

Potential Actions in FW32: Harvest of scallops in the NLS-S-deep

Eas(ier) Changes the Council may wish to consider. Can likely be in done in a FW or Specs Package.

- Possession limits
 - Equitable across the fleet
 - Can still manage total removals through monitoring
 - Could remove the possession limit in this area (both LA and LAGC IFQ)
 - Note: In the past, the fishery has asked for possession limits.
- Ring-size
 - Equitable across fleet
 - What is the cost of changing to a smaller ring size?
 - Needed? See VIMS videos of the commercial dredge on NLS survey
 - Easily enforced
 - Minimal impact to non-target species with reduced bottom time
 - Consider a smaller ring size (3.5") – mixed opinions about this on the PDT.
 - Concern - introducing multiple ring sizes to the fishery.
 - The Commercial dredge is filling at these densities. The fishery is already able to put these on deck faster than they can be cut.
 - Smaller rings will catch more junk. With small scallops – you want cleaner tows.
- Gear obstruction
 - This would be a way more effectively to capture scallops that have not recruited to the 4" ring, without moving to a smaller ring size.
 - Equitable across fleet
 - Easily enforced
 - May reduce impact to non-target species with reduced bottom time
 - EX: put a rope through the back of the apron. At a small scale, this could be looked at.
- Crew limits
 - Equitable across fleet
 - Crew limits in AAs are relatively new
 - Easily enforced
 - Relatively recent change in the FMP of a 7-person crew limit to 8-person crew limit for AA fishing.
 - Scenario: Commercial dredge catching 50 – 60 bushels...roughly 300 – 400 lbs per dredge per tow
 - Input so far from AP/industry – ex-vessel price will help determine if vessels will actually want to take extra crew (i.e. and reduce individual crew shares).
 - How many (average) berths on vessels?
 - PDT thought some vessels have up to 11 bunks

- Setting area TAC (overall TAC, no individual allocations, Special Access Program)
 - Easily monitored
 - Accounting metric consideration— DAS, lbs or number of trips (with possession limit)?
 - Monitor this area in ways that are already in place.
 - Equitable across fleet
 - Range for the overall TAC – PDT members suggested considering limiting the TAC to “one or two” trips initially.
 - 6 million lbs to 12 million lb? Something higher?
 - Consider DAS equivalent for harvesting overall TAC.
 - Questions: What are the economics of these trips vs. “regular” trips
 - How many 30-40 can you cut in the day? How long to fill a bucket?
- Modify the Access Area Boundary
 - Equitable across fleet
 - Could draw a tighter boundary around these scallops.
 - Does this create safety or operational concerns?
 - Could be monitored – consider higher VMS ping rate? Is that needed?
 - Higher ping rates could be difficult – issue is with the capabilities of the approved VMS units.
 - Direct effort to specific part of resource
 - Consider spatial extent of the area, any lessons from the NLS-W?
 - Two patches in the NLS-S-deep → Data suggests that there isn’t a substantial difference between scallops in the east and west.
- Consider seasonal effort distribution
 - Equitable across fleet
 - Could allow certain amount of scallops to be removed at specific time intervals
 - Could be monitored
 - Would need to consider time lags in data to close area multiple times in year

More Complicated Changes (difficult, could take longer to develop/assess in a FW and implement)

- Shucking machines
 - Only a few groups have access to shucking machines
 - Methods that have been suggested:
 - Calico boat with a shucking machine
 - “Mother ship” for processing at-sea
 - Land shell stock, allow processors to use shucking machines.
 - High price tag to purchase one
 - Contrary to fundamentals of the FMP (keeping skilled labor at sea)
 - May require an amendment. This would likely require an evaluation of social impacts.
 - How this might impact overall economics of the fishery.
 - May be some controversy around these ideas.
 - Impact on price?
- Shell-stocking
 - Environmental concerns
 - Disposal of shells and viscera (shoreside, inshore waterways)
 - Removing “habitat” – EX: Attachment of larvae to shells at-sea
 - Contrary to fundamentals of the FMP (keeping skilled labor at sea)
 - Earlier FWs (FW14) highlight concerns with this practice.
 - Thin shells – may experience mortality.
 - Quality of scallops can deteriorate
 - Bringing inferior products can impact the market price.
 - Considerations for evaluating this in an action:
 - How this might impact overall economics of the fishery.
 - Concerns about dealer’s ability to purchase product
 - The PDT has not been supportive of this concept in the past.
- Transferring shell-stock at-sea
 - Limited number of larger vessels that could process product
 - Concerns about dealer’s ability to purchase product
 - Contrary to fundamentals of the FMP (keeping skilled labor at sea)

Strawman for Discussion: This is not a PDT position, included to generate discussion.

Dredge modifications: None. Looking at the SH frequencies for both the survey and commercial 4" ring dredge there is some selectivity going on. If we are considering a multi-year event, there is no need to put everything on the ocean bottom on deck with a less selective dredge. Non harvest mortality will be high enough as it is. We also should consider deck operations as influenced by the catch. Clean tows like we saw in the videos will be important. We want the crews to shovel the catch and not having to pick out from a messy pile. The 4-inch ring along with short tows will give the best results. From a regulatory point...no need to have a contrary dredge in a productive fishery area.

Crew size: Can set it higher but not enough to encourage highgrading A crew size of 9 would be a reasonable starting point for further discussion.

Area management: Consider an overall TAC for the area...when it's reached, the area closes. If the current biomass remains stable, suggest a TAC at no more than 20% of the total. Setting a trip limit with a set number of trips would complicate management with a bunch of broken trips and other fleet management issues. The area would be open to all permitted scallop vessels. No distinction between permit categories if possible.

Looking ahead: If the area is fished in 2020 and beyond, it would be a worthwhile effort to monitor some of the economic parameters of the fishery like ex vessel price, marketing changes including import/export, influence on the "normal scallop fishery", vessel participation, etc;. Some involvement of the buying/processing/marketing sectors would be important. What kind of data would be needed?

Accounting for an allocation of NLS-S-deep Scallops

