New England Fishery Management Council
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MEETING SUMMARY

Scallop PDT Meeting

March 21, 2017

The Scallop PDT met by conference call on March 21, 2017 to: 1) continue PDT discussion on analysis needs for 2017 work items and review preliminary analysis done for a) Flatfish Accountability Measures, and b) Northern Gulf of Maine Management measures.

MEETING ATTENDANCE: Jonathon Peros (PDT Chair), Demet Haksever, Sam Asci, Trish Cheney, Dr. Bill DuPaul, Travis Ford, Ben Galuardi, Dr. Dvora Hart (first half), Kevin Kelly, Dr. David Rudders, Danielle Palmer, Tim Cardiasmenos, Dr. David Bethoney, and Dr. Cate O'Keefe. Mary Beth Tooley the Scallop Committee Chair, and several members of the public also joined the call.

KEY OUTCOMES:

- The PDT was briefed on the 2017 NGOM fishery by GARFO staff.
- GARFO staff described methods for the 'real-time' tracking of daily catch from the NGOM which will minimize the likelihood of a TAC overage for FY2017.
- There are no published plans to survey the NGOM management area this year. The PDT recommends that the southern portion of the NGOM management be surveyed in 2017.

Council staff welcomed Dr. David Bethoney from SMAST to the Scallop PDT. He was appointed by the Council's Executive Director to the PDT earlier this month.

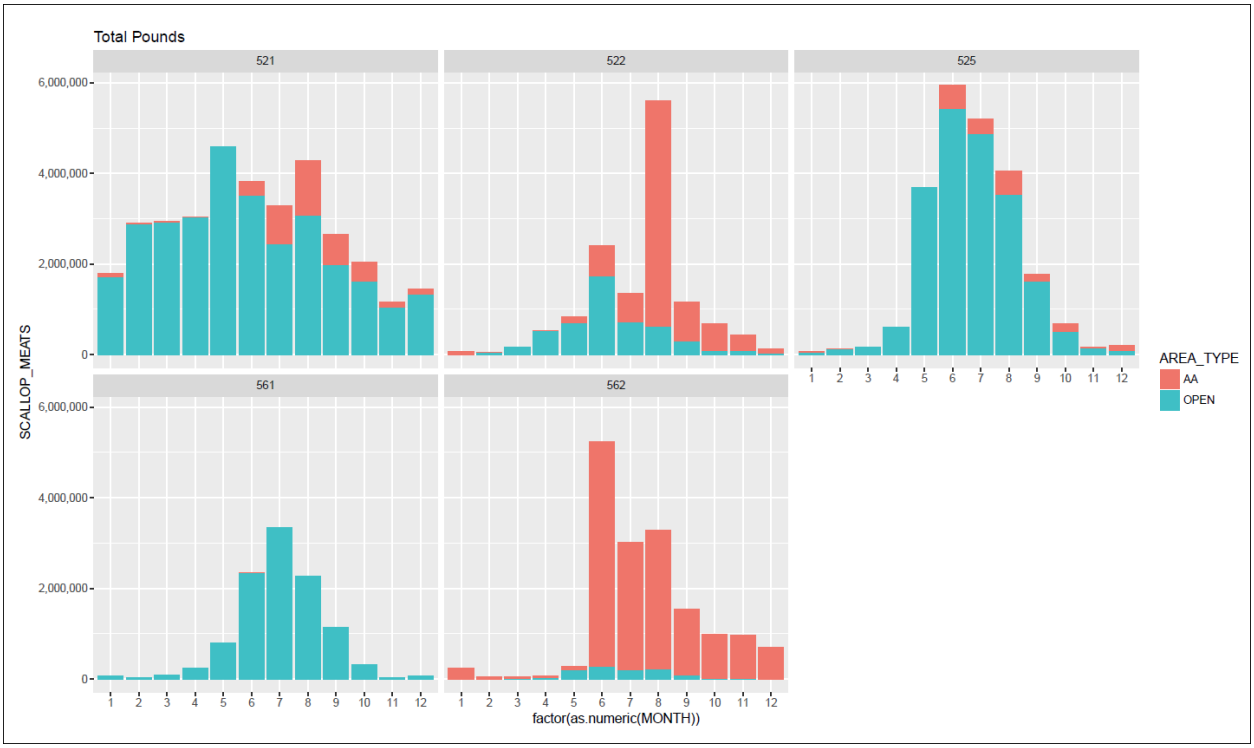
FLATFISH AM-DISCUSSION:

Mr. Ben Galuardi presented information on scallop landings by year and month for statistical reporting areas on Georges Bank by open area and access area trips for FY 2008 – 2017. The landings information is based on dealer reports matched with VTR records. Monthly catch data suggests that the majority of landings occur between May and the late fall/early winter in SRA 522, 525, 561, and 562, while landings from these areas appear to be lowest from January – April (Figure 1).

A PDT member suggested that landings from SRA 521 (Channel, east of Cape Cod) be included in this analysis. Mr. Galuardi was able to update the analysis to include data from this area (see

below). The PDT had a brief discussion, and raised the question of how effort might disperse if areas are closed seasonally.

Figure 1 – Scallop landings (meat weight) by month in SRA 521, 522,525, 561, 562 for FY 2008 – FY 2017.



NORTHERN GULF OF MAINE MANAGEMENT- DISCUSS BACKGROUND INFORMATION, ANALYSES, AND DATA NEEDS:

Staff presented an overview of preliminary data from observed trips in SRA 514 in the NGOM, and explained that more information should be available for the April Council meeting.

Mr. Ben Galuardi updated the PDT on the current landings estimates from the NGOM management area in 2017. This year GARFO changed the way it tracked removals from the area in an attempt to track landing on a near real-time basis. To do this, GARFO staff utilized VMS pre-landing reports from LAGC IFQ vessels, and VMS daily catch reports from LA vessels. The daily catch reports include a latitude and longitude, which was used to determine if the vessel was fishing in the NGOM management area or not. GARFO also looked at the number of trips completed by the LAGC fishery, which could be used to calculate a theoretical maximum of landing by multiplying the number of trips by the 200 lb trip limit.

The majority of fishing in the NGOM in 2017 occurred on Stellwagen Bank. The PDT reviewed daily catch estimates, as well as projections for removals from the area. Several members of the PDT felt that daily LPUE reports could be a useful to review. Mr. Galuardi noted that both single and double dredge vessels were active in the NGOM area, and suggested separating the daily LPUE estimates by dredge size. GARFO staff confirmed that more than 40 limited access boats

fished in the NGOM in 2017, and will be providing an exact number to the Council after the area closes. GARFO staff also noted that the Agency had received a request to close the area through Emergency Action, and explained that catch rates in the area suggested that the LAGC component would catch the TAC (closing the area) before an Emergency Action would take effect.

Members of the PDT noted that historically the scallop fishery in the Gulf of Maine has been boom and bust (ME DMR now employs rotational management). The area has been characterized by sporadic recruitment events, which may make projecting the status of scallops in this area difficult in the future. A biological framework is needed to determine the status of the resource. Developing a consistent survey data stream would be an initial step toward developing a baseline for the area.

With respect to some of the issues that emerged in the 2016 fishery with vessels possessing and processing more than 50 US bu of shell stock inshore of the demarcation line, Dr. Cate O'Keefe from MA DMF explained that the Commonwealth had observed no cases of illegal shucking in state waters in 2017.

The Committee or Council have not met yet, and the PDT has not received tasking on this work item. In the absence of tasking, some members of the PDT noted that if the Council is interested in manage total removals from the area, a different tool would needed to track LA landings in the area.

The PDT noted that while the landings from the area have increased, the overall removals from the area will likely represent a small percentage (~2%) of the projected total harvest (47.5 million lbs) in 2017.

The PDT also noted that exploring the potential differences between the resource in the Gulf of Maine and other areas (GB and MA) could be helpful to the Council as it considers potential changes to the management of this area. The PDT discussed identifying a suite of data sources that could be used to characterize the GOM area, such as presence/absence in the northern shrimp survey. The group noted that findings from peer-reviewed research on Gulf of Maine scallops may be a valuable source as the PDT gathers information regarding the NGOM resource. Since the call Council staff compiled the list of potential resources:

Auster, P. J., Malatesta, R. J., Langton, R. W., Watting, L., Valentine, P. C., Donaldson, C. L. Shepard, A. N., & Babb, W. G. (1996). The impacts of mobile fishing gear on seafloor habitats in the Gulf of Maine (Northwest Atlantic): implications for conservation of fish populations. *Reviews in Fisheries Science*, *4*(2), 185-202.

Kelly, K. H. 2010. Results from Maine sea scallop surveys, 2002-2008. Appendix B5 in Northeast Fisheries Science Center 50th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (50th SAW) Assessment Report, US Dept Commer, Northeast Fish Sci Cent Ref Doc. 10-17.

Langton, R. W., & Robinson, W. E. (1990). Faunal associations on scallop grounds in the western Gulf of Maine. *J Exp Mar Biol Ecol*,144:157-171.

Langton, R. W., Robinson, W. E., & Schick, D. (1987). Fecundity and reproductive effort of sea scallops *Placopecten magellanicus* from the Gulf of Maine. *Marine Ecology Progress Series*, 37:19-25.

Serchuk, Frederic M., Paul W. Wood, and Robert S. Rak. *Review and assessment of the Georges Bank, Mid-Atlantic and Gulf of Maine Atlantic sea scallop (Placopecten magellanicus) resources*. National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Center, Woods Hole Laboratory, 1982.

Schick, D. F., Shumway, S. E., & Hunter, M. A. (1988). A comparison of growth rate between shallow water and deep water populations of scallops, *Placopecten magellanicus* (Gmelin, 1791), in the Gulf of Maine. *Am. Malacol. Bull*., *6*(1), 1-8.

Truesdell, S.B., K.H. Kelly, C.E. O'Keefe, and Y. Chen. 2010. An assessment of the sea scallop resource in the Northern Gulf of Maine management area. Appendix B6 in Northeast Fisheries Science Center 50th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (50th SAW) Assessment Report, US Dept Commer, Northeast Fish Sci Cent Ref Doc. 10-17.

The PDT agreed that these resources may be a good starting point; however, the PDT's focus will be dictated by how the Council chooses to approach this issue.

PDT follow-up:

- Trend in the daily LPUE of LA vessels fishing on Stellwagen Bank. (Ben Galuardi)
- Discuss the NGOM survey as part of the 2018/2019 RSA priority setting at future meeting.

Key considerations:

1. The approach used to set the NGOM TAC did not control total landings from the area as expected. The removals from the NGOM in 2017 exceed the anticipated landings.

2. GARFO changed the way catch estimates generated in-season in order to provide a near real-time estimate of landings for monitoring purposes. This involved using LAGC pre-landing report, and LA daily catch reports.

3. The PDT recommends that a 2018/2019 RSA priority should be to survey the NGOM area, with particular emphasis on the southern portion NGOM management area.

4. The PDT recommends that the southern portion of the NGOM management be surveyed in 2017.

Other Business:

No other business was discussed.