# Northern Edge Habitat-Scallop Framework Goal and Objectives

## Approved by the Council on April 18, 2023, Mystic, CT

**Goal:** Develop a scallop rotational harvest program within and/or around the Closed Area II Habitat Closure Area (i.e., "habitat management area" or "HMA") that avoids habitats important to juvenile cod, minimizes adverse effects to essential fish habitats, minimizes adverse biological and economic impacts to other managed fisheries, and contributes to optimum yield for the scallop fishery.

**Objectives:**

1. Establish a scallop access area or areas. These area(s) may be located within and/or outside the existing Closed Area II Habitat Closure Area, including in areas that are currently open to the scallop fishery. Consider both the distribution of scallops and maintaining protection of habitats that are highly vulnerable to dredge fishing impacts and provide functional value for managed fishery resources, taking into account the ecological value of the Northern Edge to juvenile cod and other managed species.
2. Review current boundaries for the Closed Area II Habitat Closure Area (HMA) and consider whether modifications might be considered in a future action.
3. Develop a scallop rotational harvest program, including the geographic extent, duration, and frequency of scallop dredge activity relative to habitat and recovery time on the Northern Edge.
4. Manage harvest from the Northern Edge scallop resource in the short- and long-term by considering the size distribution of scallops, seasonality of fishing with regard to meat yield, spawning and recruitment potential (in this area and other areas of the scallop resource across Georges Bank), and fishing behavior. Rotational fishing should consider how to achieve harvest from a small area in an equitable and sustainable manner.
5. Develop management area boundaries that are enforceable. This may include developing additional monitoring requirements specific to this area.
6. Accurately monitor and minimize bycatch of non-target species.
7. To the extent possible, consider gear interactions including between scallop dredges and lobster traps, and the impacts of dredge gear on ovigerous lobsters in the Northern Edge HMA.