

MSC SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES CERTIFICATION

Report for Eastern Canada Offshore Scallop Fishery

2nd Surveillance - 'Review of Information'

Certificate Code	F-ACO-0054
CAB Name	Acoura Marine Ltd.
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Client Name	Seafood Producers Association of Nova Scotia (SPANS)
Date	November 2017

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1 General Information

Fishery name	Eastern Canada Offshore Scallop Fishery		
Unit(s) of Assessment (UoA)	Species: Sea Scallop (<i>Placopecten magellanicus</i>) Gear: New Bedford Scallop Rake / Dredge Area: The Eastern Canada Offshore Scallop Fishery (ECOSF) operates within the Canadian EEZ, in the following Scallop Fishing Areas (SFAs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Pierre Bank (SFAs 10, 11, & 12) • The Eastern Scotian Shelf (SFA 25) • Browns and German Bank (SFA 26) • Georges Bank (SFA 27) 		
Date certified	30 th June 2015	Date of expiry	29 th June 2020
Surveillance level and type	Level 1, review of information		
Date of surveillance audit	The review of information commenced on 2 nd October 2017		
Surveillance stage	1st Surveillance		
	2nd Surveillance	x	
	3rd Surveillance		
	4th Surveillance		
	Other (expedited etc)		
Surveillance team	Lead assessor: Paul Knapman Assessor: Julian Addison		
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2 Background

The client group for the Eastern Canada Offshore Scallop Fishery (ECOSF) is a group of 5 Enterprise Allocation (EA) holders:

- Adams and Knickle Limited
- Clearwater Seafoods Limited Partnership
- Comeau's Sea Foods Limited
- LaHave Seafoods Limited
- Ocean Choice International Limited Partnership

The Seafood Producers Association of Nova Scotia (SPANS) co-ordinates the group's MSC certification efforts. The ECOSF fleet consists of 6 wetfish vessels landing iced product and 5 freezer vessels landing frozen product.

One company in the offshore scallop fleet, Mersey Seafoods Limited, has been operating outside of the client group since the initial certification in 2010 and re-assessment in 2015. This remaining "eligible fisher" — has reached an agreement to share the certificate with the group. The company has two vessels: GS Mersey #4031 and Fortune Lady #152320. The vessels operate New Bedford dredges/rakes, i.e. the gear type that was evaluated at the re-assessment of the fishery in 2015.

As a result, Acoura Ltd asked the audit team to undertake a Gap Analysis to evaluate whether the addition of the new 'eligible fisher' resulted in any fundamental change that could potentially change any of the scores that were achieved by the fishery when it was re-assessed. The Gap Analysis is included in Appendix 2 to this report. In summary, it concluded:

Principle 1

There is no change to the scallop stocks being targeted. No rescoring is required.

Principle 2

The vessels operated by Mersey Seafoods Limited are using New Bedford Dredges/Rakes, in the Scallop Fishing Areas (SFAs) and under the same conditions as that specified in the Public Certification Report for the fishery https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/eastern-canada-offshore-scallop/@_@assessments. The addition of two vessels to the UoC is not considered to have a significant consequence to the impact of the fishery on the Principle 2 components. No rescoring is required.

Principle 3

Mersey Seafoods Limited is operating in the same waters and conforming to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada (DFO) management requirements. No rescoring is required.

As a result, Mersey Seafoods Limited, is able to join the certificate without compromising the assessment / certification. Mersey Seafoods has provided a letter confirming their understanding and commitment to the MSC fisheries and chain of custody requirements and this is also included in Appendix 2 of this report. Mersey Seafoods will have access to the MSC certificate from the publication date of this audit report.

2.1 Stock Assessment and Management of the Fishery

The fishery is managed through a combination of fishing seasons, closed areas, annual TACs and a 'meat count' regulation (which specifies a maximum number of scallop meats

per 500 g; this is intended to protect small scallops, and is reviewed annually to account for differences in growth rates and yield condition, dependent primarily upon habitat, temperature and food availability) for each of the Banks.

The ECOSF is managed through the use of geographical zones called Scallop Fishing Areas (SFAs) ranging from north east Newfoundland to Georges Bank off south west Nova Scotia (Figure 1).

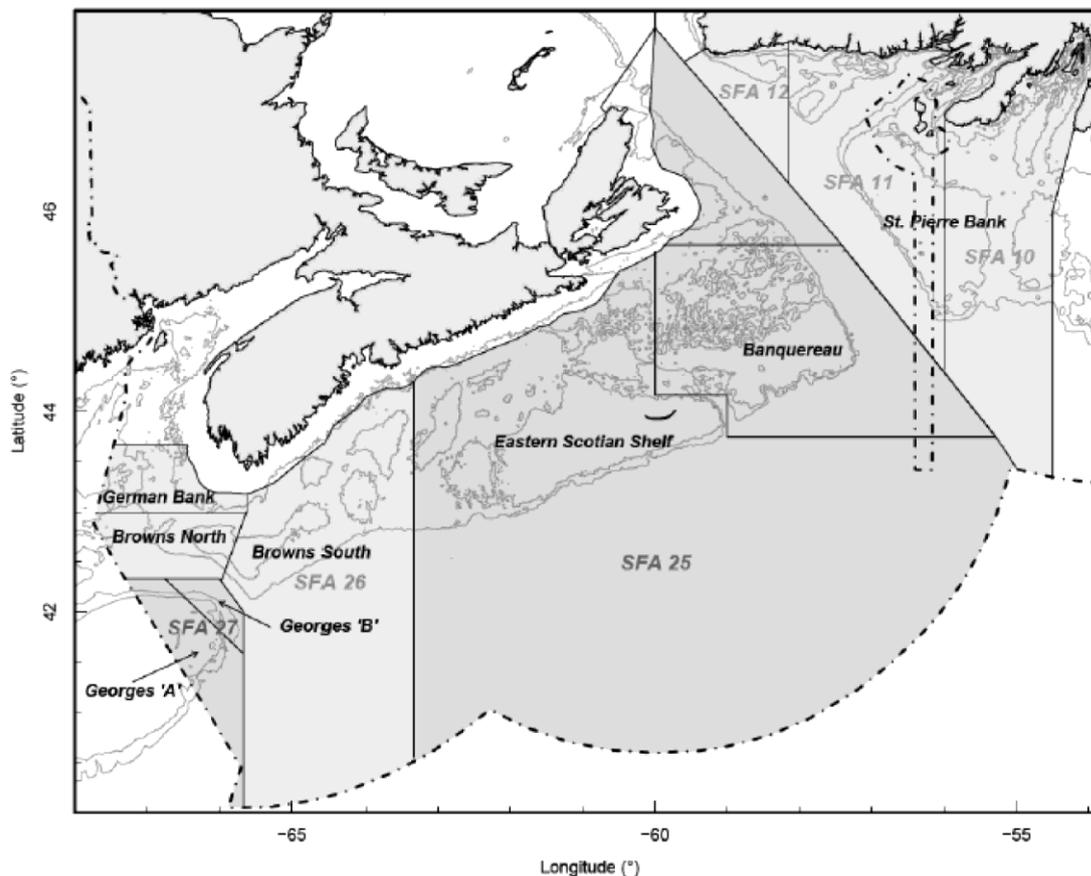


Figure 1. Scallop Fishing Areas and Banks (DFO 2015a)

Fishing in the ECOSF is principally focused on the Georges Bank (zones 'a' and 'b'), but Browns Bank and German Bank also contribute significant quantities of scallops in most years, while the Eastern Scotian Shelf, Banquereau and St. Pierre Banks are typically fished infrequently, although fishing can occur in years following pulse recruitment events.

With the exception of the Banquereau and St. Pierre Banks, the offshore scallop beds are surveyed annually by DFO with collaboration and funding from the offshore scallop fishing industry. Banquereau and St. Pierre are considered to be marginal fisheries subject to sporadic pulse recruitment. As a result, they are only exploited periodically and are surveyed less frequently than the other grounds. During this audit period, the results of a survey of the St. Pierre Bank were published and are reported below.

Two annual surveys are funded by the fishing industry, in May and August; these gather information to assess the abundance and composition of the scallop stocks.

For Georges Bank 'a', the main survey is carried out every August, and is augmented by monitoring some stations in May. The surveys of Georges Bank cover Zones 'a' and 'b', but the assessment is only conducted using data from Zone 'a'.

The annual dredge survey on Browns Bank generally takes place in May or June. The surveys are used to provide in-season advice, and to identify areas where 2-year-old seed scallops are concentrated so that these can be protected until they have grown to a commercially viable size.

2.1.1 Stock Status Update of Georges Bank

The following summarises the DFO stock status update of the Georges Bank scallop stock and the advice provided for the management of the 2017 fishery (DFO, 2017a). The 2016 TAC was 3,000 tonnes (t) for zone ‘a’ and 400 t for zone ‘b’. With quota carry forward, the adjusted 2016 TAC for zone ‘a’ was 3,075 t. Total reported landings in 2016 were 3,054 t for zone ‘a’ and 394 t for zone ‘b’ (Figure 2). Based upon preliminary analysis of the 2016 fishery data and the annual stock survey data, an interim TAC of 3,000 t was set in December 2016 for the 2017 Georges Bank zone ‘a’ fishery and 200 t for zone ‘b’.

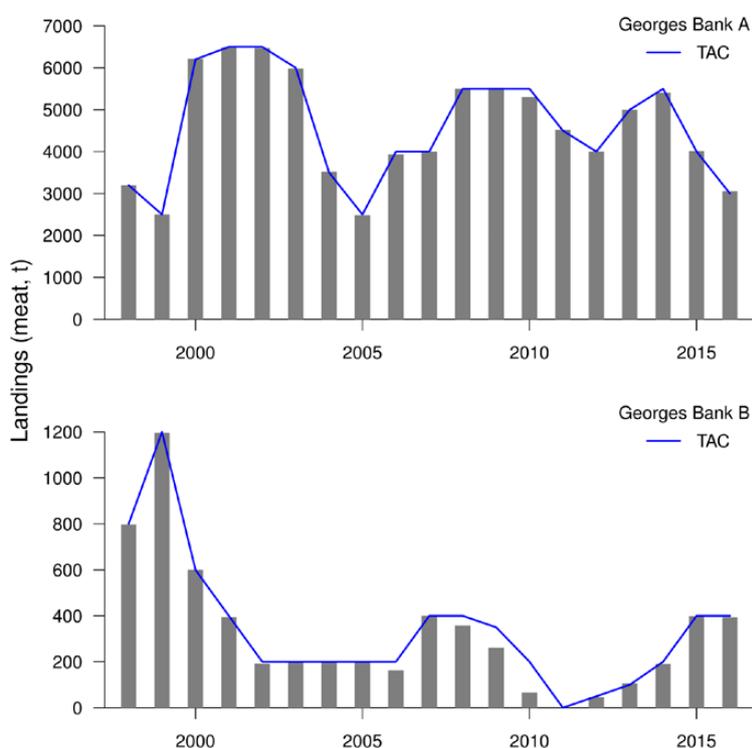


Figure 2. Landings of scallop meats (tonnes) from Georges Bank ‘a’ and ‘b’ from 1998 to 2016. Solid blue line represents TAC in tonnes. Prior to 1998, landings from Georges Bank ‘a’ and ‘b’ were combined (DFO, 2017a)

The median fully-recruited biomass is estimated to be 20,591 t in 2016. This is an increase from the 2015 estimate (18,800 t), and above the long-term median of 15,913 t. The median recruit biomass is estimated to be 6,988 t in 2016, a decrease from the 2015 estimate (8,193 t), but well above the long-term median biomass of 3,228 t (see Figure 3).

Georges Bank ‘a’ reference points are based on 30% and 80% of the mean biomass from 1986 to 2009. The lower reference point (LRP) is 7,137 t and the Upper Stock Reference (USR) is 13,284 t. The probability that the 2016 biomass is currently above the USR and in the healthy zone is above 0.99. The model forecasted median fully-recruited biomass for 2017 is 23,752 t. This forecast assumes:

- a catch of 3,000 t (the interim TAC);
- the condition in 2017 will be unchanged from 2016, (16.1 g/dm³); and,
- that natural mortality in 2017 will be unchanged from 2016 (0.24).

This represents an estimated 14% increase in fully-recruited biomass from 2016 to 2017.

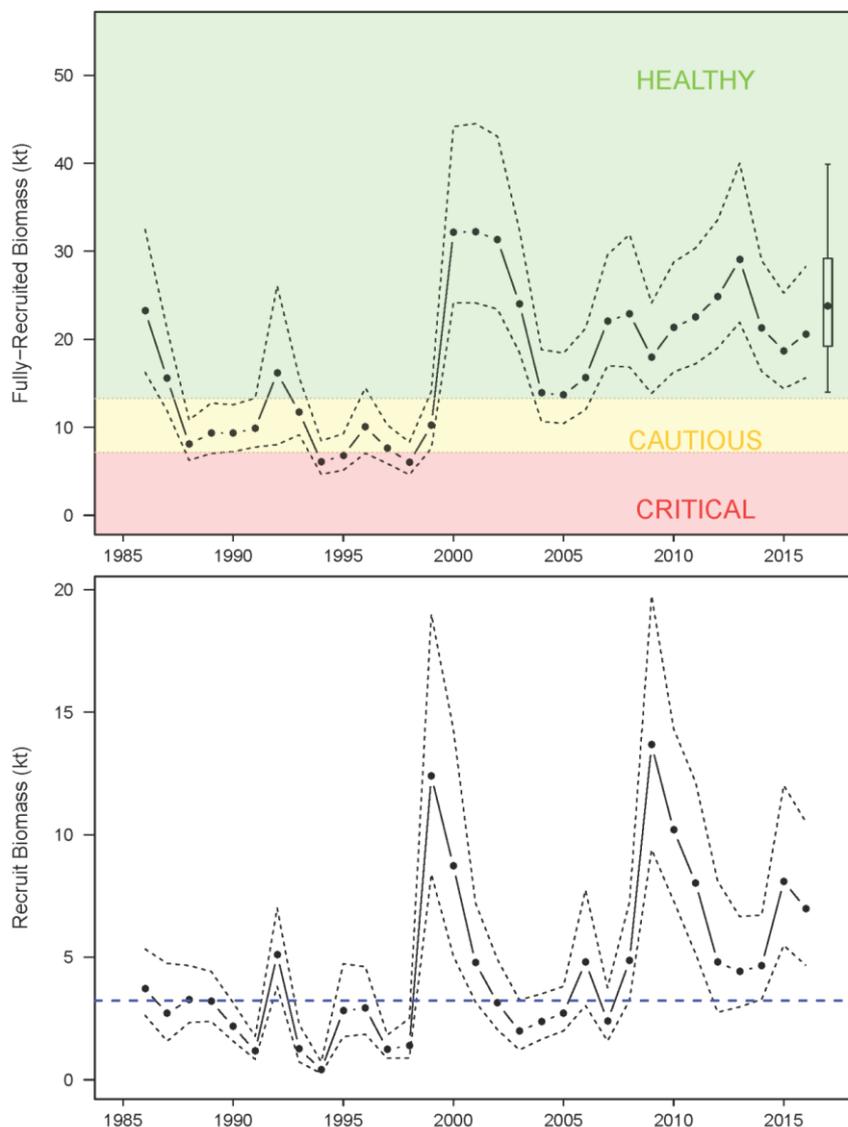


Figure 3. Biomass estimates for fully-recruited (top panel) and recruit (lower panel) scallops from the stock assessment model fit to the Georges Bank 'a' survey and commercial data. Dashed lines are the upper and lower 95% credible limits on the estimates. Coloured zones (from top to bottom) represent the healthy (green), cautious (yellow) and critical (red) zones (reference points described in text). The blue horizontal dashed line in the lower panel represents the long-term median recruit biomass. The forecasted fully-recruited biomass for 2017, assuming a catch of 3,000 t, is displayed as a box plot with median (●), 50% credible limits (box) and 80% credible limits (whiskers). (DFO, 2017a)

2.1.2 Stock Status Update of Browns Bank

The following summarises the DFO stock status update of the Browns Bank North scallop stock and the advice provided for the management of the 2017 fishery (DFO, 2017b).

The 2016 TAC was 500 t for Browns Bank North and total reported landings were 508 t (Figure 4). Based upon preliminary analysis of the 2016 fishery data and the annual stock survey data, an interim TAC of 750 t was set in December 2016 for the 2017 Browns Bank

North fishery.

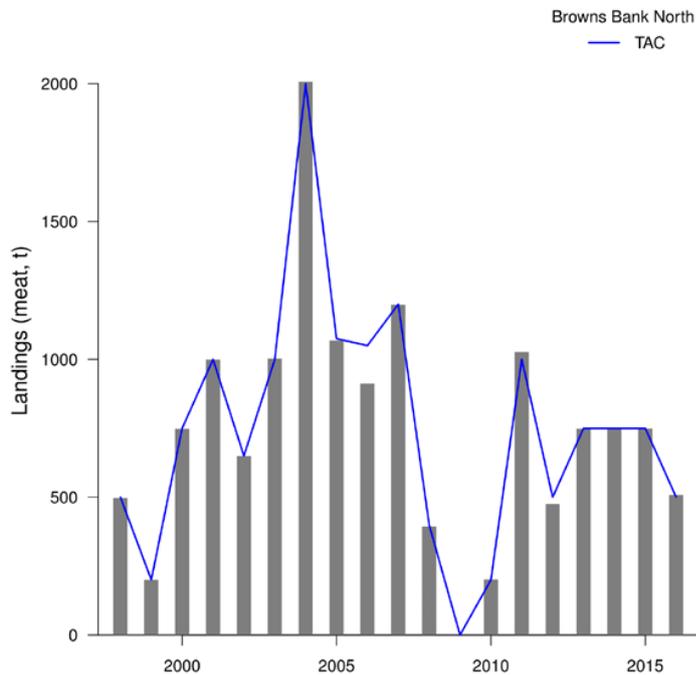


Figure 4. Landings of scallop meats in tonnes from Browns Bank North from 1998 to 2016. The solid line represents the TAC in tonnes. Prior to 1998, landings from Browns Bank North were combined with Browns Bank South. (DFO, 2017b)

The median fully-recruited biomass, estimated to be 4,708 t in 2016, is similar to the 2015 estimate (4,684 t), and remains below the long-term median biomass of 5,709 t. The median recruit biomass, estimated to be 785 t in 2016, is similar to the 2015 estimate (782 t), and above the long-term median recruit biomass of 584 t (see Figure 5).

The model's forecasted fully-recruited biomass for 2017 is 4,295 t; this forecast assumes:

- a catch of 750 t (the interim TAC),
- that condition in 2017 remains unchanged from 2016 (12.4 g/dm³), and
- that natural mortality in 2017 will be unchanged from 2016 (0.19).

This represents an estimated 9% decrease in fully-recruited biomass from 2016 to 2017. Reference points have been proposed for the fishery (DFO, 2012) but have not yet been adopted.

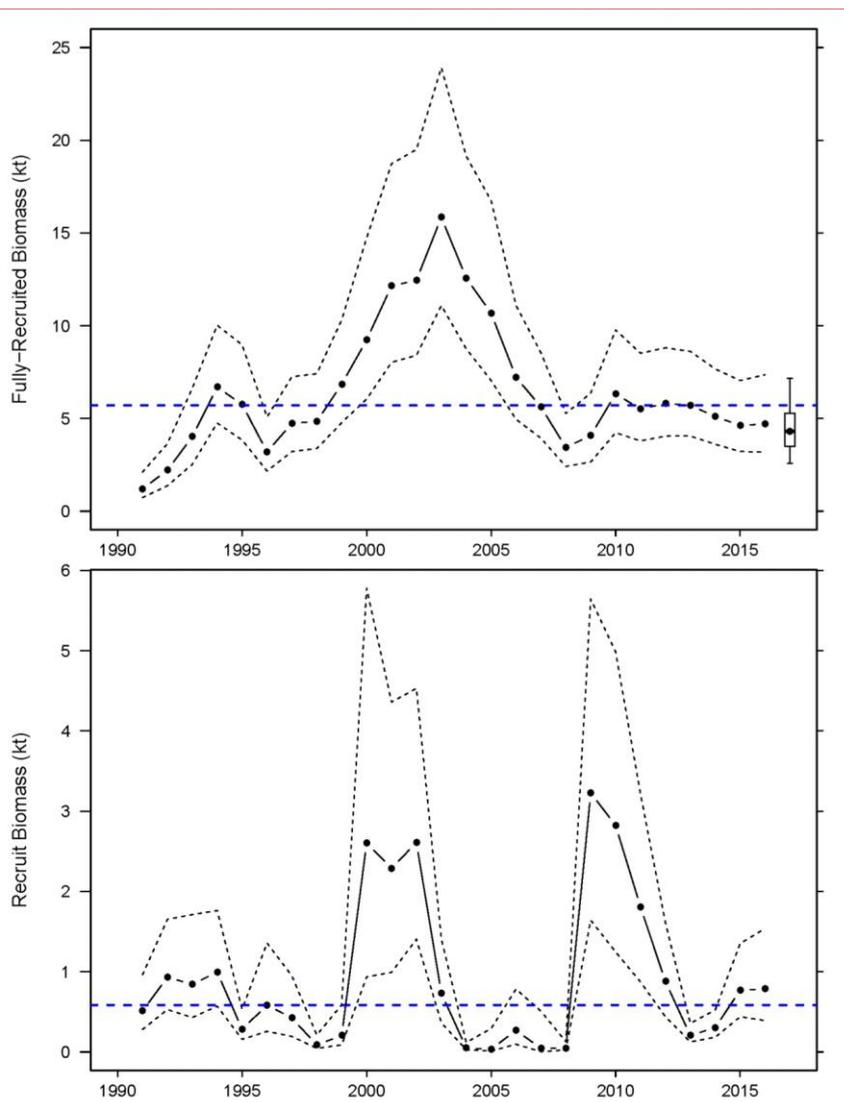


Figure 5. Biomass estimates for fully-recruited (top panel) and recruit (lower panel) scallops from the stock assessment model fit to the Browns Bank North survey and commercial data. Dashed lines are the upper and lower 95% credible limits on the estimates. The blue horizontal dashed line represents the long-term median biomass. The forecasted fully-recruited biomass for 2017, assuming a catch of 750 t, is displayed as a box plot with median (●), 50% credible limits (box) and 80% credible limits (whiskers) (DFO, 2017b).

2.1.3 Assessment of St. Pierre Bank (Subdivision 3PS)

In 2006, fishing areas were assigned based on three known fishing beds on the St. Pierre Bank (see Figure 6). Prior to 2015/16 (as reported in last year’s audit report) the offshore fleet had not fished on the St. Pierre Bank and fishing had only been taking place on the North bed by Newfoundland inshore vessels.

The following summarises the findings of an assessment of the scallop stock on the St. Pierre Bank which was published in 2016 (DFO, 2016a). Prior to this, the last assessment was conducted in 2010.

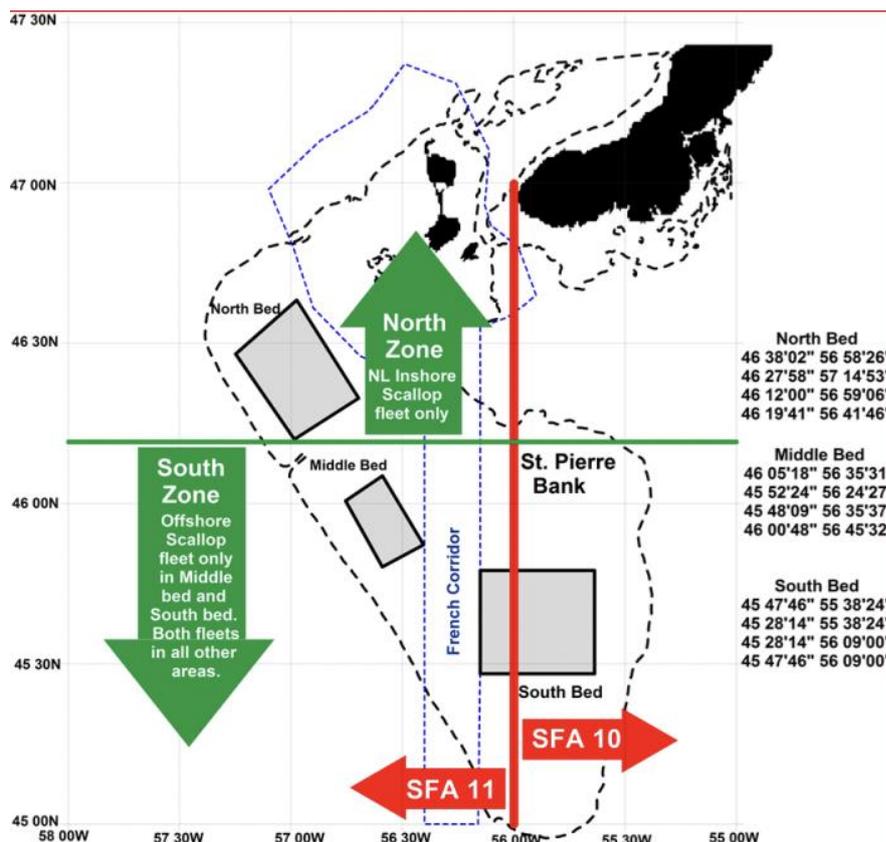


Figure 6. St. Pierre Bank showing the three main Sea Scallop beds, the inshore/offshore fleet separation zones and Scallop Fishing Areas (SFA) 10 and 11. (DFO, 2016a)

A Canadian research vessel survey for Sea Scallops on the St. Pierre Bank (Subdivision 3Ps) was completed in September 2015. A Regional Peer Review meeting was held February 22, 2016 in St. John’s, Newfoundland to assess the status of the Sea Scallop on the St. Pierre Bank. Participants included DFO scientists and fisheries managers, and representatives from industry and the Provincial and Nunatsiavut governments.

The survey resulted in a minimum dredgeable biomass (MDB) estimate of 5,912 t which is a decrease from the 2010 estimate of 7,500 t. The area with the biggest reduction was the North bed where it decreased by 56%. The biomass increased slightly from 329 t to 516 t in the Middle bed and from 3,024 t to 3,575 t in the South bed.

Recruitment is measured by the abundance of scallop < 90 mm, which has been low since 2004. Future recruitment prospects are unknown.

The natural mortality index (computed from the ratio of empty scallop shells or “cluckers” to live scallops) increased from 0.09 in 2010 to 0.13 in 2015. This low level is associated with low biomass of predatory sea stars.

2.1.4 Assessment Update for all Banks

The following tables summarise information provided in a Powerpoint presentation provided to the Offshore Scallop Advisory Committee (OSAC) by DFO in December 2016 (DFO, 2016b).

Table 1. DFO scientific advice to OSAC 2016 (DFO, 2016b)

	Georges Bank “a”	Georges Bank “b”	Browns Bank North	Browns Bank South
When last surveyed	2016	2016	2016	2016
Pre-recruits	At or above long term median	Well above long term median	Below long term median	Below long term median
Fully recruited and recruits	At or above long term median	Below long term median	Above long term median	Above long term median
Shell height (Fully recruited)	SH ₂₀₁₆ = 108.6 mm	SH ₂₀₁₆ = 105.8 mm	SH ₂₀₁₆ = 114.9 mm	SH ₂₀₁₆ = 107 mm
Condition factor	CF ₂₀₁₅ = 16.1 g/dm ³ Above long term median	CF ₂₀₁₅ = 11.0 g/dm ³ Near long term median	CF ₂₀₁₆ = 12.4 g/dm ³ Below long term median	CF ₂₀₁₆ = 6.1 g/dm ³ Below long term median

	German Bank	Middle Bank (Eastern Scotian Shelf)	Sable Bank (Eastern Scotian Shelf)	Banquereau	
				Sea scallop	Icelandic scallop
When last surveyed	2015	2014	2016	2016	
Pre-recruits	Near long term median	Near long term median	Localised high abundance	Icelandic more widespread. Sea scallop in NW corner of bed. Icelandic has a mix of size classes. Sea scallop mainly >90 mm	
Fully recruited and recruits	Near long term median	Near long term median	Below long term median		
Shell height (Fully recruited)			SH ₂₀₁₆ = 114.5 mm		
Condition factor	CF ₂₀₁₆ = 11.3 g/dm ³ Near long term median	CF ₂₀₁₆ = 16.8 g/dm ³ Above long term median	CF ₂₀₁₆ = 12.1 g/dm ³ Below long term median		

Table 2 shows the interim TACs that were proposed by OSAC and, on review by DFO management, confirmed for the 2017 season.

Table 2. 2017 Interim TACs for the offshore fleet (OSAC, 2016)

Bank	TAC
Georges Bank (a)	3,000
Georges Bank (b)	200
Browns Bank (North)	750
Browns Bank (South)	50
German Bank	75
Eastern Scotian Shelf	100
Banquereau Bank	100
St. Pierre Bank	90

No changes in meat counts or season dates were considered necessary by OSAC. DFO confirmed this when setting the TACs.

Table 3. Summary Tables for TAC and Catch Data

NB. TAC figures are meat weights. The conversion factor from meat weights to green weight is 8.3

TAC St Pierre Bank (SFAs 10, 11, & 12)	Year	2016	Amount*	90 t (747 t green weight)
UoA share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	90 t
UoC share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	83.7 t (694.71 t green weight)
Total green weight catch by UoA	Year	2016	Amount	655.7 t (79 t meat weight)
	Year (most recent)	2015	Amount	0 t
	Year (2nd most recent)	2014	Amount	0 t

*This includes the TAC for the inshore fishery that fishes the North Bed annually

TAC Banquereau	Year	2016	Amount	50 t (415 t green weight)
UoA share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	50 t (415 t green weight)
UoC share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	47 t (390 t green weight)
Total green weight catch by UoA	Year	2016	Amount	357 t (43 t meat weight)
	Year (most recent)	2015	Amount	83 t (10 t meat weight)
	Year (2nd most recent)	2014	Amount	0 t

TAC Eastern Scotian Shelf (SFA 25)	Year	2016	Amount	150 t (1,245 t green weight)
UoA share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	150 t (1,245 t green weight)
UoC share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	139.5 t (1,158 t green weight)
Total green weight catch by UoA	Year	2016	Amount	987.7 t (119 t meat weight)
	Year (most recent)	2015	Amount	468.1 t (56 t meat weight)
	Year (2nd most recent)	2014	Amount	334.5 t (40 t meat weight)

TAC Browns and German Bank (SFA 26)	Year	2016	Amount	600 t (4,980 t green weight)
UoA share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	600 t (4,980 t green weight)
UoC share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	558 t (4,631.4 green weight)
Total green weight catch by UoA	Year	2016	Amount	5,004.9 t (603 t meat weight)
	Year (most recent)	2015	Amount	6,899.8 t (831 t meat weight)
	Year (2nd most recent)	2014	Amount	7,319.8 t (882 t meat weight)

TAC Georges Bank (SFA 27)	Year	2016	Amount	3,400 t (28,220 t green weight)
UoA share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	3,400 t (28,220 t green weight)
UoC share of TAC	Year	2016	Amount	3,162 t (26,244.6 t green weight)
Total green weight catch by UoA	Year	2016	Amount	28,610.1 t (3,447 t meat weight)
	Year (most recent)	2015	Amount	36,644.5 t (4,415 t meat weight)
	Year (2nd most recent)	2014	Amount	46,456.8 t (5,597 t meat weight)

2.2 Audit Team Comments / Observations

All interim 2017 TACs and management measures that were recommended by industry and set by DFO are consistent with the science advice and with the annual TAC setting process.

2.3 Other Recent Changes in the Fishery

Quota carry over

The annual carry over of a maximum of 5% of unused annual quota remains in place for Georges Bank 'a'.

Marine Protected Areas

DFO have recently announced the designation of the Western/Emerald Banks Conservation Area (Figure 7) and, in so doing, have prohibited all commercial and recreational fisheries using bottom contact gear and/or fishing gear known to interact with groundfish. This includes the offshore scallop fishery. The designation is intended to protect groundfish species, in particular NAFO Division 4VW haddock, by reducing anthropogenic disturbance of benthic habitat that supports juveniles and adult haddock and other groundfish species.

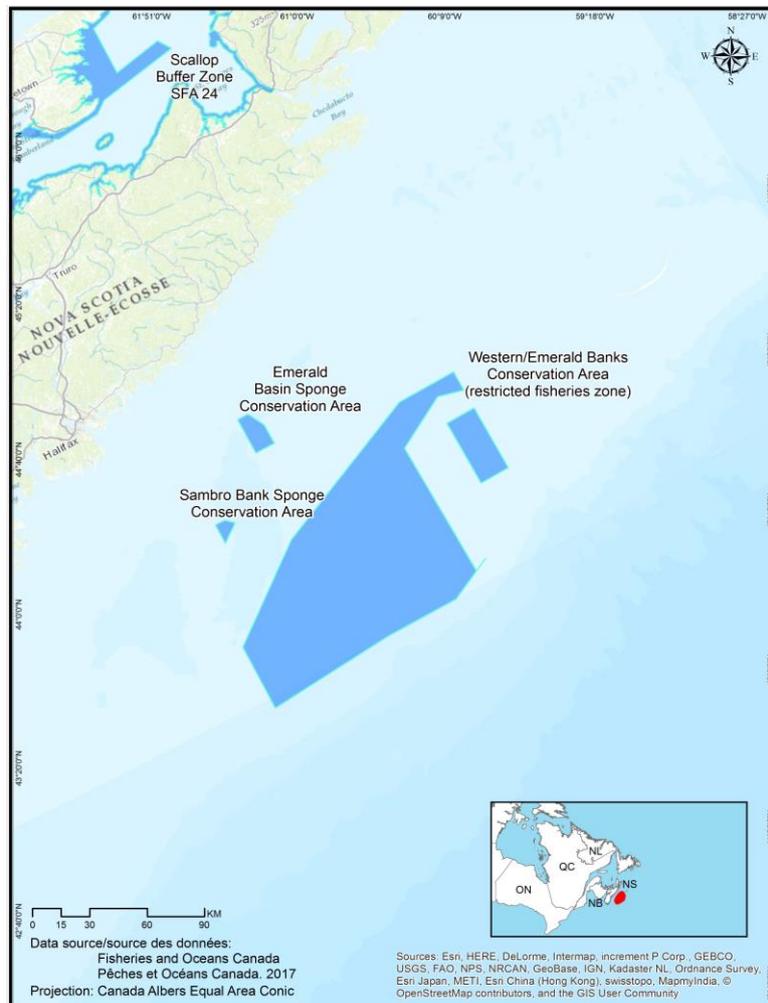


Figure 7. Western/Emerald Banks Conservation Area (restricted fisheries zone)
(source: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/images/oeabcm-amcepz/refuges/Western-Emerald-Banks-E.jpg>)

Staff changes

New staff appointees within DFO:

- Regional Director General - Mary-Ellen Valkenier;
- Director General - Doug Wentzell;
- Senior Fisheries Management Officer - Alan Reeves;
- Head, Scallop and Benthic Habitat Unit - Jessica Sameoto.

These changes are not expected to result in a change in focus or approach to the management of the scallop fishery according to the client representative (pers. comm. R. Stirling, 2017).

Interaction between the inshore and offshore scallop fleets on the St Pierre Bank

As reported in last year's audit, there were complaints from an inshore scallop fisherman about the offshore fleet operating on the Middle and South beds of the St. Pierre Bank. This was investigated and it was confirmed that the offshore vessels were legitimately operating in this area. As a follow up, this year's audit team were able to confirm with the client and DFO that no further instances were reported during this audit period.

The audit team were provided with a letter from the Regional Director General for the Maritimes, to the client representative (see Appendix 1) confirming that, other than the designation of the Western/Emerald Banks Conservation Area, data collection, governance, stock assessments and consultative processes remain the same and there are no changes to the regulatory compliance regime.

2.4 Inseparable or Practically Inseparable (IPI) Species

Iceland scallop (*Chlamys islandica*) is distinguishable from sea scallop in the shell, but it is very difficult to sort small quantities of Iceland scallops from catches made up predominantly of sea scallops. At the level of the fishery, the meats of the two species are indistinguishable once shucking has occurred. During the re-assessment of the fishery, Iceland scallop was identified as an IPI stock owing to its presence in catches, particularly on the St. Pierre and Banquereau Banks but, because the total harvest of Iceland scallop was less than 2% of the ECOSF catch, an exemption to the IPI requirements was accepted by MSC allowing Iceland Scallops to be eligible to enter into MSC chains of custody.

MSC Certification Requirements (v2.0) require the review and reporting of the continuing performance of eligible IPI species at surveillance audits.

In this instance, fishing by ECOSF has taken place on the St Pierre Bank (SFA 10, 11, 12) and Banquereau (Part of SFA 25) within the audit period. The total quantity of all scallop (Iceland and sea scallop) that was reported from the St Pierre and Banquereau Banks by the offshore fleet was 79 t and 43 t (meat weight), respectively.

With respect to the St. Pierre Bank, the recent stock assessment (DFO, 2016a) shows that the Iceland and sea scallop distributions overlap to varying degrees on the 3 component scallop beds that make up the St Pierre Bank. There is a complete overlap in the Middle bed, and a large area in the southern portion of the South bed, with a sandy substrate, is inhabited only by sea scallops. The North bed is not open to the offshore scallop fleet. The DFO presentation to OSAC on 2017 interim stock status (DFO, 2016b) shows the 2016 spatial distribution of catch concentrated only on the sandy substrate areas on the South bed where only sea scallop is found. Therefore, it is considered very likely that the catch was mainly sea scallop.

With respect to Banquereau, the DFO presentation to OSAC on 2017 interim stock status (DFO, 2016b) confirms that Iceland scallops are widespread across the bed, whereas, sea scallops are concentrated in the North West corner of the bed. The 2016 spatial distribution of the catch shows effort was concentrated in this North West corner. It is therefore very likely that the catch was mainly sea scallop.

With the distribution of Iceland scallop being limited to a small number of Banks where the fleets only periodically fish (i.e. there can be years between fishing) and, with the fleets ability to focus their effort in areas where sea scallop are concentrated, the catch of Iceland scallops is likely very small and, as a percentage of the total landings of scallop from the UoC will be <2%. Therefore, the exemption to the IPI requirements remain valid.

3 Assessment Process

This is the second audit since the re-assessment and certification of the fishery (<https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/north-west-atlantic/Eastern-Canada-offshore-scallop/reassessment-downloads>).

As of 1st April 2015, Conformity Assessment Bodies (CAB) are required to use the surveillance process set out in the MSC Certification Requirements (v2.0). In instances where fisheries achieve the minimum surveillance level (Level 1), i.e. no conditions of certification, the fishery is eligible for a “review of information” audit.

A “*Review of information*” audit involves, seeking the views of the client about:

1. Changes to the fishery management and regulation;
2. Any developments or changes within the fishery which impact traceability and the ability to segregate MSC from non-MSC products; and
3. Any other significant changes in the fishery.

If the information base for PI scores has changed the CAB is required to:

- a. Report and record what has changed in the information base;
- b. Re-score the PI;
- c. If the new score is less than 80, define the condition(s) and require the client to develop a Client Action Plan for the new condition(s).

In a review of information audit a CAB is required to actively consult with the client, and stakeholders are invited to provide written submissions via an announcement of the audit posted on the MSC website. A notice of the review of information audit was posted on the MSC website on 1st September 2017 (<https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/eastern-canada-offshore-scallop/@@assessments>).

This review of information is presented using the required MSC template.

4 Results and Conclusion

A new company – Mersey Seafoods Limited – has joined the client group as an “eligible fisher”. The company has two vessels that have operated in the scallop fishery for a number of years. A Gap Analysis has confirmed that their inclusion within the client group does not necessitate the need to re-evaluate any of the performance indicators against which the fishery was re-assessed and certified in 2015. Mersey Seafoods Limited have confirmed their understanding for the MSC fisheries and chain of custody requirements and committed to abide by them. At this moment in time the client has confirmed they do not intend to use the MSC logo or claim that their product is from a MSC certified fishery and so are not seeking MSC chain of custody certification.

No other developments or changes took place within the fishery that would impact traceability or the ability to segregate MSC from non-MSC products.

In 2016, the fishery continued to focus fishing effort on Georges and Browns Bank with some fishing taking place on the Eastern Scotian Shelf and the St. Pierre Bank. The fishery operated within specified stock management levels.

DFO have designated the Western/Emerald Conservation Area to protect groundfish and groundfish habitat. Ground-contacting fishing gear, including scallop dredging, is prohibited in this area.

There have been some DFO staff changes but it is considered that the transition of new staff has been successful and has not compromised the science or management of the fishery.

No violations were reported.

Iceland scallop is an IPI species in this fishery. There are two Banks - St. Pierre and Banquereau – where they are more common. Fishing took place on both Banks in this audit period and catch data confirms that Iceland scallop continues to make up less than 2% of the total catch of the certified fleet and so continues to meet the IPI exemption requirements.

The audit team concludes that the fishery should remain certified as meeting the MSC standard for a well-managed and sustainable fishery.

References

DFO. 2012. Reference Points Consistent with the Precautionary Approach for a Variety of Stocks in the Maritimes Region. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep. 2012/035.

DFO 2015a. Assessment update of Browns Bank North Scallops (*Placopecten magellanicus*). DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Resp. 2015/024

DFO. 2016a. An Assessment of Sea Scallop on the St. Pierre Bank (Subdivision 3Ps). DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep. 2016/032.

DFO 2016b. Power point presentation on 2017 interim stock status.

DFO. 2017a. Stock Status Update of Georges Bank Scallops (*Placopecten magellanicus*). DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Resp. 2017/033.

DFO. 2017b. Stock Status Update of Browns Bank North Scallops (*Placopecten magellanicus*). DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Resp. 2017/032.

OSAC 2016 Meeting Minutes

Appendix 1. Stakeholder submissions

1 Challenger Drive
P.O. Box 1006
Dartmouth, NS
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JUN 29 2017

Mr. Roger Stirling
Seafood Producers Association of Nova Scotia
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Dear Mr. Stirling:

Re: Eastern Canada Offshore Scallop Fishery Marine Stewardship Council
Re-certification 2nd Annual Surveillance Audit

I am writing in relation to your upcoming annual surveillance audit of the Eastern Canada Offshore Scallop fishery for Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Certification, which will likely be held in July 2017. The audit will examine if there have been any significant changes to the fishery or the way it has been managed over the past year. An update on DFO activities related to this fishery since the first audit (August 2016) is provided below.

In relation to the management of the fishery, the offshore scallop industry has worked collaboratively with DFO to define boundaries for a scallop area of access within the Western/Emerald Banks Conservation Area. DFO anticipates the remaining portion of the Conservation Area will qualify as an Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measure contributing to Canada's Marine Conservation Target, to protect 5% of Canada's marine and coastal areas by 2017. In terms of data collection, governance arrangements, regulatory compliance regime, stock assessments, and compliance, there are no other material changes to report at this time.

To conclude, the only material change since the first audit is the anticipated closure of the remaining portion of the Western/Emerald Banks Conservation Area. Should you require further assistance, please contact the A/Eco-certification Coordinator, Sheena Shen, at 902-426-6384. I wish you all the best with your upcoming surveillance audit.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 2. Gap Analysis

Inclusion of an eligible fisher to the Unit of Certification of the Eastern Canada Offshore Scallop Fishery

Background

Acoura has been requested to modify the Unit of Certification (UoC) for the Eastern Canada Offshore Scallop Fishery to include another eligible fisher within a Certificate Sharing agreement.

The client group for the Eastern Canada Offshore Scallop Fishery (ECOSF) is a group of 5 Enterprise Allocation (EA) holders:

- Adams and Knickle Limited
- Clearwater Seafoods Limited Partnership
- Comeau's Sea Foods Limited
- LaHave Seafoods Limited
- Ocean Choice International Limited Partnership

The ECOSF fleet consists of 6 wetfish vessels landing iced product and 5 freezer vessels landing frozen product.

The Seafood Producers Association of Nova Scotia (SPANS) co-ordinates the group's MSC certification efforts.

The five group members have reached an agreement with Mersey Seafoods Limited to share the MSC certification of the fishery.

Mersey Seafoods Limited operate two vessels: GS Mersey #4031 and Fortune Lady #152320. The vessels operate New Bedford dredges/rakes, i.e. the gear type that was evaluated at the re-assessment of the fishery in 2015. The vessels land into Liverpool, Nova Scotia.

A letter from Mersey Seafoods limited is included below confirming their commitment to abide by MSC certification requirements and conditions of certification and also their understanding of their MSC Chain of Custody obligations.

Traceability

The fisheries certification ends at the point of landing. If Mersey Seafoods Limited intend to use the MSC logo or claim their product is from a MSC certified fishery they will be subject to MSC Chain of Custody requirements and require a MSC Chain of Custody certificate.

GAP analysis

A GAP analysis was undertaken by Paul Knapman and Julian Addison in association with their second annual review of information audit of the fishery. The analysis confirmed that no rescoring is required in order to add Mersey Seafoods Limited to the certificate. The analysis is presented on the following page.

Conclusion

Acoura grant the modification as requested and the certificate for the fishery is modified to reflect this change. Mersey Seafoods Limited will have access to the certificate from the publication date of this announcement.

Gap Analysis for Inclusion of an Eligible Fisher to the Unit of Certification of Eastern Canada Offshore Scallop Fishery

The following Gap Analysis identifies any areas of the scoring of the fishery that may be impacted by an addition of an eligible fisher to the fishery certificate. In summary the analysis concludes:

Principle 1

There is no change to the scallop stocks being targeted. No rescoring is required.

Principle 2

The vessels operated by Mersey Seafoods Limited are using New Bedford Dredges/Rakes, in the Scallop Fishing Areas (SFAs) and under the same conditions as that specified in the Public Certification Report for the fishery <https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/eastern-canada-offshore-scallop/@@assessments>. The addition of two vessels to the UoC is not considered to have a significant consequence to the impact of the fishery on the Principle 2 components. No rescoring is required.

Principle 3

Mersey Seafoods Limited are operating in the same waters and conforming to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada (DFO) management requirements. No rescoring is required.

Principle	Component	PI	Performance Indicator	To be evaluated	Rationale/ Key points
1	Outcome	1.1.1	Stock status	No	With the exception of the Banquereau and St. Pierre Banks, the offshore scallop beds are surveyed annually. All interim 2016 and 2017 TACs and management measures that were recommended by industry and set by DFO are consistent with the science advice and with the annual TAC setting process
		1.1.2	Reference points	No	As above
		1.1.3	Stock rebuilding	No	As above
	Management	1.2.1	Harvest Strategy	No	As above
		1.2.2	Harvest control rules and tools	No	As above
		1.2.3	Information and monitoring	No	As above
		1.2.4	Assessment of stock status	No	As above
2	Retained species	2.1.1	Outcome	Yes	There are no regulations on scallop dredge dimensions in the fishery, but vessels typically employ two dredges (sometimes three), each varying in width from 4m to 6.1m

Principle	Component	PI	Performance Indicator	To be evaluated	Rationale/ Key points
					The client group confirmed that the new company uses New Bedford dredges/rakes within these dimensions. Catches of retained species by the new vessels are likely to be identical to those by the vessels currently in the UoC, and therefore the score for the outcome PI will not be affected.
		2.1.2	Management	Yes	The new vessels use the same gear as those vessels in the UoC, so the score for the management PI should not be affected.
		2.1.3	Information	Yes	The new vessels use the same gear as those vessels in the UoC, so the score for the information PI should not be affected.
	Bycatch species	2.2.1	Outcome	Yes	There are no regulations on scallop dredge dimensions in the fishery, but vessels typically employ two dredges (sometimes three), each varying in width from 4m to 6.1m The client group confirmed that the new company uses New Bedford dredges/rakes within these dimensions. Catches of bycatch species by the new vessels are likely to be identical to those by the vessels currently in the UoC, and therefore the score for the outcome PI will not be affected.
		2.2.2	Management	Yes	The new vessels use the same gear as those vessels in the UoC, so the score for the management PI should not be affected.
		2.2.3	Information	Yes	The new vessels use the same gear as those vessels in the UoC, so the score for the information PI should not be affected.
	ETP species	2.3.1	Outcome	Yes	There are no regulations on scallop dredge dimensions in the fishery, but vessels typically employ two dredges (sometimes three), each varying in width from 4m to 6.1m The client group confirmed that the new company uses New Bedford dredges/rakes within these dimensions. Catches of ETP species by the new vessels are likely to be identical to those by the vessels currently in the UoC, and therefore the score for the outcome PI will not be affected.
		2.3.2	Management	Yes	The new vessels use the same gear as those vessels in the UoC, so the score for the management PI should

Principle	Component	PI	Performance Indicator	To be evaluated	Rationale/ Key points	
	Habitats				not be affected.	
		2.3.3	Information	Yes	The new vessels use the same gear as those vessels in the UoC, so the score for the information PI should not be affected.	
		2.4.1	Outcome	Yes	There are no regulations on scallop dredge dimensions in the fishery, but vessels typically employ two dredges (sometimes three), each varying in width from 4m to 6.1m The client group confirmed that the new company uses New Bedford dredges/rakes within these dimensions, and therefore the scores for the 2.4 Habitat PIs should not be affected. Two additional vessels joining the client group are not considered likely to have a significant impact on the habitat component of the fishery.	
		2.4.2	Management	Yes	As above	
		2.4.3	Information	Yes	As above	
	Ecosystem	2.5.1	Outcome	Yes	There are no regulations on scallop dredge dimensions in the fishery, but vessels typically employ two dredges (sometimes three), each varying in width from 4m to 6.1m The client group confirmed that the new company uses New Bedford dredges/rakes within these dimensions, and therefore the scores for the 2.5 Ecosystem PIs should not be affected.	
		2.5.2	Management	Yes	As above	
		2.5.3	Information	Yes	As above	
	3	Governance & policy	3.1.1	Legal and customary framework	No	Fishing areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Pierre Bank (SFA 10, 11, 12); • Eastern Scotian Shelf (SFA 25); • Browns & German Bank (SFA 26); • Georges Bank (SFA 27), Have all been assessed under Principle 3 and include all eligible fishers.
			3.1.2	Consultation, roles and responsibilities	No	As above

Principle	Component	PI	Performance Indicator	To be evaluated	Rationale/ Key points
		3.1.3	Long term objectives	No	As above
		3.1.4	Incentives for sustainable fishing	No	As above
	Fishery specific management system	3.2.1	Fishery specific objectives	No	As above
		3.2.2	Decision making processes	No	As above
		3.2.3	Compliance and enforcement	No	As above
		3.2.4	Research plan	No	As above
		3.2.5	Management performance evaluation	No	As above



Mersey Seafoods Limited

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October 25, 2017

Seafood Producers Association of Nova Scotia
1801 - 45 Alderney Drive
P. O. Box 991,
Dartmouth, NS B2Y 3Z6

Dear Roger;

In regard to our application to become part of the MSC certification for Sea Scallops.

I wish to advise that it is not currently Mersey Seafoods intention to use the MSC logo. However, we will abide by the MSC certification requirements and conditions of Certification.

If in future Mersey Seafoods intends to use the MSC logo, we will first ensure we have the appropriate chain of custody in place prior to using the MSC logo in any way.

I hope this addresses any concerns.

Kindest regards,
MERSEY SEAFOODS LIMITED

Alan Cameron
SALES

AC/sd

Appendix 3. Surveillance Schedule

Table 2.1 : Surveillance level rationale

Year	Surveillance activity	Number of auditors	Rationale
3	Off-site surveillance audit	2	There are no conditions for this fishery and so the minimum surveillance level can be applied. Two review of information audits have been conducted and so the minimum requirement is to have an off-site surveillance audit.

Table 2.2: Timing of surveillance audit

Year	Anniversary date of certificate	Proposed date of surveillance audit	Rationale
2018	30 th June 2017	July 2017	The CAB would like to undertake the audit as close to the anniversary date as possible.

Table 2.3: Fishery Surveillance Program

Surveillance Level	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Level 1	Review of information audit	Review of information audit	Off-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit & re-assessment site visit