



New England Fishery Management Council

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MEETING SUMMARY

Scallop PDT Conference Call

May 25, 2016

The Scallop PDT met via conference call on May 25, 2016 to: 1) provide recommendations on research set aside (RSA) priorities for 2017/2018, 2) discuss scallop 2016 workload and management priorities, including a draft action plan for FW28, 3) discuss draft management measures for an upcoming scallop framework.

MEETING ATTENDANCE: Jonathon Peros (PDT Chair), Deirdre Boelke, Demet Haksever, Trish Cheney, Dr. Bill DuPaul, Chad Keith, Travis Ford, Ben Galuardi, Dr. Dvora Hart, Emily Keiley, Kevin Kelly Dr. David Rudders, and Dr. Cate O'Keefe. Mary Beth Tooley the Chair of the Scallop Committee, Peter Hughes the Chair of the Scallop AP, and at least four other members of the public listened as well.

KEY OUTCOMES:

- The PDT developed recommendations for the 2017/2018 RSA research priorities.

The meeting began at 9:33am.

The agenda was modified to allow for discussion of RSA research priorities first.

REVIEW OF AGENDA AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The meeting began with several scallop related updates:

- Amendment 19 pre-submission was sent to NMFS on May 19th, 2016.
- During the first leg of the federal scallop survey, HabCam4 became separated from the R/V Sharp. No new information available since a NOAA update posted on May 23rd, 2016.
- The Northern Gulf of Maine Management Area closed to all federal scallop fishing for the remainder of FY2016 on May 13th, 2016 after NMFS determined that the total allowable catch (TAC) of 70,000 lbs had been harvested.

Upcoming Scallop Related Meetings:

SSC meeting - June 2 nd , 2016 in Boston MA (Hilton Garden Inn, Logan) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff will be providing SSC with a brief update on progress of the 5-year IFQ review. The SSC TOR is to provide input for the Council to consider.
Scallop AP – June 7 th , 2016 in Boston, MA (Hilton Garden Inn, Logan)
Scallop Committee – June 8 th , 2016 in Boston, MA (Hilton Garden Inn, Logan)
Groundfish Committee – June 9 th , 2016 in Boston MA (Hilton Garden Inn, Logan) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FYI - Groundfish Committee will be discussing a possible scallop sub-ACL for northern windowpane flounder.
NEFMC June Meeting – June 21-23, 2016 in Portland, ME (Holiday Inn By the Bay)
Scallop PDT Meeting – July 21 st , 2016
Scallop PDT Meeting – August 30 th and 31 st , 2016

AGENDA ITEM #1 - 2017/2018 RSA RESEARCH PRIORITIES:

The PDT reviewed RSA research priorities described in the 2016/2017 FFO, and made a host of recommendations. The discussion built on recommendations made by a group of scallop advisors and PDT members at the May 4th, 2016 joint PDT/AP meeting. The PDT worked from a track changes version of the 2016/2017 FFO that incorporated input from the joint PDT/AP RSA discussion. The PDT has provided additional recommended edits in track changes in a new document. A description of the PDT recommendations and discussion are described below in more detail:

1. *#1 – Survey Related Research* - Several members of the PDT stressed the importance of including information about survey projects which received two years of funding through the 2016/2017 RSA award, and recommended including details about the kind of survey (dredge vs. optical), and the areas being covered.
2. *#1a – Intensive industry-based survey (IBS) of relevant scallop access areas (AAs)* – The PDT recommends that the priority areas for *#1a* should be as follows (in priority order):
 - 1) Elephant Trunk (ET)
 - 2) Closed Area II (CA2) south and extension.
3. *#1a* – The PDT recommended striking text referencing priority areas for 2018, noting that these areas are subject to change based on the results of the 2016 surveys and/or feedback from the scallop fishing industry.
4. *#1b – IBS survey of areas that may be candidate access areas in the future* – The PDT recommended adding a footnote to this section to clarify that a two-year survey of the Northern Edge of Georges Bank was funded in 2016. The PDT discussed trimming the “example area” list from the 2016 FFO, and recommended that just the “sliver” north of the current CA1 access area be prioritized in 2017. In general, the PDT felt that the text in the priority should focus on candidate areas only. The PDT recommends cutting back the text.

5. #1b – The PDT liked the idea of seasonal monitoring that is listed under #1b, and recommended moving this concept out of this section and including it in to priority #3 (scallop meat quality). There was some discussion of ongoing EFP requests for access to survey the northern portion of CA2 of Georges Bank.
6. #1c – *Resource wide industry-based survey of scallops within Georges Bank and/or Mid-Atlantic resource areas* – The PDT felt that it is important to clarify that “additional” means in addition to the federal survey, and language was added. The PDT also recommended removing “broad” from the description of the resource wide survey given the above clarification.
7. The PDT recommended revising the overall priority order as follows:
 - 1) Leave all survey related priorities equal (1a, 1b, 1c) as highest (HIGHEST).
 - 2) HIGH (priorities 2 and 3 equal).
 - 3) MEDIUM (priorities 4 and 5 – but #4 higher than #5).
 - 4) OTHER (priorities 6 through the rest – all equal priority).
8. #2 – *Bycatch Research* – The PDT recommended not breaking out bycatch research into sub-categories (small scallops and non-target species). Several PDT members noted that gear modifications can address both bycatch issues in this priority.
9. #2 – The PDT recommended removing references to specific species in favor of the phrase “key bycatch species,” noting that bycatch species may change at any time and the researcher should make the case for which species are important to focus on. Also, the PDT noted that yellowtail discard mortality rate has been funded, studied, and incorporated in the assessment, and could be removed. The PDT recommended clarifying that non-target bycatch work should provide results to address AMs (non-target species only – not small scallops).
10. #3 - Change title of #3 from scallop area management to – #3 *scallop meat quality*. This section now focuses solely on scallop meat quality and the factors which may impact it. The PDT agreed with PDT/AP edits made at the May 4th meeting that added in examining density dependence and area rotation. The PDT recommended moving research on spat collection and seeding of sea scallops from this section to OTHER priorities. It was placed within #7.
11. #3 – The PDT recommended adding in the phrase “(including the life cycle and disease processes)” to number three as a way of potentially linking disease/parasite work with turtle research. In general, the PDT felt that understanding the potential linkage between turtles and scallop quality is a HIGH research priority.
12. #4 – *Investigation of non-harvest mortality of scallops* – The PDT supported modifications of #4 made at the PDT/AP meeting – the sentiment was that the new text is much clearer, and that research on these topics could help to inform the next scallop benchmark assessment (currently planned for the spring of 2018). PDT does not think mitigation of predators should be included in this bullet – and recommended that mitigation projects be listed separately under “other” priorities. The PDT felt that this priority should be on impacts of predation and how they relate to natural mortality. The removal of predators is a different topic, and the PDT does not agree it should be a medium priority, or equal to research focused on understanding the impacts of predation.
13. #5 – *Turtle Research* – The PDT recommended taking part of #5 and moving it under #3 to give it higher priority (deeper understanding of life cycle processes of

- nematode, see 11. above). The PDT believes that understanding the life cycle processes of nematodes has higher priority to the scallop fishery than other elements of this item. The PDT did not reach consensus on the specific ranking of turtle research – some members felt that it should be a MEDIUM priority, while others felt that it should be grouped with OTHER priorities. In the end, the PDT recommended leaving it as MEDIUM, but ranking it below #4 - *Non-harvest mortality of scallops*. The PDT also discussed adding emphasis on research that can contribute to future assessments of turtle populations. Finally, the group discussed the concept of turtle vaccinations, and suggested that if this concept is pursued that it should be done as a separate OTHER priority.
14. #6 – *Habitat Characterization Research* – The PDT noted that a BACI study of the Northern Edge area of Georges Bank was funded for two years through the 2016 RSA awards, and recommended adding a footnote to the RSA FFO. The PDT recommended leaving this research track under OTHER.
 15. Discard mortality and incidental mortality (#8 and #9 in the 2016 FFO) have been folded into #3 – Non-harvest mortality and elevated to HIGH priority.
 16. #9 – *Research to evaluate LPUE* – This is a new priority for 2017 (also part of the Council’s 5-year research priorities). The PDT had some discussion to add more text around specific research projects – but in the end left as is.
 17. #10 – *Other Resource Surveys* – Under the topic of other resource surveys, the PDT discussed surveys of the NGOM. There was not PDT consensus on where this item should be on the list – some felt the area should be surveyed more often (higher priority) and some did not (leave it where it is). The PDT noted that 2012 was the last time the area was surveyed (scheduled to be surveyed in 2016). Some felt that a survey every three/four years may not be frequent enough, and that we miss entire year classes by surveying at this frequency. The PDT noted that fishing has increased in the NGOM, and that the Council added an FMP priority in response to this, so there is a need to know more about fishing and the resource. Several members of the PDT suggested that the most immediate survey by ME DMR will hopefully help to solve issues at hand now – such as the TAC for 2017.
 18. #11 – The PDT recommended removing the bullet focusing on data-collection and monitoring, and folding aspects of this priority into higher ranking priorities. Specifically, the PDT recommended moving real-time bycatch to bycatch bullet #2, and moving real-time meat weight data to #3. In general, from a PDT only perspective, the monitoring items are not a high priority. The PDT discussed how it can be difficult to connect and scale projects under this priority into fleet wide benefits. Some members of the PDT noted that the RSA program has funded these kinds of projects in the past, and felt that they have not yielded the expected results.
 19. The PDT discussed clarifying text in the FFO about open access of journal articles. The PDT agrees that sharing research results should be emphasized in the RSA FFO, and recommended adding text to reflect this, but not under evaluation criteria.

20. The PDT discussed reporting vessels that get compensation, and felt that more input from AP about their specific rationale is needed so text can be clarified. Currently, a list of vessels that were *eligible* for compensation fishing can be shared.
21. The PDT recommended adding the common scallop price estimate used in the previous year as a footnote.
22. The PDT recommended adding language to further clarify both the technical and management review processes in the FFO.

AGENDA ITEM #2 – REVIEW DRAFT WORK PLAN FOR 2016 (DRAFT FRAMEWORK 28 ACTION PLAN):

As the RSA discussion took a considerable portion of the morning, the PDT only briefly discussed the Draft Framework 28 (FW28) Action Plan. Staff explained that NEFMC and GARFO staff drafted an action plan for Scallop FW28, which lays out a potential approach for addressing Council priorities in 2016. Staff explained that the timing of other actions, notably the Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2, weighed heavily in developing this draft approach (see Meeting Materials, Doc.1). The PDT did not have time to review this document on the call, and agreed to provide initial feedback through correspondence. Specific recommendations for additions and clarifications will be included in the next draft. The process for action plan approval is that after the PDT reviews the draft, it goes to leadership at the Council, GARFO, and Center – and is also provided to the AP/CTE as draft. The action plan is not final until approved by the full Council.

Other Business:

The PDT did not have time to provide additional input on the development of management measures, and moved directly to other business after reviewing the FW28 Action Plan. The PDT briefly discussed HabCam4 and catch estimates from all fleets in the Northern Gulf of Maine management area. A member of the PDT asked if there were any additional information that could be shared regarding the recovery of HabCam4. NEFSC staff on stated there were no new updates at this time.

A member of the PDT asked if catch estimates by fishery component (Limited Access and LAGC catch) were available for the NGOM. GARFO staff explained that determining the catch of limited access vessels within the NGOM management area is difficult because the management boundary does not match statistical reporting boundaries, such that vessels can operate within a single statistical area, but inside and outside of the NGOM management area. Because of this, GARFO staff advised that providing a range of landings (or catch) from the NGOM management area for the LA component could be a way to put bounds on LA removals.