Federal monitoring of the Northern Gulf of Maine scallop fishery expected to start fishing year 2022

**Regulatory update and IFS observer program**

Amendment 21 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan was published in the Federal Register on January 12, 2022. Amendment 21 includes management measures for the directed scallop fishery in the federal waters of the Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) Management Area (see map), and is expected to be implemented concurrently with Framework Adjustment 34 at the start of the 2022 scallop fishing year (beginning April 1, 2022).

All vessels active in the directed scallop fishery in the federal waters of the NGOM will be required to participate in the Industry-Funded Scallop (IFS) observer program, operated by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center. Compensation to help support observer coverage will be available.

**IFS call-in requirement and notification of selection for coverage**

Limited Access General Category (LAGC)-NGOM scallop fishery vessels will be required to call the automated interactive voice response (IVR) phone system to declare their intent to fish and participate in the IFS program. Vessels will need to call the IVR at least 72 hours prior to the start of the calendar week (i.e., by Thursday prior to the Sunday to Saturday week they intend to sail). Within 24 hours after calling the IVR, the vessel representative will receive an email via the vessel monitoring system (VMS) indicating either that the vessel was selected to carry an observer, or that the vessel was waived of observer coverage. If selected for coverage, the vessel representative will need to contact IFS service provider companies at least 48 hours prior to the start of the trip to arrange for observer deployment.

**Important phone numbers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scallop IVR call-in system</td>
<td>(508) 495-2100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vessel call-in coordinator and IFS support</td>
<td>(508) 560-3550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFS service providers:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.I.S. Inc.</td>
<td>(774) 200-1688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East West Technical Services, Inc.</td>
<td>(860) 910-4957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathom Resources, LLC.</td>
<td>(508) 990-0997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are vessel safety requirements I must meet to carry an observer?

All vessels planning to take part in the NGOM scallop fishery need to comply with U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and observer program safety and emergency preparedness standards. All vessels must have:

- A current USCG Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Examination decal, regardless of vessel size.
  - Visit www.fishsafe.info for more information regarding the USCG decal and maritime safety for commercial fishing vessels.
- Personal flotation devices/immersion suits
- Ring buoys
- Distress signals
- Fire extinguishing equipment
- Emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB)
- Survival craft with sufficient capacity to accommodate the total number of crew and the observer.

Duties of an IFS observer

IFS observers monitor sea scallop dredge and trawl trips to inform the conservation and management of the Atlantic sea scallop fishery. Specifically, IFS observers record information about the trip (e.g., price of fuel, VTR number), gear (e.g., frame type, ring sizes, number of chains), and tow, such as depth, water temperature, and time and location of each tow. IFS observers collect data on all kept and discarded catch including species, weight, and reason kept or discarded. They record specific sea scallop information such as shell heights, meat weight, and meat volume, and take biological samples (e.g., otolith) of priority species. They also document interactions with marine mammals, sea turtles, sea birds, and other protected species. Data collected by IFS observers are valuable to understand the commercial scallop fishery, evaluate sea scallop health and distribution, support stock assessments, reduce bycatch, recover protected species, and support sustainable fisheries management. Observers are encouraged to communicate with and be respectful of the captain, crew, and ongoing fishing activity while performing their duties.

What are the captain’s responsibilities when carrying an observer?

- Ensure the vessel adheres to U.S. Coast Guard safety standards.
- Allow the observer to perform IFS observer duties safely and effectively, and collaborate when needed.
- Provide the observer reasonable accommodation (i.e., access to living quarters, amenities, storage).

For more information or questions contact:

Amendment 21: Travis Ford, Sustainable Fisheries, GARFO, (978) 281-9233
Industry-funded scallop (IFS) program: Jessica Blaylock, Fishery Monitoring Operations, NEFSC, (508) 524-3020