

DRAFT Evaluation of Rotational Management – Project Overview

Overview:

- An evaluation of rotational management will focus on two questions: 1) Has the program achieved the primary objectives identified in Amendment 10; and 2) Is the version of rotational management that we are using now working?
- The analyses will rely on available information such as landings, effort, and observer data. Outcomes of rotational management are correlated to the performance of scallop projections (surveys and the SAMS model). This evaluation will not examine projection performance.
 - NOTE: The NRCC recently agreed to an evaluation of scallop projection models in the Spring of 2023, which would include the SAMS model, and perhaps a new “GEOSAMS” model that is being developed by the Center.
- The project timeline will run from June 2021 – December 2021, with a draft report prepared for the December Council meeting. The plan is to have a sub-group of the PDT will be working on this report, with the assistance of a contractor.

Council Priority

This is a one-year work priority (January 2021 – December 2021). The PDT, with the assistance of a contractor, will provide the Committee and Council a draft report by the December Council meeting. There are 28 weeks between June 7 and the December Council meeting. A project timeline for the next two months is shown in Table 1.

Goals:

1. Evaluate if the original objectives of the rotational program have been met.
2. Evaluate if the current version of rotational management that the Council is using is working.

Objectives:

1. Document the use of rotational management over time, with a particular emphasis on the most recent period (SARC 59 forward?).
2. Assess the performance of the program relative to a subset of the [primary objectives of A10](#):
 - 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.
3. Describe how the rotational management program is currently being used in comparison to the original approach and describe the outcomes and rationale/justification for new approaches. This would include but is not limited to:
 - a. Which original policies and criteria for rotational management (A10) are still being used, and which criteria are not. EX: Openings, closures, growth potential.
 - b. FLEX Trips → How have they been used? Outcomes?
 - c. Broken Trips → Now allocating pounds.
 - d. Trip trading at smaller increments → How is this being used?
4. Document two-year specification actions and evaluate outcomes.
5. Identify possible changes or areas for improvement (straw person).

Work Product & Application:

The project will create a report that evaluates the rotational management program, focusing on fishing years 2013 to 2020. Based on the report, the Council could consider if adjustments and/or improvements to the FMP can or should be made through management measures based on the results of the report.

High Level Project Description:

Rotational management has been an integral part of scallop fishery management by the New England Fishery Management Council since it was first implemented. The program has evolved over time in response to changes in data collection, scallop abundance and spatial distribution, and fishery management (i.e., scallop, groundfish, habitat). The evaluation will use existing information and data sources to document how the Council has used rotational management and assess if the program has met the original objective of Amendment 10, and how the current version of the program is performing. The report will draw on available data, such as landings and revenue, effort, and observer data. The report will also consider how the Council considered the goals of other FMPs, such as the groundfish closures, in documenting the evolution of the program. Council staff and PDT members will work to assemble the existing data sets, and the Council plans to hire a contractor to support the completion of this work by December of 2021. The contractor will work closely with Council staff and a sub-group of the Scallop PDT.

Data and Information Needs (availability):

1. Amendment 10 and actions that have adjusted the program (Council has this).
2. Rotational Scenarios for each year, with allocations to each area. (Council has this in a table)
 - a. How rotational areas have evolved over time. (Council has this, also in the admin record).
3. Details on decision making criteria, rationale for selecting a particular rotational configuration, documentation of emergency closures, closures other key information on management decisions (Administrative Record) vs. realized, what are the constraints? Were there other things that happened.
4. Observer Data from NEFSC (NEFSC databases, PDT commitment to help)
5. Landings and price data by market grade, month, year, access area, fishery component (GARFO – APSD, Council staff have access to this database).
6. Average landings per trip for each access area (Ben did this for us when we looked at monitoring).
7. Assemble research that has been completed on this topic.

Questions we should be able to answer with this evaluation:

1. Did access areas openings perform the way that managers expected?
 - a. Did we improve the yield of the scallops in access areas?
2. What were some of the unexpected challenges with rotational management?
3. Did we leave the areas closed long enough to maximize yield? If not, what were some of the reasons/rationales for an earlier opening? [Did you ever look back at ET-Closed/Flex...did that work out the way we thought it would? Was density an issue?]
4. How have access areas changed over time (size, spatial distribution, configurations)?
5. Have seasonal harvest patterns changed over time? Do they align with meat weight anomaly?

6. Does the fishery utilize rotational areas differently now vs. at the outset of the program?
7. Are there opportunities to modify or improve how the Council utilizes rotational management based the available data, and how the program has performed? What are some of the trade-offs between annual and biannual specifications?
8. What is the appropriate spatial scale of rotational management areas? [A10 had guidance on this too, closure had to be a certain number of 10-minute squares]

Table 1 - Project Timeline - Late May - July

Week	Status	31-May	7-Jun	14-Jun	21-Jun	28-Jun	5-Jul	12-Jul	19-Jul	26-Jul
RFP										
Develop scope of work, deliverables, draft RFP	Ongoing									
Work on website/announcement	Contacted									
RFP announcement open (June 17th - 8am July 6?)	Drafting			After CTE						
Review applications, finalize contract (July 6 - 9)										
First meeting with contractor, kick off work										
Scallop PDT call planned for July 28 - project update										
Workplan										
Form a PDT sub-group to help with data access	Complete									
Assemble datasets that will be used in report (staff, PDT)	In progress									
Contractor works with staff POC, PDT sub-group										
Present work to PDT										