



## SMAST Bycatch Avoidance Program



Dear Scallop Fleet Member:

March 1, 2017

SMAST is continuing the Bycatch Avoidance Program for yellowtail and windowpane flounder in Closed Area II for Fishing Year 2017. We will provide bycatch advisories through VMS email and update our website with bycatch maps on the location of yellowtail and windowpane hotspots to help vessels avoid areas of high bycatch while catching scallops. High bycatch of yellowtail and windowpane could trigger costly time/area closures.

The fleet has been using the bycatch avoidance program to successfully stay under yellowtail catch limits since 2010. For FY 2017, the scallop fleet requested that we maintain the program to cover Closed Area II Access Area. We're asking the fleet to participate and report scallops, yellowtail and windowpane, so we can provide the most accurate and timely information on flounder bycatch.

Please see the enclosed instructions, reporting grid and data sheets for participation:

1. If you haven't done so already, **please fill out and return** the Boatrac's Email Authorization:

**Brooke Wright**  
**SMAST**  
**200 Mill Road, Suite 325**  
**Fairhaven, MA 02719**

**FAX: 508-910-6374**  
**Email: [brooke.wright@umassd.edu](mailto:brooke.wright@umassd.edu)**  
**Phone: 508-910-6372**

2. Instruction sheet for sending and receiving data.

3. Grid maps: **Please use the grid map of Closed Area II included in the mailing.**

4. Frequently Asked Questions about the program with answers to assist vessel operators.

5. Data collection sheet to record bycatch and scallop catch daily by location.

We hope that you will consider participating in the bycatch avoidance effort in FY 2017. Please do not hesitate to contact **Brooke Wright (508 910-6372, [brooke.wright@umassd.edu](mailto:brooke.wright@umassd.edu))** with any questions.

**Thank you for your support and thanks to all of our collaborators!**





## E-mail Authorization Worksheet

**This form must be completed and signed before Boatracs will enable your e-mail services to and from the vessel(s)!**

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Vessel Name: \_\_\_\_\_ **MCT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Vessel Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\* MCT is the unit # which is found by pressing the view status button, then pressing the down arrow button once. It is located at the top of that screen next to unit serial number, on the dome or on the bill.**

**WARNING: The vessel owner will be responsible for charges incurred for any and all e-mails that are received by the vessels from SMAST.**

### E-mail Addresses Allowed:

Specific e-mail address to be allowed permissions.	To Boat	From Boat
E-mail address: <b>scallops@umassd.edu</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

If you need additional space for authorizations, please make copies of these sheets.

Please fill out the information below, and sign this form authorizing us to put the restrictions in place.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name and Position/Title (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



# 2017 SMAST BYCATCH AVOIDANCE



## INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR SENDING AND RECEIVING DATA

1. **Locate your position** on the grid map.
2. **Record the letter of the grid cell you are fishing in and the pounds of yellowtail, windowpane, and scallops** caught during each tow on the provided data collection worksheets.

- If you cross a grid line during a single tow, record the cell where the most fishing effort occurred.

3. **Tally the tows** made in each cell and add up the yellowtail (YT), scallop and windowpane (WP) pounds.

- For example:

Cell	#Tows	Lbs YT	Lbs Scal	Lbs WP
S	4	15	1200	30
X	3	5	900	75

This shows that cell S had 4 tows with 15 pounds of YT, 1200 pounds of scallops, and 30 pounds of WP; cell X had 3 tows with 5 pounds of YT, 900 pounds of scallops, and 75 pounds of WP.

\*\* As a weight guide:

- **Yellowtail possession prohibited:**

- Yellowtail less than 12" weigh approximately 0.5 lbs.
- Yellowtail greater than 12" weigh approximately 1.0 lbs.

- **Windowpane possession prohibited:**

- Full basket (level, not mounded) of windowpane weighs approximately 80 lbs.
- Half basket of windowpane weighs approximately 40 lbs.

4. **Report your catch** once per day to SMAST.

**BOATRACS:** Use **code 15** to access the Macro on your Boatracs unit.

- **Step 1:** Enter the area where you are fishing.  
(2= Closed Area II)
- **Step 2:** Enter whether or not you are carrying an observer
- **Step 3:** Use the table in the Macro to record data. Use a separate line for each grid cell.

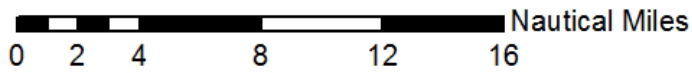
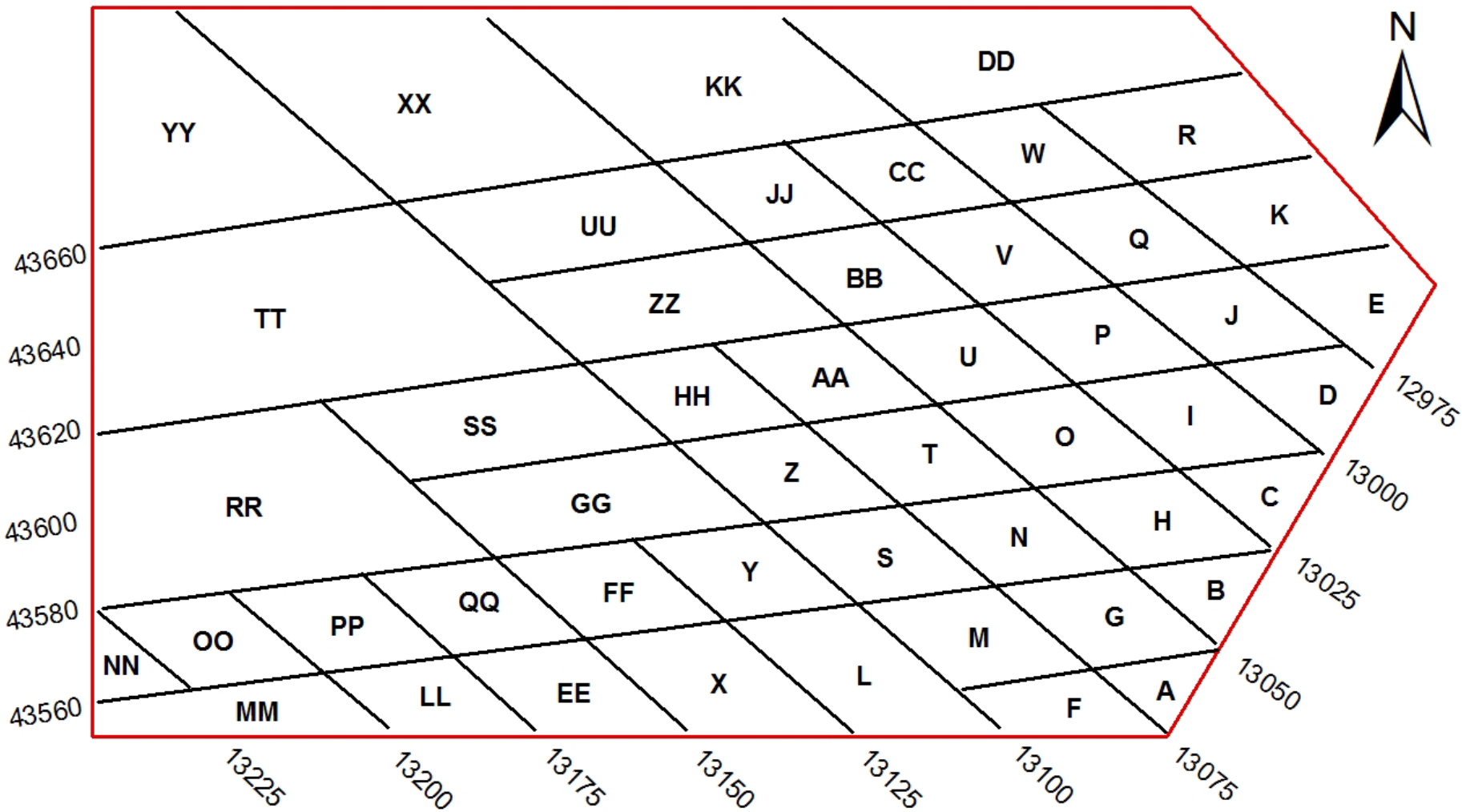
**NON-BOATRACS:** Email the daily catch reports to SMAST at [scallops@umassd.edu](mailto:scallops@umassd.edu) (same method as previously):

5. SMAST will retrieve all data reports at 7:00am and compile information. **You will receive email advisories from SMAST about the location of yellowtail and windowpane bycatch hotspots (MEDIUM and HIGH concentrations) for each area that is fished.**

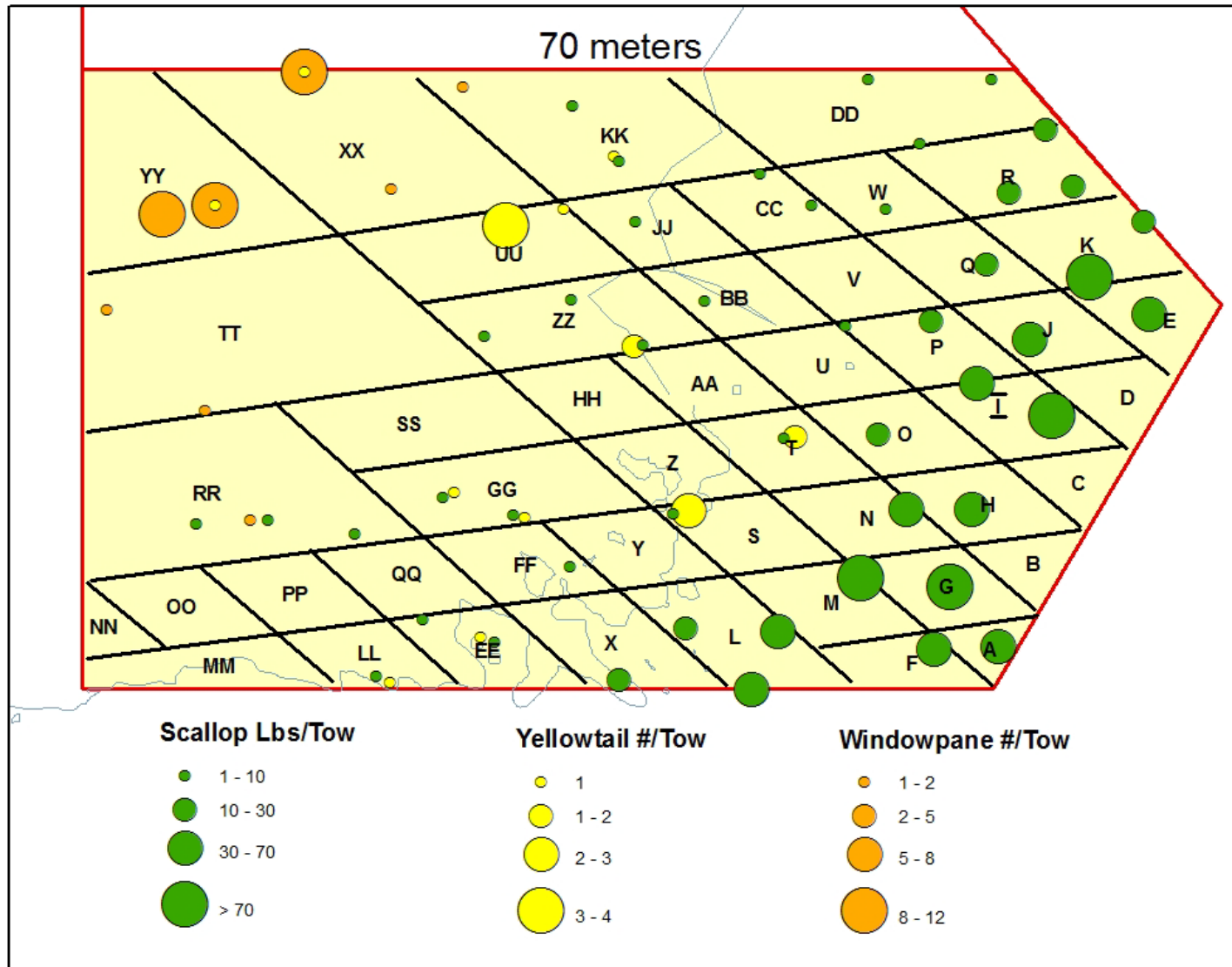
**All vessel information remains confidential.**

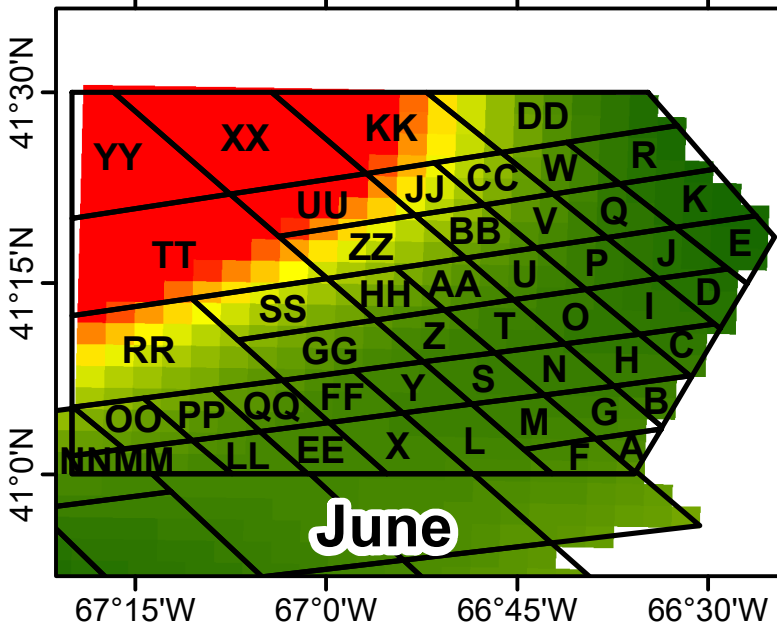
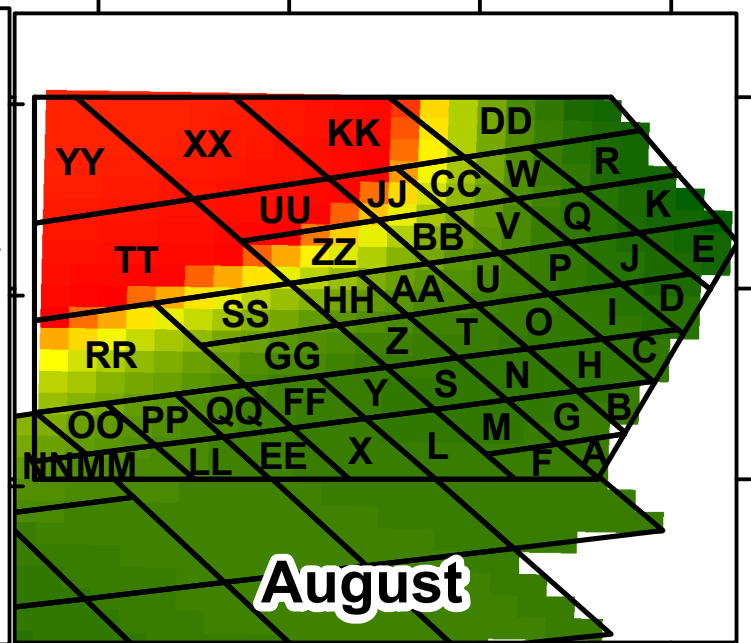
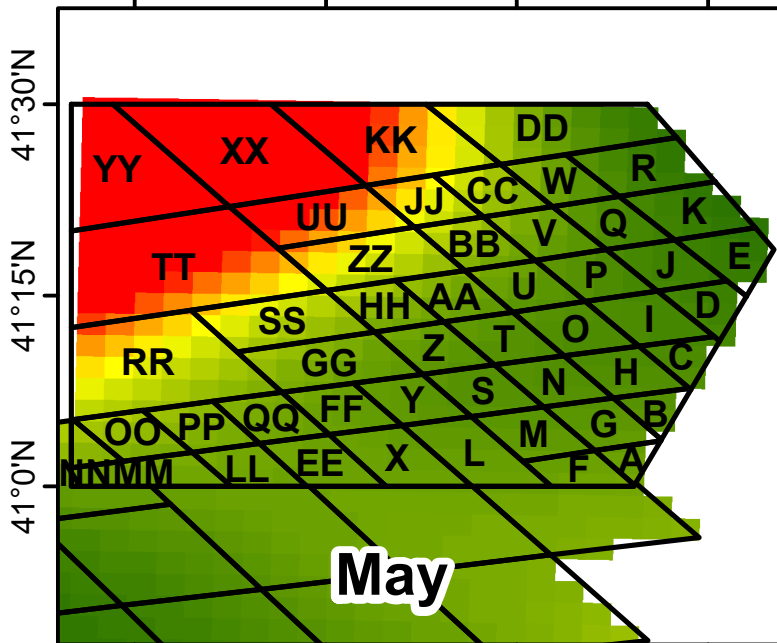
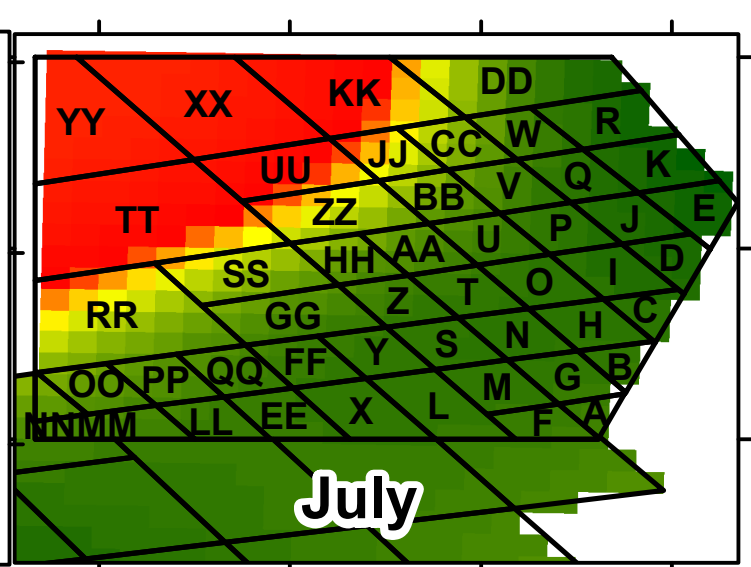
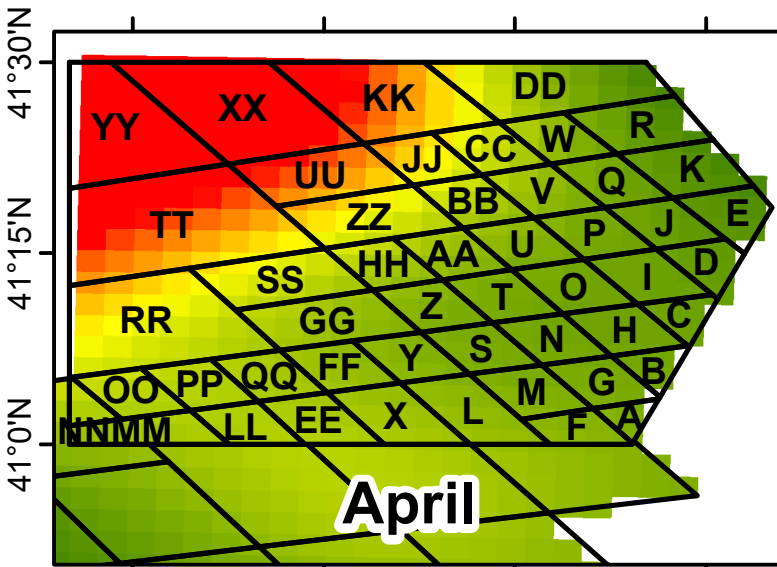
**\*\*Reporting scallop catch is very important to ensure bycatch hotspots are accurate\*\***

# CLOSED AREA 2



# 2016 VIMS Survey – Closed Area II

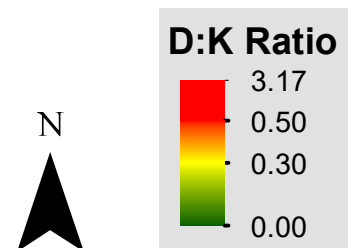




67°15'W 67°0'W 66°45'W 66°30'W

# Closed Area II Access Area

Model Predicted  
Yellowtail: Scallop Ratio



67°15'W 67°0'W 66°45'W 66°30'W



## SMAST Bycatch Avoidance Program



### Frequently Asked Questions

- **Does SMAST share the data from the bycatch reports?**
  - No. All of the bycatch data that is sent from the vessels to SMAST remains confidential. The data reporting costs of the Bycatch Avoidance Program are funded by the scallop industry. SMAST does not share the vessel reports with NOAA, the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, the New England Fisheries Management Council, or any other agency or organization.
  
- **Why does the amount of flounder bycatch matter?**
  - Every fishing year, the scallop fleet is given a certain amount of yellowtail and windowpane flounder (known as a sub-Annual Catch Limits). If the scallop fleet exceeds their sub-Annual Catch Limits, then Accountability Measures (time/area closures or gear modifications) will be put in place for the next fishing year.
  
- **What are the Accountability Measures (AMs)?**
  - For yellowtail, Accountability Measures lead to the closure of large portions of the fishing grounds, either on Georges Bank or in southern New England.
  - For southern windowpane, Accountability Measures require changing dredge configuration to fish in certain areas of southern New England and the Mid-Atlantic.
  - For northern windowpane, Accountability Measures will be developed in 2017 and may include time-area closures.
  
- **Why are you asking for me to report windowpane flounder bycatch?**
  - The New England Fishery Management Council recently voted to implement sub-Annual Catch Limits for northern windowpane flounder. If the scallop fleet exceeds their sub-Annual Catch Limit of windowpane flounder, Accountability Measures will be put into place in the next year.
  
- **Why should I report my bycatch?**
  - The accuracy of the bycatch advisory depends upon the number of reports that SMAST receives from the fleet. As the number of reports increases, it allows us to identify bycatch hotspots more accurately, and provide the best available information to the fishing vessels.
  - The Bycatch Avoidance Program can help the fleet achieve a higher scallop catch while avoiding Accountability Measures.



- **Why do you ask for my scallop catches?**
  - In order to determine whether bycatch is high, medium or low, we examine the catch of flounder relative to the catch of scallops for each cell.
  - As the scallop catch rate decreases even small amounts of flounder will increase the overall bycatch rate.
- **How much bycatch is too much?**
  - The bycatch thresholds are set based upon the allocation of scallops and flounder in that area. For Closed Area II, the thresholds are projected from previous years' observer data.
- **How does SMAST determine if a grid cell has high, medium or low bycatch?**
  - For each grid cell, we calculate the average bycatch reported by all of the vessels that have fished in that cell. The calculations are updated every day as SMAST receives new data from the fleet.
- **How does NOAA estimate the amount of bycatch in the scallop fishery?**
  - Bycatch for the scallop fishery is estimated using observer data. Approximately 10% of all scallop trips have an observer onboard. NOAA assumes that the bycatch rates of observed and unobserved trips are the same when they estimate the total bycatch in the scallop fishery.
- **Who can I contact at SMAST to get more information?**
  - **To get more information about the Bycatch Avoidance program please contact:**
    - **Brooke Wright ([brooke.wright@umassd.edu](mailto:brooke.wright@umassd.edu), 508-910-6372)**
    - **visit our website at: [www.umassd.edu/smast/bycatch](http://www.umassd.edu/smast/bycatch)**





