



New England Fishery Management Council

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Scallops: Council Takes Final Action on Framework 30; Sets Stage for Fishing Year 2019 with Defaults for 2020

During its December 4-6 meeting in Newport, RI, the New England Fishery Management Council approved Framework Adjustment 30 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan. The framework contains: (1) specifications for the 2019 scallop fishing year, which will begin on April 1; (2) default specifications for 2020; and (3) two “standard default measures” that will carry on into future years.

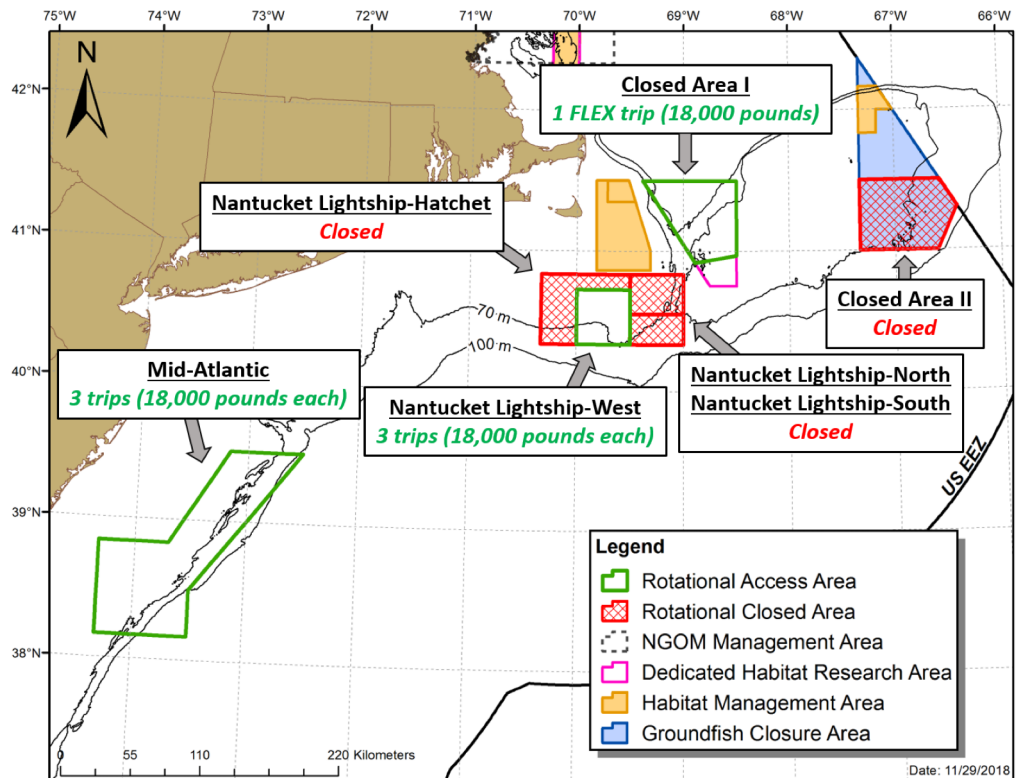
The Council will submit the framework to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS, NOAA Fisheries) for review and implementation. The Scallop Plan Development Team projects that, under the provisions selected by the Council, the region’s scallop fleet should be able to land roughly 60 million pounds of scallop meats in the 2019 fishing year.

Here’s what’s in the framework.

Full-Time Limited Access Fleet

In 2019, vessels with full-time limited access scallop permits will be allocated 24 open-area days-at-sea and seven 18,000-pound access area trips:

- Three trips into Nantucket Lightship-West;
- Three trips into the Mid-Atlantic Access Area; and
- One “flex” trip that can be fished either in Closed Area I, Nantucket Lightship-West, or the Mid-Atlantic Access Area.



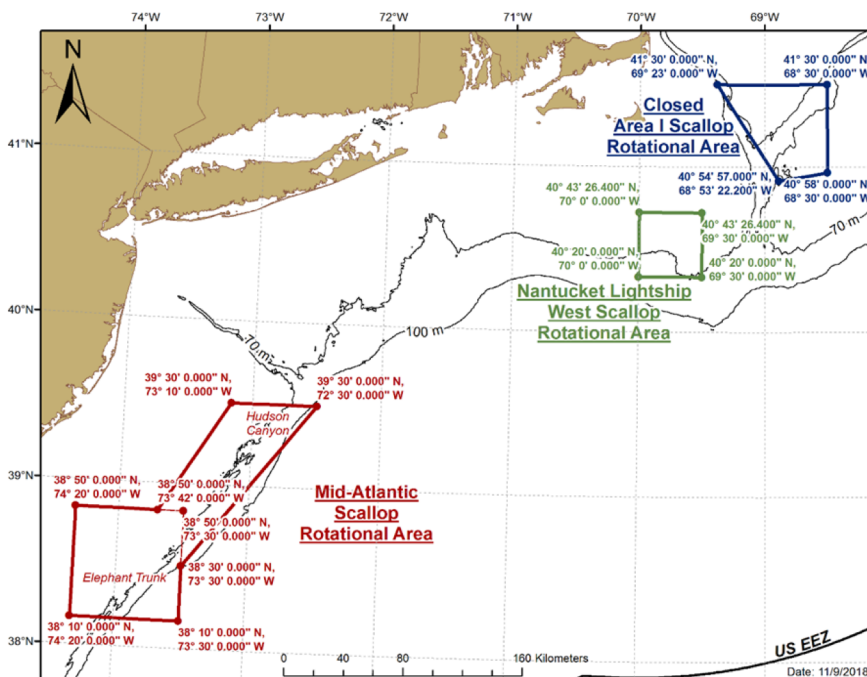
As depicted in the map above, vessels with full-time limited access scallop permits will be allocated seven 18,000-pound access area trips for the 2019 scallop fishing year under Framework Adjustment 30. — New England Fishery Management Council graphic



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For fishing year 2020, the default allocations for the full-time fleet include 18 open-area days-at-sea and two 18,000-pound rotational access area trips – one into Nantucket Lightship-West and one into the Mid-Atlantic Access Area.

Part-Time Limited Access Fleet: Vessels with part-time limited access scallop permits will be allocated 9.6 open-area days-at-sea in 2019 and three 17,000-pound rotational access area trips – one trip into Nantucket Lightship-West, one trip into the Mid-Atlantic Access Area, and one “flex” trip that can be fished either in Closed Area I or in the other two areas. As default allocations for 2020, the part-time fleet will be allocated 7.2 open-area days-at-sea and two 7,200-pound trips – one into the Mid-Atlantic Access Area and one into Nantucket Lightship-West.



Limited access scallopers who do not fish their 2019 access area trips will have the opportunity to do so within the first 60 days of the 2020 fishing year within the boundaries of the same areas that were allocated under Framework 30. For example, a vessel that was allocated a 2019 trip into Nantucket Lightship-West could fish that trip within the first 60 days of 2020 in Nantucket Lightship-West. The three areas available under this provision are Closed Area I, Nantucket Lightship-West, and the Mid-Atlantic Access Area as shown in the map above. – New England Fishery Management Council graphic

NOTE: The Council will develop a full complement of specifications for the 2020 fishing year following the completion of 2019 scallop surveys. The 2020 specifications in Framework Adjustment 30 are default measures that were included to provide an opportunity for fishing activity to take place in the event that new specifications are delayed beyond the April 1, 2020 start of the fishing year.

Closed Area I “Flex” Trips

Q: What is a flex trip?

A: The Closed Area I allocation is being called a “flex” trip because scallopers will have the *flexibility* to fish all or part of the allocation in Closed Area I, the Mid-Atlantic Access Area, and/or Nantucket Lightship-West.

Q: Why is the Council doing this?

A: Most of the scallops in Closed Area I are nine years and ripe for harvest. However, the Scallop Plan Development Team (PDT) cautioned that biomass projections may be overly optimistic. If so, then the fleet may not be able to fully achieve the allocation in Closed Area I. Therefore, the Council opted to give scallopers the flexibility to fish this trip in the other available areas if fishing opportunities in Closed Area I do not meet expectations. The other areas, which have large biomasses of harvestable scallops, can support any potential redirection of effort.



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Limited Access General Category (LAGC) Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Fishery

The LAGC IFQ component of the fishery is allocated 5.5% of the available harvest. Of that amount, vessels that exclusively fish under IFQ permits receive 5% of the poundage and vessels that fish under *both* a regular limited access permit and an IFQ permit receive 0.5% of the available IFQ poundage.

Projected 2019 landings for are:

- **LAGC IFQ Permits:** roughly 3 million pounds; and
- **Limited Access and IFQ Permits:** roughly 300,000 pounds.

Default LACG allocations for 2020 are set at 75% of the 2019 value.

Also under Framework Adjustment 30, the LAGC IFQ component of the fishery will be allocated 5.5% of the total access area allocations, which comes to 3,396 trips proportionally divided as follows:

- 3/7th to **Nantucket Lightship-West** for a total of 1,713 trips;
- 3/7th to the **Mid-Atlantic Access Area** for a total of 1,713 trips ; and
- 1/7th to **Closed Area I** for a total of 571 trips.

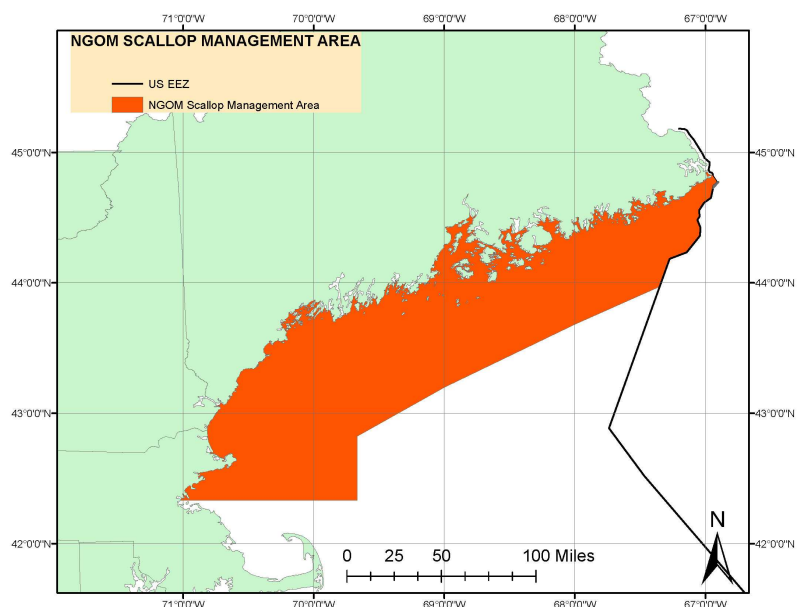
Vessels in the LAGC IFQ component of the fishery are not allocated individual trips. Instead, the fleet collectively works within an allowed pool of trips. That's because IFQ vessels are allocated a quota each year, and vessels can choose to fish their pounds either in open areas or in access areas until the fleet-wide number of trips has been reached for a designated area.

Northern Gulf of Maine

The Northern Gulf of Maine Management Area is regulated under a total allowable catch (TAC) that cannot be exceeded. For Framework Adjustment 30, the Council approved the following TACs for the area:

- **Fishing Year 2019:** 205,000 pounds; and
- **Fishing Year 2020:** 170,000 pounds as a default measure.

These TACs were based on projections of exploitable biomass – meaning scallops that are of harvestable size – within portions of the Northern Gulf of Maine where fishing activity is expected to occur based on recent surveys of the area.

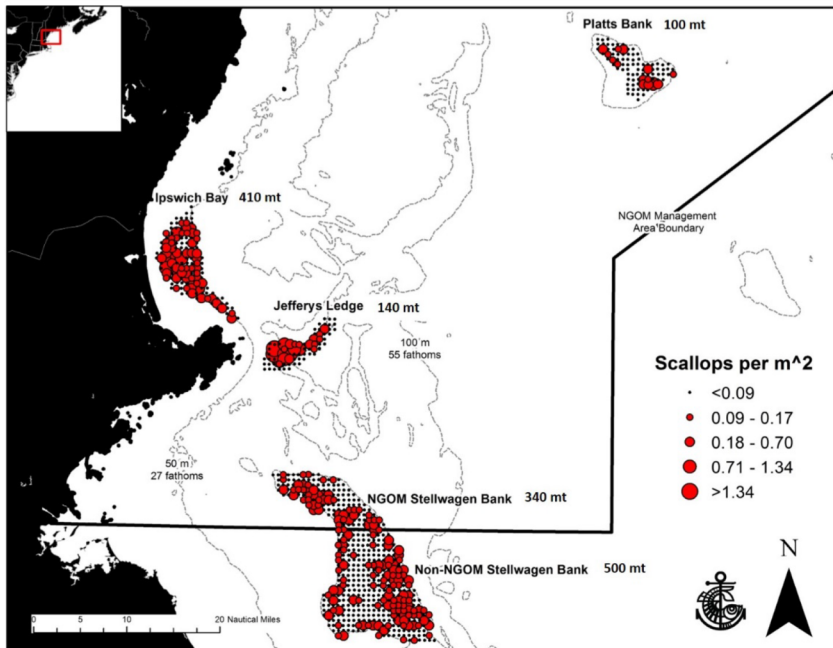


Northern Gulf of Maine Management Area. – NEFMC graphic



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Fishing activity in the Northern Gulf of Maine Management Area is expected to occur on the northern portion of Stellwagen Bank, in Ipswich Bay, and on Jeffreys Ledge. The TAC is divided as follows:



The UMass Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology 2018 drop camera survey in the Gulf of Maine revealed harvestable densities of scallops on Stellwagen Bank and in Ipswich Bay, as well as some recruitment on Jeffreys Ledge. – SMAST graphic

- The first 70,000 pounds will be allocated to the limited access general category component of the fishery; and then
- The remaining poundage will be split 50/50 between the LAGC and limited access components of the fishery. For the 2019 fishing year, the overall shares turn out to be:
 - 137,500 pounds for LAGC boats; and
 - 67,500 pounds for limited access vessels with IFQ allocations.

NOTE: The limited access share of the Northern Gulf of Maine TAC can be utilized **only** for research set-aside (RSA) compensation fishing. This is a short-term solution to utilize the small TAC available to the limited access fishery until the Council develops a more formal allocation and harvest strategy in a future management action.

FRAMEWORK ADJUSTMENT 30 STANDARDIZED DEFAULT MEASURES

Q: Why did the Council turn two familiar provisions into “standardized” default measures?

A: The Council took this step to streamline the specification-setting process. From now on: (1) default open-area days-at-sea for the limited access component of the fishery and default LAGC IFQ quota allocations will be set at 75% of the previous fishing year’s allocations; and (2) LAGC IFQ access area allocations will be set at 5.5% of total expected access area harvest. These measures have become routine. Standardizing them: a) reduces uncertainty among industry members over what will happen in the subsequent fishing year; and (b) facilitates analyses of annual specifications.

Research Set-Aside (RSA) Fishing

The Council further voted to prohibit RSA compensation fishing in Closed Area I but to allow it in the other two access areas – Nantucket Lightship-West and the Mid-Atlantic Access Area – as well as in the Northern Gulf of Maine Management Area as described above. RSA fishing will be allowed on open bottom as part of Framework 30.



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Atlantic Sea Scallop Overfishing Limit (OFL) and Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)

Units = metric tons (mt), 2020 specifications are defaults

Fishing Year	Overfishing Limit	Acceptable Biological Catch
2019	73,421 mt	57,003 mt
2020	59,447 mt	46,028 mt

The New England Council adopted updated overfishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) values for the scallop fishery based on advice from its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) as depicted in the table above. The fishing mortality rates used to generate these numbers were based on results from the new [2018 benchmark stock assessment](#).

While the 2019 ABC of 57,003 mt is equivalent to 125 million pounds, the fishery itself is projected to land on the order of 60 million pounds. Projected landings are based primarily on recent survey information and the fact that scallop fishing occurs under a rotational area management program where the fleet is directed to areas with dense concentrations of large, harvestable scallops. Many smaller scallops – and even marketable ones – lie in both open and closed bottom regionwide, where they remain for further grow-out and potential contributions to spawning. This approach is conservative and based on the best scientific information available. It results in a very low probability of overfishing.

Groundfish Sub-Annual Catch Limits (Sub-ACLs) for the Scallop Fishery

The scallop fishery is subject to sub-annual catch limits (sub-ACLs) for four stocks of groundfish under the Council's Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. The table below summarizes the expected allocations to the scallop fishery for fishing year 2019. During this same meeting in Newport, RI, the Council approved Groundfish Framework Adjustment 58. The framework contains a provision that extends the temporary policy currently in place for implementing the Georges Bank yellowtail flounder accountability measure (AM) for scallopers. Visit [groundfish materials](#) for details about the AM provision.

Groundfish Stocks Allocated to Scallop Fishery	FY 2018 Sub-ACL	FY 2019 Sub-ACL	Percentage Change
Georges Bank (GB) Yellowtail Flounder	33 mt	17 mt	- 48%
Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) Yellowtail Flounder	5 mt	15 mt	+ 200%
Gulf of Maine/GB Windowpane	18 mt	18 mt	No Change
SNE/MA Windowpane Flounder	158 mt	158 mt	No change

For more information, contact Jonathon Peros, the Council's scallop plan coordinator, at (978) 465-0492, ext. 117, jperos@nefmc.org. Also visit the Council's [scallop webpage](#).

All materials used during this meeting can be found at [NEFMC December 4-6, 2018, Newport, RI](#).