



## New England Fishery Management Council

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

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** September 14, 2017  
**TO:** Scallop Committee  
**FROM:** Mr. Mark Alexander, Scallop Committee Chair  
**SUBJECT:** **Purpose for Scallop Committee meeting on September 20, 2017**

There is a Scallop Committee meeting at the Waypoint Event Center at the Fairfield Inn by Marriott in New Bedford, MA on Tuesday, **September 20, 2017 at 9:30 AM**. Please note there is an Advisory Panel meeting at that same location on September 19, 2017.

**Purpose:** The main goals of this Committee meeting are to:

- 1) Review results of the 2017 scallop surveys, preliminary biomass estimates, and fishery data. Discuss potential specification alternatives to be considered in Framework 29.
- 2) Review progress on potential management measures that may be included in Framework 29, including: 1) flatfish accountability measures; and 2) Northern Gulf of Maine Management.
- 3) Initial discussion on potential scallop work priorities for 2018.
- 4) Discuss if there are regulations in the Scallop FMP that could be eliminated, improved, or streamlined based on recent Executive Orders
- 5) Discuss other business as necessary.
- 6) Review Applications for an open seat on the Scallop AP (Closed Session)

The Scallop Committee will be considering input from the AP and PDT at this meeting. The full Council will meet again from September 26 – 28 in Gloucester, MA, with the Scallop Committee report scheduled for 9:30 am on Thursday, September 28. The groundfish report (starting with TMGC) is scheduled for 10 am Wednesday, September 28.

**Meeting Materials:** Paper copies of the documents listed below will not be mailed to you before the meeting, but will be provided at the meeting. The documents will be emailed to you as they become available, and a PDF of each document will be posted to [www.nefmc.org](http://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](mailto:jperos@nefmc.org); 978-465-0492 ext. 117).

1. Meeting Memo from Scallop Committee Chair, Mr. Mark Alexander
2. Scallop Framework 29
  - a. Draft Framework 29 Action Plan
  - b. FW29 Discussion Document
  - c. Northern Gulf of Maine Management Measures Discussion Document
  - d. Flatfish Accountability Measures Information
  - e. Draft 2017 survey biomass estimates

3. Scallop PDT meeting summaries
  - a. June 27, 2017 Scallop PDT meeting summary
  - b. July 21, 2017 Scallop PDT meeting summary
  - c. August 29 & 30 Scallop PDT meeting summary
  - d. September 12, 2017 Scallop PDT meeting summary
4. Draft of list of Potential 2018 Priorities for Scallop FMP
5. 2018/2019 Scallop RSA Federal Funding Opportunity
6. Correspondence
7. LAGC IFQ Fishery Program Review (See Reference Binder for hardcopy at meeting)

### **2017 Scallop Survey and Preliminary Biomass Estimates**

**Recent Activity:** The Scallop PDT met in Falmouth, MA on Aug. 29 & 30, 2017 to hear presentations on 2017 scallop survey results, review preliminary survey biomass estimates, and discuss 2016 and 2017 fishery data. The group also received an update on continued work tracking scallop meat quality. Several groups completed surveys in 2017 through RSA support. VIMS completed dredge surveys of the Mid-Atlantic, Nantucket Lightship and surrounds, and Closed Area II and surrounds. SMAST completed high resolution drop camera surveys of Closed Area I and surrounds, Closed Area II and surrounds, and the Elephant Trunk, as well as the broadscale surveys of the Mid-Atlantic and Georges Bank primarily using high resolution Imperx Digital Still camera. The Coonamessett Farm Foundation surveyed the Nantucket Lightship using HabCam V3, and WHOI surveyed areas of the Northern Edge, including eastern Georges Shoal using HabCam V5. The NEFSC survey utilized both HabCam 4 and a dredge survey in the Mid-Atlantic and on Georges Bank. In the Gulf of Maine, SMAST and the Coonamessett Farm Foundation completed optical surveys in areas of the Northern Gulf of Maine that had been fished in 2016 and 2017. VIMS presented updated information on scallop meat quality in the Mid-Atlantic from their 2017 survey. The PDT also reviewed information on recent fishery activity, discarding behavior, and landings by market grade.

**Next Steps:** Council staff will review the results of the 2017 scallop surveys, and present information that is intended to inform the discussion around potential specification alternatives to be considered in Framework 29. The Committee may wish to develop potential specification alternatives and task the PDT with model runs (for review in October). The scallop PDT will be meeting on September 25, 2017 at the Mariners House in Boston, MA to review ABC estimates and a first run of the SAMS model. The scallop Committee will meet on October 26, 2017 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Boston, MA to discuss the specification runs/alternatives in FW29.

### **Framework 29: Northern Gulf of Maine Management Measures**

**Recent Activity:** The Council initiated Framework 29 at its April meeting, and approved a problem statement to guide work on Northern Gulf of Maine management measures. At the request of the Council, additional RSA funds were made available from the 2018 award cycle to support survey work in the Northern Gulf of Maine. SMAST surveyed portions of Stellwagen Bank using the drop camera, and the Coonamessett Farm Foundation surveyed Jeffreys Ledge and Stellwagen Bank using HabCam v3. Both surveys were conducted after fishing in the NGOM was completed. The PDT is in the process of projecting 2018 exploitable biomass, and will begin reviewing this information its meeting on September 25, 2017 at the Mariners House in Boston, MA. In response to the Council's problem statement and Committee tasking, the PDT has also developed a discussion document to aid the conversation of how to handle a TAC split between the General Category and Limited Access Components (Document 2c).

Based on the Committee's tasking motion to develop options for splitting the NGOM TAC using a hybrid approach, several tables have been developed in Document 2c to show how the TAC split for GC and LA under recent NGOM TACs as the "floor", and a percent split between the two components ranging from 0% - 100%.

**Next Steps:** Staff will review NGOM survey results and discuss preliminary 2017 survey biomass estimates and the contents of Document 2c. The PDT is seeking input from the Committee on the range of alternatives to be developed and analyzed in Framework 29. There will not be final information available on 2018 exploitable biomass at this meeting, but based on the survey results the PDT believes that it is reasonable to assume that the overall allocated NGOM TAC (to be split between GC and LA) will not be more than a few hundred thousand pounds.

*TAC Consideration #1:* The Committee may wish to provide input on a range of TAC "floors" for the GC, and a range of percentages to consider for the TAC split. The Committee may also wish to offer additional approaches of how to split the NGOM TAC.

*TAC Consideration #2:* The Council will also be considering harvest approaches for the LA in the NGOM in Framework 29. The PDT is looking for Committee input at this meeting ways to structure this harvest (i.e. trips, trip size, lottery, etc.).

The main goal is to have new measures in place for April 1, 2018.

### **Framework 29: Flatfish Accountability Measures**

**Recent Activity:** The PDT has worked on development of flatfish accountability measures over several meetings, and will be presenting bycatch "saving" options to the Advisory Panel for northern windowpane flounder, and Georges Bank yellowtail flounder. The PDT is in the process of calculating the bycatch "savings" of SNE/ME yellowtail flounder using the same AM parameters in place for southern windowpane (gear modification, west of 71° W).

**Next Steps:** Staff will present bycatch "savings" approaches for northern windowpane and GB yellowtail flounder at this meeting. The PDT is seeking input from the Committee on the range of measures that will be developed in Framework 29. The Committee should be prepared to comment on the information prepared by the PDT, and to provide input on the timing and scales of AMs for northern windowpane and GB yellowtail at this meeting.

### **2018 Scallop Work Priorities**

**Recent Activity.** The Council will be making its final decision on 2018 work priorities at its December meeting, and will be reviewing an initial list of items as potential work priorities for 2018 at its September meeting. The scallop PDT discussed 2018 work priorities at its meetings on July 18, 2017 and Aug. 30, 2017.

**Next Steps.** Staff will review potential work priorities for 2018. The Committee should be prepared to provide input on the current list of potential 2018 work priorities, but does not need to rank them at this meeting. The goal for this discussion is to discuss items on the list and bring forward new concepts for the Council to consider.

## **Executive Orders about streamlining current regulations**

Staff will review recent Executive Orders that have been issued about streamlining current regulations. NOAA is seeking public input on the efficiency and effectiveness of current regulations and whether they can be improved. Members will review AP input and discuss if there are any regulations in the Scallop FMP that could be eliminated, improved, or streamlined.

## **Review of Scallop AP Applications**

The Committee will review applicants for an open seat on the scallop AP in a closed door session following the meeting.

Please review all documents before the meeting.

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