



New England Fishery Management Council News Release

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New England Fishery Council Approves Measures for Further Development in Amendment 15 to the Scallop Plan

NEWBURYPORT, MA At its meeting in Portsmouth, NH yesterday, the New England Fishery Management Council voted to approve, for purposes of conducting further analyses in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, measures for possible inclusion in Amendment 15 to its Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The primary purpose of the amendment is to address several new legal requirements mandated by the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The Act requires that each fishery use annual catch limits (ACLs) to prevent overfishing, including measures to ensure accountability. The Scallop FMP is required to be consistent with these new regulations by 2011 since the stock is not subject to overfishing. While the development of ACL alternatives is well developed, work on accountability measures (AMs) will continue at the Scallop Committee and Plan Development Team level before further Council consideration.

Other measures that will be further analyzed will address capacity in the limited access scallop fishery and improve overall economic performance; including stacking and leasing alternatives. In keeping with the goals of examining impacts on various fisheries and fishing communities, the Council also directed the Scallop Committee to consider a sector proposal and measures that would allow a limited access general category IFQ permit to be split from other permits held by the same vessel and transferred independently --- as well as splitting a Northern Gulf of Maine general category permit from other permits on a vessel.

Additional issues in the Amendment 15 package at this time include an adjustment to the current overfishing definition to be more compatible with area rotation, adjustments to the recently-implemented limited access general category management program and other measures.

The Council's timeline calls for work to continue on Amendment 15 throughout 2009. Implementation would occur in 2011 to ensure that the required ACLs and AMs are in place at the beginning of the scallop fishing year.

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