



New England Fishery Management Council

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**DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY**

**Scallop PDT Meeting**

October 1, 2019

Hyatt Hotel, Braintree, MA

The Scallop PDT met in Braintree, MA on October 1, 2019 to: 1) review FY 2020 and FY 2021 (default) OFL & ABC estimates; 2) review progress on Framework 32 alternatives and analyses and prepare for the SSC meeting on October 17, 2019; 3) continue development of Amendment 21 to the Scallop Fishery Management Plan; and, 4) discuss other business.

**MEETING ATTENDANCE:** Jonathon Peros (PDT Chair), Sam Asci, Dr. Naresh Pradhan, Dr. Rachel Feeney, Dr. David Rudders, Travis Ford, Ben Galuardi, Chad Keith, Michael Kersula, Dr. Dvora Hart, Dr. Cate O’Keefe, and Tim Cardiasmenos. Vincent Balzano, Scallop Committee Chair, was in attendance along with approximately 5 members of the public.

The meeting began at 9:37 am. Following roll call, Council staff briefly reviewed the agenda. Meeting materials are available at this link on the Council’s website:

<https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/oct-1-2019-scallop-plan-development-team-meeting>

**Framework 32: Discussion & Key Outcomes**

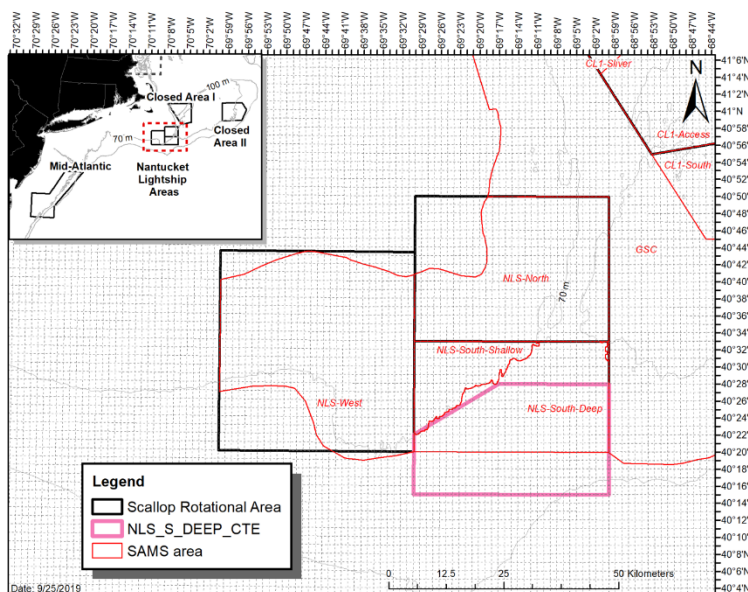
- 1. The PDT reviewed OFL and ABC estimates for FY 2020 and 2021, and recommended that they be advanced to the SSC for review.

Year	ABC-Land	ABC-Disc	ABC-Tot	OFL-Land	OFL-Disc	OFL-Total
2020	45414	5046	50460	53224	5962	59186
2021	36435	3995	40430	42790	4713	47503

- 2. The PDT noted that there are several reasons for the decline in OFL and ABC estimates between 2020 and 2021:
  - a. Strong 2012 & 2013 year classes are being fished.
  - b. Areas that were formally closed (before OHA2) are now being fished.
  - c. Substantial mortality event in the NLS-West area.
  - d. An extended period of low recruitment.
  - e. Follow up: Produce new CASA results, which will include 2018 estimates of recruitment. How does 2018 recruitment compare to other years in the time series?

3. For FW32, the PDT plans to update the current LPUE model that was approved in SARC 65 with another year of data. Dr. Hart has been working on a new LPUE model that uses abundance and area as variables but said that it needed more work, which will likely not be ready for FW32.
4. The PDT discussed the current scallop dredge strata and noted that there are currently strata that appear to cover areas of both low and high scallop productivity. Strata should be relatively homogenous with regard to scallop productivity, and the PDT supports updates and modifications to the current dredge survey stratification.
5. The PDT discussed scallop dredge efficiency in high density areas, and noted that work continues to be done on this issue (NEFSC and RSA supported efforts). The PDT supports the development of criteria to determine when an area would be considered high density. SARC 65 reduced dredge efficiency in high density areas by two thirds (from 0.4 to 0.13).
6. The PDT noted that there are elements of the annual specifications process that can be continuously improved, such as the LPUE model that is used to determine LA DAS allocations. The PDT was supportive of utilizing peer-review processes to evaluate model updates in the future.
7. The PDT recommended a new management boundary for the NLS-S-deep area (Figure 1). The PDT also recommended that the existing NLS-S-shallow and NLS-S-deep SAMS areas be used for projection purposes. In summary, there will be a new management boundary in the NLS-S-deep, but no modifications to SAMS areas.
8. The PDT discussed several options for partitioning the existing Closed Area II Access Area to protect small scallops and mitigate impacts on Georges Bank yellowtail flounder. See post meeting analyses.
9. The PDT discussed several options for closures on Stellwagen Bank (inside and outside the NGOM). The group noted that this is a particularly small area, and small-scale closures could be difficult to enforce.

Figure 1 – NLS-S-deep management boundary is shown in pink below. This area extends an additional 5 nmi south of the area the former NLS-S boundary.



## PDT Recommended SAMS Run

10. The PDT developed the following SAMS projection run. The group considered 2019 survey information and Committee tasking during its discussion.

	PDT Run
Open area F	F=0.23
FT LA trip limit	18,000
CL1-Access	1/2 FLEX Trip to MAAA
CL1-Sliver	
CL1-South	CLOSED
CL2-North (HAPC)	CLOSED
CL2-AA-closure	CLOSED
CL2-Access-EAST	1 AA Trip
CL2-Ext	CLOSED
NLS-North	1/2 AA trip
NLS-South-Shallow	
NLS-West	OPEN BOTTOM
NLS-South-Deep	1 AA Trip
NF	OPEN BOTTOM
GSC	OPEN BOTTOM
SF	OPEN BOTTOM
BI	OPEN BOTTOM
LI	OPEN BOTTOM
NYB	OPEN BOTTOM
MAB-Nearshore	OPEN BOTTOM
HCS	2 AA trips
ET Open	
ET Flex	
DMV	OPEN BOTTOM

## Amendment 21 Discussion – Key Outcomes:

11. GARFO staff explained that there could be opportunity to streamline access area/management area closures in the General Category fishery by bypassing notice in the FR to close an area. The net result of this kind of change would be to reduce workload.
12. With regard to the allocation split, the PDT discussed Committee tasking and reviewed work that was presented to the Scallop Advisors and Committee.

- a. For allocation share alternatives, Council and GARFO staff explained that NGOM management measures established in Amendment 11 would be considered the No Action alternative. Under this scenario, the LA component could fish DAS in the area, the General Category TAC would be set in annual specifications, and the area would close to all scallop vessels once the General Category TAC is reached.
  - b. The PDT plans to continue to develop the strawman option that was presented at the September 18 & 19, 2019 Scallop AP and Committee meetings.
  - c. The group noted that there could be legal implications of keeping the NGOM outside of the OFL and ABC since the stock is managed as a single unit throughout its range.
  - d. It was suggested that there may be value in outlining the full range of goals and objective of Amendment 11.
  - e. With 347 LA permits in the fishery, the PDT noted that allocating equitably to this component of the fishery could be challenging at a lower level of biomass.
  - f. The PDT recommends building in flexibility to allow the Council to make management decisions about how allocations are fished in the NGOM management area in Framework actions.
13. Council staff explained that the AP and Committee were seeking additional information about movement between LAGC permit categories. See post meeting analyses.

### Other Business:

Mr. Ron Smolowitz spoke to the concept of moving small scallops from the NLS-S-deep to the NLS-S-shallow. He suggested that this would take action from the Council and the agency, and proposed a strawperson of how it might be done. Mr. Smolowitz suggested that the small scallops could be moved a few miles out of the deep water into a shallower portion of the NLS region where they might grow better using trawl nets (vs. dredges). The concept included requiring observers during the transplanting and using the existing observer set-aside to fund the work. There was no PDT discussion on this topic. Council staff stated that if this idea comes forward again at the AP or Committee, it would be useful to have the details of such an effort written up. The meeting concluded at 3:48 PM.

## Post-Meeting Analyses

The Scallop PDT identified follow-up work during the October 1, 2019 meeting. The following analyses and information were completed shortly after the meeting:

### Recruitment event on Stellwagen Bank – Small scale closures and sand dollars

- In response to Committee tasking, the PDT discussed several options for potential closures on Stellwagen Bank (see Figures below). The PDT felt that a targeted closure on Stellwagen could be difficult to enforce (Figure 6).
- During the meeting Mr. Michael Kersula noted that the ME DMR/UMaine dredge survey encountered sand dollars in an area where recruitment was observed south of the WGOM closure (north of Provincetown). It was hypothesized that the presence of sand dollars may have impacted the catch of scallops in the survey dredge, and therefore recruitment in this area could be underestimated by the dredge survey. Mr. Kersula reviewed survey data and produce the graphic shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - Catch of sand dollars in the 2019 ME DMR & UMaine Dredge Survey

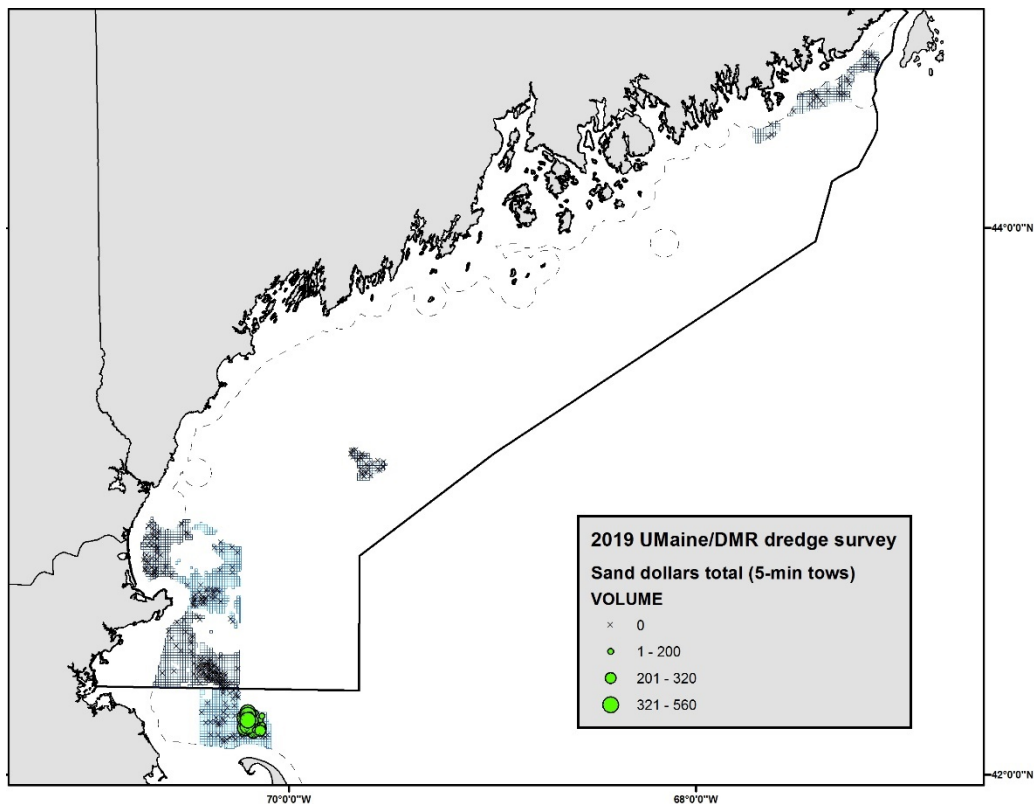


Figure 3 - "Stellwagen North" closure. Covers entirety of Stellwagen north of 42° 20'. Stellwagen south of 42° 20' remains open to LA/LAGC.

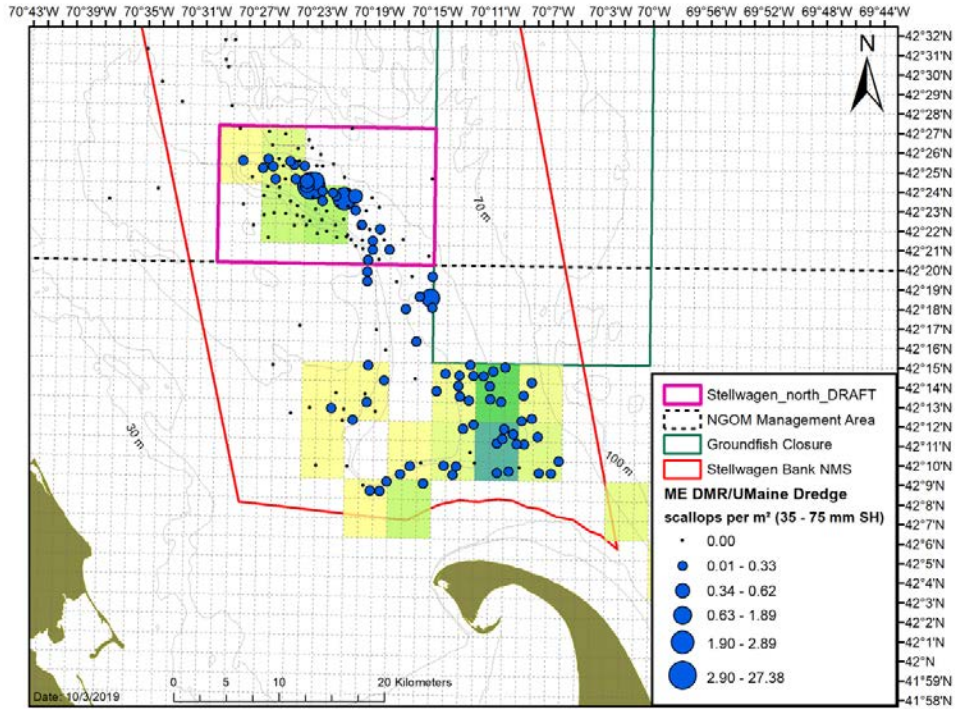


Figure 4 - "Stellwagen North v.2" closure. Covers entirety of Stellwagen north of 42° 15'. Stellwagen south of 42° 15' remains open bottom to LA/LAGC.

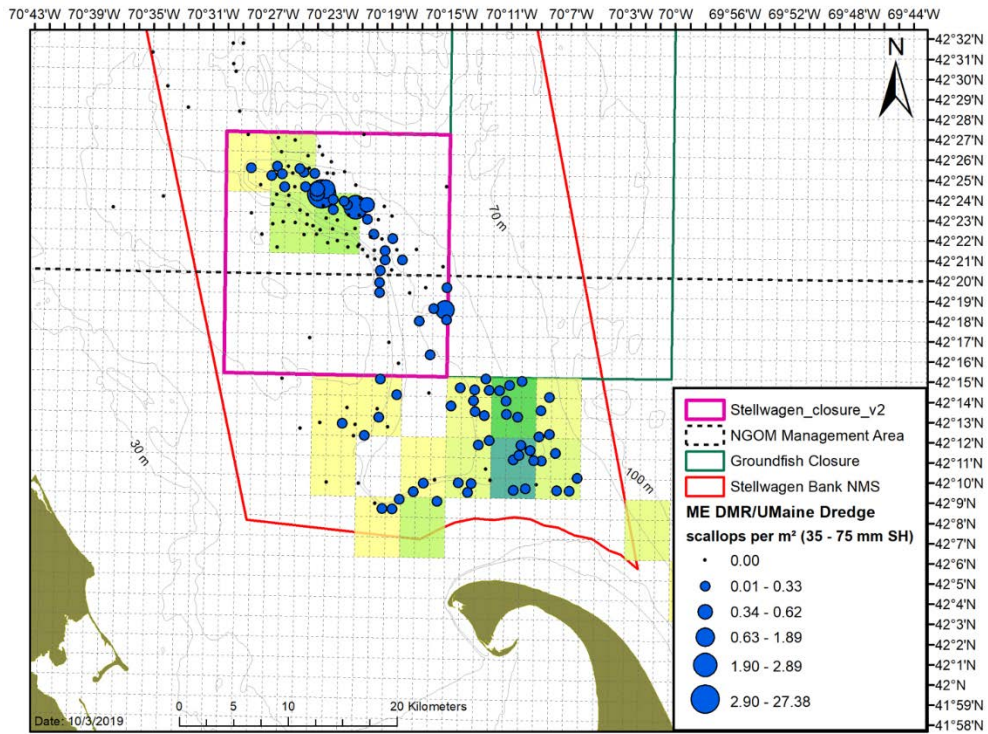


Figure 5 - “Stellwagen North v.3” closure. Covers entirety of Stellwagen north of 42° 15' and includes area directly south of WGOM closure where recruits were observed.

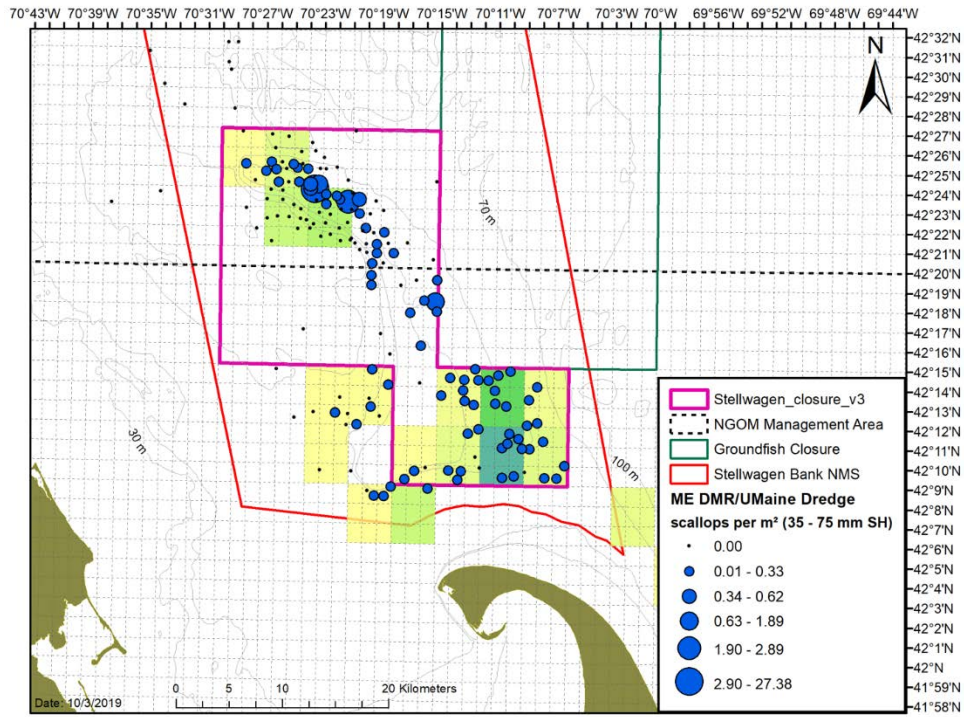


Figure 6 - “Stellwagen North v.3” closure. Covers entirety of Stellwagen north of 42° 15' and includes area directly south of WGOM closure where recruits were observed (slightly smaller than v.3 – opens up three 3-minute squares).

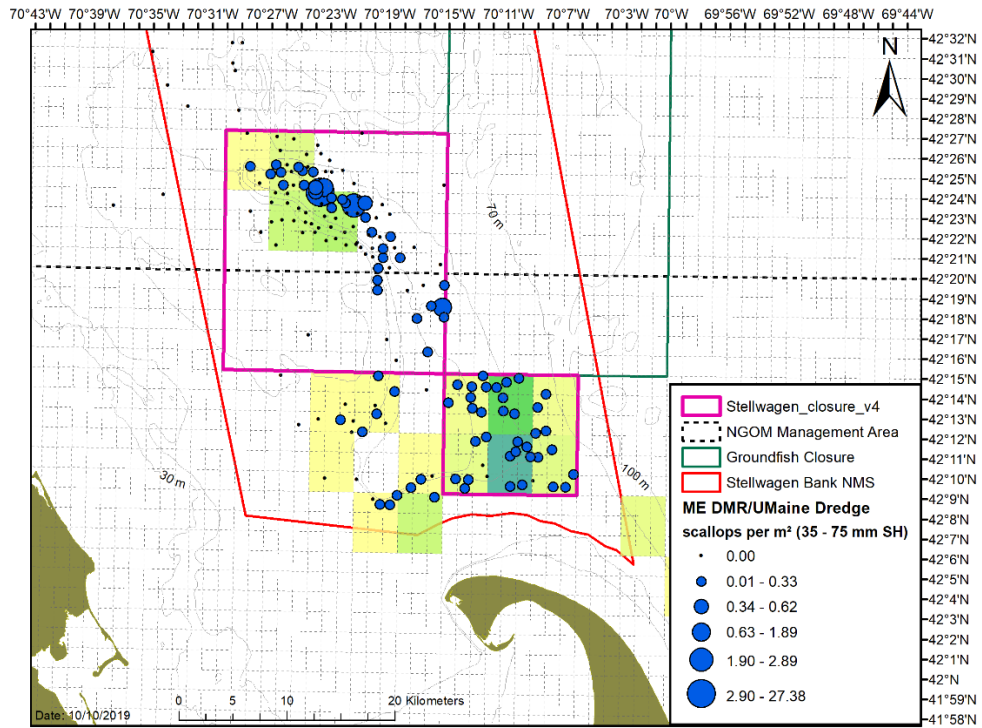
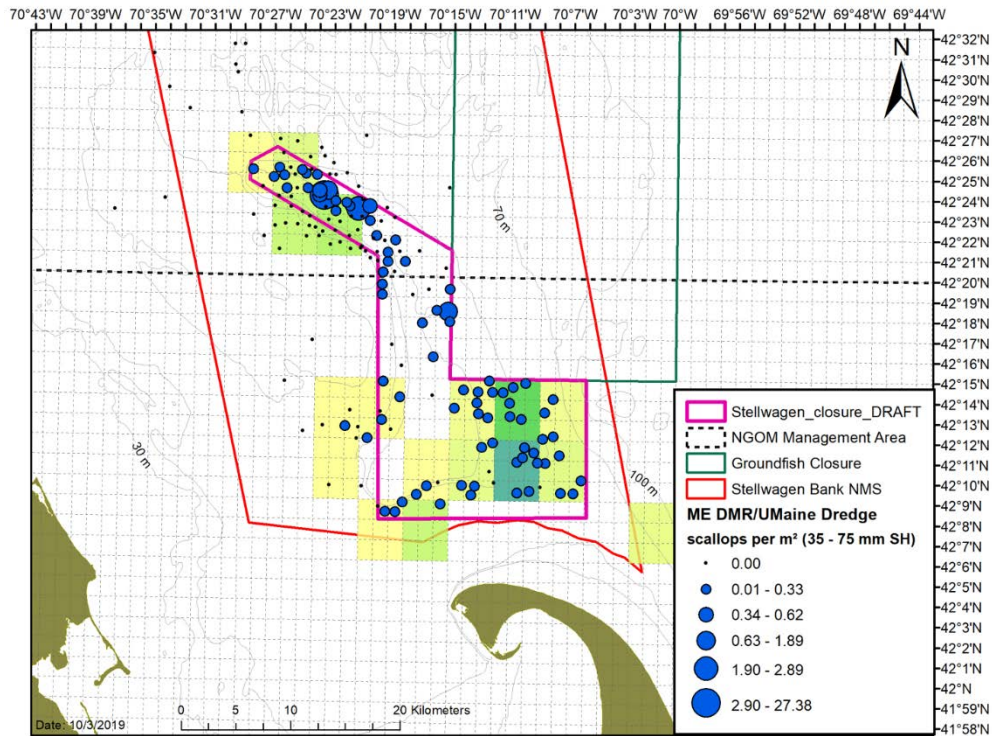


Figure 7 - Stellwagen Recruit - Targeted Closure. Covers areas of Stellwagen where majority of recruits were observed. Leaves western edge north of 42° 20' available to fish.



### LAGC Permit Information

The PDT reviewed the following information about movement between LAGC permit categories, focusing on the switching permanently from LAGC A (IFQ) to LAGC B (NGOM), and switching between LAGC B (NGOM) and LAGC C (Incidental) permits at the time of renewal.

As of May 21, 2019 there were 425 incidental/NGOM rights (LAGC Category B/C). There were 107 Category B (NGOM) and 237 Category C (Incidental) active permits (not in CPH) at the end of 2018 (March 31, 2019). Summary of permit switching from 2009-2019 (11 years) is in Table 1:

- 17 permits converted from IFQ (A) to NGOM/Inc (B/C)
- 13 shifts from incidental to NGOM
- 4 shifts from NGOM to incidental

The PDT felt that it was important to understand the number of LAGC IFQ (A) permits that have zero allocation (Table 2).



Table 1 - Summary of LAGC conversions and switches between FY 2008 and FY 2019.

Year	Conversion from A to B/C	From B to C Within a year	From C to B Within a year	From B to C Across Years	From C to B Across Years
2008	-	-	-	-	-
2009	0	0	0	0	3
2010	0	0	0	0	1
2011	1	0	0	0	0
2012	1	0	0	2	2
2013	2	0	0	0	0
2014	6	1	1	1	0
2015	0	0	2	0	0
2016	0	0	0	0	0
2017	3	0	0	0	1
2018	3	0	0	0	1
2019	1	0	1	0	1

Table 2 - Number of Scallop LAGC IFQ (A) MRIs with zero base allocation.

FY	MRI
2011	7
2012	5
2013	28
2014	46
2015	49
2016	66
2017	88
2018	87
2019	94

### Potential Closures of Closed Area II Access Area and Surrounds

The Scallop Committee tasked the PDT with developing a targeted closure on Eastern Georges Bank that could be used to protect small scallops. An added benefit could be that such a closure could reduce impacts on Georges Bank yellowtail flounder.

Figure 8 - "CAII-West" closure. Focuses access in eastern peak of CAII and maintains CAII-ext and SF as open bottom.

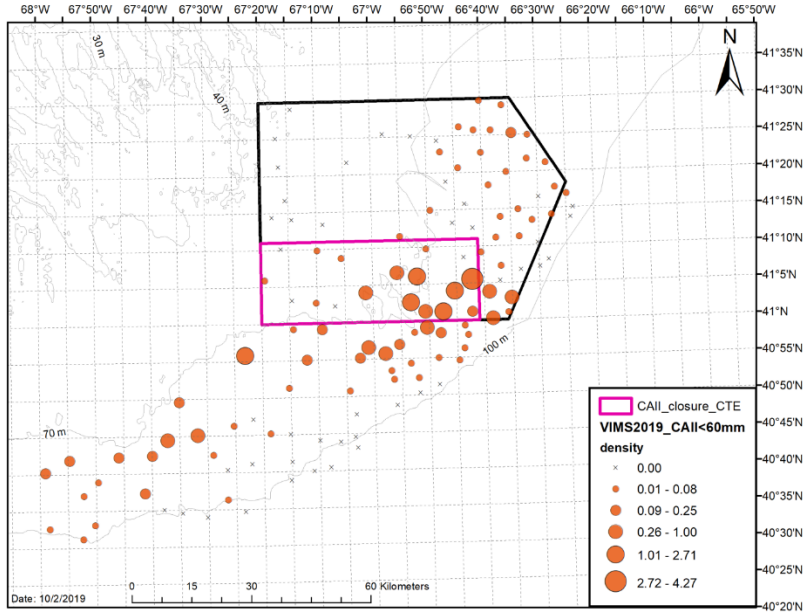


Figure 9 -Plot of the shell heights in CAII-S, inside and outside the proposed closure (Figure 8). Notes: It looks that the CAII-West closure is well designed, with almost all the 2 year olds inside, and most of the adults outside. The scallops in the proposed closure grow a bit faster than those on the outside, likely because of the shallower depth.

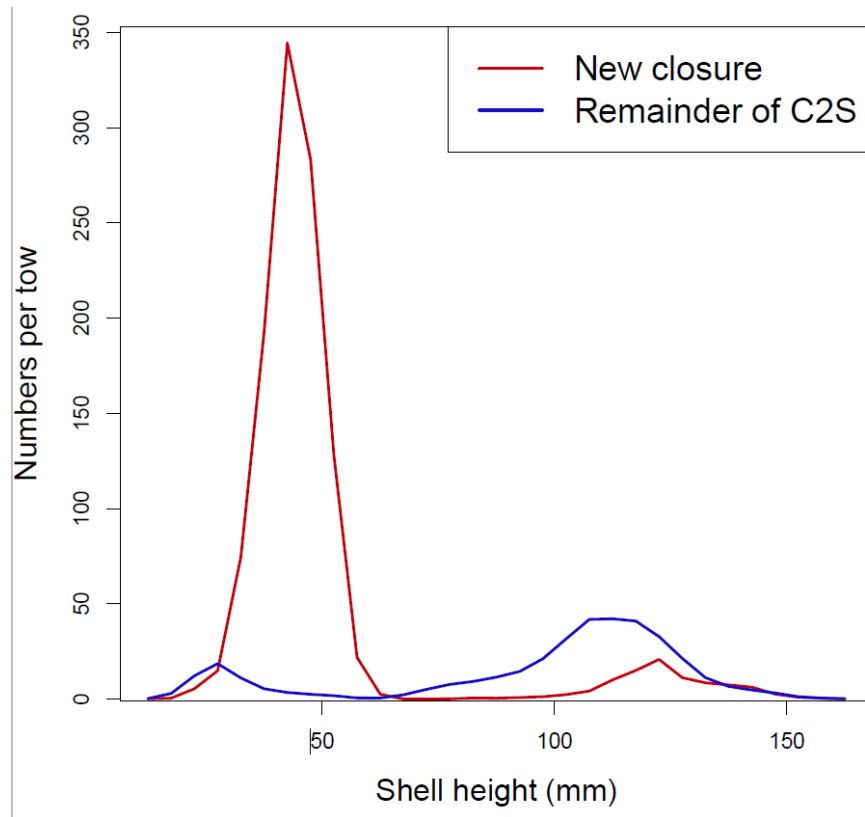


Figure 10 - “CAII-South West” closure. Focuses access in eastern peak of CAII, closes CAII-ext, and maintains SF as open bottom. Eastern part of CAII AA is extended south to include some larger scallops that do not overlap with recruits, and provide more room for vessels that are fishing close to the boundary of the closure.

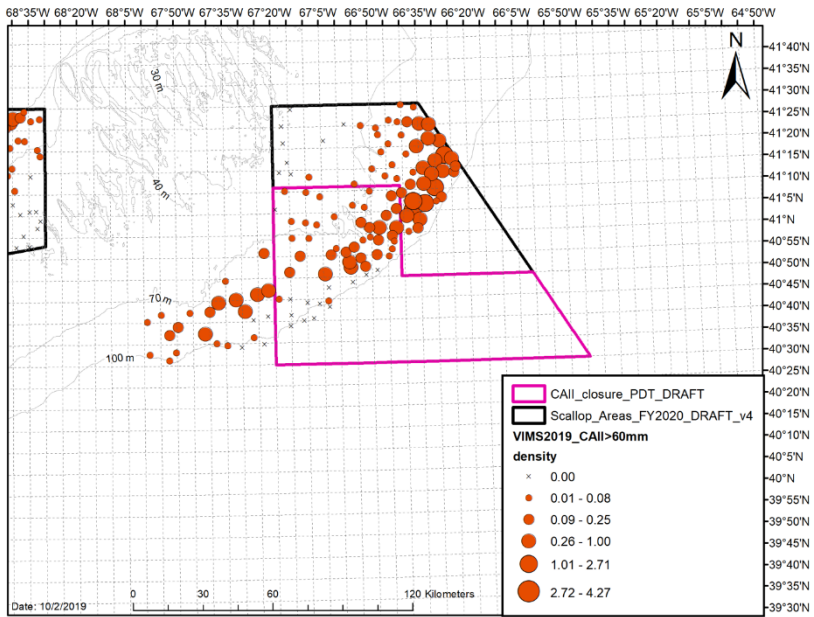


Figure 11 - “SE Parts” closure. Focuses access in eastern peak of CAII, closes CAII-ext, and closes the portion of the SF with the highest concentration of recruits. Eastern part of CAII AA is extended south to include some larger scallops that do not overlap with recruits, and provide more room for vessels that are fishing close to the boundary of the closure. Keeps some open bottom in SF accessible.

