



ASSESSMENT OF SEA SCALLOP (*PLACOPECTEN MAGELLANICUS*) ON THE ST. PIERRE BANK (NAFO SUBDIVISION 3PS) IN 2025

CONTEXT

The Fisheries Management (FM) Branch of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has requested that the stock status and trends for the Sea Scallop (*Placopecten magellanicus*) resource on St. Pierre Bank (NAFO Subdivision 3Ps) be assessed to provide advice on potential impacts of maintaining or changing current harvest levels of the stock, taking into account ecosystem and climate change considerations, where relevant.

This Fisheries Science Advisory Report is from the regional peer review meeting of March 18–19, 2026, on 3Ps Sea Scallop Stock Assessment. Additional publications from this meeting will be posted on the [Fisheries and Oceans Canada \(DFO\) Science Advisory Schedule](#) as they become available.

SCIENCE ADVICE

Status

- In 2025, the Minimum Dredgeable Biomass (MDB) index is at time-series highs while pre-recruit scallop abundance is near time-series lows in all beds. There are no reference points to assess stock status with respect to the DFO Precautionary Approach (PA) Framework.

Trends

- The MDB index increased in 2025 to time-series highs in all beds. Pre-recruit signals declined to near time-series lows.

Ecosystem and Climate Change Considerations

- The warm phase in ocean climate that started around 2020 continued in 2025. Ocean climate controls productivity at the ecosystem level; the current warm phase is generally associated with improving overall ecosystem productivity conditions.
- The ecosystem in 3Ps is undergoing structural changes associated with changing ocean climate, including an increase in dominance of warm-water species.

Stock Advice

- The MDB indices are at the highest level in the time series for all beds.
- Given the low recruitment level in 2025, the prospects for population growth for the next one to four years appear limited.

BASIS FOR ASSESSMENT

Assessment Details

Year Assessment Approach was Approved

2016 (DFO 2016, Coughlan et al. 2020)

Assessment Type

Full Assessment

Most Recent Assessment Date

1. Last Full Assessment: 2020 (DFO 2021, and Coughlan et al. 2023)
2. Last Interim-Year Update: NA

Stock Assessment Approach

1. Broad category: Index-based
2. Specific category: Index-based (including fishery-dependent and fishery-independent indices)

The assessment approach is detailed in Coughlan et al. (2023). Changes to the methodology include the adoption of a spatiotemporal modeling approach to estimate MDB and the abundances of Sea Scallop, cluckers (hinged empty shells), and predatory sea stars. In addition, a condition factor based on the meat weight to shell height relationship was introduced as a new metric to the assessment. These changes are outlined in Coughlan et al. (in prep¹).

Ecosystem and Climate Change Assessment Approach

The physical environment was characterized by examining trends in ocean climate using oceanographic indicators and the Newfoundland and Labrador Climate Index (NLCI). Food web components examined included: lower trophic levels, characterized using primary production, and zooplankton indicators; status and trends of the fish community; and seabird and marine mammal information. The characterization of ecological and environmental interactions included fish diets, analysis of invertebrate predators, and estimations of food consumption. Habitat elements included a summary on Significant Benthic Areas and existing fisheries closures. Aggregated fisheries metrics considered included fishing footprint and the risk of ecosystem overfishing. Pathways for climate change impacts explored the link between ocean climate and ecosystem productivity.

Stock Structure Assumption

Sea Scallop in 3Ps is assumed to be part of a broader stock which is assessed in three main beds: the North, Middle, and South.

Reference Points

- Limit Reference Point (LRP): NA

¹ Coughlan, E.J., Baker, K.D., Fraser, S., and Wells, B. In preparation. Assessment of Sea Scallop (*Placopecten magellanicus*) on St. Pierre Bank in 2025. DFO Can. Sci. Adv. Sec. Res. Doc.

Newfoundland and Labrador Region

- Upper Stock Reference (USR): NA
- Removal Reference (RR): NA
- Target Reference Point (TRP): NA

Data

- Resource Assessment surveys Sea Scallop data (2003–06, 2010, 2015, 2019, 2025)
- Commercial logbook data (2003–25) (NL Region)
- Commercial logbook data (1982–2025) (Maritimes Region)
- DFO Statistics-Reported Landings Data (1969–2025) (NL Region)
- DFO Canadian Research Vessel (RV) survey (1983–2025)
- Atlantic Zone Monitoring Program (1950–2025)
- MODIS/Aqua surface chlorophyll (2003–25)
- DFO-NL Ecosystem Research Program Indicators (1960–2025)

ASSESSMENT

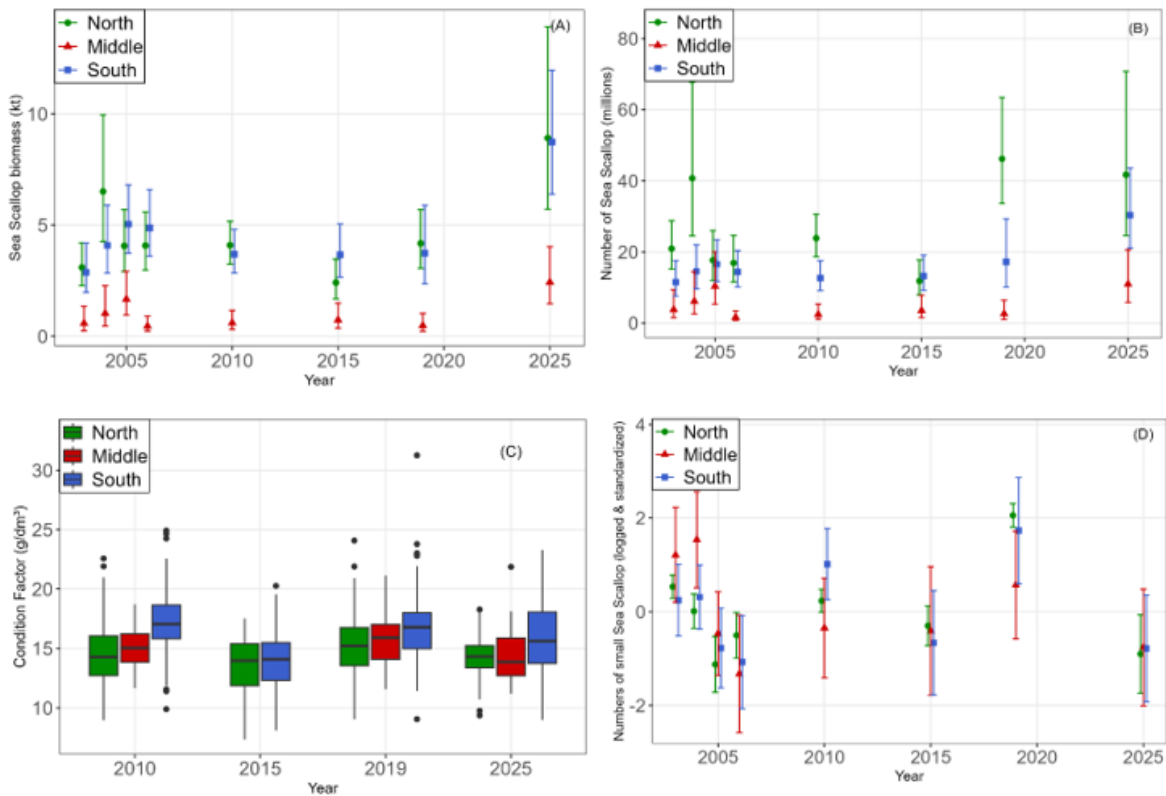


Figure 1. (A: top left) Model-based estimates of Sea Scallop minimum dredgeable biomass (kilotonnes (kt)) in three beds (North, Middle, and South), derived from resource assessment surveys in 2003–06, 2010, 2015, 2019, and 2025 (95% Confidence interval [CI]). (B: top right) Model-based estimates of Sea Scallop abundance (millions) in three beds (North, Middle, and South), derived from resource assessment surveys in 2003–06, 2010, 2015, 2019, and 2025 (95% CI). (C: bottom left) Condition factor (grams/decimeters³) for the North, Middle, and South beds based on the 2010, 2015, 2019, and 2025 resource assessment surveys. (D: bottom right) Logged and standardized numbers of small (<90 mm) Sea Scallop in three beds (North, Middle, and South), derived from resource assessment surveys in 2003–06, 2010, 2015, 2019, and 2025 (95% CI).

Stock Status and Trends

Biomass Index

The MDB index for all beds combined was 20.06 kilotonnes (kt) in 2025, representing the highest value in the survey time series. The increase in MDB was observed in all three beds. In 2025, the MDB was 8.91 kt, 2.42 kt, and 8.73 kt, in the North, Middle, and South beds, respectively (Figure 1A).

Abundance Index

The abundance index of Sea Scallop reached a time-series high in 2025. Increases were observed in the Middle and South beds, but abundance remained stable in the North bed, around a time-series high level (Figure 1B).

Newfoundland and Labrador Region

Condition Factor

Condition factor expresses the changing weight to height relationship as a single metric (Hubley et al. 2014) and is an indicator of scallop health.

Condition shows a North to South pattern, with condition being generally higher in the South bed and lower in the North bed. The condition factor has varied little over the time series in all three beds and remained near average in 2025 (Figure 1C).

Size structure

In 2025, the size structure of scallop in all three beds was dominated by a larger group of scallop, with the modal shell height for the three beds remaining above the time-series mean of 112 mm. This reflects a high abundance of large scallop and a low abundance of small scallop within any given bed. The small (< 90 mm) scallop abundance in 2025 was below average, representing the second lowest in the time series for all beds (Figure 1D).

Natural Mortality

Natural mortality reached a time-series high in 2015 and was below average in 2019. In 2025, the natural mortality was around the time-series average in all beds (Figure 2A).

Current Status

There is currently no established reference points by which to determine stock status in relation to a PA Framework. In 2025, the MDB index is at time-series highs while pre-recruit scallop abundance is near time series lows in all beds.

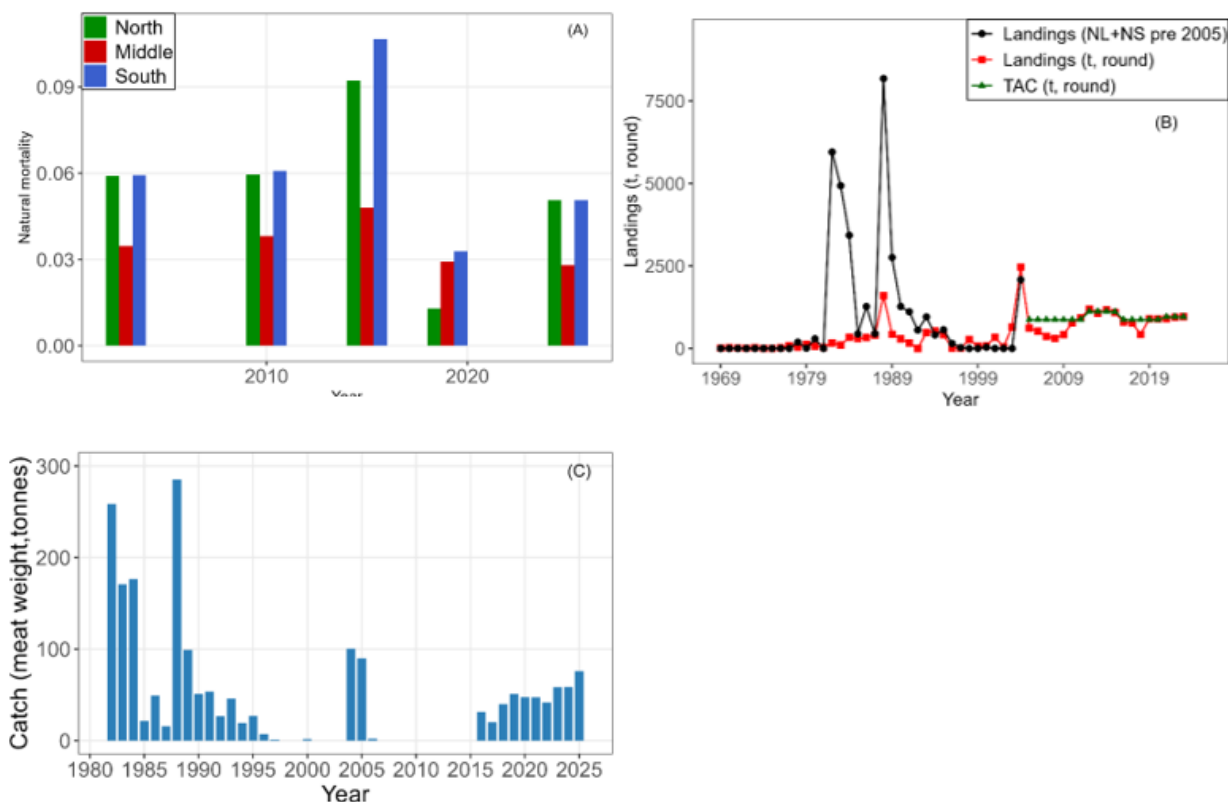


Figure 2. (A: top left) Sea Scallop natural mortality index in three beds (North, Middle, and South), derived from resource assessment surveys in 2003–06, 2010, 2015, 2019, and 2025. (B: top right) Annual landings of Sea Scallop, round weight (tonnes) from scallop fishing in NAFO Subdivision 3Ps between 1969 and 2025. The red line with square symbols represents the landings round weight (t) (NL fleet inshore 1969–2025), the black line with circle symbols represents total landings, round weight (t) (NL inshore and NS offshore) pre-2005 and the green line with triangle symbols represents the Total Allowable Catch (TAC), round weight (t) North bed (Inshore). (C: bottom left) Annual catch-landings of Sea Scallop meat weight (tonnes) from the offshore between 1982 and 2025 (note landings scaled for privacy reasons).

History of the Fishery

The Sea Scallop fishery conducted on St. Pierre Bank (NAFO Subdivision 3Ps) Scallop Fishing Areas (SFA) 10 and 11 was split in 2006 following the release of the Hooley Report (Hooley 2005). The Minister assigned fishing areas and TACs based on three known fishing beds (North, Middle, and South) on the St. Pierre Bank (DFO 2011). The North bed was allocated to the NL Inshore Scallop fleet and is managed by the FM Branch in the NL Region, and the Middle and South beds were assigned to the Offshore Scallop fleet and are managed by the FM Branch in the Maritimes Region.

The landings averaged 823 t round weight between 2016 and 2023 in the North bed and increased in 2024 and 2025 to an average of 1,100 t (Figure 2B, Table 1). Since 2016, the landings have averaged 116 t meat weight in the Middle and South beds (Figure 2C, Table 1).

Newfoundland and Labrador Region

Assessment of Sea Scallop (*Placopecten magellanicus*) on the St. Pierre Bank (NAFO Subdivision 3Ps) in 2025

In 2024 and 2025, the TAC (round weight) for the inshore fleet was 1,055 t (Figure 2B). The TAC (meat weight) for the offshore fleet has been variable in recent years, ranging between 100 t and 175 t (in 2025) (Table 1).

Table 1. Average annual total allowable catch (TAC) and Sea Scallop landings (meat weight in tonnes) for the offshore, and TAC and landings (round weight, t) for the inshore of St. Pierre Bank SFA 10 and 11 from 1990 to 2025.

Location	Offshore			Inshore											
Year	1990–2006 Average	2007–15 Average	2016–25 Average	1990–2006 Average	2007–15 Average	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
TAC (meat weight, t)	117	0	119	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Landings (meat weight, t)	67	0	116	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TAC (round weight, t)	-	-	-	-	981	872	872	872	872	872	959	959	959	1,055	1,055
Landings (round weight, t)	-	-	-	409	811	794	766	427	896	893	901	950	959	1,049	1,158

Ecosystem and Climate Change Considerations

The ocean climate in the NL bioregion has shown decadal-scale cold and warm phases. The warm phase that started around 2020 continued in 2025. Recent phytoplankton blooms have been earlier than average, which favors recruitment of the copepod *Calanus finmarchicus*, a key food item for fish. Total zooplankton biomass was above normal in 2025 for the first time in over a decade, while the abundance of small copepod taxa remained below normal.

A relationship between ocean climate and ecosystem productivity, indicating bottom-up regulation, has been identified across Northwest Atlantic ecosystems, including 3Ps. Ecosystem biomass in 3Ps saw important declines in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a period characterized by cold ocean climate and ecosystem overfishing. After these declines, no major increases have been observed, with ecosystem biomass varying around an average level. After a below average period in mid-late 2010s, ecosystem indicators in the 2019–25 period suggest conditions could be improving. The 3Ps ecosystem like others in the NL bioregion, remains in an overall lower productivity state.

The ecosystem in 3Ps continues to undergo structural changes associated with warming ocean climate. With rising temperatures, clear changes in fish community composition have been observed since the early 2010s, including increases in warmer water species. For example, Atlantic Cod historically dominated the piscivores functional group, but over the last decade Silver Hake increased and became the most dominant species.

There are no records of scallop being a measurable part of the diet of key predatory fishes in 3Ps, but other benthic predators, like sea stars, may have a more significant regulatory role on scallop stock dynamics.

While 3Ps is assessed at an intermediate risk of ecosystem overfishing, the aggregated fisheries catches of suspension feeding species have been below but near the levels consistent with a high risk of ecosystem overfishing since the late 2010s. While Sea Scallop is an important component, these catches are dominated by sea cucumber. The uncertainty around this evaluation for suspension feeding species remains high.

Stock Advice

There is no assessment model or projections for this stock. The MDB indices are at the highest level in the time series for all beds. Given the low recruitment level in 2025 the prospects for population growth for the next 1 to 4 years appear limited.

SOURCES OF UNCERTAINTY

The large and inconsistent temporal gaps in the survey time series hamper the ability to examine annual changes in the Sea Scallop size structure, abundance, or biomass.

The assessment only addresses subsets of a larger biological stock. Relative status or changes in population dynamics in stock components outside the assessment beds are unknown and unaccounted for.

The relative catchability of scallop by size and habitat type in the survey gear remains unknown.

LIST OF MEETING PARTICIPANTS

NAME	AFFILIATION
Courtney King	DFO-NL – Centre for Science Advice
Rachelle Dove	DFO-NL – Centre for Science Advice
Elizabeth Coughlan	DFO-NL – Science
Erika Parrill	DFO-NL – Science
Julia Pantin	DFO-NL – Science
Darrell Mullooney	DFO-NL – Science
Nicolas Le Corre	DFO-NL – Science
Will Coffey	DFO-NL – Science
Krista Baker	DFO-NL – Science
Hannah Munro	DFO-NL – Science
Mariano Koen-Alonso	DFO-NL – Science
Kathleen Ryan	DFO-NL – Science
Chelsea Malayny	DFO-NL – Science
Sarah Fraser	DFO-NL – Science
Bruce Wells	DFO-NL – Science
Scott Quilty	DFO-NL – Science
Darren Sullivan	DFO-NL – Science
David Keith	DFO-Maritimes – Science
Yamin Janjua	DFO-NCR – Science
Kelly Dooley	DFO-NL – Resource Management
Jodi Riggs-Power	DFO-NL – Resource Management
Alan Reeves	DFO-Maritimes – Resource Management
Justin Strong	Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture of NL
April Wiseman	Fish, Food and Allied Workers
Chris Strowbridge	Fish, Food and Allied Workers
Ginette Robert	Seafood Producers Association of Nova Scotia
Danny Dumaresque	Labrador Gem Seafoods

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Coughlan, E., Hynick, E., and Stansbury, D. 2020. [An Assessment of Sea Scallop \(*Placopecten magellanicus*\) on St. Pierre Bank](#). DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Res. Doc. 2020/005. iv + 27 p.
- Coughlan, E.J., Baker, K.D., and Hynick, E. 2023. [An Assessment of Sea Scallop \(*Placopecten magellanicus*\) on St. Pierre Bank in 2019](#). DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Res. Doc. 2023/057. iv + 30 p.
- DFO. 2011. [An assessment of Sea Scallop on the St. Pierre Bank \(Subdivision 3Ps\)](#). DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep. 2011/042.
- DFO. 2016. [An Assessment of Sea Scallop on the St. Pierre Bank \(Subdivision 3Ps\)](#). DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep. 2016/032.
- DFO. 2021. [An Assessment of Sea Scallop on the St. Pierre Bank \(Subdivision 3Ps\)](#). DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep. 2021/044.

Assessment of Sea Scallop (*Placopecten magellanicus*) on the St. Pierre Bank (NAFO Subdivision 3Ps) in 2025

Newfoundland and Labrador Region

Hooley, D.W. 2005. Independent Process to Examine the Allocation of Sea Scallop Quota on St. Pierre Bank (3Ps) by David W. Hooley Commissioned at the direction of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Honourable Geoff Regan.

Hubley, P.B., Reeves, A., Smith, S.J., and Nasmith, L. 2014. [Georges Bank 'a' and Browns Bank 'North' Scallop \(*Placopecten magellanicus*\) Stock Assessment](#). DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Res. Doc. 2013/079. vi + 58 p.

THIS REPORT IS AVAILABLE FROM THE:

Centre for Science Advice (CSA)
Newfoundland and Labrador Region
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
PO Box 5667
St. John's, NL A1C 5X1

E-Mail: DFO.NLCSA-TNLCAS.MPO@DFO-MPO.GC.CA
Internet address: www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/

ISSN 1919-5087

ISBN 978-0-662-38188-4 Cat. No. Fs70-6/2026-035E-PDF

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of the
Department of Fisheries and Oceans, 2026

This report is published under the [Open Government Licence - Canada](#)



Correct Citation for this Publication:

DFO. 2026. Assessment of Sea Scallop (*Placopecten magellanicus*) on the St. Pierre Bank (NAFO Subdivision 3Ps) in 2025. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep. 2026/035.

Aussi disponible en français :

*MPO. 2026. Évaluation du pétoncle géant (*Placopecten magellanicus*) sur le banc de Saint-Pierre (sous-division 3Ps de l'OPANO) en 2025. Secr. can. des avis sci. du MPO. Avis sci. 2026/035.*