



New England Fishery Management Council

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DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

Scallop PDT Meeting Mariners House, Boston, MA February 4, 2016

The Scallop PDT met on February 4, 2016 in Boston, MA to: 1) discuss work priorities for 2016; 2) review draft analyses prepared for the upcoming inshore scallop workshop; 3) review plan for LAGC iFQ five year review; 4) initial discussion of non-specification work priorities (ACL flowchart and potential GB access area modifications); 5) recommendations for five year research priorities; and 6) two items under other business (update on nematode research and new observer protocols for improving monitoring of meat quality and highgrading). Twelve PDT members were present at the meeting, two called in to the meeting, and two were absent. There were six members of the public at the meeting.

KEY OUTCOMES:

- During a discussion of 2016 work priorities the PDT developed two recommendations related to the RSA process.
- PDT will update several aspects of draft analyses for background information for the inshore scallop workshop.
- PDT will develop several alternatives for AP and Cmte to consider related to ACL flowchart.
- Initial ideas for future work on GB access areas.
- The PDT scheduled a conference call for Wednesday, March 9 at 10:00AM and hopes to plan a joint PDT/AP meeting in May to review preliminary results from RSA projects and other issues.

AGENDA ITEM #1: WORK PRIORITIES FOR 2016

Staff reviewed the work priorities for 2016 and presented draft timelines for various items. The list of work items include: final submission and approval of FW27, final submission and approval of EFH Omnibus 2, final submission and approval of A19, inshore scallop workshop, review of RSA proposals and identifying research priorities, development of 2017/2018 specifications, LAGC IFQ 5-year review, and potential action on ACL flowchart and potential modification of GB access areas pending approval of EFH Omnibus 2. Staff explained that for most of the year both Deirdre and Jonathan will likely be fulfilling the responsibilities of PDT Chair and Jonathan transitions into PDT Chair by the end of the year.

The PDT discussed each item, and in particular focused on the growing workload related to review of RSA proposals. This does not impact the full PDT, but a handful of PDT members are actively involved as well as several other individuals. ***During the discussion the PDT came to consensus on two recommendations related to the RSA process.*** The intent of both these suggestions is to improve accountability and integration of research results into the management process.

1. The annual meeting to review RSA results is very important and helps link the research into the management process. If funding is available, the meeting should include the full PDT and AP. In addition, the PDT recommends that all PIs be required to present the status of research results at an annual meeting, assuming that can be a condition of an RSA grant.
2. Currently there is no formal process in place to get final reports to the PDT. There is a website that is periodically updated, but no automatic notification or announcement is made when reports are added. The PDT recommends that outreach efforts be increased to improve awareness of research results. By the time final lists get back through the Research Steering Cmte the results may not be as timely. Some PIs forward final reports directly to PDT members, but it is not consistent. Perhaps a press release or formal letter to the Council with the status of all funded projects every six months or so.

Under the work item related to annual monitoring responsibilities GARFO staff explained that based on the mid-year review of bycatch in the scallop fishery no AMs are expected to be triggered and no transfer of GB YT is expected. The PDT discussed that because this mid-year review is in the regulations related to ACL monitoring it may be helpful to formalize the results of the mid-year review. ***Specifically, the PDT recommends that a formal letter be sent to the Council with the preliminary analyses and determination related to the potential transfer of GB YT so it can be documented.***

AGENDA ITEM #2: REVIEW PRELIMINARY ANALYSES FOR INSHORE WORKSHOP

Staff reviewed the goals and agenda for the workshop. Several PDT members gave presentations with analyses that could be presented during the workshop or provided as background materials.

First, Demet Haksever presented various tables and figures with trends in landings, revenues, DAS used, active vessels, and LPUE. The PDT had several recommendations about additional analyses that could be prepared. Specific suggestions include: 1) tables with allocations per access area and usage; 2) add whisker plots to some of the figures to give range information not just the mean; 3) separate some info out by state; 4) try to get updated leasing and permanent transfer activity by state(similar to 3-year report); and 5) separate some of the gen cat info into groups (by region such as trawl vessels on LI or by landings categories).

Second, Ben Galuardi presented fishing effort information primarily from VMS data. He presented average LPUE by month for different permit categories and regions (GB offshore, GB inshore, and MA) including steaming time. In general, the overall trends have increased for all

areas between 2008 to 2012 and then declined in 2013 and 2014. The MA is more flat, and the greatest increase and decrease was the south channel.

Ben also presented scallop landings by size distribution by permit category. Detailed maps were presented by fishery and year, as well as by distance from shore in 10 nm zones from the coast. In general, areas of overlap vary by year and the relative importance of the overlap varies as well. Some suggestions were discussed if time permits: 1) present some of the info with both LA and LAGC together; 2) split out size distribution figures by region because scallops grow larger on GB and maybe put data in tables with proportion; 3) make tables from figures with days fished per 10 mile buffer and make similar maps and tables for biomass; 4) could buffer maps and figure be for open areas only? or MA and GB broken out separately?; 5) suggestions to look at distance from homeports instead, but these data do not include permit information so that is not feasible at this time. The PDT discussed that if a GIS layer for mean exploitable biomass is available, it could also be analyzed using the same 10 nautical mile buffers.

Dvora Hart presented LPUE information per tow based on observer data from 2006 to 2015 to date by permit category and region. For the MA LPUE per tow has increased from about 75 pounds per tow in 2006 to almost 200 pounds per tow in 2011 for the LA fishery, and has declined since again to about 75 pounds per tow. Average catch per tow for LAGC vessels has been a bit more stable in the MA, about 50 pounds, but also increased in 2010 and 2011 and has declined again. For GB the trends between the two fisheries are very similar, this time a large increase from 2008-2012 followed by a large decrease. LPUE for the LA fishery was split out between GB inshore and GB offshore, but the trends are not very different. The highest mean catch rate for the LAGC fishery was in 2012, and 2011 for the LA fishery. The PDT discussed that it may be easier to compare these trends if the data were normalized for each fleet/region with respect to its maximum.

Finally, Dvora Hart presented some information related to potential differences in productivity in nearshore areas vs offshore. She primarily summarized two papers that evaluated the effects of spatial differences in growth and fishing effort and how that impacts yield per recruit analysis. This relates to the workshop because scallops in shallow waters tend to grow faster and have great meat yield potential overall; thus are generally more productive than scallops in deeper waters. Therefore, the fishing mortality that achieves the max yield per recruit is lower at shallow depths, thus shallow areas should be fished less to maximize yield per recruit. However, these areas are typically fished harder because they are most attractive to the industry (faster growth, larger meats, and closer to shore). The analyses suggest that fishing above F_{max} inshore could be costing 20% in overall yield from those areas. This suggests that taking spatial variation into account (depth and fishing mortality) is important and something the PDT should spend more time on in the future when developing projections for specifications.

Staff will follow up with individual PDT members to see what final work can be finalized before the workshop. Highlights from all these analyses will be included in presentations at the meeting and potentially included with other background materials.

AGENDA ITEM #3: REVIEW PLAN FOR FIVE YEAR LAGC IFQ REVIEW

Staff has been working with the Social Science Branch about how to approach the required five year reviews. Draft guidelines are out for comment, and the Council is drafting a letter with several concerns about the scope and content expected in the reviews. ***The current plan is to identify a technical working group made up of Council staff, NEFSC SSB staff, and NMFS GARFO staff to develop a draft report for the Council to review in June/September.*** The group will meet informally and seek input from the PDT/AP and Cmte at various points between now and September.

AGENDA ITEM #4: INITIAL DISCUSSION OF NON-SPECIFICATION WORK PRIORITIES (ACL FLOWCHART AND POTENTIAL MODIFICATION OF GB ACCESS AREAS)

- **ACL Flowchart**

Staff reviewed a background document with information from Amendment 15, the action that implemented the ACL structure. It has been five years under this system and the Council requested the PDT evaluate how the structure is performing and recommend potential modifications if needed. In summary the PDT still feels that it is appropriate for the OFL to be based on the stock as a whole, as well as the ABC/ACL. However, the ACT needs to take spatial considerations into account better, and needs to apply to both fleets, not just the LA fishery. Under spatial management the location of catch is important and that needs to be integrated better into the system. It was also pointed out that there have been some changes in the last few years that may have increased or decreased management uncertainty and it may warrant another evaluation. In addition, the PDT discussed that more work is needed on the LPUE function. Several ideas were discussed, and hopefully they can be a priority between now and the next specification setting process this fall. ***A subset of PDT members are going to work on background analyses for this subject and several potential measures for the PDT/AP/Cmte to consider in more detail at a later date.***

- **Potential modification to GB Access Areas**

The PDT reviewed the potential timing issues and overall discussed that limited resources should be devoted to this subject until the timing is more certain later in the year. The PDT discussed that the objectives may not be the same for the GB access areas moving forward. It was suggested that the original guidelines for area rotation from A10 should be used as a starting point. Will the overall principles used to set fishing targets need to change if EFH areas open, specifically setting open area F at Fmsy. The PDT rattled out a few ideas briefly, but they all need more discussion. For example, specifications for FY2017 may want to include an option with lower open area F, Delmarva could convert to an open area, could identify the most productive areas on GB and have that drive access area boundaries.

AGENDA ITEM #5: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 5 YEAR RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The PDT very briefly discussed and reviewed the five year priority list from 2010. The PDT will need to finalize input on a follow-up conference call (March 9).

AGENDA ITEM #6: OTHER BUSINESS

Under other business the PDT discussed two items.

1. Dr. David Rudders gave a presentation about additional research VIMS is doing related to the presence of a nematode in scallop meats from surveys in 2015.
2. Chad Keith from the Observer Program gave an update about a change to the observer protocol for scallop vessels in response to a Council request to improve data collection of discard information, specific to meat weight quality and highgrading.

THE NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED AS A CONFERENCE CALL MARCH 9, 2015.