



# *New England Fishery Management Council*

## *News Release*

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**April 6, 2006**

**Patricia Fiorelli**  
**978.465.0492**

### ***NE Council Plans to Limit Scallop General Category Vessel Fishing***

Mystic, CT The New England Fishery Management Council yesterday took another step toward limiting the number of vessels in the sea scallop general category fleet and more effectively controlling the amount of scallops that group of vessels may catch each year. By approving the goals and objectives of Amendment 11 to the Scallop Fishery Management Plan, the Council agreed to address serious concerns about capacity and fishing mortality in what is currently an “open access” fishery, one in which anyone can apply for and obtain a vessel permit. General category scallop vessels are allowed to catch up to 400 pounds of scallops each day.

Through Amendment 11, the Council hopes to address capacity in this sector of the fishery, the balance between the number of vessels fishing, their harvesting capabilities and resource availability. With recent scallop prices as high as \$10 per pound, general category landings increased from 2 percent of the overall landings in 1999 to about 12 percent in 2005.

The Council will seek comments from its advisors and the public on a range of alternatives to accomplish these goals before any final decisions are made. Its members agreed to consider use of the existing November 1, 2004 “control date”. In order to qualify for participation in what is likely to be a limited access, as opposed to an open access fishery, vessels must have held a general category permit prior to the control date and possibly meet additional criteria, such as a history of landings within a specific timeframe. The Council also approved and will ask for comments on a range of between 2.5 and 11 percent of the overall scallop catch to serve as a limit on the landings of general category vessels that qualify under the new rules.

During the process of deliberating on future management measures, the Council received the good news that the scallop resource continues to be in great shape and is fully rebuilt. While short-term overfishing occurred during the last two years, overfishing is no longer occurring as a result of management measures that were put in place in 2004. This year the sea scallop fishery is expected to generate over 70 million pounds of scallop landings worth about \$535 million dollars.

Please visit the Council’s website, [www.nefmc.org](http://www.nefmc.org) for further details about future scallop committee and advisory panel meetings, as well as information on when and where public hearings will be held.

# # #