



New England Fishery Management Council

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John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 30, 2021
TO: **Scallop Survey Working Group (SSWG)**
FROM: Tom Nies, Executive Director
SUBJECT: **Scallop Survey Working Group Terms of Reference (TORs)**

1. The final SSWG TORs are attached. Dr. Hare and I reviewed the TOR suggestions provided by the SSWG. We thank the group for their thoughtful discussion and suggestions. While most were accepted, we made one modification to the proposed TORs as explained in the following paragraph.

2. The SSWG suggested adding this bullet to TOR 3:

Consideration of survey strategies to inform and support scallop enhancement efforts

We decided that this is not an appropriate task for the SSWG. The group was not established to develop mechanisms to support a management approach that has yet to be thoroughly discussed by the Council. This proposed bullet does, however, highlight the need to make sure that the scallop survey can adapt to changes in distribution that result from either natural or anthropogenic factors. For that reason, we believe a more general approach to this topic is appropriate and have revised the second bullet to read as follows (the addition is underline).

- *Identification of existing and new scallop survey strategies for population assessments under changing conditions in stock and habitat parameters, and changes in stock distribution as a result of natural or anthropogenic factors.*

**Scallop Survey Working Group
Terms of Reference
April 30, 2021**

TOR #1: Describe the current survey system, including survey (dredge and optical) methods, design, and data products, as well as the process for determining annual survey coverage.

Description:

- *This TOR will include descriptions of the current survey system, including survey tools and methods, the process used to determine annual spatial coverage by survey type, and the data collected in each survey. This information will serve as a description of the current approach for the scallop survey system and will be referenced in relation to SSWG recommendations for TORs 2, 3, and 4.*

TOR #2: Describe and assess a coordinated strategy for sea scallop resource assessment surveys and investigate opportunities and methods for implementation. Address each of the following areas:

- a. Spatial coverage, including the Northern Gulf of Maine;**
- b. Sampling frequency and intensity within and between surveys;**
- c. Data standardization, delivery, access, and storage;**
- d. Automated scallop detection;**
- e. RSA survey priority setting process and long-term planning.**

Description:

- *This TOR will include, but not be limited to, the following items for each identified topic:*
 - *Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current scallop survey system, including uncertainties and gaps in data outputs to meet objectives and needs of science and management.*
 - *Describe new or alternative approaches for optimizing the survey system.*
 - *Investigate opportunities and methods to implement strategies across all survey groups and including the new and alternative approaches.*

TOR #3: Identify survey methods, tools, and designs to monitor and assess the scallop resource in a changing ocean environment that includes offshore wind installations and changes in resource and fishery distribution.

Description:

- *This TOR will include, but not be limited to, the following items:*
 - *Description of the likely impacts of offshore wind installations on the current survey domain and methods on a present and multi-year timescale.*
 - *Identification of existing and new scallop survey strategies for population assessments under changing conditions in stock and habitat parameters, and changes in stock distribution as a result of natural or anthropogenic factors.*

TOR #4: Identify and catalogue the survey data products needed to support stock assessment approaches in the future and outline a process for modifying the scallop survey system to collect identified data products.

Description:

- *This TOR will include, but not be limited to, the following items:*
 - *Description of survey data outputs needed to support potential changes to stock assessment models, including age samples and ageing methods, growth information and density-dependent effects, scallop meat weight sampling, and estimates of fecundity.*
 - *Consider survey data products and survey spatial scale needed to support a spatially explicit methodology for forecasting the abundance and distribution of sea scallops by incorporating spatial data from surveys, landings, and fleet effort.*