



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Northeast Fisheries Science Center  
166 Water Street  
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

June 11, 2012

Capt. Paul J. Howard  
Executive Director  
New England Fishery Management Council  
50 Water Street  
Newburyport, MA 01950

Dear Paul:

Subject: Review of Scallop RSA Final Report: Optimizing the Georges Bank Scallop Fishery by Maximizing Meat Yield and Minimizing Bycatch-Final Report (Prepared for the 2011 Sea Scallop Research Set-Aside and Submitted May 2012 by Ronald Smolowitz, Kathryn Goetting, Farrell Davis, Dan Ward, Coonamessett Farm Foundation, Inc.)

The NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) is requesting that the New England Fishery Management Council have its Research Steering Committee (RSC) review the Subject report for potential use in Scallop Framework 24 (FW24) later this year. The Council, under FW24, is considering alternatives that would potentially modify the current seasonal closures within the Georges Bank closed areas to reduce yellowtail flounder bycatch and optimize scallop yield in the commercial scallop fishery. Scallop vessels are currently only permitted limited access within the closed areas between June 15 and January 31. This RSA-funded project has evaluated the bycatch of several important groundfish species during all months of the year including months the areas are closed.

Therefore, the Center is requesting that the RSC review and possibly deem these analyses appropriate for use in management decision making and evaluate the completeness and efficacy of the technical review. The technical review comments will be supplied under separate cover.

Sincerely,

*Russell W. Brown*  
For

William A. Karp, Ph.D.  
Acting Science and Research Director

cc: R. Brown  
F. Serchuk  
J. Hoey  
E. Meredith  
D. Morris (NERO)

