

Draft Guiding Principles for Completing 2021/2022 Specifications:

The following principles have been discussed with 2020 survey groups and were shared with the Scallop PDT in response to the impact the COVID-19 pandemic is going to have on upcoming work. The Scallop Committee may want to develop guiding principles for the development of 2021/2022 specification. This would help survey groups, and NOAA and Council staff plan for and execute work, consistent with the Committee's intent. A primary goal of this exercise is start a discussion about delays in the specifications process, and to develop a shared understanding and set of expectations for completing this work later in 2020.

With the situation surrounding COVID-19 evolving daily, the PDT and survey groups feel that additional guidance is needed from states, universities, and NOAA before a plan for the 2021/2022 specifications process can be more fully developed. The Council should expect delays in the schedule that has been used in recent years. This includes taking final action at the January 2021 Council meeting.

AP/Committee: Please review the following 'principles' and be ready to comment at your meeting.

1. The health and welfare of all survey groups is paramount. The 2021/2022 specifications can be completed with using data from last year's survey information (basically a two year specifications cycle). No survey group should feel forced or obligated by NMFS or the Council to complete survey work this year – arrangements can be made to delay projects/awards.
2. There is uncertainty over how long COVID-19 emergency measures will impact surveys of the scallop resource and limit public meetings and gatherings.
3. The Scallop RSA has funded several groups to complete survey work that is used to support management. The NEFSC contracts with the R/V Sharp to conduct annual scallop surveys. Each survey group is navigating a unique set of institutional constraints and challenges.
4. Since the situation around scallop surveys will continue to unfold after the June Council meeting, the Scallop Committee [may wish to] adopt the following guiding principles for the completion of 2020/2021 Specifications in light of COVID-19:
 - a. Survey Work Completion:
 - i. The NEFSC and RSA funded survey groups should be given the opportunity to complete their planned survey work, and deliver data to the NEFSC and Council.
 - ii. The specifications process will be planned around the latest date that a survey group can submit the data.
 1. The latest the survey data can be submitted to the NEFSC and Council for use in the 2020/2021 specifications process and January 2021 final action is September 25, 2020.
 2. If all data is received from all survey groups on or before September 2nd, the Committee may try to use an expedited process to keep the usual timeline of a final vote in December.
 3. If any data is received after September 2nd, 2020, the Council would take final action on FW33 in January 2021.
 4. If RSA survey projects are not able collect data to support the 2021/2022 specifications setting process, the Committee recommends that the awards be delayed to 2021, but that RSA compensation for 2020 be awarded to fund the work.
 - iii. If survey groups need to limit the scope of their surveys, surveys should focus first in access areas that are candidates for fishing in 2021: MAAA, NLS-S-deep,

CAII and surrounds. For these areas, it is preferable to have biomass estimates from dredge and optical surveys.

iv. If the scallop resource is partially surveyed, the PDT will fill in data from last year's process (FW32) for whatever areas needed.

b. Specifications Setting Process:

- i. The Committee should aim to limit the overall range of alternatives in Framework 33 to help streamline the action for submission and implementation. (Only specs, no other special measures)
- ii. The Scallop Committee should aim to limit the complexity of spatial management alternatives in Framework 33 to help streamline the action for submission and implementation.
- iii. The latest the Council should take action on 2021/2022 specifications is at its January 2021 meeting.

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