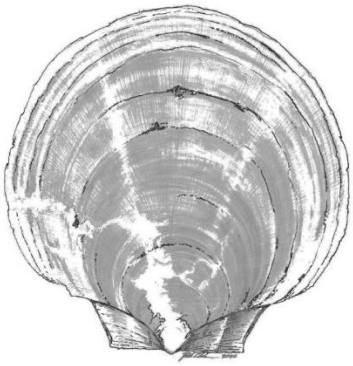
DECISION DOCUMENT

For

Framework 40 to the

Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan



This document was developed to help the Council select final preferred alternatives for Framework 40.

November 19, 2025

Version 1.2 – AP & Committee Copy

Framework 40

Framework 40 was initiated at the June 2025 Council meeting and currently includes: scallop fishery specifications for FY2026 and default measures for FY2027 (ABC/ACLs, DAS, access area allocations for LA and LAGC, target-TAC for LAGC incidental catch and set-asides for the observer and research programs, TAL for NGOM management area including alternatives that create sub-areas with separate catch-limits within the NGOM).

Anticipated Action:

Prior to selecting final preferred alternatives, the AP and Committee will receive a presentation on measures under consideration in Framework 40 and their analyzed impacts on target species, non-target species, protected resources, the physical environment (EFH), and human communities (economic and social impacts).

Council staff recommend that the AP and Committee work through Framework 40 topics in the following order:

Anticipated Outcomes:

1. Select the preferred alternative for overfishing limits and acceptable biological catches (Section 4.1)
2. Select the preferred alternative for Northern Gulf of Maine total allowable landings in FY 2026 and FY 2027 (Section 4.2.1).
3. Consider any modifications to the specification alternatives in Section 4.3. If changes are recommended, they should be made as a motion.
4. Select the preferred alternative for fishery specifications for FY 2026 and FY 2027 (default) including access area and DAS allocations (Section 4.3).
5. Select the preferred alternative for LAGC IFQ access area trip allocations (Section 4.4).
6. Develop motions or consensus statements to move measures that were not selected as preferred to considered but rejected.
7. Motion to submit Framework 40 to NOAA Fisheries (***Council meeting only***).

Section 4.1 – Action 1 – Overfishing Limit and Acceptable Biological Catch *Choose one alternative.*		Preferred by		
		PDT	**AP**	**CTE**
Alternative 1 (Sec. 4.1.1)	No Action (default OFL and ABC for FY 2026 from Framework 39)			
Alternative 2 (Sec. 4.1.2)	Updated OFL and ABC for FY 2025 and FY 2026.	X		
Decisions/Questions/Information to Consider				
Action 1 considers updating OFL and ABC estimates using the most recent survey information and updated reference points from the 2025 scallop research track assessment. The SSC recommended updated OFL and ABC values for 2026 and 2027 (default) at its meeting on Oct. 8, 2025. The Atlantic sea scallop stock is not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring.				
Other important Considerations/Draft EA References				
• Biological impacts: Section 6.2.1				

Section 4.2 – Action 2 – Northern Gulf of Maine Management and TAL Setting Section 4.2.1 – Northern Gulf of Maine TAL Setting *Choose one alternative*		Preferred by		
		PDT	**AP**	**CTE**
Alternative 1 (Sec. 4.2.1.1)	No Action *FW38 Default NGOM Set-Aside set at 507,063 lb.*			
Alternative 2 (Sec. 4.2.1.2)	*Set NGOM TAL at F=0.25, with set-asides to support research, monitoring, and a directed LAGC fishery* *TAL= 255,047 lb, NGOM Set-Aside = 204,694 lb, 2027 Default = 102,347*			
Alternative 3 (Sec. 4.2.1.3)	*Set TALs for NGOM-Stellwagen at F=0.25 and NGOM-North at F=0.18, with set-asides to support research, monitoring, and a directed LAGC fishery* *TAL = 482,752 lb,* *NGOM-Stellwagen Set-Aside = 232,604 lb,* *NGOM-North Set-Aside= 205,263 lb* *2027 NGOM-Stellwagen Default = 116,302 lb,* *2027 NGOM-North Default = 102,631 lb*			

Decisions/Questions/Information to Consider

The PDT does not recommend Alternative 3. The PDT considered that with the lack of NOAA support for analysis and implementation, Alternative 3 is likely not feasibly for implementation in FY 2026. The PDT notes that the fishing mortality rate and resulting FY 2026 NGOM Set-Aside under Alternative 2 would be low relative to the FY 2025 NGOM Set-Aside, but would effectively limit fishing effort on Stellwagen Bank. The PDT also notes that currently, only the SMAST drop camera survey is scheduled to survey the Gulf of Maine in 2026. Without the ME DMR dredge survey in the area, there is likely to be additional uncertainty in NGOM biomass estimates, particularly in the area defined as NGOM-North.

Stellwagen Bank holds high densities of scallops in the management unit and is where most of the fishing is expected to occur in 2026, but the PDT notes that there is a similar level of exploitable biomass between Ipswich Bay, Jeffreys Ledge, Platts Bank, and Machias Seal Island. The PDT notes that there have been higher levels of mortality in high density areas, such as the NLS-West and NLS-South. Scallops in the Stellwagen area are 9 years old and likely have little growth potential. The Council's preferred alternative was F=0.18 in FW39.

Other important Considerations/Draft EA References

- Biological impacts: Section 6.2.2
- Economic impacts: Section 6.6

Section 4.3 – Action 3 – Fishery Specifications *Choose one alternative.*		**Preferred by**		
		PDT	**AP**	**CTE**
Alternative 1 (Sec. 4.3.1)	No Action - *Default measures from Framework 39*			
Alternative 2 (Sec. 4.3.2)	32 Days At Sea			
Alternative 3 (Sec. 4.3.3)	34 Days At Sea	X		
Alternative 4 (Sec. 4.3.4)	36 Days At Sea			
Alternative 5 (Sec 4.3.5)	24 Days At Sea, one access area trip with 9,000-pound trip limit			
Alternative 6 (Sec. 4.3.6)	34 Days At Sea, one access area trip with 9,000-pound trip limit			
Alternative 7 (Sec. 4.3.7)	24 Days At Sea, two 6,000 lb. access area trips with 12,000 lb. trip limit			
Alternative 8 (Sec. 4.3.8)	30 Days At Sea, two 6,000 lb. access area trips with 12,000 lb. trip limit			

Decisions/Questions/Information to Consider

The PDT considered available data and was not supportive of allocating access area trips (Alternatives 5-8). The PDT notes that a large proportion of landings from Area I in FY 2025 have been from smaller market grades (20-30 and 30-40 count). The PDT also considered the total fishing mortality rates for Alternative 4, Alternative 6, and Alternative 8 which are higher than that associated with the Council's preferred alternative in recent years.

Other important Considerations/Draft EA References

- Biological impacts: Section 6.2.4
- Economic impacts: Section 6.6

Section 4.4 – Action 4 – Access Area Trip Allocations to the LAGC IFQ Component *Choose one alternative.*		Preferred by		
		PDT	**AP**	**CTE**
Alternative 1 (Sec. 4.4.1)	No Action			
Alternative 2 (Sec. 4.4.2)	Update LAGC IFQ Access Area Trip Allocations, Distribute LAGC IFQ Access Area Allocation to available access area(s).	X		

Decisions/Questions/Information to Consider

The PDT recommends Alternative 2. The PDT notes that if rotational fishing is available for the Limited Access component in FY 2026, it would be equitable to allow the LAGC IFQ component access to any available access areas on Georges Bank or in the Mid-Atlantic.

Alternative 2 would make the total LAGC IFQ access area trip allocation available in Area I and Area II. There would not be a specific number of trips allocated to available access area(s), but rather, vessels would be able to fish in any available area and trips would be counted against the total trip allocation. Once the total trip allocation is projected to have been taken, both areas would be closed to LAGC IFQ access area fishing for the remainder of the fishing year.

Other important Considerations/Draft EA References

- Biological impacts: Section 6.2.5
- Economic impacts: Section 6.6

Table 1. Fishing mortality rate and projected landings for FW40 alternatives.

Alternative	Description	Overall F	Open Area F	DAS	APL	APL w/o Set-Asides	LA APL (94.5%)	LAGC IFQ APL (5.5%)	LAGC IFQ (5%)	LA with IFQ (0.05%)
4.3.1	No Action (Default Measures)	0.118	0.230	18	10,133,800	8,825,327	8,081,478	743,849	676,227	67,622
4.3.2	32 DAS	0.231	0.313	32	16,785,213	15,203,242	14,367,063	836,178	760,162	76,016
4.3.3	34 DAS	0.237	0.336	34	17,735,421	16,153,450	15,265,010	888,440	807,673	80,767
4.3.4	36 DAS	0.253	0.360	36	18,685,622	17,103,651	16,162,950	940,701	855,183	85,518
4.3.5	24 DAS, 9k trip	0.210	0.321	24	16,098,686	14,516,715	13,718,295	798,419	725,836	72,584
4.3.6	34 DAS, 9k trip	0.290	0.492	34	20,849,698	19,267,727	18,208,002	1,059,725	963,386	96,339
4.3.7	24 DAS, 2x 6k trips	0.227	0.321	24	17,136,784	15,554,813	14,699,299	855,515	777,741	77,774
4.3.8	30 DAS, 2x 6k trips	0.275	0.420	30	19,987,387	18,405,416	17,393,118	1,012,298	920,271	92,027
Status Quo	24 DAS, 2x 12k trips	0.274	0.321	24	19,931,639	18,349,668	17,340,437	1,009,232	917,483	91,748

Table 2. Economic Impacts of FW40 Specifications Alternatives (million lb.; 2024 dollars).

	Alt SQ 24DAS 2x12k	Alt 1 NA 18DAS	Alt 2 32DAS 0AA	Alt 3 34DAS 0AA	Alt 4 36DAS 0AA	Alt 5 24DAS 9k	Alt 6 34DAS 9k	Alt 7 24DAS 2x6k	Alt 8 30DAS 2x6k
Landings	18.350	8.825	15.203	16.153	17.104	14.517	19.268	15.555	18.405
Revenue	**$296.951**	**$148.079**	**$248.981**	**$263.591**	**$278.094**	**$238.357**	**$310.728**	**$254.399**	**$297.790**
Net Revenue (after Trip Cost)	**$264.964**	**$133.172**	**$222.479**	**$235.434**	**$248.280**	**$213.054**	**$277.143**	**$227.285**	**$265.707**
Producer Surplus (PS)	$182.950	$61.819	$143.890	$155.810	$167.623	$135.212	$194.132	$148.312	$183.633
Consumer Surplus (CS)	$8.063	$1.908	$5.576	$6.281	$7.026	$5.092	$8.871	$5.832	$8.111
Total Benefits (PS+CS)	$191.013	$63.727	$149.466	$162.091	$174.648	$140.304	$203.003	$154.145	$191.744
Difference from SQ on:									
Revenue	**$0**	**-$148.87**	**-$47.97**	**-$33.36**	**-$18.86**	**-$58.59**	**$13.78**	**-$42.55**	**$0.84**
Net Revenue	**$0**	**-$131.79**	**-$42.48**	**-$29.53**	**-$16.68**	**-$51.91**	**$12.18**	**-$37.68**	**$0.74**
Producer Surplus	$0	-$121.13	-$39.06	-$27.14	-$15.33	-$47.74	$11.18	-$34.64	$0.68
Total Benefits	$0	-$127.29	-$41.55	-$28.92	-$16.36	-$50.71	$11.99	-$36.87	$0.73
Economic Ranking		**8**	**6**	**4**	**3**	**7**	**1**	**5**	**2**

Figure 1. Open area fishing mortality rates for FW40 alternatives relative to recent Council-preferred alternatives.

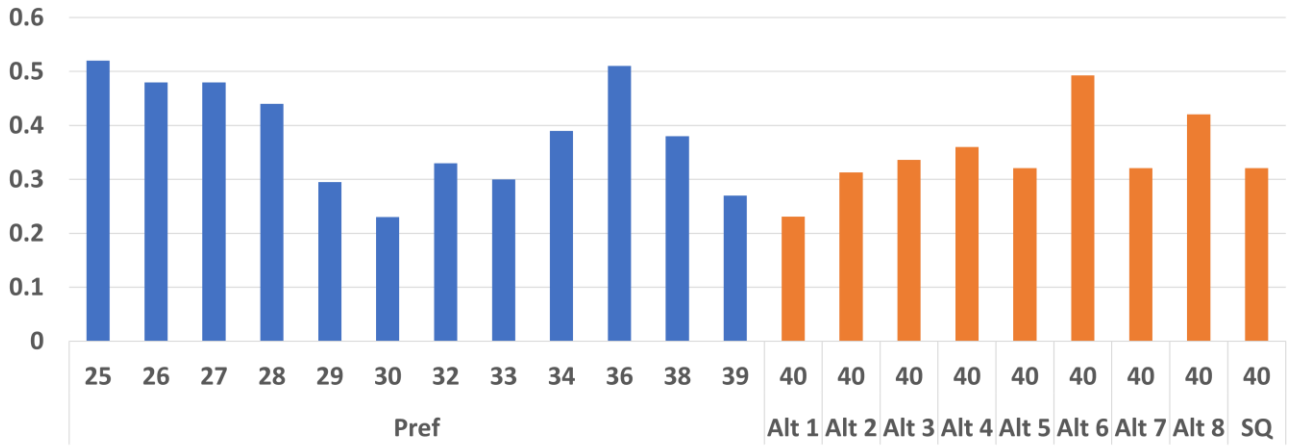


Figure 2. Total fishing mortality rates for FW40 alternatives relative to recent Council-preferred alternatives.