



To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

Under the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: Framework Adjustment 26 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan, RIN 0648-BE68

LOCATION: Exclusive Economic Zone off the Northeastern U.S.

SUMMARY: Framework 26 will set specifications for the scallop fishery for fishing year 2015, including days-at-sea (DAS) allocations, individual fishing quotas, and sea scallop access area trip allocations. This action sets precautionary default fishing year 2016 specifications in case we implement the next framework after the March 1, 2016, start of fishing year 2016, and we need transitional measures. In addition, Framework 26: Closes a portion of the Elephant Trunk Access Area and extends the boundaries of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area to protect small scallops; adjusts the State Waters Exemption Program; allows for vessel monitoring system declaration changes for vessels to steam home with product on board; implements a proactive accountability measure to protect windowpane flounder and yellowtail flounder; aligns two gear measures designed to protect sea turtles; and implements other measures to improve the management of the scallop fishery.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:

John K. Bullard
Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration (NOAA)
55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930
978-281-9250

The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement was not prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI), including the environmental assessment, is enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA/FONSI we will consider any comments submitted that would assist us in preparing future NEPA documents. Please submit any written comments to the Responsible Official named above.

Sincerely,

for Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure