

2027 & 2028 (Default) Atlantic Sea Scallop OFLs and ABCs

SCALLOP PDT

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

OCTOBER 7, 2026

NEW BEDFORD, MA AND WEBINAR



New England Fishery
Management Council

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference

- A. Consider information provided by the Scallop PDT on survey data and methods to develop fishing mortality reference points and targets based on the 2025 research track assessments, recommendations of the SSC made in October 2025, and updated data and modelling. Provide the Council with a recommendation as to whether these methods remain appropriate for this year's application.
- B. Review assumptions used in the Scallop Area Management Simulation (SAMS) model to project biomass, including natural mortality assumptions. Provide the Council with a recommendation as to whether these methods are appropriate.
- C. Recommend OFLs and ABCs for Atlantic sea scallop for FY 2027 and FY 2028 (default) that will prevent overfishing, are consistent with the Council's Scallop ABC control rule, and consider the Council's Risk Policy.



OFL >

ABC = ACL

> ACT

State Waters Catch
(322 mt)

OFL = F of 0.49 (21,418 mt)

Add

NGOM & GOM
exploitable biomass
added to OFL
(GB F_{MSY})

Reduced by scientific uncertainty

ABC = ACL (16,668 mt)

Reduced by estimated discards (3,516 mt)

ABC after discards are removed (13,152 mt)

Reduced by LAGC incidental catch, observer (1%), and RSA set asides, NGOM Set-Aside

ACL after set-asides (12,430 mt)

Update after NGOM
Set-Aside is
determined
(< 800k lbs)

Allocate sub-ACLs to LA and LAGC IFQ

LA Sub-ACL
(94.5%)
(11,747 mt)

LAGC IFQ
sub-ACL = sub-ACT
(5.5%)
(684 mt)

Reduced for Management Uncertainty

LA Sub-ACT (F=0.29)
(10,181 mt)

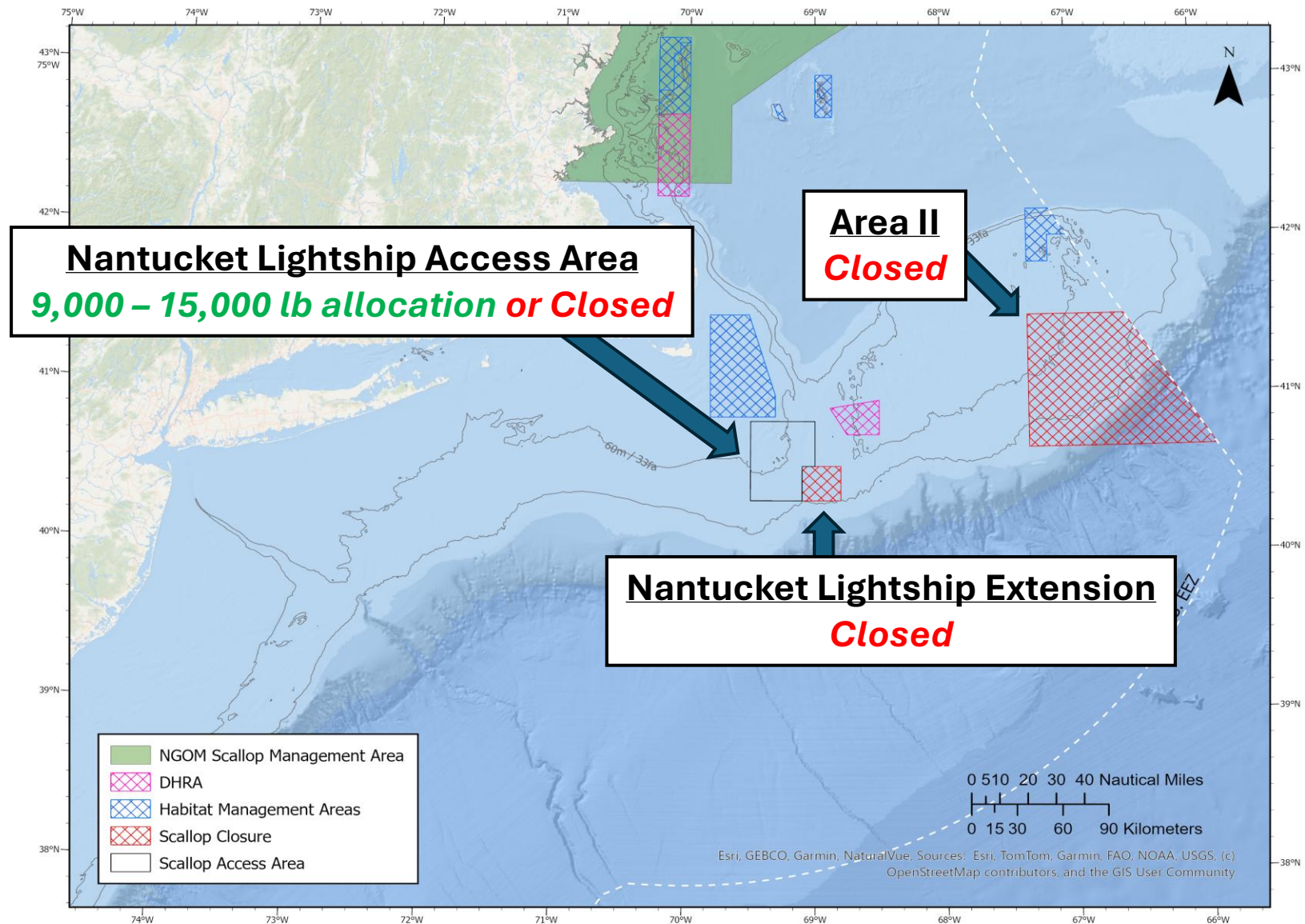
2027 AND 2028 (DEFAULT) SPECIFICATIONS

- OFL and ABC for FY 2027 and FY 2028 (default).
- Fishery allocations and rotational management
 - **Status Quo** – 36 Days at Sea, no access area allocation; 418 mt LAGC IFQ, 306 mt, 199 mt Northern Gulf of Maine Set-Aside
 - **No Action** – 27 Days at Sea, no access area allocation; 320 mt LAGC IFQ, 99 mt Northern Gulf of Maine Set-Aside
 - Range of open area Days at Sea being analyzed: 20 – 40
 - Range of rotational management options from no access area allocation as well as a 9,000 – 15,000 pound allocation in the Nantucket Lightship
 - Range of fishing mortality rates applied to set NGOM TAL: $F=0.15-0.25$
- Final Action by December 2026, target implementation by April 1, 2027



FY 2027 AND FY 2028 (DEFAULT) SPECIFICATIONS

- Two rotational management scenarios being considered, hinging around whether to allocate harvest in the Nantucket Lightship region
- All options being considered leave Area II and the NLS-Extension closed



FY 2027 AND FY 2028 (DEFAULT) OFL AND ABC

PDT Recommendation: Scallop ABC control rule using combined stock reference points and applied to projected 2027 and 2028 scallop exploitable biomass.

OFL and ABC – The same control rules developed in A15 and used for FW21-40, with updated survey and fishery data

- OFL - equivalent to the catch associated with F_{MSY} ($F=0.49$)
- ABC control rule – $F_{ABC} = 0.36$, defined as the 75% probability of remaining below the true F_{MSY} . Risk is evaluated in terms the probability of overfishing compared to the fraction loss of yield.
- *The fishery has not exceeded ABC/ACL under A15 control rule*
- *Stock status: Not overfished and overfishing not occurring*



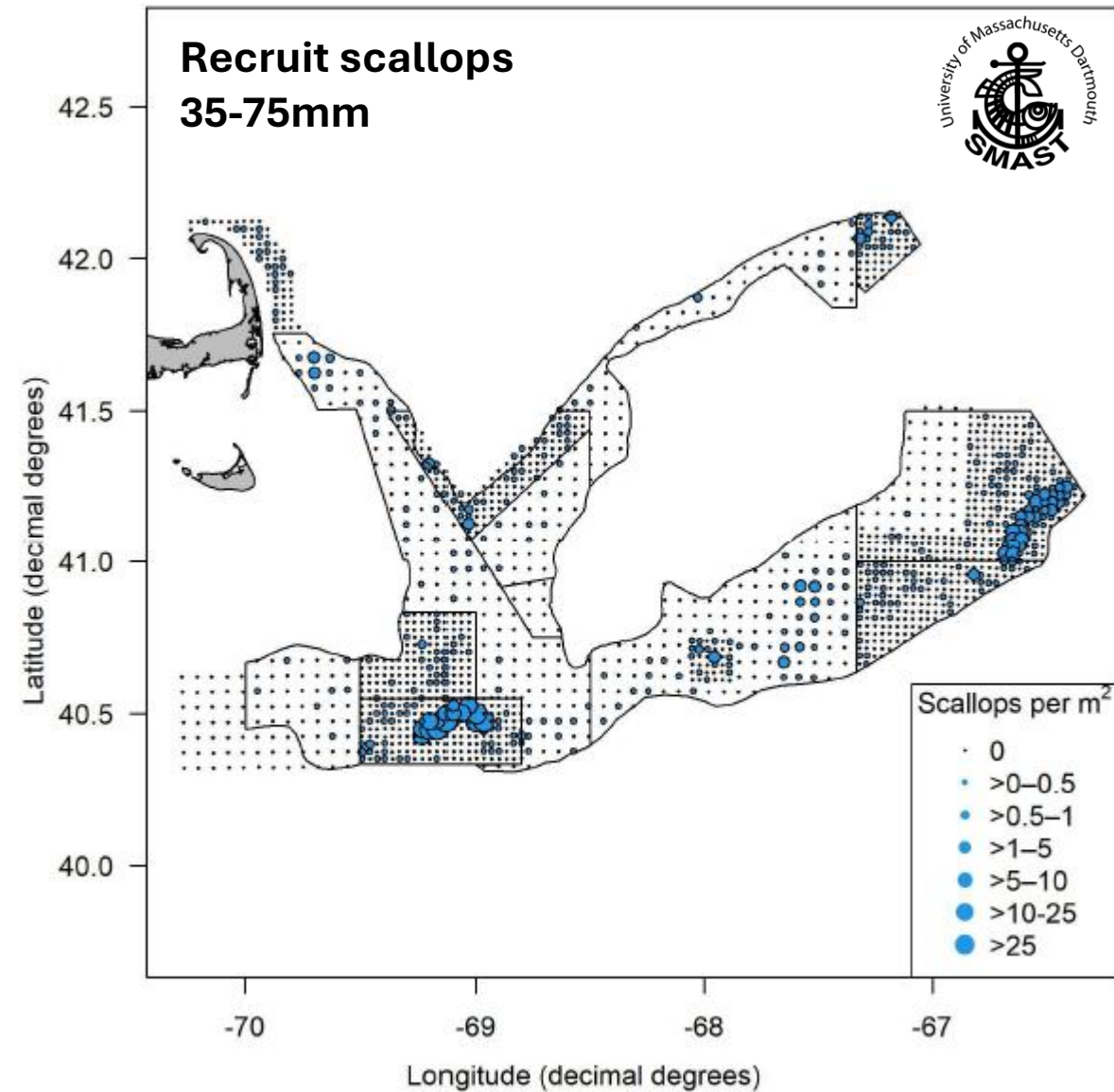
2025 RESEARCH TRACK ASSESSMENT

	Definition in Scallop FMP		SARC 65 (2018)	2020 Management Track	2025 Research Track
OFL	F_{MSY}	Mid-Atlantic	$F_{MSY\ MA} = 0.73$	$F_{MSY\ MA} = 0.72$	$F_{MSY\ MA} = 1.56$
		Georges Bank	$F_{MSY\ GB} = 0.57$	$F_{MSY\ GB} = 0.46$	$F_{MSY\ GB} = 0.36$
		Combined Regional	$F_{MSY} = 0.64$	$F_{MSY} = 0.61$	$F_{MSY} = 0.49$
ABC=ACL	25% probability of exceeding the OFL		$F = 0.51$	$F = 0.45$	$F = 0.36$
B_{MSY}	B_{TARGET}		116,766 mt	102,657 mt	93,282 mt
$\frac{1}{2} B_{MSY}$	$B_{THRESHOLD}$		58,383 mt	51,329 mt	46,641 mt
MSY			46,531 mt	32,079 mt	28,402 mt
Overfished?	$B < B_{THRESHOLD}$		No	No	No
Overfishing?	$F < F_{THRESHOLD} = F_{MSY}$		No	No	No

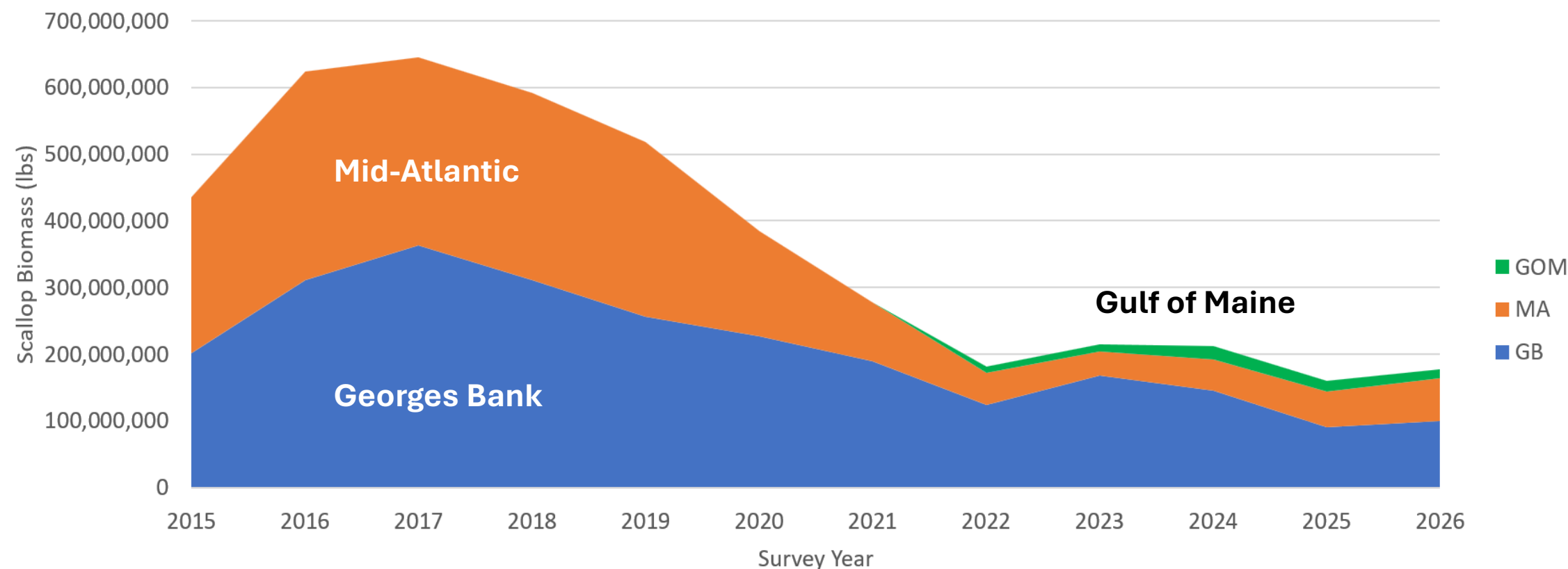


KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

- 76% of all scallops are on Georges Bank, with 48% within the Nantucket Lightship South alone.
- Abundance (>40mm) decreased by 10% across the resource, but incoming recruitment event noted in Closed Area II and the Great South Channel
- Biomass (>40mm) increased, driven by growth of large Nantucket Lightship cohort. This year class continues to grow relatively slowly.



SURVEY BIOMASS HOVERING NEAR 25 YEAR LOW



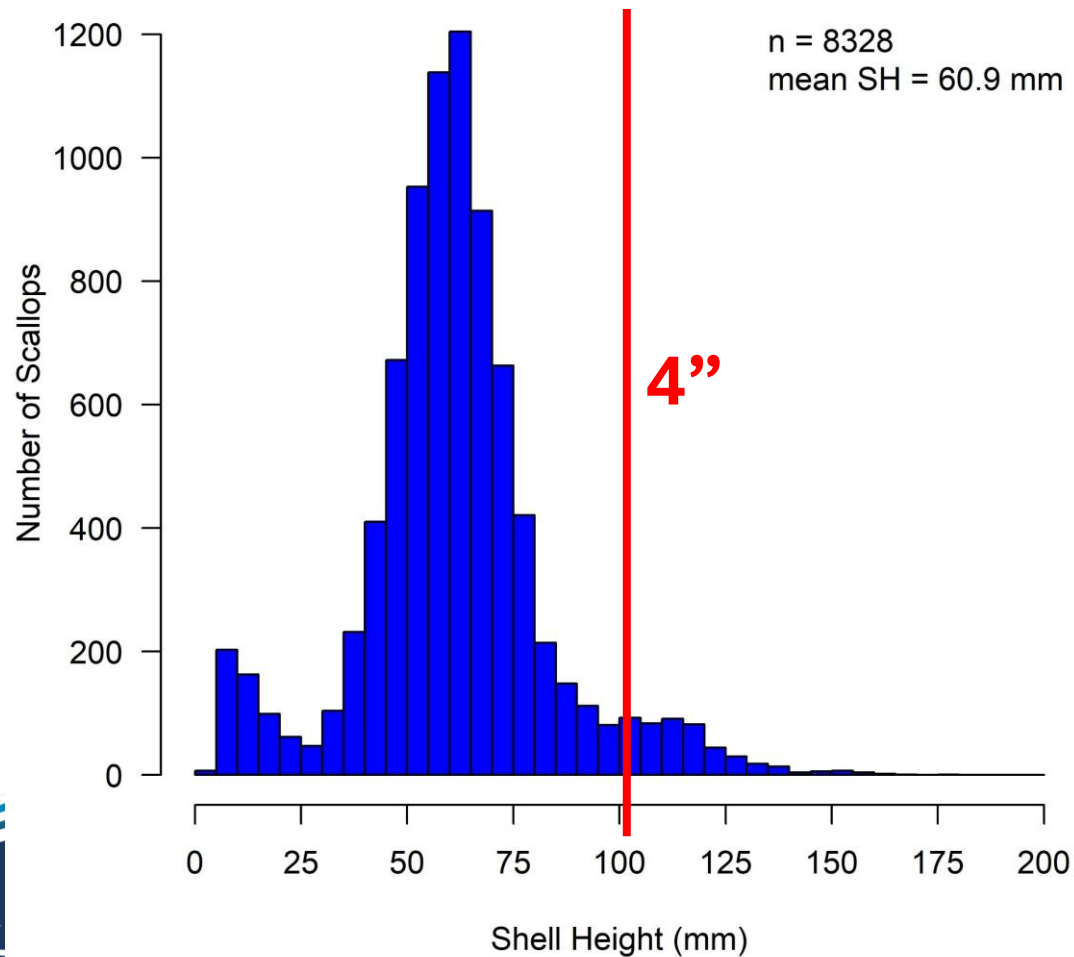
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MOST GEORGES BANK SCALLOPS NOT FULLY SELECTED



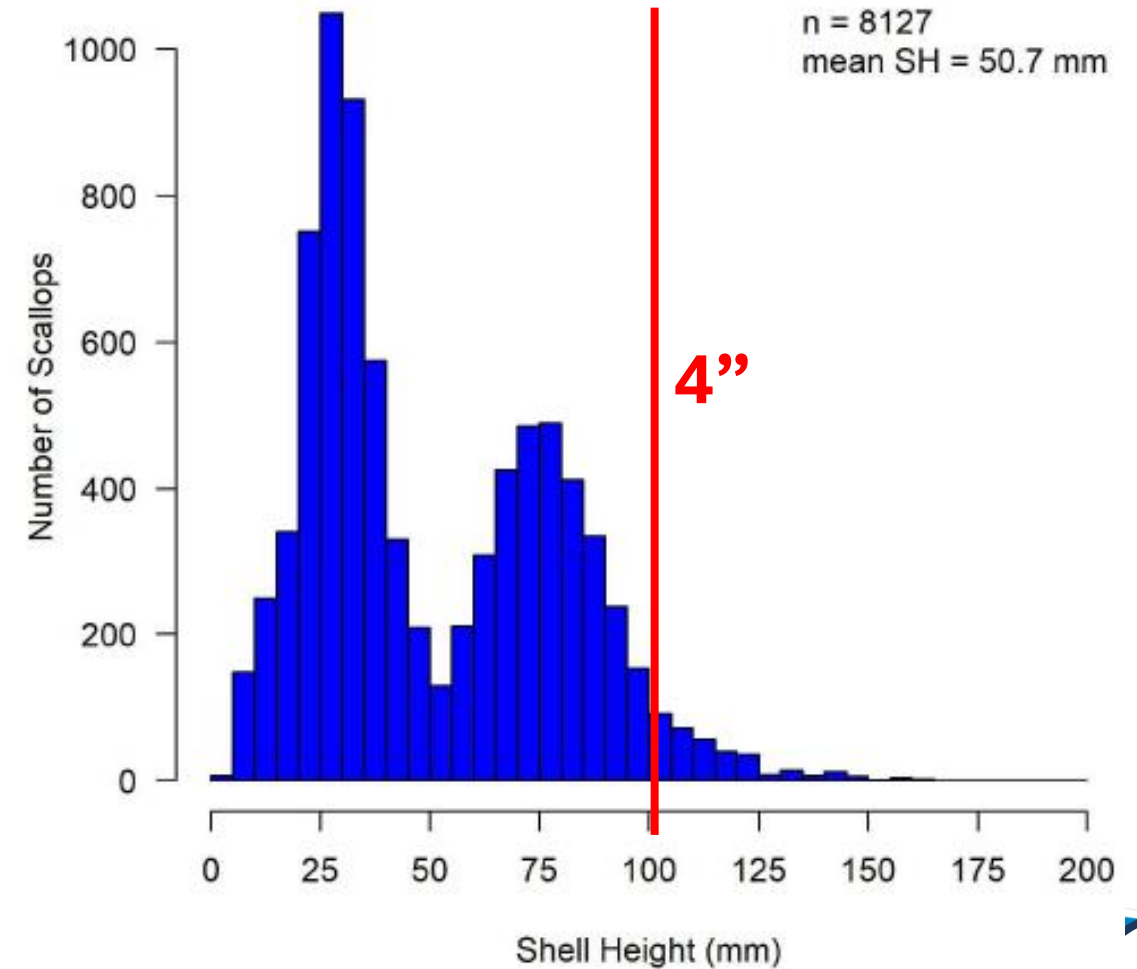
2025

Georges Bank all

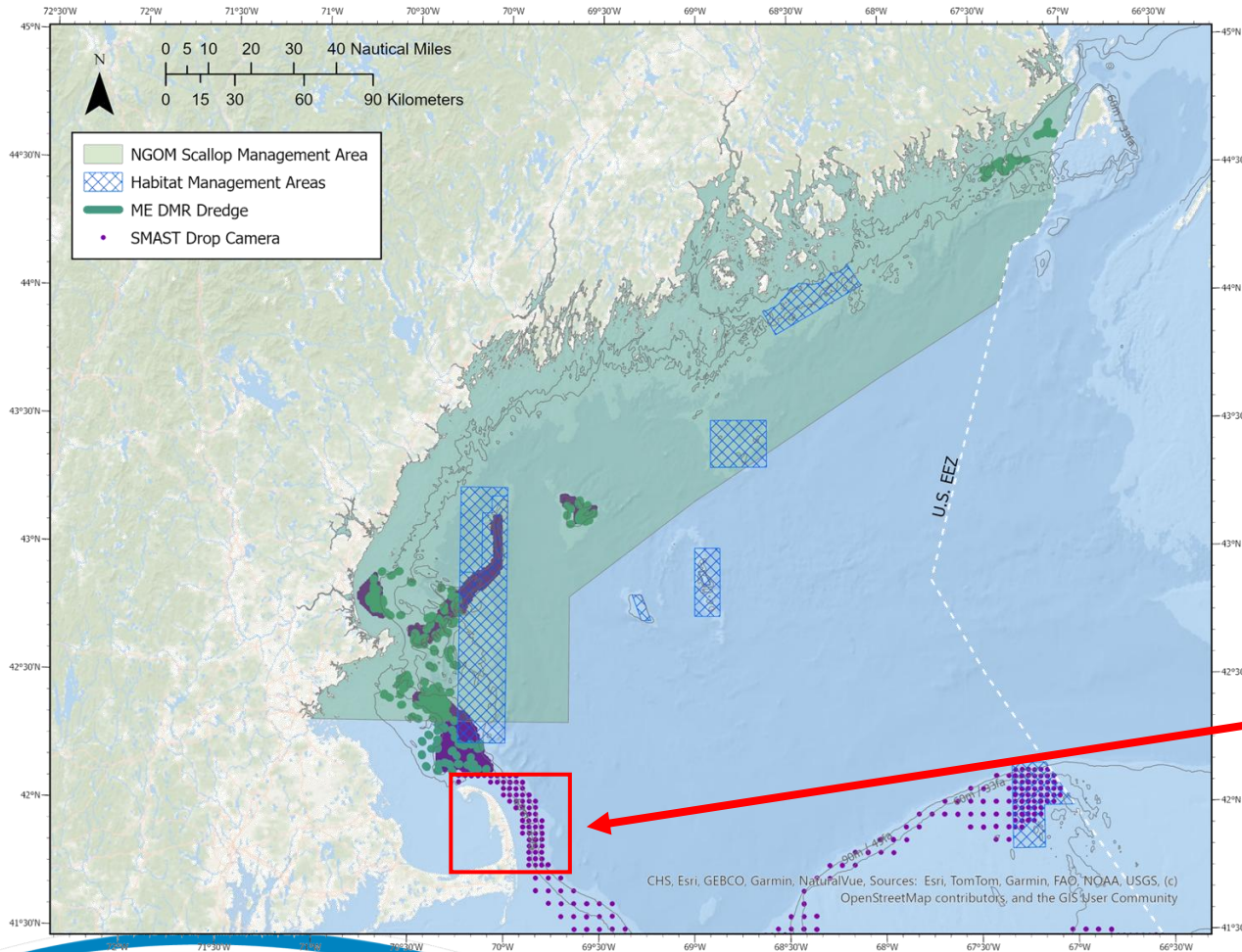


2026

Georges Bank all



2026 SCALLOP SURVEY COVERAGE IN THE GULF OF MAINE



- Survey time series continues to grow. RSA-funded drop camera and dredge coverage in 2026.
- Surveys of the Gulf of Maine include the NGOM management unit, parts of the WGOM Closure, and Stellwagen Bank south of the NGOM.
 - Outer Cape Cod survey data included with Stellwagen South estimate
- No reference points for this region, GB reference points used as proxy.



2025 ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES

<i>MODEL</i>	Catch-at-size analysis (CASA) models (GB Open, GB Closed, Mid-Atlantic)
<i>STOCK STATUS</i>	Not overfished, overfishing not occurring
<i>RETROSPECTIVE ADJUSTMENT</i>	No
<i>UNCERTAINTIES</i>	Discard mortality, incidental mortality, stock-recruit relationship, natural mortality, growth, maturity & fecundity, density dependence, shell-height meat-weight relationship
<i>CHANGES</i>	Explicit consideration of environmental influences, increased baseline natural mortality in all regions, updated growth models incorporating random effects.



FY 2027 AND FY 2028 PROJECTIONS

Mid-Atlantic

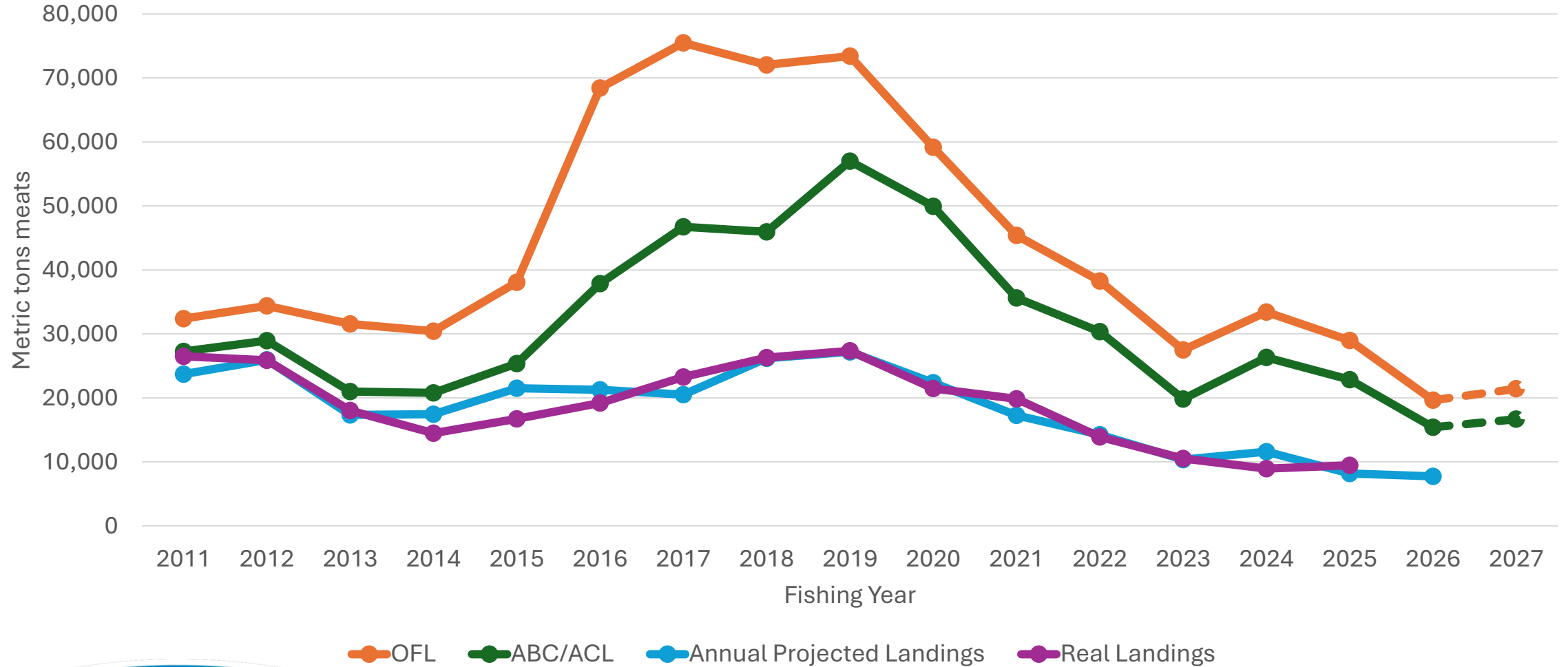
Georges Bank

Gulf of Maine

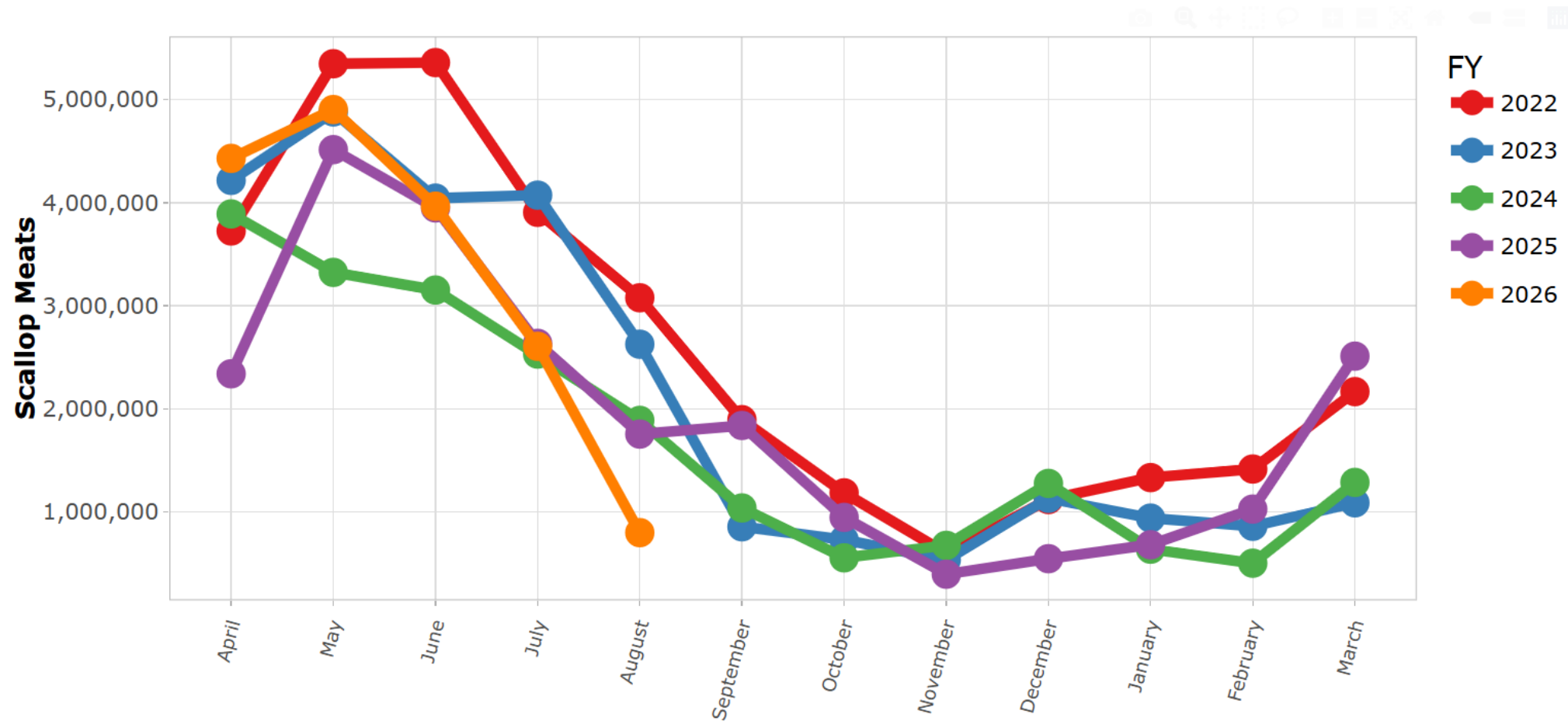
SAMS/Region	2027 Biomass (mt)	2027 Exploitable (mt)	2028 Biomass (mt)	2028 Exploitable (mt)
Hudson Canyon South	6292	4369	4809	3036
Virginia	10	0	11	0
Elephant Trunk	7067	4280	7998	2797
Delmarva	212	60	218	64
New York Bight	3913	2317	3189	2362
Long Island, Block Island	5184	3383	4120	3146
MAB-Inshore	108	1	327	43
Mid-Atlantic Total	22786	14410	20672	11448
CA1-Sliver	1796	807	1624	844
CA1-Access	554	299	505	238
CA2-N	3833	2936	3226	1788
CA2-S	12538	1041	18144	1896
CA2-Ext	2798	1000	3287	785
NLS-W	197	115	178	99
NLS-N	944	606	776	462
NLS-S	14092	5837	12340	7155
NLS-Ext	13540	5028	11639	6756
Great South Channel	5287	2976	7837	2733
Northern Flank	1605	505	2290	818
Southern Flank	8162	4028	9262	4198
Georges Bank Total	65347	25178	71108	27772
Stellwagen South (Open)	480	346	449	306
Stellwagen NGOM	794	463	1225	450
Jeffreys Ledge	270	227	220	173
NGOM-Other	492	419	448	290
WGOM Closure	3177	2774	1812	1670
Gulf of Maine Total	4961	4229	4154	2889



OFL ABC PLOT

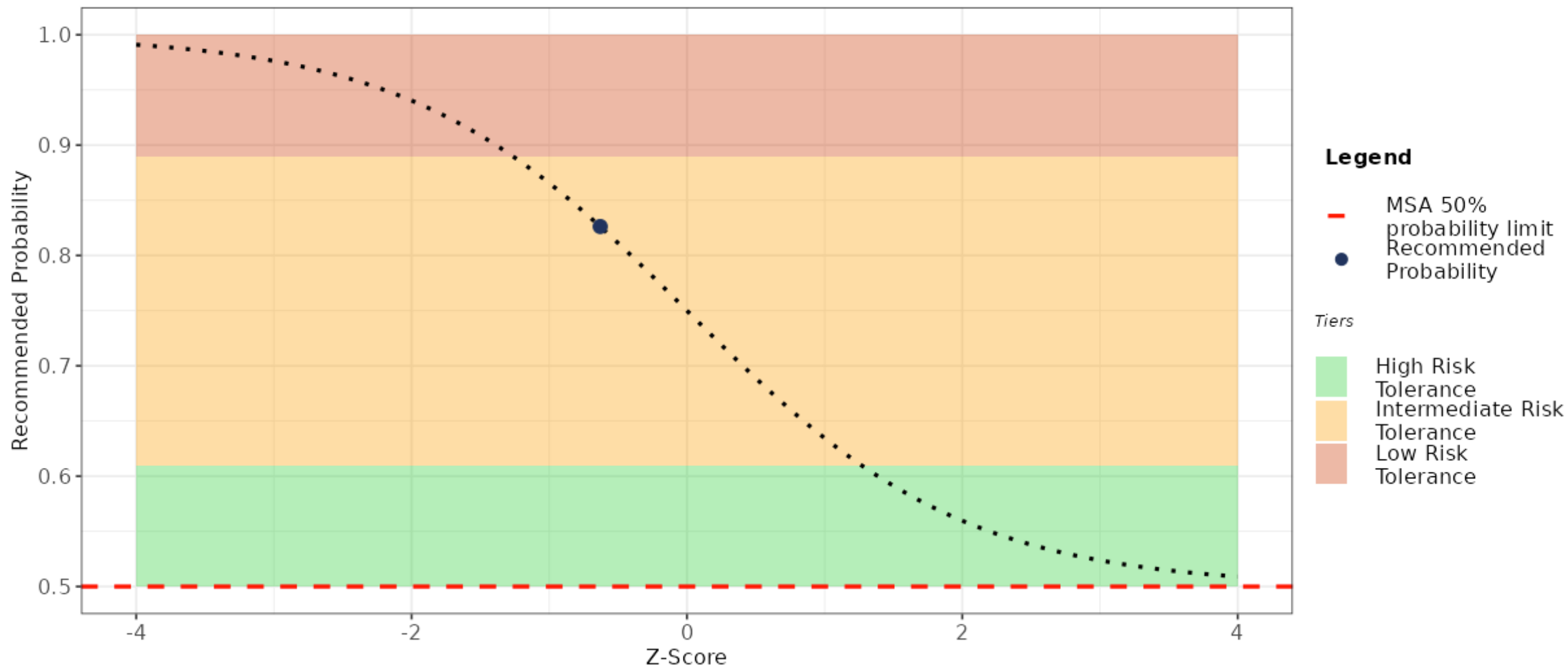


RECENT FISHERY PERFORMANCE



ATLANTIC SEA SCALLOP: RISK POLICY FACTORS, SCORING, AND WEIGHTING

 Sea Scallop	 Weight	 Score	Rationale
 SSB / Stock Status	0.30	-2	Terminal year (2023) biomass < 75% (74.99%)
 Recruitment	0.26	0	From 2019-2023, three years are within 25-75 th percentile of recruitment time-series (2 year below < 25 th).
 Climate Vulnerability	0.19	-4	High climate vulnerability, directional effect is negative (Hare et al. 2016)
 Commercial Fishery Characterization	0.25	3	Utilization > 80% of the APL in two of last three years. Four of five most recent years < 25 th percentile for revenue). No constraining fishery interactions. AP input score of '0'.
 Recreational Fishery Characterization	No sub-ACL	-	
			Total Z Score: -0.63



Z-SCORE = -0.63 → INTERMEDIATE RISK TOLERANCE



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PDT RESPONSE TO 2025 SSC RECOMMENDATIONS

SSC Comment	PDT Response
<i>“...Reconsider the spatial structure of the stock, and specifically to research the possibility of managing Atlantic Sea Scallops as multiple stocks. Continued pursuit of GeoSAMS, and exploring options for spatially explicit management even if the stock structure is not reconsidered (e.g., setting catch and/or days-at-sea assignments separately for different regions). The SSC noted that the information presented on spatiotemporal changes in biological parameters such as growth and mortality justified these recommendations.”</i>	The PDT is not aware of additional research to inform consideration of alternative scallop stock structure. However, the PDT notes that a current Council action, Scallop Framework 42, will consider measures to establish spatially explicit management of Scallop Days-at-Sea to better account for regional differences. The Council approved a Scallop Strategic Plan in December 2025, which includes work items related to continued exploration of scallop stock structure and spatially explicit management.
<i>“...Developing decision-support tools that might help the PDT accomplish finer-scale spatial or temporal (e.g., in-season) management. This recommendation followed the PDT’s description of a need for tools that could help them explore more flexible approaches and to consider uncertainty and socioeconomic implications associated with alternative decisions”</i>	The PDT notes that several ongoing projects aim to develop decision-support tools to collect and process real-time data to support in-season management, as well as to better assess the bioeconomic impacts of management decisions and climate change. As above, the Scallop Strategic Plan approved in December 2025 includes work items related to the development of tools to support more finer spatial and temporal management.



TERM OF REFERENCE A

The Scallop PDT recommends:

- Adjustments to **Shell-Height Meat-Weight (SHMW)** relationship from those developed through the 2025 Research Track Assessment for both Georges Bank and the Mid-Atlantic
 - Mid-Atlantic SHMW equation adjusted to include the mean year effect, and squared depth term
 - Additional year of dredge data included for area-specific Nantucket Lightship South SHMW equation
 - Additional year of dredge data included for Gulf of Maine area SHMW equations
- Including survey data from **Outer Cape Cod** from SMAST drop camera survey with survey estimates of Stellwagen South, contributing to the OFL/ABC estimates.
 - Biomass from this region is not substantial (225 mt) but has been historically excluded from biomass used to calculate the OFL and ABC.



TERM OF REFERENCE B

The Scallop PDT recommends:

- Continued use of **area-specific natural mortality parameters** used in 2025 to account for spatial variation in the Mid-Atlantic.
- Continued use of **adjustment growth parameters for the Nantucket Lightship South area**. Growth in other areas remains unchanged from the 2020 Management Track Assessment.



TERM OF REFERENCE C

The Scallop PDT recommends:

	FY 2027	FY 2028
Overfishing Limit	21,418 mt	22,137 mt
ABC	16,668 mt	17,178 mt
ABC (discards excluded)	13,152 mt	13,520 mt

