



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*

**To:** Paul J. Howard, Executive Director  
**From:** Scientific and Statistical Committee  
**Date:** 21 September 2012

**Subject:** **Scallop ABC for FY2013-2015**

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) met on September 13, 2012 to address scallop catch recommendations.

The SSC was asked to:

1. Provide the Council with OFL and ABC recommendations, based on the previously approved ABC control rule, for fishing years 2013-2015.
2. Review draft Terms of Reference for NEFSC Sea Scallop Survey Peer Review and make any recommendations through the Council to the NEFSC to consider.

In order to meet these terms of reference, the SSC considered the following:

1. Quantifying the tradeoff between precaution and yield in the US sea scallop fishery (Appendix II from Amendment 15)
2. Summary of Sea Scallop stock status and fishery since last assessment in 2010
3. Draft Framework 24 measures under consideration
4. Scallop PDT recommendations for 2013-2015 ABC
5. Draft Terms of Reference for NEFSC review of sea scallop survey methods
6. Presentation from Scallop PDT regarding ABC control rules
7. Presentation from lead analyst on sea scallop assessment

The presentations by Dvora Hart and Dierdre Boelke as well as the scallop PDT report were clear and concise, facilitating the catch advice discussion. The SSC found the consistency of the three surveys used for sea scallops to be remarkable and useful for setting the ABC for FY 2013-2015. The SSC could find no issues which would prevent application of the previously accepted control rule for sea scallops. It should be noted that the OFL and ABC values approved include estimated discard mortality. The SSC discussed that the estimate of discards used in these analyses is a source of uncertainty that could be improved with updated research.

**The SSC recommends the use of the previously accepted control rule for sea scallops to set the FY 2013-2015 OFL and ABC as follows in metric tons of meats:**

Catch	2013	2014	2015
OFL	31,555	35,110	38,074
ABC	27,370	30,353	34,395

The SSC expressed concern about the Sea Scallop Survey Peer Review because it appears that one institution is acting alone to design a review of surveys conducted by multiple institutions. The SSC suggests that a joint effort by all involved institutions would be preferred. The current terms of reference (TOR) also appear to be directed at separate groups; the institutions conducting the surveys as one group and the review panel as a second group. The SSC suggests explicitly identifying which group will respond to each TOR to avoid confusion about roles in the process. The current TOR are also somewhat ambiguous regarding the specific aspects to be reviewed and could be clarified. For example, TOR 2 could ask whether a survey uses methods which are unbiased and produce minimum variance estimates, while a priority ranking could be given to the list of items in TOR 3. The costs described in TOR 8 could be perceived as threatening to some groups and would need to be clearly defined if they are to be compared among programs, because there are many ways to calculate costs. It is not clear to the SSC what purpose TOR 8 serves in this review. Given the current success of the assessment and management of this stock, the SSC suggests that instead of an approve/disapprove type review, as the current TOR seem to indicate, a review group could meet with each institution individually and then together to find ways to improve integration of the current surveys. While this may in fact be the desire of the TOR, it is not clear from the single institution approach employed so far that this will be the result.