

DRAFT

Discussion Document

Framework 29

to the

Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan

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Prepared by
New England Fishery Management Council Staff

Draft

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1.0 CONTENTS

1.0	Contents	3
1.1	Preliminary Note Re: Framework 29	5
1.2	Draft Purpose and Need for Action	5
1.3	Northern Gulf of Maine Problem Statement.....	6
2.0	Potential Management Alternatives	6
2.1	Overfishing Limit and Acceptable Biological Catch.....	6
2.1.1	Alternative 1 – No Action for OFL and ABC.....	6
2.1.2	Alternative 2 – Updated OFL and ABC for FY 2018 and FY 2019 (default)	6
2.2	Northern Gulf of Maine Total Allowable Catch.....	6
2.2.1	Alternative 1 – No Action (Default measures from Framework 28)	6
2.2.2	Alternative 2 – Set the TAC at zero pounds for FY 2018	6
2.2.3	Alternative 3 – Cap overall landings from the Northern Gulf of Maine management area for all permit holders, and establish separate limits for the LAGC and LA components	6
2.3	Fishery Specifications	7
2.3.1	Overall fishery Allocations (Allocation options based on SAMS runs – usually several).....	7
2.3.1.1	Alternative 1 – No Action (Default Measures from FW28)	7
2.3.1.2	Alternative 2 – Basic Run	7
2.3.1.3	Alternative 3 – Basic Run with modification	7
2.3.2	Fishery Allocations to the LAGC IFQ Component	7
2.3.2.1	Allocation of LAGC IFQ Trips in Access Areas.....	7
2.3.2.1.1	Alternative 1 – No Action (Default Measures from FW28).....	7
2.3.2.1.2	Alternative 2 – 5.5% of the Access Area Allocation	7
2.3.2.2	Allocation of LAGC IFQ Allocations by Access Area.....	7
2.3.2.2.1	Alternative 1 –	7
2.3.2.2.2	Alternative 2 –	7
2.4	Additional Measures to Reduce Fishery Impacts	7
2.4.1	Alternative 1 – No Action.....	7
2.4.2	Alternative 2 – RSA Compensation fishing in... ..	7
2.5	Accountability Measures for the Northern (GOM/GB) Windowpane Flounder Sub-ACL allocated to the Scallop Fishery	7
2.5.1	Alternative 1 - No Action	7
2.5.2	Alternative 2 - Reactive Accountability Measure.....	8
2.6	Accountability Measures for the Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder sub-ACL allocated to the Scallop Fishery	8
2.6.1	Alternative 1 - No Action, the existing GB YT AM remains in place	8
2.6.2	Alternative 2 - Reactive Accountability Measure.....	8

2.7	Accountability Measures for SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder sub-ACL allocated to the Scallop Fishery (LA, LAGC dredge, LAGC trawl).....	8
2.7.1	SNE/MA Yellowtail AM for the LA component	8
2.7.1.1	Alternative 1 - No Action – The existing AM remains in place for LA component	8
2.7.1.2	Alternative 2 – Reactive Accountability Measure	8
2.7.2	SNE/MA Yellowtail AM for LAGC dredge component.....	8
2.7.2.1	Alternative 1 - No Action – The existing AM remains in place for LAGC component.....	8
2.7.2.2	Alternative 2 – Reactive Accountability Measure	8
2.8	Modify the Closed Area I Access Area Boundary.....	8
2.8.1	Alternative 1 – No Action.....	8
2.8.2	Alternative 2 - Expand the CA I AA to include former HMA N	9

1.1 Preliminary Note Re: Framework 29

At its April 18, 2017 meeting the Council moved to initiate a framework action to address the management of the Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) Management Area, as well as other 2017 Council priorities. The Committee and Council discussed a two-phase management approach that would begin with a framework this year, with the Council considering an amendment to make further changes during the priority setting process for 2018 later this year. The Council has recommended that specifications and 2017 work priorities (including the NGOM) be worked on in a single action in 2017.

NEFMC staff developed this document to assist the Council as it considers the 2017 scallop work plan. Section 2 provides a general overview of the likely range of alternatives that would be developed in FW29, assuming this action will contain specifications and management measures.

1.2 Draft Purpose and Need for Action

Need	Purpose	Section(s)
To achieve the objectives of the Atlantic Sea Scallop FMP to prevent overfishing and improve yield-per recruit from the fishery	To set specifications including: OFL, ABC, scallop fishery ACLs and ACTs including associated set-asides, day-at-sea (DAS) allocations, general category fishery allocations, and area rotation schedule and allocations for the 2017 fishing year, as well as default measures for FY2018 that are expected to be replaced by a subsequent action.	TBD
To manage total removals from the Northern Gulf of Maine management area.	To set landing limits for the LA and LAGC components in the Northern Gulf of Maine management area based on exploitable biomass.	TBD
To reduce bycatch of windowpane flounder and yellowtail flounder if the scallop fishery exceeds the annual catch limit (sub-ACL).	To implement AMs for GOM/GB windowpane flounder, GB and SNE/MA yellowtail flounder.	TBD
To facilitate access to scallops formerly in a habitat management area	To modify existing access area boundaries to facilitate the harvest of scallops, consistent with FMP goals and objectives.	TBD

1.3 Northern Gulf of Maine Problem Statement

Northern Gulf of Maine Problem statement/goal:

Recent high landings and unknown biomass in the NGOM scallop management area underscore the critical need to initiate surveys and develop additional tools to better manage the area and fully understand the total removals.

2.0 POTENTIAL MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

The following management options are for discussion purposes only. The Council has not selected a range of alternatives for this action.

2.1 Overfishing Limit and Acceptable Biological Catch

2.1.1 Alternative 1 – No Action for OFL and ABC

2.1.2 Alternative 2 – Updated OFL and ABC for FY 2018 and FY 2019 (default)

2.2 Northern Gulf of Maine Total Allowable Catch

2.2.1 Alternative 1 – No Action (Default measures from Framework 28)

The NGOM hard TAC would be set at 95,000 pounds for the LAGC component. The area would open on April 1, 2018 with not change to the current management program.

Rationale: Specifying the NGOM TAC at 95,000 pounds is consistent with default measures set through FW28, and the Council's approach to TAC setting for the NGOM management area since the inception of this area as part of the FMP.

2.2.2 Alternative 2 – Set the TAC at zero pounds for FY 2018

The TAC would be zero and the NGOM management area would not open. There would be no scallop harvest from federal waters within the bounds of the NGOM management area.

2.2.3 Alternative 3 – Cap overall landings from the Northern Gulf of Maine management area for all permit holders, and establish separate limits for the LAGC and LA components

Overall landing from the Northern Gulf of Maine Management Area would be capped at a value recommended by the Council. The LA and LAGC components would operate under separate landings limits.

Rationale: The current management approach in this area has led to imprecise catch accounting, as tracking landings in real-time has proven to be difficult with the current resources available. Separate limits for the LAGC and the LA would allow both components to harvest a portion of the resource and not tied to the landings of the other group (FMP takes a similar approach to AA allocations for LA and LAGC).

2.3 Fishery Specifications

2.3.1 Overall fishery Allocations (Allocation options based on SAMS runs – usually several)

2.3.1.1 Alternative 1 – No Action (Default Measures from FW28)

2.3.1.2 Alternative 2 – Basic Run

2.3.1.3 Alternative 3 – Basic Run with modification

2.3.2 Fishery Allocations to the LAGC IFQ Component

2.3.2.1 Allocation of LAGC IFQ Trips in Access Areas

2.3.2.1.1 Alternative 1 – No Action (Default Measures from FW28)

2.3.2.1.2 Alternative 2 – 5.5% of the Access Area Allocation

2.3.2.2 Allocation of LAGC IFQ Allocations by Access Area

2.3.2.2.1 Alternative 1 –

2.3.2.2.2 Alternative 2 –

2.4 Additional Measures to Reduce Fishery Impacts

2.4.1 Alternative 1 – No Action

2.4.2 Alternative 2 – RSA Compensation fishing in...

2.5 Accountability Measures for the Northern (GOM/GB) Windowpane Flounder Sub-ACL allocated to the Scallop Fishery

2.5.1 Alternative 1 - No Action

Under No Action, there would be no accountability measure linked to the scallop fishery's GOM/GB windowpane flounder sub-ACL. If the scallop fishery exceeds its sub-ACL, no measures would be triggered to limit or reduce future catch of northern windowpane flounder in the scallop fishery.

2.5.2 Alternative 2 - Reactive Accountability Measure

2.6 Accountability Measures for the Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder sub-ACL allocated to the Scallop Fishery

2.6.1 Alternative 1 - No Action, the existing GB YT AM remains in place

There would be no change to the existing Georges Bank yellowtail accountability measure already in place for the scallop fishery.

2.6.2 Alternative 2 - Reactive Accountability Measure

2.7 Accountability Measures for SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder sub-ACL allocated to the Scallop Fishery (LA, LAGC dredge, LAGC trawl)

2.7.1 SNE/MA Yellowtail AM for the LA component

2.7.1.1 Alternative 1 - No Action – The existing AM remains in place for LA component

2.7.1.2 Alternative 2 – Reactive Accountability Measure

2.7.2 SNE/MA Yellowtail AM for LAGC dredge component

2.7.2.1 Alternative 1 - No Action – The existing AM remains in place for LAGC component

2.7.2.2 Alternative 2 – Reactive Accountability Measure

2.8 Modify the Closed Area I Access Area Boundary

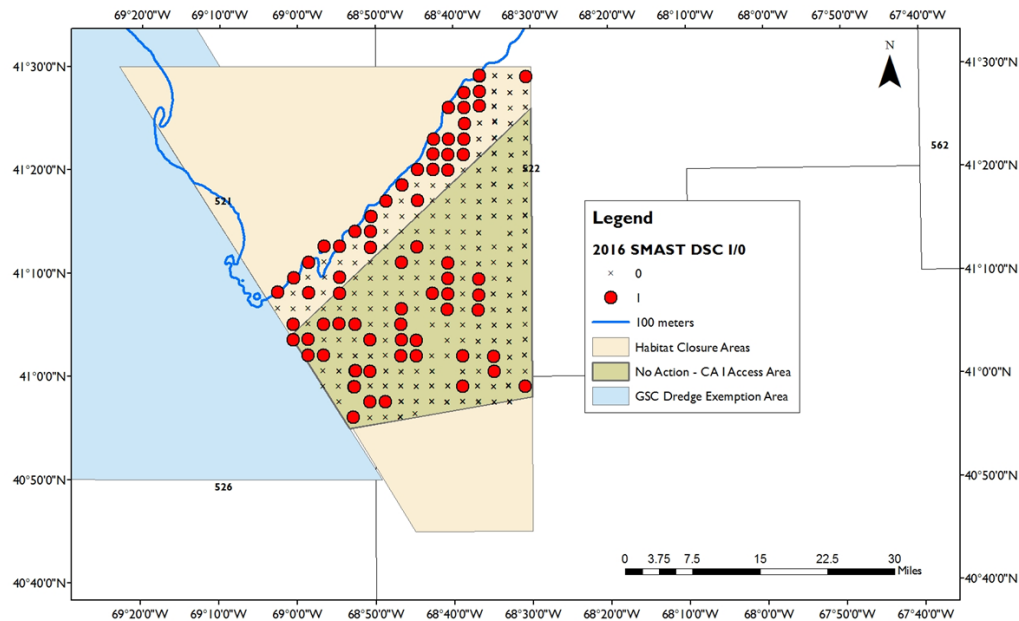
Modifications to the Closed Area I Access Area boundary are contingent upon the final rule of Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2.

2.8.1 Alternative 1 – No Action

There would be no change to the existing Closed Area I Access Area Boundary.

Table 1 - Current Coordinates of CA I Access Area.

No Action		
Point	Latitude	Longitude
CAIA1	41°26' N.	68°30' W.
CAIA2	40°58' N.	68°30' W.
CAIA3	40°54.95' N.	68°53.37' W.
CAIA4	41°04' N.	69°01' W.
CAIA1	41°26' N.	68°30' W.

Figure 1 - Current Closed Area I Access Area Configuration

2.8.2 Alternative 2 - Expand the CA I AA to include former HMA N

The Closed Area I Access Area boundary would be modified, consistent with recent modifications to groundfish closed areas and habitat closures through the OHA2 (TBD, pending final rule). Alternative 2 would expand the boundary of existing Closed Area I access area to include the former HMA area to the north of the AA, and would include biomass just to the north of existing northern boundary.

Figure 2 – Configuration of Alternative 2, expansion of the CA I access area boundary.