



New England Fishery Management Council

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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 22, 2017
TO: Scallop Committee and Advisory Panel
FROM: Vincent Balzano, Scallop Committee Chair
SUBJECT: **Purpose for Scallop Committee meetings on November 29 & 30, 2017**

There is a Scallop AP meeting at the Hilton Garden Inn in Boston, MA on Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2017 at 9:00 AM. The Scallop Committee will convene on Thursday Nov. 30, 2017 at that same location. Paper copies will not be mailed to you before the meeting. Documents for this meeting will be e-mailed to you as they become available.

Purpose: The main goals of the Committee meeting are to:

- 1) Review Framework 29 alternatives and analyses.
- 2) Review PDT progress on tasking from the October Committee meeting.
- 3) Identify final preferred alternatives recommendations for Framework 29.
- 4) Other Business – Review Executive Committee Recommendations for 2018 Work Priorities.

The AP and Committee will NOT meet again before the Council takes final action on Framework 29. The full Council is scheduled to take final action on Framework 29 at the December Council meeting in Newport, RI. The Scallop Report will be on the morning of December 7, 2017.

Meeting Materials: Paper copies of the documents listed below will be provided at the meeting. A PDF of each document will be posted to www.nefmc.org. Staff will provide copies of any additional meeting materials that are not included in this package. If you have any questions about the documents, please contact Jonathon Peros (jperos@nefmc.org; 978-465-0492 ext. 117).

Documents:

1. Staff Presentation (*to be distributed before the meeting*)
 - a. Meeting Agenda
 - b. Meeting Memo from Mr. Vincent Balzano, Scallop Committee Chair
2. Draft Framework 29
 - a. FW29 Decision Document (*may be updated before the meeting*)
 - b. Draft Framework 29 economic analysis
3. Scallop Framework 29 Action Plan
4. Memo from Scallop PDT to Scallop Committee re: Evaluation of Projected Flatfish Catch in Framework 29 (November 22, 2017)
5. Memo from Scallop PDT to SSC re: OFL and ABC values for 2018 and 2019 (default)
6. Recent Meeting Summaries
 - a. October 25, 2017 Joint Scallop AP/PDT meeting summary

- b. October 26, 2017 Scallop Committee meeting summary
- c. November 9, 2017 Scallop PDT meeting summary
- 7. Council staff memo re Scallop fishery catch of CC/GOM yellowtail flounder
- 8. Scallop PDT memo to Groundfish PDT re Scallop fishery bycatch projections for FY2018
- 9. Correspondence
- 10. Memo on Executive Committee recommendations for 2018 Priorities & Council rankings

Additional materials may be added and presentations will be shared as they become available.

Framework 29 Specifications and Management Measures

Recent Activity: The Scallop PDT has met in person on November 9, 2017 to: 1) SAMS model results from Committee tasking; 2) bycatch projections for FY 2018; 3) other issues relevant to this action. The PDT made several recommendations for the AP and Committee to consider. See document 6c. The PDT also evaluated projected flatfish catch in FW29 (see document 4).

OHA2 Status Update Relative to Framework 29: On October 6, 2017 the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a Notice of Availability of the Council's Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2 (OHA2). A final decision on the Omnibus Habitat Amendment is anticipated on or before January 4, 2018, after the Council takes final action on Framework 29. NMFS may approve or disapprove the Council's preferred measures in the OHA2. For example, NMFS may fully approve all measures, or partially approve the action (and disapprove some proposed measures). There are four possible specification scenarios considered through Framework 29: 1) Status quo - No change to current habitat and groundfish closures; 2) Approval and implementation of both Georges Bank measures (Alternative 10 in 2.3.4 of OHA2) and Great South Channel and Southern New England (Alternative 4 in Section 2.3.5 of OHA2); 3) Approval and implementation of only Great South Channel and Southern New England measures; and 4) Approval and implementation of only Georges Bank measures (**Table 1**). In this action, the Council is only considering recommending access to and the harvest of scallops currently in 1) Closed Area I North Habitat Management Area, which is part of Georges Bank habitat measures, and 2) the Nantucket Lightship Habitat Management Area which is part of the Great South Channel and Southern New England measures. While OHA2 may lift closures of other areas that hold scallops, the Council has not developed measures in this action to facilitate access beyond Closed Area I and the Nantucket Lightship HMAs.

Facilitating access to high densities of scallops in areas that may open through OHA2 (Closed Area I North HMA and the Nantucket Lightship HMA) is a two-step process. First, the Council must modify or create new access areas. Second, the Council may recommend a harvest of scallops from the newly delineated areas. For clarity in this action, access area configurations are nested within each specification alternative so that changes to access areas are contained within each specifications alternative.

The Council is also considering options that would allocate Closed Area I carryover pounds that were allocated to the Limited Access component, but not harvest due to a lack of biomass in the area.

The AP and Committee may vote on a preferred alternative for each specification scenario identified in Section 4.4 in Framework 29, and **Table 1**. Alternatives in this section are grouped by scenario number shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1 – OHA2 specification scenarios (1-4) considered in FW29 and Council's Preferred Alternatives.

| # | OHA2 Specification Scenarios | FW29 Specification Alternatives Available for Selection under this Scenario | Council's preferred alternative |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Status Quo – No change to current habitat and groundfish closures. | 4.4.2 - BASE Runs 4.4.1 - No Action | TBD |
| 2 | Approval and implementation of both Georges Bank measures (Alternative 10 in 2.3.4 of OHA2) and Great South Channel and Southern New England (Alternative 4 in Section 2.3.5 of OHA2) | 4.4.3 & 4.4.4 - Both open (5 & 6 trip options) 4.4.5 - NLS West Runs 4.4.6 - CAIF36 4.4.2 - BASE Runs 4.4.1 - No Action | TBD |
| 3 | Approval and implementation of only Great South Channel and Southern New England measures through OHA2 | 4.4.5 - NLS West Runs 4.4.2 - BASE Runs 4.4.1 - No Action | TBD |
| 4 | Approval and implementation of only Georges Bank measures through OHA2 | 4.4.6 - CAIF36 4.4.2 - BASE Runs 4.4.1 - No Action | TBD |

Next Steps: Council staff will present information on the range of alternatives under consideration in Framework 29. The AP and Committee will have the opportunity to select preferred alternatives at this meeting. This is the final opportunity for both groups to weigh in on FW29 development before the Council takes final action on December 7, 2017 in Newport, RI. Council staff recommends that the AP and Committee work through Framework 29 decisions in the order specified in Anticipated Outcomes on page 4. This list is intended to help guide discussion, and does not preclude either group from developing additional recommendations.

Anticipated Outcomes:

1. Select *preferred alternative* for 2018 and 2019 OFL and ABC (Section 4.1)
2. Select *preferred alternatives* for Northern Gulf of Maine Management Measures (Section 4.2)
 - a. Consider recommending RSA trip limits for any NGOM RSA harvest – otherwise this will be specified by NMFS.
3. Allocation of Limited Access Closed Area I Carryover Pounds (select a *preferred alternative*)
4. Select a *preferred specifications alternative* for OHA2 Scenario 2: Approval and Implementation of both Georges Bank and Great South Channel/Southern New England Measures are approved.
5. Select a *preferred specifications alternative* for OHA2 Scenario 3: Approval and Implementation of only Great South Channel/Southern New England measures through OHA2.
6. Select a *preferred specifications alternative* for OHA2 Scenario 4: Approval and implementation of only Georges Bank measures through OHA2.
7. Select a *preferred specifications alternative* for OHA2 Scenario 1: Status Quo – No change to current habitat and groundfish closures.
8. Select a *preferred alternative* for setting the total LAGC IFQ trips in access areas.
9. Select a *preferred alternative* for allocating LAGC IFQ trips by access area.
10. *Recommend* default measures for FY 2019. (Not numbered, but the AP and Committee may also wish to weigh in on PT access area allocations and trip limits).
11. Select a *preferred alternative* for additional measures to reduce fishery impacts.
12. Select a *preferred alternative* for Northern windowpane accountability measures.
13. Select a *preferred alternative* for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder accountability measures.
14. Select a *preferred alternative* for Southern New England yellowtail flounder accountability measures.
15. Review the PDT's evaluation of projected flatfish catch in Framework 29 (see Doc.4), and determine whether or not to recommend additional measures in this action to reduce catch of flatfish by the scallop fishery. If the AP and Committee recommend additional measures, they may wish to identify a *preferred alternative*.

Other Business

Recent Activity: The Council's Executive Committee has developed recommendations for 2018 scallop work priorities (Document 10). The Executive Committee has recommended action for the NGOM as well as monitoring and catch accounting provisions. The Executive Committee suggests the Council consider doing one or the other of these two tasks, but not both, in order to streamline the workload for the Scallop Committee.

Anticipated Outcomes: In light of the Executive Committee's input, the AP and Committee may wish to weigh in on how to rank NGOM vs. monitoring and catch accounting for 2018 priorities. Additional items and issues may be taken up under other business.

Please review all documents before the meeting.

If you have any questions about these enclosures please contact Jonathon Peros (978-465-0492 ext. 117).