

Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder Groundfish Plan Development Team Report

Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting

August 24, 2021



New England
Fishery Management Council

SSC Recommendations – Aug 2020

1. The SSC recommends that the OFL for the Georges Bank yellowtail flounder stock remains unknown due to the lack of an analytical assessment from which to generate biological reference points.
2. The SSC recommends the ABC for the Georges Bank yellowtail flounder stock should not exceed 125 mt for FY 2021 and FY2022, with the expectation that the FY2022 catch specifications will be revisited and possibly adjusted following the 2021 TRAC assessment.

SSC Recommendations – Aug 2020

3. The SSC reaffirms its previous recommendations that the Council continue to work toward the development of a control rule for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder (and other “empirical approach” stocks as an extension) per the advice of the SCWG and elevate this as a Council priority for 2021.
 - a. The SSC recognizes that some work will be forthcoming from the index-based stocks research track assessment process and is encouraged by the development of additional potential tools by the NEFSC towards this goal.

SSC Recommendations – Aug 2020

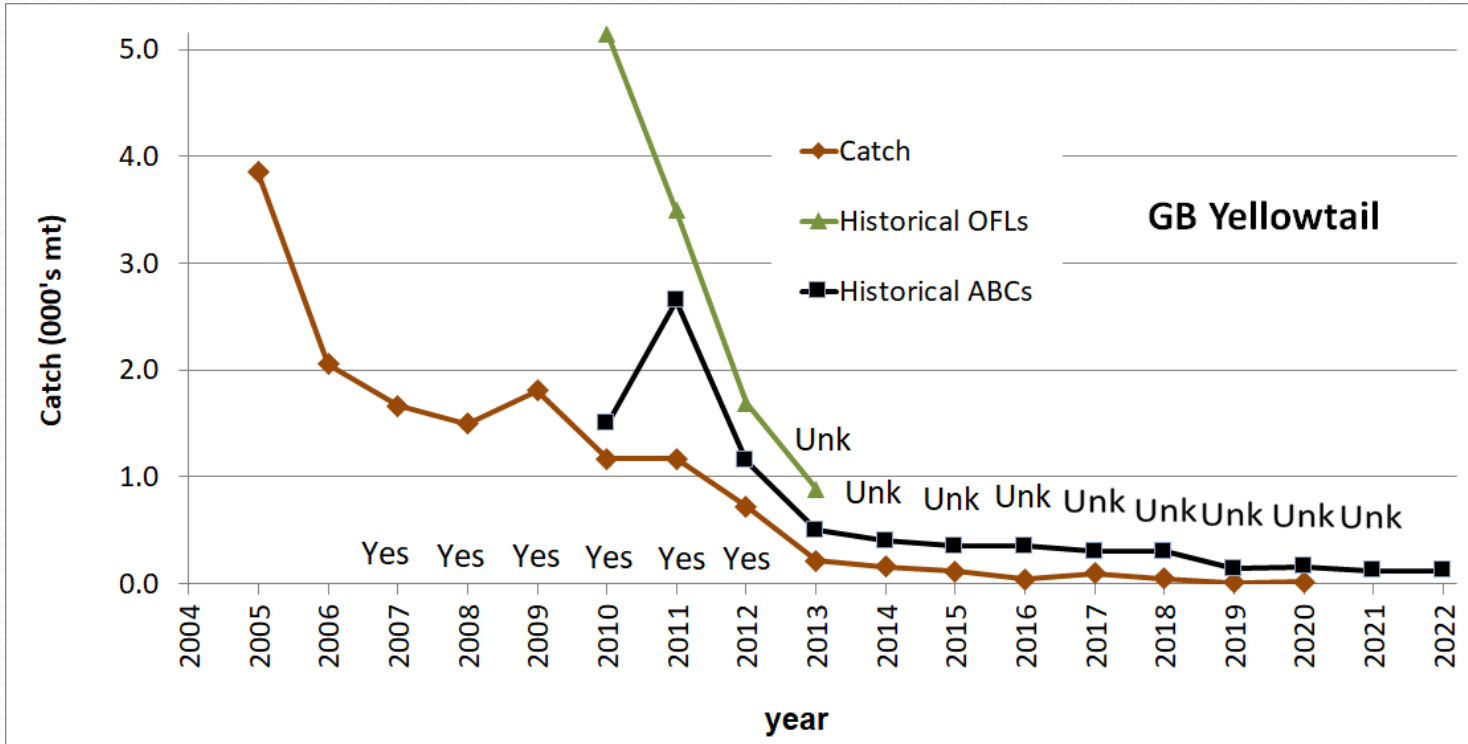
4. The SSC adds an important note that there will be more uncertainties to contend with in 2021 due to missing survey and fisheries dependent datasets stemming from the COVID-19 restrictions in 2020. Thought should be given to these uncertainties early in the process so they can be adequately dealt with.
5. The SSC recommends continuing to investigate the environmental drivers effecting this species at both the juvenile and adult stages.
6. The SSC appreciated the work done on the quota change model and continues to encourage the inclusion of socioeconomic information, with an emphasis on information regarding the interaction of Georges Bank yellowtail flounder and sea scallops.

Groundfish PDT Report Summary

Updated fishery information:

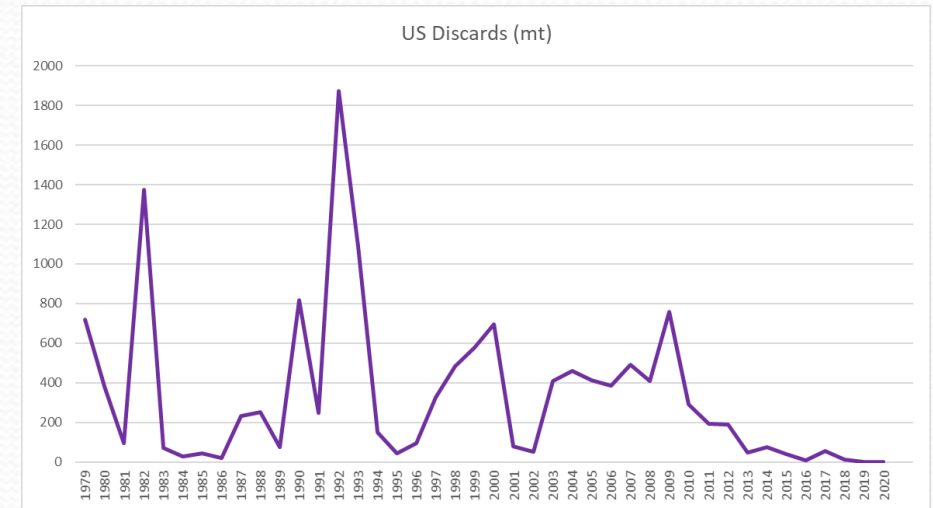
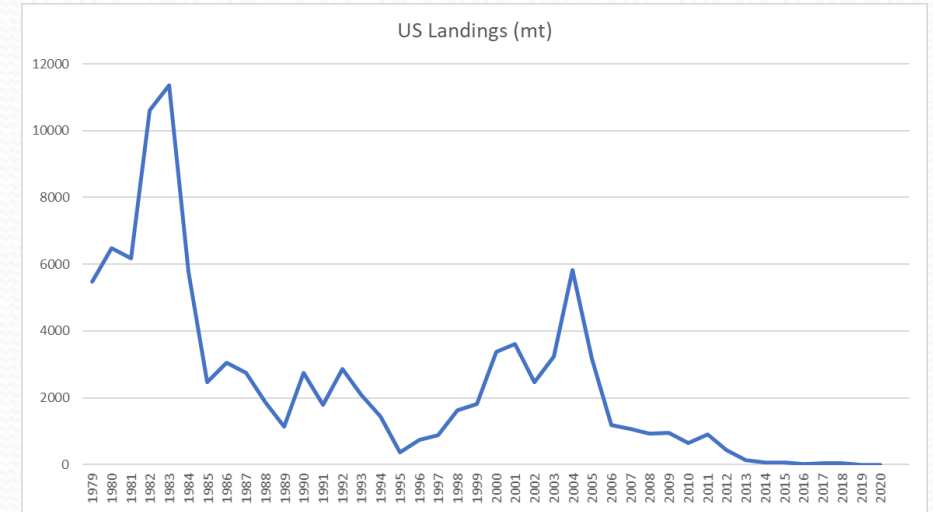
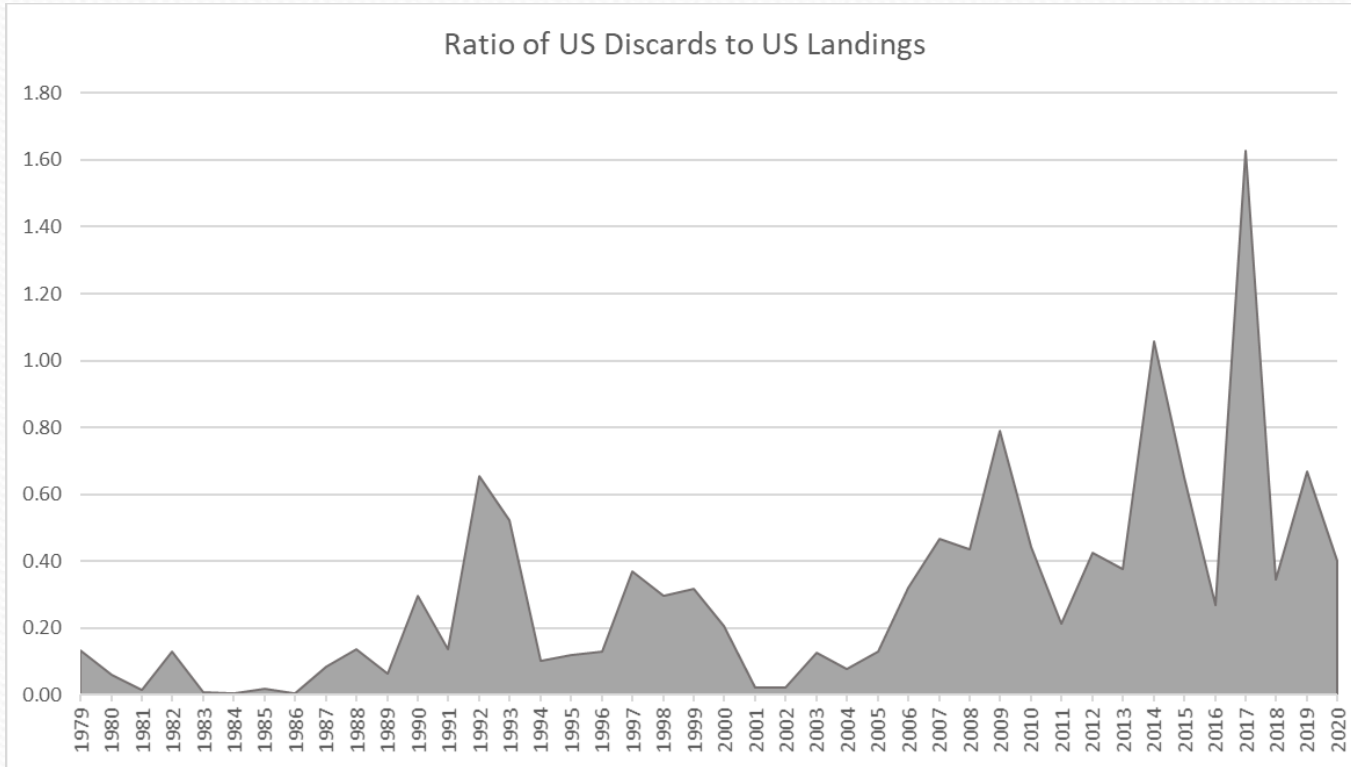
- (1) catch performance for GB yellowtail flounder
- (2) the ratio of US discards to US landings for GB yellowtail flounder,
- (3) observed catches of GB yellowtail flounder,
- (4) in-season utilization of GB yellowtail flounder by the commercial groundfish fishery, and
- (5) summary of economic information

Catch Performance



Year	CY Catch	OFLs	ABCs
2010	1,170	5,148	1,500
2011	1,171	3,495	2,650
2012	725	1,691	1,150
2013	218	882	500
2014	159	undefined	400
2015	118	undefined	354
2016	44	undefined	354
2017	95	undefined	300
2018	45	undefined	300
2019	8	undefined	140
2020	14	undefined	162
2021		undefined	125
2022		undefined	125

Ratio of US Discards to US Landings



Observed Catches of Yellowtail Flounder

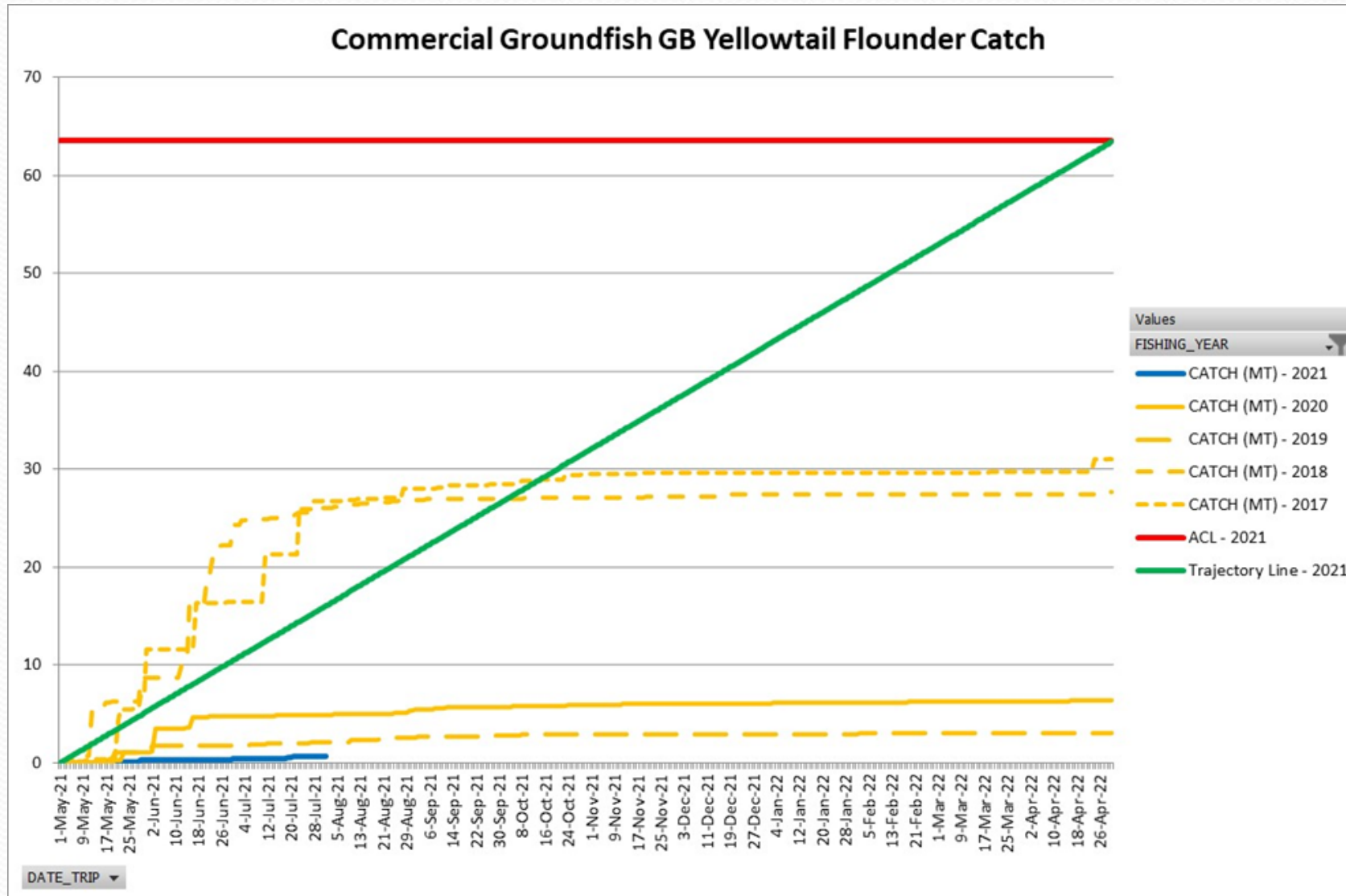
	CC/GOM				GB				SNE/MA		
	513	514	515	521	522	525	561	562	537	539	613
<100 lbs.	70	343	8	141	37		9	11	12	15	
100-<200 lbs.	*	53									
200-<300 lbs.		26									
<300+ lbs.		31									

* Indicates confidential data based on <3 vessels.

Count of observed large-mesh hauls of yellowtail flounder by haul weight (binned in 100 lb. increments) and statistical reporting areas (SRAs) for fishing year 2020

Data are all large-mesh bottom trawl hauls (NEGEAR=050) and are not filtered by fishery.

In-Season Utilization Commercial Groundfish



Economic Information – Sectors - QCM

FY	Sector sub-ACL	Catch (mt)		Utilization (%)		Gross Rev (\$mil, 2019)	
		Realized	Predicted	Realized	Predicted	Realized	Predicted
2011	1142	997.5	901.1	0.873	0.789	2.9	2.4
2012	364.1	214.8	323.3	0.59	0.888	0.7	1
2013	100	55.8	99.6	0.558	0.996	0.2	0.3
GB Yellowtail Flounder 2014	251.5	61.2	161.1	0.243	0.641	0.2	0.6
2015	192.3	38.4	52.5	0.2	0.273	0.1	0.2
2016	207	23.9	21.5	0.116	0.104	0.1	0.1
2017	119.8	31	19.4	0.259	0.162	0.1	0.1
2018	167	27.6	36.8	0.166	0.22	0.1	0.2
2019	83	3.1	37.3	0.037	0.449	0.1	0
2020	93	5.0	27.1	0.054	0.291	0	0.1

Other US Fisheries with Catch Limits

- Small-mesh (mainly squid and whiting) fisheries
- Scallop fishery

Small-Mesh Fisheries

	Small-mesh fisheries sub-ACL (mt)	Small-mesh fisheries (mt)	Percent small-mesh fisheries Caught (%)
FY2013	4	2.5	63.7%
FY2014	6.1	1.1	18.1%
FY2015	5	0.1	1.0%
FY2016	5	4.8	95.2%
FY2017	4	0.4	9.7%
FY2018	4	0.1	2.5%
FY2019	2	<0.0	1.5%
FY2020	2		
FY2021	1.5		

Sea Scallop Fishery – Scallop PDT Report

Key Points – Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder

- The scallop fishery is allocated a sub-Annual Catch Limit (sub-ACL) of GB yellowtail equivalent to 16% of the US TAC.
- Since 2012, the scallop fleet has caught an average of 31% of the US catch and 68% of the scallop sub-ACL.
- The scallop fishery's estimated catch of GB yellowtail has fluctuated in recent years. This is attributed to changes in rotational management (see Appendix II), specifically access to CAII AA and open areas directly adjacent to CAII AA.
- The Scallop PDT projected GB yellowtail bycatch to be about 16.4 mt for FY2021 (see Framework 33). This is largely due to the scallop fishery having access to CAII AA in FY2021.
- The scallop fishery accountability measure (AM) is structured in a way that the fishery would be able to continue to harvest scallops even if the AM is triggered. If the reactive AM is triggered for either GB yellowtail or northern windowpane, the fishery would be required to use a gear modification while fishing on eastern Georges Bank. Preliminary data suggests that the northern windowpane sub-ACL was exceeded by more than 150% in FY2020. This would mean that the gear restricted area (GRA) would be in effect in FY2022 and that a reduction in GB yellowtail catch could be expected in CAII AA in FY2022 as a result of the AM.

Figure 4 – Scallop fishery effort in terms of Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) hours fished for fishing year 2020 on Georges Bank. Scallop Area Management Simulator (SAMS) area boundaries are shown in red.

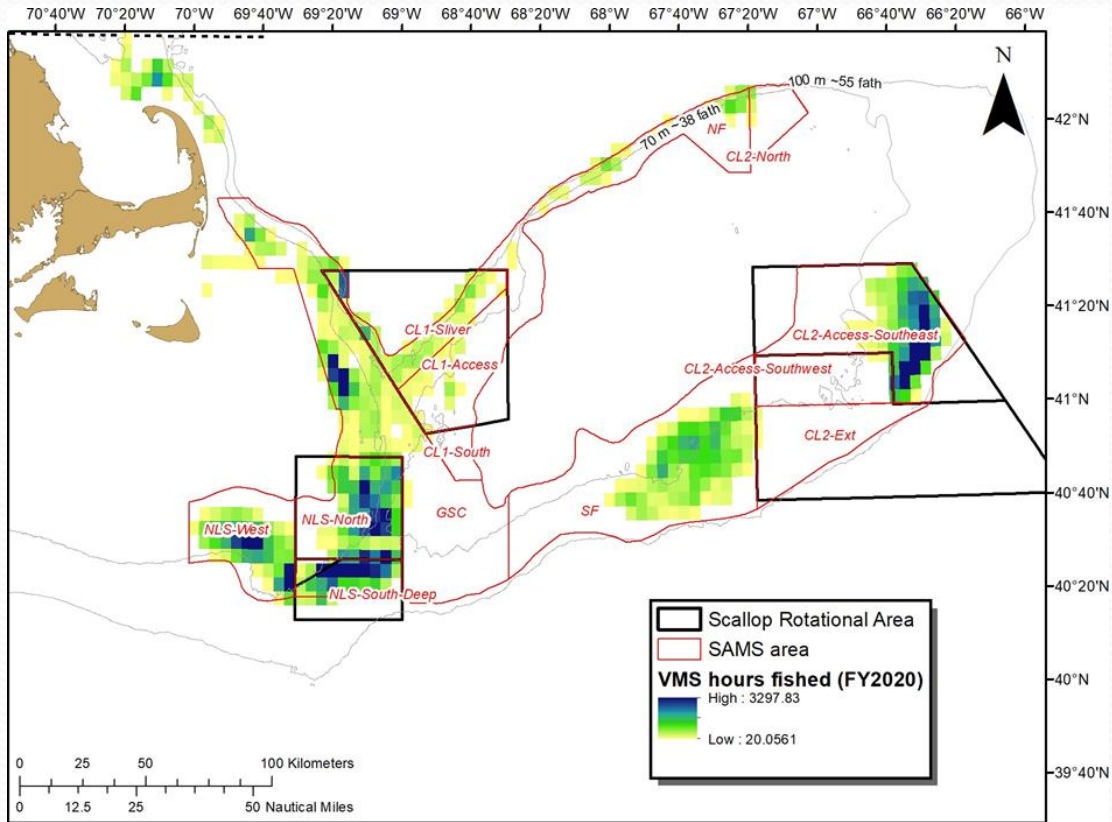
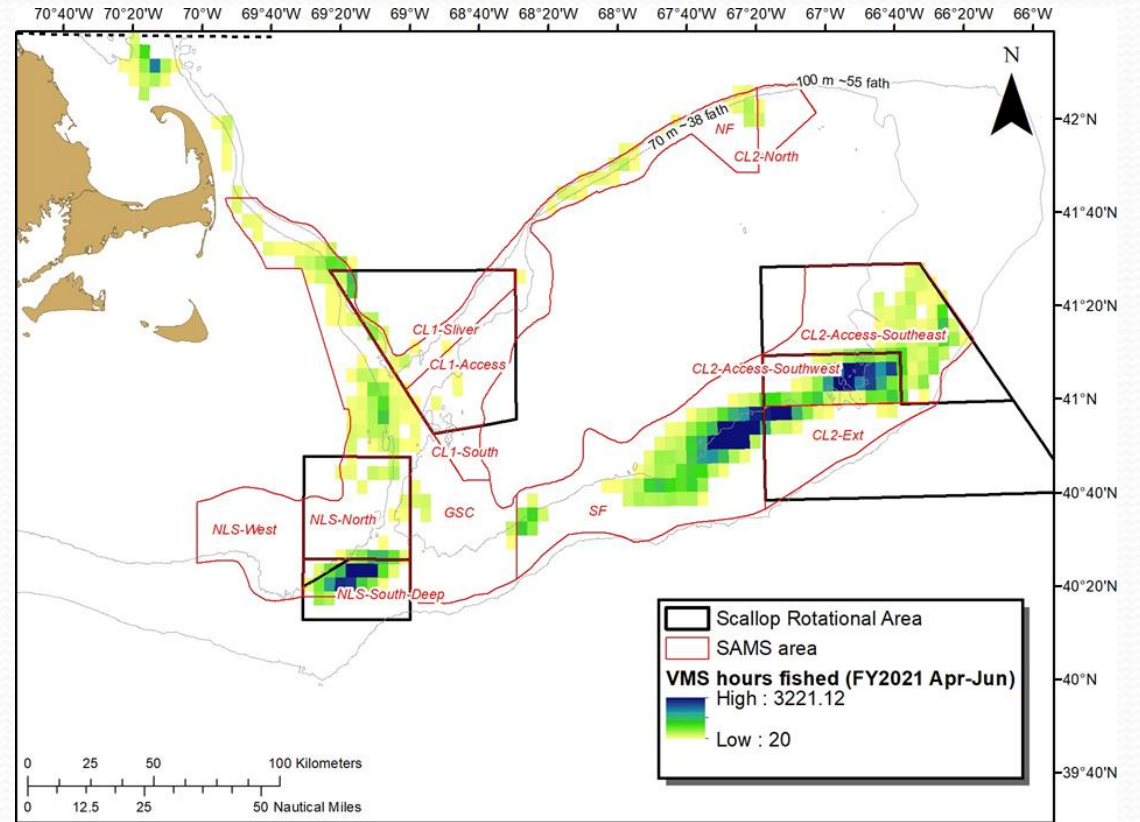


Figure 5 – Scallop fishery effort in terms of Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) hours fished for April through June 2021 on Georges Bank. Scallop Area Management Simulator (SAMS) area boundaries are shown in red.



For the SSC today

Recommend OFLs and ABCs for Fishing Years 2022 and 2023 for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder.