



New England Fishery Management Council

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MEETING SUMMARY
Joint Scallop Advisory Panel and PDT Meeting

Boston, MA
October 23rd, 2018

The Scallop Advisory Panel and PDT met jointly in Boston, MA on October 23rd, 2018 to: 1) review analyses and recommend specification alternatives to be considered by the Scallop Committee for inclusion in Framework 30, 2) review and consider potential measures to reduce fishery impacts, 3) provide input on potential scallop work priorities for 2019, and 4) discuss other business.

MEETING ATTENDANCE:

PDT: Jonathon Peros (PDT Chair), Sam Asci, Dr. David Rudders, Dr. William DuPaul, Shannah Jaburek, Ben Galuardi, Danielle Palmer, Tim Cardiasmenos, Kevin Kelly, Dr. Dvora Hart, Dr. Demet Haksever, Chad Keith, and Dr. Cate O'Keefe.

AP: Jim Gutowski (AP Chair), Robert Maxwell, Ronald Enoksen, Ed Mullis, Brent Fulcher, Eric Hansen, Kirk Larson, Michael Marchetti, Paul Parker, Kristan Porter, Charles Quinn, Tom Reilly, Edward Welch, and Paul Vifides.

Vincent Balzano, Scallop Committee Chair, was in attendance along with 13 members of the public.

MEETING MATERIALS:

- 1) [Meeting Agenda](#); 2) [Meeting Memo from Committee Chair, Mr. Vincent Balzano](#);
- Framework 30 Documents:* 3a) [Framework 30 Decision Document](#), 3b) [Draft Framework 30](#), 3c) [Scallop Price Model](#), 3d) [2018 Fishery Performance](#), 3e) [Measures to reduce fishery impacts](#);
- 4) [Scallop Committee Meeting Summary, Sept. 14, 2018](#); 5) [Scallop Advisory Panel Meeting Summary, Sept. 13, 2018](#); 6) [Scallop PDT Meeting Summaries: July – October](#); 7) [Scallop PDT memo to the SSC re: 2019 and 2020 \(default\) OFLs and ABCs](#); 8) [Priorities: 2018 work items and potential 2019 work priorities for the Scallop FMP](#); 9) [Correspondence](#); and B1) [Economic simulations of prices and revenue](#).

The meeting began at 9:13 am. Jim Gutowski (AP Chair) welcomed the AP, PDT, and members of the public to the meeting and briefly reviewed the agenda. He also noted the structure of the joint meeting, in that PDT and AP will be seated together at the meeting table and will discuss most agenda items as a group. Recommendations to the Committee may come as consensus statements from the entire group, or in the form of a motion from the AP. PDT members will not vote on AP motions, but may join in the discussion.

AP Chair Gutowski highlighted the meeting objective of providing input to the Committee regarding the range of alternatives to be considered in FW30 and noted that the selection of preferred alternatives would be addressed at the November AP and Committee meetings.

Council staff updated the group with SSC recommendations for 2019 and 2020 OFL and ABC estimates, noting the similarity between values approved for 2018. The decline between 2019 and 2020 estimates is attributed to the incredibly large 2012/2013 year classes recruiting to the fishery and the absence of strong recruitment in subsequent years. The FY2019 ACL was estimated to be approximately 123 million lbs ($F=0.51$) and FY2019 spatial management options projected landings to total around 60 million lbs.

Staff continued with an outline of agenda items that will inform a broader discussion around 2019 specifications, including 2018 Fishery Information, SAMS model runs and outputs, Economic scenarios, and FW30 specification considerations.

2018 Fishery Performance

Ben Galuardi (GARFO) presented information on landings by market grade, ex-vessel price, and LPUE between FY2015 and FY2018 to date. Questions and key points from the AP and PDT discussion included:

- With regard to figures showing landings by market grade, the market grade “other” refers mostly to landings from the NGOM management area.
- When comparing monthly landings by area, it appears that larger scallops have been landed from the MAAA in FY2018 compared to FY2017.
- FY2018 average monthly ex-vessel prices by area for the LA and LAGC components trended down between April and June, but have been increasing since June. The combined average price in October appears to be slightly greater than \$10 per pound for both the LA and LAGC components.
 - A member of the PDT noted that average price seemed to be consistently lower for the LAGC component compared to the LA component. An AP member suggested this was a result of derby fishing in access areas because vessels do not have as much flexibility to fish when they want (i.e. when prices are at their best).
- A review of monthly open-area LPUE showed catch rates dropping off in September. Discussion around this yielded several potential explanations:
 - Recent reports from industry suggested meat yield was decreasing in September around Long Island and in the Southeast Parts.
 - Weather conditions were consistently poor during the month of September which could have slowed fishing.

Framework 30 Projections and LPUE Model Update

Dr. Dvora Hart (NEFSC) presented updates to the LPUE model and projected FY2019 landings by area at a range of fishing mortality rates. Key points from the presentation and AP/PDT discussion included:

- The 2018 LPUE regression model used $R^2=0.45$ which is an adjustment compared to previous years. The regression of exploitable biomass vs. catch rates by year showed that predicted LPUE in recent years have fallen above the regression line compared to previous years which were below it. This suggests that the scallop fleet is becoming more efficient over time (i.e. achieving higher catch rates).
- A two-variable regression of exploitable biomass vs. time ($R^2=0.75$) was used to predict 2018 LPUE for the SAMS model. Both variables were significant, and predicted 2018 LPUE was 2,362 pounds per day.
- Following a question from the AP, Dr. Hart explained that predicted and realized LPUE for 2017 had not been investigated, although the 2018 regression model showed 2017 to be slightly underestimated.
- An AP member asked for more justification to the takeaway that the fleet is getting more efficient and expressed hesitation due to regulations only becoming more restrictive over time. It was noted that the regression does not provide an explanation to the efficiency trend but does strongly suggest that the fleet is becoming more efficient. Some factors influencing this trend could be the increase in newer vessels, an increased use of tools that make processing at sea more efficient, or even selectivity to larger animals.
- A member of the PDT found the LPUE breakdown by region helpful and suggested that it would be even more informative if LPUE were broken down by SAMS area. Dr. Hart found this to be a worthy exercise and felt she would have time to do so once FW30 development was complete.
- A member of the AP suggested using crew age as a variable in the model moving forward noting that younger crews are typically more efficient. Overall, the PDT and AP felt this was a good thing to investigate in the future; however, it was also noted that changing the current model at present was probably not a good idea in light of final action being in the near future. Furthermore, changes to the LPUE model are expected in the future as a result of SARC 65 and this point can be taken up at that time.
- A member of the AP suggested the introduction of AIS and availability of survey information has contributed to vessels becoming more efficient in recent years.

Exploration of Landings by Fishing Mortality

Dr. Hart presented information on projected fishing mortality in access areas and open areas. Specifically, her perspective was that fishing mortality should be higher in access areas compared to open areas because older scallops and higher biomass are in access areas. She noted that many of the current specification alternatives being considered have open area F set higher than access area F. If F was set to 0.35 for access areas, the projection model suggested that the MAAA could handle over four trips and the NLS-W could handle about 3.5 trips (at 18,000 lbs). The SAMS model suggested that 1 trip to CAI would result in a much higher F (around 0.5), meaning there could be concerns that realized F could be higher if a mortality event were to occur or projections were overly optimistic. Dr. Hart suggested that the AP consider reducing open area F and increasing harvest in the MAAA and NLS-W.

Economic Simulation Analyses re: 2019 Price and Revenue Estimates

Dr. Demet Haksever (Council staff) presented a summary of economic simulation analyses comparing relative estimates of ex-vessel scallop price, revenue, and producer surplus between FY2019 spatial management runs. Analysis assumed the current import price of \$5.50 and the ratio of imports from Japan and Canada to be constant across the range of landings and size composition expected for each spatial management run. Key points from the presentation include:

- Lower import prices generally correlate with higher landings; however, many other factors influence global supply and demand (i.e. exchange rate, tariffs) which vary from year to year.
- In general, higher landings result in lower prices holding other factors constant, but revenues would still be higher at larger landings. For example, a 10% increase in landings from 50 million lb. to 55 million lb. is estimated to reduce the annual average prices by only 2%, meaning the greater volume of landings outweighs the impact on price and would result in higher revenue overall.
- Analysis suggested that prices would be highest under the PDT run and lowest under Com2 because more scallops would be landed under Com2 (roughly 65.5 million lbs) compared to the PDT run (roughly 57.6 million lbs). It was noted that the relative size composition of landings appeared very similar between the PDT run and Com2; however, 2020 landings were estimated to be the highest under the PDT run relative to the other runs which would result in this option having lower prices in 2020 relative to the others.
- For the same reasons, scallop revenues and producer surplus would be highest in 2019 under Com2, and lowest under the PDT run and the opposite would be expected for 2020 (i.e. PDT run would have greater landings, revenues, and produce surplus in 2020 relative to the other options, but would also have lower prices.

There was no AP/PDT discussion on the presentation.

2019 Specifications Discussion

Council staff prefaced discussion on 2019 specifications with the following considerations:

- SAMS projections from specification runs tasked by the Committee all use the same open bottom configuration, meaning DAS projections and total pounds coming from rotational areas can be “mixed and matched” to interpret a wider range of spatial management options than what the tasked projection runs offer.
- With regard to the NLS, roughly 38% of total 2018 biomass was observed in the NLS-S-deep and NLS-W. A comparison of recent VMS data (April-September 2018), VIMS survey data, and interpolated meat count contours shows that the part of the NLS-W with the highest biomass hasn’t been fished yet in FY2018 (Figure 1).

- As of October 17th, 55% of expected FY2018 landings have been harvested (i.e. ~43 million lbs combined total between the LA, LAGC IFQ, and LA/LAGC IFQ combo components).
- Staff reviewed SAMS projection runs from Committee and Council tasking (Table 1), as well as a specifications matrix that can be used to ‘mix and match’ projected rotational landings and open area landings to best inform spatial management options for FY2019 (Table 2).
- NMFS is in the process of expanding VMS preland notification requirements to include limited access open area trips.
- A proposed rule is expected to publish related to expanding the current GSC and SNE Scallop Dredge Exemption Areas, which could potentially broaden the range of where LAGC IFQ vessels can fish open trips. The proposed GB/SNE Scallop Dredge Exemption Area is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1. Density per m2 of >75 mm scallops from the 2018 VIMS survey dredge relative to interpolated meat count contours (solid black lines) and VMS hours fished from April to September 14th, 2018.

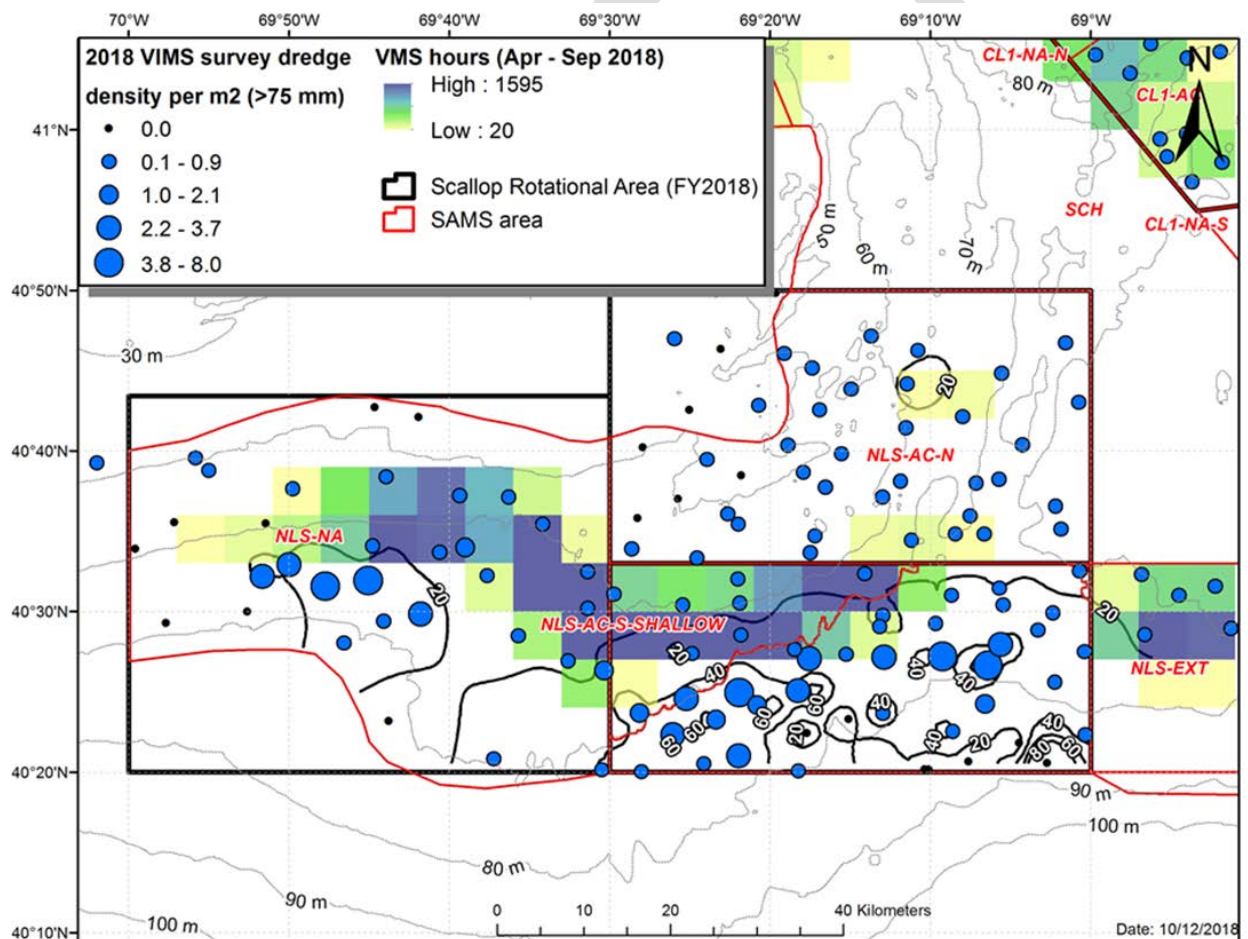


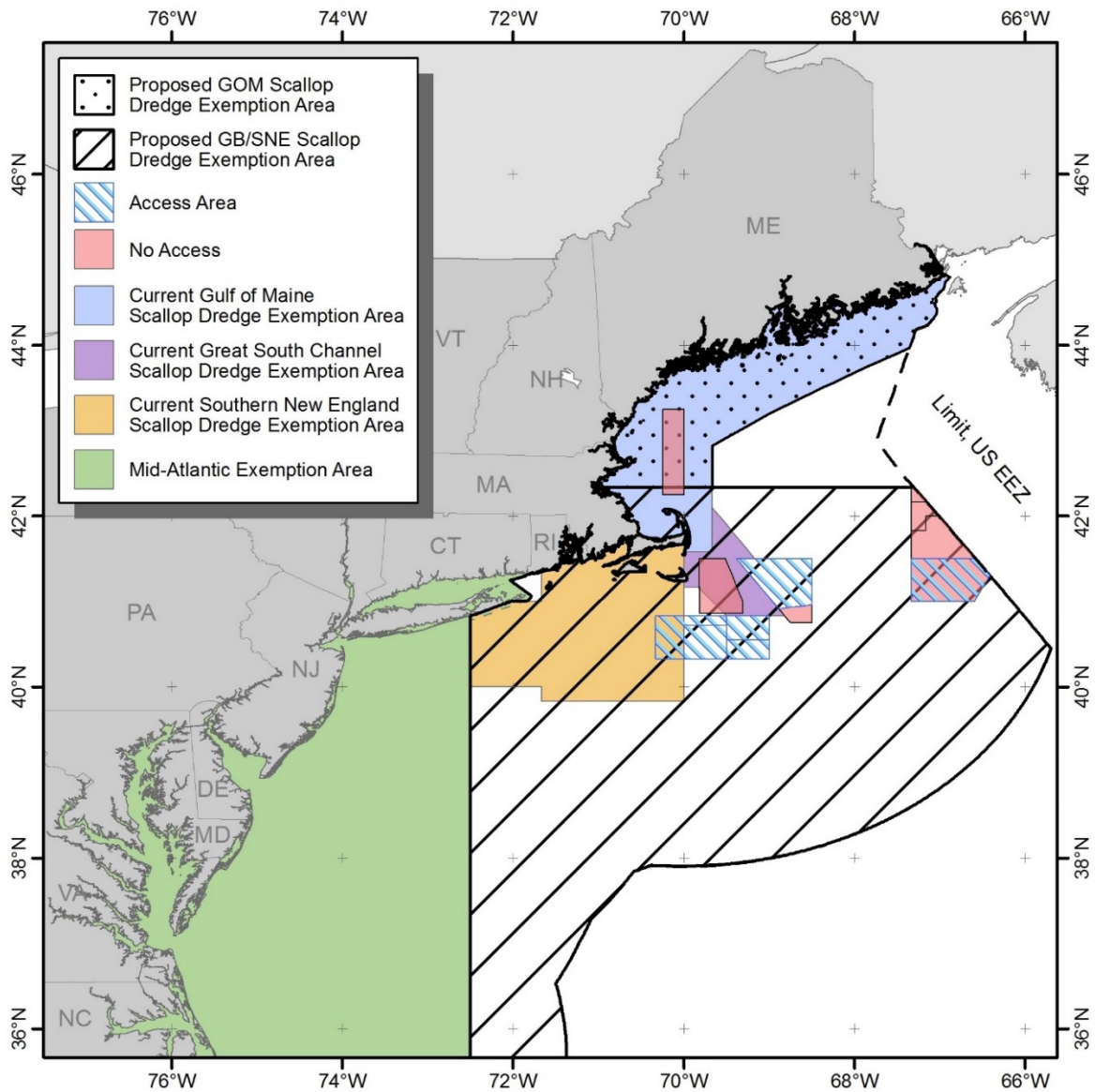
Table 1. SAMS projection model outputs for FY2019 specification runs tasked by the Committee/Council (see Doc.0 and Doc.3a).

		2. "Committee 1"	3. "Committee 2"	4. "Committee 3"	5. "Council"	6. "PDT"
	Spatial management	6 at 18,000 lbs; 1 CAI; 3 NLS-W; 2 MAAA	6 at 18,000 lbs; 1 CAI; 3 NLS-S&W; 2 MAAA	5 at 18,000 lbs; 1 CAI; 2 NLS-W; 2 MAAA	7 at 15,000 lbs; 1 CAI; 1 CAII; 3 NLS-W; 2 MAAA	7 at 15,000 lbs; 1 CAI; 3 NLS-W; 3 MAAA
a	Projected Landings (mil lbs)	61.6	65.5	62.8	61.0	57.6
b	APL after set-asides (mil lbs)	59.1	62.9	60.3	58.5	55.0
c	Open Area F	0.295	0.35	0.4	0.3	0.25
d	FT LA DAS	30	35	39	31	26
e	Open Area landings (mil lbs)	25.5	29.4	32.5	26	22.5
f	Rotational landings (mil lbs)	36.1	36.1	30.3	35.0	35.1
g	LAGC IFQ Quota (5%) (mil lbs)	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.8
h	Overall F	0.131	0.15	0.131	0.122	0.122
i	LPUE (AA + Open) - lbs day	2,931	2,879	2,801	2,912	2,999
j	LPUE-OPEN BOTTOM - lbs day	2,355	2,323	2,294	2,352	2,381
k	Total days at sea	21,031	22,752	22,429	20,955	19,194
l	Area swept - sq nm	2,635	3,100	3,467	2,846	2,336

Table 2. Specifications matrix showing combinations of open area F rates and rotational management scenarios. This matrix can be used to calculate the approximate landings by combining a "spatial management" scenario (columns) and associated harvest with estimated landings from open bottom (see Doc.0, Doc.3).

				i	ii	iii
				5 trips at 18,000 lbs - "Committee 3"	6 trips at 18,000 lbs - "Committee 1 & Committee 2"	7 trips at 15,000 lbs - "Council and PDT"
			Rotational landings (mil)	30 mil lbs	36 mil lbs	35 mil lbs
	Open Area F	FT LA DAS	Open Area landings (mil)			
a	0.25	26	22.5	52.5	58.5	57.5
b	0.295	30	25.5	55.5	61.5	60.5
c	0.3	31	26	56	62	61.0
d	0.35	35	29.4	59.4	65.4	64.4
e	0.4	39	32.5	62.5	68.5	67.5

Figure 2. The proposed GB/SNE and GOM Scallop Dredge Exemption areas being considered by NMFS relative to the current boundaries of Scallop Dredge Exemption Areas.



AP Discussion on 2019 Specifications:

Following the staff presentation, AP Chair Jim Gutowski reiterated the main objective for the AP: provide input to the Committee on what alternatives should be considered in FW30; alternatives should specify the configuration of rotational areas, and access area trip limit, and an open area F rate.

Motion 1: Larson/Quinn

Recommend that the Committee develop a specifications alternative in FW30 that follows the “PDT” run:

- Set FT LA trip limit at: 15,000
- Allocate (7) access area trips to the following areas:
 - 1 trip in CAI
 - 3 trips in NLS-W (NLS-N and NLS-S would be closed)
 - 3 trips in MAAA
- Include open area F options setting: ○ F=0.25, 26 DAS

Rationale: Supportive of the open area F of F=0.25. CAI will need to be fished at a higher F to achieve a 18,000 lb FT LA trip. Closed Area II would be closed.

The motion carried on a show of hands. (11/1/1)

Discussion points:

- A member of the AP expressed interest in the rotational management configuration described in Motion 1, but supported a possession limit of 18,000 lbs.
- It was clarified that the PDT recommendation of a 15,000-pound possession limit in access areas was addressing the concern around available exploitable biomass in CAI being uncertain.
- As a way to reduce pressure in CAI, a member of the AP suggested the CAI trip have a possession limit of 15,000 lbs, while trips to the NLS-W and MAAA have a possession limit of 18,000 lbs.
 - Other members of the AP did not like the thought of specifying access area trips at different possession limits because it complicates the ability for vessels to trade trips. In the past, trip trading has only been allowed with full trips on a one for one basis.
- Dr. Hart suggested another way to reduce pressure in CAI would be to allocate a ‘flex’ trip that could be taken in either CAI or the MAAA.
- A member of the AP was hesitant of allocating more than 3 trips to the MAAA in FY2019 and stressed the importance of this area being available in FY2020 and beyond. To this point, even though some exploitable biomass in the MAAA may not be available due to nematode infection, expected removals from three trips to this area in FY2019 would represent a relatively small portion of what exists there.
- A member of the audience supported the motion because all trips had the same possession limit and suggested that a lower possession limit (i.e. 15,000 lbs) could potentially yield higher prices at the dock. He further supported the flex trip idea, citing past instances where available biomass in CAI had been overestimated and highlighted the need for a ‘fire escape’ in case this were to happen again in FY2019.

Motion 2: Hansen/Fulcher

Recommend that the Committee develop a specifications alternative in FW30 that would:

- Set FT LA trip limit at: 18,000
- Allocate (7) access area trips to the following areas:
 - 3 trips in NLS-W (NLS-N and NLS-S would be closed)
 - 3 trips in MAAA
 - 1 flex trip that could be taken in CAI, NLS-W, MAAA. Entire trip would be fished in the area selected.
- Include open area F options setting:
 - $F=0.25$, 26 DAS

Rationale: Option to allow fleet to work in multiple areas and move to areas with high production. Flex option could provide relief in CAI to allow for some 18,000 lbs in the area. Price has been steady in 2018, not effected as much as was expected with increase in landings. 18,000 lb trip limit is what the fishery has been at for some time.

The motion carried on a show of hands. (10/3/0)

Discussion points:

- A member of the AP supported Motion 2 but suggested that projected landings under this option (i.e. 63 million pounds) represents the upper bound of the range that should be considered for FY2019.
- A member of the PDT felt it would be informative to see what parts of the resource the SAMS model is attributing open area landings to.
- Shannah Jaburek (GARFO) described the administrative mechanics of a flex trip. In the past, when a vessel declared a flex trip in a rotational area it had to finish the entire trip there (i.e. could not fish a portion of the flex trip in another area). She also recalled challenges related to flex fishing in the past and stressed the importance of vessels accounting for flex trips. It was also noted that it would not be possible to introduce a flex option for the LAGC IFQ component due to LAGC AA trips being allocated at the fleet level (i.e. instead of the individual vessel level).
- The AP was generally supportive of the flex trip option because it puts a mechanism in place to divert CAI effort into other access areas in a situation where CAI fishing does not pan out as expected (i.e. if biomass was overestimated, or if biomass becomes unavailable due to grey meat infection or some sort of mortality event).
 - The AP also suggested that the flex trip option be developed in such a way that would allow trips to be traded. There was some discussion around if/how this could be administered. Staff will work with GARFO to figure out if this is possible and how best to structure the regulations related to this alternative.
- The AP discussed how LAGC trips could be allocated under an alternative that has a flex trip option for full-time LA vessels. There was support for handling flex trips similar to how the

Council has allocated LAGC AA trips under alternatives that send full-time LA trips to CAII AA (i.e. redistribute LAGC trips to other available rotational areas).

Motion 3: Parker/Welch

Recommend that the Committee add a DAS sub-option of Motion 2:

- Set open area DAS at 24 (and calculate the corresponding F)

Rationale: This would add a DAS sub-option to Motion 2.

The motion carried on a show of hands (13-0-0).

Discussion points:

- AP/PDT discussion clarified that it is possible for DAS to be specified in the SAMS model (i.e. as opposed to specifying an open area F to estimate DAS).
- The majority of the AP was in support of Motion 3 because it provides a range of options for the group to consider in FW30.
- Many AP members supported Motion 3 because they felt it important to reduce effort in the open area, which was consistent with the PDT's recommendation for FY2019
- Two members of the AP felt that 24 DAS was overcautious based on the rationale that the open area is currently being fished less now than ever before. They also suggested that open area $F = 0.25$ be the lower bound of the range considered in FW30.
 - Staff clarified the PDT recommendation for reducing open area effort: huge year classes of scallops are driving the state of the resource at present and are almost entirely within rotational areas. Based on this and considering that the very low level of recruitment observed in recent years has been in the open bottom, the PDT felt strongly that the bulk of effort should be focused in access areas.
- Dr. Hart reiterated that the SAMS model projections suggest that the MAAA and NLS-W can support more access area trips than what the current range of alternatives specify when fishing at a relatively low F ($F=0.35$).
 - Other PDT members supported the sentiment of focusing effort in access areas and being conservative in the open area. There was some hesitation around recommending more than three trips to the NLS-W, mostly due to the majority of available biomass being 20-30 count and concentrated in a relatively small part of the area.
 - Similar hesitation was expressed for the MAAA considering how nematode prevalence has reduced available biomass in the southern extent of the area.

Motion 4: Mullis/Maxwell

Recommend that the Committee develop a specifications alternative in FW30 that would:

- Set FT LA trip limit at: 18,000
- Allocate (7) access area trips to the following areas:
 - 3 trips in NLS-SW (The “NLS-SW” would be a combination of the NLS-S-shallow, NLS-S-deep, and the NLS-W; NLS-N would be closed)
 - 3 trips in MAAA
 - 1 flex trip that could be taken in CAI, NLS-W, MAAA. Entire trip would be fished in the area selected.
- Include open area sub-options setting:
 - F=0.25, 26 DAS
 - 24 DAS

Rationale: Facilitate access area fishing in the NLS-S and NLS-W, as the Committee put forth in option 3.

The motion was withdrawn without objection.

Discussion points:

- Motion 4 was withdrawn without objection following brief discussion around PDT input on this specifications alternative:
 - The PDT recommended closing the NLS-S in FY2019 to optimize growth potential in the area and be a candidate for fishing in FY2020.
 - Due to the incredibly high biomass in the NLS-W, it is unlikely that combining the NLS-W and NLS-S would change management advice for the NLS-W.
 - Allocating a trip to the NLS-S in FY2019 would likely complicate development of harvest approaches for the slow growing, deep water scallops of the NLS-S-deep in the coming year.
- There was some AP discussion around adding a sub-option to the current specification alternatives that would facilitate access to the slow growing scallops of the NLS-S-deep. Staff recalled this option being discussed last year and reminded the group of the AP’s disinterest at that time. It was also noted that there has been continued interest in handling the NLS-S-deep separately from FW30 because including alternatives related to harvesting the slow growing animals there would likely cause a delay in implementation. Furthermore, facilitating access to this part of the resource is outside of the analysis prepared for specifications runs being considered at the day’s meeting.

Motion 5: Fulcher/Mullis

The AP recommends that allocated access area trips be available in the area they were allocated to in the first 60 days of following FY.

Rationale: To clarify support for allowing fishing unused access area trips during the first 60 of the new fishing year, even if the access area is scheduled to close.

The motion carried on a show of hands (13-0-0).

Motion 6: Enoksen/Larson

The AP recommends that the Committee include default measures for 2020 in FW30 that would allocate 1 access area trip in the MAAA and 1 access area trip in the NLS-West at the trip limit specified for 2019 FY.

Rationale: Make sense to continue the fishing year. This allows folks to make business plans, and provides more flexibility. This would include access area trips for the GC component.

The motion carried on a show of hands (13-0-0).

Motion 7: Parker/Fulcher

Allocate the total available LAGC IFQ access area trips that would be associated in Motion #2 using the following ratios for each area:

- 1/7 in the CAI
- 3/7 in MAAA
- 3/7 in NLS-W

The motion carried on a show of hands (13-0-0).

Discussion points:

- With regard to Motion 5 and Motion 6, the AP was supportive of specifying the access area timeline (i.e. trips can be fished in the 60 days following the fishing year) and default specifications for FY2020 because both provide flexibility to the fleet and assist business planning for the outyear.
- The AP supported Motion 7 because it addresses earlier discussion regarding the administration of LAGC AA allocations under an alternative with a flex trip option.

2019 NGOM TAC Discussion

Council staff provided a brief overview of considerations related to setting the FY2019 NGOM TAC. At the time of the meeting, projections of 2019 exploitable biomass within surveyed areas of the NGOM were not available; however, staff directed AP discussion toward the areas which are considered when setting the TAC and recommending a range of F rates to base the TAC on. PDT recommendations related to the FY2019 NGOM TAC were:

1. Consider setting NGOM TAC using $F=0.2$ or $F=0.25$.
2. Develop TAC using estimates of areas that are likely to be fished.
3. Consider setting default measures at conservative level (or zero). The rationale for doing so is to avoid a situation where specifications are delayed past the start of the fishing year and the out-year TAC is lower than the default. This is a concern due to the potential of the default TAC being fished before updated specifications are implemented, resulting in the updated NGOM TAC being exceeded.

Discussion points:

- A member of the AP noted that based on 2018 survey estimates from the NGOM, it seems like fishing above 2020 default NGOM TAC (set in FW29) wouldn't be a concern. This point was taken, and it was suggested that discussion be taken back up in November after reviewing NGOM projection runs for 2019.

Motion 8: Porter/Fulcher

Recommend that the Committee develop NGOM TAC options in FW30 using the following approach:

- Maintain the same approach to TAC setting in the NGOM in 2019 and 2020 for the LA and LAGC components that was developed and implemented through FW29.
- Develop TAC options based on fishing the following NGOM areas at $F=0.2$, $F=0.25$:
 - Stellwagen Bank
 - Jeffreys Ledge
 - Ipswich Bay

Rationale: Do not expect fishing on Platt's Bank. Anticipate fishing in other areas, but support being conservative. Stellwagen will probably see the bulk of the activity. Some areas of Stellwagen will be fished.

The motion carried on a show of hands (13-0-0).

Measures to Reduce Fishery Impacts

Council staff presented relevant background information and PDT input to date regarding measures in FW30 that reduce fishery impacts. Typically, alternatives have been included in annual specifications actions that direct where RSA compensation fishing can and cannot occur. In FW30, as it has in recent actions, the Council may wish to restrict compensation fishing in some areas to reduce impacts on small scallops, bycatch, or to limit overall harvest from an area. PDT recommendations to date on this topic included:

- Restrict compensation fishing in CAI due to potential impacts on available biomass.
- Restrict compensation fishing in CAII AA (i.e. if available to the scallop fishery in FY2019) to mitigate bycatch of GB yellowtail flounder.
- Allow RSA compensation fishing in all other available access areas (i.e. most likely NLS-W and the MAAA) and open bottom.
- As was done in FW29, allocate the LA share of the NGOM TAC as RSA compensation pounds, which would cap LA removals from the NGOM.

At the September 28th, 2018 meeting, the PDT discussed the considerably lower GB yellowtail sub-ACL anticipated for the scallop fishery in FY2019. Considering this, and how in-season VMS monitoring showed consistent fishing in CAII-ext (i.e. an area known for higher GB yellowtail bycatch relative to other parts of Georges Bank), the PDT put forth the following recommendations:

- The initial PDT proposal was to consider extending the current seasonal closure in CAII AA (August 15th to November 15th) to cover CAII-ext.
- Restrict RSA compensation fishing in CAII and CAII-ext to reduce impacts on GB yellowtail.

Staff briefly reviewed recent GB yellowtail discard information from observed hauls to expand PDT discussion around extending the CAII AA seasonal closure to CAII-ext. Methods, caveats, and key findings presented to the AP/PDT included:

- NEFOP records from March 1st, 2017 to August 24th, 2018 (i.e. most recent available) were used to estimate GB yellowtail discard to kept ratio (d/K) by ten-minute square on a bi-weekly basis.
 - This time period was used to gauge a reasonable expectation of GB yellowtail bycatch in the near future.
- CAII-ext was closed in FY2017 and turned into open bottom in FY2018. Since FY2018 data is available only through August 24th, observer records are not available to inform expected bycatch in CAII-ext after this time. It was suggested that comparing d/K figures to FY2018 VMS information may allow for some reasonable inferences to be made on seasonal GB yellowtail bycatch.

- Little to no GB yellowtail bycatch was observed in CAII-ext during August 1st-15th or August 16th-31st. Some GB yellowtail catch was observed in the SF SAMS area during August 1st-15th; however, little to no bycatch was observed in the SF during August 16th-31st, September 1st-15th, or September 16th-30th.
- Though no recent NEFOP records in CAII-ext are available for November 16th-30th, this time period appears to have higher GB yellowtail bycatch in CAII AA relative to other time periods considered in analysis. It was suggested that this trend could be expected to some extent in CAII-ext, a theory which was supported by analysis prepared for FW29 that showed GB yellowtail bycatch to be at its highest in CAII-ext between September and December.
- From April to mid-September 2018, 27% of all scallop fishery effort has been directed in and directly adjacent to CAII-ext. Staff suggested that if this trend continues in FY2019, there may be a reasonable argument to consider a seasonal closure in CAII-ext as well as restricting RSA compensation fishing there to mitigate bycatch of GB yellowtail.

Discussion points:

- A member of the PDT supported the point that restricting fishing in CAII-ext would reduce GB yellowtail bycatch in the scallop fishery.
- A member of the AP noted that the FY2018 opening of CAII-ext made this part of the resource available to the scallop fishery after several years of closure, which lead to a pulse of fishing in CAII-ext. He felt it would be overcautious to extend the CAII AA seasonal closure to CAII-ext or restrict RSA compensation fishing in CAII-ext because open area fishing will probably not be a strong there next year.
 - The AP was supportive of not pursuing a seasonal closure or restricting RSA compensation fishing in CAII-ext in FY2019.

Motion 9: Hansen/Enoksen

The AP recommends that the Committee develop alternatives in FW30 that would:

1. Allow RSA fishing in NLS-West, MAAA, and open bottom.

Rationale: RSA compensation fishing would not be allowed in other access areas, even if they are open.

The motion carried on a show of hands 13-0-0.

2019 Priorities Discussion

AP Chair Jim Gutowski thanked the PDT for participating in the meeting and noted that the 2019 priorities discussion was for the AP only. He also explained that the goal for this agenda item, to identify potential 2019 work priorities for the Council to consider, and take final action on at their December meeting. Council staff gave a brief overview of the status of ongoing 2018 work priorities, as well as the current list of priorities being considered for 2019 (Table 3). There were no questions from the AP on the presentation.

Motion 10: Quinn/Larson

To prioritize for work in 2019:

- ECSHA - Continue to address issues and challenges facing the LA component.

Rationale: This priority should stay on the list for work in 2019.

The motion was withdrawn without objection.

Discussion points:

- Following Motion 10, the AP discussed the best way to identify and rank priorities for the Committee and Council to consider. The group agreed it would make sense to put forth a complete list instead of handling priority items in individual motions.

Motion 11: Parker/Maxwell

Recommend that the Committee prioritize the following work items in 2019 (not ranked).

Priority/Task Title
Specifications for FY2020 and FY2021
Modify AA to be consistent with OHA2
Evaluation of rotational management program
Evaluate harvesting slow growing scallops in the Nantucket Lightship – south deep
LAGC IFQ Trip Limits
DAS and IFQ carryover
East Coast Scallop Harvest Association – problems and challenges in fishery

The motion carried on a show of hands (9-4-0).

Discussion points:

- Council staff clarified that “in-season catch accounting” and “support annual Scallop RSA process” would be part of 2019 priorities regardless of AP and Committee recommendations.
- Members of the AP were both for and against Motion 11.
 - A member of the AP did not support including “East Coast Scallop Harvest Association – problems and challenges in fishery” on the 2019 priorities list because he disagreed with deviating from the current scallop fishery management structure. Specifically, he felt that DAS management is an important buffer to maintain sustainability of the resource and suggested that a quota-based system would have negative impacts on the resource. Overall, he and other AP members disagreed that there are issues in the fishery and that all stakeholders have been successful under the current management structure.
 - Several members of the AP and public supported including “East Coast Scallop Harvest Association – problems and challenges in fishery” on the 2019 priorities list because it offers the opportunity to tweak the current management structure and make it more efficient. Those in support generally felt this priority would facilitate constructive discussion around ways the scallop fishery could be improved.

- A member of the audience supported prioritizing this item based on industry discussion from a series of recent port meetings (see Doc.9 Correspondence for port meeting details), which highlighted areas the scallop fishery that could be improved. Examples provided were crew conditions, safety at sea, drug use, and having too much steel at the dock.
- A member of the AP did not support Motion 11 due to the “LAGC IFQ Trip Limits” item included on the list. Specifically, he felt that modifying the possession limit would have negative impacts on the LAGC IFQ fishery.

Note: Motion 12 moved to rank the priorities listed in Motion 11. Motion 12 was tabled so that the AP could discuss new priorities that may be added to the list before ranking (see Motion 13 and 14. By consensus below).

Motion 13: Fulcher/Marchetti

Table Motion 12 until the AP can discuss additional work priorities at this meeting.

The motion carried on a show of hands (13-0-0).

Discussion points:

The AP did not have additional items to add to the 2019 priorities list; however, a member of the public offered to following items for consideration:

- Concern was expressed around the level of effort being considered for the MAAA and it was suggested that it could result in negative impacts to the resource there. He suggested that a system be developed to exchange access area pounds for discounted open area DAS in case access area fishing takes a sudden turn for the worse.
- He cited the huge year classes that settled in the NLS-W and NLS-S-deep and noted these areas are not considered suitable scallop habitat. If this were to occur again, he felt that it was important to establish a mechanism that facilitates transplanting of scallops from sub-prime habitat to other parts of the resource with suitable scallop habitat.
- It was his opinion that RSA funding has decreased in recent years due to a drop in scallop prices. He felt that the objective of the RSA program should be examined, and that the appropriated amount of compensation pounds be added to the RSA program to maintain survey coverage.
- Members of the AP found the above ideas interesting, but were not compelled to prioritize them for 2019.

14. By consensus: the AP reconsidered the tabled motion.

Motion 12: Fulcher/Maxwell

Recommend that the Committee rank 2019 priorities in the following order.

Rank	Priority/Task Title
1	Modify AA to be consistent with OHA2 (Access to Eastern Georges Bank)
2	Specifications for FY2020 and FY2021
3	Evaluate harvesting slow growing scallops in the Nantucket Lightship – south deep
4	East Coast Scallop Harvest Association – problems and challenges in fishery
5	LAGC IFQ Trip Limits
6	Evaluation of rotational management program
7	DAS and IFQ carryover

The motion carried on a show of hands (11-2-0).

Discussion points:

- Members of the AP suggested that a top Council priority should be to revisit the disapproved portion of the OHA2 Amendment on Eastern Georges Bank. Council staff explained that any efforts to address this would be led by the Council’s Habitat Committee.
- The AP also felt that completing specifications should be a top priority for 2019.
- There was not consensus on whether or not ECSHA – problems and challenges in the fishery - should be on the list.
- While Northern Gulf of Maine management measures were not part of the AP’s ranked list, and member of the AP expressed support for the Council to continue work on this issues that was prioritized for work in 2018.

Table 3. The current list of potential 2019 priorities including the status of ongoing 2018 priorities.

	Priority/Task Title	Status	Regulatory Requirement?
A	Specifications for FY2020 and FY2021		YES
B	Modify AA to be consistent with OHA2	2018 Priority – some progress made	
C	NEW: Evaluation of rotational management program	Added by Committee	
D	NEW: Evaluate harvesting slow growing scallops in the Nantucket Lightship – south deep	Added by Committee	
E	NEW: LAGC IFQ Trip Limits	Added by Committee	
F	NGOM management measures	2018 Priority – minimal progress made	
G	DAS and IFQ carryover		
H	Gear Modifications to Protect Small scallops	PDT does not recommend this as a 2019 priority	
I	Specify allocation review triggers	Ongoing	NMFS policy
J	Adjustments to industry funded observer program (NGOM coverage, etc.)	NEFSC letter in August 2017	
K	NEW: East Coast Scallop Harvest Association – problems and challenges in fishery	Correspondence received at September Council	
L	In-season catch accounting	Ongoing staff work	
M	Support Annual Scallop RSA process	Ongoing staff work	

Other Business

Motion 15: Parker/Maxwell:

Recommend that the Committee recommend that the Council initiate a FW to address:

- General Category trip limits.
- Harvest of slow growing scallops in Nantucket Lightship-South-deep

Rationale: The GC trip limit issue has not advanced at the Council level for two years due to process. There is interest in accesses scallops in the deep water that are not growing normally.

The motion carried on a show of hands (10-3-0)

Discussion points:

- Initially Motion 15 was specific to initiating a FW to address general category trip limits; however, after AP discussion, the maker of the motion was open to including “harvest of slow growing scallops in Nantucket Lightship-South-deep”.
- Staff clarified that the Council considered a motion at their September meeting that would initiate a FW to address LAGC trip limits; the motion ultimately failed due to concerns of an additional action delaying implementation of FY2019 specifications.
- Some AP members disagreed with initiating an action to address LAGC trip limits. Those in support of addressing LAGC trip limits agreed that there was a sense of urgency around a modest increase to the trip limit.
- All AP members were in agreement that harvesting the slow growing scallops in the NLS-S-deep is an important issue to be addressed in the near future.

No other business was discussed.

The meeting adjourned in 4:27 pm.