AGENDA D-1(a)
APRIL 2011

DRAFT Scallop Plan Team Report

March 7-8, 2011
Old Federal Bldg, Room 205
Anchorage Alaska.

Plan Team members present: Diana Stram (NPFMC) co-chair, Gregg Rosenkranz (ADF&G Kodiak)-co-chair, Scott Miller (NMFS Juneau), Peggy Murphy (NMFS Juneau), Rich Gustafson (ADF&G), Ryan Burt (ADF&G), Joseph Stratman (ADF&G).

Plan Team members absent: Jie Zheng (ADF&G Juneau)

Public and agency personnel present (for some or all of meeting): Jim Stone (Alaska Scallop Association), Doug Woodby (ADF&G), David Witherell (NPFMC), John Olson (NMFS), Diana Evans (NPFMC), Sarah Melton (NPFMC), Brendan Harrington (F/V Kilkenny), Richard Parris (F/V Kilkenny), John Lemar (F/V Arctic Hunter), Tom Minio (F/V Provider), Bill Harrington (F/V Kilkenny).

Administrative Issues:
SPT meeting 2012: The SPT indicated that the 2012 SPT meeting would be in Juneau tentatively during the week of February 21st. Having an earlier meeting would alleviate some of the timing constraints experienced this year with putting together the SAFE report in time for the April Council meeting.

The team recommended including several presentations by AFSC and RO staff in Juneau for next year's meeting. These include presentations on the GOA IERP work, BASIS program and the Catch in Areas database.

Minutes: The team reviewed and approved minutes from the September SPT meeting with no changes.

Agenda: The attached agenda was approved for the meeting with no changes.

Essential Fish Habitat: Diana Evans (Council staff) provided an overview of our past presentations on Scallop EFH as well as an update on conversations with stock assessment authors. The description of Scallop EFH has been revised to incorporate new scallop EFH areas. Work on this update was done by Diana Evans, John Olson (NMFS) and Sarah Melton (Council staff) along with Ryan Burt (ADF&G). Diana Evans presented the new FMP language, which is described by life history stages for late juveniles and adults and identifies areas based on inner, middle, and outer shelf. Diana presented maps of the new EFH, for which John Olson provided explanation of the survey data (ADF&G trawl surveys) and meeting minute's discussions that were used to revise the EFH distribution map. John offered to go over this information with anyone who would like to offer input on how to change these maps. Ryan Burt has also worked on distribution from observer data, NMFS trawl survey data and ADF&G trawl survey data and will get together with John and Diana Evans later in the meeting to refine.

Diana Evans continued with an explanation of how EFH documentation is used in Federal habitat consultations (e.g. for oil and gas exploration, submerged cables, etc.).

Jim Stone noted that there is probably some more data from old fish tickets, especially within bays.

Discussion ensued as to the timing of use of data, marginal habitats and information from areas that are closed and its utility in describing EFH for this stock. Known biomass of scallop that are closed should also be included in case it is affected by future activities. John Olson indicated that the potential impacts include upland affects (e.g. runoff from logging).
The team noted that for scallop EFH much of the information is anecdotal and pulled together from multiple time frames of information due to the lack of comprehensive survey information. This information should all be considered however in delineating scallop EFH as these areas may contribute significantly to the productivity of the stock. A working group of state and federal staff as well as fishermen met over lunch to revise the draft map presented to the team.

The team reviewed the sections on Relevant Trophic Information and Habitat and Biological Associations. Team members questioned why King Crab not listed and discussed that that prey of scallop by pycnopodia is a major source of mortality, and that they see evidence of octopus preying on scallops too. The team recommended adding sea stars, King crab, and octopus as predators of scallops. Diana clarified that this round of amendments will define EFH in the FMP for the next five years but that any items for additional consideration can be added to the list of things to consider in the next five year review. Some additional predator and prey relations were recommended by the team including adding to "prey of" categories of crab, the flatfishes, and Sea Otters. Revisions were also recommended on the approximate upper size limits.

A revised map provided to the analysis following discussion and recommendations is attached. There was discussion but no consensus on connecting beds. It was recommended to add to the text that scallops also exist in SE Alaska.

Update on Annual Catch Limit (ACL) Action: Diana Stram gave an overview of ACL final action by the Council in October. The Council's motion established an ACL equal to the ABC recommended by the SSC. The maximum ABC control rule recommended by the Council's motion would be 90% of OFL statewide. Here the OFL is re-estimated to account for known discards over the time frame of the historical catch calculation upon which the OFL is based (now 1.29 million lbs., was 1.24 million lbs.). The SPT may recommend an ABC lower than that by application of the control rule, the final ABC is recommended by the SSC. The State must take into account the ABC in setting regional GHLs to ensure that the sum of the GHLs by region is not greater than the Statewide ABC.

If catch were to exceed the ACL (including discard mortality) in any one year then the GHL would be adjusted downward to account for the overage. For now the default value is a 20% discard mortality multiplier. It can be changed if new information becomes available.

Further under this action, non-Weathervane scallops have been moved into an ecosystem component of the FMP. ACLs are not required for these stocks. The SAFE report will, on a periodic basis, need to document whatever information we have on these other non-target scallop stocks. Catch data will be reported annually. The team discusses what information could be compiled for a new section on ecosystem component stocks. Observer data may provide some data on other species catch in the haul composition data. Also, Kamishak survey will include estimates of *Chalmys* catch. Some data will be compiled to start (based on information included in the ACL amendment analysis EA) and the team will plan to update and expand this as information becomes available on a periodic basis.

The team discussed how to determine at what point catch of these species would exceed the de-minimis amounts per the definition of qualifying as ecosystem component species. In order to target these stocks the FMP would need to be amended to move them 'into the fishery" and ACLs would need to be established. There is no prohibition however on retention of EC species.

Approval by the Secretary of Commerce (SOC) must happen prior to the 2011 season start in June. The team is assuming approval will occur by then. The team recommended that in anticipation of this action being approved for the 2011/12 fishing year, that the ABC be established at the default maxABC level of 90% of the newly estimated OFL. The team notes that all catch will accrue towards this ACL (ACL = ABC) level in this year including discards. As noted above a 20% handling mortality rate will be applied to discards.

The issue of status of federal regulations for EC species in state waters was discussed without much resolution. The topic was noted as a topic for further discussion/clarity at a future meeting as needed.
Overview of Stock Status: The team reviewed stock status by region. Gregg Rosenkranz provided an overview of stock status in the Westward region including new information on discards given the new requirements for total catch accounting under ACLs. The Team discussed status of stocks and sections to update for SAFE report.

The team discussed Tanner crab bycatch in the GOA and Bering Sea. Industry has been requesting that the weight of crabs as well as the number be recorded in the SAFE report to better inform the public regarding the size of the crabs taken as bycatch by region. While overall weights were not possible to include this year, the team included size frequency distributions on Tanner crabs where available by region. Next year the team will plan to include information on the estimated total weight corresponding to the number by region as possible.

The team discussed how to update and better organize the ecosystem considerations section and update information on haul composition data to best reflect bycatch trends in the fishery. The team decided to list the top five bycatch components over most recent five years, plus additional information on species of consideration that are not necessarily in the top 5 but are of particular interest, such as Halibut, and EBS snow crab. This may be a plan for next year's SAFE report given the time constraints of updating this year's report.

Rich Gustafson provided an overview of the South Central area surveys and fishery information. This information is all included in this year's SAFE report. For Kayak Island they surveyed both east and west beds. For the west bed all stations were surveyed and abundance was down significantly and showed limited age structure thus the area was closed. The east bed sampling was limited and only occurred on the edges due to weather delays and cancellations in May and mechanical difficulties in July. No biomass estimate was possible for the east bed but CPUE was similar to the recent past so a small fishery was allowed. Age composition shows mostly 7 years and under in 2010 and the age structure data is quite different from east to west beds. Rich presented the distribution of small scallops (age 1-2) by year shows pronounced inter-annual variability. Doug Woodby pointed out that 2006 shows no small scallops in the 2006 survey and that tracks into the 2010 data as well with very low 6-7 year olds.

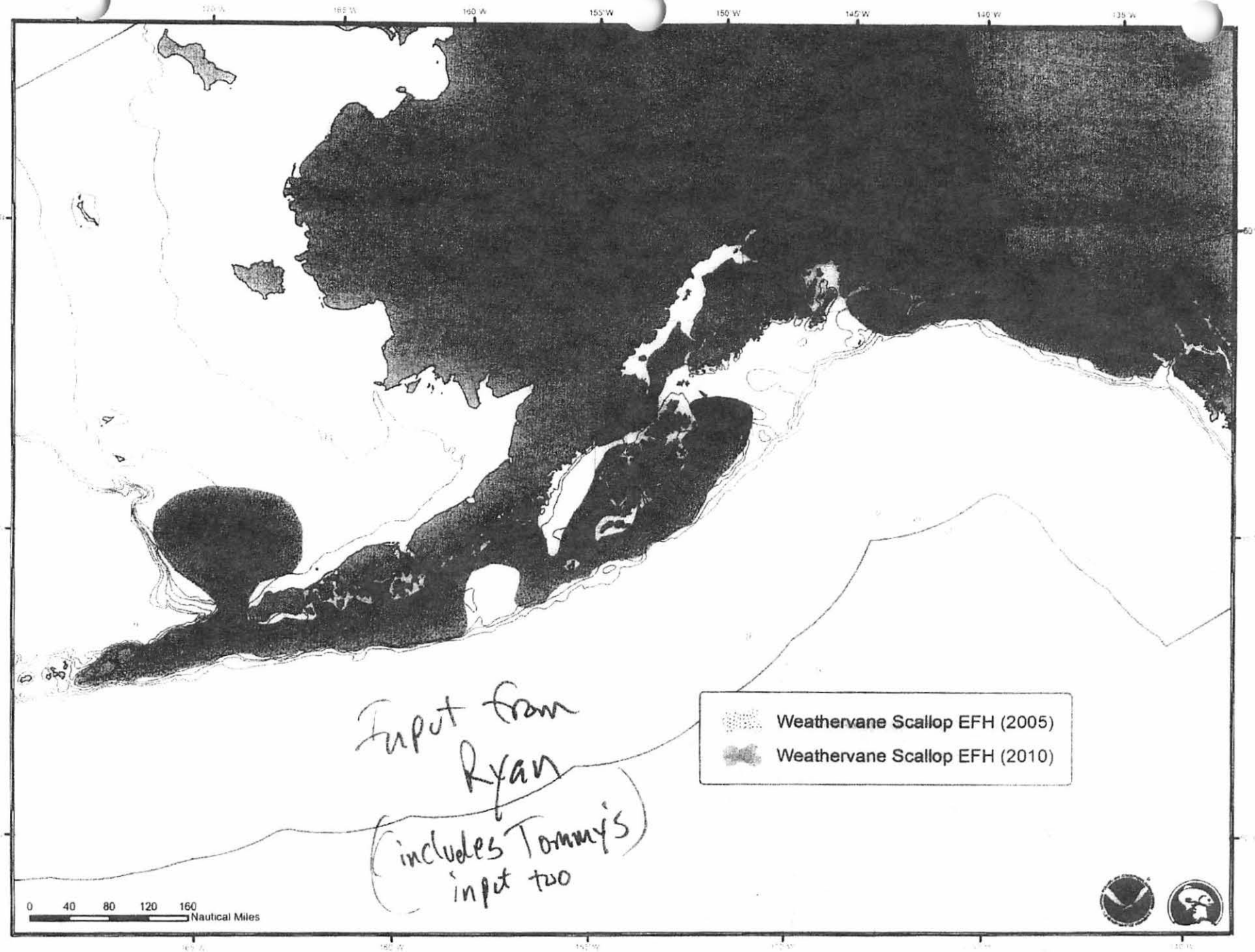
The team discussed SSC comments from last year and responses for this year's SAFE. These are all reflected in the SAFE report.

Economic Plans: Scott Miller provided an overview of the developments in the catch-in-areas database (CIA DB), and the team discussed potential uses of this database in the future. Next year this could be used to estimate the footprint of the overall fishery. The team requested a presentation on the CIA DB at the next SPT meeting. This would also provide a useful groundtruthing of the database with the team and industry. The team also discussed ownership changes with the Kilkenney and the need to get the RAM permitting updated. The team discussed price differentials and how the state tabulates prices from the COAR report versus fresh product prices.

Research Priorities: Diana Stram provided an overview of the research priorities recommended by the team last year. She noted that it would be useful to modify and prioritize the items this year. The team therefore makes the following (see attachment 2) modifications to last year's priorities (shown in strike out and additions from last year).

New business: The team discussed any upcoming BOF issues. The 2012 meeting will be a statewide shellfish meeting with possible action on scallop proposed at that time. In the interim all pending actions are housekeeping and did not warrant further team discussion.

The meeting adjourned to a work session for the afternoon to complete sections of the SAFE report at noon on the 8th.


Weathervane Scallop EFH (2005)
Weathervane Scallop EFH (2010)
Input from Ryan (includes Tommy's input too
0 40 80 120 160
Nautical Miles

Research Priorities

The following research items were noted (~~without indication~~in order of prioritization):

1. Life-history/genetics studies to provide information ~~is lacking~~on ~~and~~ sources and sinks of scallop larvae and where they settle is lacking ~~unknown~~ to verify ~~to what extent it is a single statewide stock.~~stock structure and larval transport mechanisms.
   ~~2. Additional genetic studies are needed for more information related to stock structure.~~
   ~~3. Current genetic study shows that stocks appear to be connected with limited degree of separation (Stew Grant paper in press indicates limited genetic variability).~~
2. Computerized image processing for camera sled data.
3. Fishery-independent stock assessment in Yakutat.
4. Continue research on weak meats and scallop quality. Environmental parameters should be studied coincident with determining cause of weak meats.
~~5. Vessel of opportunity research to tow camera sleds. Additional camera sled survey information on areas closed to scallop fishing with known scallop beds. Habitat based assessment approach possibility for pooling camera sled research and broadscale assessment statewide for statewide biomass estimate.~~[note that this work is currently underway]
~~6.~~5. Mark-recapture-tagging studies to estimate ~~look at~~ discard mortality~~, intact discards~~, scallop movement within and between beds, and growth.
6. ~~Fishery-independent stock assessment in Yakutat~~Multi-variate analysis of bycatch data from Scallop observer program (haul composition data).
7. Continue development of age-structured model in Central region.
~~8. Larval studies for better understanding of larval movements in scallops.~~[combined with 1]

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