



New England Fishery Management Council

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MEETING SUMMARY

Scallop Committee

Hilton Garden Inn, Boston, MA

October 26th, 2017

The Scallop Committee met in Boston, MA on October 26th, 2017 to: (1) review analyses and discuss potential specification alternatives to be considered in Framework 29, and receive an update on OHA2 relative to FW29, (2) review PDT progress on tasking from the September Committee meeting, (3) review progress on management measures in FW29, including flatfish accountability measures, Northern Gulf of Maine Management Measures, and measures to modify access area boundaries to be consistent with potential changes to habitat and groundfish mortality closed areas, (4) provide input on potential scallop work priorities for 2018, and (5) discuss other business.

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Vincent Balzano (Scallop Committee Chair), John Quinn (Council Chair), Melanie Griffin, Mark Alexander, Rick Bellavance, Peter Christopher, Mark Godfroy, Cheri Patterson, John Pappalardo, Eric Reid, Michael Sissenwine, Terry Stockwell, Peter Hughes, Roger Mann, and Jonathon Peros (Scallop PDT Chair). Jim Gutowski (Chair of Scallop AP) was present in the audience, along with approximately 7 members of the public.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION: (1) [Framework 29 Action Plan](#), (2) Framework 29 Documents—(a) [FW29 Specification information](#), (b) [Draft Framework 29 management measures](#), (c) [Updated fishery data for FY2017](#), (3) [Scallop Committee meeting summary, Sept. 20, 2017](#), (4) [Scallop Advisory Panel meeting summary Sept 19, 2017](#), (5) [Scallop PDT summaries: July - October](#), (6) [Scallop PDT memo to the SSC re: 2018 and 2019 \(default\) OFLs and ABCs](#), (7) [Potential 2018 work priorities for the Scallop FMP](#), and (8) [Correspondence](#).

KEY OUTCOMES:

- The Scallop Committee passed several motions tasking the PDT to develop measures for consideration in Scallop Framework 29.
- The Scallop Committee recommended a list of 2018 scallop priorities to the Council.

The meeting began at 9:08 am.

Council staff explained that the meeting would begin with a series of presentations focused on fishery data and SAMS model runs relevant to setting specifications for FY2018, and that a goal of the meeting was to identify measures to be included in Framework 29.

A final decision on OHA2 is expected by January 4th, 2017, but the timing of a final rule and effective date is still uncertain. Staff noted the goal of the day's meeting: identify a range of alternatives to be included in FW29 that address each possible outcome of an OHA2 final decision (i.e. if OHA2 is not approved, if OHA2 is approved, if only the SNE part of OHA2 is approved, if only the Georges Bank part of OHA2 is approved). The Committee was also asked to consider how to structure RSA compensation fishing in FW29 under these different OHA2 scenarios.

VMS Summary for scallop fishing year 2017, 2017 Scallop Grades and LPUE update

The Committee received a summary of scallop fishery VMS data to date for FY2017 (March-September). For both LA and LAGC components, VMS data with a speed filter ($2 \text{ kts} \leq 5 \text{ kts}$) were compiled by 3-minute square and used as a proxy for fishing effort. LA open-area effort in FY2017 appeared to be directed in concentrated patches off Long Island and along the south west boundary of CAII extension. Some LAGC effort has been directed off Long Island, while the most concentrated effort has been seen around Chatham and along the eastern coast of outer Cape Cod. Generally, 2017 fishing appeared to be more concentrated than what was seen in 2016.

The Committee received an update of scallop market information and LPUE to date in FY2017. The figures presented suggested that more 10-20's have been caught in the open area in FY2017 compared to FY2016 and FY2015, prices have generally decreased over the course of FY2017, and that LPUE in FY2017 has continued to be higher than what was seen in the past several years.

Specification alternatives and access area configurations for Framework 29

Council staff described the anticipated outcomes for the day's discussion on FW29 specification alternatives:

1. Provide input on open area fishing configurations for FW29, particularly areas that could become open bottom (ex: NLS-ext and Delmarva).
2. Provide input on F rates for setting DAS fishing (ex: $F=0.48$, $F=0.4$, something lower?). Including or excluding NLS-S and DMV will change DAS associated with different F rates.
3. For areas currently available to the fishery (i.e. NOT areas that may open with OHA2), provide tasking to the PDT of additional SAMS runs, if needed. In doing so, the Committee should identify the number of access area trips, where they would be taken, and the configuration of open areas.
4. For areas that may open to the fishery through OHA2 (i.e. Closed Area I, Nantucket Lightship West), provide tasking to the PDT of additional SAMS runs, if needed. In

doing so, the Committee should identify the number of access area trips, where they would be taken, and the configuration of open areas. This should be done after the recommendations on available areas are made (#3).

Dr. Dvora Hart reviewed the details of the FW29 alternatives SAMS runs (see [here](#) for presentation and details). Discussion points included:

- A member of the public suggested that not fishing CAII and CAII ext in FY2018 may improve yield from this area in FY2019.
- F_{msy} in the Mid-Atl. is higher than on GB because Mid-Atlantic scallops grow faster and do not grow as large as scallops on Georges Bank. Though some SAMS model runs put Mid-Atl. F at 0.7, realized F for smaller scallops (~100 mm) is much lower.

Motion 1: Griffin/Hughes

Move to include in FW29 for analysis a specification run as follows:

- 1 trip in CCAII (include CAII-ext in AA)
- 1 trip in NLS-S (NLS-N would be closed)
- 3 trips in MAAA
- NLS-ext and DMV open
- Run at both $F=0.4$ and $F=0.36$ with $F_{dmv}=0$
- FT trip limit = 18,000-lbs.

Rationale: This is a run in consideration of the OHA2 not being implemented in time for consideration and is based on AP Motion 2 and PDT recommendation 2. It would add on a run consideration at $F=0.36$ which is more conservative in consideration of concerns about near future open bottom fishing harvest given lack of recruitment. Without additional access to exploitable biomass on GB this option would allocate 3 trips to the MAAA.

The motion carried on a show of hands 12-0-0.

Discussion: The Committee agreed with the rationale provided with this motion. There was no further discussion with regard to Motion 1.

Motion 2: Griffin/Hughes

Move to include in FW29 for analysis two specification runs as follows:

- 1 trip in NLS-S (NLS-N would be closed)
- 2 trips in NLS-west
- 2 trips in MAAA
- NLS-ext, CAII-ext and DMV open
- Run at both $F=0.4$ and $F=0.36$ with $F_{dmv}=0$
- FT trip limit = 18,000-lbs.

Rationale: This is a run in consideration of the OHA2 being implemented in time for consideration but with no approval of GB areas (i.e., just NLS-west and not CAI) and is based on AP Motion 4. It would add on a run consideration at $F=0.36$ which is more conservative in

consideration of concerns about near future open bottom fishing harvest given lack of recruitment. With additional access to exploitable biomass in NLS-west some effort would be redirected from MAAA to NLS-west. Additionally, effort would be moved off declining exploitable biomass in CAII in favor of more favorable exploitable biomass in NLS-west.

The motion carried on a show of hands 12-0-0.

Discussion: The Committee noted that GARFO is currently evaluating options for the expansion of the current LAGC IFQ dredge exemption areas to include all or part of Georges Bank. This will be done in a separate action (i.e. not in FW29) which will likely have a proposed rule published in early spring of 2018.

Motion 3: Griffin/Reid

Move to include in FW29 for analysis a specification run as follows:

- 2 trips in NLS-west (NLS-S and NLS-N would be closed)
- 2 trips in MAAA
- 1 trip in CAI
- NLS-ext, CAII-ext and DMV open
- Run at both $F=0.4$ and $F=0.36$ with $F_{dmv}=0$
- FT trip limit = 18,000-lbs.

Rationale: This is a run in consideration of the OHA2 being implemented in time for consideration with both Southern New England and GB areas approved (i.e., both NLS-west and CAI accessible) and is based on AP Motion 7. It differs from the 6 trip option by eliminated access to NLS-S and adds (relative to AP Motion 7) a run at $F=0.36$. It would direct access to preferable areas of exploitable biomass in NLS-west and CAI.

The motion carried on a show of hands 12-0-0.

Discussion: The Committee discussed how, dependent on the outcome of OHA2, some of these alternatives may not be included in the FW29 NEPA document because they will not be possible. The EA for FW29 will only include alternatives that are possible following the OHA2 final decision.

Motion 4: Griffin/Reid

Move to include in FW29 for analysis a specification run as follows:

- 1 trip in NLS-S (NLS-N would be closed)
- 2 trips in NLS-west
- 2 trips in MAAA
- 1 trip in CAI
- NLS-ext, CAII-ext and DMV open
- 2 Runs at $F=0.295$ and $F=0.26$ with $F_{dmv}=0$
- FT trip limit = 18,000-lbs.

Rationale: This is a run in consideration of the OHA2 being implemented in time for consideration with both Southern New England and GB areas approved (i.e., both NLS-west and CAI accessible) and is based on AP Motion 6. It is the only 6-trip configuration and would add alter F rates considered to F=0.4 and 0.36. It would direct access to preferable areas of exploitable biomass in NLS (both west and south) and CAI.

The motion carried on a show of hands 12-0-0.

Discussion: The Committee agreed with the rationale provided with this motion. There was no further discussion with regard to Motion 4.

Motion 5: Griffin/Hughes

The Committee recommend the following run for consideration in the development of FW29: Five trips at 18,000 with F=0.36.

- 1 trip in CAI
- 1 trip in CAII with Ext
- 1 trip in NLS-South
- 2 trip in MAAA
- NLS ext and DMV open areas. DMV F=0.

Rationale: This is a run in consideration of the OHA2 being implemented in time for consideration but with no approval of Southern New England areas (i.e., just CAI and not NLS-West) and is based on AP Motion 9.

The motion carried on a show of hands 12-0-0.

Discussion: The Committee will be able to move some of the alternatives outlined in Motions 1-5 to the considered but rejected portion of FW29 at their next meeting. A member of the Committee noted that, even if OHA2 is approved in its entirety, the Committee would still have the option to not allocate to all newly accessible areas.

Motion 6: Hughes/Reid

The Committee supports and moves forward AP consensus statements #11 and #17:

#11 The Committee recommends the development of the NLS-West AA boundary described in Section 4.9 of doc.2b for consideration in FW29.

#17 The Committee recommends the development of the NLS-South AA boundary that reflects the NLS-S SAMS area boundary for consideration in FW29.

Rationale: Measures are needed in FW29 to define the boundaries of proposed access areas.

The motion carried on a show of hands 11-0-0.

Motion 7: Hughes/Mann

The Committee recommends the development of CAI carryover pounds described in Section 4.10 of doc.2b for consideration in FW29. The Committee also recommends that these pounds be fished in NLS-W if only that area opens through OHA2.

Rationale: The priority is that these pounds come out of CAI if it is available. These pounds have been on the books for 5 years. Keep the access area possession limit at 18,000.

The motion carried on a show of hands 11-0-0.

Discussion: The Committee agreed with the rationale provided with Motion 6 and Motion 7. There was no further discussion with regard to Motion 6 or Motion 7.

Review and provide input on Northern Gulf of Maine management measures for FW29

The Committee received a presentation on projected FY2018 exploitable biomass in the NGOM and corresponding overall NGOM TAC, and reviewed potential options for how to split that TAC between LA and LAGC components. Dr. Hart confirmed that she will be able to provide the Committee with FY2019 default specifications for the NGOM for their next meeting.

Motion 8: Stockwell/Patterson

The Committee recommends that an alternatives for the NGOM TAC be set at $F=0.15$ and $F=0.18$ for both Jeffreys and Stellwagen Bank for consideration in FW29 (153,000 lb and 183,000 lb TAC in FY2018).

Rationale: There is likely to be fishing on Jeffreys, close to Gloucester on weather days. The PDT will also develop default measures for FY 2019.

The motion carried on a show of hands 11-0-0.

Motion 9: Stockwell/Patterson

The Committee recommends that an alternative be developed that would allow the LA share of the NGOM TAC to be available for RSA compensation fishing, with priority given to research in the NGOM, for consideration in FW29.

Rationale: This would be a short term solution to utilize a small LA TAC in the NGOM with the expectation that a more formal allocation and harvest strategy would be developed in a future amendment. This would not be in addition to the 1.25 million lbs set-aside for the RSA program. These pounds would not be exclusive to RSA research in the NGOM, but priority would be given to support research projects in the NGOM.

The motion carried on a show of hands 11-0-0.

Discussion: There was no discussion with regard to Motion 8 or Motion 9.

Review and provide input on Flatfish Accountability measures for FW29

Council staff presented recommendations of reactive flatfish accountability measure alternatives to be included in FW29.

Motion 10: Stockwell/Hughes

The Committee recommends that flatfish AM measures be developed for Northern windowpane, GB yellowtail, and SNE/MA yellowtail as described in sections 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7 in Doc 2b for consideration in FW29.

Rationale: Broad range of measures that address Committee tasking.

The motion carried on a show of hands 11-0-0.

Discussion: A member of the Committee pointed to the recent SCC recommendations for scallop fishery sub-ACL flatfish species and how this will be reflected in much lower sub-ACLs in FY2019.

Motion 11: Stockwell/Patterson

Move that the Committee task the PDT to 1) compare the FW29 flatfish bycatch projections to potential flatfish sub-ACL values being developed for FY2018; and 2) in cases where the projected scallop fishery bycatch exceeds the scallop fishery sub-ACL in 2018 develop options for reducing bycatch for inclusion in FW29.

Rationale: Significant reductions in SNE/YT, SWP, NWP, and low GB YT sub-ACLs.

The motion carried on a show of hands 11-0-0.

Discussion: A member of the public expressed concern with how the tasking in Motion 11 may impact the timeliness of FW29 implementation. He further highlighted how the scallop fishery has been very proactive in the past with flatfish bycatch issues, and suggested that there is no need for additional proactive AMs.

Potential scallop work priorities for 2018

The Committee reviewed a draft list of potential work priorities for 2018; staff noted that the Council added 'increase to LAGC IFQ trip limits' to the list at their September meeting. Council staff and members of the PDT will be working into the 2018 calendar year to prepare FW29 for review by NMFS, and Council staff and many PDT members will be involved in the 2018 benchmark assessment throughout the spring. The Committee was reminded that the goal for today was to provide final recommendations on 2018 work priorities (in ranked order, if possible) to the Council for consideration. The Council takes final vote on the list at their December meeting.

Motion 12: Hughes/Stockwell

Motion to recommend to the Council that the following priorities remain above the line for 2018:

- A. Specifications* for 2019/2020
- B. Amendment - NGOM
- C. OHA2 follow-up: Modify access areas
- D. Gear modifications to protect small scallops
- E. 2018 Benchmark Assessment
- F. Increase LAGC IFQ trips limits

Rationale: The Council is already addressing some of these items. These would be ranked as “HIGH” priority by the Committee.

The motion carried on a show of hands 11-0-0.

Motion 13: Hughes/Stockwell

After the 2018 Benchmark assessment, task the PDT to assess the current access area delineation as configured to find out if they are still appropriate for rotational management.

Rational: It may be appropriate to revisit the current delineation coordinates associated with access areas to see if they are still relevant to rotational management.

The motion carried on a show of hands 11-0-0.

There was no discussion with regard to Motion 12 or Motion 13.

Other business

No other business was discussed. The meeting concluded at 2:15 pm.