



New England Fishery Management Council

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MEETING SUMMARY

Scallop PDT Meeting

April 26, 2018

The Scallop PDT met by conference call on April 26, 2018 to: 1) Discuss recommendations for the 2019/2020 Scallop Research Set-Aside program; 2) Discuss other business as necessary.

MEETING ATTENDANCE: Jonathon Peros (PDT Chair), Sam Asci, Dr. Demet Haksever, Dr. Bill DuPaul, Dr. David Rudders Travis Ford, Ben Galuardi, Kevin Kelly, Chad Keith, Danielle Palmer, Dr. Dvora Hart, Dr. David Bethoney, and Dr. Cate O’Keefe. Several members of the public also joined the call.

KEY OUTCOMES:

- The PDT made initial recommends for 2019/2020 Scallop RSA priorities, and plans to follow-up on this effort on May 8, 2018.
- The PDT recommends keeping the RSA research priorities broad in order to invite a range of proposals on general issues, allowing researchers to make their case for the work to be done its relevance to the scallop fishery.

The meeting began at 1:03 pm.

2019/2020 RESEARCH SET-ASIDE PRIORITIES:

Council staff opened the meeting with a review of the agenda and meeting materials, roll call, and noted that Dr. Bill DuPaul was the 2018 recipient of the Council’s Janice Plante Award for Excellence.

The 2018/2019 RSA awards have not been announced but should be available by mid-May. In April, the Council updated the 2018 work priorities by removing gear modifications to protect small scallops, and adding the development of standard default measures. Staff explained that several of the 2018 work priorities, such as Northern Gulf of Maine management and modifying access areas to be consistent with OHA2 could be multi-year priorities.

Table 1 - 2018 Scallop Priorities - Ranked and Modified by the Council in April 2018.

Regulatory Requirements & Ongoing work	Council Ranking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifications for 2019/2020 • Benchmark (SAW/SARC 65) • Support Scallop RSA Program • In-season catch accounting • Specify Allocation Review Triggers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modify Access Areas to be consistent with OHA2 2. Standard default measures 3. Monitoring and catch accounting 4. Consider LAGC IFQ trip limits 5. NGOM Management measures

Before beginning discussion around potential research topics, Council staff briefly reviewed the range of topics/projects that were funded through the 2016/2017, and the 2017/2018 RSA cycles (see [Doc.6](#)), noting that several of the projects had recently been presented at Scallop SAW 65 meetings. Related to the Council removing “gear modifications to protect small scallops” from the 2018 priority list, a member of the PDT expressed interest in receiving updates on on-going gear modification projects funded by the RSA.

Follow-up:

- Follow-up with PIs of gear modification projects by the May 8, 2018 meeting.
- Reach out to NEFSC regarding the timing of when the 2018/2019 awards will be announced.

POTENTIAL AREAS OF RSA FOCUS: 2019/2020

This year, the PDT began its RSA priorities discussion by focusing on several topics that have been raised since the Council finalized 2018/2019 RSA research priorities in June of 2017. The PDT did not begin its discussion with the existing list of 2018/2019 priorities.

1. Continuation of dredge efficiency work for high density areas.

Dredge efficiency in high density areas of the Nantucket Lightship and Elephant Trunk access areas has been a recurring issue in recent years (driven by strong year classes in these areas). Research comparing the 15-minute tows vs. 10-minute tows was presented during the scallop stock assessment workgroup meetings in early 2018. The results of this research were not conclusive that shortening tow duration by 5-minutes is an appropriate response to address survey dredge efficiency. Discussion during the 2018 scallop benchmark process suggested that additional research may be needed on this topic. The topic of dredge efficiency was an RSA priority in 2018/2019, and was ranked as “other” (#6).

PDT Discussion: Members of the PDT noted that the SAW process is ongoing and felt that more information on this topic may come forward at upcoming meetings. The NEFSC is planning to do some work on this issue during the 2018 survey season and may look at 7.5 min tow durations using the survey dredge in high density areas and compare findings to HabCam.

Follow-up:

- The PDT recommended leaving this as a RSA research priority for now – and to revisit it if more information becomes available in the short term.
 - Research recommendations are typically discussed at the final SAW meeting (scheduled April 30 – May 4, 2018). Staff can bring discussion items from SAW to next PDT meeting.
2. *Studies/analysis to quantify the impact of offshore energy development on the scallop fishery.*

Council staff explained that this concept was added as a potential area of focus for PDT discussion in light of the recent developments around offshore energy development, particularly wind farms. Staff noted that the Council’s input in this area is being coordinated through the Habitat Committee, and that the Council voted in April 2018 to send several comment letters to BOEM. NOAA Fisheries has assembled a group that is focusing on offshore wind energy projects in the Greater Atlantic Region. Michelle Bachman, the Council’s Habitat Plan Coordinator, participates in this group along with Scallop PDT member Benjamin Galuardi. Mr. Tim Cardiasmenos (NEPA) is also following this work closely. The key questions that the PDT considered were: 1) Is the Scallop RSA an appropriate mechanism to fund research related to offshore wind; and 2) Are there specific unanswered questions around offshore wind development that relate to scallop management.

PDT Discussion: The PDT felt that the first step to addressing the above questions is to assemble information around research that has already been conducted or will be in the near future and assess the existing research and funding responsibilities of BOEM and wind farm developers. For example, wind farm developers are required to prepare a construction and operations plan (COP) for BOEM, and BOEM is the agency responsible for preparing environmental impact statements. Members of the PDT felt that this should not be pursued through the RSA unless there are specific scallop related questions that should be answered that aren’t already being addressed in the permitting and development process.

Follow-up:

- The PDT suggests raising this issue with the Scallop Advisory Panel to see if there is desire to use RSA funding to address issues related to offshore energy development.

3. *Management procedures/MSE for scallop rotational management.*

Council staff explained that this concept has come up during recent PDT meetings. Input prior to the meeting suggested that this priority could focus on evaluating fishery performance under current and alternative management approaches. Examples of current management processes include surveys, monitoring, assessment approaches, harvest control rules (i.e. rotational access areas, open areas DAS). Staff also noted that many of these processes are currently being reviewed through the 2018 benchmark assessment.

PDT Discussion: The PDT suggested that this concept should be added to the RSA priority list, and noted that much of the work would rely on existing data and research. Dr. Hart explained that extensive analysis was completed in the development of Amendment 10, but noted that none

of the analyses were included in the Amendment 10 document. She explained that the SAMS model has been coded with “rules” in it, such as a growth rule developed in Amendment 10 which informed the rotational management area schedule. The PDT noted that the rotational management process has moved toward an annual evaluation of openings and closures based on the availability of survey information. The group felt that a MSE could be used as a tool that assesses how effective current management processes are at completing management objectives and to potentially identify alternative approaches that add value to the process. The PDT agreed that the development of an MSE as a RSA project would require some cooperation with the Northeast Fisheries Science Center and the New England Fishery Management Council.

With regard to the evolution of area management, the Dr. Hart explained that since Amendment 10 the selectivity of the fishery has shifted to larger animals, which can change the timing of rotation. Updated growth data have also been incorporated into the model, as well as a higher estimate of natural mortality. Dr. Hart suggested rotation on a 1-3 year timeline may make more sense given our current set of assumptions.

Follow-up:

- The PDT recommended adding this to the RSA priority list and combining Priorities #9 and #11 from the 2018/2019 FFO. The group felt that this concept should remain broadly defined.
4. *Fluctuations of the cold pool in Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic, and its relationship to scallop recruitment.*

Council staff explained that this concept had come up between last June (2017) and this meeting during brainstorming discussions.

PDT Discussion: It was reported that Dr. Kevin Friedland at the NEFSC Narragansett Lab has been doing some work on this specific topic. The PDT felt that this would be a narrow topic for the RSA, and that it would be more appropriate to keep research topics broadly defined to allow researchers to respond with specific proposals. The group thought this concept would fit within the existing priority for scallop biology research.

6. *Bycatch issues.*

Council staff explained an idea that was advanced through correspondence to develop a CPUE index for flatfish species from scallop observer data. Staff also invited comments on key species of concern, and other efforts related to bycatch such as conservation engineering and turtle research.

PDT Discussion: With regard to developing a CPUE index for flatfish species, it was noted that this could be done using existing data by members of the Scallop PDT. In the past, Dr. Hart has presented CPUE data for some flatfish species. It was also acknowledged that this kind of work could help to support other ongoing fishery science efforts in the region, such as groundfish stock assessments. The RSA process provides a vehicle to complete work on issues that may impact the scallop fishery in the future. An example of this was the recent funding of a project to assess the discard mortality of monkfish in scallop dredges.

In terms of bycatch species of concern, the PDT felt that it is reasonable to continue focus on yellowtail and windowpane flounder stocks. The PDT did not recommend removing any specific issues, but felt that it is important to continue evaluating the data needs in each area of research after having a better understanding of what RSA work has been funded for the near future, and the findings of recent work.

Other Business:

There was no other business. The meeting adjourned at 2:14 pm.