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Final Report

An Assessment of Sea Scallop Abundance and Distribution in the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area and Surrounds

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Project Summary

For the sea scallop, *Placopecten magellanicus*, the concepts of space and time have emerged as the basis of an effective management tool. The strategy of closing or limiting activities in certain areas for specific lengths of time has gained support as a method to conserve and enhance the scallop resource. In the last decade, rotational area management has provided a mechanism to protect juvenile scallops from fishing mortality by closing areas based upon scallop abundance and observed age distribution. Approximately half of the sea scallop industry's current annual landings are attributed to from areas under this rotational harvest strategy. While this represents a management success, it also highlights the extent to which landings are dependent on the effective implementation of this strategy. The continued prosperity of scallop spatial management is dependent on both periodic and large incoming year classes, as well as a mechanism to delineate the scale of a recruitment event and subsequently monitor the growth and abundance of these scallops over time. Current and accurate information related to the abundance and distribution of adult and juvenile scallops is essential for managers to respond to changes in resource subunits.

Acknowledging the importance of accurate, timely, and meaningful information necessary to meet the management challenges presented by this situation, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) conducted a stratified random survey of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area (NL) in the summer of 2018 and 2019. The primary objective of these surveys was to assess the abundance and distribution of sea scallops in the survey domains, culminating with spatially explicit annual estimates of total and exploitable biomass by Scallop Area Management Simulator (SAMS) Area. Secondary project objectives for each survey year included: 1. Finfish bycatch species composition and catch rates, 2. Scallop biological sampling (length:weight relationship, disease, product quality parameters, and shell samples for ageing), and 3. Sea scallop dredge performance (commercial and survey dredges).

Survey results were presented to the Sea Scallop Plan Development Team (PDT) to inform management decisions for fishing years (FY) 2019 and 2020 (i.e., SAMS Area access and catch allocation). Survey data were also provided to the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) in 2018 and 2019 for use in projections for Days-at-Sea (DAS) and SAMS Area catch allocation calculations for FY 2019 and 2020. Results indicated that the exploitable biomass in the West SAMS Area was high in 2018 and reduced in 2019. Scallops in the Southern Deep SAMS Area continued to exhibit slower growth in 2018 (mean length of 83.61 mm for commercial dredge and 78.42 mm for survey dredge); however, in 2019 these scallops did show some signs of growth, with a mean length of 91.44 mm (commercial) and 86.36 mm (survey), although there was substantial variance around the mean. The estimate of exploitable biomass in the North SAMS Area indicated there could be a partial controlled opening in FY 2020. Gear performance of the New Bedford style dredge was consistent with previous results for the gear in terms of relative efficiency and selectivity. Survey dredge efficiency continued to be comprised in high density areas.

Project Background

The sea scallop, *Placopecten magellanicus*, supports a fishery that landed over 50 million pounds of meats with an ex-vessel value in excess of US \$ 500,000,000 in 2017 (NMFS, 2018). These landings resulted in the sea scallop fishery being one of the most valuable single species fisheries along the East Coast of the United States. While historically subject to extreme cycles of productivity, the fishery has benefited from recent management measures intended to bring stability and sustainability. These measures include: limiting the number of participants, total effort (days-at-sea), gear and crew restrictions, and a strategy to improve yield by protecting scallops through rotational area closures.

Amendment #10 to the Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan (FMP) officially introduced the concept of area rotation to the fishery in both the Mid-Atlantic Bight (MAB) and Georges Bank (GB) resource areas. This strategy seeks to increase the yield and reproductive potential of the sea scallop resource by identifying and protecting discrete areas of high densities of juvenile scallops from fishing mortality. By delaying capture, the rapid growth rate of scallops is exploited to realize substantial gains in yield over short time periods. In addition to the formal attempts established by Amendment #10 to manage discrete areas of scallops for improved yield, specific areas on GB are also subject to area closures. Since 1999, limited access to three closed areas on GB has been allowed for the harvest of scallops. In recent years, spatial management on GB has become more adaptive and conducted at finer spatial scales (i.e., NL Extension Closure and the GB Closed Area II Extension Closure) to provide protection for observed recruitment events outside of the established access areas to meet management and fishery objectives.

In the context of the spatial management strategy for the MAB and GB, as well as open areas not currently included in the rotational area management program, timely and detailed abundance and distribution information becomes crucial. This information forms the basis for assessment of the species and specifications for the next fishing year, as well as the potential establishment of additional closed areas. Amendment #10 specifies that an area is a candidate to be closed when the annual growth potential in that area is greater than 30%. Additionally, when the annual growth rate is reduced to less than 15% the area is available for a controlled re-opening. Certain other criteria exist regarding the spatial requirements for a closed area, but growth rates which are determined by the length distribution of the population within that area is a key component of that determination. The collection of abundance and length distribution information from discrete areas is a major component of this strategy, and the use of commercial vessels provides a flexible and efficient platform to collect the required information.

Spatial management for scallops essentially provides a mechanism to delay age at first capture. This approach, while effective, is predicated on a level of recruitment sufficient to supply discrete areas with recruits. A strong seed set was observed during the VIMS 2013 survey in NL. The spatial extent of the recruitment event was subsequently delineated by additional optical resource surveys (NEFSC HabCam and School for Marine Science and Technology Drop Camera), with observed high levels of animals in both the "open" area to the east of the NL and the EFH area to the west. Based upon this information an additional closure, named the "NL extension" was implemented to protect these recruits. Since that time, managers have monitored this year class and while mortality has been observed, the year class is still

considered to be one of the largest recorded for the GB resource. In 2018, both areas were open for harvest. In addition to the recruitment event observed in the NL extension, another large recruitment event was observed by multiple surveys, beginning in 2015, in the Southern Deep SAMS Area in waters greater than 70 m. These scallops have presented a challenge to fishery managers, assessments scientists, and the industry due to the slow growth and yield observed over the last couple of years. The continued monitoring of biological characteristics (i.e., shell height:meat weight and product quality) of these scallops has aided in biomass estimation and development of management measures.

Cooperative dredge surveys have been successfully completed with the involvement of industry, academic, and governmental partners since 2000 through funding from the Sea Scallop Research Set-Aside Program (RSA). The additional information provided by these surveys has been vital in the determination of appropriate Total Allowable Catches (TAC) in the subsequent re-openings of the closed areas and determination of the number of open area DAS. This type of survey, using commercial fishing vessels, provides an excellent opportunity to gather required information and involve stakeholders in the management of the resource.

In addition to collecting data to assess the abundance and distribution of sea scallops in the NL, the operational characteristics of commercial scallop vessels allow for the simultaneous towing of two dredges. As in past surveys, we towed two dredges at each survey station. One dredge was a standard NMFS sea scallop survey dredge and the other was a standard New Bedford style commercial dredge (NBD). This paired design, using one non-selective gear (NMFS) and one selective gear (NBD), allowed for the estimation of the size selective characteristics of the NBD. While gear performance (i.e., size selectivity and relative efficiency) information for the NBD has been documented (Yochum and DuPaul, 2008), continuing to evaluate the performance of this gear will allow for changes in selectivity and efficiency to be monitored and quantified. Understanding time varying changes for the NBD is beneficial for two reasons. First, it could be an important consideration for the stock assessment for scallops in that it provides the size selectivity characteristics of the most recent gear configuration. In addition, selectivity analyses using the SELECT method provide insight to the relative efficiency of the two gears used in the study (Millar, 1992). The relative efficiency measure from this experiment can be used to refine existing absolute efficiency estimates for the NBD.

An advantage of a sea scallop dredge survey is that one can access and sample the target species. This has a number of advantages including accurate measurement of animal length and the ability to collect biological specimens. One attribute routinely measured is the shell height:meat weight relationship. While this relationship is used to determine swept area biomass for the area surveyed at that time, it can also be used to document seasonal shifts in the relationship due to environmental and biological factors. For this reason, data on the shell height:meat weight relationship is routinely gathered by both the NEFSC and VIMS scallop surveys. While this relationship may not be a direct indicator of animal health in and of itself, long term data sets may be useful in evaluating changing environmental conditions, food availability, and density dependent interactions. While collecting data for shell height:meat weight determination, information is also collected on animal health and product quality (i.e., presence of disease and parasites). This information can be useful to the industry, as well as inform management measures.

For this study, we pursued multiple objectives. The primary objective was to collect information to characterize the abundance and distribution of sea scallops within the NL area, ultimately culminating in estimates of scallop biomass to be used for subsequent management actions. Utilizing the same catch data with a different analytical approach, we estimated the size selectivity characteristics of the commercial sea scallop dredge. An additional component of the selectivity analysis allows for supplementary information regarding the efficiency of the commercial dredge relative to the NMFS survey dredge. As a third objective of this study, we collected biological samples to estimate time and area specific shell height:meat weight relationships. Additional biological samples were taken to assess product quality for the adult resource and to monitor scallop disease/parasite prevalence. Sea scallop shells were also collected to supplement the NEFSC shell collection for ageing.

Methods

Survey Area and Sampling Design

Sampling stations for the surveys were selected using a stratified random sampling design with the strata consisting of the NMFS shellfish strata that have been used since the 1970s. Station locations were determined using a hybrid approach consisting of both proportional and optimal allocation techniques based on the biomass (weight) and number of animals observed during the VIMS 2017 survey and VIMS 2018 survey. Data from 2017 were used to inform station selection for 2018, and 2018 survey data were then used for station allocation in 2019. To assure that all strata had some representation of stations, a minimum of two stations were allocated to each stratum to allow for variance to be calculated. A portion of the total pool of samples is allocated proportionally based stratum areas. The remaining samples are allocated using Neyman allocation that allocates samples based upon the biomass and number of animals observed in the prior year's survey. In 2018, 130 stations were occupied and station locations for the survey are shown in Figure 1. The number of stations in 2019 was increased to 135 to improve sampling in the West and Southern Deep SAMS Areas. The station locations completed during the 2019 survey are shown in Figure 2. The survey domain was modified between 2018 and 2019 to align with SAMS Area designations. The Extension SAMS Area (referred to as NLS-Ext, Figure 3) present in 2018 was removed in 2019 because this SAMS Area was combined with the South Channel SAMS Area and was not completely surveyed by VIMS (Figure 4).

Sampling Protocols

While at sea, the vessels simultaneously towed two dredges. A NMFS sea scallop survey dredge, 8 ft. in width equipped with 2-inch rings, 3.5-inch diamond mesh twine top, and a 1.5-inch diamond mesh liner was towed on one side of the vessel. On the other side of the vessel, a 14 ft. (2018) and 13 ft. (2019) NBD equipped with 4-inch rings, a 10-inch diamond mesh twine top, and no liner was utilized. In this paired design, it is assumed that the dredges cover a similar area of substrate and sample from the same population of scallops.

For each survey tow, the dredges were fished for 15 minutes with a towing speed of approximately 3.8-4.0 kts. High-resolution navigational logging equipment was used to accurately determine and record vessel position. A Star-Oddi™ DST sensor was used on the dredge to measure and record dredge tilt angle, as well as depth and temperature (Figure 5).

Data from the DST sensor was used to determine the actual start and end of each tow to provide a more accurate estimate of the area covered. Synchronous time stamps on both the navigational log and DST sensor were used to estimate the linear distance for each tow.

Sampling of the catch was conducted in the same manner described by DuPaul and Kirkley (1995), which has been utilized during all of our scallop surveys since 2005. For each station, the entire scallop catch from both the survey and commercial dredges was kept separate and placed in traditional scallop baskets to quantify total catch. Total scallop catch or a subsample, depending upon the volume of the catch, was measured to the nearest mm to determine size frequency. This protocol allows for the determination of the size frequency of the entire catch by expanding the catch at each shell height by the fraction of total number of baskets sampled. The result is an estimate of the number and size of the scallops caught for each dredge at each station. These catch data were also used to calculate biomass for both dredges and estimate the commercial gear selectivity.

Finfish and invertebrate bycatch were also quantified at each station for each gear, with commercially important finfish and barndoor skates being sorted by species and measured to the nearest mm (total length (TL)). All other skate species (consisting predominantly of little (*Leucoraja erinacea*) and winter skates (*Leucoraja ocellata*) were grouped into an unclassified category and enumerated. At randomly selected stations, sea scallop predators were enumerated and weighed. These predators, that included mainly crabs and starfish were identified to the genus or species level and enumerated.

Samples were taken to determine area specific shell height:meat weight relationships, as well as monitor animal health and product quality. At every station that contained scallops, 15 animals encompassing the size distribution observed at the station were selected for sampling. First, shell height was measured to the nearest mm. Then each scallop was carefully shucked and the adductor muscle and gonad were separated from the remaining soft tissue. Both were individually weighed at sea with a Marel™ motion compensating scale. In 2018, gonad weights were only taken at a select set of stations (n=21) where sampling was being conducted for another VIMS RSA project. Thirty scallops were sampled at each of these stations. In 2019, gonad weights were taken for all scallops assessed at each station. Additional sampling for the other RSA project was also conducted in 2019 at with 30 scallops assessed at 21 stations. In 2018, the majority of adductor muscle weights were taken using a Marel M1100 motion compensating scale to the nearest 0.5 gram. For stations where gonad weights were also taken, a Marel M2200 motion compensating scale was used for weights and weights were taken to the nearest 0.01 gram. In 2019, only the Marel M2200 scale was used for all weight measurements, and all weight measurements were taken to the nearest 0.05 gram. In addition to shell height and meat weight data collected, biological characteristics and product quality information were collected. Biological data included sex and reproductive stage. Product quality was also evaluated through visual inspection of each adductor muscle and shell using a semi-qualitative ordinal coding scheme for each characteristic assessed. Characteristics evaluated included overall market condition, color, texture, and the presence of blister disease. The presence and number of nematode lesions observed on each adductor muscle was also quantified through gross observation.

Five to ten scallop shells were collected at every fifth station from samples selected for shell height:meat weight assessment for ageing purposes. Shells were selected if there was no shell damage and the shell was relatively large. For the 21 stations in each year where sampling was being conducted for the other RSA project, 30 shells were retained. Shells were aged using the external ring method described in Hart and Chute (2009), as well as a novel method involving the resilium, which is being developed at VIMS by Dr. Roger Mann's lab (Mann and Rudders, 2019). A subset of shells was added to the archived collection housed at VIMS.

Station level catch and location information were entered into FEED (Fisheries Environment for Electronic Data), a data acquisition program developed by Chris Bonzek at VIMS. Data from the bridge were entered into FEED using an integrated GPS input. Station level data included location, time, tow-time (break-set/haul-back), tow speed, water depth, weather, and comments relative to the quality of the tow. FEED was also used to record detailed catch information at the station level for scallops, finfish, and invertebrates. Catch by species was entered into FEED as either the number of baskets caught and measured (scallops) or number of animals (finfish, skates, etc.) caught. Length measurements were recorded using the Ichthystick measuring board connected to the FEED program that allows for automatic recording of length measurements. Shell height:meat weight and product quality data were also recorded using FEED. The Marel scale was connected to FEED to allow for automatic recording of adductor muscle weight data.

Data Analysis

Catch and navigation data were used to estimate swept area biomass within the area surveyed by SAMS Area. The methodology to estimate biomass is similar to that used in previous survey work by VIMS. In essence, we estimate a stratified mean catch weight of either all scallops or the fraction available to the commercial gear (exploitable) from the point estimates and scale that value up to the entire area of the domain sampled following methods from Cochran (1977) for calculating a stratified random size of a population. These calculations are given as:

Stratified mean biomass per tow in stratum and subarea of interest:

$$
\bar{C}_h = \frac{1}{n_h} \sum_{i=1}^h C_{i,h} \tag{1}
$$

Variance Equation 1

$$
Var(\bar{C}_h) = \frac{1}{n_h(n_h - 1)} \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} (C_{i,h} - \bar{C}_h)^2
$$

Stratified mean biomass per tow in subarea of interest:

$$
\bar{C}_s = \sum_{h=1}^L W_h \cdot \bar{C}_h \tag{2}
$$

Variance Equation 2

$$
Var(\bar{C}_s) = \sum_{h=1}^{L} W_h^2 \cdot Var(\bar{C}_h)
$$

Total biomass in subarea of interest:

$$
\widehat{B_S} = \left(\frac{\left(\frac{\overline{c}_S}{\overline{a}_S}\right)}{E_S}\right) A_S \tag{3}
$$

Variance Equation 3

$$
Var(\widehat{B_S}) = Var(\bar{C_S}) \cdot \left(\frac{A_S}{\bar{a_S}}\right)^2
$$

where:

 $L = #$ of strata $n = #$ of stations in stratum h $h =$ stratum $i =$ station *i* in stratum *h* $s=$ subarea s in survey of interest A_s = area of survey of interest in subarea s E_s = gear efficiency estimate for subarea s \bar{a}_s = mean area swept per tow in subarea s $\bar{\mathcal{B}}_{\mathcal{S}} =$ total biomass in subarea s $C_{\rm s}$ = stratified mean biomass caught per tow for subarea s $C_{h,s}$ = mean biomass caught per tow in stratum h for subarea s W_h = proportion of survey/subarea area in stratum h

Stratified mean catch weight per tow of exploitable scallops was calculated from the raw catch data as an expanded size frequency distribution with a SAMS Area appropriate shell height:meat weight relationship applied. Length-weight relationships used to convert the number of scallops to weight were determined by the Scallop PDT. In 2018, SAMS Area specific shell height:meat weight relationships developed with VIMS survey data from 2016-2018 were used for all SAMS Areas, with the exception of the Ext SAMS Area. The analysis presented to the Scallop PDT is included as Appendix A. SARC 65 values were applied to the Ext SAMS Area data (NEFSC, 2018). In 2019, shell height:meat weight relationships estimated from the VIMS 2016-2019 survey data were used for all four SAMS Areas. The analysis presented to the Scallop PDT is included as Appendix B. Exploitable biomass, defined as the fraction of the population vulnerable to capture by the currently regulated commercial gear, was calculated using two approaches. The observed catch at length data from the NMFS survey dredge (assumed to be non-size selective) was adjusted based upon the size selectivity characteristics of the commercial gear (Yochum and DuPaul, 2008). The observed catch at length data from the commercial dredge was not adjusted due to the fact that these data already represent that fraction of the population that is subject to exploitation by the currently regulated commercial gear.

Utilizing the information obtained from the high resolution GPS, an estimate of area swept per tow was calculated. Throughout the cruise, the location of the ship was logged every second. By determining the start and end of each tow based on the recorded times as delineated by the DST sensor data, a survey tow can be represented by a series of consecutive coordinates (latitude, longitude). The linear distance of the tow is calculated by:

$$
TowDist = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sqrt{(long_2 - long_1)^2 + (lat_2 - lat_1)^2}
$$

The linear distance of the tow is multiplied by the width of the gear (either 14 or 13 ft. for the commercial dredge and 8 ft. for the survey dredge.) for an estimate of the area swept during a given survey tow.

The final two components of the estimation of biomass are generally constants and not determined from experimental data obtained on these cruises. The Miller et al. (2019) and SARC 65 (NEFSC, 2018) efficiency (q) estimates for the NMFS survey dredge (41%) and the NBD (65%) were used to scale relative biomass to absolute biomass where appropriate. In the most recent years, survey dredge efficiency has become reduced in high density areas and this has resulted in an under-estimate of absolute biomass estimates for specific SAMS Areas in the NL survey domain for the dredge surveys (NEFSC, 2018). Based on work conducted by the NEFSC, a lower q value of 0.13 was applied to several dredge SAMS Areas biomass estimates in 2018 and 2019 to account for this reduced efficiency. In 2018, a reduced q was used in the NLS-NA and NLS-AC-S-Deep SAMS Areas. In 2019, a reduced q was applied in the West and South Deep SAMS Areas. These are the same two SAMS Areas as 2018, but with different names. Decisions to adjust q for specific SAMS Areas was determined by the Scallop PDT. No adjustments to the commercial dredge q were needed. To scale the estimated stratified mean scallop catch to the full domain, the total area of each resource subunit within the survey domain was calculated in ArcGIS v. 10.1. Biomass estimates were calculated for the NL SAMS Areas for the entire survey domain, including area outside of the SAMS Areas that were surveyed (Figures 3 and 4). Area surveyed outside the pre-determined SAMS Areas was referred to as the VIMS_45 SAMS Area.

Shell Height:Meat Weight

The relationship between shell height and meat weight was estimated using a generalized linear mixed effects model (gamma distribution, log link, and a random effect of station) using the glmer function in the lme4 package in R v. 3.2.1 (R Core Team, 2016). The relationship was estimated with the following general model:

$$
\mu = X'\beta + Z\gamma + \varepsilon
$$

where μ is the predicted weight (grams), X' is a design matrix of covariates, β is a vector of coefficients, Z is a design matrix of random effects, γ is a vector of random effect parameters, and ε is the error term.

Models were developed with forward selection and variables were retained in the model if the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) was reduced three or more units. Variables were added to the model based on individual model AIC values. SAMS Area was included in all models to allow for the estimation of a SAMS Area effect. The model with the lowest AIC was selected as the preferred model and used to predict shell height:meat weight relationships by SAMS Area. If models were within three units of each other, a likelihood ratio test was used to test for a significant difference between models. If there was no significant difference between the models, the more parsimonious model was selected as the preferred model. Variables

considered were: ln shell height, ln depth (average depth of a tow), SAMS Area (retained in all models), latitude (beginning latitude of a tow), and an interaction term of shell height and depth.

Size Selectivity

The estimation of size selectivity of the NBD was based on a comparative analysis of the catches from the two dredges used in the survey. For this analysis, the NMFS survey dredge is assumed to be non-selective (i.e., a scallop that enters the dredge is retained by the dredge). Catch at length from the selective gear (commercial dredge) were compared to the nonselective gear via the SELECT method (Millar, 1992). With this analytical approach, the selective properties (i.e., the length based probability of retention) of the commercial dredge were estimated. In addition to estimates of the length based probabilities of capture by the commercial dredge, the SELECT method characterizes a measure of relative fishing intensity. Assuming a known quantity of efficiency for one of the two gears (in this case the survey dredge at 40%), insight into the efficiency of the other gear (commercial dredge) can be attained.

Prior to analysis, all comparative tows were evaluated. Any tows that were deemed to have had problems during deployment or at any point during the tow (flipped, hangs, crossed towing wires, etc.) were removed from the analysis. In addition, tows where zero scallops or less than 20 scallops were captured by both dredges were also removed. The remaining tow pairs were then used to analyze the size selective properties of the commercial dredge. The SELECT method was used to calculate selectivity and relative efficiency of the NBD for the survey. This was done for each year and for both years combined.

The SELECT method is one of the preferred methods to analyze size-selectivity studies encompassing a wide array of fishing gears and experimental designs (Millar and Fryer, 1999). This analytical approach conditions the catch of the selective gear at length *l* to the total catch (from both the selective gear variant and small mesh control).

$$
\Phi_c(l) = \frac{p_c r_c(l)}{p_c r_c(l) + (1 - p_c)}
$$

where *r(l)* is the probability of a fish at length *l* being retained by the gear given contact and *p* is the split parameter (measure of relative efficiency). Traditionally, selectivity curves have been described by the logistic function. This functional form has symmetric tails. In certain cases, other functional forms have been utilized to describe size selectivity of fishing gears. Examples of different functional forms include Richards, log-log, and complimentary log-log. Model selection is determined by an examination of model deviance (the likelihood ratio statistic for model goodness of fit), as well as AIC (Xu and Millar, 1993; Sala *et al.*, 2008). For towed gears; however, the logistic function is the most common functional form observed. Given the logistic function:

$$
r(l) = \left(\frac{\exp(a+bl)}{1+\exp(a+bl)}\right)
$$

by substitution:

$$
\Phi(L) = \frac{pr(L)}{(1-p) + pr(L)} = \frac{p \frac{e^{a+bL}}{1+e^{a+bL}}}{(1-p) + p \frac{e^{a+bL}}{1+e^{a+bL}}} = \frac{pe^{a+bL}}{(1-p) + e^{ea+bL}}
$$

a bL

where *a*, *b*, and *p* are parameters estimated via maximum likelihood. Based on the parameter estimates, L_{50} and the selection range (SR) are calculated.

$$
L_{50} = \frac{-a}{b}
$$

$$
SR = \frac{2 * \ln(3)}{b}
$$

where L_{50} defines the length at which an animal has a 50% probability of being retained given contact with the gear and SR represents the difference between L_{75} and L_{25} , which is a measure of the slope of the ascending portion of the logistic curve.

In situations where catch at length data from multiple comparative tows is pooled to estimate an average selectivity curve for the experiment, tow by tow variation is often ignored. Millar *et al.* (2004) developed an analytical technique to address this between-haul variation and incorporate that error into the standard error of the parameter estimates. Due to the inherently variable environment that characterizes the operation of fishing gears, replicate tows typically show high levels of between-haul variation. This variation manifests itself with respect to estimated selectivity curves for a given gear configuration (Fryer 1991, Millar *et al.*, 2004). If not accounted for, this between-haul variation may result in an underestimate of the uncertainty surrounding estimated parameters, increasing the probability of spurious statistical significance (Millar *et al.,* 2004).

Approaches developed by Fryer (1991) and Millar *et al.,* (2004) address the issue of between-haul variability. One approach formally models the between-haul variability using a hierarchical mixed effects model (Fryer 1991). This approach quantifies the variability in the selectivity parameters for each haul estimated individually and may be more appropriate for complex experimental designs or experiments involving more than one gear. For more straightforward experimental designs, or studies that involve a single gear, a more intuitive combined-hauls approach may be more appropriate (Millar *et* al., 2004).

This combined-hauls approach characterizes and then calculates an overdispersion correction for the selectivity curve estimated from the catch data summed over all tows, which is identical to a curve calculated simultaneously to all individual tows. Given this identity, a replication estimate of between-haul variation (REP) can be calculated and used to evaluate how well the expected catch using the selectivity curve calculated from the combined hauls fits the observed catches for each individual haul (Millar *et al.* 2004).

REP is calculated as the Pearson chi-square statistic for model goodness of fit divided by the degrees of freedom.

$$
REP = \frac{Q}{d}
$$

where *Q* is equal to the Pearson chi-square statistic for model goodness of fit and *d* is equal to the degrees of freedom. The degrees of freedom are calculated as the number of terms in the summation, minus the number of estimated parameters. The calculated replicate estimate of between-haul variation was used to calculate observed levels of extra Poisson variation by

multiplying the estimated standard errors by \sqrt{REP} . This correction is only performed when the data are overdispersed (Millar, 1993).

A significant contribution of the SELECT model is the estimation of the split parameter which estimates the probability of an animal "choosing" one gear over another (Holst and Revill, 2009). This measure of relative efficiency, while not directly describing the size selectivity properties of the gear, is insightful relative to both the experimental design of the study, as well as the characteristics of the gears used. A measure of relative efficiency (on the observational scale) can be calculated in instances where the sampling intensity is unequal. In this case, the sampling intensity is unequal due to differences in dredge width. Relative efficiency can be computed for each individual trip by the following formula:

$$
RE = \frac{p/(1-p)}{p_0/(1-p_0)}
$$

where p is equal to the observed value (estimated p value) and $p₀$ represents the expected value of the split parameter based upon the dredge widths in the study (Park *et al.*, 2007). For this study, a 14 ft. (2018) and 13 ft. (2019) commercial dredge was used with expected split parameter of 0.636 and 0.619 respectively. The computed relative efficiency values were then used to scale the estimate of the NMFS survey dredge efficiency obtained from the optical comparisons (41%). Computing efficiency for the estimated *p* value from Yochum and DuPaul (2008) yields a commercial dredge efficiency of 65% for a New Bedford style dredge.

Additional Analysis

Additional analysis of NL survey data was completed at the request of the Scallop PDT in both years. In 2018, a subset of age data, collected from 2016-2018, for the West SAMS Area were used to provide estimates of the growth parameters K and L[∞] (Hart and Chute, 2009). This analysis was completed to determine if the growth parameters for this SAMS Area needed to be adjusted for projections for the next fishing year. The short report provided to the Scallop PDT is included as Appendix G. In 2018 and 2019, meat count data were estimated for the entire NL survey domain and shapefiles were provided to the NEFMC staff for presentations.

Results

Abundance and Distribution

The NL surveys were conducted from July 12-18 of 2018 and July 24-31 of 2019. In 2018, 130 stations were occupied onboard the *F/V Celtic* (referred to as CruiseID 201804). In 2019, 135 stations were completed onboard the *F/V Socatean* (referred to as CruiseID 201908). Boxplots depicting the estimated linear distances covered per tow over the entire survey by year are shown in Figure 6. The mean tow length in 2018 was 1,789.19 m with a standard deviation of 115.93 m. The mean tow length in 2019 was 1,841.92 m with a standard deviation of 28.13 m.

Relative length frequency distributions for scallops, along with the expanded number of scallops, and mean length by gear captured during the survey by SAMS Area and year are shown in Figures 7-8. Maps depicting the spatial distribution of scallop catch by size class (< 35mm, 35-75 mm, and > 75 mm) for the survey dredge are shown in Figure 9-10. Total and exploitable biomass calculated using the area-specific shell height:meat weight coefficients, described above, for 2018 and 2019, along with confidence intervals by gear type and SAMS Area are shown in Tables 1-4 (total biomass from the commercial dredge is not estimated due to the selective properties of the commercial gear). An estimate of the total number of animals by year, gear type, and SAMS Area are shown in Tables 5-6. Shell height:meat weight relationships were estimated by SAMS Area within the survey domain. The resulting parameters estimated by year are shown in Table 7. The predicted shell height:meat weight relationships by SAMS Area and year are shown in Figure 11. Catch per unit of effort for finfish bycatch for each survey is shown in Table 8. Length frequency distributions for finfish bycatch with sufficient sample sizes by gear and year are shown in Figures 12-13.

Size Selectivity

The catch data were evaluated by the SELECT method with a variety of functional forms (logistic, Richards) in an attempt to characterize the most appropriate model. Examination of residual patterns, model deviance, and AIC values indicated that the logistic curve provided the best fit to the data. An additional model run was conducted to determine whether the hypotheses of equal fishing intensity (i.e., the two gears fished equally) was supported. Visual examination of residuals and AIC indicated the model with an estimated split parameter provided the best fit to the data. Parameter estimates using the logistic function and with *p* being estimated by year are shown in Table 9. Observed versus predicted fits and deviance residuals by year are shown in Figures 14-15. The predicted selectivity curves by year are shown in Figure 16.

Parameter estimates across years indicated an increase in the L_{25} , L_{50} , L_{75} , and p parameter estimates between 2018 and 2019 (Table 9). This increase may be associated with the lack of growth observed in the South Deep SAMS Area in 2018. Although there was an increase in the L_{25} , L_{50} , and L_{75} parameters between years, the SR remained consistent (i.e., 41.02 in 2018 and 39.69 in 2019). This shows the NBD has the ability to catch a wide range of scallops in the NL area, including small scallops. This result is consistent with Roman and Rudders (2019), who reported a large SR for the NBD in the NL area for 2015-2017. The estimated *p* parameter was lower than that reported in Yochum and DuPaul (2008) for the NBD dredge (0.77) in 2018, but was higher in 2019, indicating in this area the NBD can be more efficient. This increase in efficiency may be related to the extreme biomass levels observed in some areas of the survey domain that may be decreasing gear selectivity. Yochum and DuPaul found that selectivity was reduced as scallop catch increased (2012).

Meat Quality and Shell Blisters

A total of 3,820 scallops were sampled at shell height:meat weight stations for the twoyear period. In 2018, a total of 1,831 scallops were sampled, and in 2019, 1,989 scallops were processed. A total of 653 gonad weights were taken in 2018 and 1,985 gonad weights were measured in 2019. Summary information on sex, market category, color, texture, and blister

disease stage are provided in Table 10. Table 11 provides the classifications and descriptions for market category, color, texture, and blister codes. The majority of scallops were classified as marketable with no texture or color deviations. In 2018, 90 percent of scallops were classified in the highest overall marketability code. In 2019, 96 percent of scallops were assessed in the same overall marketability classification. Approximately 0.3 percent of the scallops assessed showed signs of shell blister disease, regardless of sex, across both years.

Nematode Monitoring

All scallops assessed for meat quality and shell blisters were also assessed for nematode infections. No scallops were observed to be infected.

Scallop Shells

Approximately 795 scallop shells were collected. Shell samples were aged and a subset were archived at VIMS.

Outreach

As part of the outreach component of this project, presentations detailing the annual results of each survey were compiled. These presentations were delivered to the Sea Scallop PDT at their meeting in Falmouth, MA, during August 28-29, 2018 and in Woods Hole, MA, from August 27-28, 2019. Presentations are included as Appendices C and D, respectively. Annual industry reports were generated to summarize results from VIMS 2018 and 2019 survey efforts and were distributed to stakeholders (Appendices E and F).

Presentations

Several other presentations were given that included information regarding these surveys and survey results:

- 148th Annual American Fisheries Society Conference, Atlantic City, NJ. August 17- 23, 2018
	- Growth Rate Measurement in Scallops: Revisiting Merrill after 50 Years on the Library Shelf. M. Chase Long¹, Roger Mann¹, David Rudders¹, Sally Roman¹, Toni Chute², Sally Walker³ and Kelly Cronin³, (1)Virginia Institute of Marine Science, (2)Northeast Fisheries Science Center, (3)University of Georgia
- September 4, 2019 Scallop PDT Meeting, New Bedford, MA
	- VIMS NL South Deep Information. Sally Roman and Dave Rudders
	- VIMS Survey Data Treatment Updates. Sally Roman and Dave Rudders

Discussion

Surveys of important resource areas like the NL Access Area are an important endeavor. These surveys provide information about a critical component of the resource unit that includes rotational access areas. Additionally, the timing of industry-based surveys can be tailored to give managers current information to guide important management decisions. This information can help time access to closed areas, set TAC for re-opening of access areas, and determine the number of allowable DAS for open area fishing. Finally, this type of survey is important in that it involves the stakeholders of the fishery in the management of the resource.

Our results suggest that significant biomass exists in the South Deep SAMS Area of the NL, but the growth of these scallops is still less than expected, with mean lengths of 91.44 mm (commercial dredge) and 86.36 mm (survey dredge) in 2019. These scallops are now 7 years old and a significant portion remain under 75 mm in length. Total biomass estimates in 2018 (30,962.64 mt) and 2019 (36,608.75 mt) indicate this SAMS Area could be open for harvest in the near future. Biomass estimates for the NL North SAMS Area in 2019 also indicated the area could sustain a more limited controlled re-opening, although a possession limit of 18,000 lbs. per limited access vessel may exceed what the area could sustain in terms of harvest. The West SAMS Area showed signs that high grading and/or discard mortality may have been high during the previous fishing year. This could account for the difference between the survey averaged biomass for this SAMS Area in 2018 compared to that of 2019.

The use of commercial scallop vessels in a project of this magnitude presents some interesting challenges. One such challenge is the use of the commercial gear. This gear is not designed to be a survey gear; it is designed to be efficient in a commercial setting. The design of this current experiment; however, provides insight into the utility of using a commercial gear as a survey tool. One advantage of the use of this gear is that the catch from this dredge represents exploitable biomass and no further correction is needed. A disadvantage lies in the fact that there is very little ability of this gear to detect recruitment events. However, since this survey is designed to estimate exploitable biomass, this is not a critical issue.

The concurrent use of two different dredge configurations provides a means to not only test for agreement of results between the two gears, but also simultaneously conduct size selectivity experiments. In this instance, our experiment provided information regarding the NBD based on information collected in 2018 and 2019. Selectivity of the NBD was estimated by Yochum and DuPaul (2008) and by Roman and Rudders (2019), and while expectation is that the selectivity of the NBD would not change over time, the utilization of this survey to estimate selectivity for this gear is beneficial for examining potential shifts in selectivity over time. Results varied compared to those estimated by Yochum and DuPaul (2008), but the estimated *p* parameter and relatively efficiency estimates indicated the NBD was more efficient in the NL survey area. In 2018, the L_{50} estimate of 82.7 mm was lower than the 100.1 mm value estimated by Yochum and DuPaul (2008). The 2019 L_{50} of 120.6 mm was greater than Yochum and DuPaul (2008). The lower L_{50} in 2018 is probably related to the high biomass levels observed in several of the SAMS Areas. Yochum and DuPaul (2008) found that increased scallop catch led to a decrease in selectivity. As the dredge fills, escapement of smaller scallops through the 4 inch rings may be limited. Identifying area and time specific changes in the selectivity of this gear may be useful for managers and assessment scientists. The increase in 2019 indicates time varying selectivity may exist for this dredge, but more data would be required in future years to determine if this variability is a result of current resource conditions.

Biomass estimates are sensitive to other assumptions made about the biological characteristics of the resource; specifically, the use of appropriate shell height:meat weight parameters. Shell height:meat weight relationships estimated from these two surveys highlighted the need for finer spatial scale parameter estimates for this area. While SARC 65 provided separate estimates for the South Deep SAMS Area compared to the rest of GB, using more spatially-explicit data helped to inform biomass estimation and reflect current resource

conditions. Data from the VIMS survey indicated the use of two sets of area specific parameters was insufficient to capture the varying growth of scallops and adductor meats throughout the NL. Area and time specific shell height:meat weight parameters are another topic that merits continued study, especially for this area.

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Figure 1 Locations of sampling stations for the 2018 survey of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area.

Figure 2 Locations of sampling stations for the 2019 survey of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area.

Figure 3 Map of the 2018 survey domain for the survey of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area with the SAMS Area designations and NMFS and VIMS extents (grey and blue).

Figure 4 Map of the 2019 survey domain for the survey of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area with the SAMS Area designations and NMFS and VIMS extents (grey and blue).

Figure 5 An example of the output from the Star-Oddi™ DST sensor. Arrows indicate the interpretation of the start and end of the dredge tow.

Figure 6 Boxplots of calculated tow lengths from the 2018 and 2019 surveys of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area.

CruiselD

Figure 7 Scallop length frequency distributions generated from catch data obtained from both the survey and the commercial dredges during the VIMS survey of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area in July 2018 by SAMS Area. Number of scallops (n) measured and mean length by gear are also included.

Figure 8 Scallop length frequency distributions generated from catch data obtained from both the survey and the commercial dredges during the VIMS survey of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area in July 2019 by SAMS Area. Number of scallops (n) measured and mean length by gear are also included.

Figure 9 Spatial distribution of the number of sea scallops caught per m² in the NMFS survey dredge during the VIMS survey of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area in 2018. This figure represents the catch of pre-recruit sea scallops (< 35mm (top), 35-75mm (middle), and > 75mm (bottom)).

Figure 10 Spatial distribution of the number of sea scallops caught per m² in the NMFS survey dredge during the VIMS survey of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area in 2019. This figure represents the catch of pre-recruit sea scallops (< 35mm (top), 35-75mm (middle), and > 75mm (bottom)).

Figure 11 Predicted shell height:meat weight relationships by SAMS Area estimated from scallops sampled during the Nantucket Lightship Access Area survey in 2018 (A) and 2019 (B).

Figure 12 Length frequency distributions of bycatch for the NMFS survey dredge with sufficient sample sizes for the Nantucket Lightship Access Area survey conducted in 2018 (CruiseID 201804) and 2019 (CruiseID 201908).

Figure 14 Logistic SELECT curve fit to the proportion of the total catch in the New Bedford style dredge relative to the total catch (survey and commercial) for the Nantucket Lightship Access Area survey conducted in 2018. Left: Observed and predicted retention probability. Right: Deviance residuals for the model fit.

Figure 15 Logistic SELECT curve fit to the proportion of the total catch in the New Bedford style dredge relative to the total catch (survey and commercial) for the Nantucket Lightship Access Area survey conducted in 2019. Left: Observed and predicted retention probability. Right: Deviance residuals for the model fit.

Figure 16 Predicted selectivity curves for 2018 (A) and 2019 (B) for the New Bedford style dredge. The middle, dashed line represents the length at 50% retention probability. The upper and lower dashed lines represent the lengths at 25% and 75% retention probability.

Table 1 Estimated total and exploitable biomass for the NMFS survey dredge for the Nantucket Lightship Access Area surveyed in 2018 by SAMS Area. 95% confidence intervals, average density (scallops/m²), and average meat weight (grams) are also provided.
Table 2 Estimated exploitable biomass for the New Bedford style commercial dredge for the Nantucket Lightship Access Area surveyed in 2018 by SAMS Area. 95% confidence intervals, average density (scallops/m²), and average meat weight (grams) are also provided.

Table 3 Estimated total and exploitable biomass for the NMFS survey dredge for the Nantucket Lightship Access Area in 2019 by SAMS Area. 95% confidence intervals, average density (scallops/m²), and average meat weight (grams) are also provided.

Table 4 Estimated exploitable biomass for the New Bedford style commercial dredge for the Nantucket Lightship Access Area surveyed in 2019 by SAMS Area. 95% confidence intervals, average density (scallops/m²), and average meat weight (grams) are also provided.

Table 5 Estimated total and exploitable number of scallops by gear for the Nantucket Lightship Access Area surveyed in 2018 by SAMS Area.

Table 6 Estimated total and exploitable number of scallops by gear for the Nantucket Lightship Access Area surveyed in 2019 by SAMS Area.

Table 7 Shell height:meat weight parameters estimated from scallops sampled during the Nantucket Lightship Access Area surveys in 2018 and 2019.

Table 8 Total catch (number of animals) and catch per unit effort for bycatch for the 2018 (201804) and 2019 (201908) surveys of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area survey for the NMFS survey dredge and the New Bedford Style commercial dredge.

Table 9 Selectivity analysis parameter values estimated with a logistic curve and estimated split parameter (*p*) by cruise for the 2018 and 2019 surveys of Nantucket Lightship Access Area for the New Bedford style commercial dredge.

Table 10 Summary information for scallops assessed for marketability, color, texture, and blister disease at shell height:meat weight stations by sex during the 2018 and 2019 surveys of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area.

Table 11 Description of marketability, color, texture, and blister codes for Table10.

Appendix A

VIMS SHMW Analysis

Sally Roman

August 6, 2018

Methods

Shell height meat weight relationships (SHMW) were estimated for the MAB and NL surveys with VIMS survey data. For the MAB survey, SHMW relationships were estimated with the current SAMS areas (n=8). No data were collected from the VIR SAMS area. A separate analysis was conducted with a new SAMS area, referred to as the High Density Area, and defined below in Figure 1. The High Density SAMS area was originally in the ET_Flex SAMS area (also referred to as ET_Close). Data from the VIMS 2018 MAB survey were used for the MAB SHMW analysis. Another set of SHMW equations were developed for the NLCA. The first developed SHMW relationships for the four current SAMS areas within the survey domain. The second analysis separated the Southern SAMS area (referred to as NLS_AC_S) into two new areas based on depth. Shallow (< 70 m) and Deep SAMS areas (> 70 m) replaced the Southern SAMS area. Combined VIMS survey data from the NLCA for 2016- 2018 were used for both NLCA SHMW analyses.

SHMW models were developed with forward selection and variables were retained in the model if the AIC was reduced three or more units. Variables were added to the model based on individual model AIC values. SAMS area was included in all models to estimate the SAMS area effect. The model with the lowest AIC that satisfied model building criteria was selected as the preferred model and used to predict SHMW relationships by SAMS area. Variables considered were: ln shell height, ln depth (average depth of a tow), SAMS Area (retained in all models), latitude (MAB only, beginning latitude of a tow) and an interaction term of shell height and depth. The interaction term was not included in the full model if the term was not significant in the individual interaction model. This occurred for the NLCA analyses. Tables provided below include the SHMW models with parameters and AIC by SAMS area and analysis. Parameter estimates for the preferred model and predicted SHMW relationships are also provided. Specific to the NLCA, several SHMW parameter tables are provided:

- 1. VIMS 2016-2017 parameter estimates (used in last year's biomass calculations for the Southern and NA SAMS areas)
- 2. Parameter estimates for the current SAMS area preferred model with the 2016-2018 survey data, and
- 3. Parameter estimates for the current Ext, NA and Northern SAMS areas and Shallow and Deep SAMS area with the 2016-2018 survey data.

2018 total biomass for the VIMS NLCA survey was estimated with the SARC 65 GB SHMW parameters and the VIMS combined 2016-18 parameter estimates. VIMS parameter estimates were applied to all SAMS areas when biomass estimation was conducted. A comparison of biomass estimates is provided below. Dredge efficiency issues persist in high density areas.

MAB

Figure 1. Boundary for High Density SAMS area within the ET_Flex area.

Table 1. SHMW models for the MAB with current SAMS areas. Bold variables indicate significance. Model in red was selected as the preferred model. * indicates an interaction term.

Modnames	Parameters	AIC
mab1	\approx 1 + shell height*depth + SAMS Area	31342.81
mab ₅	\sim 1 + shell height*depth + SAMS Area + latitude	31344.36
mab ₆	\sim 1 + shell height + depth + SAMS Area	31381.42
mab ₇	\sim 1 + shell height + depth + SAMS Area + latitude	31383.3

Parameter	Parameter		
	Estimate		
Intercept	-19.71		
In shell height	5.057		
In depth	2.38		
DMV	-0.24		
ET Flex	0.02		
ET_Open	-0.05		
HCS	-0.08		
п	-0.05		
NYB	-0.05		
NYB Inshore	0.02		
In shell height: In depth	-0.54		

Table 2. Parameter estimates for model mab1 from Table 1.

Figure 2. Predicted SHMW relationships by SAMS Area for the MAB using model mab1 from Table 1.

Table 3. SHMW models for the MAB with current SAMS areas and a High Density SAMS area. Bold variables indicate significance. Model in red was selected as the preferred model. * indicates an interaction term.

Table 4. Parameter estimates for model mab5 from Table 3.

NLCA

Table 5. SHMW models for the NLCA with current SAMS areas using 2016-2018 combined survey data. Bold variables indicate significance. Model in red was selected as the preferred model. * indicates an interaction term.

Table 6. Parameter estimates for model nl4 from Table 5.

Parameter	Parameter		
	Estimate		
Intercept	-9.30		
In shell height	2.81		
In depth	-0.13		
NLS_AC_S	-0.34		
NLS EXT	-0.22		
NLS NA	-0.22		
VIMS 45	0.03		

Figure 4. Predicted SHMW relationships by SAMS Area for the NLCA using model nl4 from Table 5.

Table 7. SHMW models for the NLCA with NA, Ext, Northern, Shallow and Deep SAMS areas using 2016- 2018 combined survey data. Bold variables indicate significance. Model in red was selected as the preferred model. * indicates an interaction term.

Table 8. Parameter estimates for model nl4.1 from Table 7.

Figure 5. Predicted SHMW relationships by SAMS Area for the NLCA using model nl4.1 from Table 7.

Table 10. Total biomass estimates (mt) for the NLCA using SARC 65 parameter estimates and VIMS 2016-18 parameter estimates for the current SAMS areas. Dredge efficiency issues persist in high density areas. VIMS 2016-18 parameters used for all current SAMS areas.

Discussion

For the MAB, partitioning the ET_Flex SAMS area into two distinct SAMS Areas (High Density and ET_Flex) may not be appropriate. Predicted SHMW relationships for the MAB, with the addition of the High Density SAMS area, did not indicate the High Density SAMS area had significantly lower growth compared to the current SAMS areas (Figure 3). The predicted SHMW relationship for the High Density SAMS area was consistent with the other SHMW relationships in the MAB and the ET area. Growth of scallops in the ET Flex SAMS area increased in 2018 compared to 2017. The mean length of scallops observed in the survey dredge in 2017 was 91.41mm, compared to a mean length of 104.53 mm in 2018.

For the NLCA, it may be appropriate to consider alternative SHMW relationships for some SAMS areas as has been done in the past. There was decrease of approximately 7.70 thousand mt for total biomass in the Southern SAMS area when using the VIMS estimates compared to the SARC estimates. Biomass estimates for the Northern and EXT SAMS areas were comparable. It is unclear if the SARC 65 GB model (Table A2-2) includes the peter pan scallops. Table A2-1 of SARC 65 indicates that slow growing (peter pan) scallops were left out of the GB all and GB closed estimates. VIMS SHMW estimates for the 2016-17 data used last year and the 2016-18 results are similar. Biomass estimates for the additional Shallow and Deep SAMS area in place of the Southern SAMS area could not be calculated. Stratum areas within the new SAMS area would have to be calculated prior to biomass estimation.

Appendix B

VIMS Nantucket Lightship SHMW Analysis

August 19, 2019

Methods

Shell height meat weight relationships (SHMW) were estimated for the Nantucket Lightship (NL) survey by SAMS area with VIMS survey data. SHMW relationships were developed using only the 2019 survey data and a combined dataset from survey data for 2016-19.

SHMW models were developed with forward selection and variables were retained in the model if the AIC was reduced three or more units. Variables were added to the model based on individual model AIC values. SAMS area was included in all models to estimate the SAMS area effect. The model with the lowest AIC was selected as the preferred model and used to predict SHMW relationships by SAMS area. If models were within three units of each other, a likelihood ratio test was used to test for significant differences between model. If there was no significant difference between the models, the more parsimonious model was selected as the preferred model. Variables considered were: ln shell height, ln depth (average depth of a tow), SAMS Area (retained in all models), latitude (beginning latitude of a tow) and an interaction term of shell height and depth. Year was included in the combined data model to test for a year effect, and was not significant. Tables provided below include the SHMW models with parameters and AIC by SAMS area. Parameter estimates for the preferred model and predicted SHMW relationships are also provided.

2019 total biomass for the VIMS NL survey was estimated with the SARC 65 GB SHMW parameters, the VIMS combined 2016-18 parameter estimates, and the VIMS combined 2016-19. A comparison of biomass estimates is provided below. Dredge efficiency issues persist in high density area in the South_Deep SAMS area.

Table 1. SHMW models for the 2019 VIMS NL survey data. Bold variables indicate significance. Model in red was selected as the preferred model. * indicates an interaction term.

Model	Parameters		AICc	Delta AICc
nl3	\sim 1 + shell height + latitude + depth + SAMS Area	-10	12,527.89	0.00
n ₂	\sim 1 + shell height + latitude + SAMS Area		12,529.01	1.12
n 4	\sim 1 + shell height + depth + SAMS Area	9	12,533.81	5.92
n ₁₅	\sim 1 + shell height $*$ depth + SAMS Area	10	12,534.60	6.71
nl1	\sim 1 + shell height + SAMS Area	8	12,535.11	7.22

Table 2. Parameter estimates for model nl2 from Table 1.

Figure 1. Predicted SHMW relationships by SAMS Area for the NL using model nl2 from Table2.

Table 3. SHMW models for the 2016-19 VIMS NL survey data. Bold variables indicate significance. Model in red was selected as the preferred model. * indicates an interaction term.

Table 4. Parameter estimates for model nl3 from Table 3.

Figure 2. Predicted SHMW relationships by SAMS Area for the NL using model nl3 from Table4.

Table 5. Total biomass estimates (mt) for the NL using SARC 65 parameter estimates, VIMS 2016-18 parameter estimates and VIMS 2016-19 for the current SAMS areas. Dredge efficiency issues persist in high density area in the South_Deep SAMS Area.

Discussion

SHMW relationships in the NL continue to show a similar trend across years. The South Deep SAMS Area continues to have a lower meat weight at shell height compared to the other SAMS areas. This SAMS Area is significantly different from the reference case, NLS_North SAMS Area, for the 2019 analysis and the combined analysis.

Biomass estimates were comparable between the different SHMW parameters used for estimation. This result is likely from having updated data included in the SARC 65 estimates and having the South_Shallow scallops in a separate SHMW analysis for SARC 65.

Appendix C

An Assessment of Sea Scallop Abundance and Distribution in the Mid-Atlantic Bight, Nantucket Lightship Closed Area, Closed **Area I and Closed Area II**

> **David B. Rudders Sally Roman Sara Thomas**

Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Sea Scallop Plan Development Team Falmouth, MA August 28-29, 2018

Preliminary – PDT use only.

2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative Surveys Mid-Atlantic Bight

First Leg

- F/V Carolina Capes II
- \cdot 5/4/18 5/13/18
	- 227 Stations

Second Leg

- F/V Italian **Princess**
- 5/19/18 5/29/18
	- 223 Stations

Total • 450 Stations

15 **2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative Surveys CA I II and NLCA**

- F/V Arcturus
- 6/8/18 6/16/18
	- 189 Stations
- F/V Celtic
- \cdot 7/12/18 7/18/18
	- 130 Stations

2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative Surveys Analytical Framework

- **Swept area method is used to calculate biomass estimates (Cochran, 1997)**
- **Area swept per tow (***as***)**
	- **Navigational info**
	- **Tilt sensor**
- Catch weight per tow (C_h)
	- **Expanded length frequencies**
	- **Length-weight relationship (SARC values or determined by PDT- SARC 65)**
	- **Selectivity (Yochum and DuPaul, 2008)**
- **Efficiency (***Es***)**
	- **Values from SARC 2014**
		- **65%Commercial Dredge**
		- **40% NMFS Survey Dredge**
	- $L = #$ of strata
	- $n = #$ of stations in stratum h
	- $h =$ stratum
	- $i =$ station *i* in stratum *h*
	- $s=$ subarea s in survey of interest
	- A_s = area of survey of interest in subarea s
	- E_s = gear efficiency estimate for subarea s

Stratified mean biomass per tow in stratum and subarea of interest

$$
\bar{C}_{h,s} = \frac{1}{n_h} \sum_{i=1}^h C_{i,h,s}
$$

Stratified mean biomass per tow in subarea of interest

$$
\bar{C}_S = \sum_{h=1}^L W_h \cdot \bar{C}_{h,S}
$$

Total biomass in subarea of interest

$$
\widehat{B_S} = \left(\frac{\left(\frac{\bar{C}_S}{\bar{a}_S}\right)}{E_S}\right) A_S
$$

- \bar{a}_s = mean area swept per tow in subarea s
- \widehat{B}_s = total biomass in subarea s
- $C_{h,s}$ = mean biomass caught per tow in stratum h for subarea s
- $\bar{\mathcal{C}}_{\mathcal{S}}$ = stratified mean biomass caught per tow for subarea \mathcal{S}
- W_h = proportion of survey/subarea area in stratum h

VITI 5

2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative Surveys SH:MW Relationship

- **SH:MW samples were taken from all stations that had scallops (15/station):**
	- **MAB Survey: 5,413 (380 stations)**
	- **CA I II Survey: 1,971 (157 stations)**
	- **NL Survey: 1,831 (113 stations)**
- **The objective is to construct a model to predict meat weight based on a suite of potential covariates (i.e. shell height, depth, SAMS area, sex, disease…).**
- **Average depth was calculated for each tow from tilt sensor**
- **A GLMM was used to fit model (Gamma distribution, log link, random effect at the station level) with R v 3.3.1 Package lme4.**

2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative MAB Survey SHMW Results

• Trend of increasing meat weight at length with latitude (SAMS Area) this year and results are similar 2017 SHMW relationships for the MAB

2016-2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative NLCA Survey SHMW Results

• Significantly different relationships for all SAMS Area except VIMS 45 compared to the Northern SAMS Area.

2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative CA I Survey SHMW Results

- Southern SAMS SHMW curve is greater than the Northern Area
- Likely a function of average depths for each of subarea, as well as the temporal spread of the sampling

2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative CA II Survey SHMW Results

• Extension and Open Area SF SHMW curves are lower than the Northern Access Area

2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative MAB Survey Length Frequency- SAMS Areas

2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative NLCA Survey Length Frequency- SAMS Areas

2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative CA I II Survey Length Frequency- SAMS Areas

2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative MAB Survey Scallop Distribution

MAB Survey Recruits (35 - 75mm)

2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative NLCA Surveys Scallop Distribution

2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative CA I II Surveys Scallop Distribution

VINET **2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative Surveys Total Biomass – SAMS Areas**

$V\sqrt{5}$ **2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative Surveys Exploitable Biomass Survey – SAMS Areas**

2018 VIMS-Industry Cooperative Surveys Exploitable Biomass - Commercial by SAMS Areas

WS^T

SARC 65 Total Biomass Estimates Compared to VIMS 2016-18 Estimates NL

Acknowledgements

- **The owners, captains and crews;**
	- **F/V** *Carolina Capes II*
	- *F/V Italian Princess*
	- **F/V** *Arcturus*
	- **F/V** *Celtic*
- **Lee Rollins, Kelly Lewis, Victoria Thomas, Matthew Cunningham, Chase Long, Theresa Redmond and Patricia Perez**
- **Support from NMFS NEFSC: Dvora Hart and Pete Chase.**
- **Funding through Sea Scallop RSA program.**

Appendix D

An Assessment of Sea Scallop Abundance and Distribution in the Mid-Atlantic Bight, Nantucket Lightship, Closed Area I and **Closed Area II**

> **David B. Rudders Sally Roman Erin Mohr Kaitlyn Clark**

Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Sea Scallop Plan Development Team Woods Hole, MA August 27-28, 2019

Preliminary – PDT use only.

2019 VIMS-Industry Cooperative Surveys Project Objectives

Primary Objectives

- **Assess the abundance and distribution of scallops in the Mid-Atlantic Bight, NL, CAI & CAII by SAMS Area**
- **Estimate total & exploitable biomass**

Secondary Objectives

- **Gear performance**
	- **Selectivity of commercial gear**
- **Scallop Biology & Product Quality**
	- **Assess marketability, growth, disease & SHMW**
- **Finfish Bycatch**
- **Scallop Predators**

VHTY 15

2019 VIMS-Industry Cooperative Surveys

- **Sampling design**
	- **Stratified random design**
		- **NMFS shellfish strata plus SAMS areas included in survey domains**
	- **Allocation**
		- **Area, prior year catch data (biomass, number)**
- **Automated Data acquisition system**
- **Survey dredge performance monitored**
- **All other protocols remained the same**
	- **Tow a survey dredge & commercial dredge simultaneously**
		- **Survey dredge – 8 ft in width, 2 in rings & 1.5 in diamond mesh liner**
		- **Commercial dredge – varies by vessel and area**

Biomass Estimation

• **Swept area method is used to calculate biomass estimates (Cochran, 1997)**

- **Area swept per tow (***as***)**
	- **Navigational info**
	- **Tilt sensor**
- Catch weight per tow (C_h)
	- **Expanded length frequencies**
	- **Length-weight relationship (SARC 65 or determined by PDT)**
	- **Selectivity (Yochum and DuPaul, 2008)**
- **Efficiency** (*E*_s)
	- **Values from SARC 2014**
		- **65%Commercial Dredge**
		- **40% NMFS Survey Dredge**
- $L = #$ of strata
- $n = #$ of stations in stratum h
- $h =$ stratum
- $i =$ station *i* in stratum *h*
- $s=$ subarea s in survey of interest
- A_s = area of survey of interest in subarea s
- E_s = gear efficiency estimate for subarea s
- \bar{a}_s = mean area swept per tow in subarea s
- \widehat{B}_s = total biomass in subarea s
- $\mathcal{C}_{\mathcal{S}}$ = stratified mean biomass caught per tow for subarea s
- $\bar{\mathcal{C}}_{h, s} =$ mean biomass caught per tow in stratum h for subarea s
- W_h = proportion of survey/subarea in stratum h

Stratified mean biomass per tow in stratum and subarea of interest

VIMET

$$
\bar{C}_{h,s} = \frac{1}{n_h} \sum_{i=1}^{h} C_{i,h,s}
$$

$$
Var(\bar{C}_{h,s}) = \frac{1}{n_h(n_h - 1)} \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} (C_{i,h,s} - \bar{C}_{h,s})^2
$$

Stratified mean biomass per tow in subarea of interest

$$
\bar{C}_S = \sum_{h=1}^L W_h \cdot \bar{C}_{h,S} \quad Var(\bar{C}_S) = \sum_{h=1}^L W_h^2 \cdot Var(\bar{C}_h)
$$

Total biomass in subarea of interest

$$
\widehat{B_S} = \left(\frac{\left(\frac{\bar{C_S}}{\bar{a}_S}\right)}{E_S}\right) A_S \quad Var\left(\widehat{B_S}\right) = Var\left(\bar{C_S}\right) \cdot \left(\frac{A_S}{\bar{a}_S}\right)^2
$$

2019 SAMS Areas

MAB Survey

- **9 SAMS Areas**
	- **Only minor changes to some area names**
- **VIMS surveys outside of areas & biomass in VIMS areas is included in the closest SAMS Area**

2019 SAMS Areas

NL Survey

- **4 SAMS Areas**
- **2018 Ext SAMS Area included in GSC**
- **VIMS surveys outside of areas & biomass in VIMS areas is calculated as a separate area**

2019 SAMS Areas

CAI II Survey

- **CAI - 2 SAMS Areas**
- **CAII - 3 SAMS Areas**
- **Only changes to names**
	- **VIMS surveys outside of areas & biomass in VIMS areas is calculated as separate areas**

2019 VIMS-Industry Cooperative Surveys MAB

First Leg

- **F/V Italian Princess**
	- **5/10/19 – 5/19/19**

• **225 Stations**

Second Leg

- **F/V Carolina Capes II**
	- **5/22/19 – 6/2/19**
		- **225 Stations**

Third Leg

- **F/V Anticipation**
- **8/12/19 – 8/15/19**
- **39 Stations reoccupied from Leg 1**

Total • **450 Stations**

VITI 5 **2019 VIMS-Industry Cooperative Surveys CA I II and NL**

- **F/V Polaris**
- **6/7/19 - 6/14/19**
	- **200 Stations**
- **F/V Socetean**
- **7/24/19 - 7/31/19**
	- **135 Stations**

2019 MAB Survey Scallop Distribution

MAB Survey Recruits (35 - 75mm)

2019 NL Survey Scallop Distribution

NL Survey Recruits (35 - 75mm)

NL Survey Recruits (>75mm)

2019 CA I II Survey Scallop Distribution

SHMW Relationship

- **SHMW samples (meat & gonad weight) were taken from all stations that had scallops (15/station):**
	- **MAB Survey: 5,510 (377 stations)**
	- **CA I II Survey: 2,350 (174 stations)**
	- **NL Survey: 1,989 (124 stations)**
- **The objective is to construct a model to predict meat weight based on a suite of potential covariates (i.e. shell height, depth, SAMS area, sex, disease…)**
- **Average depth was calculated for each tow from tilt sensor**
- **A GLMM was used to fit model (Gamma distribution, log link, random effect at the station level) with R v 3.3.1 Package lme4**

2019 MAB Survey SHMW Results

- **Majority of SAMS Areas have similar SHMW relationship**
- **DMV has the smallest meat weight at a given shell height**

2019 NL Survey SHMW Results

- **Similar trend to previous years for the South Deep SAMS Area having the lowest meat weight at shell height**
- **South Deep SAMS only area significantly different than reference area: NLS-North**

2019 CA I Survey SHMW Results

- **CAI Access SAMS Areas significantly different from Sliver SAMS Area**
- **Likely a function of average depths for each subarea, as well as the temporal spread of the sampling**

2019 CAII Survey SHMW Results

• **Extension and Open Area SF SHMW curves are lower than the Northern Access Area**

2019 MAB Survey Length Frequency- SAMS Areas

2019 NL Survey Length Frequency- SAMS Areas

2019 CA I Survey Length Frequency- SAMS Areas

2019 CA II Survey Length Frequency- SAMS Areas

2019 CA II Survey Recruitment

VHTY 5 **2019 VIMS-Industry Cooperative Surveys Total Biomass Survey Gear – SAMS Areas**

$W5$ **2019 VIMS-Industry Cooperative Surveys Exploitable Biomass Commercial Gear - SAMS Areas**

SARC 65 Total Biomass Estimates Compared to VIMS 2016-19 Estimates NL

NLS West Clappers • **Observed large**

- **quantities of clappers in the NLS-West SAMS Area**
- **Maybe an indication of higher than expected discard and/or incidental mortality.**
- **This information may provide insight into potential fishery behavior in the South Deep SAMS Area in the future, due to the size range of scallops in this SAMS Area.**

NLS West Clappers

- **The percentage of clappers in the catch was greatest in the NLS-West SAMS Area for both gears**
- **Percentage of clappers in both dredges ranged from 1 to 26%.**

Acknowledgements

- **The owners, captains and crews:**
	- *F/V Carolina Capes II*
	- *F/V Italian Princess*
	- *F/V Polaris*
	- *F/V Socetean*
- **Scientific Staff:**
	- **Lee Rollins, Kelly Lewis, Victoria Thomas, and Sarah Borsetti**
- **Reidar's Manufacturing Inc.**
- **Support from NMFS NEFSC: Dvora Hart and Pete Chase.**
- **Funding through Sea Scallop RSA program.**

Appendix E

Results for the 2018 VIMS Industry Cooperative Surveys of the Mid-Atlantic, Nantucket Lightship Closed Area, Closed Area I, and Closed Area II Resource Areas

Submitted to: Sea Scallop Fishing Industry

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The Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) conducted high resolution sea scallop dredge surveys of the entire Mid-Atlantic (MAB) sea scallop resource area, the Nantucket Lightship (NLCA) area and the Closed Area I (CAI) and II (CAII) areas during May-July of 2018 (Figure 1). These surveys were funded by the Sea Scallop Research Set-Aside Program (RSA). Exploitable biomass for each survey is shown in Table 1 and for each spatially explicit SAMS (Scallop Area Management Simulator) area in figures 2-4. SAMS areas represent management relevant spatial subunits of the resource and explicitly account for differences in recruitment, vital rates, and fishing effort in the forward projection of survey information. At the time of the surveys, exploitable biomass estimated from the commercial dredge was 12,194 mt or 26.9 million pounds for the Open Elephant Truck (ET-Open) SAMS area and 18,9692 mt or 41.2 million pounds in Elephant Trunk Flex (ET-Flex) SAMS area. For open area in the Long Island (LI) SAMS area, exploitable biomass was estimated at 8,888 mt or 19.6 million pounds. In the western NLCA area (NLS_NA), the exploitable biomass was 26,245 mt or 57.9 million pounds. The southern SAMS area from 2017 (NLS_AC_S) was split into two areas based on depth: NLS_AC_Shallow (<70m) and NLS_AC_Deep (>70m), which had 533 mt (1.2 million pounds) and 4,279 mt (9.4 million pounds), respectively. Exploitable biomass in the CAII access area (CAII_S_AC) was 5,203 mt or 11.5 million pounds. We estimated an exploitable biomass of 1,551 mt or 3.4 million pounds for the CAI access area (CAI_AC)

The MAB survey was conducted aboard two commercial vessels: F/V *Carolina Capes II* and F/V *Italian Princess* during May 2018. Each vessel completed one survey leg and occupied approximately 225 stations throughout the MAB survey area. The CAI and CAII surveys were conducted onboard the F/V *Arcturus* in June of 2018 and a total of 189 stations were completed. The F/V *Celtic* conducted the NLCA survey during July of 2018 and occupied a total of 130 survey stations. All vessels towed a NMFS 8 foot survey dredge along with either a 14 foot Coonamessett Farm Turtle Deflector Dredge (CFTDD) equipped with a 10 inch diamond mesh twine top with a 1.76 hanging ratio (60 meshes, 34 rings) and 8.5 meshes on the side, or a 14 or 15 foot New Bedford style commercial dredge. While the comparison of catches between the survey dredge and the commercial dredge are informative on a relative basis, for the purposes of this report, we present only the catch data from the commercial dredges obtained during a 15 minute survey tow at 3.8-4.0 kts with a 3:1 scope (Table 2). We present the data from the commercial dredge only as this information is more applicable to the resource conditions that the industry is likely to encounter.

Catch data in tabular form is shown in Table 2. The density and number of scallops caught in three size classes (<35mm, 35-75mm, and >75mm) for each tow is shown in Figures 6-8. In Figures 9-11, the shell height frequency distribution from both dredges (survey and commercial for the different surveys and SAMS areas. Figure 12 depicts the estimated meat count (meats per pound) for the NLCA survey.

In addition to the catch data that informed our understanding of scallop abundance and biomass, we also monitored meat quality during each survey. This protocol allowed us to the prevalence and intensity of a parasitic nematode observed in the scallop meat. Infected scallops typically present with a rust colored lesions on the exterior of the adductor muscle, typically opposite the sweet meat. Nematode infected scallops were observed only during the MAB survey with a typical number of nematodes observed per scallop meat ranging from 1-6. The spatial distribution of the nematode prevalence (% of sampled scallops at a given station with at least one lesion) by year is shown in Figure 13. Overall, the extent of nematode prevalence still covers the majority of the southern range for these surveys. In Figures 14-15, the spatial distribution of nematode prevalence in sampled scallops is displayed by year and size class. Smaller scallops appear to be less infected over time. However, prevalence of nematodes in scallops less than 100 mm in size increased in the southern most portion of the MAB survey area from 2017 to 2018, as well as a potentially slight increase in some areas in the northern portion of the MAB.

Table 1. Exploitable biomass for scallops captured in the commercial during the VIMS/Industry cooperative surveys by survey, gear, and SAMS Area during May-July 2018.

Table 2. Catch data for the commercial dredge from the VIMS/Industry cooperative surveys completed during May-July 2018. Nematode prevalence (% of scallops sampled at a given station infected with nematodes) is also provided for each station.

Figure 1. Survey domains with station locations for the VIMS/Industry cooperative surveys of the Mid-Atlantic sea scallop resource area, Nantucket Lightship Closed Area, Closed Area I, and Closed Area II completed during May-July 2018. Within the Mid-Atlantic survey domain, black dots represent the first leg of the survey while red represent the second leg.

Figure 2. SAMS areas used to calculate biomass estimates for the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Mid-Atlantic sea scallop resource during May 2018.

Figure 3. SAMS areas used to calculate biomass estimates for the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Nantucket Lightship access area and surrounds resource during July 2018.

Figure 4. SAMS areas used to calculate biomass estimates for the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Closed Area II access area and open area along the southern flank during June 2018.

Closed Area I access area during June 2018.

Figure 6. Number of scallops under 35 mm (A), 35-75 mm (B), and greater than 75 mm (C) caught in the NMFS survey dredge during the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Mid-Atlantic sea scallop resource during May 2018.

Figure 7. Number of scallops under 35 mm (A), 35-75 mm (B), and greater than 75 mm (C) caught in the NMFS survey dredge during the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Nantucket Lightship access area during July 2018.

Figure 8. Number of scallops under 35 mm (A), 35-75 mm (B), and greater than 75 mm (C) caught in the NMFS survey dredge during the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Closed Area I and II access areas during June 2018.

Figure 9. Scallop length frequency distributions generated from catch data obtained from both the survey and commercial dredges during the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Mid-Atlantic sea scallop resource area in May 2018 by SAMS area. Number of scallops (n) measured and mean length by gear are also included.

Figure 10. Scallop length frequency distributions generated from catch data obtained from both the survey and commercial dredges during the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Nantucket Lightship access area and surrounds in July 2018 by SAMS area. Number of scallops (n) measured and mean length by gear are also included.

Figure 11. Scallop length frequency distributions generated from catch data obtained from both the survey and commercial dredges during the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Closed Area I (top row) and Closed Area II (middle and bottom rows) in June 2018 by SAMS area. Number of scallops (n) measured and mean length by gear are also included.

Figure 12. Estimated meat count (meats per pound) across the VIMS Nantucket Lightship survey domain.

Figure 13. Spatial distribution of the prevalence of the nematode parasite in sampled scallops from 2017 and 2018 for the MAB resource area. Crosses indicate VIMS survey station locations.

Figure 14. Spatial distribution of the prevalence of the nematode parasite in sampled scallops smaller than 100 mm in 2017 and 2018 for the MAB resource area.

Figure 15. Spatial distribution of the prevalence of the nematode parasite in sampled scallops larger than 100 mm in 2017 and 2018 for the MAB resource area.
Appendix F

Results for the 2019 VIMS Industry Cooperative Surveys of the

Mid-Atlantic, Nantucket Lightship Closed Area, Closed Area I, and

Closed Area II Resource Areas

Submitted to:

Sea Scallop Fishing Industry

David B. Rudders, Sally Roman, Erin Mohr, and Kaitlyn Clark

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VIMS Marine Resource Report No. 2019-7

September 19, 2019

The Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) conducted high resolution sea scallop dredge surveys of the entire Mid-Atlantic (MAB), the Nantucket Lightship (NLCA), Closed Area I (CAI), and Closed Area II (CAII) during May–July 2019. These surveys were funded by the Sea Scallop Research Set-Aside Program (RSA). Exploitable biomass for each survey is shown in Table 1 for each spatially explicit SAMS Area (Scallop Area Management Simulator). SAMS Areas represent management relevant spatial subunits of the resource and explicitly account for differences in recruitment, vital rates, and fishing effort in the forward projection of survey information. Maps of SAMS Areas are provided in Figures 1-5. At the time of the surveys, exploitable biomass estimated from the commercial dredge was 18,884 mt or 41.6 million pounds for the Open Elephant Truck (ET-Open) SAMS Area and 18,691 mt or 41.2 million pounds in the Elephant Trunk Flex (ET-Flex) SAMS Area. For open bottom in the Long Island (LI) SAMS Area, exploitable biomass was estimated at 9,437 mt or 20.8 million pounds. In the western NLCA SAMS Area (NLS-West), the exploitable biomass was 1,052 mt or 2.3 million pounds.

The MAB survey was conducted aboard two commercial vessels: *F/V Italian Princess* and *F/V Carolina Capes II* during May 2019. Each vessel completed one survey leg and occupied a total of 450 stations throughout the MAB survey area. The CAI and CAII survey was conducted onboard the *F/V Polaris* in May 2019 and a total of 200 stations were completed. The *F/V Socatean* conducted the NLCA survey during July 2019 and occupied a total of 135 survey stations. All vessels towed a NMFS 8-foot survey dredge along with either a 14-foot Coonamessett Farm Turtle Deflector Dredge (CFTDD) equipped with a 10-inch diamond mesh twine top with a 1.76 hanging ratio (60 meshes, 34 rings) and 8.5 meshes on the side or a 13- or 14-foot New Bedford style commercial dredge. While the comparison of catches between the survey dredge and the commercial dredge are informative on a relative basis, for the purposes of this report, we present only the catch data from the commercial dredges as this information is more applicable to the resource conditions that the industry is likely to encounter. Dredge data were obtained during 15-minute survey tows at 3.8–4.0 kts with a 3:1 scope (Table 2).

Catch data in tabular form is shown in Table 2. The density and number of scallops caught in three size classes ($<$ 35 mm, 35–75 mm, and $>$ 75 mm) for each tow is shown in Figures 6–8. In Figures 9– 11, the shell height frequency distribution from both dredges (survey and commercial) for the different surveys and SAMS Areas are shown.

1

In addition to the catch data that informed our understanding of scallop abundance and biomass, we also monitored meat quality during each survey. This protocol allowed us to determine the prevalence and intensity of a parasitic nematode observed in the scallop meat. Infected scallops typically present with rust colored lesions on the exterior of the adductor muscle, often opposite the sweet meat. Nematode infected scallops were observed only during the MAB survey with a typical number of nematodes observed per scallop meat ranging from 1–11. The spatial distribution of the nematode prevalence (percent of sampled scallops at a given station with at least one lesion) by year is shown in Figure 12. In 2019, the prevalence of nematodes declined compared to previous survey years, with high numbers of infected scallops present in only the ET-Open and ET-Flex SAMS Areas.

Table 1: Exploitable biomass for scallops captured in the commercial dredges during the VIMS/Industry cooperative surveys by survey and SAMS Area during May–August 2019.

Table 2: Catch data for the commercial dredges from the VIMS/Industry cooperative surveys completed during May–August 2019. Nematode prevalence (percentage of scallops sampled at a given station infected with nematodes) is also provided for each station.

Figure 1: Survey domains with station locations for the VIMS/Industry cooperative surveys of the Mid-Atlantic sea scallop resource area, the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area, Closed Area I, and Closed Area II completed during May-July 2019.

Figure 2: SAMS Areas used to calculate biomass estimates for the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Mid-Atlantic sea scallop resource during May 2019.

Figure 3: SAMS Areas used to calculate biomass estimates for the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Nantucket Lightship access area and surrounds resource during July 2019.

Figure 4: SAMS Areas used to calculate biomass estimates for the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Closed Area II access area and open area along the southern flank during June 2019.

Figure 5: SAMS Areas used to calculate biomass estimates for the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Closed Area I access area during June 2019.

Figure 6: Number of scallops <35 mm, 35–75 mm, and >75 mm caught in the NMFS survey dredge during the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Mid-Atlantic sea scallop resource during May 2019.

NL Survey Recruits (35 − 75mm)

Figure 7: Number of scallops <35 mm, 35–75 mm, and >75 mm caught in the NMFS survey dredge during the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Nantucket Lightship access area during July 2019.

Figure 8: Number of scallops <35 mm, 35–75 mm, and >75 mm caught in the NMFS survey dredge during the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Closed Area I and II access areas during June 2019.

Figure 9: Scallop length frequency distributions generated from catch data obtained from both the survey and commercial dredges during the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Mid-Atlantic sea scallop resource area in May 2019 by SAMS Area. Number of scallops (n) measured and mean length by gear are also included.

Figure 10: Scallop length frequency distributions generated from catch data obtained from both the survey and commercial dredges during the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Nantucket Lightship access area and surrounds in July 2019 by SAMS Area. Number of scallops (n) measured and mean length by gear are also included.

Figure 11: Scallop length frequency distributions generated from catch data obtained from both the survey and commercial dredges during the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of Closed Area I (top row) and Closed Area II (middle and bottom rows) in June 2019 by SAMS Area. Number of scallops (n) measured and mean length by gear are also included.

Figure 12: Proportion of scallops infected with nematodes for 2015-2019 in the VIMS/Industry cooperative survey of the Mid-Atlantic sea scallop resource area.

Appendix G

NL West Growth Analysis

VIMS

September 4, 2018

Methods

Shells collected during VIMS 2016-2018 Nantucket Lightship (NL) surveys were aged using the external ring method described in Hart and Chute (2009). Shells were collected at random stations throughout the NL survey domain. Shells from the NL West SAMS area for 2016-2018 were queried from all shells collected from the NL survey. Mean growth parameters (L[∞] and K) were estimated following the methods described in Hart and Chute (2009) using a random intercept model (L[∞] only) due to sample size. Scallops less than 40 mm and shells with only two annual ring measurements were excluded.

Results

Table 1. Mean K and L∞ parameter estimates along with standard errors and sample sizes for the NL_West shell samples.

The estimated L[∞] value of 119.02 is lower than the L[∞] of 143.9 estimated for Georges Bank by Hart and Chute (2009). The mean K value of 0.56 is greater than the 0.427 value reported in Hart and Chute (2009).

Table 2. Number of shells collected by year.

Figure 1. Ford-Walford plot for all years combined with regression lines by year.

Reference

Hart, D. and A.S. Chute. 2009. Estimating von Bertalanffy growth parameters from growth increment data using a linear mixed-effects model, with an application to the sea scallop *Placopecten magellanicus*. ICES Journal of Marine Science 66: 2165-2175.