



New England Fishery Management Council

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Scallops: Council Initiates New Framework; Approves 2023-2024 Research-Set Aside Program Priorities

During its [June 28-30, 2022 hybrid meeting](#) in Portland, ME, the New England Fishery Management Council initiated a new framework adjustment to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan. The framework will include specifications for the 2023 scallop fishing year, default specifications for 2024, and other measures. Work on this action – Framework 36 – will continue throughout the summer and fall and address recommendations from the [final report](#) on the evaluation of rotational management. The Council will receive an update on the framework in September, and final action is scheduled for December.

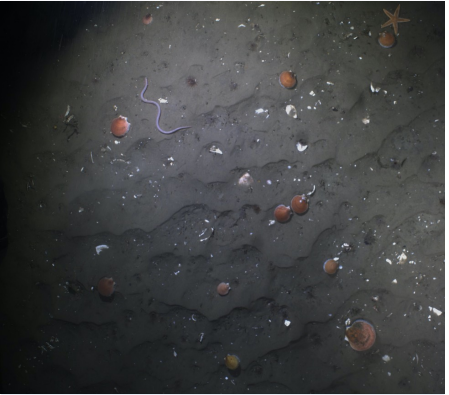
RSA PRIORITIES: The Council also approved 2023-2024 priorities for the Scallop Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. Once again, the Council selected scallop resource surveys as its highest priority. These industry-based surveys provide important data on scallop length frequencies, abundance, and biomass that directly feed into the Scallop Plan Development Team’s work to develop annual specifications for the fishery. RSA surveys primarily support the fishery’s annual management and science needs.

The Council adopted six “medium priority” research categories – all of which were equally ranked – and two additional priorities under “general research” that also were equally ranked (see table).

The full text describing each of the priorities can be found in the [Scallop Committee Recommendations](#) for 2023-2024 RSA priorities. The program funds roughly 10-15 projects each year.

Here are some [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and associated answers that contain more info.

2023-2024 Scallop Research Set-Aside (RSA) Priorities

#	HIGH PRIORITY	#	GENERAL RESEARCH
1	Scallop Resource Surveys	8	Bycatch: Small Scallops and Non-Target Species
	MEDIUM PRIORITY	9	Gear: Commercial Dredge Research
2	Scallop Biology		
3	Sea Turtle Research		
4	Enhancement		
5	Habitat Characterization		
6	High Density Areas		
7	Offshore Wind		<small>School for Marine Science and Technology (SMAST) photo taken in 2020 on an RSA survey trip in Closed Area II.</small>



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SCALLOP SURVEY WORKING GROUP: The Council received a progress report from the [Scallop Survey Working Group](#) that focused on the group's data and offshore wind-related recommendations. The group was asked to:

- Describe and assess a coordinated strategy for for sea scallop resource assessment surveys and investigate opportunities and methods for implementation; and
- Identify survey methods, tools, and designs to monitor and assess the scallop resource in a changing ocean environment that includes offshore wind installations and changes in resource and fishery distributions.

More information about the group's data and wind recommendations, as well as input on scallop RSA research priorities, can be found in the [presentation](#).

OTHER ISSUES: The Council received brief updates on the Northern Gulf of Maine fishery, preliminary 2022 survey sightings, and recent fishery performance in Nantucket Lightship South. Highlights are noted in [this presentation](#).



Pictured above are scallops harvested during a June 2022 RSA trip in the Mid-Atlantic Bight. The Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) survey team encountered a wide range of scallop sizes. Pockets of seed scallops were interspersed throughout the area. – VIMS photo



New England Fishery
Management Council

SCALLOP INDUSTRY IS LEASING NEEDED?

Written Comments Due:

July 5th – 8 AM

MORE INFO

• **nefmc.org**

LAST CALL! The Council recently wrapped up seven in-person [scoping meetings](#) and two webinars to solicit comments from stakeholders on whether a [leasing program](#) is needed in the limited access component of the scallop fishery. The deadline for submitting written comments is **8:00 a.m. EST on July 5, 2022**. Details on how to submit comments are spelled out in the [meeting notice](#). The Council will review all comments during its September meeting in Gloucester and decide whether to: (a) end further discussion on leasing; or (b) take the next step and begin work on an amendment to the scallop plan to develop leasing alternatives. Upcoming Scallop Committee and Advisory Panel meetings will be posted on the [scallop webpage](#).