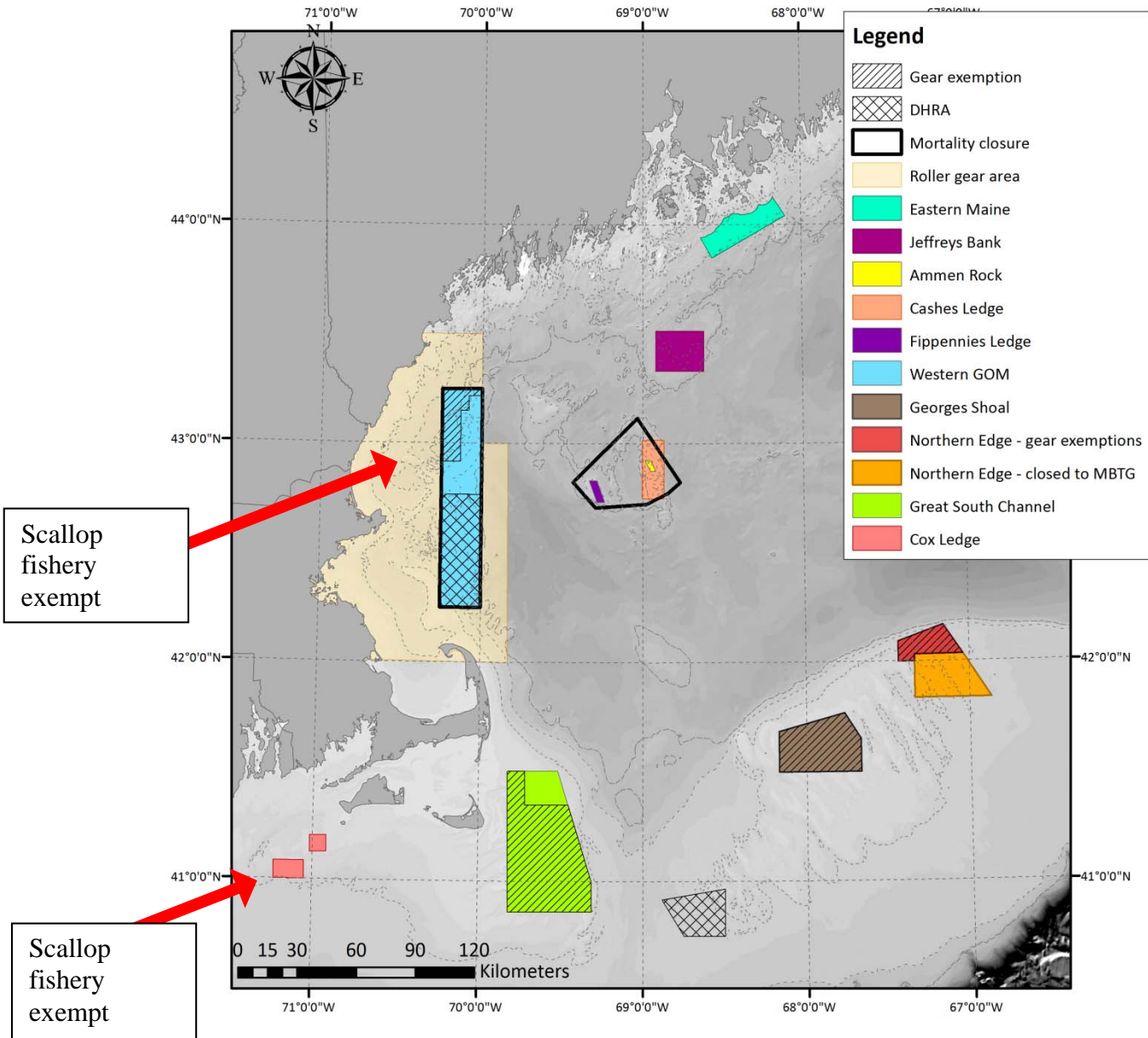


## **Background on Potential modification to GB Access Areas in future action**

The Council identified final recommendations for modifications to habitat management areas over two Council meetings, April 2015 and June 2015. That action is currently under review and is expected to be implemented in 2016. A summary of the Council's preferred recommendations can be found at [www.nefmc.org](http://www.nefmc.org), and Figure 1 and Figure 2 are included below with the final recommendations for habitat management areas and seasonal spawning areas. **Note that these measures have not been approved; a proposed rule is expected early summer 2016.**

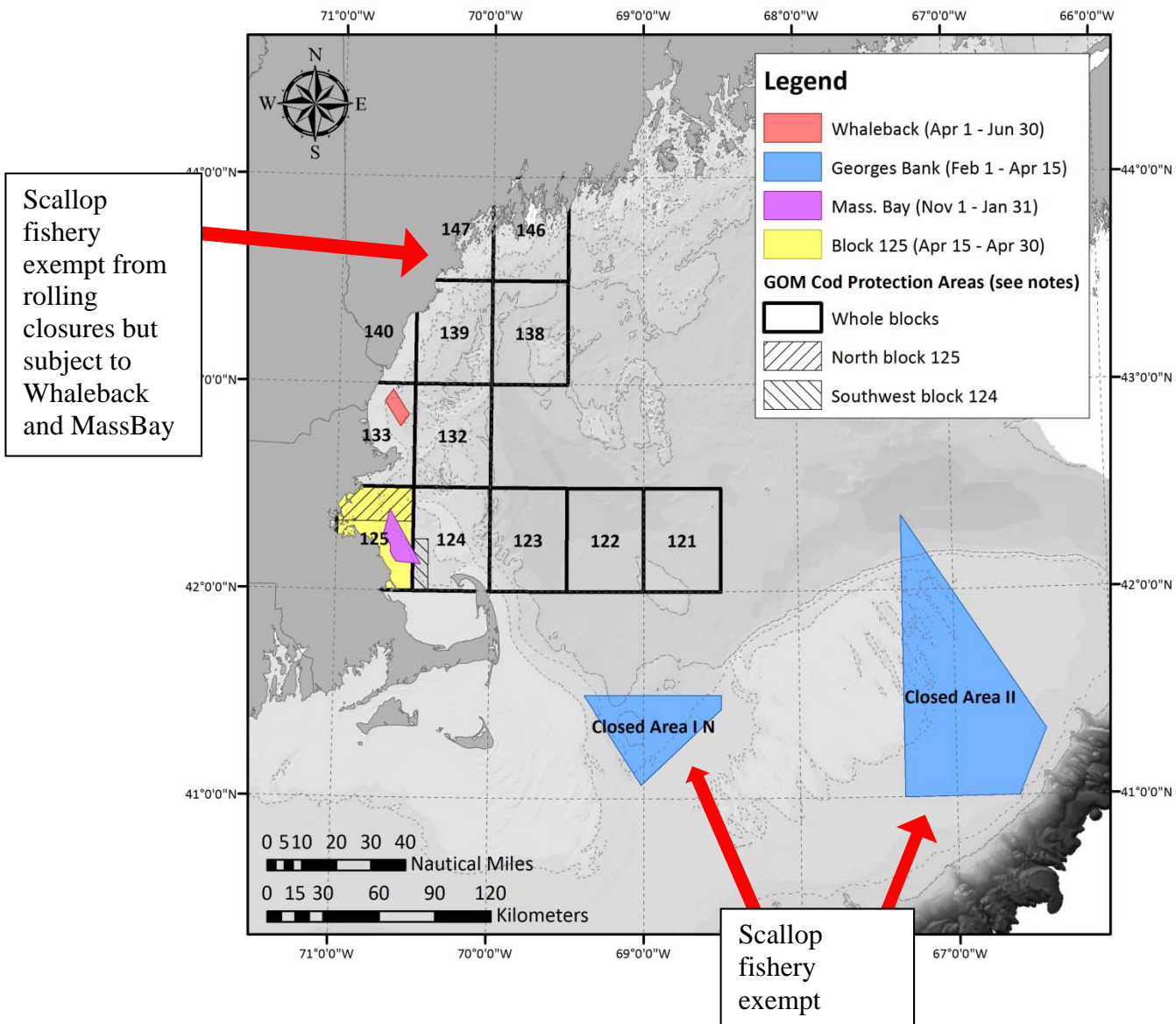
**Figure 1 – Preferred alternative year-round spatial management areas. Seasonal areas not shown.**

- Gear exemption areas hatched. In western Gulf of Maine, shrimp trawls exempt. In Great South Channel and Georges Shoal, clam dredges exempt for one year. On Northern Edge (red area), scallop access fishing exempt, bottom trawling for groundfish exempt west of 67° 20' W.
- Dedicated Habitat Research Areas are cross-hatched. Stellwagen DHRA (north), Georges Bank DHRA (south)
- Mortality closures shown with heavy black outline. Current gear restrictions.
- Largest shaded area is the roller gear restricted area.
- Other shaded/colored areas are mobile bottom-tending gear closures, with gear exemptions as noted above.
- Cox Ledge closed to clam dredges, and trawls cannot use ground cables.
- Ammen Rock closed to all gears except lobster traps.



**Figure 2 – Preferred alternative seasonal spatial management areas. Year-round areas not shown.**

GOM COD PROTECTION CLOSURES	SPAWNING AREAS
Closed to commercial gears with various exemptions	
Nov-Jan: 125 and 124 (southwest corner of 124 only)	-- Whaleback and Massachusetts Bay Cod Spawning Protection Areas have the same gear restrictions, i.e. closed to commercial and recreational gears with various exemptions
Feb: None	-- Georges Bank areas closed to various commercial and recreational gears capable of catching groundfish, with various exemptions, including scallop dredges
Mar: 121, 122, and 123 (all areas common pool only)	** Block 125 in April is not part of Cod Protection Closures, but was added by Council in June as a spawning area from April 15 - April 30
April: None**	
May: 125 (northern part only), 132, 133, 138, 139, 140	
June: 125 (northern part only), 132, 139, 140, 146, 147	
July-September: None	
October: 124 and 125 (both areas common pool only)	



## **Timeline**

Proposed rule in summer 2016

Final decision in September 2016

Final rule in early December 2016, effective 30 days later.

## **Objectives**

What should the objectives be for identifying GB access area boundaries? Same as area rotation guidelines for scallop access areas, or different since areas have been closed already for other purposes (GF and habitat)?

## **Data needs**

Brainstorm a wish list of data sets we would like to have for this action