

Scallop AP and Committee Meetings

Jonathon Peros, Council Staff

**March 26 & 27, 2020
Webinar**



**New England
Fishery Management Council**



Today's Meeting:

- **Goals/Objectives:**

- Provide input on range of measures in Amendment 2 I
- Provide input on impact of COVID-19 pandemic
- Provide input on Council's 5 year research priorities

Meeting Outlook:

- Scallop Report at Council meeting will be Wednesday, April 15th.
- Expect PDT meetings in April and May, will work to schedule the AP and Committee.

Announcements

General Announcements

- Framework 32 – submission package is at NOAA HQ
- VMS type approval – New McMurdo unit has not been type approved. E-mailed about the iValue system.
- Scallop RSA awards were announced. 12 projects funded. See document 5.

COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 Pandemic

Discussion:

- Council operations (upcoming meetings, contacting staff, etc)
- USCG – Safety stickers and documentation
 - No walk-in customers for NVDC. [Link](#)
 - Vessels decals being issued, or a letter of deferment.
- Market report from the AP
- Explanation of recent request to NMFS to take emergency action
 - We have motions on the emergency action request that AP members wish to make.

Amendment 21

Amendment 21: NGOM

Steps taken by the Scallop Committee:

- Reaffirmed A I I vision statement
- Developed goals and objectives for NGOM & IFQ
- Committee Tasking to Develop Alternatives that:
 1. Allocate to LAGC NGOM, LAGC IFQ, and LA
 2. Minimize current derby style fishery, lengthen season
 3. Reliably monitor and report catch and bycatch
 4. Support research through an RSA program
 5. GRA in NGOM and GOM dredge exemption
 6. Requested PDT to gather data to support decision making

Amendment 21 Timelines

Short Term Outlook

- February 26/27, 2020 → CTE input on range of alternatives
- **March 26/27, 2020 → Provide input on range of alternatives**
 - ONE WEEK until the Council mailing (April 3, 2020)
- **April 14 – 16, 2020 → Council votes on range of alternatives**
- May AP/CTE → Continue developing the EA or EIS.
- **June Council → Council approve document, select preferred alternatives for scoping**

After June, begin to focus on FW development. Take final action on A21 in early 2021.

Amendment 21

Vision for LAGC

- In Amendment 21, the Council reaffirmed the Amendment 11 vision statement for the Limited Access General Category component as:
 - *“a fleet made up of relatively small vessels, with possession limits to maintain the historical character of this fleet and provide opportunities to various participants including vessels from smaller coastal communities.”*

Amendment 2 I

Goals and Objectives

Northern Gulf of Maine Management

1. Support a growing directed scallop fishery in federal waters in the NGOM.
2. Allow for orderly access to the scallop resource in this area by the LAGC and LA components.
3. Establishing mechanisms to set allowable catches and accurately monitor catch and bycatch from the NGOM

LAGC IFQ Measures

1. Improve overall economic performance of the LAGC IFQ component.
2. Allow for continued participation in the General Category fishery at varying levels.

Focus of today's meeting:

A2I Alternative Development

- **Looking to develop a range – NOT final action. Focus on concepts.**
- PDT met on March 17, 2020, new measures in now A2I
- Focus of presentation is on what has been updated in the document.
- Every issue or idea may not need to be resolved in A2I.

Amendment 21 Materials

Visit www.nefmc.org/library/amendment-21

- Scoping Summary Report
- Scoping Meeting Summaries
- Full List of Written Comments
- Amendment 21 Scoping Press Release
- Notice of Scoping Meetings
- Scoping Document
- Staff Presentation

- Also available – Committee and AP meeting summaries, draft alternatives and background information.
 - www.nefmc.org/management-plans/scallops

Amendment 21: Background on Northern Gulf of Maine

**If there are specific questions, we can
review information from last meeting**

Northern Gulf of Maine

Recent Council Actions: Temporary

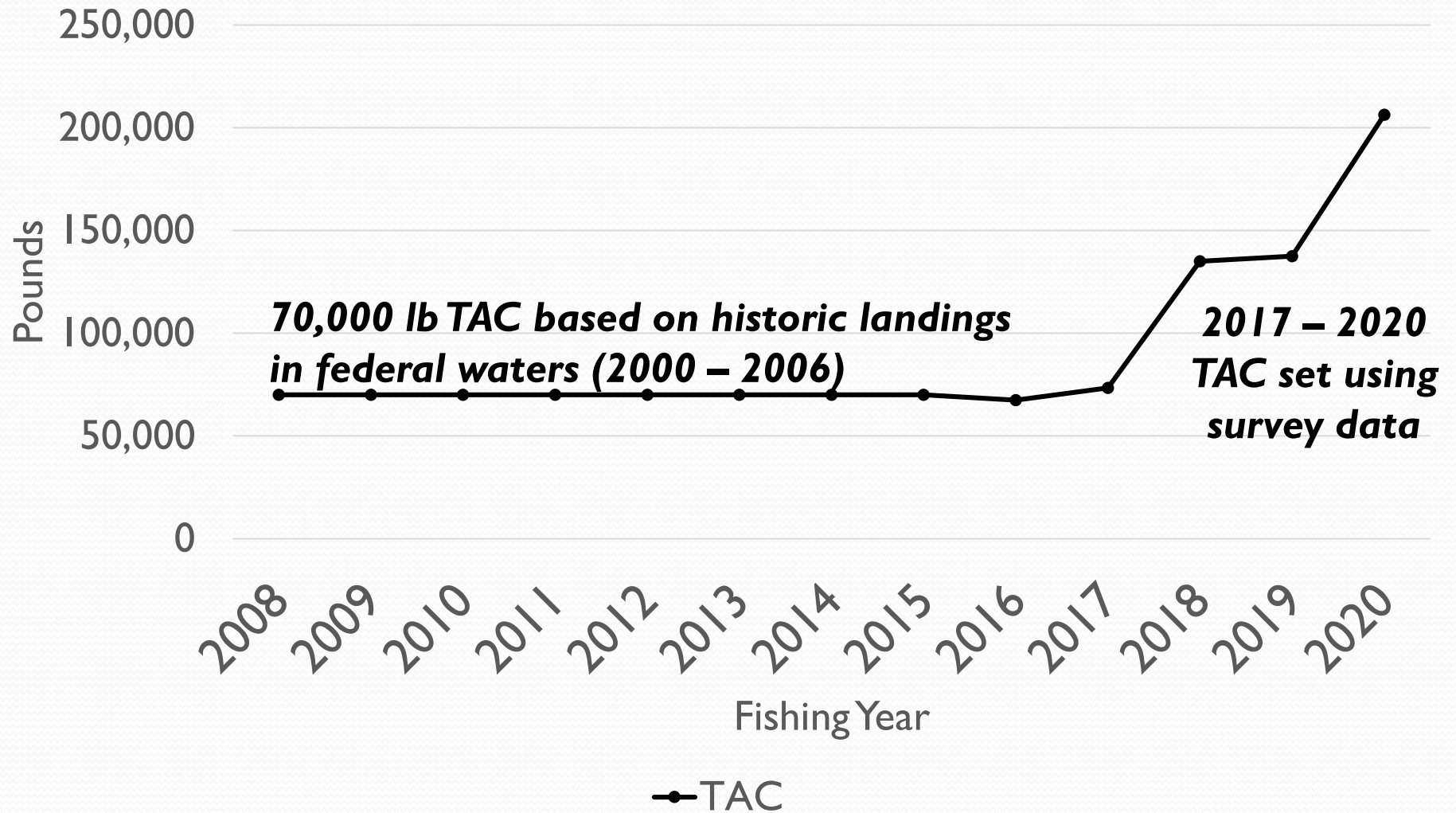
- In response to the increase in effort and landings by both the LAGC and LA components in 2016 and 2017, the Council developed a problem statement in Framework 29.
- *Recent high landings and unknown biomass...underscore the critical need to initiate surveys and develop additional tools to better manage the area and fully understand total removals.*
- Measures in recent FW actions are considered temporary until a new, permanent management regime is put in place (i.e. via Amendment 21).

Evolution of NGOM Management

| | 2008 – 2016 | 2017 | 2018+ |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Setting Catch Limits | Based on historic landings | UMaine/ DMR surveys | Based on surveys and forward projecting model |
| Harvest Controls | LA – DAS LAGC – Hard TAC | | Overall limit for removals |
| Scallop RSA | OTHER research (lowest priority) | | HIGHEST survey priority |

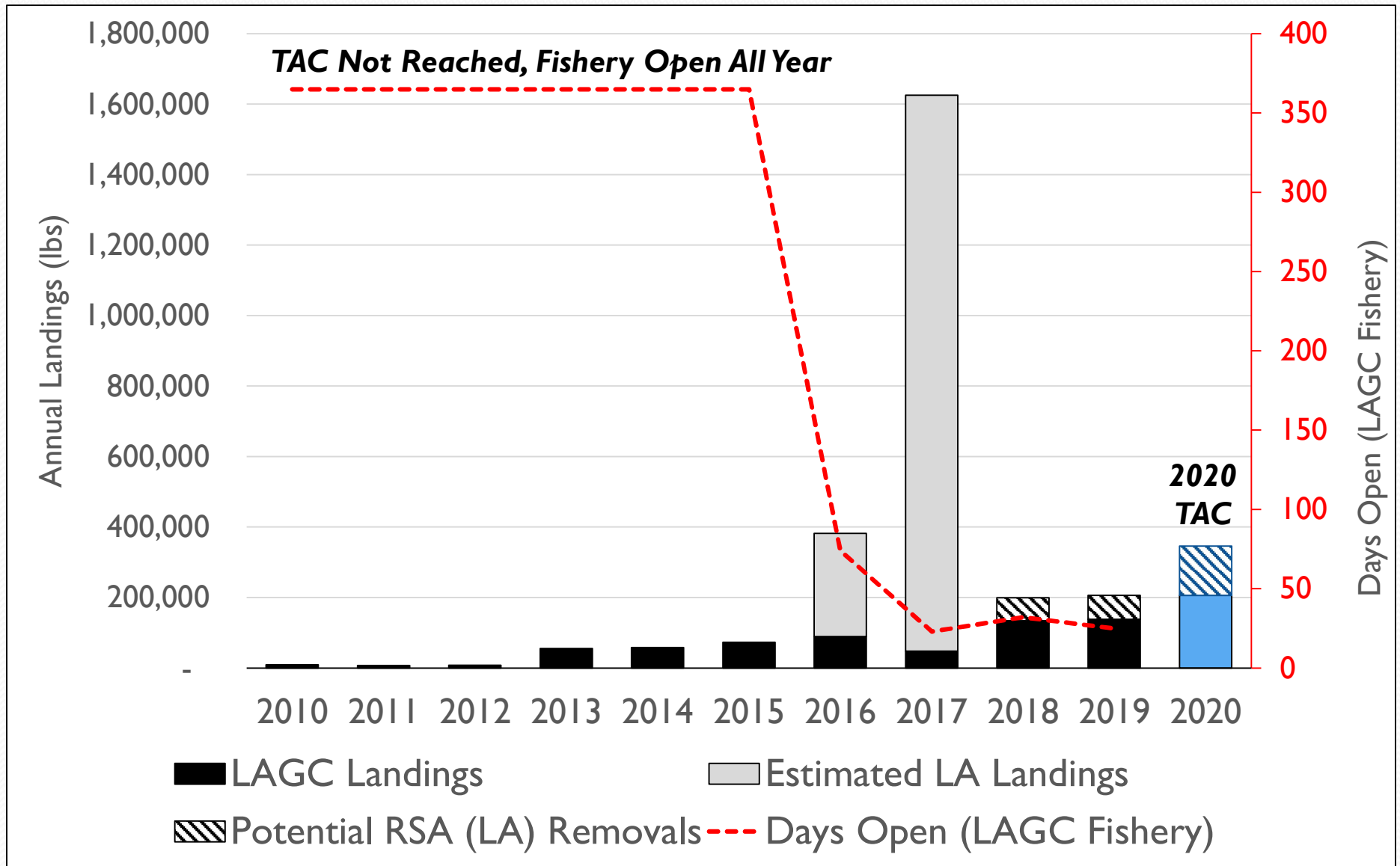
Northern Gulf of Maine

NGOM TAC for LAGC since 2008



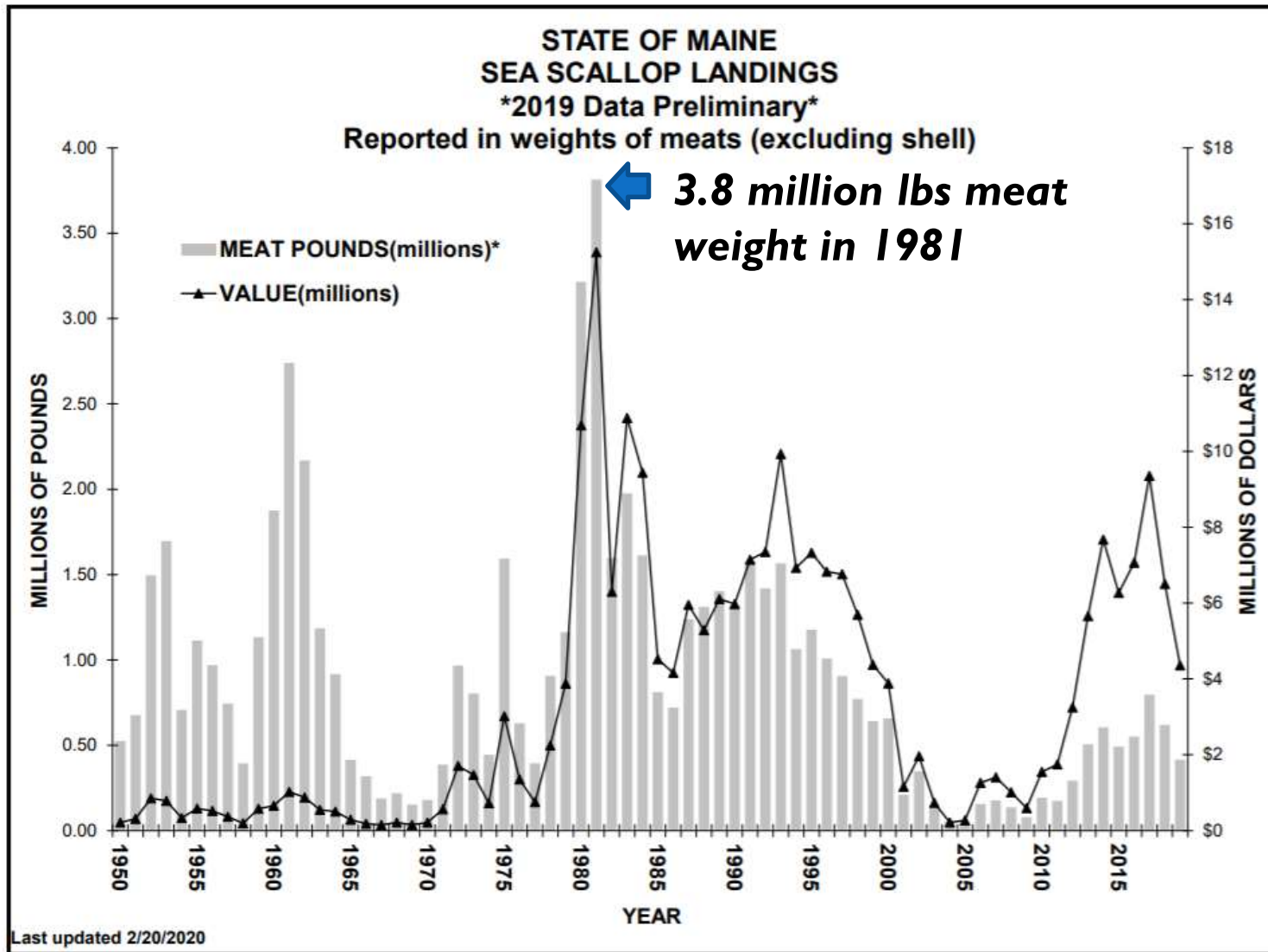
Northern Gulf of Maine

Landings: Recent Performance (LA and LAGC)



Landings Data from ME DMR

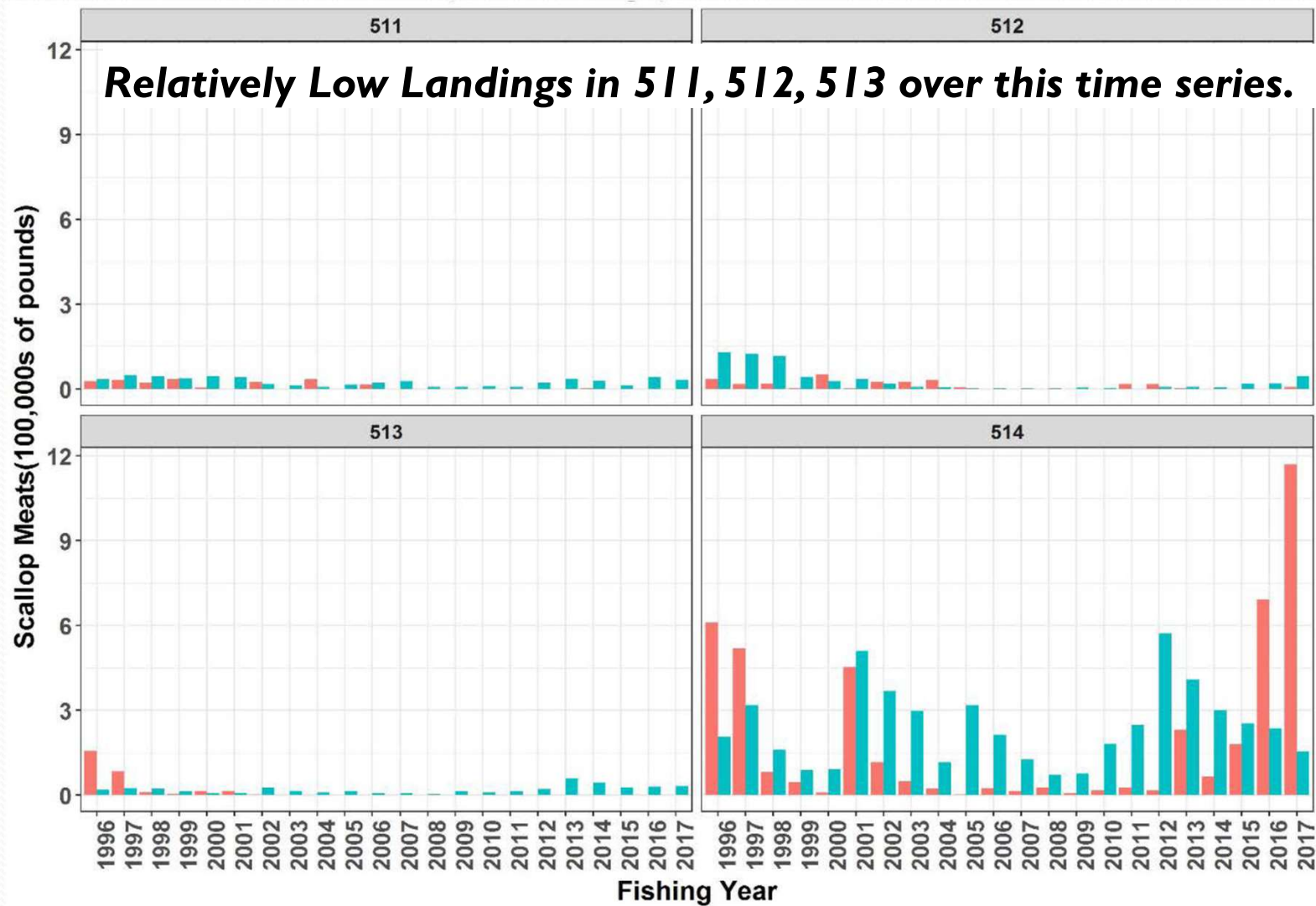
From State and Federal Waters, 1950 - 2019



<https://www.maine.gov/dmr/commercial-fishing/landings/documents/scallop.graph.pdf>

Landings Data from VTR Data

LA and LAGC reported landings, 1996 - 2017





See Doc.2c

Fishery LA LAGC

LAGC Activity in the NGOM

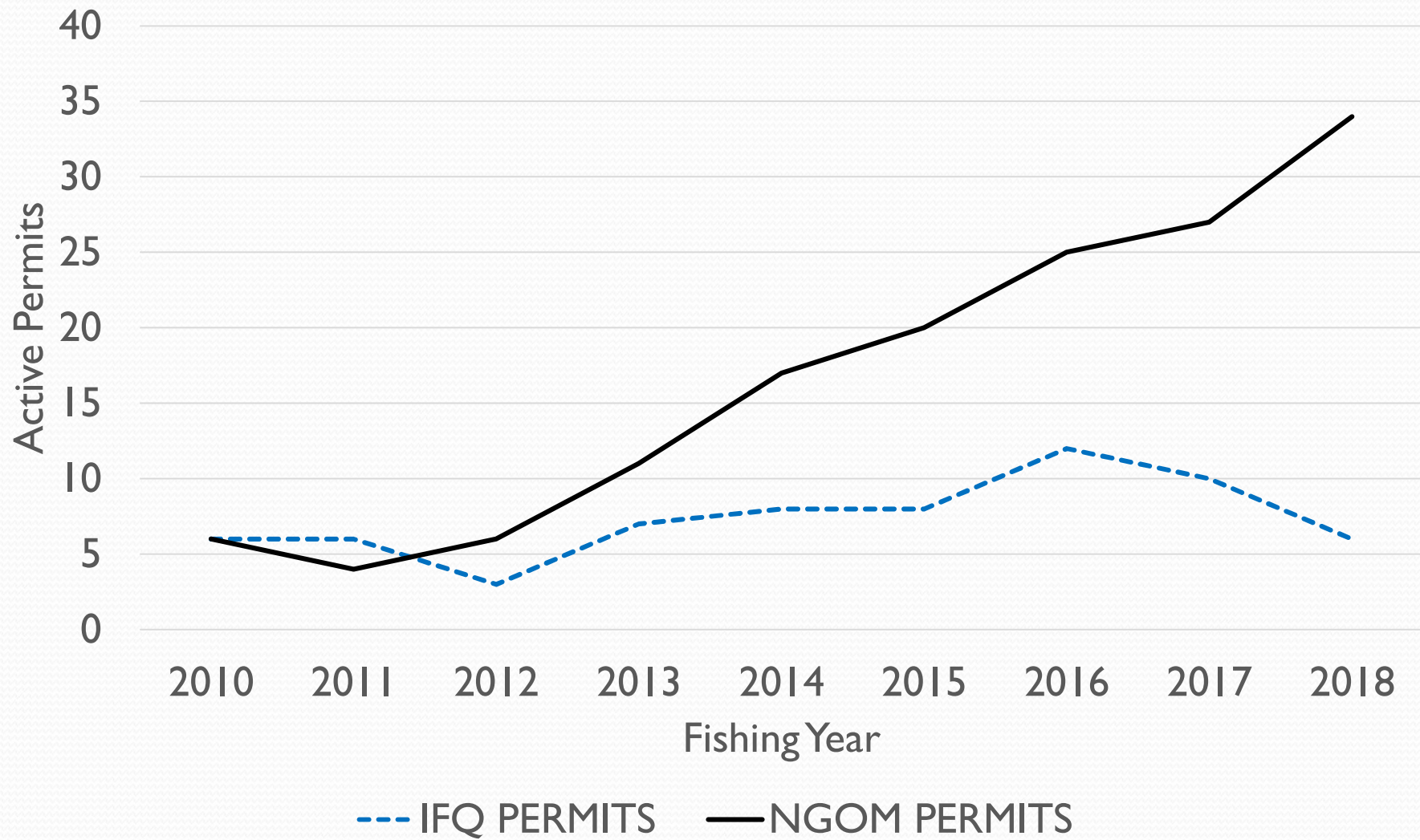
Trends in Participation (2010 – 2019)

Both Cat. A (IFQ) and Cat. B (NGOM) permits:

- Number of active vessels: 
~10 in 2010-2012 → ~40 in 2016-2019.
- Average landings per trip: 
~70 lbs in 2010 → ~200lb trip limit in recent years.
- Increases in participation from vessels based in ME and MA, NH activity stable. Last two FY:
 - ME: ~25 Active vessels MA: ~12 Active vessels
 - ME: ~500 NGOM trips MA: ~175 NGOM Trips

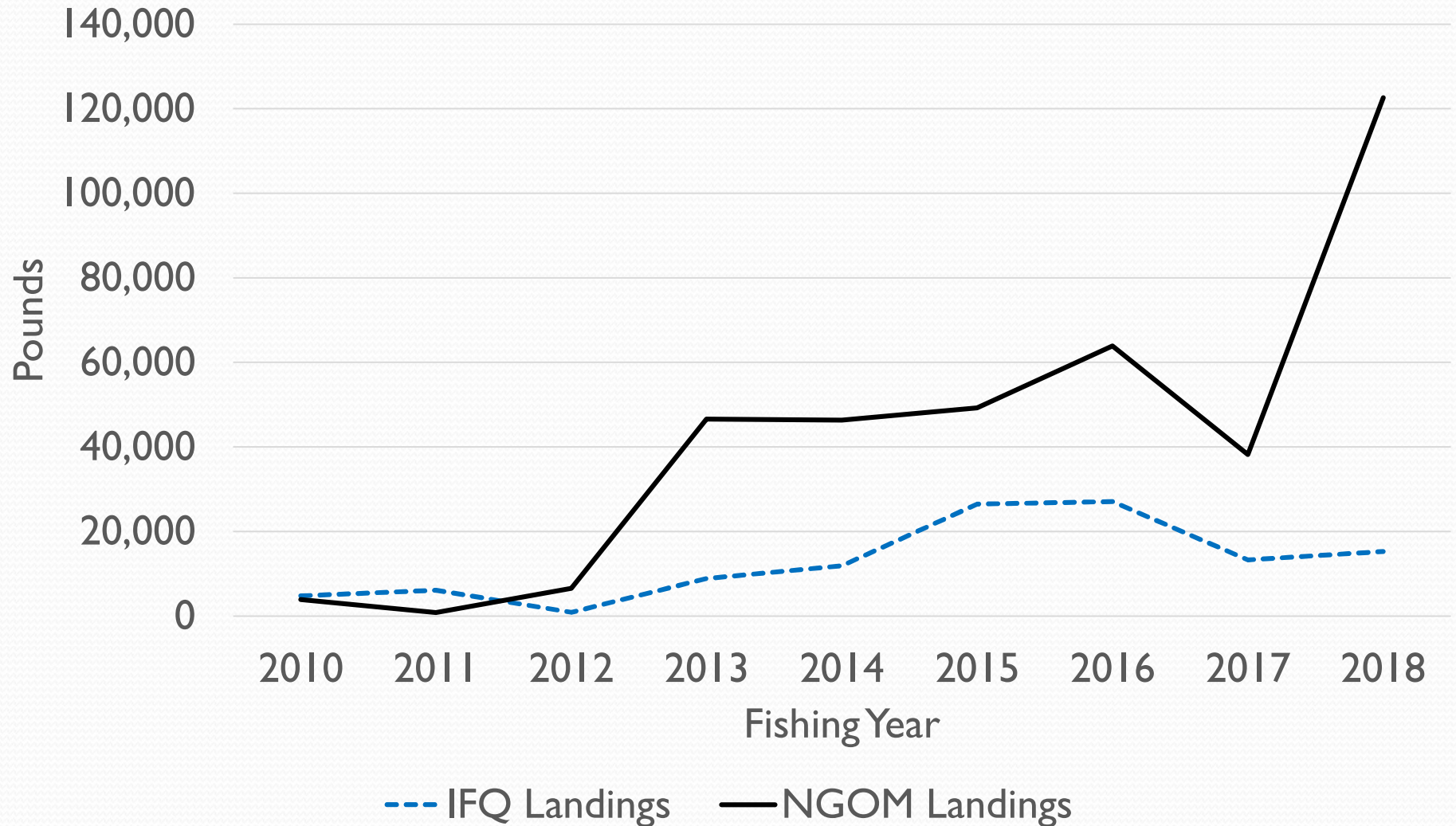
Northern Gulf of Maine

Activity by LAGC IFQ and LAGC NGOM



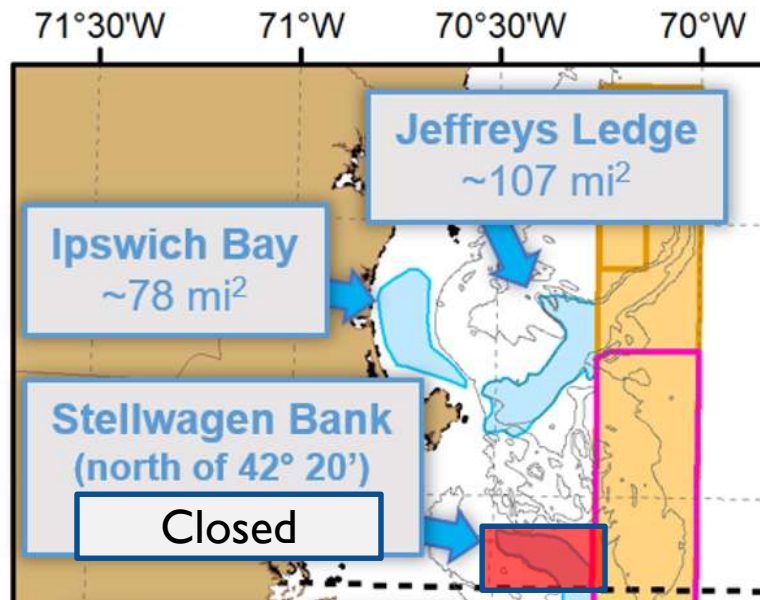
Northern Gulf of Maine

Landings by LAGC IFQ and LAGC NGOM Permits



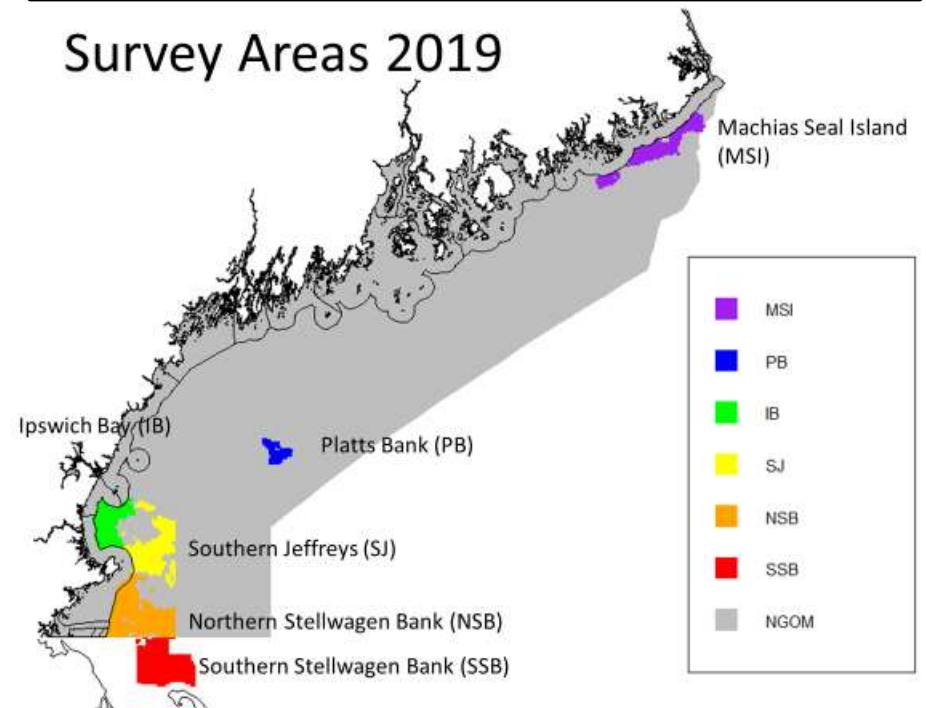
Legal Limits vs. Fishery Allocations

Accounting for Scallops in the NGOM



Allocations are based on a sub-set of surveyed areas, Ipswich Bay & Jeffreys Ledge.

If the NGOM is included in OFL, ABC, and ACL, exploitable scallops from surveyed areas in NGOM would count toward fishery-wide legal limits.



NGOM Accounting

Staff Input re: accounting for NGOM in flowchart

- At lower harvest & biomass levels, under the original management structure, accounting for the NGOM as part of OFL (with state waters) has worked.
- Over the past five years, management in the area has become more complex, with more user groups accessing scallops.
- The lack of monitoring in the NGOM should be addressed, and inclusion in the ACL flowchart can help with this.
- If biomass in the area increases, legal limits should scale with actual allocations (and landings).
- Scallops are managed as a single stock throughout the range, currently no plans to change this (EX: Split GB/MA).

NGOM Accounting

Biological and process considerations for adding NGOM into legal limits (ACL flowchart)

1. Based on the data we do have; it is unlikely that F_{MSY} in the Gulf of Maine is $F=0.64$. F_{MSY} for GOM would be no higher, and perhaps lower, than the one for Georges. F_{MSY} for Georges Bank is $F=0.57$ as of SARC 65.
2. Adding the NGOM into the OFL workflow (ABC, ACL flowchart) would be additional steps during specs/FW process.
 1. If NGOM were folded into the SAMS model, this might be simpler.
3. New work requirements with the management track assessment.
4. For several years, the ABC has been much higher than the APL for the LA and LAGC IFQ. Some buffer to accommodate landings without adding biomass from the NGOM into the OFL/ABC (ACL flowchart).

NGOM Accounting

Accounting for NGOM in legal limits in A21

- Staff plan to include different options for how we account for this part of the resource in A21 (inside & outside flowchart)
 - Document will be updated to reflect this.
- This is a separate issue from **HOW** the Council allocates to different permit categories.

Amendment 21: NGOM Alternatives

Northern Gulf of Maine

Underlying Assumptions

- Survey data is available for the NGOM management area.
- There southern boundary of NGOM remains at 42°20' N.
- Trip limits in the NGOM for GC vessels remain at 200 lbs.
- IFQ counts against the NGOM TAC and individual quotas.
- LAGC IFQ vessels would have the flexibility to fish allocations outside the NGOM (like access area allocations).

- See new definitions in Section 3.6 of Document 2a.

NGOM Allocations

What allocations can be changed in Amendment 21?

- Council has the discretion to set and change allocations. It recently adopted a policy that spells out how reviews of existing allocations will be conducted.

Scoping Document – A21 may consider:

- *“An allocation split between the Limited Access and Limited Access General Category components for the NGOM management unit...”*
- *“The action may change how landings by IFQ vessels in the NGOM are accounted for...”*

Allocations from Georges Bank and Mid-Atlantic are split 94.5% for LA and 5.5% for LAGC IFQ. The Council did not seek comment on this at scoping.

NGOM Allocations

Current approach; unique allocation situation in this area

- NGOM TAC currently supports research and a LAGC fishery.
- Current approach developed in FW29 does not add to LAGC IFQ or LA allocations.
- A2I should address how to allocate to three permit categories in this management area:
 - LAGC NGOM (no individual allocations, area TAC)
 - LAGC IFQ (vessel level allocations)
 - LA (vessel level allocations)
- Not a “simple” split between the GC and LA.
 - IFQ boats operate using quota and need quota to go fishing.

NGOM Allocations: Set-aside (Alt. 2)

Accommodating a unique allocation situation in this area

- **Set-aside** approach formalizes concepts that the Council has used in the last three FWs.
 - Initial portion of TAC available for research and LAGC fishing.
- A **set-aside** is one way to allocate to all user groups (vessel level allocations and TAC) that:
 - Allows the Council to consider a range of allocations (ex: 50/50);
 - And can maintain existing allocation splits for LA/LAGC IFQ.
- The **set-aside** can increase as biomass in the NGOM grows.
 - Committee has included this option in A2I measures.

NGOM Allocations

“Set-Aside Approach”

The “**set-aside**” is intended to address goals and objectives of Amendment 21:

- Support directed General Category fishery
- Access for IFQ and LA at higher levels of biomass
- Support Research: Pounds for the Scallop RSA
- Fully account for removals from the area

It also:

- Reflects existing management approaches on GB/MA;
- Can be administratively efficient
 - Fund monitoring in the NGOM (observers, EM?) using existing processes

Action I – Northern Gulf of Maine Allocations

Structure of the Allocation Options

- Planning to update the document before April Council meetings based on input from Committee.
- Current version of A2I does not deal with choices of how to account for NGOM in legal limits (this will be added)
- Structured Alt. 2 around key allocation decisions:
 1. What amount of NGOM TAC limits access to only the NGOM set-aside? **Determine “trigger” for allocating to all components. 5 options in document. More?**
 2. How should the NGOM TAC be distributed above the trigger? Two approaches suggested in Feb. are sub-options. Right now, only 1 sub-option for each trigger. **Input?**

Action I, Alternative I, No Action Amendment I I approach

- Revert to original NGOM measures.
- The Northern Gulf of Maine management unit would be managed as follows:
 1. LAGC IFQ catch applied against NGOM TAC and individual IFQ
 2. LAGC Incidental catch is not applied against TAC, 40 lb poss. limit
 3. Landings from NGOM vessels fishing exclusively in state waters are not deducted from the NGOM TAC
 4. LA catch is not applied against the NGOM TAC, vessels would operate under DAS management
 5. Once TAC is reached, NGOM is shut down to all federally permitted vessels
 6. NGOM landings would not be included in annual projected landings (APL) used to set overall allocations for LA and LAGC IFQ components

Action 1 – Northern Gulf of Maine Allocations

Structure of the Allocation Options Action 1

- Alternative 1 – No Action
- Alternative 2 – Create a NGOM set-aside, use $F=0.15$ – $F=0.25$
 - Option 1 – NGOM set-aside trigger at 1 million lbs
 - Sub-option 1 – pounds over trigger: 5% to NGOM set-aside, 95% to NGOM APL
 - Option 2 - NGOM set-aside trigger at 750,000 lbs
 - Sub-option 1 – pounds over trigger: 5% to NGOM set-aside, 95% to NGOM APL
 - Option 3 - NGOM set-aside trigger at 600,000 lbs
 - Sub-option 1 – pounds over trigger: up to 3 million, split 25% NGOM set-aside, 75% NGOM APL, then 5% to NGOM set-aside, 95% to NGOM APL
 - Option 4 – NGOM set-aside trigger at 500,000 lbs
 - Sub-option 1 – pounds over trigger: 5% to NGOM set-aside, 95% to NGOM APL
 - Option 5 – NGOM set-aside trigger at 300,000 lbs
 - Sub-option 1 – pounds over trigger: up to 3 million, split 25% NGOM set-aside, 75% NGOM APL, then 5% to NGOM set-aside, 95% to NGOM APL

NGOM Set-Aside Approach:

What are the steps?

1. Determine a NGOM set-aside “**trigger**”
2. Set a target fishing mortality rate for the area.
3. *Survey the area, project biomass, set a TAC.*
4. If exploitable biomass in **open areas** of NGOM is **less than** the set-aside trigger (Decision I):
....Only GC fishing and RSA support.
5. If exploitable biomass in **open areas** of NGOM is **more than** the set-aside trigger:
 1. Allocate full amount of set-aside for GC fishing (+ research)
 2. Share the remaining allocation between the NGOM APL and NGOM set-aside.

NGOM Set-Aside Scenario: Less than the Trigger

NGOM TAC

Use part of TAC to off-set monitoring costs
(separate decision – 4.2 Action 2)

Is the NGOM TAC less than the NGOM set-aside trigger?

YES → Only allocate to NGOM Set-Aside

NGOM Set-Aside

TAC for LAGC
NGOM
+
LAGC IFQ

Use part of NGOM set-aside to support research
(separate decision – 4.3 Action 3)

NGOM Set-Aside Scenario: More than the Trigger

NGOM TAC

Use part of TAC to off-set monitoring costs
(separate decision – 4.2 Action 2)

Is the NGOM TAC less than the NGOM set-aside maximum?

NO → Allocate pounds to NGOM Set-Aside up to maximum, then use tiered approach to allocate pounds above the maximum to the NGOM Set-Aside and the NGOM APL

NGOM Set-Aside

NGOM APL

Common Pool TAC
for LAGC NGOM
+
LAGC IFQ

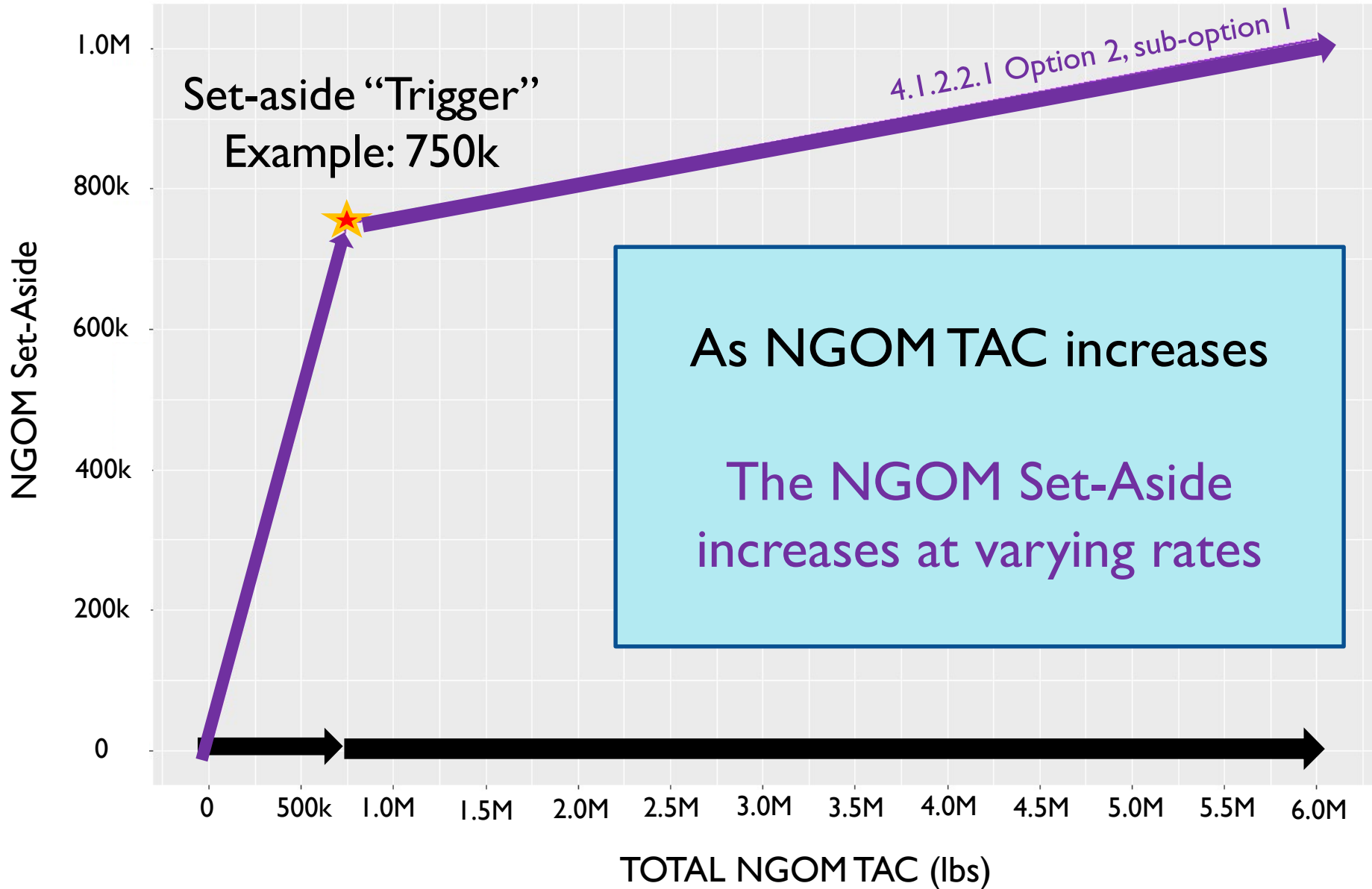
Use part of NGOM set-aside to support research
(separate decision –
4.3 Action 3)

LA (94.5%)

LAGC IFQ
(5.5%)

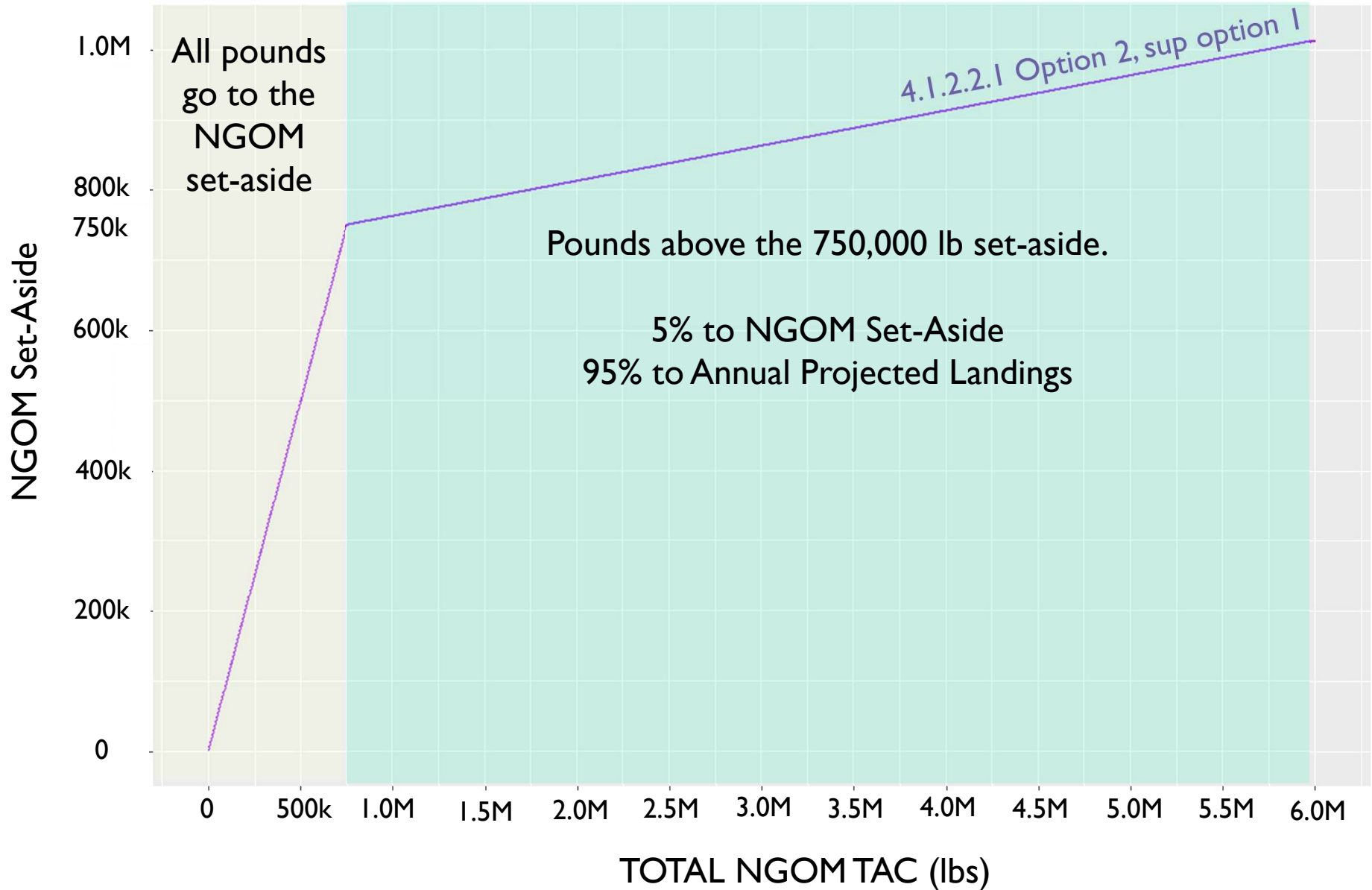
Allocation Alternatives

Options for growing the NGOM Set-aside



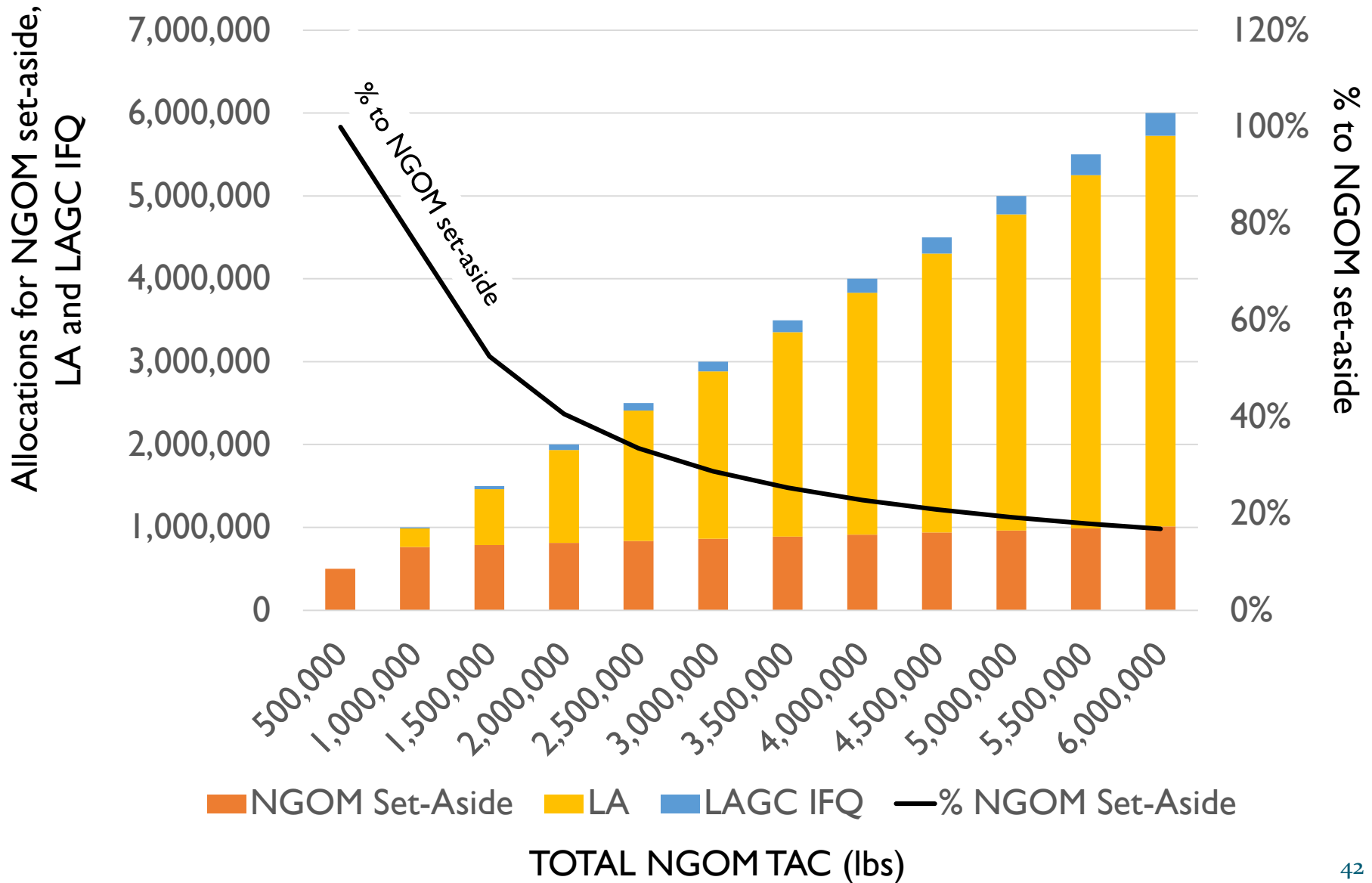
Comparison of Growth Options for the NGOM

4.1.2.2, NGOM Set-Aside at 750k & 95/5



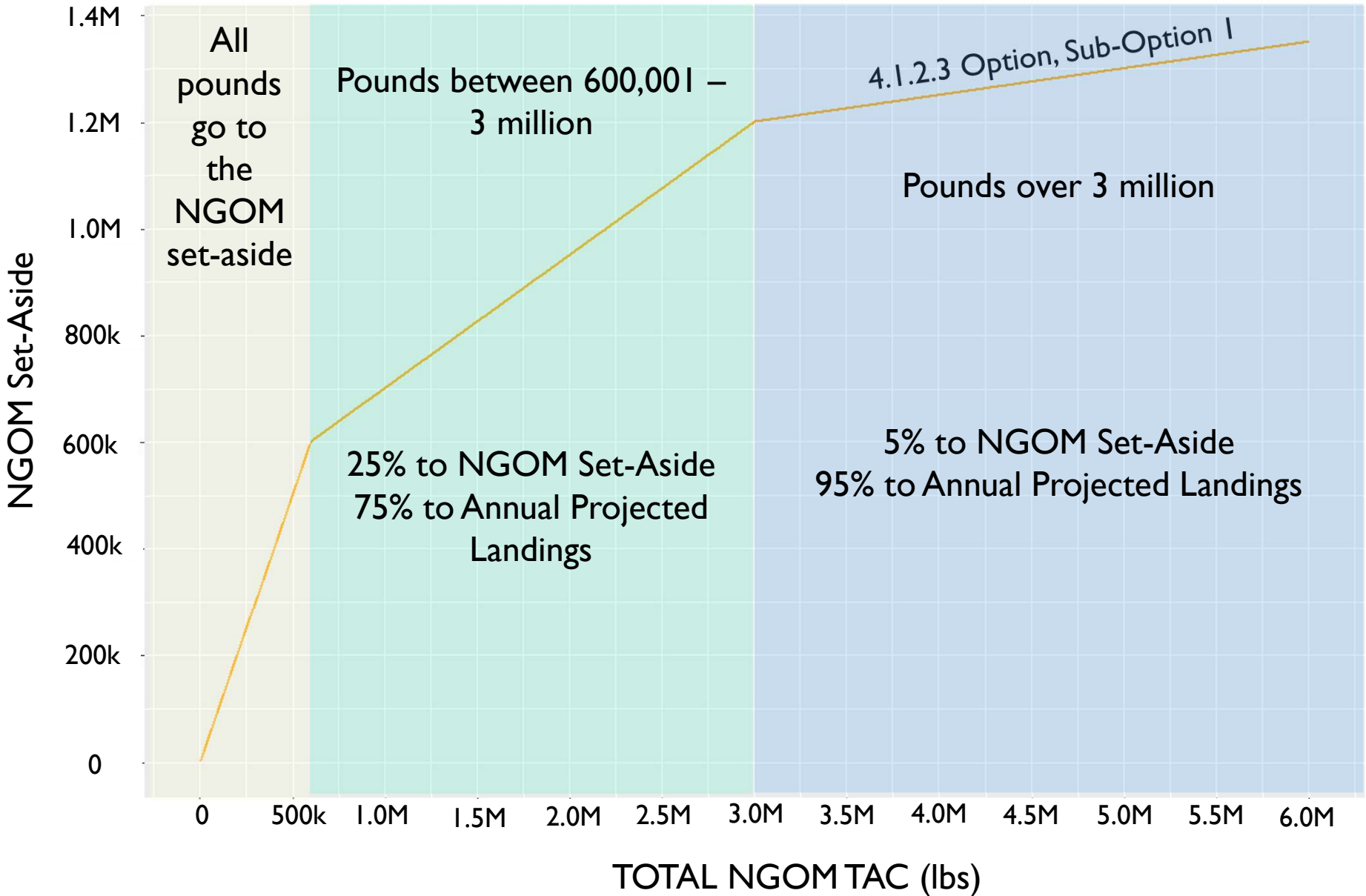
Distribution of the NGOM allocation at 95/5 growth

Allocations for NGOM set-aside, LA, LAGC IFQ



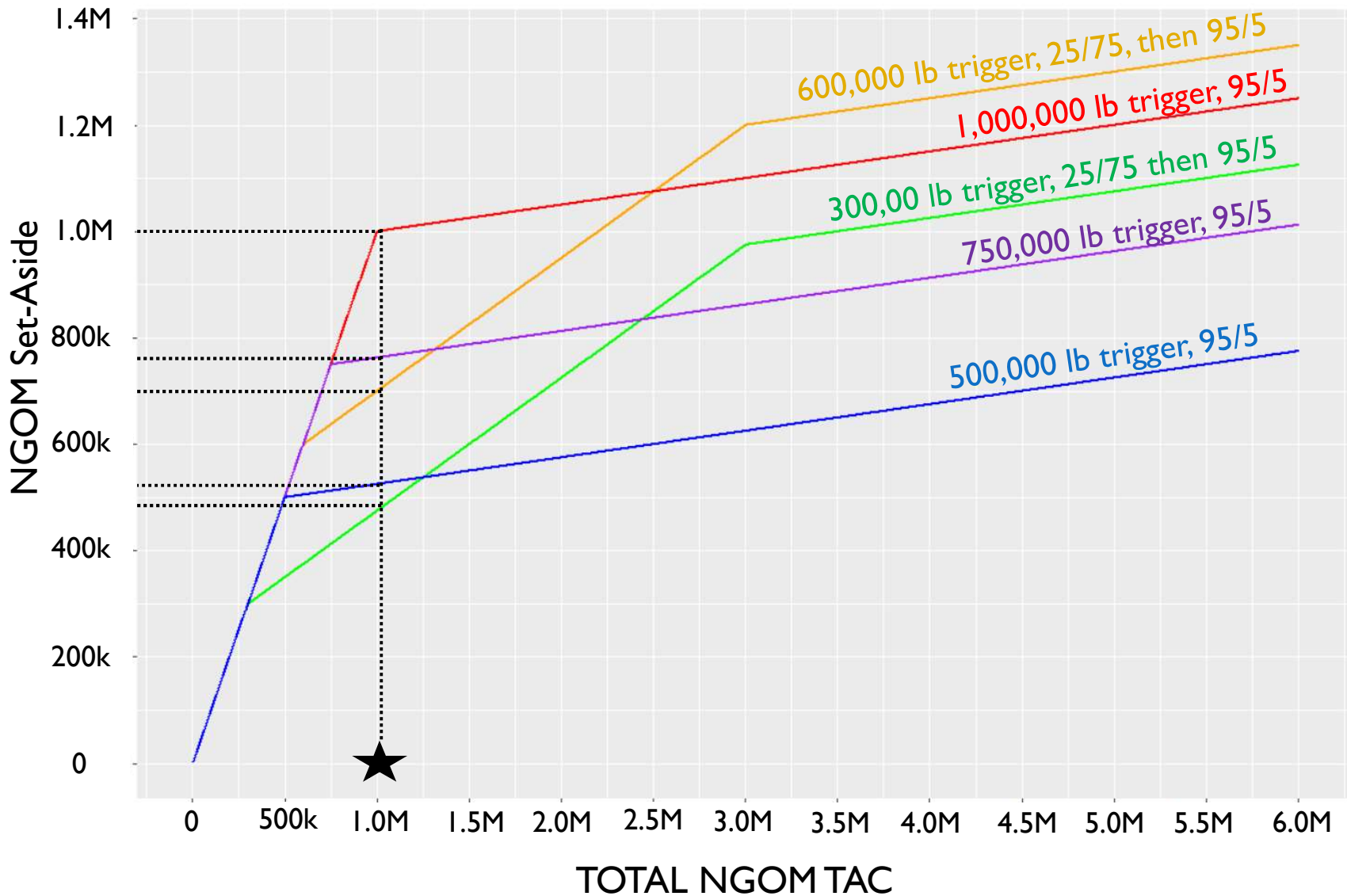
Comparison of Growth sub-Options for NGOM

4.1.2.3 - NGOM Set-Aside at 600k & 2 Tiers



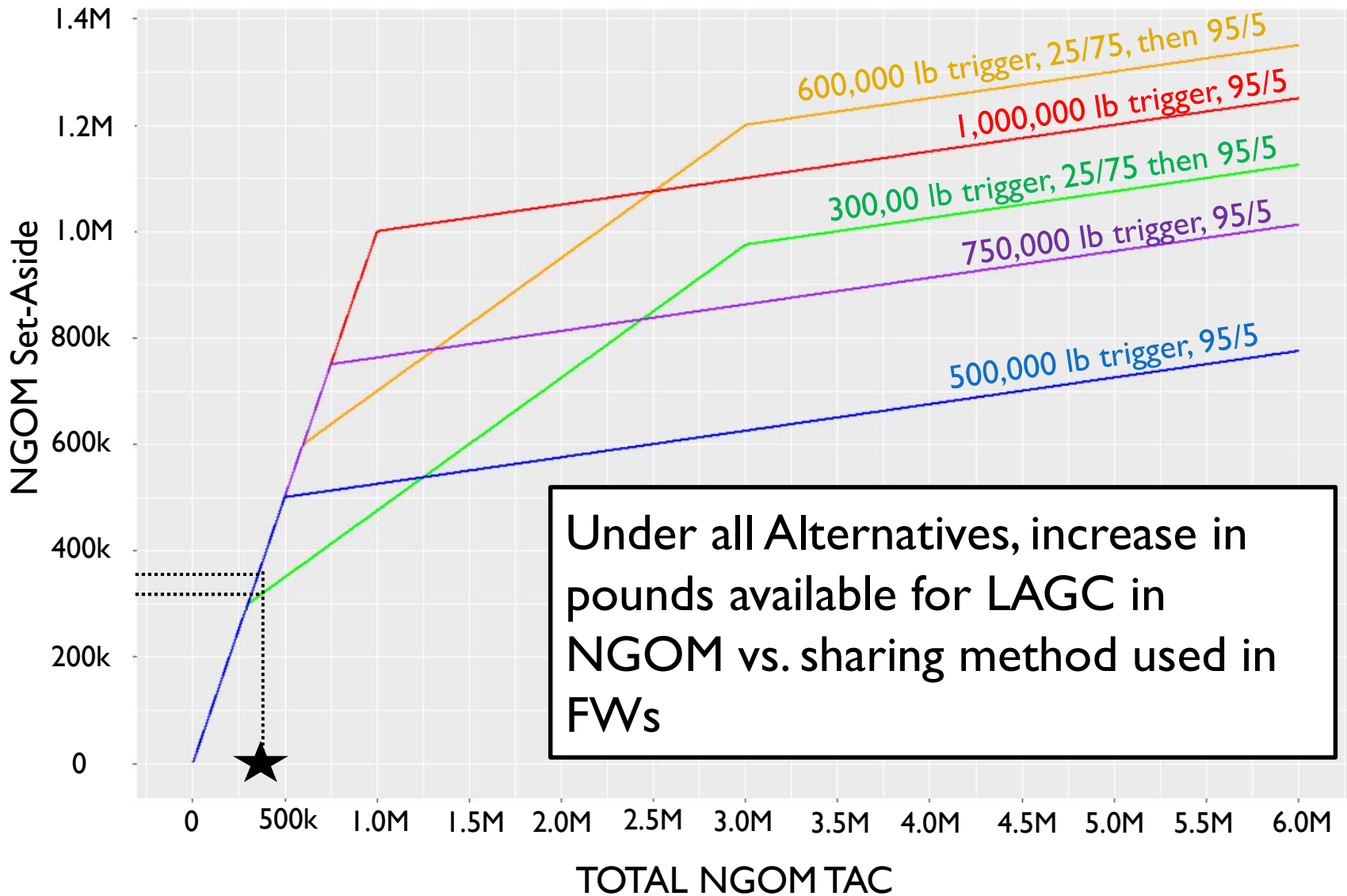
Comparison 5 trigger Options

EX: NGOM Set-Aside at 1 million lb TAC



Comparison 5 trigger Options

EX: NGOM Set-Aside of 350,000 from FW32



Action I – Northern Gulf of Maine Allocations

Lingering issues...

- 4.1.2.6 Option 6.
 - *One Tier – Use a set-aside trigger of 70,000 pounds. Pounds over 70,000 would be split 50% for the NGOM Set-Aside and 50% for NGOM Annual Projected Landings.*
 - Motion made in Sept. 2019 to use the numbers from current temporary FW approach. Uses “LAGC/LA” split that document is moving away from.
 - If the Committee wants this approach included, suggest that change “LAGC” to “NGOM set-aside” and change “LA” to “NGOM APL”.
- 4.1.3 NGOM set-aside, but no growth as biomass increases
 - This was part of the original strawperson presentation in Sept. 2019, modified slightly. General interest in developing the set-aside concept, but no “vote” to use this as an option.
 - The Feb. 2020 Committee tasking was to include sub-options that would grow the NGOM set-aside as the NGOM TAC increased.

Action 2 – Monitoring NGOM fishery

Three Alternatives

- 4.2.2 – Alternative 2 – Expand the Scallop IFO program
 - Creates an observer call-in requirement for all directed scallop trips in the NGOM management area (all vessels/permit cat.)
 - Add pounds from the NGOM to the overall observer set-aside and administer a single pool of pounds for all vessels.
 - If “outside” the ABC (ACL flowchart), set-aside a % of the NGOM TAC to off-set monitoring costs. (2% in this alternative, could be changed)
 - If part of the ABC (inside ACL flowchart), no reduction of TAC is needed since NGOM biomass is part of the 1% observer set-aside.
 - Observer coverage levels would be set by NMFS.
 - Council can weigh in on this, recommend a monitoring standard that NMFS uses to set coverage levels (to meet SBRM?).
 - Vessels carrying an observer would be able land a higher trip limit to offset the cost of the observer. NMFS sets a compensation rate.
 - EX: 200 pounds + 100 pound compensation rate = 300 pound trip limit.

Action 2 – Monitoring NGOM fishery

Three Alternatives

- 4.2.3 – Alternative 3 – Use NEFOP program to monitor trips in the NGOM.
 - Creates an observer call-in requirement for all directed scallop trips in the NGOM management area (all vessels/permit cat.)
 - Use an existing observer program (not Scallop IFO) to cover trips.
 - As the NEFOP program is federally funded, additional pounds would not be set-aside to offset the cost of observers in the NGOM area.

Action 3 – Support Scallop Research (RSA)

Three Alternatives

- 4.3.2 – Alternative 2 – Allocate a portion of the NGOM Set-Aside as a research TAC to support Scallop RSA compensation fishing.
 - No additional pounds to the RSA program (still 1.25 mil).
 - Would hardwire in opportunity to comp fish in the NGOM.
 - Compensation fishing up to research TAC inside NGOM.
 - Pounds used for any project funded through RSA, but projects funded to do research in the NGOM would have preference to use these pounds.
 - Research TAC would not have to be fished (pounds not assigned to specific projects).
 - Administered by NMFS.

Action 3 – Support Scallop Research (RSA)

Three Alternatives

- 4.3.3 – Alternative 3 – Allocate a portion of the NGOM Set-Aside as a research TAC to support Scallop RSA compensation fishing.
 - **Additional** pounds to the RSA (1.25 mil + **research TAC**).
 - Would hardwire in opportunity to comp fish in the NGOM.
 - Compensation fishing up to research TAC inside NGOM.
 - Pounds used for any project funded through RSA, but projects funded to do research in the NGOM would have preference to use these pounds.
 - Research TAC would not have to be fished in NGOM (pounds not assigned to specific projects).
 - Administered by NMFS.

Action 3 – Support Scallop Research (RSA)

Two sub-options for determining research TAC

Alternatives 2 & 3: same sub-options for consideration

- Option 1 – Allocate 10% of the NGOM Set-Aside as a research TAC
- Option 2 – Allocate the first 50,000 pounds of NGOM set-aside as a research TAC

Notes:

- The PDT discussed some variations of Options 1 and 2, such as 10% of the set-aside, up to 50,000 pounds. The PDT has also discussed capping the research TAC.
- The Council may want to make decisions about the RSA through other processes (program review follow-up).
- AP and Committee may wish to add/change options.

Action 4: NGOM Fishing Season

Four Alternatives

Alternatives in 4.4:

1. No Action
2. Limit the number of landings per week to 5
3. Limit vessels to one sailing per day
4. Establish a seasonal closure of the NGOM management area from September 1 – November 31 annually

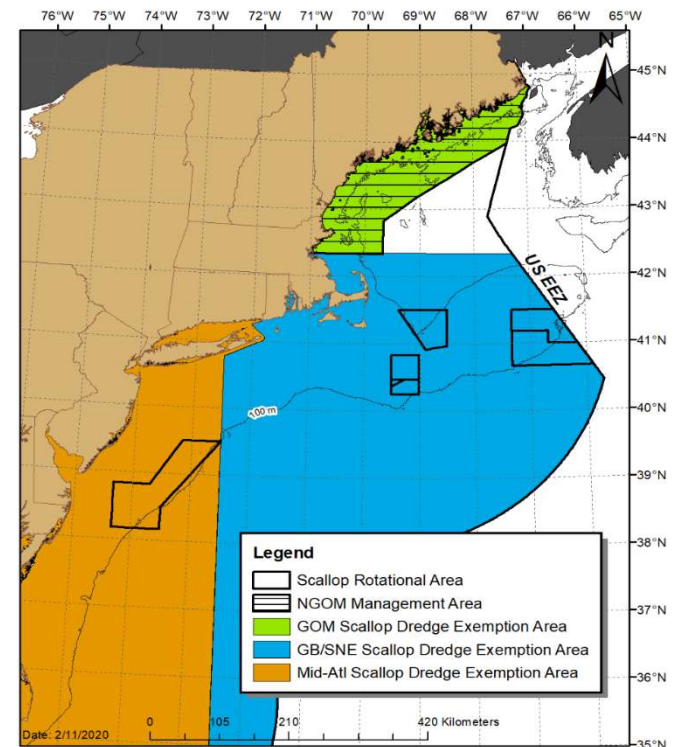
Any other ideas?

Action 5 - NGOM Gear Restricted Area

Three Alternatives, focus max dredge width

- Three options in Amendment 21:
 1. No Action
 2. 10.5' max dredge width for all scallop vessels in NGOM management area
 3. 15.5' max dredge width for all scallop vessels in NGOM management area
- 2 and 3 would limit the FT LA component that can currently fish a combined maximum dredge width of 31'. **Looking for more rationale.**

Scallop Dredge Exemption Areas as of February 14, 2020. Gear restrictions would cover the entire green area, which is the GOM Scallop Dredge Exemption Area.



Action 9 – SPECIFICATIONS AND FRAMEWORK ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

List of items that can be addressed in future actions

1. Alternative 2 would allow the following list of measures to be adjusted in a specifications package or through a framework:
 2. Partition the NGOM into multiple sub-areas with separate TACs.
 3. Partition the NGOM TAC is multiple seasons.
 4. Modify the F rate used to set the NGOM TAC.
 5. Modify how the NGOM is accounted for in the calculation of OFL, ABC, and ACLs.
 6. Allow the use of electronic monitoring in place of at-sea observers.
- *Rationale:* Expanding the list of changes that may be made to the FMP in subsequent specification packages or framework adjustments would give the Council flexibility to address specific issues without starting an amendment to the FMP.

(Document 2e next)

2020 – 2024 Council Research Priorities

See Doc. 4

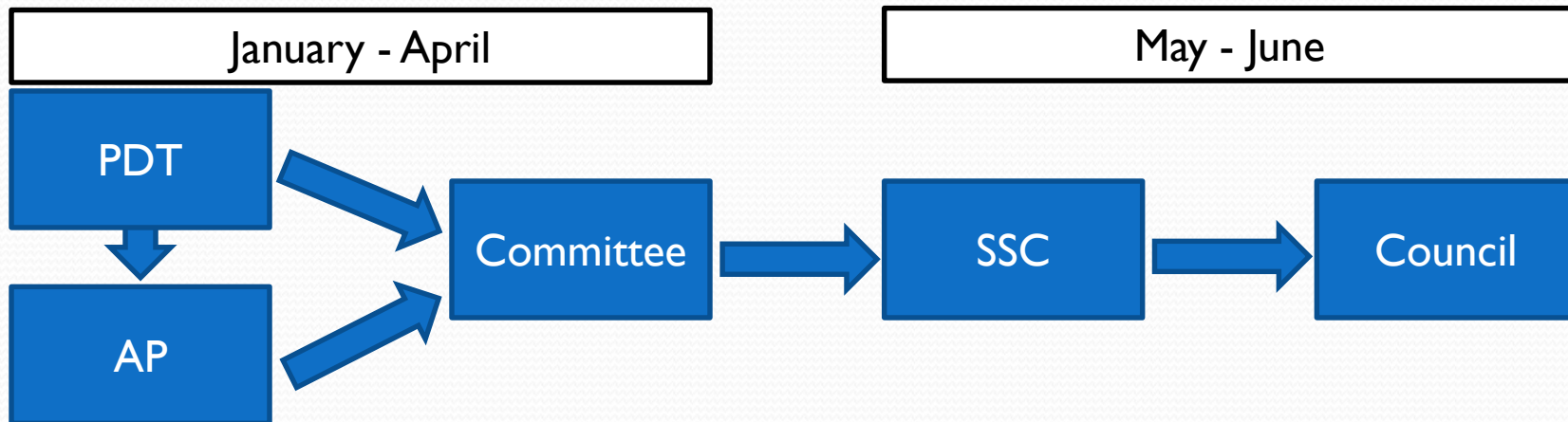
Council 2020 – 2024 Research Priorities

- **THIS IS NOT THE SCALLOP RSA RESEARCH SETTING PROCESS.** That process begins in May.
- Per the Magnuson Stevens Reauthorization Act of 2006, Councils are required to develop five-year research priority plans and submit them to the Secretary of Commerce.
 - Council was updating this list once every 5 years.
 - Now updating annually.
- NEFMC has implemented a research priority setting process on an annual basis.
- The priority list can also be used by Center, GARFO, and other organizations/institutions to direct research.



Council 2020 – 2024 Research Priorities

- **Council is expected to update “5-year” research priorities at their June 2020 meeting.**
- What is the process going forward?
 - Expect the Council to annually approve research, allowing the list to evolve as issues are identified and addressed.



Council 2019 – 2023 Research Priorities

- Scallop PDT made several recommendations to update the current list over two meetings in January and February.
- Sources of updates:
 1. PDT recommendations to last year's list (2019 – 2023)
 2. SSC recommended research priorities
 3. 2020/2021 Scallop RSA Research priorities
 4. Feedback from the NEFSC
 5. Habitat PDT recommendations to research related to offshore wind and the northern edge.
- Seeking input: Staff suggest we do most of this through correspondence after the webinar. Take initial input today.



Other Business