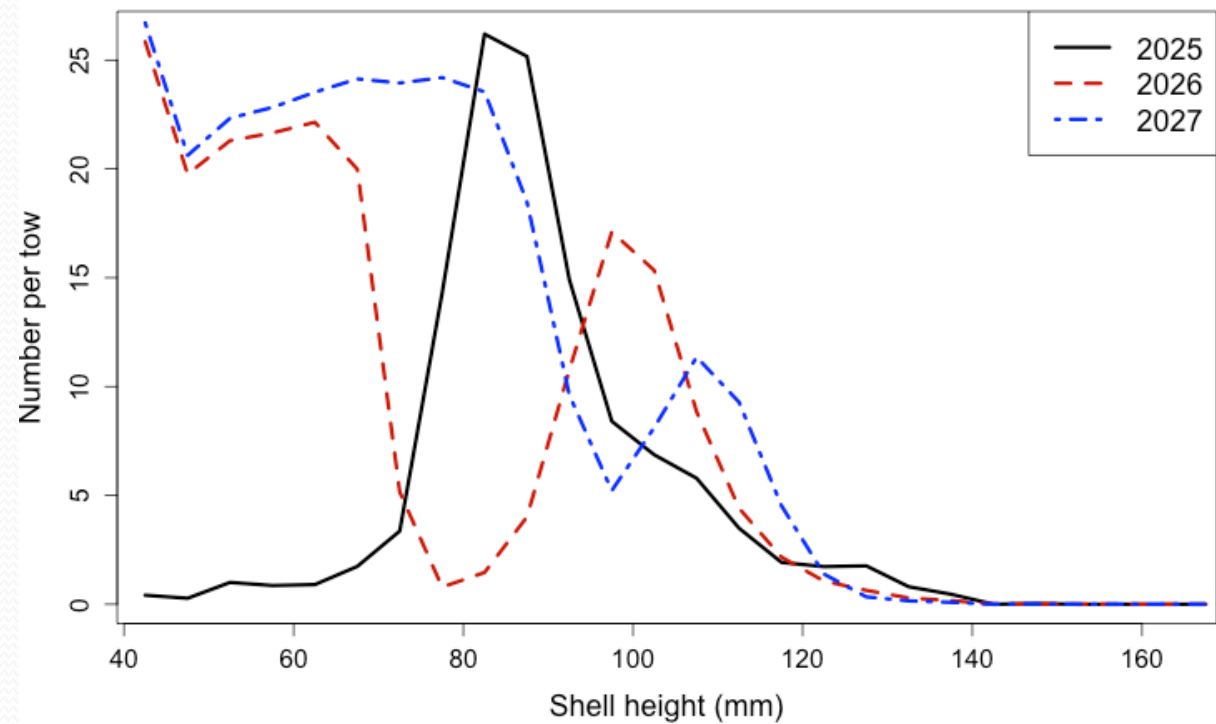


Area II

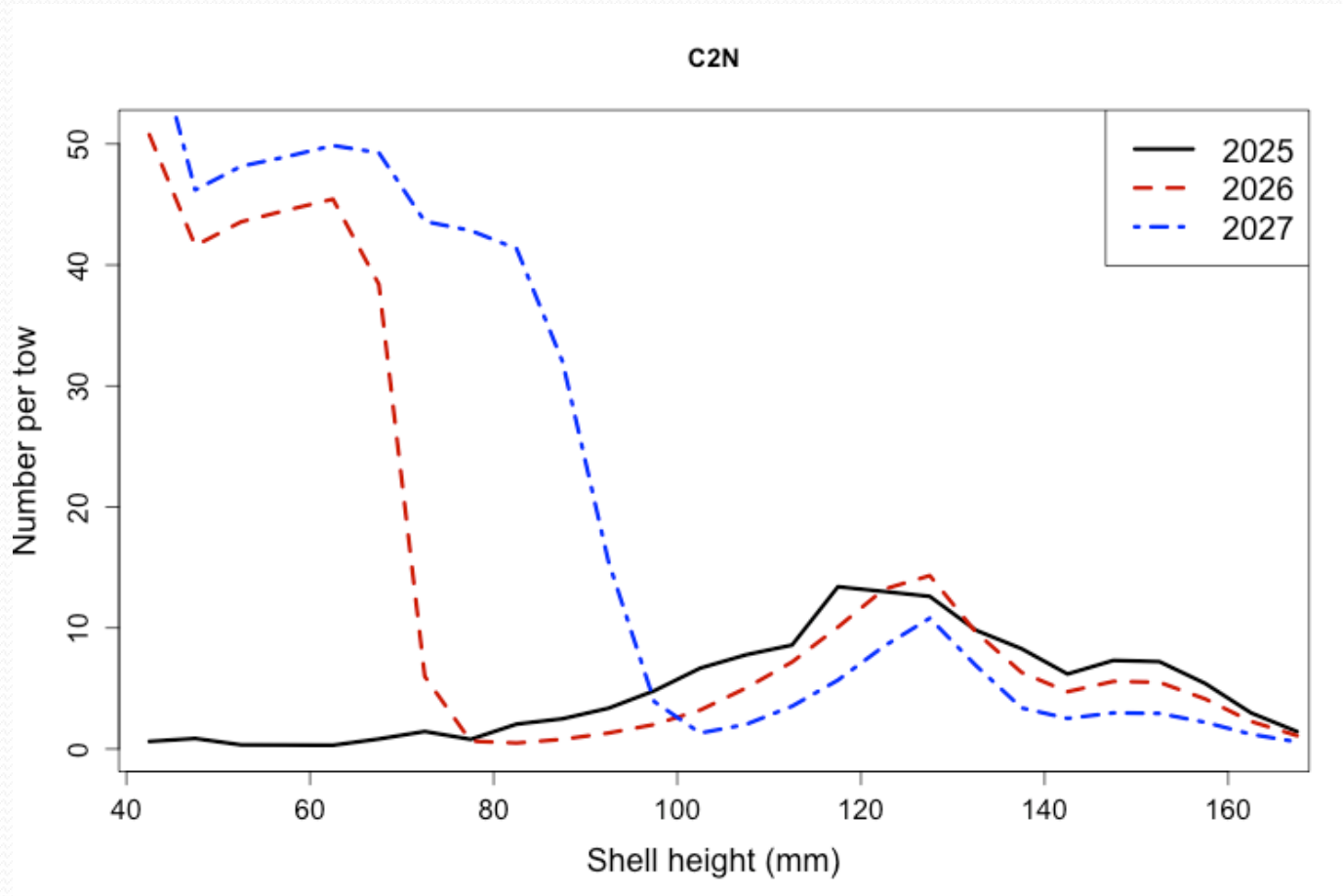
C2S



C2ext

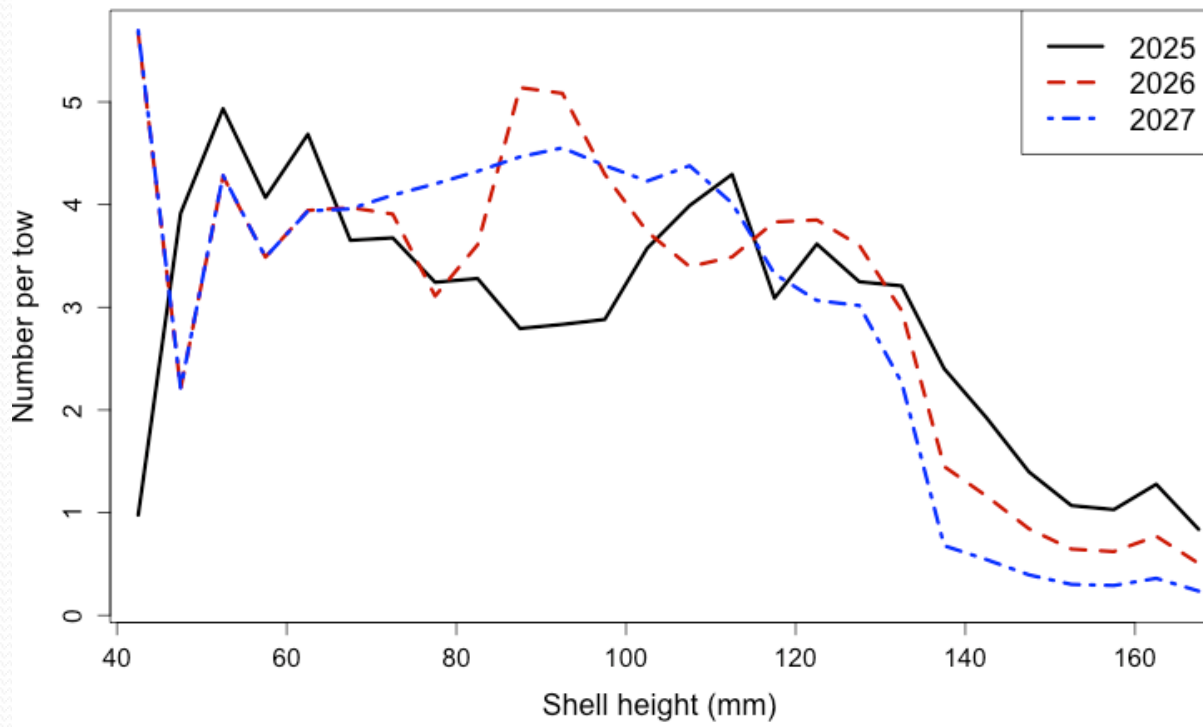


Closed Area II – North (HAPC)

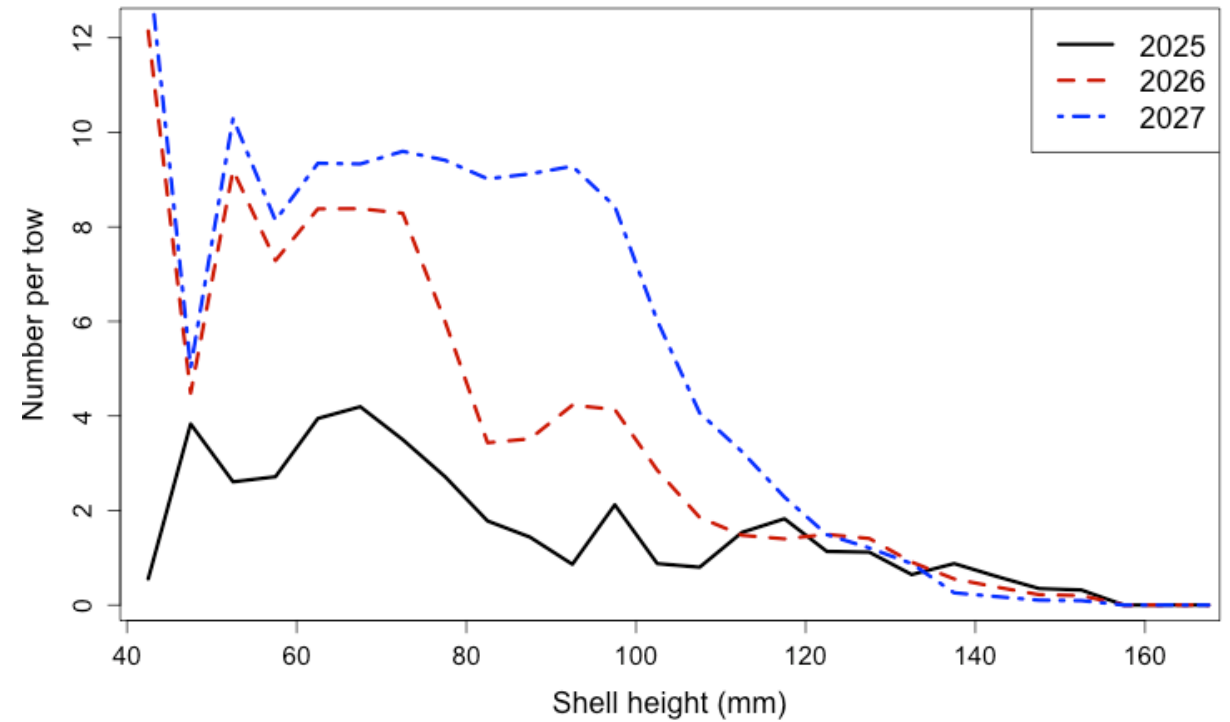


LI + BI and NYB

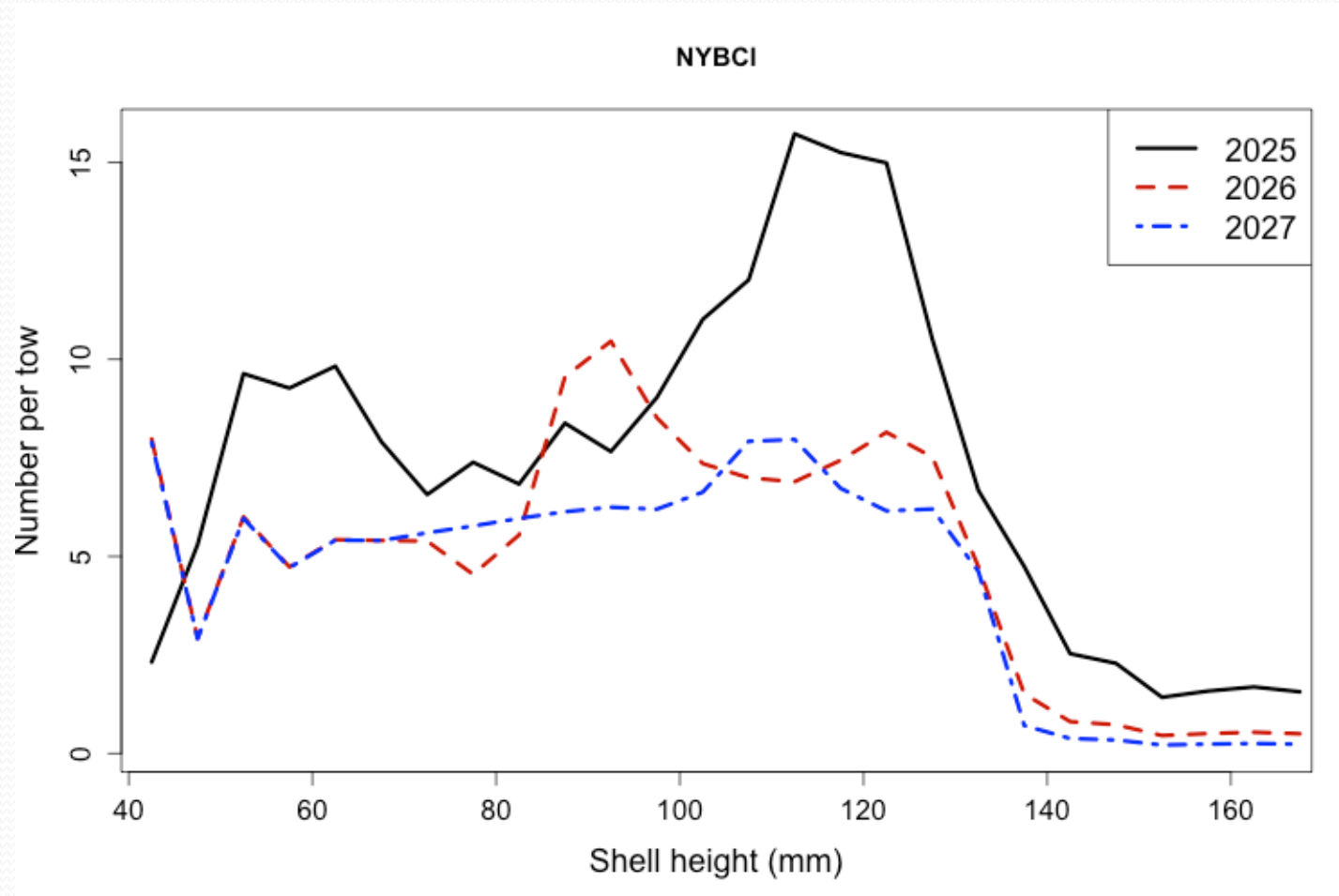
LI+BI



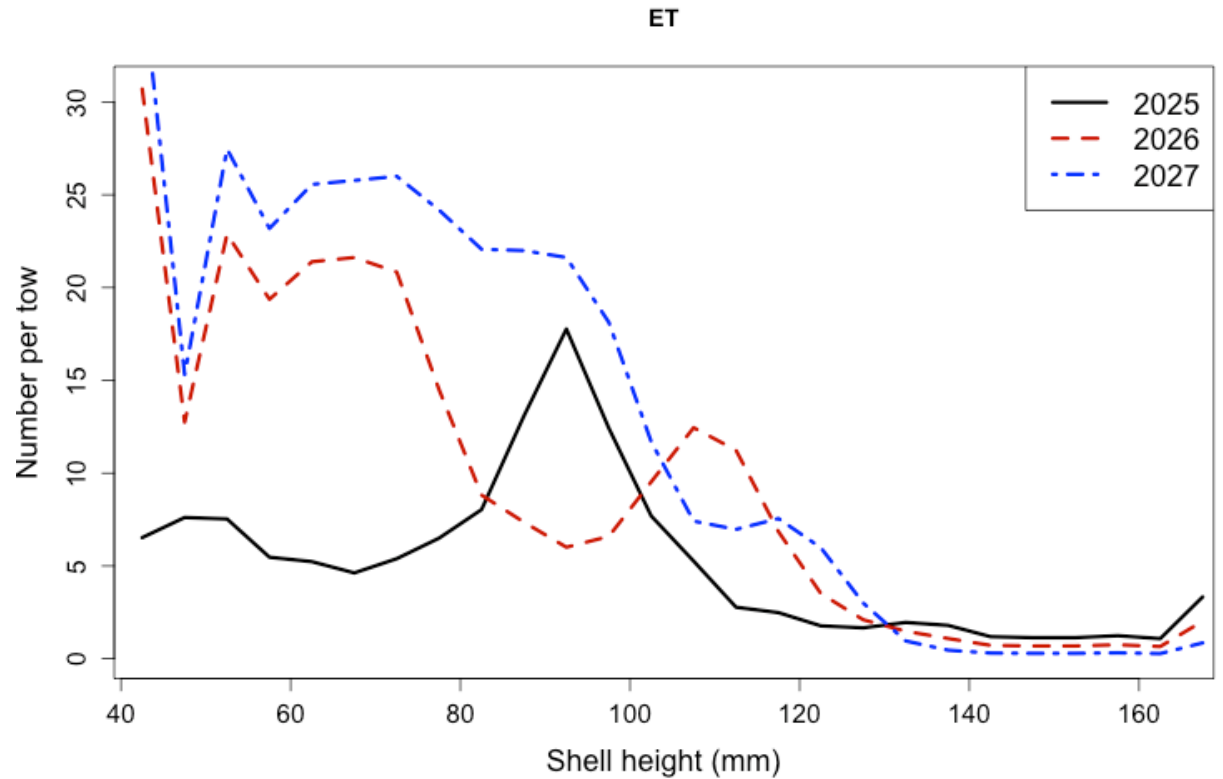
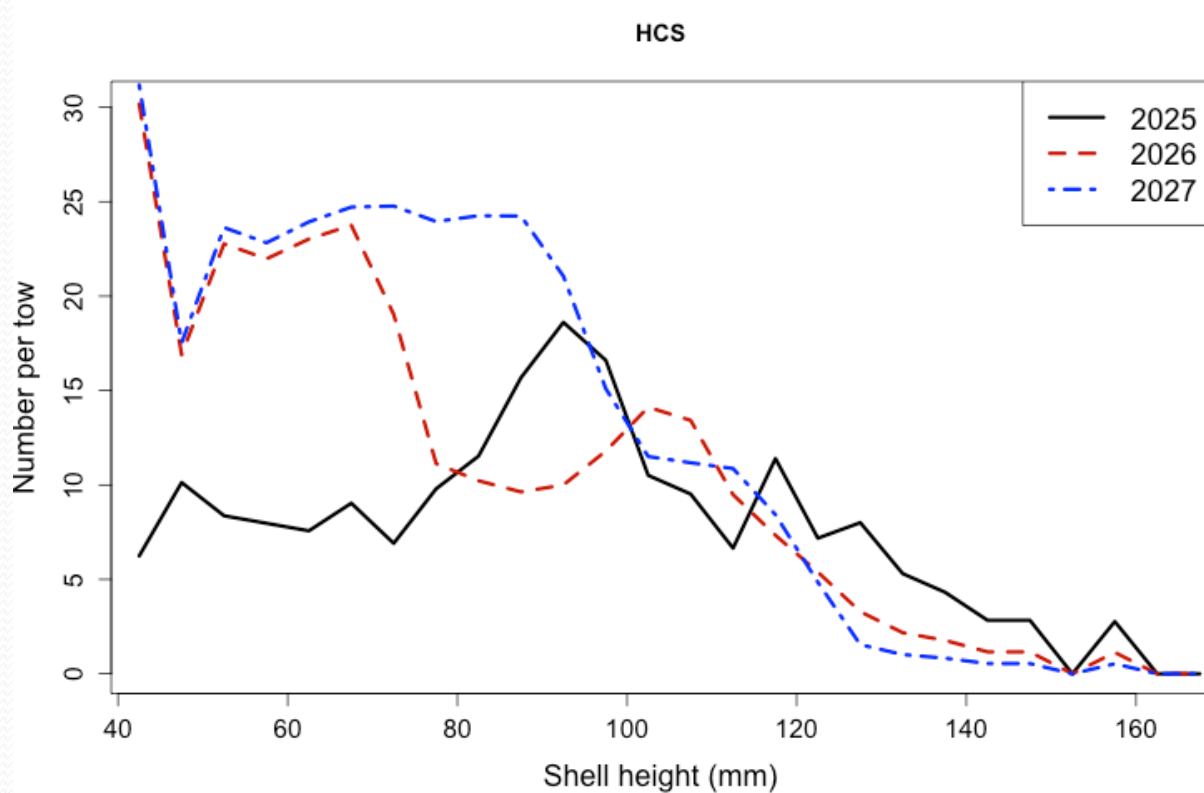
NYB



NYB Closure

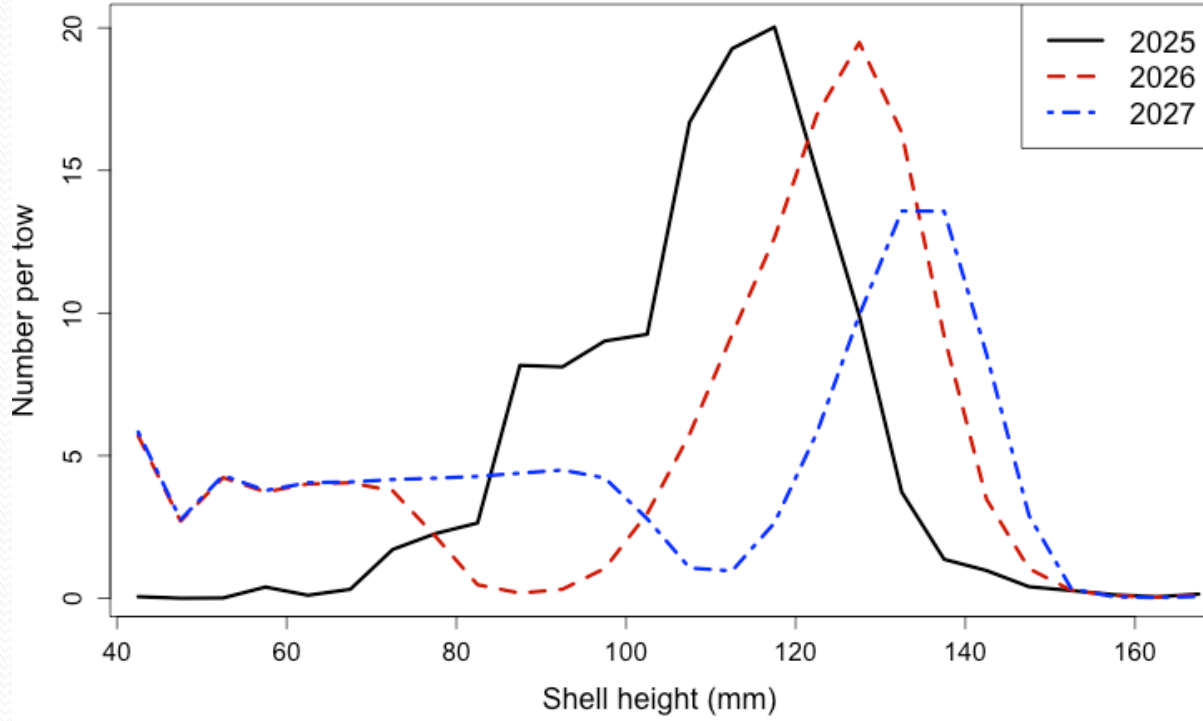


Elephant Trunk + Hudson Canyon South

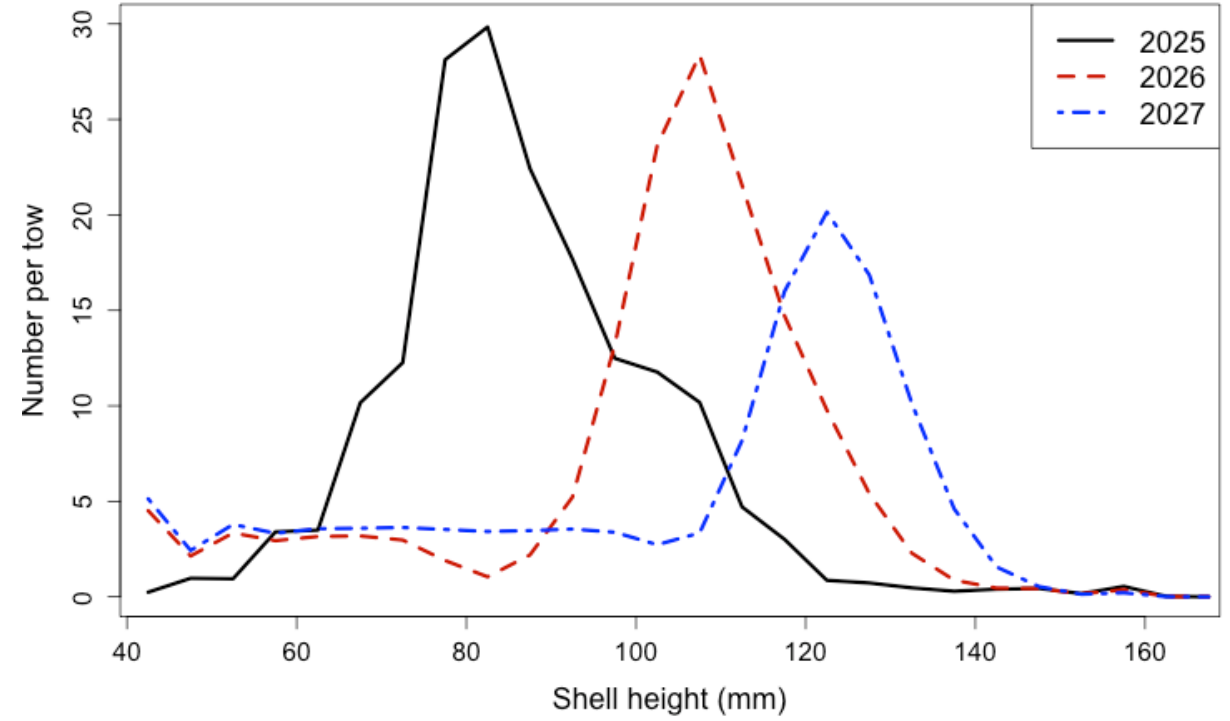


Stellwagen Bank

StellGOM



StellIS



NGOM - Other

