



New England Fishery Management Council

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MEETING SUMMARY

Scallop PDT Meeting

February 10, 2020

Conference Call

The Scallop PDT met by conference call on February 10, 2020 to: 1) discuss SAMS area boundaries for 2020 surveys, 2) review status of alternative development for NGOM measures in A21, 3) finalize input for NEFMC Research Priorities and Data Needs (2020-2024), and 4) discuss other business.

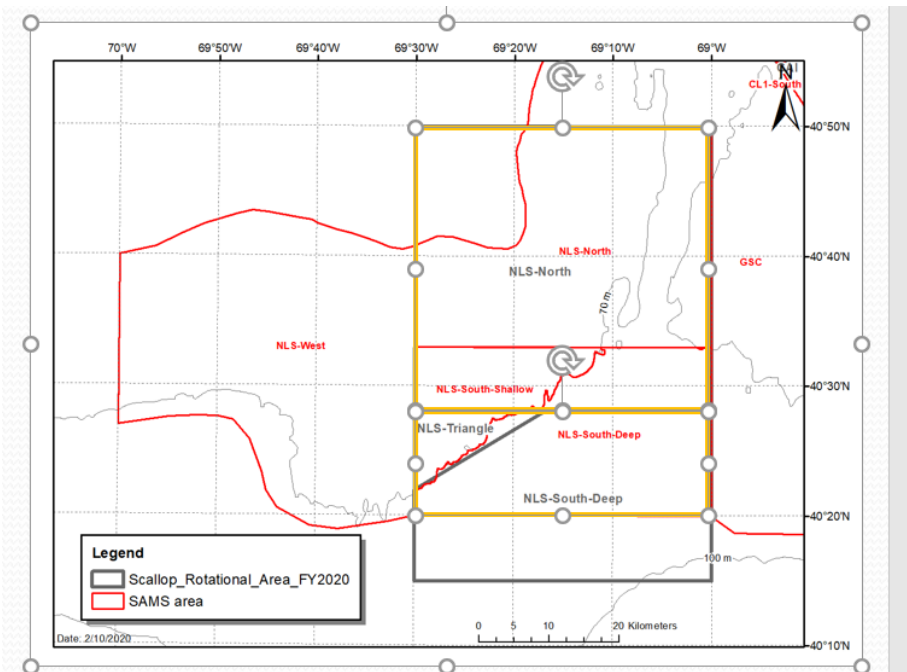
MEETING ATTENDANCE: Jonathon Peros (PDT Chair), Sam Asci, Dr. Naresh Pradhan, Dr. Rachel Feeney, Dr. David Rudders, Dr. Bill DuPaul, Dr. Dave Bethoney, Travis Ford, Ben Galuardi, Tim Cardiasmenos, Dr. Dvora Hart, Chad Keith, Chris Parkins, and Dr. Cate O’Keefe. Vincent Balzano, Scallop Committee Chairman, joined the call along with 4 members of the public.

The call began at 1:31 pm. Following roll call, Council staff briefly reviewed the agenda and provided the PDT with a list of upcoming meetings. It was noted that a management track scallop assessment is being scheduled for the week of September 14th, 2020. The management track assessment will update the CASA model with new data but will not make any major changes to the model that were reviewed in the 2018 benchmark assessment (SARC 65).

SAMS area modifications: The PDT revisited discussion around modifying SAMS area boundaries on Georges Bank to reflect scallop management area boundaries that are proposed in the Council’s preferred specifications alternative in FW32.

Key PDT discussion points and recommendations:

- The PDT agreed that SAMS areas should be as closely aligned to management area boundaries as possible for the 2020 fishing year and survey season.
- The PDT agreed that SAMS boundaries on Eastern Georges Bank (i.e. CAII, CAII-Ext, Southern Flank) be made consistent with the management boundaries proposed through FW32.
- In the NLS, it was suggested that the NLS-North SAMS area be modified to reflect the management boundary for this area in FY2020 (i.e. shifted farther south to encompass most of the NLS-S-shallow SAMS area, see orange boundaries in figure below). Staff will follow up with NEFSC staff to further discuss this revision, and report back to the PDT. A member of the PDT also cautioned that making SAMS areas too small could make estimations more difficult or susceptible to error.



Amendment 21—NGOM Management:

Staff reviewed approaches for allocation share alternatives that could be considered for the NGOM through Amendment 21. It was noted that the AP and Committee would be reviewing the same draft approaches in addition to PDT input at the February 26 and 27 meetings. During the review of potential allocation sharing approaches, staff highlighted the decision points that the Committee will need to consider before the options are developed further.

Key points from PDT discussion:

- In the allocation share approach, the “LAGC” share could be accessible to LAGC IFQ and LAGC NGOM permits, meaning the overall percent share harvested by IFQ vessels could vary based on how many vessels participate and how much they land.
- The PDT noted that any formal allocation to the LAGC in the NGOM would change the existing shares of the APL that go to the LA (94.5%) and the LAGC IFQ (5.5%). While the allocation split established between the LA and LAGC IFQ in Amendment 11 can remain the same, increasing the overall allocation with pounds for the NGOM modifies how the APL is split.
- Several PDT members agreed that the range of allocation share ideas would affect each permit group differently. Regarding the use of a cap on a NGOM set-aside, the PDT discussed a scenario where a substation portion of overall biomass is in the NGOM and the ability of the LA and LAGC to access it.
- It was suggested that another approach could be to establish an allocation for LAGC vessels in the NGOM as a percentage of the APL.

- A member of the PDT noted that in some of the draft scenarios, NGOM allocation reaches into the millions of pounds range—they felt this level of allocation would not align with the Amendment 11 vision statement of a small coastal fishery. Another PDT member agreed that allocating at this magnitude and maintaining a 200-pound trip limit would likely cause other issues in the future.
- An allocation approach could be to allocate available biomass as the NGOM TAC up to a set percentage of the overall APL, and then allocate anything above that level to the LA and LAGC IFQ components. It was suggested this approach would avoid a major reallocation or the need to do a minor reallocation through each specifications action.
- Regarding the idea to treat the NGOM as a “bonus” fishing opportunity, several members of the PDT were hesitant to support this approach. They noted that doing so would mean the NGOM would not be folded into the rest of the scallop fishery (i.e. which is a point of interest to do through A21), and that it would create complications in the LAGC IFQ component because vessels could potentially fish outside of quota allocations.
- There was some discussion around the difficulty of developing allocation share approaches that don’t change the 94.5%/5.5% split between the LA and LAGC IFQ components and it was suggested that the Council should be clear in deciding how this is done.

2020-2024 Council Research Priorities

Staff reviewed the draft list of Council research priorities for 2020-2024 and PDT input to date on potential revisions. A member of the PDT noted that a large portion of scallop priorities are listed as progress “unknown”, and that suggested that further PDT input could focus on updating these indicators if projects are underway to address the priorities. PDT recommendations on research priorities will be finalized through correspondence.

Other Business:

Dr. Cate O’Keefe announced that she will be moving on from MA DMF at the end of February and will no longer be serving on the scallop PDT. Several members of the PDT thanked her for her service and wished her luck in the future.

No other business was discussed. The meeting concluded at 3:23 PM.