



New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116  
C.M. "Rip" Cunningham Jr., *Chairman* | Paul J. Howard, *Executive Director*

February 6, 2012

Dr. William Karp  
Acting Science and Research Director  
Northeast Fisheries Science Center  
166 Water Street  
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

Dear Bill:

The Council met on January 31 – February 2, 2012 in Portsmouth, NH and passed a motion related to ensuring communication with the Council on the future plans of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (Center) federal sea scallop survey. The Scallop Committee received a report from the Scallop Plan Development Team recently that the Center is getting closer to identifying a final plan for how the scallop survey will be conducted in the near future. The federal dredge survey is a critical component in the successful management of the sea scallop resource and fishery. The Center has worked with the Council for several years through the Scallop Survey Advisory Panel (SSAP) to discuss the design and implementation of a new federal survey potentially using a new vessel and new survey technologies. Since the SSAP is no longer an active Committee, the Council requests that when the Center has a final plan, a presentation be given to the Scallop Committee and/or full Council summarizing how the survey will be conducted moving forward, and how results will be integrated with existing survey methods.

Some concerns have been raised already that the future federal scallop survey will rely very heavily on Habcam, a towed underwater camera. While this technology may be more cost effective in the long-term, the Council has concerns about this technology replacing the federal dredge survey and how it will impact the other very valuable surveys currently being conducted by the University of Massachusetts School of Marine Science and Technology (SMAST) and Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). It is essential that the Center explain specifically how and when the results from Habcam will be used to estimate overall biomass, and how the results will be integrated with existing survey results. The specific Council motion is below.

*Motion 7: Ms. Tooley moved on behalf of the committee:*

*that the Council request NEFSC: 1) explain how it intends to integrate Habcam results into overall biomass estimates; 2) detail scientific/technical obstacles for successful integration of Habcam results; 3) provide a timeline for expected integration of those results; and 4) describe its intentions for continued use of other surveys for biomass estimates.*

*The motion **carried** on a show of hands (16/0/1).*

Please contact my office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Howard  
Executive Director

cc: Daniel Morris, NERO