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Fisheries Survival Fund Corrects the Record on Gulf of Maine Scallops

March 22, 2017 – Atlantic sea scallops remain one of the most sustainably harvested stocks in the United States. With recent media attention on scallops in the northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM), the Fisheries Survival Fund, which represents the majority of the full-time Limited Access scallop fleet, has produced a fact sheet clarifying the true status of scallops in the region.

Recent data from the New England Fishery Management Council, which is responsible for sustainably managing the region's scallop population, shows that Atlantic sea scallops in the NGOM are not overfished, nor are they experiencing overfishing. The Limited Access fleet is operating within its allocated federal quota, and the Atlantic sea scallop fishery remains certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council. It also shows that most fishing in the area does not actually take place in the geographical NGOM, but rather in southwestern Stellwagen Bank, off the coast of Massachusetts. There are currently 36 active NGOM scallop fishing vessels in the NGOM, only 18 of which are home-ported in Maine.

We have provided a fact sheet below using the official documents in order to clarify these claims.

Fact Sheet on Scallops in the Northern Gulf of Maine

- There is no overfishing of the Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) scallop stock, nor is it rebuilding, as scallops in the NGOM are not considered a separate, unique stock. There are not separate reference points for NGOM scallops, nor are there separate Annual Catch Limits. For all management and scientific purposes, NGOM scallops are part of the overall scallop stock, and are included in the full scallop assessment. According to that assessment, scallops are not overfished and are not experiencing overfishing.
- The catch limit for the general category scallop boats in NGOM, currently set at 70,000 pounds, is based upon historical catch. The NGOM scallopers were given these allocations because they did not qualify for the limited access scallop fleet. More information can be found in Amendment 11 to the scallop Fishery Management Plan on the NEFMC website:
<http://www.nefmc.org/library/amendment-11>
- There are 81 NGOM permits and only 36 active NGOM scallop vessels fishing in NGOM. Out of those, only 18 are home-ported in Maine. This can be verified in Table 4 below, which was obtained from the New England Fishery Management Council website, from the March 1 meeting of the Scallop Plan Development Team. The table can also be found in section 3.2.1 of [Draft Discussions Document on NGOM management](#).
- Most of the scallop fishing activity in the NGOM does not occur near Maine, but offshore Massachusetts, in the southwest corner of Stellwagen Bank. Some of this activity is outside the actual NGOM management area. A table illustrating this can be found below, and can also be found in the [Draft Discussions Document on NGOM management](#) in section 3.1.
- The fishing activity of the limited access scallop fleet in the NGOM does not count towards the quota of the NGOM. The limited access fleet operates on a federal quota, in federal waters, under an entirely separate management system. This is not new: the limited access scallop fleet has been fishing in this area under this management program for many years.
- The Atlantic Sea Scallop fishery is certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council. The scallop fishery's commitment to sustainability is also reflected in their participation in the Research Set Aside program. Every year, a portion of revenue from the scallop catch is redirected towards research, which allows the scallop fishery to be managed by the most up-to-date science.
- All points made have been confirmed with the most up to date NEFMC findings. These links are provided below:

- <http://www.nefmc.org/calendar/mar-1-2017-scallop-plan-development-team-meeting>
- <http://www.nefmc.org/library/amendment-11>
- http://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/Doc4-170224_NGOM-Discussion-Draftv.2.pdf
- http://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/Doc4a-NGOM-PDT_DataRequest_Feb2017_V2.pdf

Table 4. The number of active NGOM & IFQ permitted vessels fishing in the NGOM from FY2010-FY2016 by state. Note that active NGOM & IFQ permitted vessels are combined for FY2011 and FY2012.

FY		NGOM	IFQ
2010	MA	6	
	ME	3	
	NH	3	
2011 & 2012	MA	4	
	ME	5	
2013	NH	4	
	MA	6	
	ME	7	
2014	NH	5	
	MA	3	5
	ME	10	
2015	NH	6	
	MA	4	7
	ME	11	
2016	NH	6	
	MA	4	8
	ME	18	

Figure 4. Kernel density plot (heatmap) of IFQ (LGC A) and NGOM (LGC B) fishing trips by permit type. Colors indicate density of trips; lower numbers (yellows) indicate more dense areas while higher numbers (purples) indicate less dense areas (the tail of the spatial distribution).

