

Enforcement Committee

JUNE 23RD, 2026



New England Fishery
Management Council

AGENDA

- Introductions, function of new committee, Chair/Vice-Chair nominations – [McCarron]
- Review of NOAA OLE Council enforcement updates– [Gilbert]
- Discussion of this year's NGOM scallop fishery – [Buckley/Berthiaume]
- Discussion of mesh size enforcement in redfish exemption program – [Frede]
- Discussion of potential gear conflict issues in scallop closed area two – [McCarron]
- Other business, as necessary



COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- New Enforcement Committee
 - At their December meeting, the Council voted unanimously to accept a proposal from the Executive Committee to restructure the Enforcement Committee as a panel of sworn law enforcement officers and officers of the court
 - This committee structure will allow for better input on law enforcement practices in the Northeast and will allow the committee to meet in closed session when the Chair decides that closed discussions would help advise the Council on sensitive law enforcement matters
 - Nominations for Chair/Vice-chair were asked for; however, no volunteers yet.



COMMITTEE BUSINESS - CONTINUED

Introductions

2026 Law Enforcement Committee			Alternate
Chair	TBD		
Vice-Chair	TBD		
	Lieutenant Delayne Brown	New Hampshire Fish & Game	
	SAC James Cassin	NOAA OLE	Officer Jason Berthiaume
	Captain Jack Chapin	Mass Environmental Police	
	Lieutenant Jeff Mercer	Rhode Island DEM	
	Captain John Singletary	US Coast Guard	Lieutenant Tom Bleifuss
	Lieutenant Danny White	Maine Marine Patrol	Major Robert Beal
	Captain Keith Williams	CT Environmental Conservation Police	
GC Advisors			
	Attorney Sam Duggan	NOAA GC - Northeast	
	Attorney Mitch Macdonald	NOAA GC - Northeast	
	Attorney Katherine Pohl	NOAA GC - Enforcement	
	Attorney Scott Sakowski	NOAA GC - Northeast	



FEEDBACK ON NOAA OLE REPORT TO COUNCIL

- NOAA OLE Northeast Compliance Liaison Caleb Gilbert recently asked the NEFMC and the MAFMC for feedback on the content of the quarterly and semi-annual reports that OLE submits to the Councils
- NEFMC staff would also like the Enforcement Committee to review the example materials supplied as PDF files and provide feedback to Mr. Gilbert
- Examples of the quarterly and semi-annual reports from OLE are on the most recent Enforcement meeting webpage

Past Meetings

May 14, 2026 Enforcement Committee Webinar

[View details & documents](#)

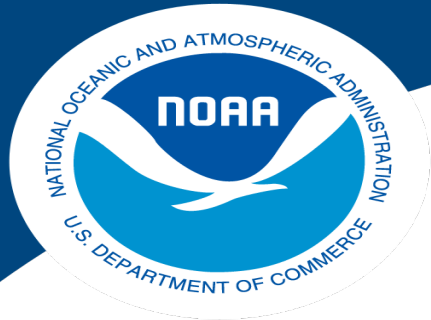


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2026 NORTHERN GULF OF MAINE SCALLOP FISHERY

- **Season opened April 1 and closed on April 13** after 437,867 lb set-aside was projected to have been harvested. Participation was record high, leading to record short season.
- **2,325 total trips, an average of 165 trips/day.** 35% of the 441,247 lb harvest was landed by LAGC IFQ vessels, and 36% of landings were to ports other than Gloucester, MA.
- **Slowing catch rates on Stellwagen Bank, vessels spread out to Jeffrey's Ledge.** This trend is expected to continue in 2027 due to declining exploitable biomass on the portion of Stellwagen Bank within the NGOM management area.





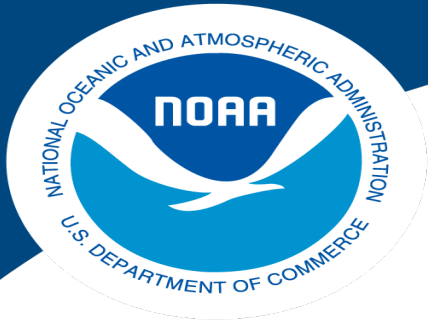
**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Office of Law Enforcement



NGOM Operations - 2026

- **Participation**
 - NOAA OLE
 - MEP
 - USCG – NA
- **88 Inspections / 19 Patrols / 35 Contacts**
 - Gloucester – 58
 - Boston – 11
 - P-town/South shore – 17
 - At-sea - 2
- **Contacts**
 - Calls/inquires – 35
 - Email reminder (VTR/VMS) – 542 (All LGC)
 - Compliance reminder (PTNS, Pre-land) – 35
 - Compliance reminder (VMS declaration) - 119



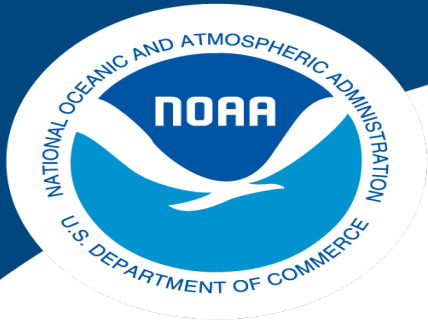
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NGOM Operations 2026



- **Violation type**
 - Reporting – 44 (Maintain eVTR, PTNS, VMS)
 - Possession limit – 20 (minimal amounts)
 - Gear – 4
 - Permit – 3 (expired)
 - Admin/other – 3 (Decal / Reg)
 - Closed area – 2 (Prior opening)
 - Dealer - 1
- **Significant violations?**
 - Reporting - eVTR
 - Overages – Couple notable
- **Permit type**
 - 2 Dealer
 - 35 IFQ
 - 51 NGOM

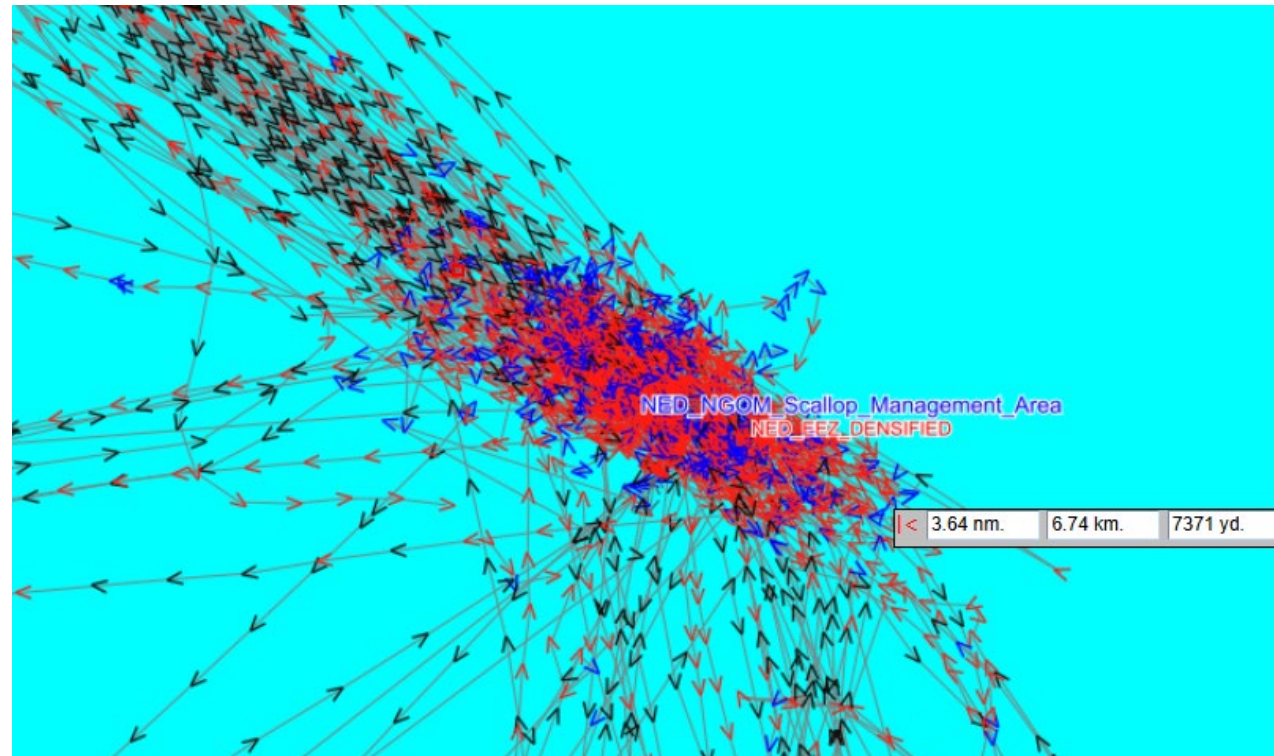


**NOAA
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This information is considered confidential and shall not be disclosed except to authorized personnel under 16. U.S.C. 1881a, Section 402, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

- **Fishing grounds**
 - 3.5 nm x 1.25 nm
 - Each vessel = 0.15 nm (900 ft)
 - If evenly distributed, vessels would be spaced about 3 football fields apart



2026 NGOM SCALLOP FISHERY

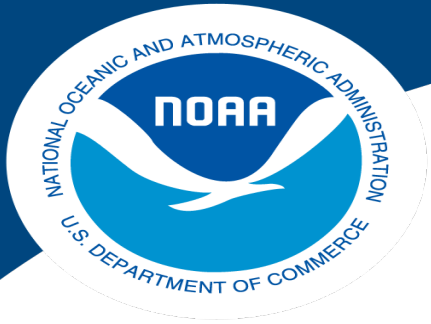
- **Crowding** – With 207 vessels active in and around Stellwagen Bank, up slightly from 2025, vessel crowding was an issue but mitigated as vessels spread out across the area.
- **Perceptions of poor fishing practices** – Scallopers reported seeing instances of excessively long tows (>1 hour), high-grading, and deck-loading. While not prohibited, this has been a source of contention for active NGOM fishermen.
- **Other issues** – NGOM fishermen have shared frustration at perceived lack of enforcement of trip limits for vessels landing in Provincetown and Boston.
- **eVTR** – Widespread non-compliance, but not specific to NGOM
- **Double trips**
 - Creates unsafe derby
 - Velocity of trips is very fast
 - Industry can't come into compliance, high incentive to turn and burn and not correct issues
 - Failure to report on time
 - Enforcement can't keep up
 - Unclear regulations – definition of port/offload/dock
 - Transferring product with skiffs
 - Becoming more problematic as fishery spreads outside of Gloucester



2026 NGOM SCALLOP FISHERY

- NOAA staff will consider clarifying the regulatory definition of a landing and will work through the Council's Scallop PDT to gain more input and develop recommendations to address other enforcement concerns.
- The Enforcement Committee will revisit the NGOM fishery at their autumn meeting.





NOAA
FISHERIES

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SCALLOP CLOSED AREA TWO

- At their April meeting, the Council heard public comment from a scalloper who would like to participate in the upcoming scallop Closed Area Two opener; however, they were concerned with the proliferation of offshore lobster gear in the area and seeking guidance on avoiding gear conflict.
 - Staff has advised vessel owner(s) to reach out to offshore lobstermen's association to see if a compromise can be worked out.
- The committee noted the increased density of fixed gear in that area and generally agreed that at-sea enforcement in LMA3 should be a higher priority as resources allow and focus on verifying trap tags, gear compliance and gear marking.



REDFISH SECTOR EXEMPTION - MESH SIZE ENFORCEMENT

- Public comments raised concerns about enforcement of mesh size regulations during discussions on the Council's review of the redfish sector exemption, including:
 - Inconsistencies in mesh size configuration across different sections of net (codend, body, and extension)
 - Enforcement of mesh size requirements in exemption program – how often nets are checked (codend and extension), enforcement challenges
- Groundfish Advisory Panel Discussion – June 10, 2025:

The Groundfish Advisors in the meeting expressed interest for the Groundfish Committee to request the Enforcement Committee hold a meeting to discuss enforcement of mesh size regulations.



REDFISH SECTOR EXEMPTION - MESH SIZE REQUIREMENTS

- The Committee discussed needing regulations that would make boardings and mesh measurements more effective and easier to enforce in the exemption program.
- OLE and USCG would welcome guidance from the committee and the Council on better mesh enforcement.
 - While recognizing limited enforcement resources, staff noted that the committee may want to pursue a recommendation advocating standardized measurement of net extension bodies.
 - Staff is investigating a cooperative approach with law enforcement and the observer program.



Questions?



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