

Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan

Species Managed Under Fishery Management Plan (FMP)

The Atlantic sea scallop (*Placopecten magellanicus*) is a bivalve mollusk which is valued for the meat contained in the large muscle that holds the top and bottom portions of the shell together. Sea scallops are semi-mobile bottom dwelling organisms. They are most abundant on coarse sand, gravel and cobble. Mature females are highly fecund, producing millions of eggs during the late summer and autumn months.

The Atlantic sea scallop is managed as a single unit throughout its range in United States waters. Five stock components are recognized: eastern Georges Bank, the Great South Channel, the Gulf of Maine, the New York Bight and the waters adjacent to Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. Scallops are harvested primarily through the use of scallop dredges and trawls.

Management Plan Overview

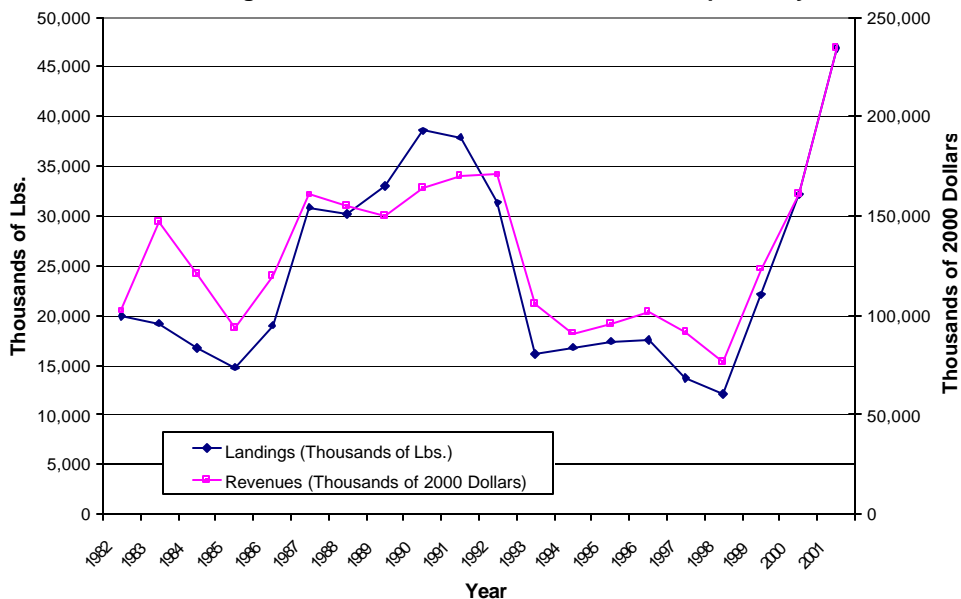
The Atlantic Sea Scallop FMP was implemented in 1982 to restore adult scallop stocks and reduce year-to-year fluctuations in stock abundance caused by variation in recruitment. Amendments 4 and 7 significantly reduced fishing effort by limiting access to the resource, instituting days-at-sea allocations (number of days a vessel is allowed to fish for scallops each year), implementing gear restrictions to improve escapement of small scallops and finfish, and limiting crew size. Area closures in New England and the Mid-Atlantic and above-average recruitment have resulted in increased scallop biomass both within and outside of the closed areas.

The scallop plan has been further developed through multiple framework adjustments and amendments. Framework Adjustment 15, pending final approval by the Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service, will adjust the annual day-at-sea allocation for 2003 in order to achieve optimum yield in the scallop fishery as well as continue the controlled access program in the Hudson Canyon and Virginia/North Carolina closed areas. The Council is currently developing Amendment 10 to the sea scallop plan which focuses on introducing area-based management strategies, reducing bycatch and protecting essential fish habitat.

History of the Fishery

The Atlantic sea scallop fishery is rebuilt to sustainable levels, following declines in fishing mortality from effort reductions, gear restrictions and closed areas. Since 1998, when new area closures were established, total commercial landings and revenue have nearly tripled without increasing the mortality rate. The value of commercial scallop landings for New England and Mid-Atlantic states in the year 2000 was estimated at \$161 million. Increased landings in 2000 were made possible by an increase in scallop biomass and favorable recruitment. The majority of scallop limited access vessels are found in Massachusetts, Virginia, New Jersey and North Carolina.

Landings and Revenues in the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery



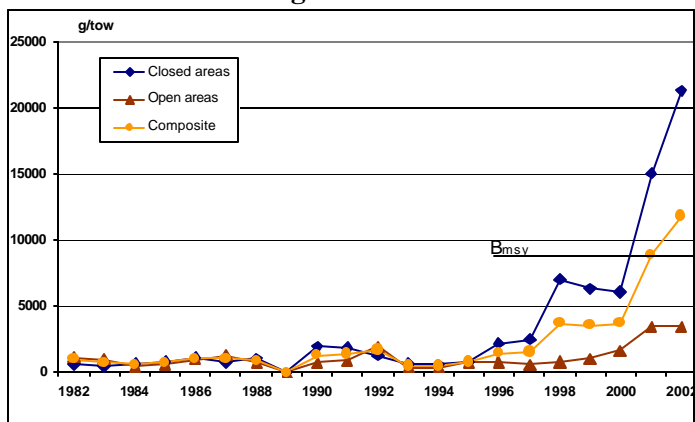
* Note that 2001 revenues are estimated based on 2000 market price and are presented as thousands of 2001 dollars

Fishery Status

Over the past six years successful management of the sea scallop resource has resulted in a dramatic increase in scallop abundance and the development of a highly profitable commercial sea scallop fishery. In the Hudson Canyon area, standing stock biomass of sea scallops is over an order of magnitude higher than it was just three years ago. Biomass also increased in open areas of the Mid-Atlantic and Georges Bank due to good recruitment, effort reduction measures and improvements in gear to allow small scallop escapement.

Atlantic Sea Scallop Abundance, 1982-2002

Georges Bank stock



Mid-Atlantic stock

