

Scallop Committee Report

**Deirdre Boelke, NEFMC Staff,
Scallop PDT Chair**

**NEFMC Meeting in Plymouth, MA
October 1, 2015**



New England
Fishery Management Council

Outline of Presentation

1. Review A19 alternatives and draft analyses
2. Select A19 Preferred Alternatives – *Council Action*
3. Review 2015 scallop survey results and specification alternatives for FY2016 (Framework 27) – *no Council action required*



Amendment 19

- Document #1 – Draft Amendment 19
- Action to address issues associated with late implementation of fishery specifications
- **Section 1.2 – Purpose and Need**
 - Need to improve the Scallop FMP so that fishery specifications are better aligned with the start of the FY
 - Purposes – reduce potential economic and biological consequences and reduce overall administrative burden from late implementation



Amendment 19 (cont.)

- **Section 2.0 – Management Alternatives**
 - 2.1 - No Action
 - 2.2 - Develop a Specifications Process (Cmte Preferred)
 - 2.3 - Change start of the fishing year to April 1 (from March 1) (Cmte Preferred)
- **Section 1.3.1.2 – Changes that could improve timing but do not require change to scallop regulations**
 - Modify when and how the federal scallop survey is conducted
 - Change final Council meeting earlier (October)
 - Only include specifications – no other measures
 - Two year specifications so second year is in place on time
 - New idea from GARFO to submit “decision document” after final Council meeting and proposed rule drafted using that rather than final EA

2.1 No Action

- Pros – use updated data, flexibility to adjust other measures if specs set by FW, requirement for two Council meetings
- Cons – process often gets delayed from development, analysis, and review of other measures
- Biological Impacts – Delays can have negative impacts on the resource and protected resources. If MA AA trips available later in the FY higher overlap with turtle season. Neutral impacts on EFH.
- Economic Impacts – Negative on fishermen and consumers, reduced flexibility to plan trips, increased confusion from default measures and replaced measures, can have negative impacts on profits and economic benefits.



2.2 Implement a Spec Process

- Pros – use updated data, potential time savings without requirement of two Council meetings and more limited scope of action, greater potential to use a SIR (supplemental information report) with potential time savings
- Cons – does not guarantee specs in place March 1, less flexible to add other measures
- Biological Impacts – low positive compared to No Action. Neutral to low positive for EFH. Positive for turtles if MA AA trips available earlier in the year.
- Economic Impacts – Low positive compared to No Action by reducing uncertainty, increased flexibility for the fleet to optimize effort, potentially resulting in lower fishing costs



2.2 Implement a Spec Process (cont.)

Minor clarifications to note – Page 17 - Highlighted in yellow

1. Limited list of measures (only fishery allocations and not set-asides)
2. Length of time for specifications – intent is the same as framework process – Specifications can be set up to two years with a third year as default
Council could set them more frequently (annual basis) but not longer than 2 years at a time. Length of time should be clarified when Council sets priorities.
3. If Council recommended specifications are not approved – Agency should have the same review authority as current framework process (Approve, Disapprove, or Partially Approve).
NMFS would not have the authority to implement different specifications.



2.3 Change the fishing year to April 1

- This could be selected with spec process alternative or without
- Pros – use updated data, flexibility to adjust other measures over 2 Council meetings if specs still set by FW, more in sync with GF fishing year for annual monitoring of ACLs, with new pre-submission process specs now expected in April so reduces administrative burden (default measure less likely)
- Cons – if FW process remains the process often gets delayed from development, analysis, and review of other measures
- Biological Impacts – low positive compared to No Action, neutral for EFH impacts, similar low negative as No Action on protected resources unless combined with spec process.
- Economic Impacts – some change in business planning with potential risks but expected to decline over time and outweighed by positive impacts on resource. NGOM season no longer split by fishing year (December – March)

2.3 Change the fishing year to April 1 (cont.)

Minor clarification to note – Page 20 - Highlighted in yellow

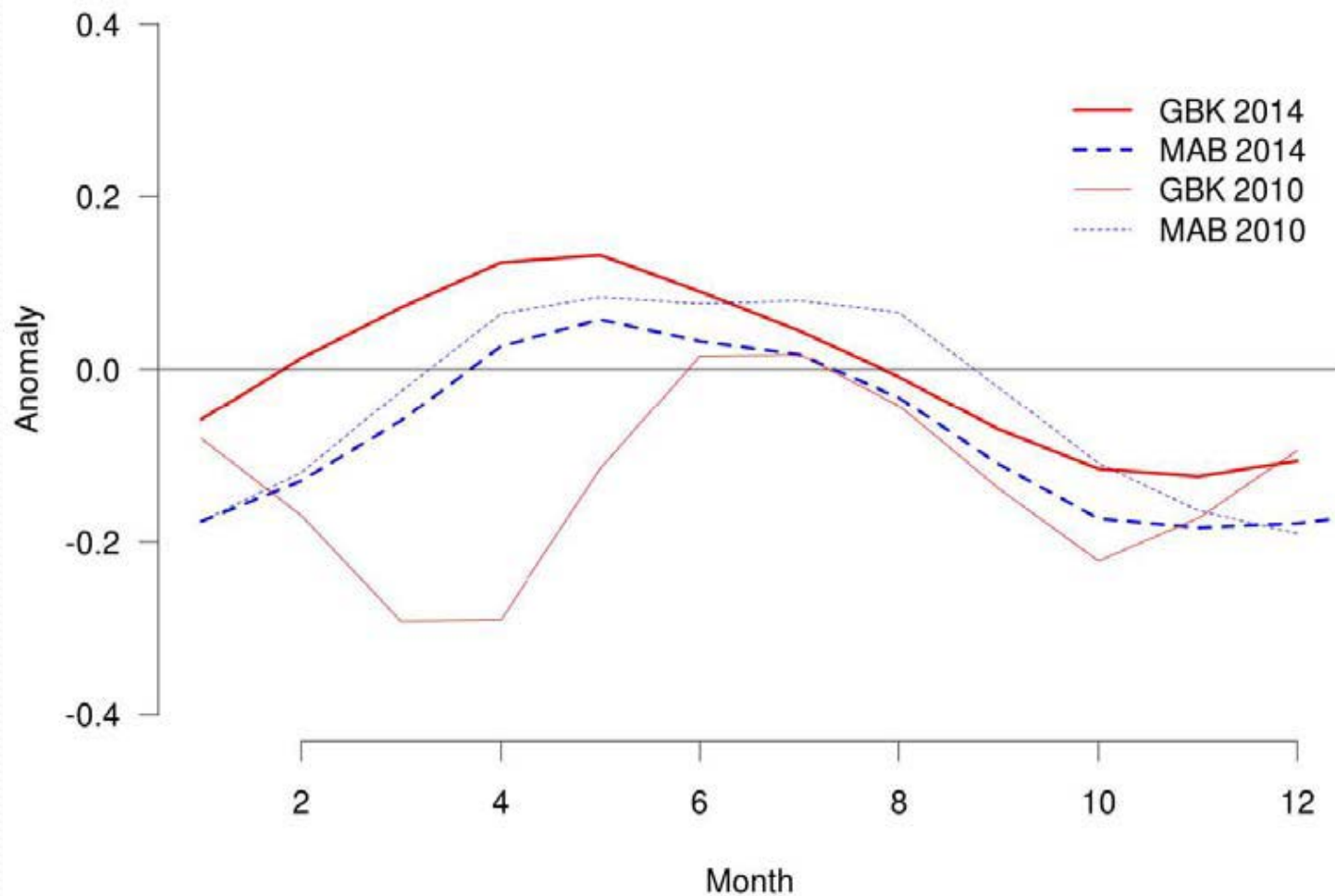
1. If selected, the first fishing year after A19 is effective would need to be 13 months in length to get fishery in sync with new start date

March 1 – March 31 (13 months)

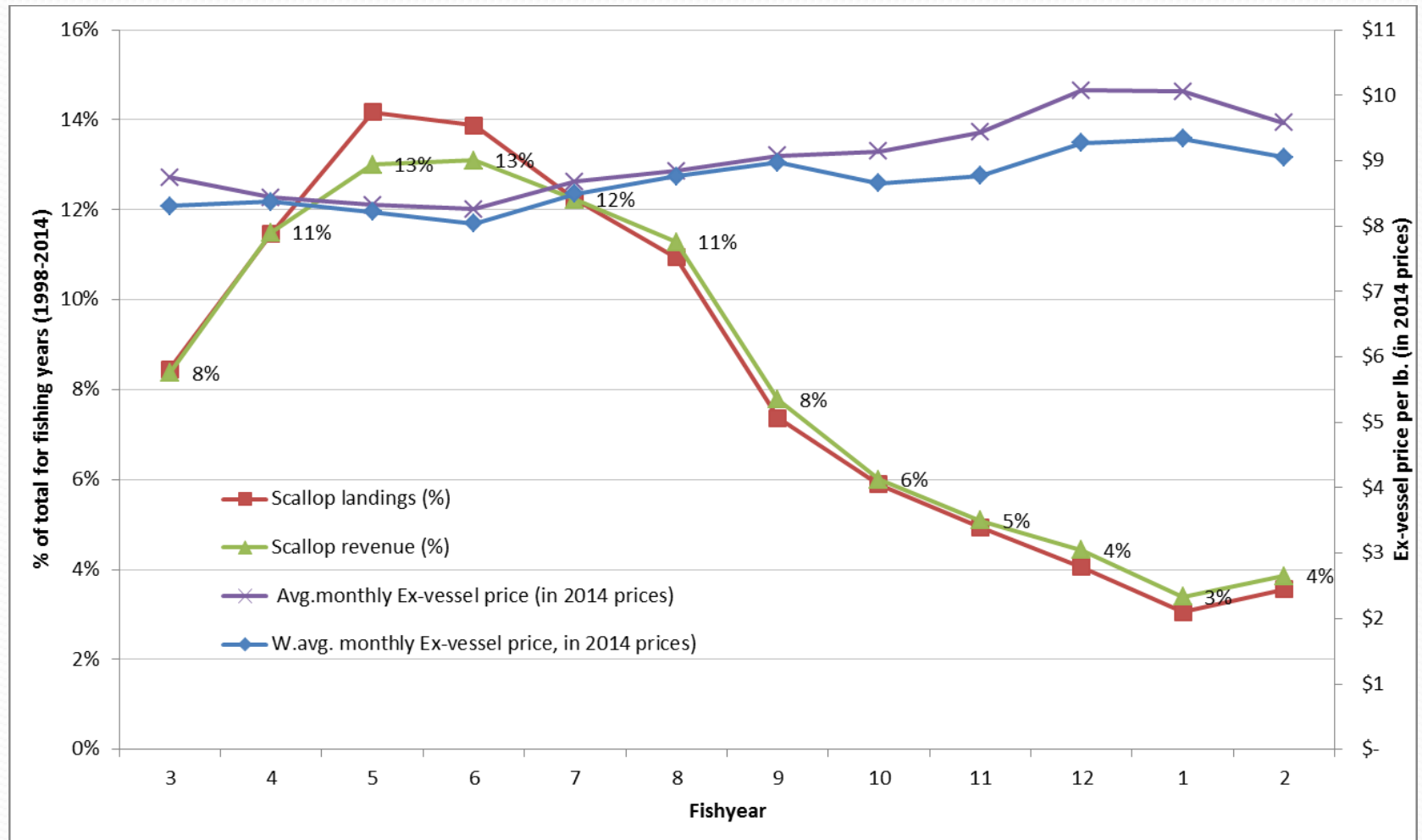
Allocations and TACs would be pro-rated to account for this shift



Seasonal MW variation – Figure 39



Monthly distribution of landings, revenues, and prices (04-14) (Fig. 40)



2.3 Change fishing year to April 1 (cont.)

Complex to analyze because depends on changes in fishing behavior

- How will vessels respond?
- Will current landings in March shift to April or will vessels hold on to more allocation for later in the fishing year?
- Many carryover provisions in place already (10 DAS, access area trips that were not completed, IFQ carryover)
- AP discussed at length (summary of discussion in Doc # 4c)



Cmte Motions for Preferred Alternatives

- Text reworded for Council action
 1. Council selects Alternative 2.2, develop a specification setting process in the Scallop FMP, as preferred for Amendment 19.

Cmte vote: 6:0:0
 2. Council selects Alternative 2.3, change the start of the fishing year to April 1, as preferred for Amendment 19.

Cmte vote: 6:0:0



Part II

Review of 2015 Scallop Surveys and
Framework 27 Alternatives to date

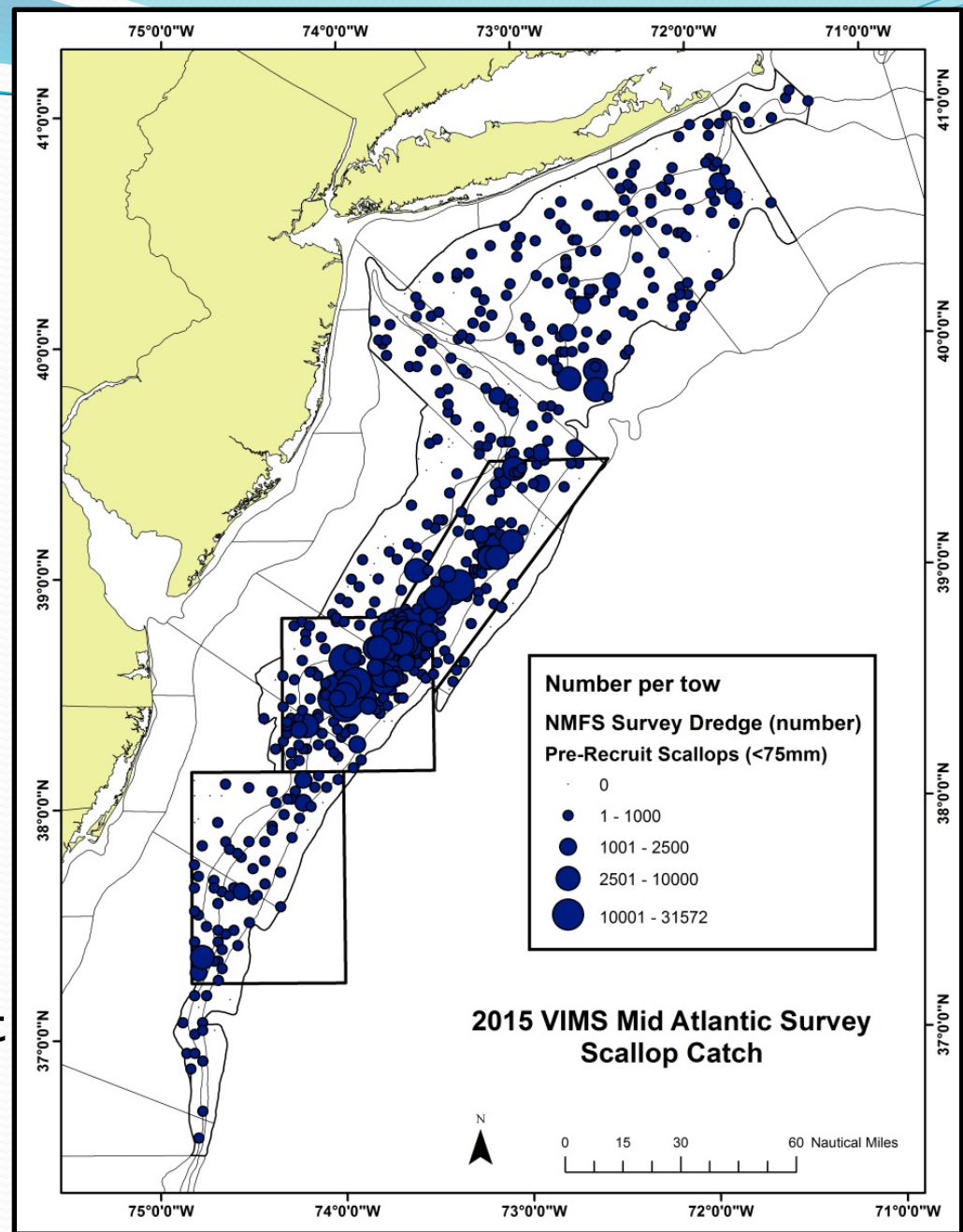
Part II – Summary of 2015 survey results

- **Very successful survey season – 4 separate surveys**
 1. VIMS dredge survey of MA;
 2. SMAST broadscale camera survey of GB and MA and intensive survey of CA2south;
 3. Habcam group v2 survey of NL and SF of GB;
 4. NEFSC dredge of GB and Habcam v4 of MA and GB
- **PDT Meeting August 25/26 (Doc.#4b)**
 1. Total biomass increased slightly from 2014 but dominated by small scallops – not ready for harvest
 2. Will be challenging to provide access to larger scallops found within high densities of small scallops



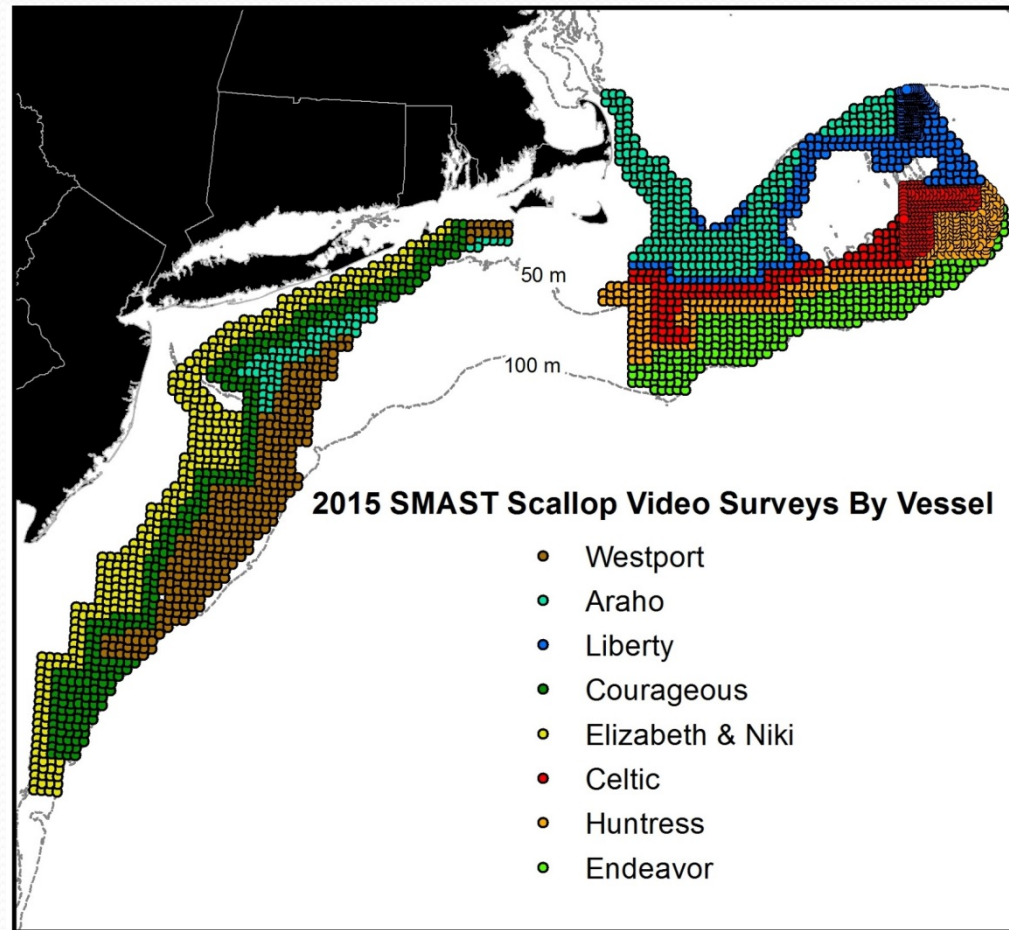
VIMS survey

- Over 600 stations on 3 legs from mid-May to late June
- New sampling design – stratified random to increase precision
- Sampling intensity of SH:MWV extended to monitor parasite
- Adult biomass in MA open areas relatively low
- High abundance of 2 year old throughout, but uncertain what that means 2-3 years in the future

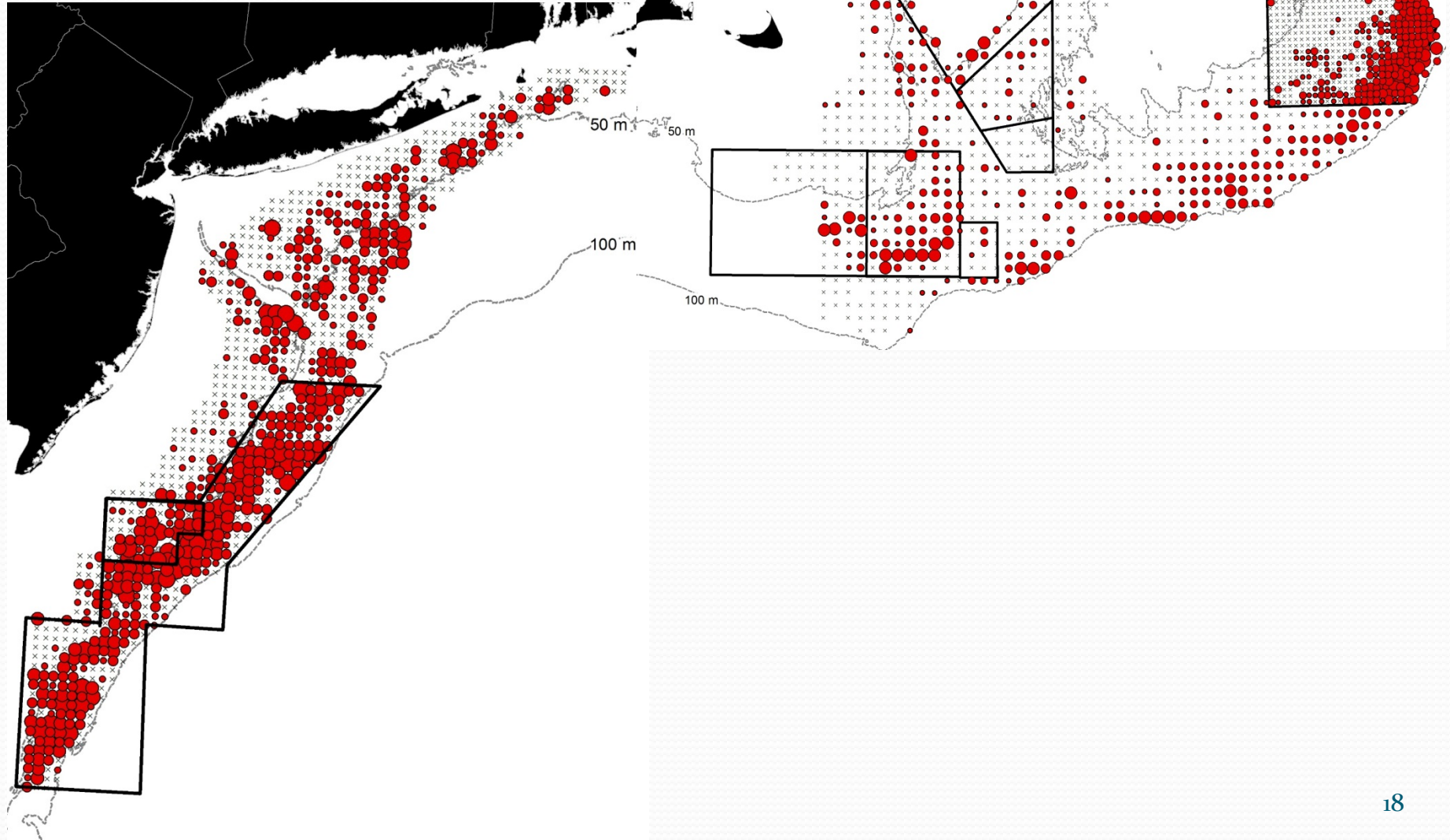


SMAST survey

- 2 RSA projects (GB broadscale and CA2 south intensive)
- MA broadscale funded using reserve funds and industry donations
- Over 2,000 stations on 8 cruises from May 1 through late June
- New digital still camera used – data not available yet
- GB – 2014 and 2015 similar and recruits still there
- MA – rec has shifted to deeper waters. More scallops than ever but relatively low level of exploitable biomass.
- Going to be a real challenge to protect large number of small scallops and balance access to larger scallops

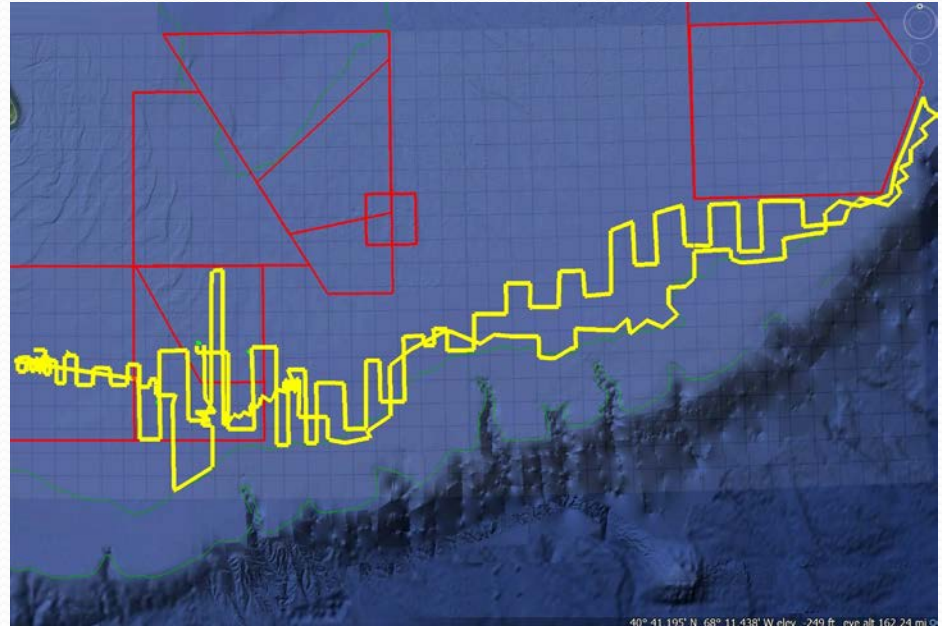


SMAST large camera (Abundance)



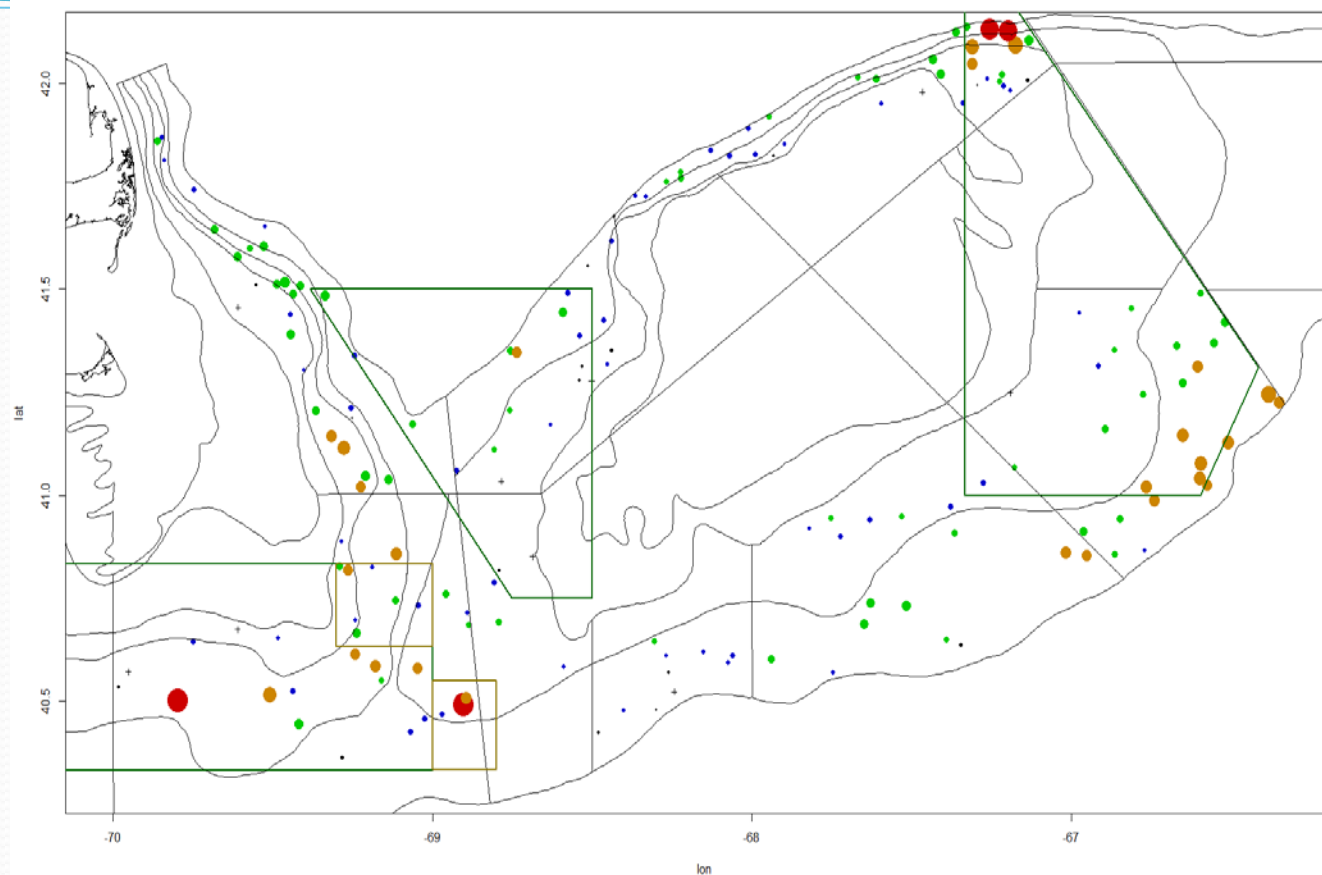
Habcam Group

- 2 RSA projects (NL and SF of GB and fall survey of ETA)
- Heaviest concentration in middle of NL EFH closure and NL access south
- Growth slower than typical
- Major gains in yield if NL left alone for a year

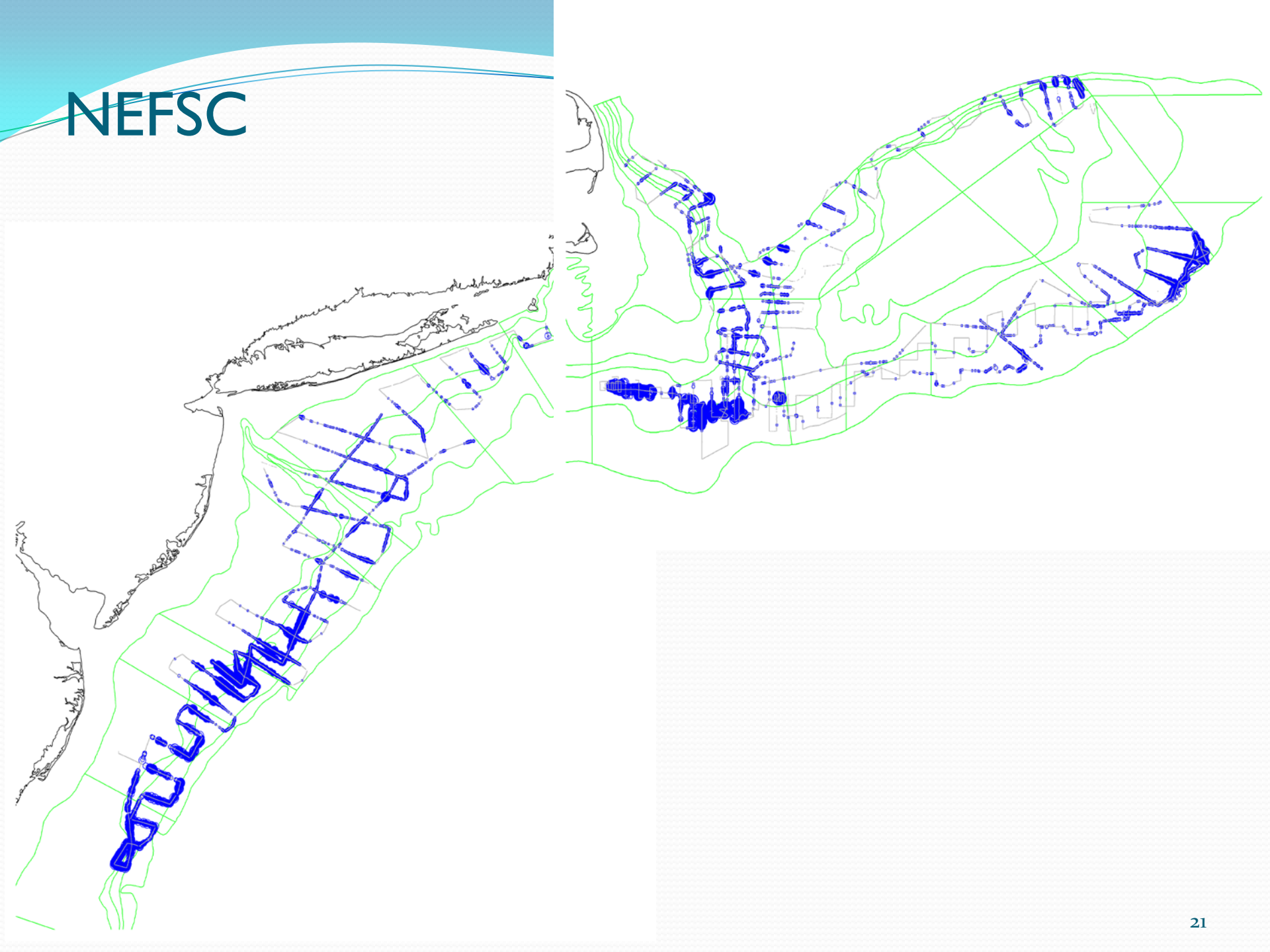


NEFSC

- 165 dredge tows on GB and Habcam v4 in both GB and MA
- No vessel or gear issues – more systematic than past
- Most habcam coverage ever
8 million images and 4,000 km trackline
- Similar results to other surveys

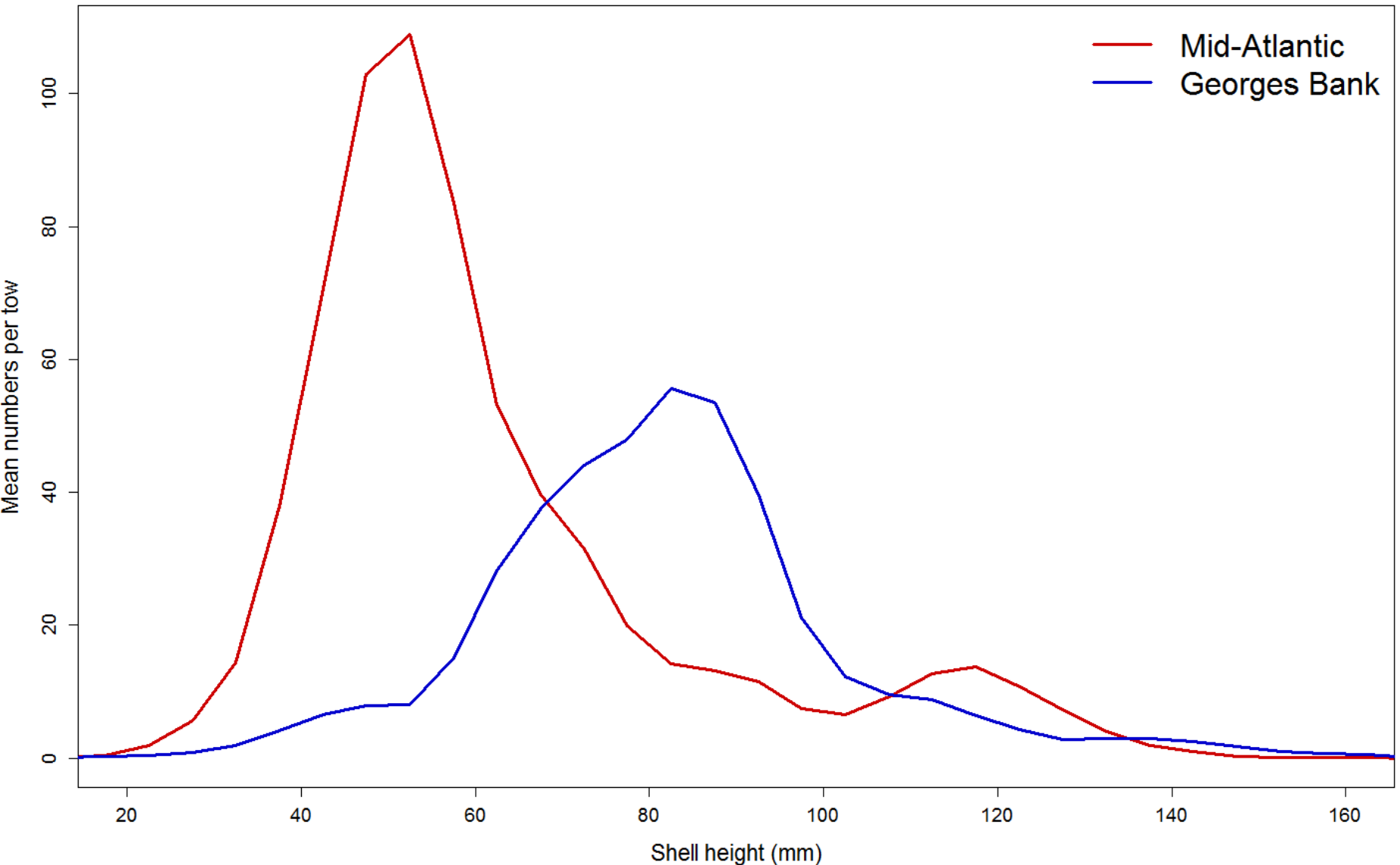


NEFSC



Dredge survey shell heights - 2015

Large 2013 year class in the Mid-Atlantic and 2012 year class on Georges



Framework 27 – Document #2

Purpose and Need

- The purpose of this action is to prevent overfishing and improve yield-per-recruit from the fishery.
- The need for this action is to set specifications to adjust the day-at-sea (DAS) allocations, general category fishery allocations and area rotation schedule for 2016 and 2017 (default)
- No additional measures considered



FW27 Meetings to date:

- PDT – August 25/26
- AP and Cmte – September 16 and 17

Cmte Consensus statement about alternatives to develop

Draft estimate of OFL and ABC

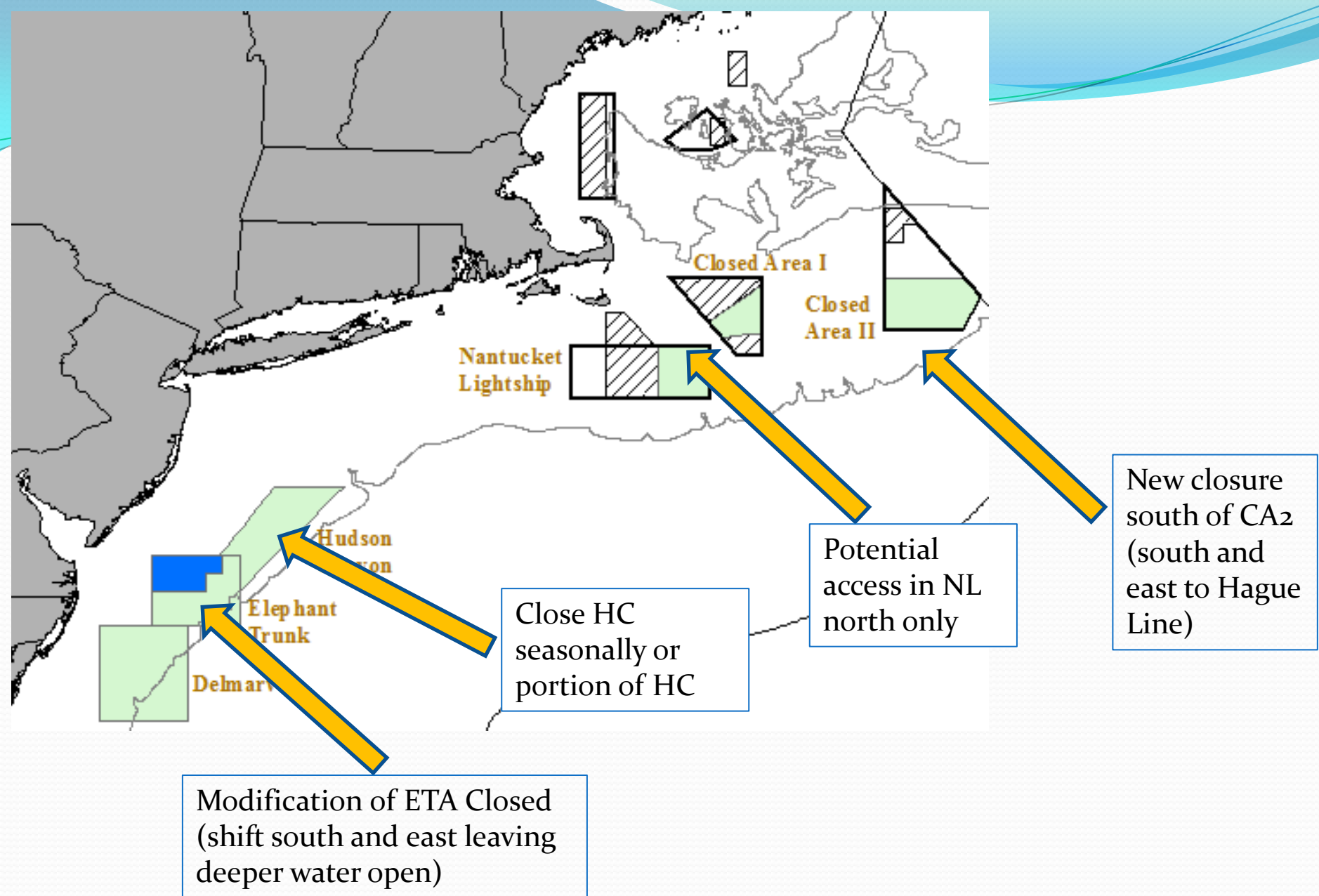
- Higher than 2016 default measures – SSC review on Oct 13

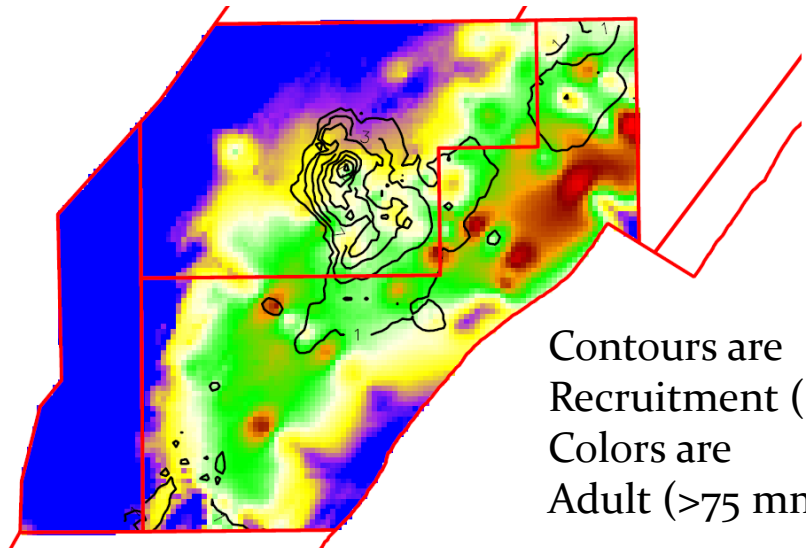
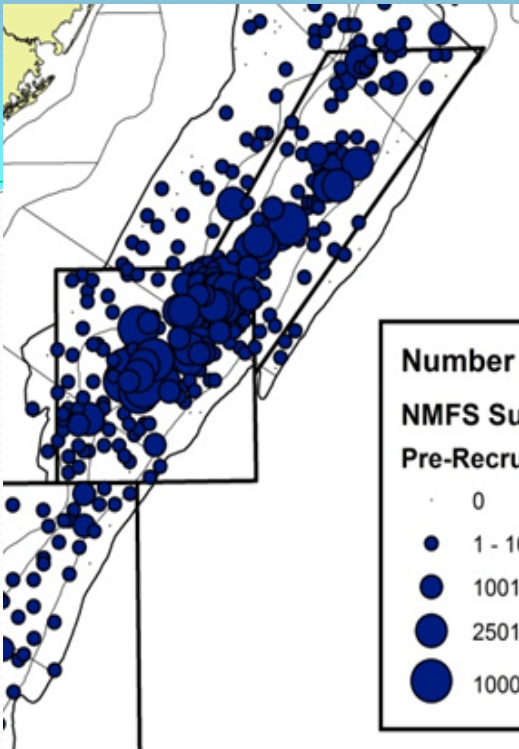


Potential Fishery Specifications

- **No Action – Default measures**
26DAS (75% of projected 34 DAS); 1 MA access area trip;
3.7 mil lbs for LAGC IFQ
- **Basic Run – Projected catch over 45 million lbs.**
(modest increase in DAS and IFQ; 3 access area trips)
- **Additional measures to protect small scallops**
 - Expand Elephant Trunk closed
 - Close all or part of Hudson Canyon
 - Close area south and east of Closed Area II
- **Consider limited access in Nantucket Lightship north**

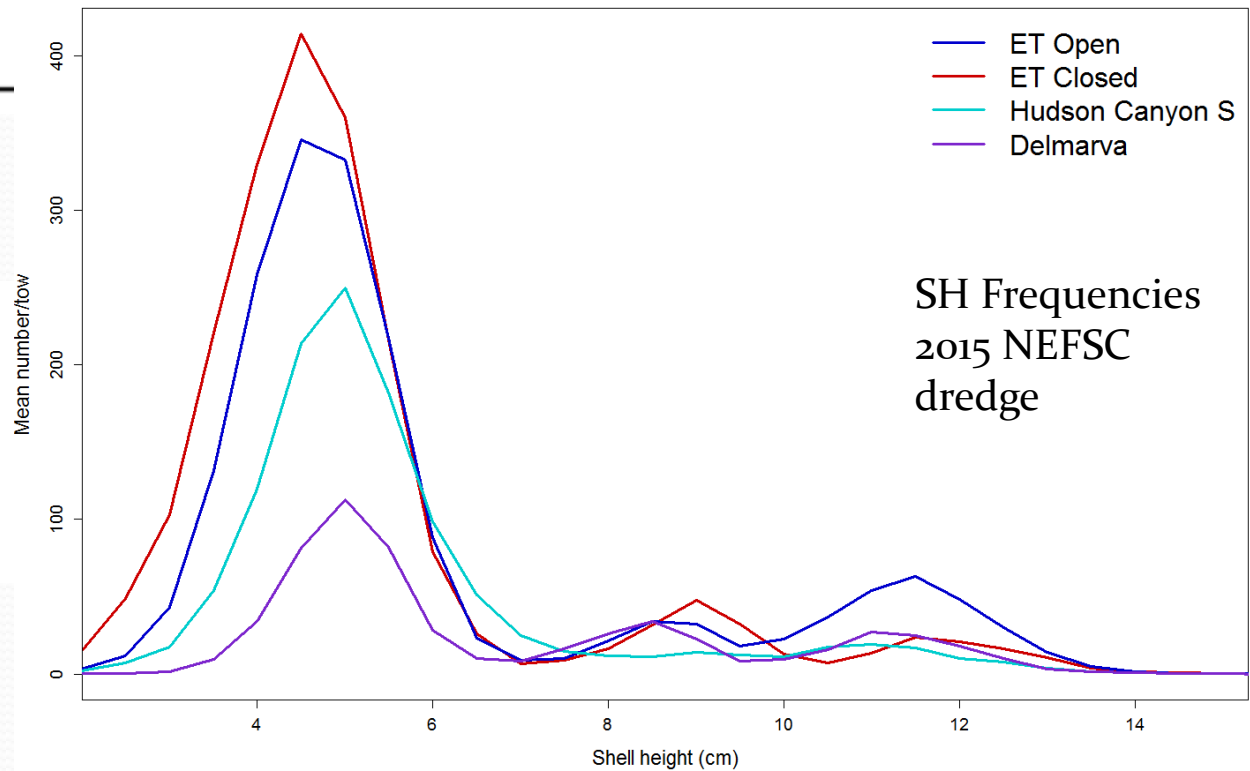
FY2015 – 38 million lbs.; 31 DAS; 3 access area trips; 3.0 mill lbs for LAGC IFQ (not a FW27 alternative)





Contours are
 Recruitment (<75 mm)
 Colors are
 Adult (>75 mm)

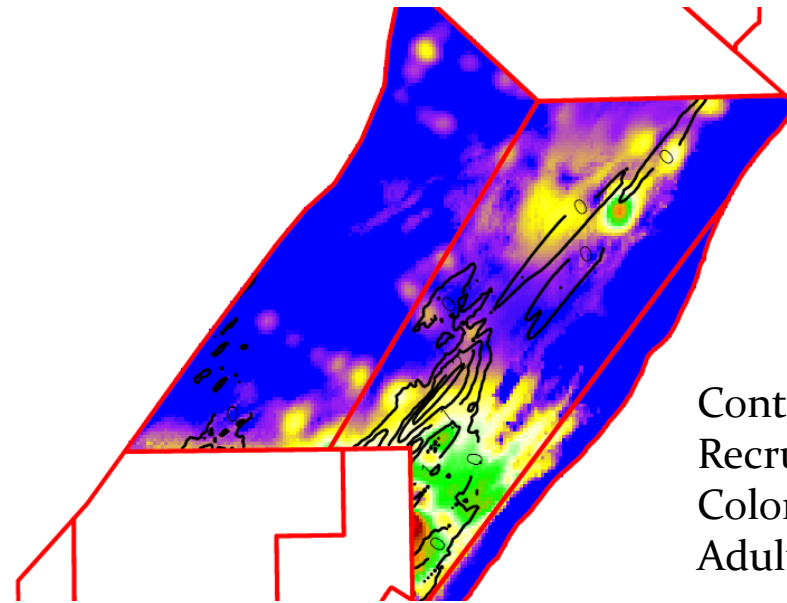
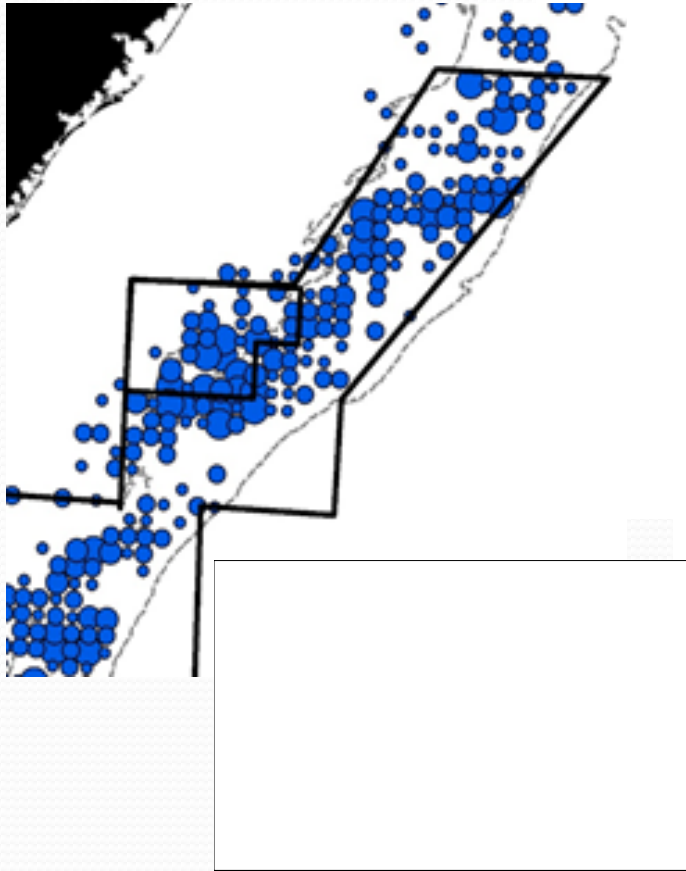
ETA closed Extension



SH Frequencies
 2015 NEFSC
 dredge

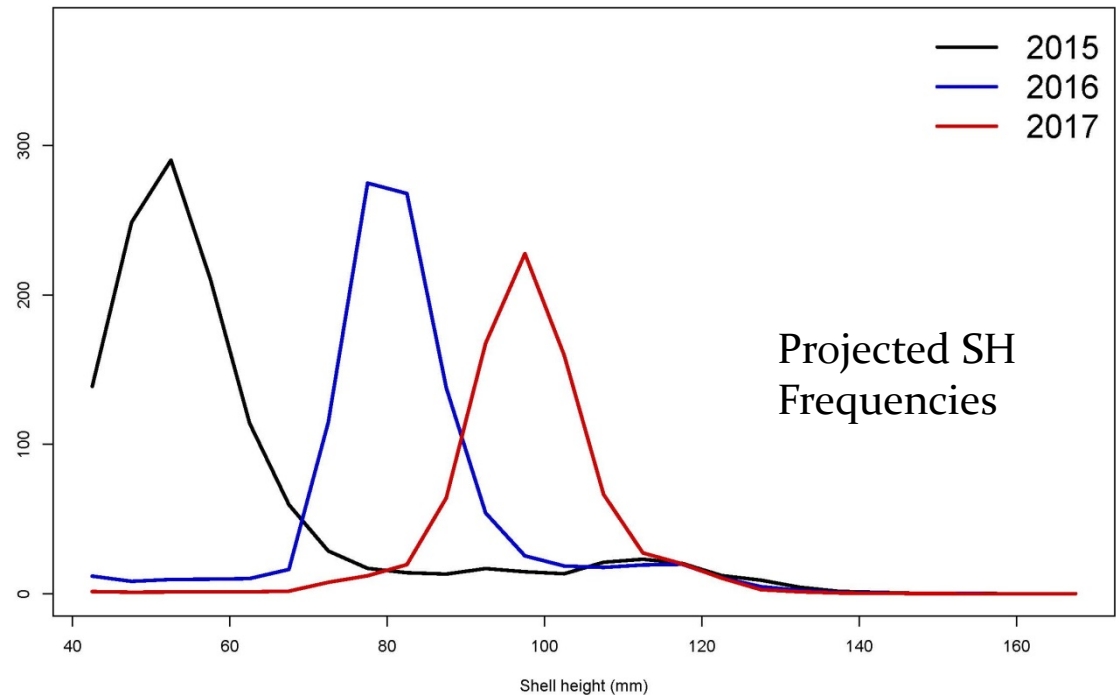


HC Closure



Hudson Canyon S

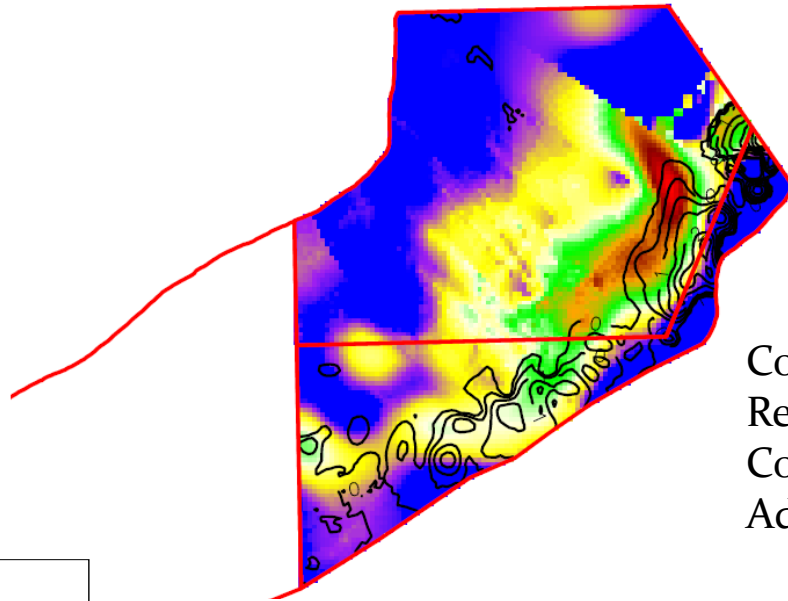
Contours are
Recruitment (<95 mm)
Colors are
Adult (>95 mm)



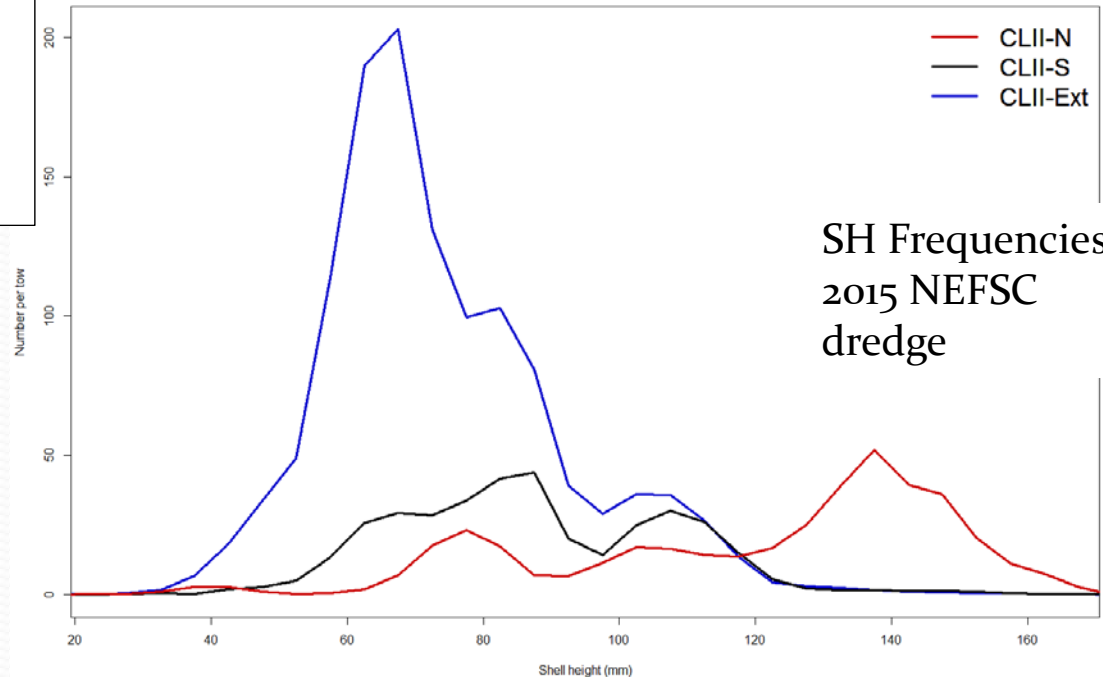
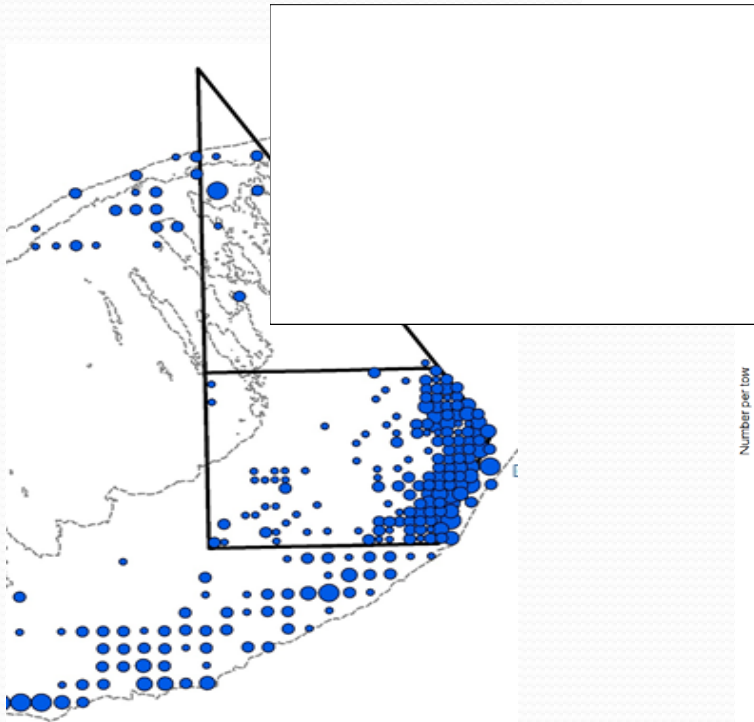
Projected SH
Frequencies



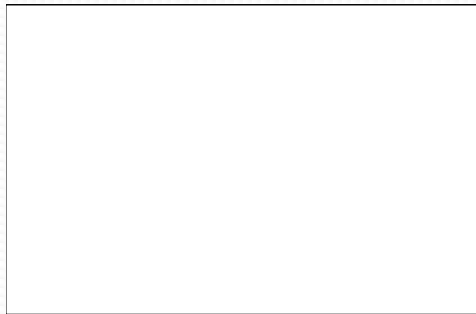
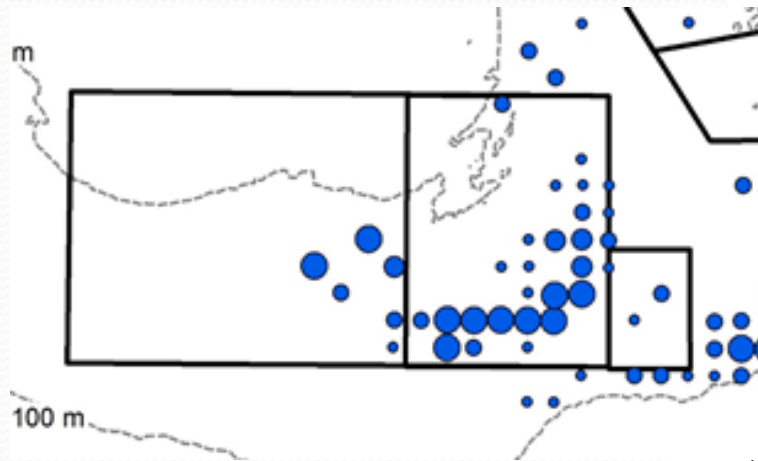
CA2 Extension



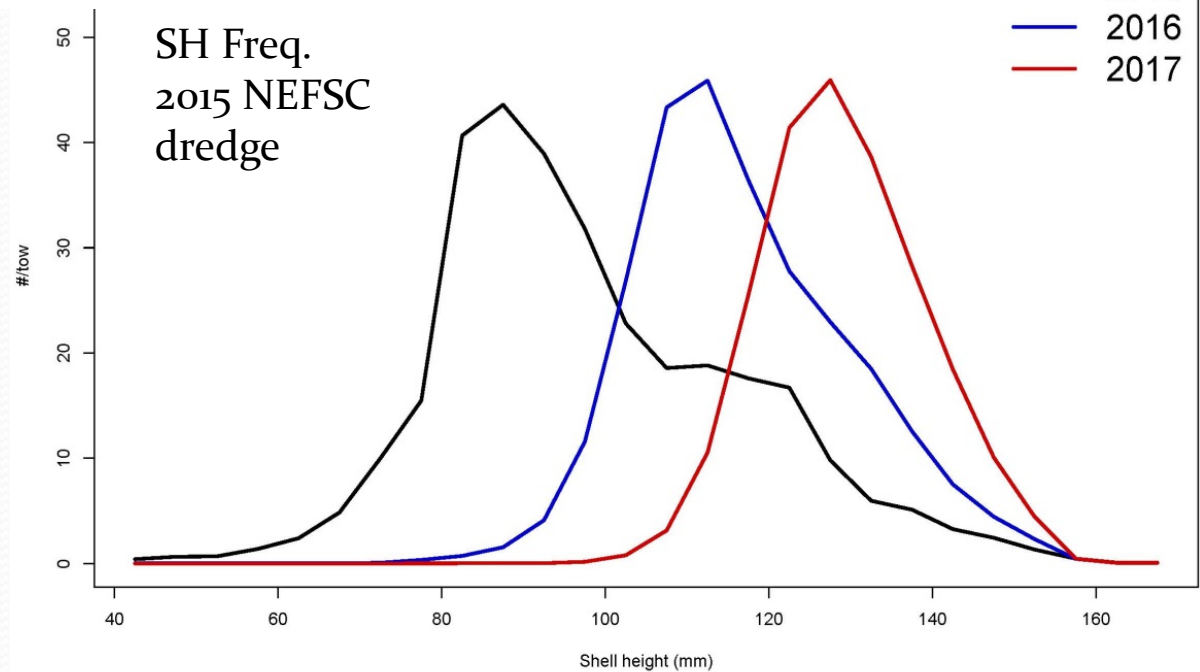
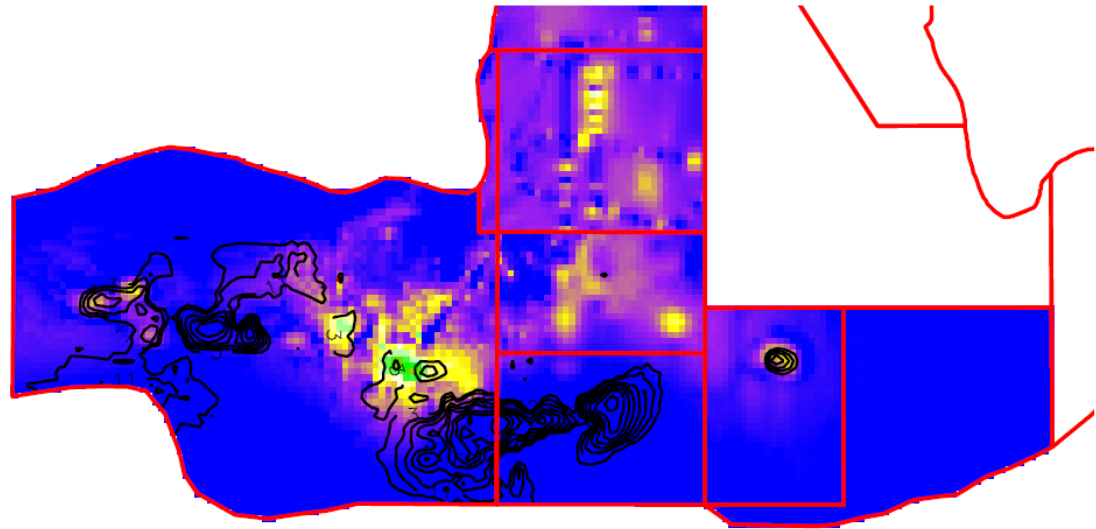
Contours are
Recruitment (<95 mm)
Colors are
Adult (>95 mm)



NL Access



Unit: million/mt per 0.5625 km²
Contour: <100mm (million) Color: >=100mm (mt)



What's next?

- PDT Meeting - October 7, 2015 to refine alternatives and complete estimate of OFL and ABC
- SSC Meeting – October 13, 2015 to approve OFL/ABC
- PDT Meeting - October 28, 2015 to review analyses
- AP and Cmte Meetings - Nov 18 and 19 to review analyses and select preferred alternatives
- Final Council Action – December 1-3, 2015
- FW27 implementation in April 2016