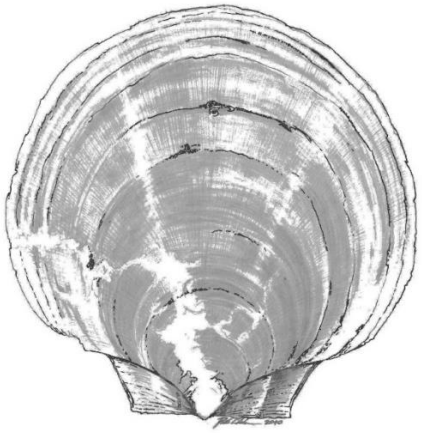
DRAFT Amendment 21

(Northern Gulf of Maine and Limited Access General Category Amendment)

Alternatives in Development



Version 1

September 13, 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, NEPA COMPLIANCE

1.1 Council's Objectives for the NGOM in Amendment 21

1. Support a growing directed scallop fishery in federal waters in the NGOM.

2. Allow for orderly access to the scallop resource in this area by the LAGC and LA components.

3. Establish mechanisms to set allowable catch and accurately monitor catch and bycatch from the NGOM.

1.2 Vision for the (entire, not just NGOM) General Category Fishery

"a fleet made up of relatively small vessels, with possession limits to maintain the historical character of this fleet and provide opportunities to various participants including vessels from smaller coastal communities."

1.3 NGOM Problem Statement from Framework 29 (developed in 2017, FY 2018 allocations):

Recent high landings and unknown biomass in the Northern Gulf of Maine Scallop Management Area underscore the critical need to initiate surveys and develop additional tools to better manage the area and fully understand total removals.

1.4 NEPA Compliance

As part of the scoping document, the Council stated at it will either prepare an EA or an EIS. The processes for competing an Environmental Assessment and an Environmental Impact Statement are different. In general, and EIS takes longer to complete. The decision on whether or not an EA or an EIS is appropriate for this action will, in part, depend on the alternatives that the Council develops in Amendment 21.

> *"In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA), and may prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), that will analyze the impacts of this amendment on the affected biological, physical, and human environment.*
>
> *This scoping document is to inform you of the Council's intent to gather information necessary for the preparation of an EA or EIS. Specifically, your input is needed to identify concerns, potential impacts, and relevant effects of past actions related to the changes being considered by the Council in this action, as well as a range of alternatives that should be considered in Amendment 21."*

2.0 DRAFT NORTHERN GULF OF MAINE ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT (IN PROGRESS)

2.1 Allocation Split between the LAGC and LA, Reliable Monitoring, RSA

Tasking	One option is to combine several of the tasking motions into a single allocation plan. Additional work or alternatives may be required to specify a monitoring plan, but the catch accounting for RSA, monitoring, and a directed fishery could be handled in a single alternative to streamline decision making. **"Task PDT to develop alternatives that will hardwire future access for the LA fishery in NGOM based upon increased stock biomass levels"** **"Task PDT to develop alternatives that will establish a NGOM RSA program."** **"Task PDT to develop alternatives that will reliably monitor and report NGOM catch and bycatch."** **PDT Plan:** • Develop draft alternatives for an allocation sharing formula. • Pre-determine a level of biomass that would trigger (hardwire) how and when the LA allocation can be fished in this area. • Consider how allocation would account for monitoring and RSA • May be opportunity to fold in other tasking
Committee Rationale	"There is a need for additional analyses to determine future access and base future allocation decisions. Alternatives should consider at what point the LA can access a directed fishery in the NGOM, and at what level. Pre-determine a level of biomass that would trigger (hardwire) how and when the LA allocation can be fished in this area. Develop alternatives for an allocation sharing formula."
A21 NGOM Objectives Addressed	1. Support a growing directed scallop fishery in federal waters in the NGOM. 2. Allow for orderly access to the scallop resource in this area by the LAGC and LA components. 3. Establish mechanisms to set allowable catch and accurately monitor catch and bycatch from the NGOM.
Problem, Purpose, Need	• TBD
Data	• Biomass estimates from recent survey data • NGOM Fishery Performance, and overall fishery performance
Alternative Ideas	• Determine a level of exploitable biomass that will differentiate the two allocation approaches. Consider options that account for both LAGC IFQ and LA. • The 70k, 50/50 is/was a temporary approach, i.e. not No Action. • Consider LA level of harvest that aligns with recent management approaches. Consider lower trip limits for "AA" allocations, or DAS conversion to fish on GB/MA.

2.1.1 Alternative 1—No Action

The Council would continue to determine temporary TAC split between the LA and LAGC. The Northern Gulf of Maine TAC would remain part of the OFL for the fishery, but outside of the ACL flowchart.

Rationale: The TAC split that was adopted in Framework 29 and carried forward again in Framework 30 is considered a temporary measure until a permanent allocation can be made in an amendment.

2.1.2 Alternative 2: Incorporate the Northern Gulf of Maine into the ACL flowchart, create a Northern Gulf of Maine set-aside to support research, monitoring, and harvest, and allocate to LAGC IFQ and LA when exploitable biomass is above the upper bound of the set-aside.

Alternative 2 would add the Northern Gulf of Maine into the ACL flowchart and annual projected landings (APL). In practice, this would entail including areas of the NGOM in the forward projection model that is currently used to develop allocations for Georges Bank and the Mid-Atlantic (SAMS model). Scallop biomass in the NGOM would count as part of the scallop OFL and the ABC.

Alternative 2 would develop a Northern Gulf of Maine set-aside that would support research, monitoring, and harvest in the management area. The Council would determine the maximum size of the set-aside in pounds in this amendment. The allocation for the set-aside would be based on projections of exploitable biomass using an F rate of F=0.3, and determined during the specification setting process (the example shown in Table 4 of this draft is a 500,000 lb maximum set-aside).

To support research, 10% of the NGOM set-aside allocation would be added to the 1.25 million pound scallop RSA research set-aside.

By incorporating the NGOM into the ACL flowchart, scallops in the NGOM would contribute to the observer set-aside, which is set at 1% of the ABC. The observer set-aside would support monitoring in the NGOM management area.

The General Category allocation for the NGOM would be calculated as the available NGOM set-aside, minus the RSA portion of the set-aside. This share would be available for a directed General Category scallop fishery in the NGOM at a 200 pound per day trip limit.

If exploitable biomass in open areas of the NGOM is projected to exceed the maximum size of the NGOM set-aside when fishing at F=0.3, the excess allocation would be allocated to the LAGC IFQ and LA components using a 5.5% and 94.5% allocation split developed in Amendment 11.

Harvest by the LA and LAGC IFQ from the NGOM management area would be structured like rotational areas. The Council would specify a set number of trips, and trip limits for the LA component in the area. The LAGC IFQ would have the option to fish inside the management unit, or use their allocation in other parts of the resource. The Council would have the ability to develop DAS conversion programs, or other harvest strategies, to allow LA vessels to opt-out of the NGOM trip in favor of open area fishing, or fishing other areas.

In the event that the NGOM is not surveyed, and a projection are not available, the NGOM set-aside would be set at 70,000 pounds (based on historic landings).

Rationale: This option would preserve and support a directed fishery in federal waters in the NGOM for LAGC permit holders by setting aside a portion of the scallop resource for research, monitoring, and a directed fishery, while allowing for orderly access to the scallop resource in this area by the LA component if exploitable biomass is above a threshold. The Council has not established an allocation share for the NGOM or incidental portions of the LAGC component, but did so for the LAGC IFQ and LA components in Amendment 11 when the NGOM and incidental permit categories were created. This option maintains the current allocation split between the LA and LAGC IFQ, while setting-aside part of the APL to support research, monitoring, and the NGOM fishery that the Council envisioned in Amendment 11.

This option is a relatively simple way to incorporate additional RSA, observer set-aside, and the directed scallop fishery in the NGOM management area into the ACL flowchart. Observer set-aside and RSA contributions from the NGOM TAC would be folded into existing programs.

At higher levels of exploitable biomass, this option also contributes to the LAGC IFQ and LA allocation shares.

This option would likely reduce the annual administrative burden associated with the current approach to setting NGOM TAC (e.g. FW29 and FW30).

Table 1 - Mean biomass estimates of individual areas of the Gulf of Maine from 2012, 2016, and 2019 ME DMR/UMaine surveys. Estimates (metric tons) are for animals greater the 75mm and assume a dredge efficiency of 0.4.

Area	2012	2016	2019
Platts Bank	51	101	8
Ipswich Bay	72 (area > ’16 or ‘19)	119	127
Machias Seal Island	59	228	286
Northern Stellwagen Bank	92 (area > ‘16 or ’19)	1,681	579
Southern Jeffreys	Part of IB, NSB	230	671
Southern Stellwagen Bank	Not surveyed	Not surveyed	434
NGOM with Southern Stellwagen	Not surveyed	Not surveyed	2,106
Total NGOM	**274 mt (604,067 lbs)**	**2,360 (5,202,909 lbs)**	**1,672 (3,686,129 lbs)**

Table 2 - NGOM biomass estimates from recent surveys (2012-present). Note that shell height cutoffs and areas vary by group and year.

Group	Survey Method	Year	Shell Height cutoff for estimate	Dredge Selectivity	Biomass MT	Biomass (lbs)	Areas
ME DMR	Dredge	2012	>75 mm	0.4	274	604,067	All
ME DMR	Dredge	2016	50.8 mm	0.4	2,426	5,349,296	All
ME DMR	Dredge	2016	>75 mm	0.4	2,360	5,202,909	All
ME DMR	Dredge	2016	101.6 mm	0.4	728	1,605,164	All
CFF	HabCam	2017	>40 mm		688	1,516,780	Stellwagen and Jeffreys
SMAST	DropCam	2017	Total		228	502,654	Stellwagen
SMAST	DropCam	2017	Total		356	784,846	Stellwagen
SMAST	DropCam	2018	Total		870	1,918,022	Southern extent
ME DMR	Dredge	2019	>75mm	0.4	1,672	3,686,129	All

Table 3 - Number of trips by GC vessels (mean, median, max), total active vessels, and total number of trips, average catch per trip, by year in the Northern Gulf of Maine management area. Trips identified by VMS activity code.

FY	Mean	Median	Max	Active vessels	Total trips	Average Catch
2010	7	6	15	11	79	72
2011	10	4	37	10	95	62
2012	6	1	27	10	60	79
2013	26	22	101	18	477	102
2014	18	10	80	25	457	141
2015	23	16	87	29	668	118
2016	15	14	43	38	559	171
2017	7	7	18	38	278	197
2018	18	18	40	40	737	186
2019	16	16	24	41	650	191

Figure 1 - Boxplot of the number total number of trips taken per year, by vessel, for fishing years 2010-2019

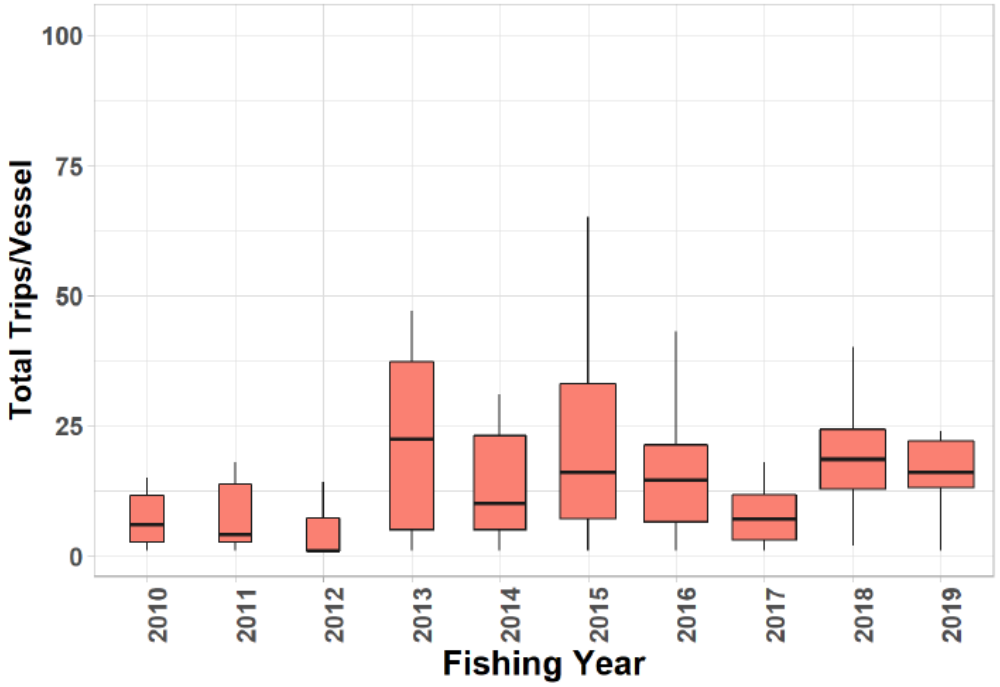


Table 4 - Example of allocations using a maximum 500,000 lb NGOM set-aside, with corresponding allocations for LA and LAGC IFQ above the maximum NGOM set-aside.

Scenario			1	2	3	4	5
Exploitable biomass in open areas of the NGOM fishing at F=0.3	a	**Math**	**205,000**	**600,000**	**1,000,000**	**3,000,000**	**6,000,000**
Maximum NGOM Set-Aside	b	Policy	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Actual NGOM Set-Aside	c		205,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
RSA contribution (10% of set-aside)	d	c*0.1	20,500	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Monitoring the NGOM	e		See Observer set-aside				
NGOM set-aside for GC harvest	f	c-d	184,500	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000
APL (over maximum NGOM set-aside)	g	a-b	0	100,000	500,000	2,500,000	5,500,000
Limited Access allocation from NGOM (94.5%)	h	g*.945	0	94,500	472,500	2,362,500	5,197,500
IFQ allocation from NGOM (5.5%)	i	g*.055	0	5,500	27,500	137,500	302,500
Total GC allocation in NGOM for harvest	j	i+f	184,500	455,500	477,500	587,500	752,500
LA allocation of NGOM directed harvest (%)	k	h/(h+j)	0	17%	50%	80%	87%
Total GC trips at 200 lbs	l	j/200	923	2,278	2,388	2,938	3,763

Figure 2 - Comparison of current (No Action) and proposed (Alternative 2) ACL flowcharts.

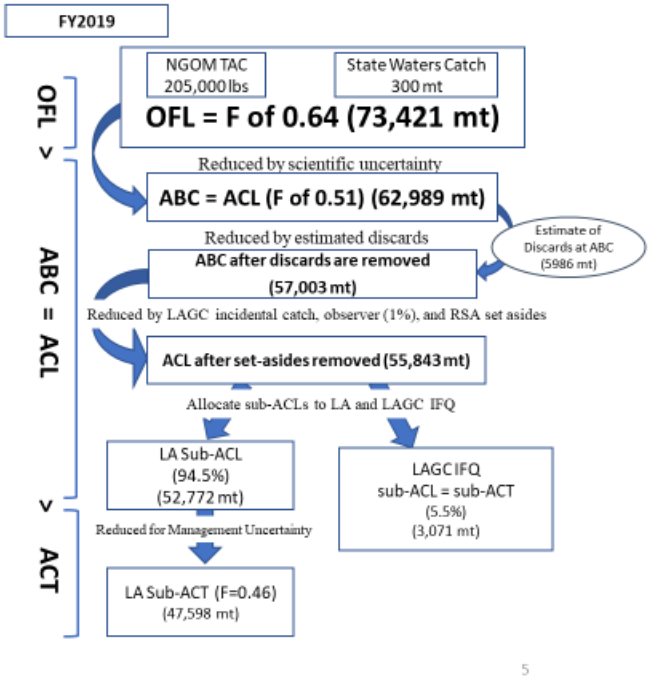
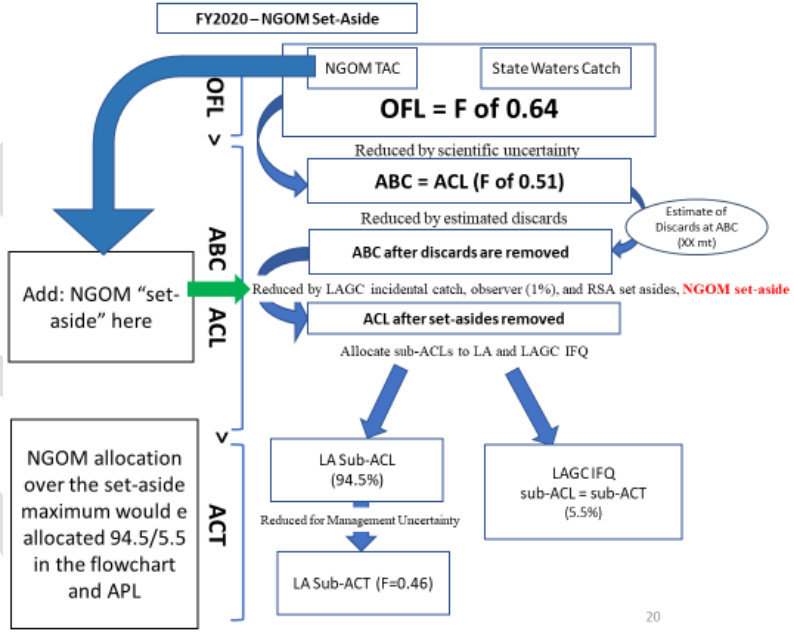
Alternative 1: No Action, current approach	Alternative 2: Proposed ACL Flowchart
	

Table 5 - Descriptions of how ACL and APL flowcharts would be modified if NGOM set-adside approach was adopted.

	ACL Flowchart	Below Maximum Set-Aside Value	Above Maximum Set-Aside Value
ACL Flowchart	OFL	Contribute F=0.64 of TOTAL NGOM exploitable biomass to OFL	
	ABC/ACL (discards removed)	Contribute F=0.51 of TOTAL NGOM exploitable biomass to ABC	
	NGOM Set-Aside	Calculated at F=0.3 of open areas of the NGOM	
	Incidental Catch	Not applicable - Set by the Council, separate issue.	
	RSA	1.25 million lbs, plus 10% of the NGOM set-aside (1.25 mil + 10% NGOM RSA)	
	Observer set-aside	1% of F=0.51 of TOTAL NGOM exploitable biomass (not taken from NGOM set-aside)	
	ACL for fishery	ABC (exploitable biomass from ALL areas, fished at F=0.51) minus: NGOM set-aside, observer set-aside, RSA, incidental catch limits.	
	Limited Access ACL	94.5% of the ACL	
	Limited Access ACT	LA ACL fished at F=0.46	
	LAGC Total ACL	5.5% of ACL	
		Below Maximum Set-Aside Value	**Above Maximum Set-Aside Value**
Annual Projected Landings	**Annual Projected Landings (APL)**	Projected exploitable biomass from open areas of fishery when applying rotational management, assigning area specific F rates	
	NGOM Set-Aside	"Off the top" - Reduce APL by Total NGOM set-aside value	
	Incidental Catch	"Off the top" - Reduce APL by NGOM set-aside value	
	RSA	"Off the top" - Reduce APL by 1.25 million lbs (NGOM RSA accounted for above)	
	Observer Set-Aside	"Off the top" - Reduce APL by 1% of ABC (observer set-aside)	
	APL (after set-asides are removed)	Allocation that is divided between the LA ad LAGC IFQ components (94.5/5.5)	
	Limited Access Projected Landings (94.5% of APL)	**No** LA fishing in the NGOM, exploitable biomass below set-aside	LA allocation to the NGOM (94.5% of the excess allocation over the set-aside), Council determines appropriate access (trips, limits)
	Total IFQ Annual Allocation (5.5% of APL)	LAGC IFQ vessels can fish in the NGOM at 200 lbs per day, using IFQ, until the TAC is reached and the area closes.	LAGC IFQ allocation is increased (5.5% of the excess allocation, over the set-aside). Vessels can fish IFQ in the NGOM, or elsewhere.

2.2 Minimize the Current Derby Style Fishery, Create Opportunities across the fishing year.

Tasking	**"Task PDT to develop alternatives that will minimize the current derby style fishery, including but not limited to one sailing per calendar day."**
Committee Rationale	"Current derby scenario creates opportunities for some, but not others. Looking to expand opportunities across the fishing year, particularly if the biomass is dispersed across the NGOM area."
Questions from the PDT	The PDT seeks clarification about the problem (or objective) and the range of alternatives that should be developed. For example, the ideas identified in the motion and rationale may be address different objectives or problems. For example: • Motion emphasizes minimizing the current derby style fishery o PDT Option: Limit one sailing per calendar day • In the rationale, the Committee seems to suggest Expand opportunities across the fishing year, particularly when biomass is dispersed in several areas.
A21 NGOM Objectives Addressed	1. Support a growing directed scallop fishery in federal waters in the NGOM. 2. Allow for orderly access to the scallop resource in this area by the LAGC and LA components.

Problem, Purpose, Need	• (Potential) Problem: One area (Stellwagen) holds large animals in relatively high densities. The entire GC TAC is fished in this area within a few weeks, and the entire NGOM area closes for the remainder of the FY.
	  o There are other parts of the NGOM that hold commercial densities of exploitable scallops that could be fished, but are not.
	  o Limited window to participate in the fishery. Over the past 10 years, at lower levels of landings and biomass, vessels were active throughout the fishing year, with the majority of effort ramping up in the winter and continuing into the early summer.

Data	• Number of permits and active participants. • Number of vessels that sail multiple times in a day. • Fishery participation by month. • NGOM Cat B Permits: Participation and revenue from all fisheries. • Price of NGOM scallops (better return later in the year) Return on the resource.

Alternative Ideas	• Limit number of sailings per day or per week
	  o Ex: Allow 4 or 5 sailings per week, but allow multiple sailings per day to maintain some flexibility.
	  o Cap number of LANDINGS – "days out" – stay away from Days.
	• Spatial management?
	  o ~~Statistical reporting areas~~ Fishery is conducted on a finer spatial scale. Ipswich Bay, Southern Jeffreys, and Stellwagen Bank are all in SRA 514.
	  o Identify individual fishing grounds (area management)
	• Partition TAC over the year
	  o EX: 2 seasons → April 1 – November 30; December 1 → March 31

2.2.1 Alternative 1: No Action

Place holder, dependent upon subsequent alternatives to address tasking. – No Change.

2.2.2 Option 2: Limit the number of landings per LAGC vessel per week in the Northern Gulf of Maine Management Area.

LAGC vessels would be prohibited from landing scallops more than five (5) times per calendar week (Monday – Sunday) from declared scallop trips in the Northern Gulf of Maine Management area.

Rationale: Capping the total number of landings per week could slow the utilization of the General Category TAC and extend the fishing season.

2.2.3 Option 3: Limit vessels to one sailing per day

Vessels would be prohibited from sailing multiple times on one calendar day.

2.2.4 Option 4: Partition the NGOM TAC into multiple areas

Option 3 would add to the list of measures that can be developed through a framework, creation of finer scale spatial units within the NGOM management unit. Options that could be available are:

- Closures to protect small scallops.
- Sub-TACs for specific areas with the management unit.

Rationale: Beginning with Framework 29, when scallop surveys are conducted in the NGOM management unit, the Council has evaluated TAC options based on projections for individual areas. For example, separate projections of exploitable biomass are done for Stellwagen Bank, Jeffrey's Ledge, and Ipswich Bay. Scallop distribution in the Gulf of Maine is patchy, and dispersed from the Canadian border (Machias Seal Island) to the northern portion of Stellwagen Bank at the southern boundary of the management unit at 42°20'.

Table 6 - Number of vessel with more than one sailing per day, and total number of times (days) vessels sailed multiple times.

FY	Vessels with more than 1 trip/day	Number of occurences
2010	0	0
2011	0	0
2012	0	0
2013	0	0
2014	3	3
2015	1	1
2016	2	2
2017	4	4
2018	7	9
2019	6	13

Figure 3 – Areas covered by the 2016 ME DMR/UMaine scallop survey. Source: ME DMR/UMaine

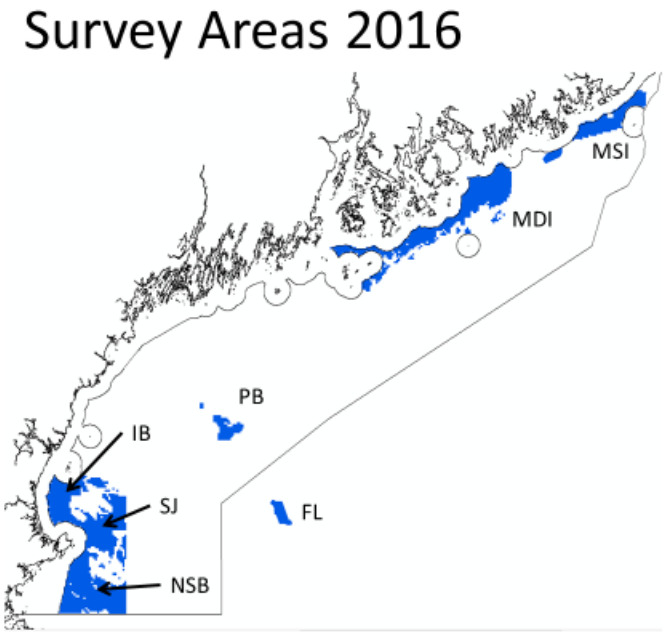
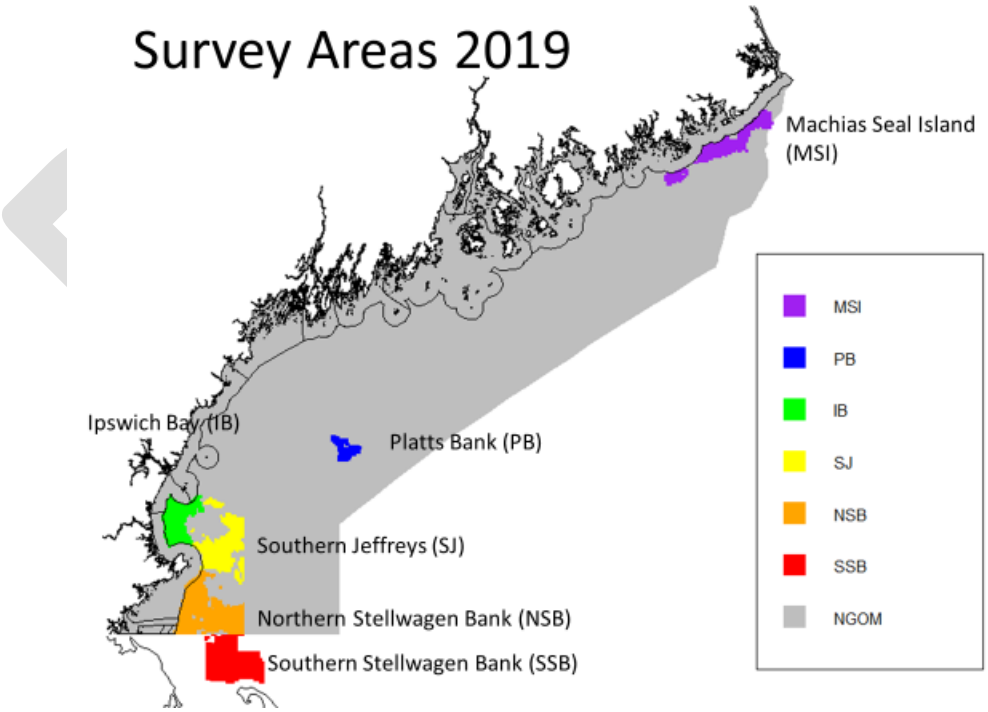


Figure 4 - Areas covered by the 2019 ME DMR/UMaine Gulf of Maine Scallop Survey. The NGOM management unit is shown in gray. Source: ME DMR/UMaine



2.3 Establish a fishery wide GRA in the NGOM

Tasking	**"Task PDT to develop alternatives that will consider a fishery wide GRA in the NGOM and GOM dredge exemption area.**
Committee Rationale	"Explore a GRA in these areas based on scoping comments the Council received."
A21 NGOM Objectives Addressed	? PDT Input: This measure would primarily impact the LA component when fishing in the NGOM management area. Currently, that component of the fishery can fish dredge(s) up to 31'.
Problem, Purpose, Need	TBD
Questions from PDT	• Is there a particular problem with fishing larger dredges? o This would be the only area in the fishery where LA dredge width is restricted below 31' for full time limited access permit holders.
Data needs?	• TBD
Alternative Ideas	• Limit the total dredge width allowed in the NGOM management area to 10.5 o

2.3.1 Alternative 1—No Action

There would be no change to the Gulf of Maine dredge exemption program. Any fishing by LA vessels in the NGOM may use gear up to 31'. [explain the dredge exemption program a bit]

2.3.2 Option 2—Implement a fishery wide 10.5' GRA for all scallop vessels in the Northern Gulf of Maine management area

For all scallop vessels (both Limited Access and LAGC) operating in the Northern Gulf of Maine management area, the combined dredge width could not exceed 10.5 ft (3.2 m), measured at the widest point in the bail of the dredge.

2.4 State Waters Exemption

Tasking	**"Develop an alternative that would remove the requirement for state licensed scallopers with IFQ permits to use their IFQ when fishing in state waters of the NGOM during the state season."**
Committee Rationale	"IFQ vessels fishing in the state waters fishery are required to use quota when operating in state waters fishery. Create parity for NGOM and IFQ vessels in state waters."
A21 NGOM Objectives Addressed	**PDT Input: This measure does to appear to directly address the NGOM objectives of Amendment 21.**
Problem, Purpose, Need	• Problem: See rationale? Not directly related to federal waters fishery in the NGOM.
Questions from PDT	• What are the biological implications of this alternative? ○ What states have state waters scallop fisheries? How might their state waters fishery be impacted? • What are the implications for increased overall landings for catch accounting?
Data needs?	• Number of IFQ permits that also have state waters permits.
Alternative Ideas	n/a

3.0 LAGC IFQ TRIP LIMIT ALTERNATIVES

Tasking	**"The Committee tasks the PDT to develop a range of alternatives for LAGC IFQ possession limit up to 1,200 lbs per trip in Amendment 21."**
Committee Rationale	"The Committee tasks the PDT to look at trip limits at 600 lbs, 800 lbs, 1000 lbs, and 1200 lbs. A trip limit increase would give a portion of the fleet more opportunity to manage their business more efficiently and safely. If you can harvest 1,200 lbs a day, you reduce the number of trips (times in/out of inlet) and fuel consumption. Longer steam times are currently required to catch trip limit. A 600 lb trip limit is OK if there was an inshore fishery. This would give small boats more flexibility, and vessels don't have to catch 1,200 a day (they could catch less). The LAGC IFQ performance review showed an increase in the number of smaller vessels following a 200 lb increase (400 lbs to 600 lbs), and stability in the number of active vessels within vessel size classes."
A21 Objectives Addressed	• Improve overall economic performance of the LAGC IFQ component. • The Council is taking action to ensure that the LAGC IFQ component remains profitable, and that there is continued participation in the General Category fishery at varying levels. • Approaches that aim to reduce the impacts of decreases in ex-vessel price and increases to fixed costs (e.g. maintenance and repairs) and variable costs (e.g. trip expenses including fuel, food, oil, ice, and water), on vessels and crews.
A11 Vision Statement	The Council's vision statement for the LAGC component established through Amendment 11 (2008) is "a fleet made up of relatively small vessels, with possession limits to maintain the historical character of this fleet and provide opportunities to various participants including vessels from smaller coastal communities." The Council reaffirmed the Amendment 11 vision statement during the development of this action (Amendment 21), and it is included here for reference when considering the LAGC IFQ possession limit alternatives in the following sub-sections.
Problem, Objective Purpose, Need	•

Alternatives 2-4 in this section would not change other aspects of LAGC IFQ component management (i.e., no changes to allocation, rotational management, capacity restrictions, observer compensation rate, etc.).

3.1.1 Alternative 1—No Action

This alternative would maintain the current LAGC IFQ possession limit of 600 pounds for open and access area trips.

Rationale: The original 400-pound possession limit was increased to 600 pounds in 2011 (Amendment 15) to account for increased operating costs while maintaining the small, dayboat nature of the LAGC IFQ component.

3.1.2 Alternative 2—Increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 800 pounds per trip

Alternative 2 would increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 800 pounds at the level specified for Sub-Option 1 and Sub-Option 2.

3.1.2.1 Sub-Option 1—Increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 800 pounds per trip for open and access area trips

This alternative would increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 800 pounds for both open and access area trips. This Alternative only considers the possession limit and does not propose any changes to how the LAGC IFQ component is administered or managed (i.e. no changes to allocation, rotational management, capacity restrictions, observer compensation rate, etc.). The Council may consider the magnitude of an increase under the range of possession limits in the following Sub-Options.

Rationale: The LAGC IFQ component has been subject to a consistent possession limit for open and access area trips since the program's inception through Amendment 11 (2008). The original 400-pound possession limit was increased in 2011 (Amendment 15) to 600 pounds as a response to industry that the 400-pound limit was not economically feasible due to increased costs. The Council is considering increasing the LAGC IFQ possession limit through this action following a request from industry members that are concerned with the economic viability of the current 600-pound limit.

Fishing in areas with higher catch rates and larger scallops is desirable because less tow time is needed harvest a trip limit. For LAGC IFQ vessels that elect to do so, this means transiting farther offshore to fish in open area or access areas with higher landings per unit of effort and improved meat yield. Targeting parts of the scallop resource father offshore leads to increased trip costs due to higher fuel expenses associated with longer steam times. Increasing the possession limit would reduce the overall number of trips and combined steam time needed to harvest quota, thereby reducing trip costs (i.e. fuel) and operating expenses (i.e. vessel maintenance) relative to the current 600-pound limit. Increasing the possession limit would offer LAGC IFQ vessels more flexibility in deciding where and when to fish, which could potentially improve safety in this component of the fishery.

3.1.2.2 Sub-Option 2—Increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 800 pounds per trip for only access area trips

This alternative would increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 800 pounds for access area trips and maintain the 600-pound possession limit for open trips. This alternative only considers the access area possession limit and does not propose any changes to how the LAGC IFQ component is administered or managed (i.e. no changes to allocation, rotational management, capacity restrictions, observer compensation rate, etc.). The Council may consider the magnitude of an increase to the access area possession limit at the range specified in the following Sub-Options.

Rationale: The LAGC IFQ component has been subject to a possession limit since the program's inception through Amendment 11 (2008). The original 400-pound possession limit was increased in 2011 (Amendment 15) to 600 pounds as a response to industry concerns that the 400-pound limit was not economically feasible due to increased costs. Interest in increasing the 600-pound trip limit through this action is based on the continued increase of operating expenses, which are principally driven by fuel costs associated with longer steam times. For LAGC IFQ vessels that

elect to do so, transiting farther offshore to fish access areas with higher landings per unit of effort and improved meat yield leads to increased trip costs due to higher fuel expenses associated with longer steam times. Increasing the access area possession limit would reduce the overall number of trips and combined steam time needed to harvest quota from offshore access areas, thereby reducing overall trip costs (i.e. fuel) and operating expenses (i.e. vessel maintenance) relative to the current 600-pound limit. Increasing the access area possession limit could offer LAGC IFQ vessels more flexibility with regard to timing access area trips around weather conditions, which could potentially improve safety in this component of the fishery.

3.1.3 Alternative 3—Increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 1,000 pounds per trip

This alternative would increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 1,000 pounds at the level specified for Sub-Option 1 and Sub-Option 2.

3.1.3.1 Sub-Option 1—Increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 1,000 pounds per trip for open and access area trips

This alternative would increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 1,000 pounds for both open and access area trips. This Alternative only considers the possession limit and does not propose any changes to how the LAGC IFQ component is administered or managed (i.e. no changes to allocation, rotational management, capacity restrictions, observer compensation rate, etc.). The Council may consider the magnitude of an increase under the range of possession limits in the following Sub-Options.

Rationale: See Above.

3.1.3.2 Sub-Option 2—Increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 1,000 pounds per trip for only access area trips

This alternative would increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 1,000 pounds for access area trips and maintain the 600-pound possession limit for open trips. This alternative only considers the access area possession limit and does not propose any changes to how the LAGC IFQ component is administered or managed (i.e. no changes to allocation, rotational management, capacity restrictions, observer compensation rate, etc.). The Council may consider the magnitude of an increase to the access area possession limit at the range specified in the following Sub-Options.

Rationale: See Above.

3.1.4 Alternative 4—Increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 1,200 pounds per trip

This alternative would increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 1,200 pounds at the level specified for Sub-Option 1 and Sub-Option 2.

3.1.4.1 **Sub-Option 1—Increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 1,200 pounds per trip for open and access area trips**

This alternative would increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 1,200 pounds for both open and access area trips. This Alternative only considers the possession limit and does not propose any changes to how the LAGC IFQ component is administered or managed (i.e. no changes to allocation, rotational management, capacity restrictions, observer compensation rate, etc.). The Council may consider the magnitude of an increase under the range of possession limits in the following Sub-Options.

Rationale: See Above

3.1.4.2 **Sub-Option 2—Increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 1,200 pounds per trip for only access area trips**

This alternative would increase the LAGC IFQ possession limit to 1,200 pounds for access area trips and maintain the 600-pound possession limit for open trips. This alternative only considers the access area possession limit and does not propose any changes to how the LAGC IFQ component is administered or managed (i.e. no changes to allocation, rotational management, capacity restrictions, observer compensation rate, etc.). The Council may consider the magnitude of an increase to the access area possession limit at the range specified in the following Sub-Options.

Rationale: See Above.

4.0 ONE-WAY TRANSFER OF QUOTA FROM LA WITH IFQ TO LAGC IFQ-ONLY

Tasking	**"The Committee tasks the PDT to develop a range of alternatives for the temporary and permanent one-way transfer of IFQ from LA with IFQ to LAGC IFQ only to be developed in Amendment 21."**
Committee Rationale	"The Committee would like to see both permanent and temporary analyzed as part of A21. The alternatives would look at annual leasing and permanent transfers."
A21 Objectives Addressed	• Improve overall economic performance of the LAGC IFQ component. • The LAGC IFQ component remains profitable, and that there is continued participation in the General Category fishery at varying levels. • Approaches that aim to reduce the impacts of decreases in ex-vessel price and increases to fixed costs (e.g. maintenance and repairs) and variable costs (e.g. trip expenses including fuel, food, oil, ice, and water), on vessels and crews.
Purpose, Need	• TBD

Amendment 11 allocated IFQ to Limited Access vessels that held a general category permit and met the same qualification criteria selected for the LAGC program. The LAGC IFQ share available to the Limited Access qualifiers was up to a total of 0.5% of the annual projected landings for the fishery and each qualifying vessel received an individual share based on their historical contribution to general category landings. These vessels with both LA and LAGC IFQ permits were allowed participate in the general category fishery (i.e. outside of a scallop DAS/access area trip), under the same management measures that apply to the LAGC IFQ fishery (i.e. trip limits, gear restrictions). A key difference between LA/LAGC IFQ vessels and the LAGC IFQ-only fleet is that LA/LAGC IFQ vessels were prohibited from transferring quota in or out. The Council's rationale for this approach was that limited access vessels that had enough general category landings to qualify for quota should be permitted to fish under general category rules because these limited access vessels depended on revenue generated though general category fishing. The Council identified 0.5% as the allocation for the LA component with LAGC IFQ history because that value was close to what historical landings had been by LA vessels in years preceding Amendment 11 and did not represent a large amount of the total catch. Furthermore, the Council felt that an allocation of 0.5% to these vessels would not have substantial impacts on other limited access and general category vessels.

Amendment 15 allowed LAGC IFQ permit holders to permanently transfer some or all of their quota allocation to another LAGC IFQ permit holder while retaining the permit itself. During development of Amendment 15, the Council considered an option that would have included LA/LAGC IFQ permit holders in this allowance; however, the Council opted against this option because it would change the overall 5% and 0.5% allocations specified in Amendment 11. For example, the 5% allocation would be expected to increase if an LA/LAGC IFQ vessel permanently transferred quota to an LAGC IFQ-only vessel. An increase in the 5% allocation would have implications on quota accumulation caps that apply to LAGC IFQ-only permit holders (i.e. 5% maximum for owners, 2.5% maximum for individual vessels).

4.1 Alternative 1—No Action

This alternative would maintain the current prohibition on quota transfers by LA vessels with IFQ.

Rationale: This alternative is consistent with the Council's rationale from Amendment 15, in that allowing permanent transfers would change the overall 5% (i.e. LAGC IFQ) and 0.5% (i.e. LA with IFQ) allocations specified in Amendment 11. For example, the 5% allocation would be expected to increase if an LA/LAGC IFQ vessel permanently transferred quota to an LAGC IFQ-only vessel. An increase in the 5% allocation would have implications on quota accumulation caps that apply to LAGC IFQ-only permit holders (i.e. 5% maximum for owners, 2.5% maximum for individual vessels).

4.2 Alternative 2—Allow temporary transfers of quota from LA vessels with IFQ to LAGC IFQ-only

4.3 Alternative 3—Allow permanent and temporary transfers of quota from LA vessels with IFQ to LAGC IFQ-only