

Scallop AP & Committee

Jonathon Peros & Sam Asci

**June 14 & 16, 2021
Webinar**



New England
Fishery Management Council

Today's Meeting

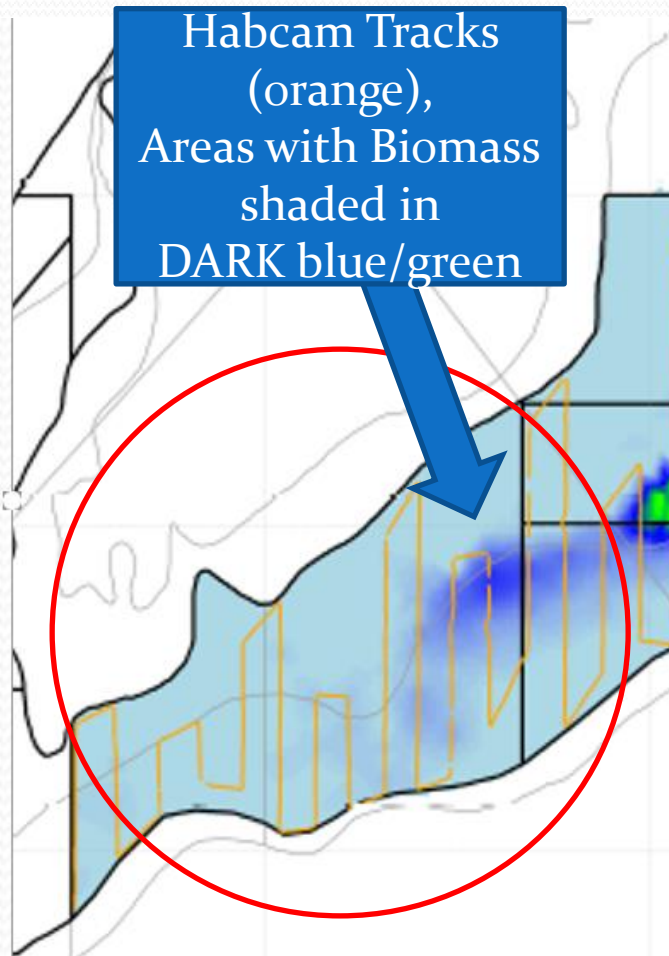
- Updates: Start of FY 2021 and outlook for 2022/2023
- Develop recommendations for 2022/2023 Scallop RSA
- Update on progress toward 2021 scallop work priorities
- Review Scallopers Campaign request for secretarial action to implement a scallop leasing program

FY2021 and outlook for FY2022/2023

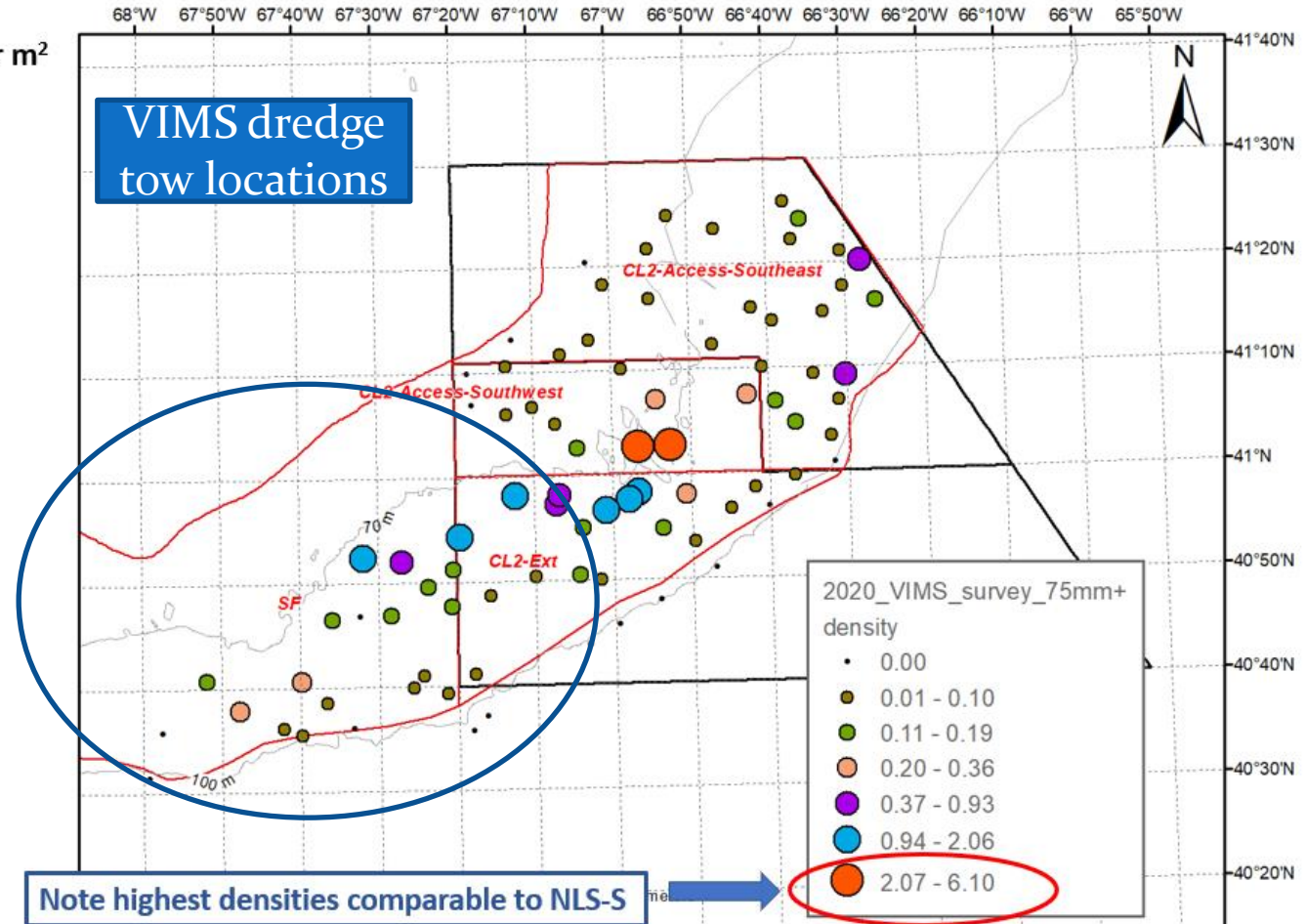
- Fishing in open areas on eastern GB is/was better than predicted. What happened?
- DAS usage up. Use of carryover days?
- Closed Area II opening → Us and 10-20s, where is the fishing happening in the AA?
- Reports on fishing in the Mid-Atlantic Access Area is that LPUE is lower than people expected.
 - What is the outlook for this area for next year? Options be for 2022?
 - Important fishing grounds for MA based boats.
- 20-30 counts coming from the NLS-S [deep]. Did they grow? Peak yields? Next year?
- NGOM fishery in southern part of the area. Any reports from MSI?
- Price is up. Market premium for Us.

Southern Flank – 2020 Surveys

Sub-Area	Projection of Exploitable Biomass 2021	Year Classes in the Area	Recruitment?	PDT Recommendation
Southern Flank	15.4 Mil. Lbs (6,989 mt)	2+	Yes	Open Bottom



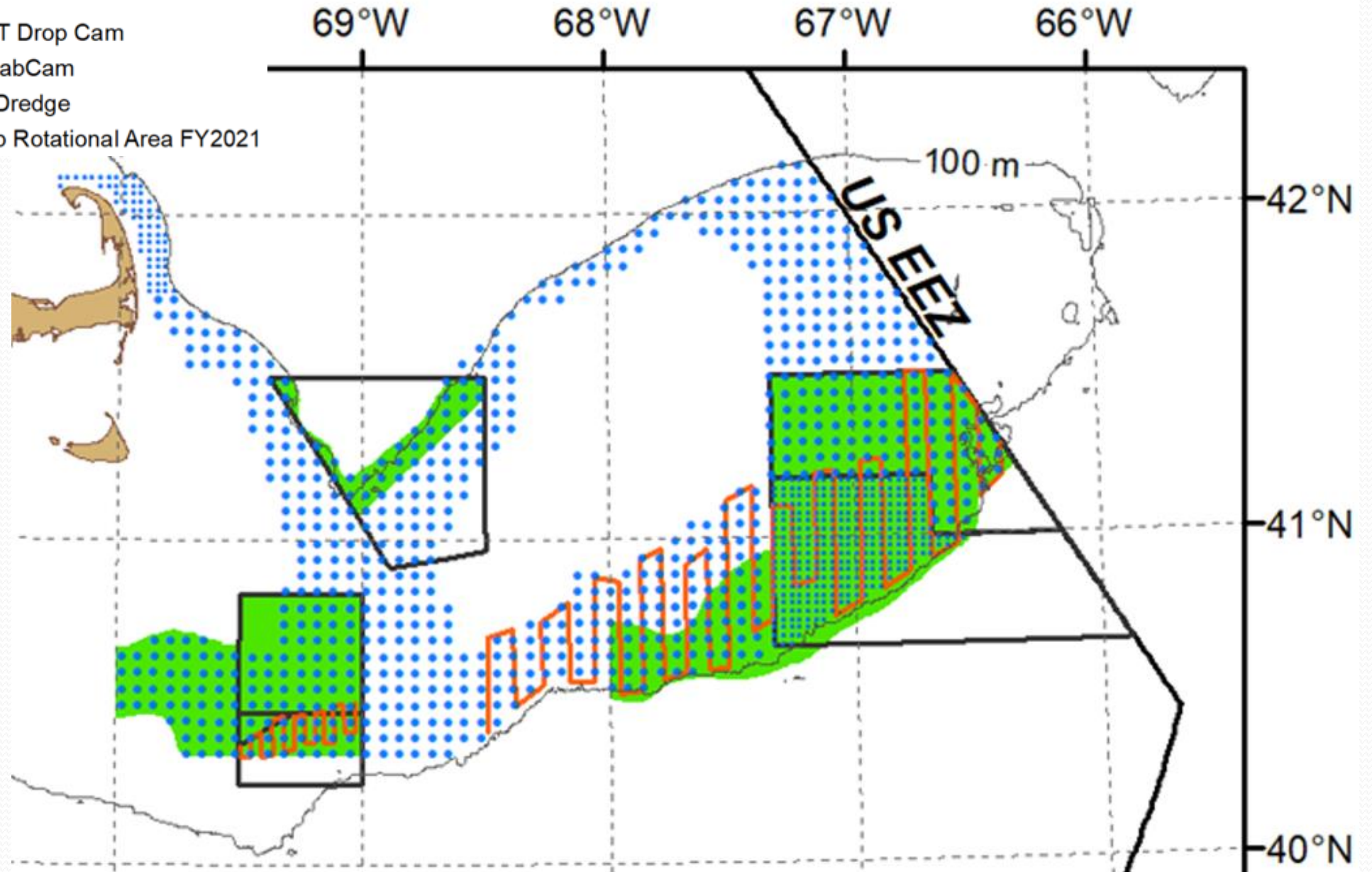
Scallops per m²
75 mm+



GB 2021 Surveys – RSA Supported

Legend

- SMAST Drop Cam
- CFF HabCam
- VIMS Dredge
- Scallop Rotational Area FY2021



LPUE

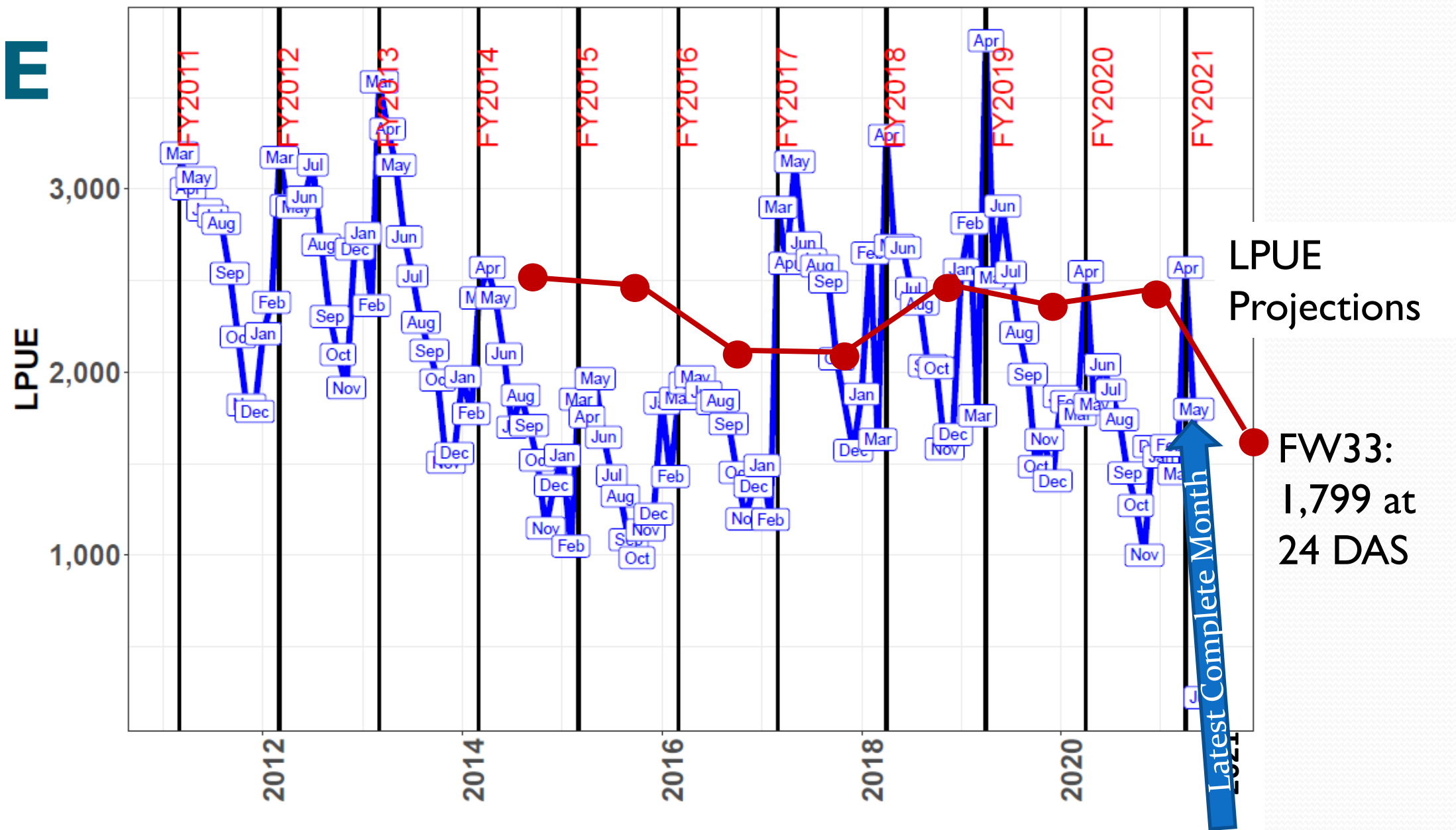


Figure 8: LPUE by month for Open Area Limited Access fishing. LPUE was calculated by dividing monthly scallop meat total landings by the days-at-sea charged.

Open Area DAS fished

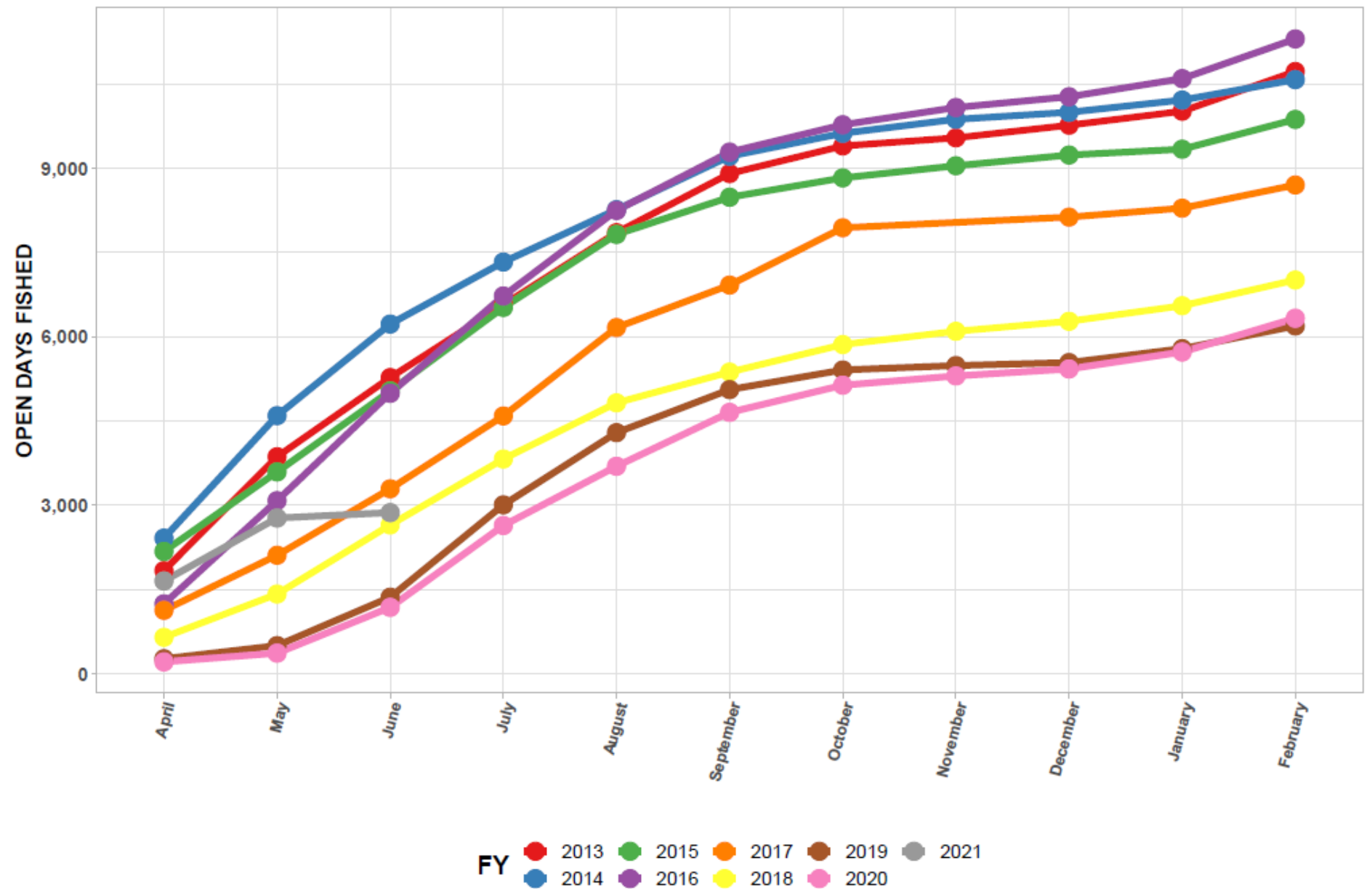


Figure 11: Cumulative open area days fished, for 2013-2021

Total Landings

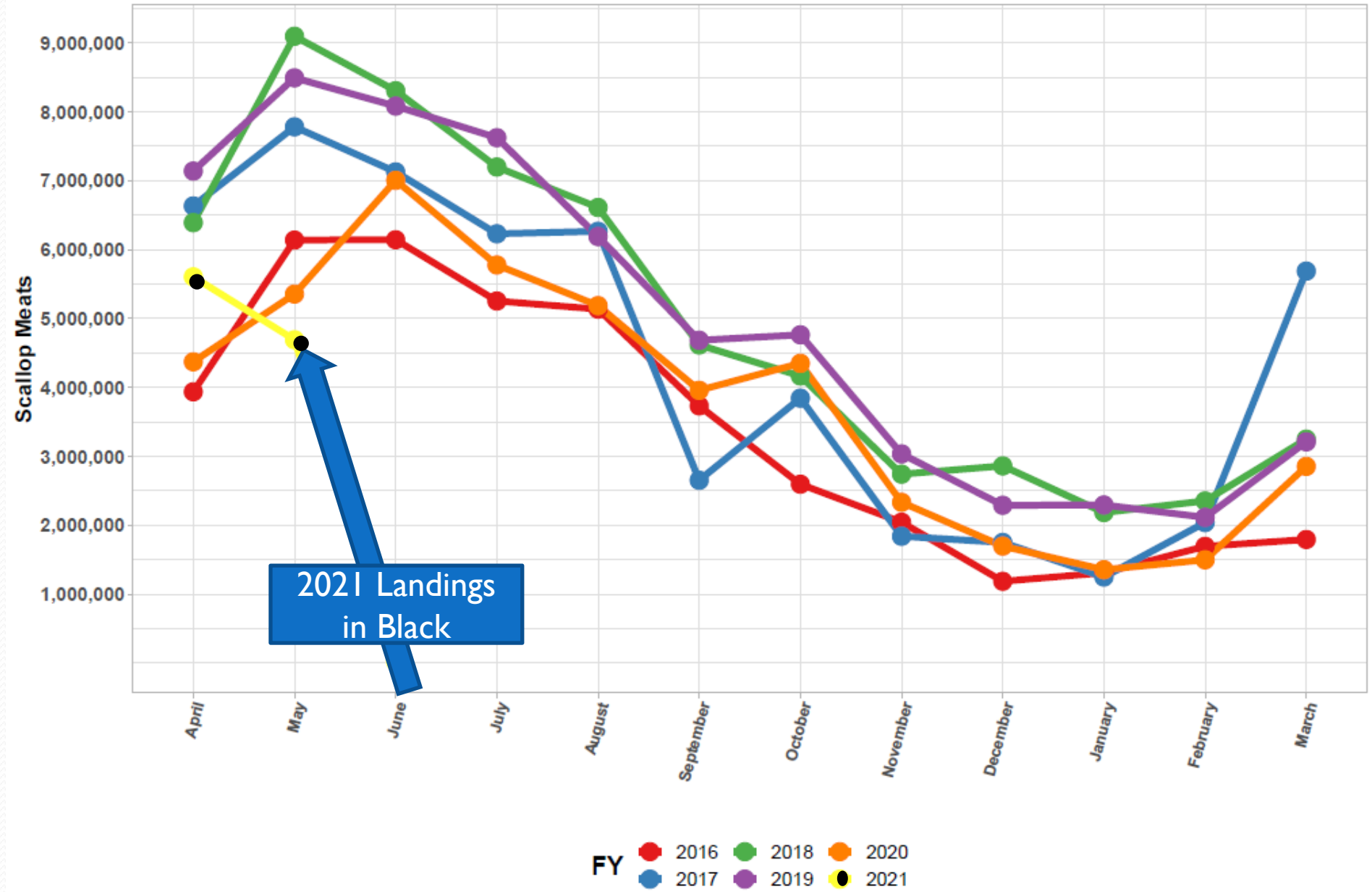
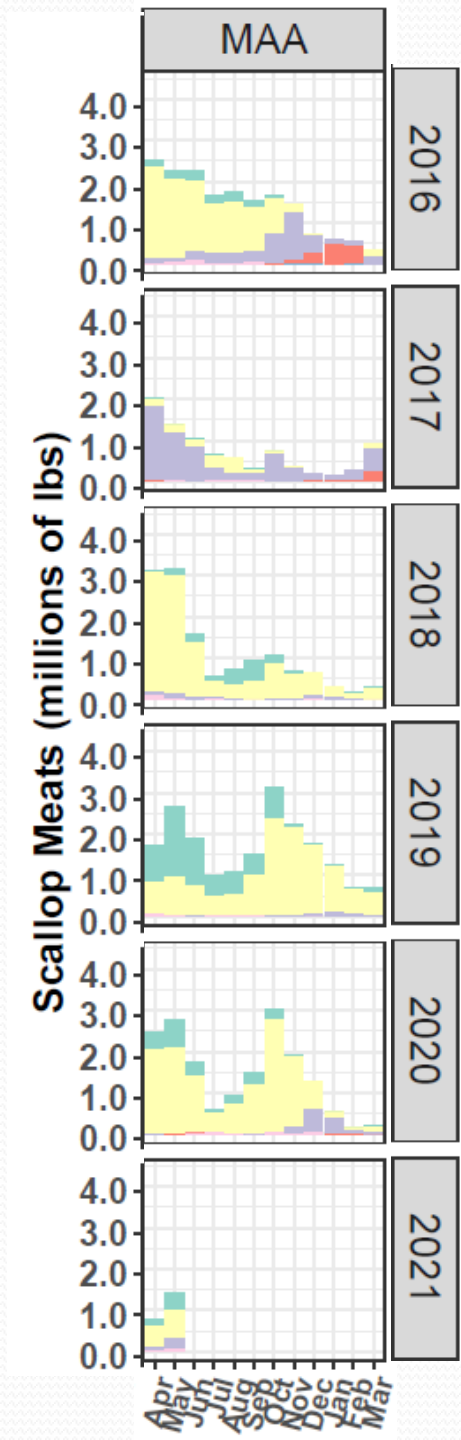


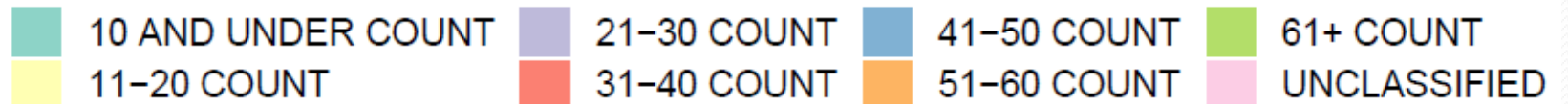
Figure 9: Total scallop landings by month, 2016-2021



Landings and Allocations in the Mid-Atlantic Access Area (2016 – 2021)

YEAR	Rotational Management	Max Allocated Pounds
2016	3 trips at 17,000 lbs, ET-Flex Closed	16.7 mil.
2017	2 trips, 1 in ET-Flex, 1 in rest of MAAA at 18k lbs	12 mil
2018	2 in MAAA 18k lbs	12 mil
2019	3 in MAAA 18k lbs plus 1 FLEX from CAI	18 mil + 6 mil FLEXed
2020	2 in MAAA at 18k lbs plus .5 FLEX from CAI	12 mil + 3 mil FLEXed
2021	1 in MAAA at 18k	6 mil
Total	13 trips, plus 1.5 FLEX trips to MAAA	76.7 Mil + 9 mil FLEXed ~86 mil total, plus RSA

Market Grade



Mid-Atlantic Research

Dr. Dvora Hart and Dr. Han Chang

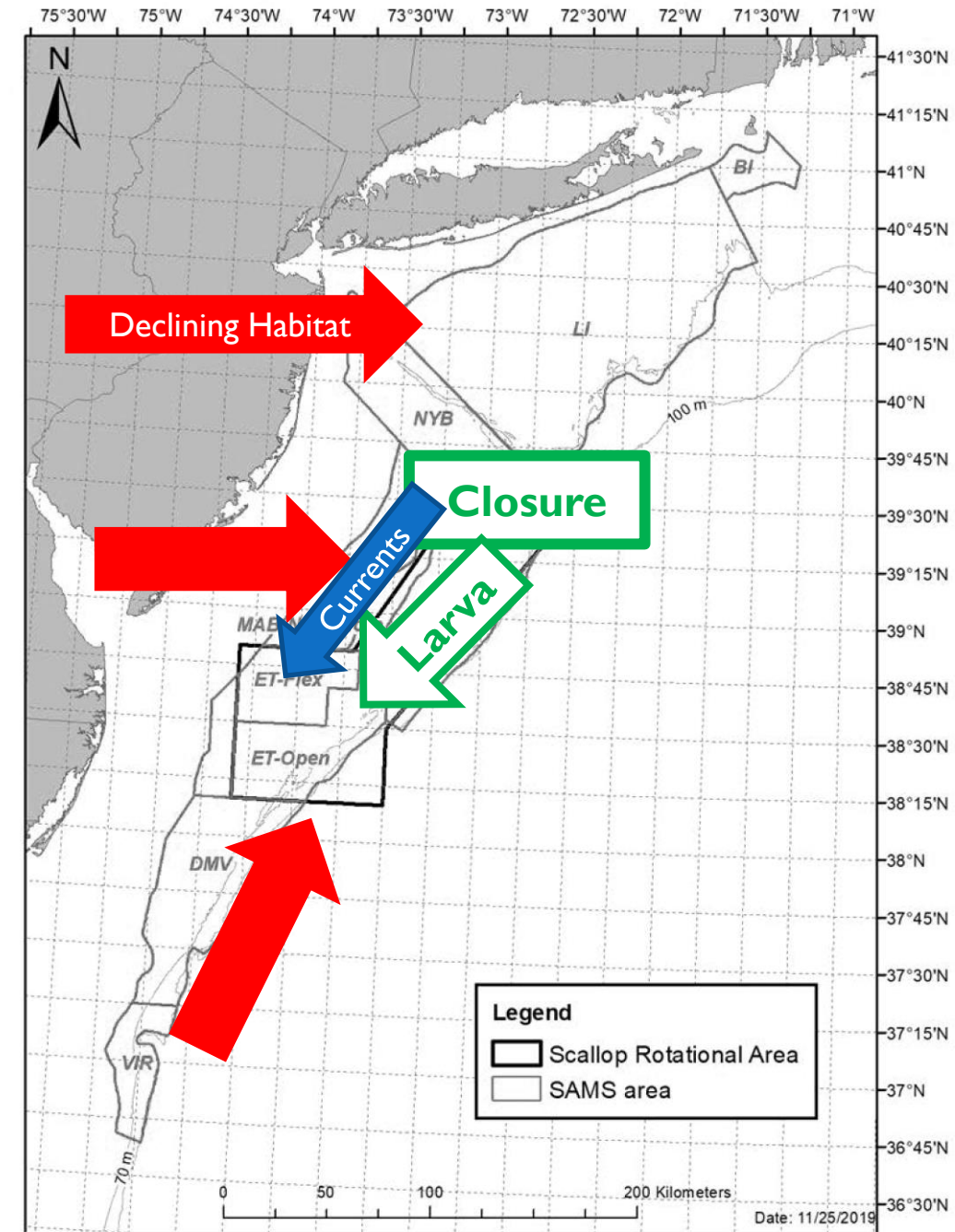
- Increases in recruitment were observed down current of the HCS after this area was closed. Models support connectivity from HCS to ET.
- Scallop habitat has declined in the Mid-Atlantic (in general), and will continue to decline with warmer temperatures.

Recent Surveys

- Order of magnitude decline of biomass in DMV.
- VIR and DMV no longer rotational areas.

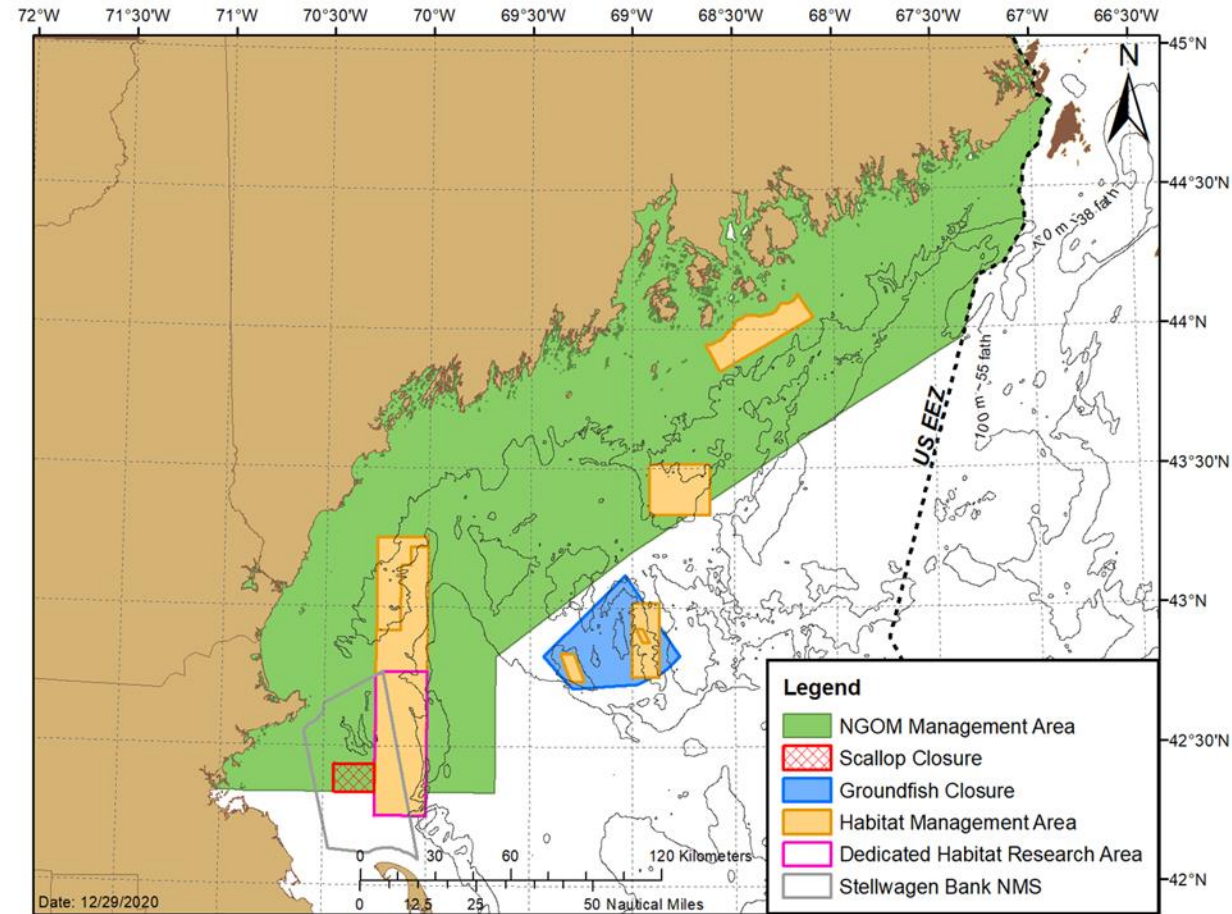
Mid-Atlantic remains a viable fishing area.

This fall: Assess survey data in HCS area, discuss if targeted closures can be a way to improve chances of recruitment in ET, areas to the south.



2021 NGOM Update

- Landings ~129k lbs, 108% of TAC
- Landings per trip ~175lbs
- Area open 36 days (Closed May 6)
- Most of the fishing in the southern portion of the area.
 - Jeffreys Ledge
 - Ipswich Bay
- Stellwagen Bank will remain closed until FW34 is implemented.
- A2I measures implemented through FW34.



Prices

- Figure shows average price per trip for LA and LACG by areas. [CAI small sample size]
- Us fetched over \$30 early in the season, over \$20 still
- Prices up from pandemic lows. Higher than we predicted.
- AP/Committee input?

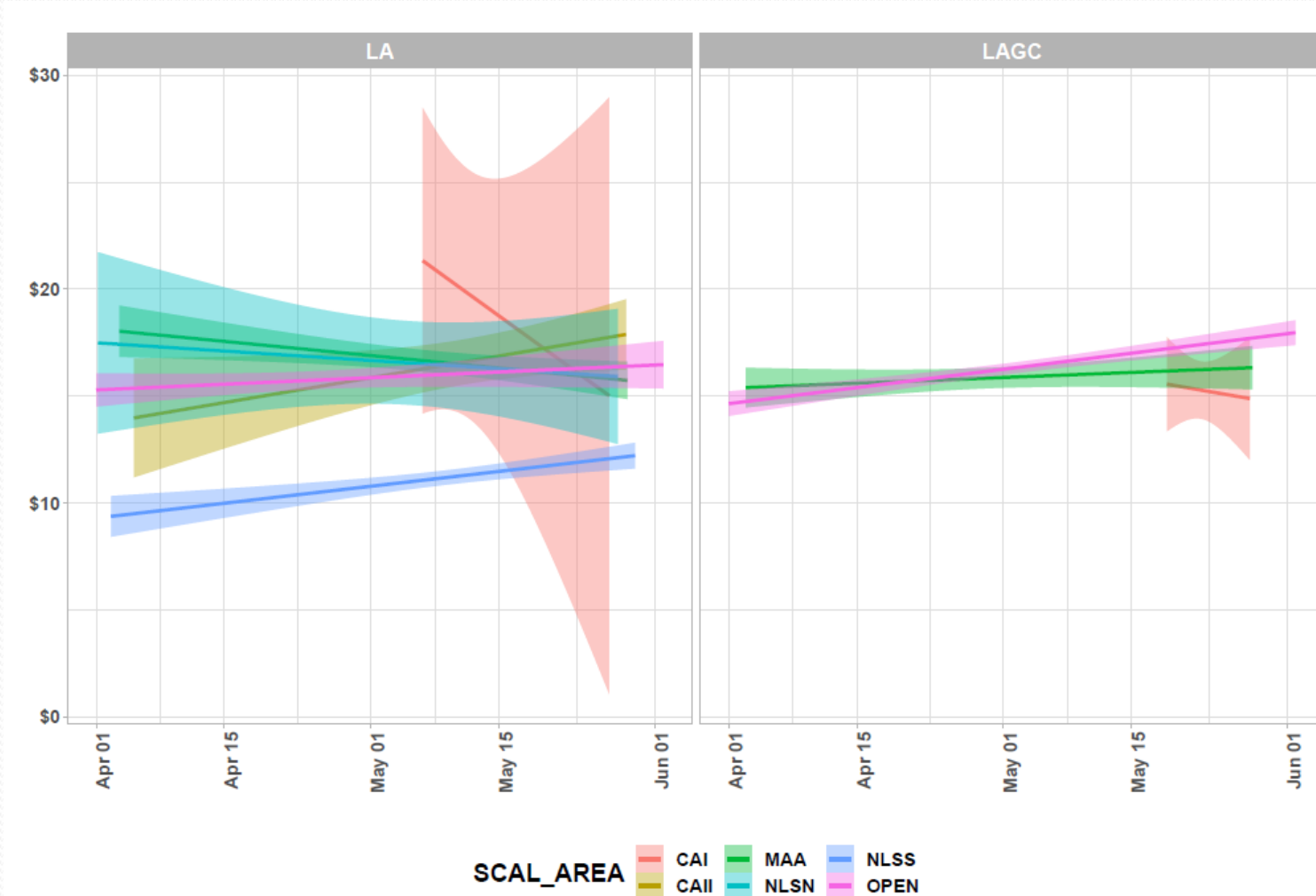


Figure 7: Average scallop price per trip by fleet and Area for Fishing Year 2021

2022/2023 RSA Priorities

Today's RSA Discussion

- GOAL: Develop recommendations for 2022/2023 Scallop RSA Research priorities.
- This is the final opportunity for the AP and the Committee to weigh in as a group.
- Seeking input as motion(s) or a consensus statements.

RSA: Background and Process

- Scallop RSA program began in 1999.
- Evolved over time, 1.25 million pounds set-aside each year to fund research projects.
- About 10-15 projects are funded annually.
- No federal funds – awards in pounds of scallop – allocated through competitive grants process.
- **Council recommends RSA priorities at June meeting for summer announcement of the funding opportunity.**
- Management and Technical Reviews during the fall.
- Final project selections early the following year.

~~RSA Share Day~~ Scallop Research Share Day

Objectives: Researchers to share findings with fishery managers and Scallop Plan Development Team. Invite talks funded by non-RSA sources.



Milford, CT
Woods Hole, MA



Scallop Research Share Days

- 1/2 day sessions by webinar. [Talks and short reports are online.](#)
- Projects funded by RSA, COCA, FATE, NMFS (OA)
- May 6:
 - 7 talks. Automated detection in optical surveys, bycatch, aquaculture, growth, Mid-Atlantic: spillover and scallop habitat.
 - 65 attendees.
- May 12:
 - 8 talks. Bycatch, gear, growth, ocean acidification, modeling impacts of offshore wind.
 - 74 attendees.
- Springboard for RSA priorities discussion...

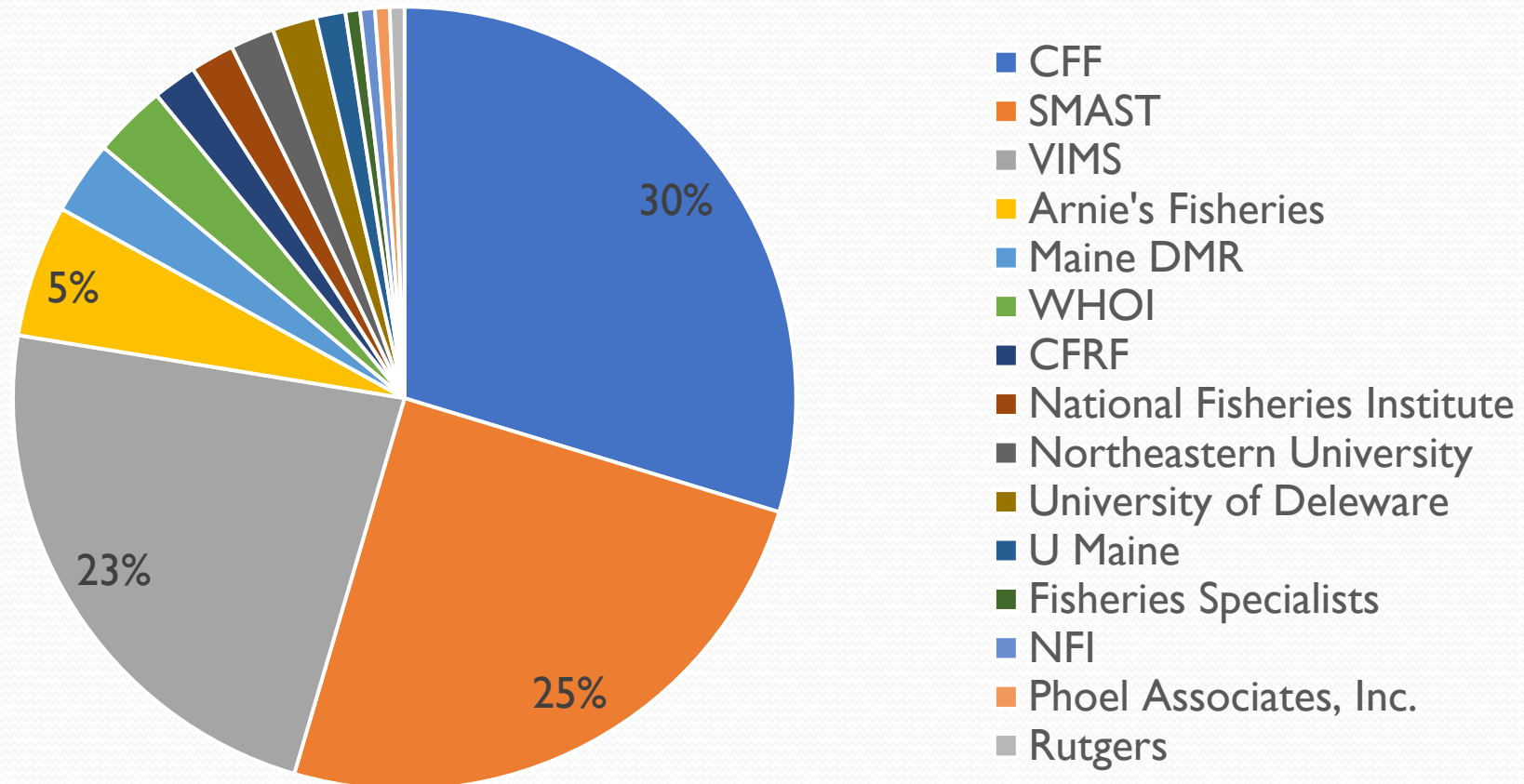
RSA Awards: 2010 - 2021

- ~\$147 million awarded over 11-year period
 - (Average scallop price) x (set-aside lbs) = Total funding
 - Total funding includes *compensation fishing* and *research*

Priority	Number of Projects		Funding
Survey	74	(45%)	\$62,376,499 (42%)
Bycatch	40	(24%)	\$35,950,182 (27%)
Other	51	(31%)	\$40,785,695 (30%)
Grand Total	165		\$146,818,013

Recipients: 2010 - 2021

- 15 groups received funding through 165 successful proposals
- Pie chart shows percentage of total RSA awards by group



2021/2022 Scallop RSA Awards

Priority	Priority Rank	Projects Funded	Research Cost
Survey	Highest	3	\$4,079,658
Bycatch/ Gear	General	6	\$5,246,205
Turtle	High	2	\$1,254,932
Biology	High	2	\$1,204,500
Total		13	\$11,785,295

One priority areas no projects funded: Scallop Recruitment Supplementation

RSA Common Price

- Common Price is set annually by NEFSC.
- Council staff provide input:
 - Model based or review of domestic fishery data and imports/exports
- RSA program review recommendation to formalize this process.
 - PDT support



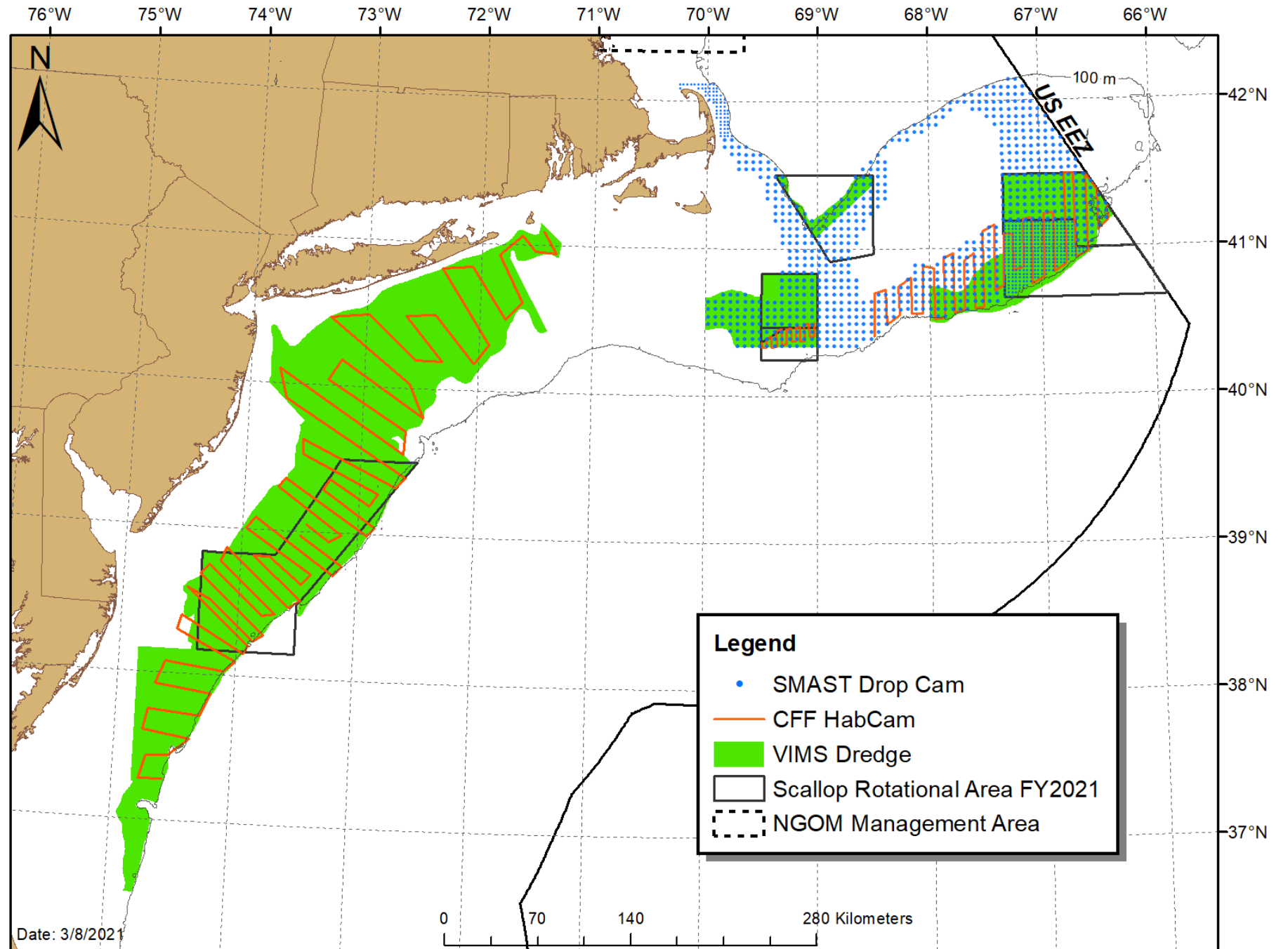
Year		Common Price
2009		\$7.55
2010	→	\$7.55
2011	↑	\$7.64
2012	↑	\$9.42
2013	↑	\$9.75
2014	↑	\$10.50
2015	↑	\$12.00
2016	→	\$12.00
2017	→	\$12.00
2018	↓	\$10.50
2019	↓	\$9.50
2020	→	\$9.50
2021	↑↑	\$12.50

Scallop RSA – Starting Questions

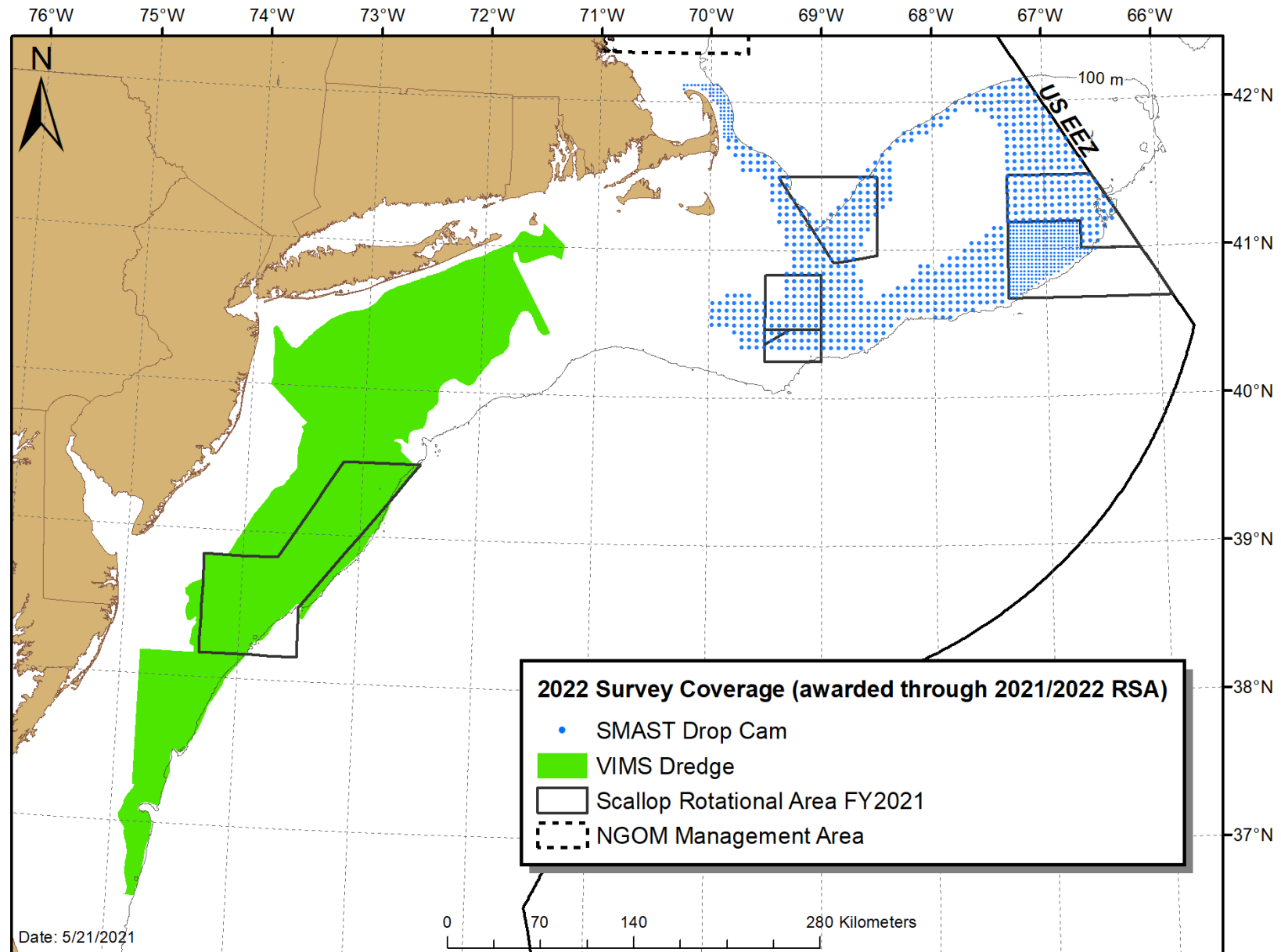
- Questions to Consider for the RSA Program Priorities:
 - (1) **If the research is successful, what action will be taken based on the findings** (e.g., is there a mechanism to use the results, is it within the purview of the entity asked to fund the research), and if so,
 - (2) **is the research likely to be successful** (or is the likelihood of success commensurate with the importance of the change it might lead to?)
- Limited pool of funding.

2021 coverage

NEFSC covering GB with dredge and HabCam



RSA Funded Coverage for 2022 (awarded through 2021/2022 RSA)



2021/2022 RSA Priorities

Council's Recommendations for 2021 RSA Priorities

- **Surveys: Highest Priority**

- Language re: COVID-19 delays added June 19, 2020
- Ia: access areas (MAAA, CAII, CAI, NLS)
- Ib: areas of interest (*recruitment* & GOM)
- Ic: Broadscale surveys of Mid-Atlantic and Georges Bank

- **High Priority Non-survey research (rank order)**

- 2. Turtle behavior
- 3. Scallop Biology

- **General Research Needs (not in rank order)**

- 4. Scallop Recruitment Supplementation
- 5. Bycatch: small scallops and non-target species
- 6. Gear: Commercial dredge research

PDT Discussion on RSA Priorities

- PDT recommends the same topics for 2022 that the AP and Committee recommended for 2021. Suggest modifications to the language within some topics and adjusted the rankings of non-survey priorities (see next slide).
- Discussion on long-term research ideas: oceanographic data, climate change, ocean acidification, the impacts of offshore wind development, and some aspects of sea turtle research. RSA program may not be the appropriate funding source to support long-term monitoring and data collection efforts.
- RSA is a limited pool of funding, may be other funding sources to support the research.
- Mid-season monitoring/surveying was discussed, but difficult to apply data in management.

PDT Recommendations for RSA Priorities

2022/203 RSA Priorities – SAME RESEARCH TOPICS AS LAST YEAR.

Adjustments *shown in track changes in Doc.2a*, Scallop Biology highest non-survey priority.

- **Surveys: Highest Priority**

- Language re: primary objectives of the surveys (in addition to NEFSC vs. supplying data)
- Ia: access areas (Ranked order: CAI, Elephant Trunk & Hudson Canyon, NLS, CAI)
- Ib: areas of interest (recruitment & GOM, emphasis on Stellwagen Bank)
- Ic: Broadscale surveys of Mid-Atlantic and Georges Bank, now includes areas along backside of Cape Cod and GOM south of 42'20.

PDT Recommendations for RSA Priorities

2022/203 RSA Priorities – SAME RESEARCH TOPICS AS LAST YEAR.

Adjustments *shown in track changes in Doc.2a*, Scallop Biology highest non-survey priority.

- **High Priority Non-survey research (rank order)**
 - 2. Scallop Biology (HIGH priority topics that relates to other key issues, added disease and parasites, continues to be a broad topic).
- **General Research Needs (not in rank order)**
 - 3. Turtle behavior (moved from HIGH priority and added linkage to research to management).
 - 4. Scallop Recruitment Supplementation (Focus on federal fishery, added development of standards and best practices, evaluation on economic feasibility).
 - 5. Bycatch: small scallops and non-target species (no changes proposed from 2021).
 - 6. Gear: Commercial dredge research (clarifying language added).

2021 Work Priorities

Scallop work priorities

High-Level overview of work items for the next 6 months.

Start discussing 2022 work priorities in September!

	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Amendment 21	Preliminary Submission	Final Submission & NOA		Proposed Rule	Public Comment		Final Rule
Framework 34	Initiated	Developing Measures & Surveys		Develop Specifications	Alternatives		Final Action
Evaluation of Rotational Management	Gather Data, RFP		Report writing [Contractor working with Scallop PDT and/or PDT sub-group]				Draft report to Council
SSWG		Meeting			Meeting?		Meeting?
RSA support	Priorities Vote	FFO		Proposals Due		Proposals Reviewed	

FW34 implementation of A2I measures

- FW34 will be the tool to implement measures recommended in Amendment 2I. Goal is April 1, 2022 implementation for both actions.
- A2I measures being addressed in FW34:
 - NGOM into the ACL flowchart.
 - Increase the Scallop RSA by 25,000 pounds.
 - Implement new allocations for the NGOM (GC, LA).
 - Increase LAGC IFQ possession limit in access areas to 800 pounds.
- LAGC IFQ Access Area Trip Accounting.

PDT will be working on this over the summer and into the fall.

Evaluation of Rotational Management

What we've planned:

- Focus on two questions:
 - Has the program achieved the primary objectives identified in Amendment 10;
 - Is the version of rotational management that we are using now working?
- Rely on available information such as landings, effort, observer data, etc.
- NRCC recently agreed to an evaluation of scallop projection models in the spring of 2023.
- The project timeline will run from June 2021 – December 2021, with a draft report prepared for the December Council meeting.
- Sub-group of the PDT will be working on this priority, with the assistance of a contractor.

Focus Areas:

1. Assess the performance of the program relative to a subset of the primary objectives of AIO:
 - a. (Obj. 1) Improve yield and rebuilding potential by reducing mortality on small scallops
 - b. (Obj. 4) Reduce and/or minimize bycatch mortality and habitat impacts
 - c. (Obj. 7) To continue controlled access to groundfish closed areas, consistent with groundfish rebuilding and habitat protection objectives in the context of area rotation management.
2. Describe program is currently being used in comparison to the original approach and describe the outcomes and rationale/justification for new approaches. This could include but is not limited to:
 - a. Policies/approaches to assess: Openings, closures, growth potential.
 - b. FLEX Trips → How have they been used? Outcomes?
 - c. Broken Trips → Now allocating pounds, not trips.
 - d. Trip trading at smaller increments → How is this being used?

Next Steps:

June-August

- PDT sub-group begins assembling data need for the evaluation.
- Put out an RFP seeking the support of a contractor.
- Initial meeting, and begin work

September - October

- Provide update to Committee and Council, opportunity for feedback.

November – December

- Focus on completing a draft report that would be available in December.

Staff: Seeking feedback on this plan from AP and Committee

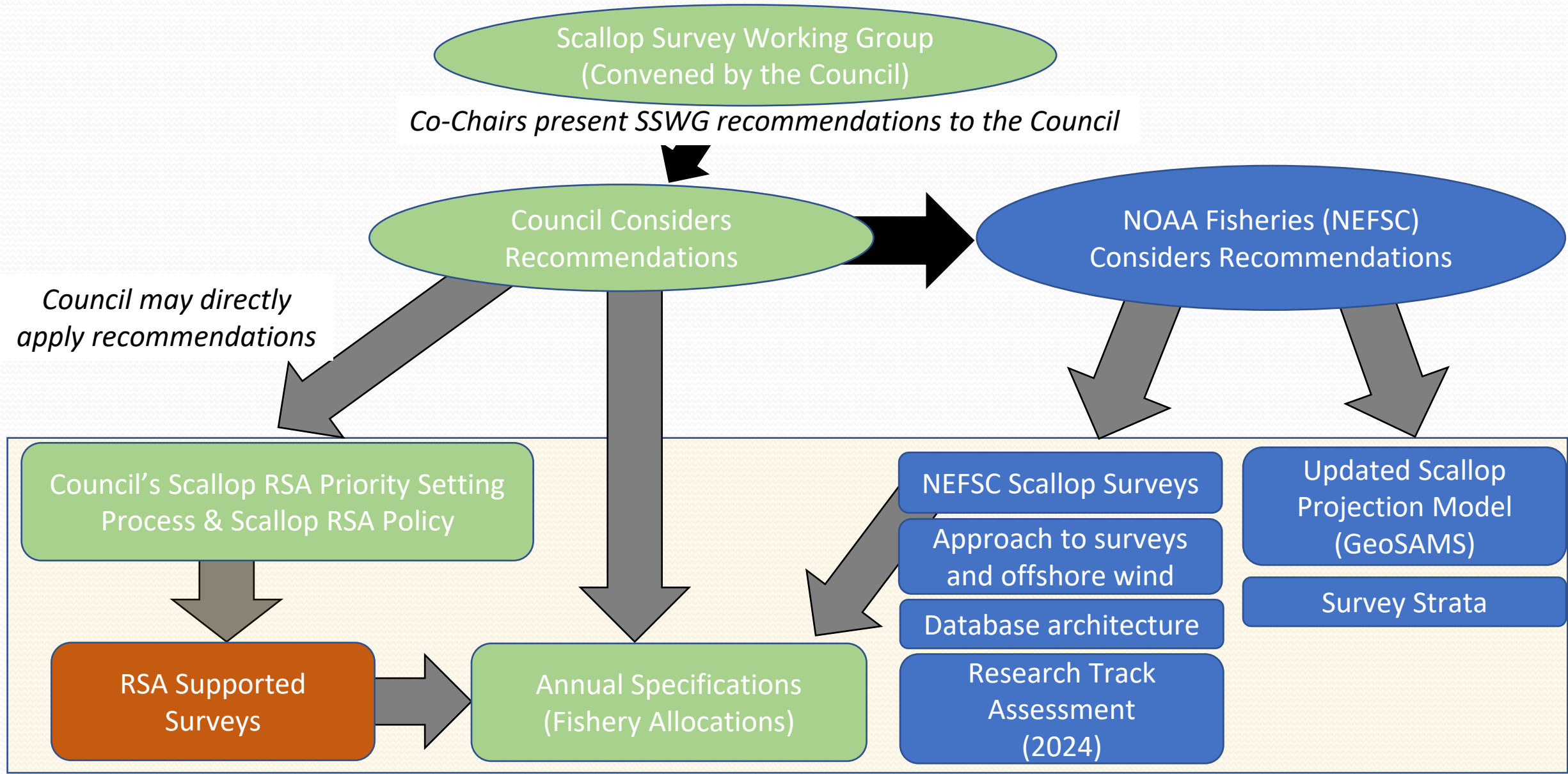
Scallop Survey Working Group (SSWG)

- Scallop Survey Working Group (SSWG) Council website:
 - <https://www.nefmc.org/committees/scallop-survey-working-group>
- Purpose:
 - Facilitate collaboration around integrated approaches to conduct scallop surveys that support stock assessments and management
 - Explore mechanisms to implement approaches

SSWG Process

- SSWG activities over 12-15 months, completed July 2022
- Co-Chairs, Council staff, facilitators will convene 5 or 6 meetings of SSWG
- SSWG Co-Chairs will present recommendations to the Council
- Council will share recommendations with NEFSC

Recommendations



Approved TORs and Meetings

- Approved TORs (shorthand here – see Doc.3b):
 - Describe the current survey system
 - Describe and assess a coordinated strategy for sea scallop resource assessment
 - Identify survey methods, tools, and designs to monitor and assess the scallop resource...that includes offshore wind installations and changes in resource and fishery distribution.
 - Identify and catalogue the survey data products needed to support stock assessment approaches in the future.
- Next Meeting: July 27, 2021 by webinar.
- Next full-day working group meeting in mid/late October

LAGC IFQ Access Area Trip Accounting

Overview

LAGC IFQ access area trip accounting

- Council priority for 2021, part of FW34
- Discussion related to increase in access area possession limit in FY2022 (A21) from 600 lbs to 800 lbs
- Higher trip limit = fewer trips
- Concern that access area fishing is underutilized in LAGC component based on current accounting method (see next slide)

No action required today.

IFQ Access Area Accounting

- Allocated fleet-wide number of trips to access areas
- Total trips per area = available allocation in pounds divided by IFQ trip limit
- Vessels can choose to fish quota in AAs, or in open areas (not required to fish in AAs)
- When GARFO projects that total trips have been taken, area closes to entire LAGC IFQ component



FEDERAL REGISTER
The Daily Journal of the United States Government



® Rule

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery; Closure of the Mid-Atlantic Scallop Access Area to General Category Individual Fishing Quota Scallop Vessels

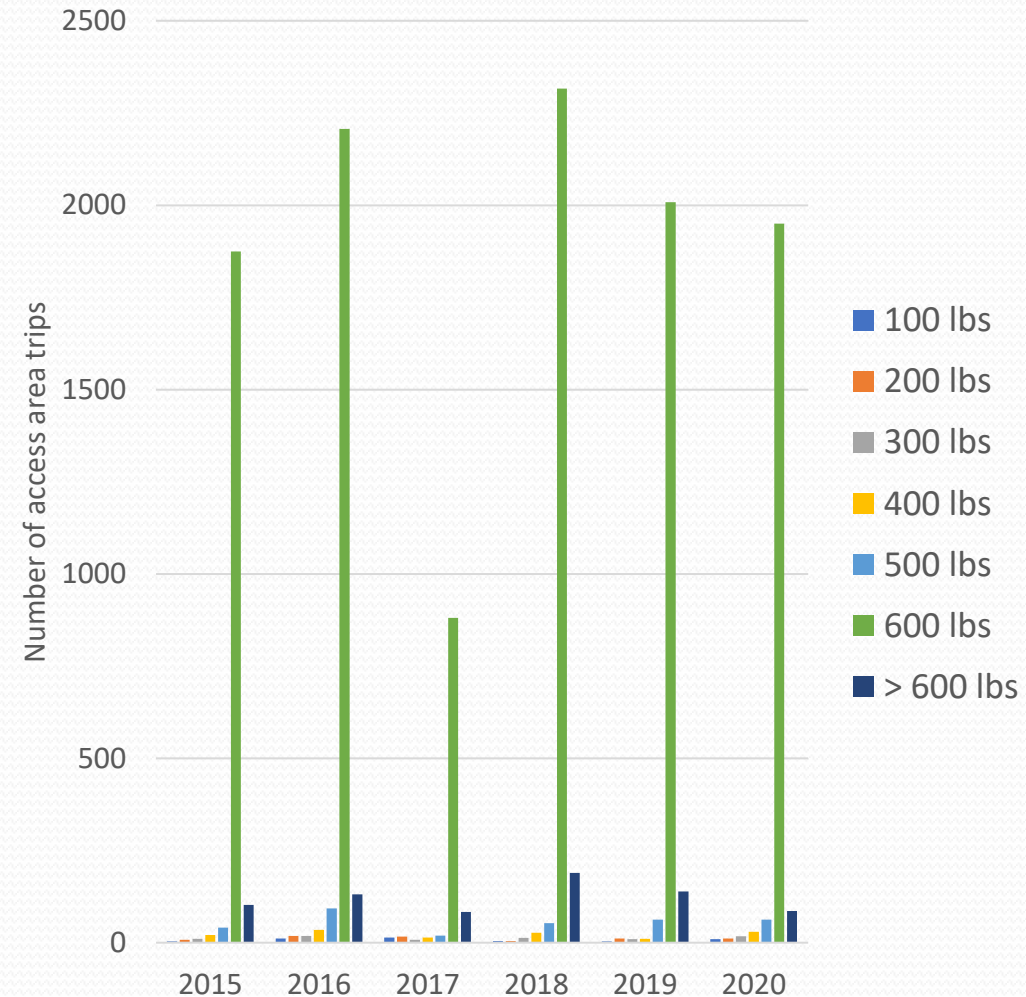
A Rule by the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) on 07/21/2020



LAGC IFQ AA landings per trip

- Landings have varied, but majority are in 600-pound range (see Figure 1)
 - Note: LAGC IFQ vessels can land more than 600 pounds when carrying an observer, or when completing RSA compensation fishing.

Figure 1 – Distribution of LAGC IFQ access area trips by pounds landed from FY2015 to FY2020



Concern around current approach

Example illustrating concern raised by Council:

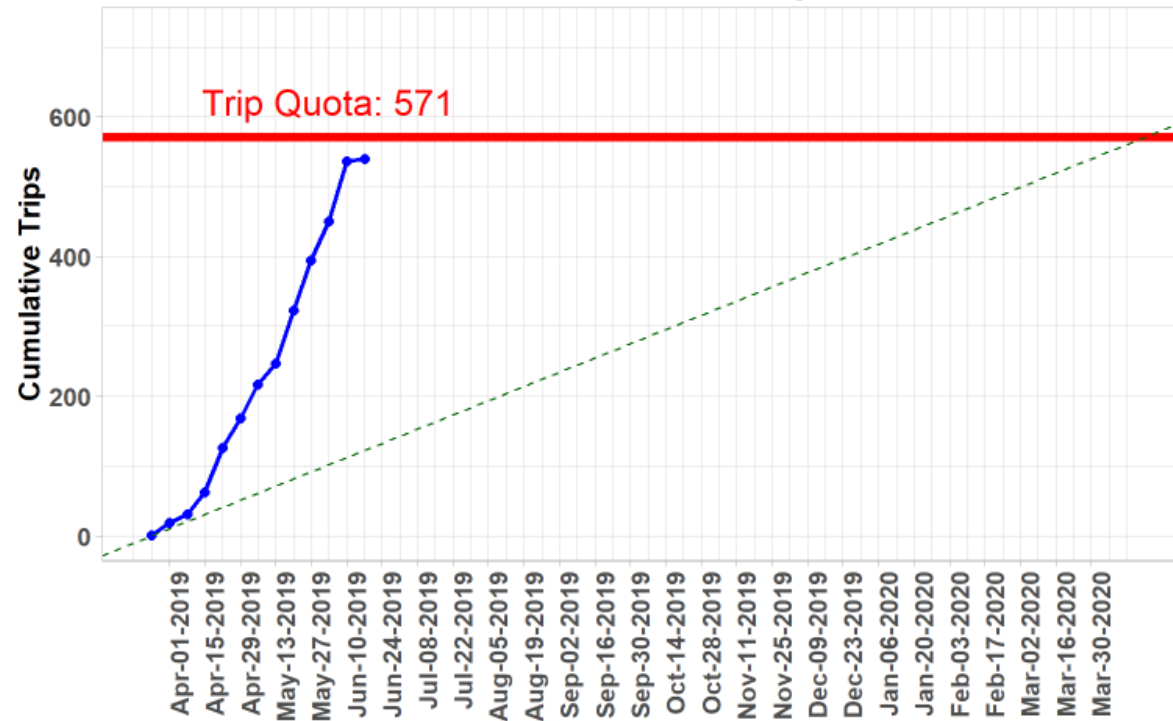
- Vessel A and Vessel B both declare a trip in the MAAA. Vessel A lands 599 lbs, Vessel B lands 200 lbs
- Only 799 lbs of the 1,200 lbs potential landings are landed, but both trips are counted equally against the total MAAA trip allocation to the IFQ component
- Concern is that a higher trip limit/fewer trips will exacerbate the issue, especially under derby conditions

Derby fishing

Quota period dates: April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020

	Trips	% of Quota (571 Trips)	Cumulative Trips	Cumulative % of Quota (571 Trips)
April	78	13.66%	78	13.66%
May	220	38.53%	298	52.19%
June	242	42.38%	540	94.57%

Closed Area I Access Area LAGC Trips



Derby fishing

- High meat yield, high catch rates make access area trips viable, can lead to derby fishing
- Factors that drive derby fishing generally mean vessels are motivated to harvest full trip and are able to do so
- Assuming early closure of access area is indicator of derby fishing, actual landings are very close to potential in these scenarios (within 2.3% on average, see Table 1)

Table 1 – The relative difference (%) in landing potential and realized landings for access area trips from FY2015 to FY2020. Gray shading represents years where the access area was closed prior to the end of the fishing year. RSA compensation trips are excluded from data

FY	CAI	MAAA	NLS	NLS-S	NLS-W
2015		-2.5%			
2016		-4.9%	0.3%		
2017		-15.9%	-0.4%		
2018	-1.7%	-2.0%		-4.2%	-2.3%
2019	-1.4%	-1.9%			-10.2%
2020	-5.1%	-3.3%	-5.1%		

Tracking in pounds vs. trips

- Example of tracking landings in pounds instead of # of trips: NGOM Management Area.
- NGOM TAC allocated in pounds, not trips. Area closes when pounds are projected to have been caught.
- One week lag in dealer data creates challenge in tracking catch in real-time.
- Work around: Available dealer data used to estimate average landings per trip, applied to number of trips taken in real-time (This was the approach used in the NGOM in 2021)
- Has made closing NGOM at exact right time virtually impossible.
- Accountability Measures: pound-for-pound payback for all overages in NGOM vs. no AM for LAGC IFQ access areas.

PDT Input/Discussion Points

- **Strong recommendation to stick with counting trips, not pounds**
 - Closure projections are more precise (i.e., no data lag in trip declarations, can track in real-time)
 - Easier for industry to monitor access area utilization
- Possible improvement to current system: use more realistic assumption of pounds landed per trip (i.e., “max average” approach)
- In a system where landings are tracked in pounds, how do we handle RSA compensation trips and observed trips?
- Consider consistency in catch accounting for LAGC IFQ access areas and NGOM

Next steps

- No action required today, but all input is welcome
- If there is interest in changing the trip accounting approach or improving current approach, please signal so now
 - will need to have alternatives prepared for September to include in FW34
- Questions/Comments?

Petition for Rulemaking: Scallopers Campaign Request to NMFS requesting secretarial action to implement a scallop leasing program

Petition for Rulemaking Process:

Scallopers Campaign Request for LA Leasing

Key Issue: DOC/NMFS has been asked to prepare an amendment to the Scallop FMP on LA leasing outside of the Council process.

Process so far:

- Request to the Secretary of Commerce on January 15, 2021
- NMFS letter to the Council on March 10, 2021

Next Steps

- Council response to NMFS & determination by NMFS

This process is separate from Council priorities.
The AP and Committee will discuss 2022 priorities in September.

Initial Petition for Rulemaking (Jan. 15, 2021):

- Request that the Secretary of Commerce prepare an amendment to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to authorize leasing in the limited access (LA) sea scallop fishery under the authority provided the Secretary in Sec. 304 (c)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1854).
- Scallopers Campaign argues that the Council has failed to act after a reasonable period and the fishery needs conservation and management.
 - National Standard 5 (Efficiency)
 - National Standard 10 (Safety at Sea)

NMFS Letter to the Council (March 10, 2021):

- NMFS requested that the Council consider merits of the petition. Specifically:
 - Council has failed to act in a reasonable period of time to submit an amendment to the Scallop FMP that achieves the goals of the MSA.
 - FMP fails to comply with National Standards 5 and 10.
- NMFS requests that the Council consider how it would address the issues if it finds merit to the petition. Asks the Council to consider the current LA program and compare the benefits and drawbacks of developing a leasing program.
- NMFS will consider the Council's input in when deciding whether or not the request has merit, and to proceed to rulemaking through Secretarial action.

Next Steps:

Council Response to NMFS, and Determination by NMFS

- Draft letter for Committee and Council to review (June 2021).
- Council leadership will send letter to NMFS this summer (July/August).
- NMFS will consider the Council's input in its determination (TBD).
 - If NMFS finds merit and proceeds with rulemaking, development of the amendment would be outside of the Council process.
 - If NMFS does not find merit, Council will still consider this topic as part of annual priority setting process.

Other Business