



# New England Fishery Management Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Scallop RSA Program: Council and Northeast Fisheries Science Center Announce 15 Awards Selected for 2018-2019 funding

The New England Fishery Management Council and NOAA Fisheries' Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) are pleased to announce that 15 projects have been selected for 2018-2019 funding through the Sea Scallop Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program.

"The Scallop RSA Program truly has become one of the flagships of the scallop fishery," said New England Council Chairman Dr. John Quinn. "The collaborative efforts that take place at sea between fishermen and researchers go a long way toward enhancing our understanding of what's happening with the resource. The results of this RSA work funnel back to the Council and support stock assessments. Without a doubt, the RSA program helps us better manage our extremely valuable scallop fishery."

Projects will address research priorities established by the Council, with a particular focus on resource surveys. The awards are expected to generate more than \$12 million: \$3 million to fund research; and \$9 million to compensate industry partners who harvest set-aside quota.

"We are excited to be able to work with the New England Fishery Management Council, industry, and scientists to fund sea scallop science through the Research Set-Aside Program," said NEFSC Science and Research Director Dr. Jon Hare. "The projects funded support surveys, bycatch mitigation, and biological studies, all with the purpose of improving the information used in the management of the sea scallop resource."

The New England Council established the Sea Scallop RSA Program to address research questions that support management of the scallop resource. The Council sets the research priorities and researchers compete for funding through a federal grant competition managed by NOAA Fisheries.



— Virginia Institute of Marine Science photo



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No federal funds are provided to support the research. Instead, projects are awarded pounds of scallops, which have been “set aside” from the annual fishery quota for this purpose. Successful applicants partner with the fishing industry to harvest their set-aside award to generate funds for the research. There are active research set-aside programs for Atlantic sea scallops, Atlantic herring, and monkfish.

## 2018-2019 Scallop RSA Award Summary

The awards fall into three categories: scallop surveys (dredge, drop camera, and HabCam); bycatch mitigation; and sea scallop biology.

### Scallop Surveys

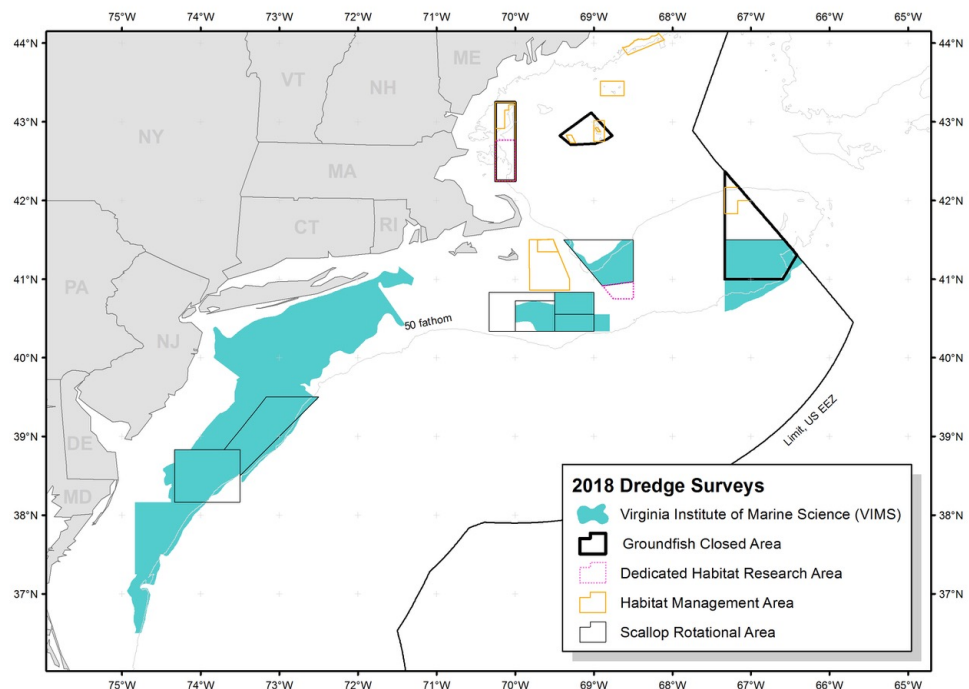
The Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) received new awards to conduct dredge surveys in Closed Area I, Closed Area II, and the Nantucket Lightship. Under an existing award from last year, VIMS also will conduct a dredge survey of the Mid-Atlantic Bight. As part of ongoing efforts to better understand scallop survey dredge performance, VIMS investigators received an award to evaluate the hydrodynamic

characteristics of both lined and unlined survey dredges

in the largest flume tank in the world, located in St. John’s, Newfoundland at Memorial University’s Marine Institute.

The University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology (SMAST) received three awards to conduct surveys using a drop-camera array. Through these awards, researchers plan to conduct high-resolution surveys of the Nantucket Lightship, Closed Area I, Great South Channel, and select portions of the Northern Gulf of Maine Scallop Management Area.

The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) will conduct Habitat Camera Mapping System (HabCam) optical surveys throughout the Mid-Atlantic Bight and on the northern flank of Georges Bank. In addition to these surveys, researchers will continue to evaluate dredge effects on habitat and habitat recovery in the Closed Area II Habitat Area of Particular Concern.



– NOAA Fisheries graphic



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Coonamessett Farm Foundation will conduct a HabCam survey of the Nantucket Lightship and Southern Flank of Georges Bank.

## Bycatch Mitigation

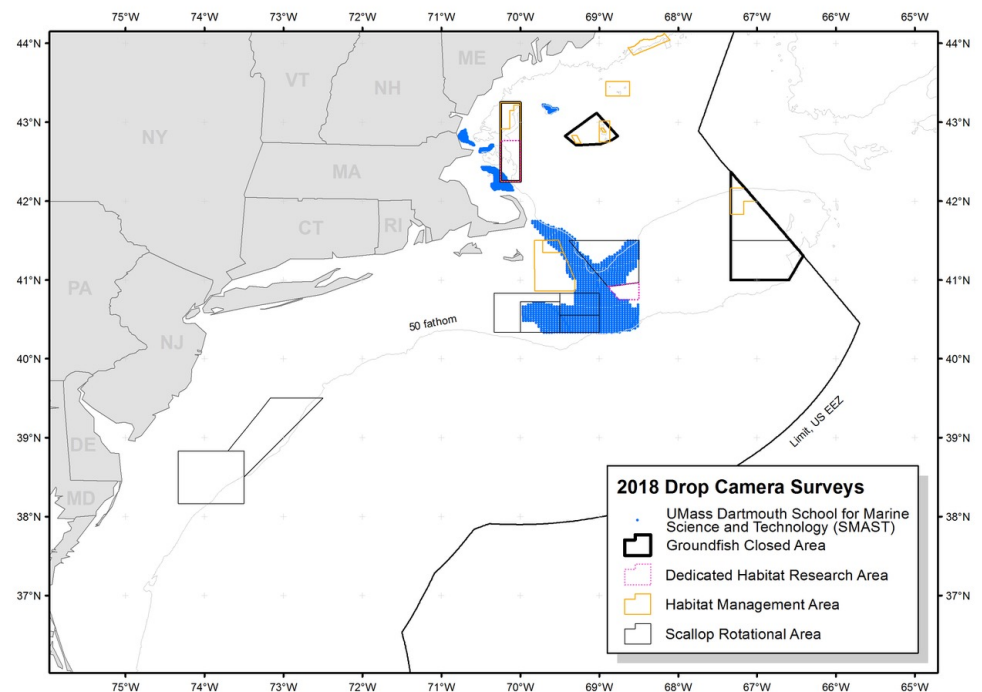
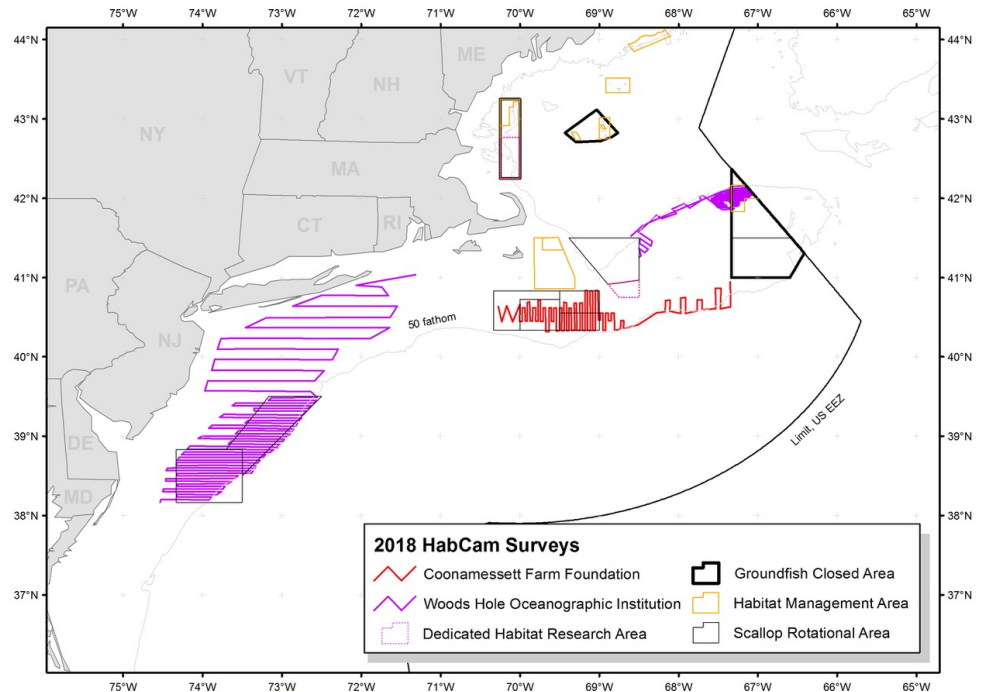
Coonamessett Farm Foundation will continue its seasonal survey on Georges Bank, collecting information on bycatch rates for yellowtail flounder and other species relative to scallop meat yield. These data also will be used to evaluate sea scallop health and meat quality, biological questions about several flounder species, and to examine lobsters for shell disease.

Coonamessett Farm Foundation will continue its loggerhead sea turtle tagging program, receiving funds to tag up to 20 loggerheads with water-activated tags. Tag data will be used to evaluate spatial and temporal overlap between loggerhead sea turtles and the scallop fishery.

Coonamessett Farm Foundation also will be testing a dredge twine-top cover net in an attempt to quantify dredge selectivity characteristics.

*HabCam and drop-camera survey maps, right.*

*– NOAA Fisheries graphics*







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## Sea Scallop Biology

The Virginia Institute of Marine Science will investigate sea scallop density-dependence factors that may be affecting growth, mortality, and reproduction of scallops in the Nantucket Lightship and Elephant Trunk areas. In addition, VIMS will conduct a pilot study to extend the current stock assessment model to better account for sea scallop ages with a particular focus on the Mid-Atlantic Bight and Nantucket Lightship areas.

WHOI will receive support to determine if a gonadosomatic index (GSI) can be calculated from Light Field 3D images of shucked scallops collected during fishing operations. The GSI is used to assess maturity and spawning events in many species of fish and shellfish, including scallops. If successful, this could improve the ability to collect and quantify scallop maturation and spawning data during the course of routine fishery sampling procedures.

*2018-2019 scallop RSA awards are based on a meat-weight price of \$10.50 per pound.*



Image from drop-camera survey. – SMAST photo



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## 2018-2019 Sea Scallop Research Set-Aside Projects

Set-Aside Award based on \$10.50 per pound

Institution, Principal Investigator	Project Title	Award
Coonamessett Farm Foundation (CFF)	Quantifying the Selectivity Characteristics of an Extended Link Apron using a Dredge Cover Net	83,320 lb scallops Est. value: \$874,859 Research cost: \$218,715
CFF	An Optical Assessment of Sea Scallop Abundance, Distribution, and Growth in the Nantucket Lightship and southern part of Georges Bank	84,134 lb scallops Est. value: \$883,405 Research cost: \$220,851
CFF	Understanding the Impacts of the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery on Loggerhead Sea Turtles	72,609 lb scallops Est. value: \$762,395 Research cost: \$190,598.75
CFF	Optimizing the Georges Bank Scallop Fishery by Maximizing Meat Yield and Minimizing Bycatch	190,182 lb scallops Est. value: \$1,996,912 Research cost: \$499,228
University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth (SMAST)	High-resolution drop camera surveys to track scallop aggregations in Closed Area I and Great South Channel	33,626 lb scallops Est. value: \$353,073 Research cost: \$84,065
SMAST	High-resolution drop camera survey examining the scallop population and habitat in select portions of the Gulf of Maine	48,922 lb scallops Est. value: \$513,680 Research cost: \$122,305
SMAST	High resolution drop camera survey examining sea stars dynamics in extremely dense scallop beds of the Nantucket Lightship	38,288 lb scallops Est. value: \$402,027 Research cost: \$95,721
Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS)	An assessment of sea scallop abundance and distribution in the Nantucket Lightship (2 Year Project)	59,859 lb scallops Est. value: \$628,516 Research cost: \$125,703
VIMS	The effect of density on growth, yield and reproduction of the sea scallop, <i>Placopecten magellanicus</i> (2 Year Project)	116,718 lb scallops Est. value: \$1,225,538 Research cost: \$272,678
VIMS	An assessment of sea scallop abundance and distribution in Closed Area I and Closed Area II (2 Year Project)	72,216 lb scallops Est. value: \$758,266 Research cost: \$151,653



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VIMS	Age-based assessment in the sea scallop <i>Placopecten magellanicu</i> : a pilot study (2 Year Project)	65,978 lb scallops Est. value: \$692,772 Research cost: \$153,630
VIMS	Understanding Dredge Performance for a Lined versus Unlined NMFS Sea Scallop Survey Dredge	15,247 lb scallops Est. value: \$160,098 Research cost: \$40,025
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI)	High Intensity Optical Survey of the Mid-Atlantic Bight Rotational Closure Areas: Elephant Trunk and Hudson Canyon	129,385 lb scallops Est. value: \$1,358,540 Research cost: \$339,635
WHOI	Developing a Spatially & Temporally Explicit Gonadosomatic Index through the Scallop Observer Program: A Pilot Study	45,019 lb scallops Est. value: \$472,696 Research cost: \$118,174
WHOI	High Intensity Optical Survey of Closed Area II and northern part of Georges Bank	114,616 lb scallops Est. value: \$1,203,468 Research cost: \$300,867



*Coonamessett Farm Foundation will be working with partners on a project to optimize the Georges Bank scallop fishery by maximizing meat yield and minimizing bycatch. – Coonamessett Farm Foundation photo*

For more information about these awards and the Scallop RSA Program, contact:

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- **Cheryl Corbett, Northeast Fisheries Science Center**, (508) 495-2037, [cheryl.corbett@noaa.gov](mailto:cheryl.corbett@noaa.gov).

➤ The 2018-2019 award listings can be found on the Northeast Fisheries Science Center website at: <https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/coopresearch/news/scallop-rsa-2018-2019/>

➤ RSA award announcements and answers to “frequently asked questions” also are available at [https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/coopresearch/rsa\\_program.html](https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/coopresearch/rsa_program.html).

➤ Visit the New England Council’s scallop webpage: <https://www.nefmc.org/management-plans/scallops>.