

## **Monitoring of Yellowtail Flounder Annual Catch Limits in the Scallop Fishery August 2012**

The following is the methodology for monitoring the scallop fishery's yellowtail flounder (YTF) annual catch limits (sub-ACLs), which were implemented through Amendment 15 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and became effective on July 21, 2011. This methodology was developed by a working group composed of staff from the Northeast Regional Office (RO), the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, and the New England Fishery Management Council.

### **Background**

#### ***What are the scallop fishery's YTF sub-ACLs?***

The scallop fishery is limited in the total amount of YTF that can be taken in the Georges Bank (GB) and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) stock areas (See Attachment 1 for a map of the areas). The scallop fishery's YTF allocations (i.e., sub-ACLs) are established through biennial framework adjustments in the Northeast Multispecies FMP. These sub-ACLs are based on the annual amount of YTF projected to be harvested by the scallop fishery in a given fishing year (FY), and represent a portion of the GB and SNE/MA total ACLs available to the multispecies fishery. The FY 2012 sub-ACLs for GB and SNE/MA are as follows:

<b>YTF Stock</b>	<b>Total YTF ACL(lb)</b>	<b>Scallop YTF sub-ACL (lb)</b>
<b>GB</b>	1,207,692	345,905*
<b>SNE/MA</b>	2,063,527	279,987

\* This allocation was adjusted in July 2012. The initial scallop YTF sub-ACL for GB was 677,921 lb.

Beginning this FY, there are no longer specific GB and SNE YTF access area catch allocations. Therefore, access areas will no longer close early due to YTF catch in a particular area. If it is projected in mid-January that the scallop fishery will exceed its GB or SNE/MA sub-ACL, and the total YTF ACL for that area will also likely be exceeded, a seasonal closure will take effect in the following year for a period of time that is based on the amount of the YTF sub-ACL overage (see 50 CFR 648.64 for the GB and SNE/MA closure schedules). If the total YTF ACL for a given stock area is not exceeded, the seasonal closure would only take effect if the scallop fishery exceeded its sub-ACL by 50 percent or more.

### **Data**

In order to monitor the YTF sub-ACL, the Northeast Region's Analysis and Program Support Division (APSD) relies on a number of sources of data. The data sources used to monitor YTF catch during FY 2012 are summarized below, with particular attention to the timeframe over which the data becomes available for monitoring purposes.

*Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Data.* The Northeast Fishery Observer Program (NEFOP) collects and processes data and biological samples obtained during commercial fishing trips. Preliminary (partially audited) observer data is available to APSD for monitoring purposes

within 24 hours of the end of observed fishing trips in Closed Area I (CAI), Closed Area II (CAII) and Nantucket Lightship (NLS). Fully audited data from open areas and all other access areas are usually available within 90 days of the end of an observed trip.

*Federal Dealer Data.* Federally permitted dealers are required to submit reports that document, among other things, the weight of each species purchased from vessels during a given reporting week, which ends on Saturday at midnight. Reports are submitted through the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS), and are due by midnight on the first Tuesday following the reporting week ending date. These reports are available to APSD upon submission.

*Vessel Trip Report (VTR) Data.* Federally permitted vessels are required to submit a VTR detailing the weights of each species kept, as well as the statistical area where caught. VTR data will be used to assign federal dealer data to the appropriate YTF stock area. For scallop trips, VTRs must be submitted within 15 days of the end of the month in which the trip occurred. However, the majority of scallop vessels also hold Northeast Multispecies permits and, as such, are required to submit VTRs on a weekly basis.

*Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Catch Reports.* A daily VMS catch report is required for all scallop trips for limited access (LA) and limited access general category (LAGC) individual fishing quota (IFQ) scallop vessels. Each of these vessels must report YTF caught (kept and discarded) and all other species kept. Each vessel is required to submit VMS catch reports daily by 9:00AM of the day following the day on which fishing occurred, consistent with access area catch reporting (See Attachment 2).

## **Observer coverage**

The Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) allocates observer sea days to monitor bycatch in commercial fisheries along the Atlantic coast, from Maine to North Carolina through the Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM) process. For more information on the targeted FY 2012 observer coverage levels in the scallop fishery, go to <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/regs/info.html>

## **YTF catch estimation**

VMS trip declarations, VTR records and dealer data are matched with the Data Matching and Imputation System (DMIS), which is the most advanced matching program at the RO. It was developed over the past two years for groundfish monitoring. Scallop trips have recently been incorporated into the system.

Overall YTF catch is calculated using the cumulative methodology<sup>1</sup>. The YTF discard rate will be calculated as the ratio of observed YTF discards (lb) to the observed kept catch of all species (lb) on observed scallop trips. A separate rate will be calculated for the LA and LAGC IFQ fleets. Additionally, a separate rate will be calculated for the dredge and trawl components of the LAGC IFQ fleet. Total YTF discards (lb) for the LA fleet will be calculated by multiplying the LA discard rate by the dealer year-to-date total kept of all species (lb), and then adding the dealer

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the cumulative methodology go to: <http://nefsc.noaa.gov/groundfish/discard/>

year-to-date YTF kept. Total YTF discards (lb) for each gear type in the LAGC IFQ fleet will be calculated by multiplying the appropriate LAGC discard rate by the year-to-date total kept scallop (lb). The formula for estimating total YTF catch is:

$$\left( \frac{\text{Observed YT discards}}{\text{Observed kept all}} \times \text{Dealer kept all} \right) + \text{Dealer kept YT} = \text{Total YT catch}$$

Beginning in FY 2012 the YTF discard rate for both GB and SNE/MA will use a stratified methodology. Stock area specific details are as follows:

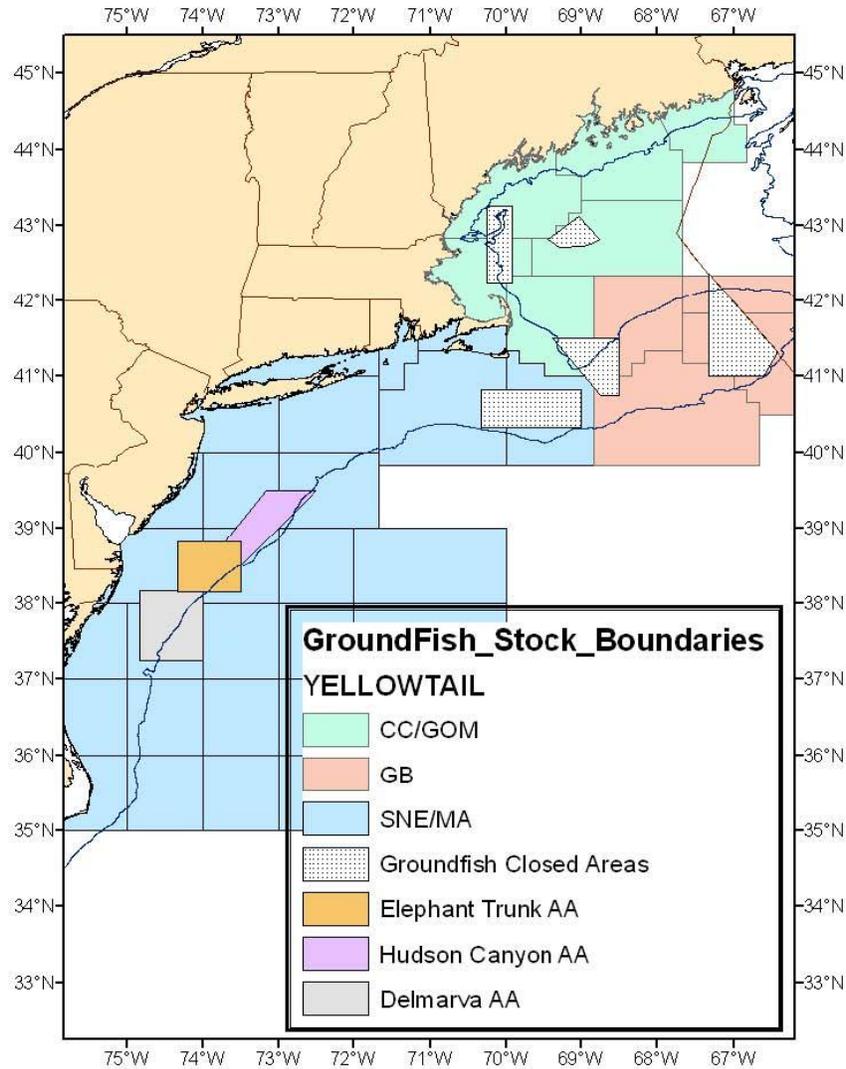
*GB YTF Stock Area.* Observer data will be stratified into open areas, CAI, and CAII. Additionally, data for CAI hauls that were observed in statistical areas 521 and 526 will be excluded from GB as these areas belong to the Gulf of Maine/Cape Cod and SNE/MA YTF stocks, respectively. The most recent available data will be used. As noted above, preliminary observer data is available for CAI and CAII within 24 hours of the end of an observed fishing trip. Thus, real-time data will be used for these two access areas. Audited observer data for open areas is usually available within 90 days of the end of an observed trip. In this case the most recent 12 months of observer data will be used. For example, when the first FY 2012 YTF Sub-ACL report was posted (July 26, 2012), observer data for April 2011 – March 2012 was used.

*SNE/MA YTF Stock Area.* Observer data will be stratified into SNE (statistical areas  $\leq 613$ ) and MA (statistical areas  $\geq 614$ ). A separate discard rate will also be calculated for NLS. Observer data for Hudson Canyon and Delmarva will be pooled with the MA data. Again, the most recent available data will be used. Preliminary observer data is available for NLS within 24 hours of the end of an observed fishing trip. Thus, real-time data will be used for this access area. Audited observer data for SNE and MA are usually available within 90 days of the end of an observed trip. In this case the most recent 12 months of observer data will be used. For example, when the first FY 2012 YTF Sub-ACL report was posted (July 26, 2012), observer data for April 2011 – March 2012 was used.

Kept all for CAI trips will only be used to calculate discards once a VTR is submitted which indicates that fishing occurred in statistical areas 522 or 525. Similarly, kept all for open area trips will only be used to calculate discards once a VTR is submitted which indicates that fishing occurred in GB, SNE or MA. In cases where the reported statistical area is not the same as the reported latitude/longitude the latter will be used.

**Attachment 1: Stock Areas for Yellowtail Reporting**

The following chart shows the stock areas applicable to the yellowtail sub-ACLs. For the scallop fishery, the Inshore and Offshore GB yellowtail stocks are combined. There is no sub-ACL for the Cape Cod/Gulf of Maine yellowtail stock.



**Attachment 2: VMS Scallop Catch Report**

This is the layout of the new VMS scallop catch report. It may appear differently depending on the manufacturer of your VMS. If the information on your catch report is different than below, you may need to update your VMS software. If so, please call the Northeast VMS Team at (978) 281-9149.

**SCALLOP CATCH REPORT**

This report is required by all limited access scallop and LAGC IFQ vessels on all declared scallop trips ONLY when fishing in the Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder Stock Area (GB YT) and the Southern New England/ Mid-Atlantic Yellowtail Flounder Stock Area (SNE/ MA YT). For each day of a declared trip, this report must be submitted by 9 AM the following day. Negative reports (0 lb) must be submitted when no fish were caught.

Note: The VTR serial number must be the same number reported to the seafood dealer receiving the landings at the end of the trip. If you use multiple pages of the VTR on the trip, record the serial number from the first VTR page used.

Vessel Trip Report (VTR) Serial Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date fish caught: Month (01-12)                    \_\_\_\_\_  
   Day (01-31)                                    \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIES	GB YT	SNE/ MA YT
=====		
Scallop Meats Kept (lbs)	_____	_____
Yellowtail Kept (lbs)	_____	_____
Yellowtail Discarded (lbs)	_____	_____
All <u>Other</u> * Fish Kept (lbs)	_____	_____
* exclude Scallop and Yellowtail		