

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Atlantic Herring Management Board

January 31, 2023

9:30 – 10:00 a.m.

Hybrid Meeting

Draft Agenda

The times listed are approximate; the order in which these items will be taken is subject to change; other items may be added as necessary.

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. Welcome/Call to Order (<i>M. Ware</i>) | 9:30 a.m. |
| 2. Board Consent | 9:30 a.m. |
| • Approval of Agenda | |
| • Approval of Proceedings from November 2022 | |
| 3. Public Comment | 9:35 a.m. |
| 4. Set Specifications for the 2023-2025 Fishing Years (<i>E. Franke</i>) Final Action | 9:45 a.m. |
| 5. Other Business/Adjourn | 10:00 a.m. |

The meeting will be held at The Westin Crystal City (1800 Richmond Highway, Arlington, VA; 703.486.1111) and via webinar; click [here](#) for details

MEETING OVERVIEW

Atlantic Herring Management Board

January 31, 2023

9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Hybrid

Chair: Megan Ware Assumed Chairmanship: 08/22	Technical Committee Chair: Renee Zobel (NH)	Law Enforcement Committee Representative: Delayne Brown (NH)
Vice Chair: Vacant	Advisory Panel Chair: Jeff Kaelin (NJ)	Previous Board Meeting: November 7, 2022
Voting Members: ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, NMFS, USFWS (9 votes)		

2. Board Consent

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Proceedings from November 2022

3. Public Comment – At the beginning of the meeting public comment will be taken on items not on the agenda. Individuals that wish to speak at this time must sign-in at the beginning of the meeting. For agenda items that have already gone out for public hearing and/or have had a public comment period that has closed, the Board Chair may determine that additional public comment will not provide additional information. In this circumstance the Chair will not allow additional public comment on an issue. For agenda items that the public has not had a chance to provide input, the Board Chair may allow limited opportunity for comment. The Board Chair has the discretion to limit the number of speakers and/or the length of each comment.

4. Set Specifications for the 2023-2025 Fishing Years (9:45-10:00 a.m.) Final Action

Background

- In September 2022, the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) recommended a 2023-2025 specifications package for Atlantic herring to be submitted to NOAA Fisheries (**Briefing Materials**).
- NOAA Fisheries is working to publish a final rule by February 2023 (after the Board meeting) implementing the specifications for the 2023-2025 fishing years.
- For the 2023 Area 1A fishery, the Board adopted a seasonal quota approach with 72.8% of the Area 1A sub-annual catch limit available June-September (Season 1) and 27.2% available October-December (Season 2) with Season 1 underages rolled into Season 2.

Presentations

- Overview of 2023-2025 specifications by E. Franke

Board actions for consideration at this meeting

- Set specifications for the 2023-2025 fishing years for Atlantic herring, pending release of a rule by NOAA Fisheries

5. Other Business/Adjourn (10:00 a.m.)

Atlantic Herring Technical Committee Task List

Activity Level: Medium

Committee Overlap Score: Medium

Committee Task List

While there are no Board tasks for the TC at present, there are several annual activities in which TC members participate, both through the Commission and NEFMC

- Participation on ASMFC PRT/PDT
- Participation on NEFMC PDT
- Summer/fall collection of spawning samples per the spawning closure protocol
- Annual state compliance reports are due February 1

TC Members

Renee Zobel (NHFG – Chair), Kurt Gottschall (CT DMF), Dr. Matt Cieri (ME DMR), Micah Dean (MA DMF), JA Macfarlan (RI DEM), Rich Pendleton (NY DEC), Matthew Heyl (NJ DEP), Jamie Cournane (NEFMC), Jonathan Deroba (NOAA NEFSC), Carrie Nordeen (NOAA)

**DRAFT PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
ATLANTIC HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**The Ocean Place Resort
Long Branch, New Jersey
Hybrid Meeting**

November 7, 2022

These minutes are draft and subject to approval by the Atlantic Herring Management Board.
The Board will review the minutes during its next meeting.

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INDEX OF MOTIONS

1. **Move to approve agenda** by Consent (Page 1).
2. **Move to approve proceedings of August 2, 2022** by Consent (Page 1).
3. **Move to allocate the 2023 Area 1A sub-ACL seasonally with 72.8% available from June through September and 27.2% allocated from October through December. The fishery will close when 92% of 4 the seasonal period's quota has been projected to be harvested and underages from June through September shall be rolled into the October through December period** (Page 3). Motion by Melanie Griffin; second by Eric Reid. Motion carried by unanimous consent (Page 4).
4. **Move to select Ray Kane as the ASMFC representative on the New England Fishery Management Council's Atlantic Herring Committee** (Page 4). Motion by Dennis Abbott; second by Melanie Griffin. Motion approved by unanimous consent (Page 5).
5. **Motion to adjourn** by Consent (Page 6).

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Megan Ware, ME, proxy for P. Keliher (AA)	Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)
Steve Train, ME (GA)	Justin Davis, CT (AA)
Cheri Patterson, NH (AA)	Bill Hyatt, CT (GA)
Doug Grout, NH (GA)	Sen. Craig Miner, CT (LA)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (LA)	John Maniscalco, NY, proxy for J. Gilmore (AA)
Melanie Griffin, MA, proxy for D. McKiernan (AA)	Joe Cimino, NJ (AA)
Raymond Kane, MA (GA)	Tom Fote, NJ (GA)
Sarah Ferrara, MA, proxy for Rep. Peake (LA)	Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Sen. Gopal (LA)
Conor McManus, RI, proxy for J. McNamee (AA)	Rick Bellavance, proxy for T. Nies, NMFS
David Borden, RI (GA)	Emily Gilbert, NMFS, proxy for A. Murphy

(AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)

Ex-Officio Members

Renee Zobel, Technical Committee Chair	Delayne Brown, Law Enforcement Representative
Jeff Kaelin, Advisory Panel Chair	

Staff

Robert Beal	Madeline Musante	Emilie Franke
Toni Kerns	Tina Berger	Chris Jacobs

Guests

Ashley Asci, NOAA	Wes Eakin, NYS DEC	Jeff Nichols, ME DMR
Robert Atwood, NH F&G	Maria Fenton, NOAA	Victoria Oriole
Rob Beal, ME DMR	Marianne Ferguson, NOAA	Nick Popoff, US FWS
Mel Bell, SC (AA)	Angela Forristall, NEFMC	Will Poston, SGA
Jesse Bisette, NC DNR	Jennifer Foss, NOAA	Chad Power
Kurt Blanchard, RI DEM	Jeanne Fuller, Bangor, ME	Craig Pugh, DE
Sarah Bland, NOAA	Kurt Gottschall, CT DEEP	Kathleen Reardon, ME DMR
Colleen Bouffard, CT DEEP	Heidi Henninger, AOLA	Ross Self, SC DNR
Cameron Brinton, GA DNR	Jay Hermsen, NOAA	Nathan Shivers
Michael Brown, ME DMR	Helen Takade-Heumacher, USFWS	Melissa Smith, ME DMR
Jeff Brust, NJ DEP	Harry Hornick, MD DNR	Renee St. Amand, CT DEEP
Josh Carloni, NH F&G	Jesse Hornstein, NYS DEC	Kevin Sullivan, NH F&G
Nicole Caudell, MD DNR	Dierdre Keliher, ME DMR	Mary Beth Tooley, O'Hara Corp
Matt Cieri, ME DMR	Zack Klyver, Bar Harbor, ME	Jesica Waller, ME DMR
Matt Colson, WVII, Bangor, ME	Jared Lamy, NH F&G	Ben Whalley
Heather Corbett, NJ DEP	Danni Logue	Steven Witthuhn, Greenlawn, NY
Cliff Cosgrove, NOAA	Genine McClair, MD DNR	Chris Wright, NOAA
Jamie Cournane, NEFMC	Lorraine Morris, ME DMR	
Jessica Daher, NJ DEP	Brandon Muffley, MAFMC	
Roman Dudus	Daniel Namur, NOAA	

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The Atlantic Herring Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Monmouth I Room of the Ocean Place Resort, Long Branch, New Jersey via hybrid meeting, in-person and webinar; Monday, November 7, 2022, and was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Megan Ware.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR MEGAN WARE: Good morning, everyone, my name is Megan; I'm the Chair of the Atlantic Herring Management Board, and we're going to call this meeting to order. Since this is our first meeting of the day, I just wanted to reintroduce Doug Grout, who is the new Governor's Appointee for New Hampshire. He is replacing Ritchie White, who has retired. Welcome to Doug Grout, but also a congratulations to Ritchie on all of his efforts over the years.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIR WARE: Our next order of business is Approval of the Agenda. We do have one update under Other Business related to funding for the Portside Sampling Program. Are there any other additions or modifications to the agenda? Seeing none; the agenda is approved by consent.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR WARE: We'll move on to approval of proceedings from August 2022.

Are there any edits to the proceedings from August 2022? Seeing none; the proceedings are approved by consent. All right, so as Toni mentioned, we are having some technical difficulties with the audio on the webinar. I'll see if there are any public commenters in the room in person, and I'm not seeing any.

We will come back to the public comment for herring at a later portion of the meeting, when we have that sorted out. I thank you for your

patience if you are here to make a comment via the webinar today.

UPDATE ON THE NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL'S SPECIFICATIONS FOR 2023 TO 2025

CHAIR WARE: Our next agenda item is an Update on the New England Fishery Management Council's specifications for 2023 to 2025. Emilie is going to provide an update on that process. This is an update only, and I will pass it over to Emilie.

MS. EMILIE FRANKE: Thank you, Chair, and we'll get the presentation up here on the screen in just a moment. At their September meeting the New England Fishery Management Council voted on a Specifications Package for 2023 through 2025. That Specifications Package was based on the most recent stock assessment, which was just completed this year.

Also, based on the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee's recommendations, consistent with the Atlantic Herring Biomass-Based Control Rule, and also consistent with the Atlantic Herring Rebuilding Plan in Framework Adjustment 9. Overall, the 2023 to 2025 annual catch limits remain pretty low in the grand scheme of things, but they are an increase relative to the most recent fishing years. As far as the timeline, the New England Council voted on this Specifications Package in September, and they will be submitting this package to NOAA Fisheries for review and approval. Then NOAA Fisheries rule to implement these specifications is expected to be published in January or February, and this Atlantic Herring Board can consider action to approve these specifications at the upcoming Winter Meeting in February, 2023.

These next two slides show the specifications selected by the New England Council for 2023 through 2025, all in metric tons here. You can see that the overfishing limit, the acceptable biological catch and the ACL increase over time through those three years, 2023 through 2025. The border transfer specification is still set at 0 metric tons.

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As a reminder, for the management uncertainty buffer, if the Canadian New Brunswick weir fishery catches less than its associated trigger, then 1,000 metric tons will be subtracted from that uncertainty buffer, and added to the Area 1A Sub-ACL. This slide now shows the Sub-ACLs for each management area, and also lists what proportion each area receives from the total ACL.

Again, you can see that slight increase from 2023 through 2025. The fixed gear set aside is still set at 30 metric tons, and the research set aside would be set at 0 percent, as it has for the past two years. This slide shows a comparison of the initial 2022 ACLs from this year, as compared to these selected 2023 through 2025 specifications. As you can see, the slight increase relative to 2022, for example this year the Area 1A Sub-ACL was initially just under 1,200 metric tons.

If these specifications are approved, next year that Area 1A Sub-ACL would be just under 3,600 metric tons. Again, for next steps. In January and February, we expect the NOAA Fisheries Rule to be published implementing these specifications, and this Board can consider action to approve those at the Winter Meeting. With that I'm happy to take any questions.

CHAIR WARE: Great, thanks, Emilie, and I'll just note. I believe our next assessment for herring would be 2024, so we'll actually potentially be revisiting the 2025 specifications via that stock assessment. Are there any questions on Emilie's presentation? Yes, Justin Davis.

DR. JUSTIN DAVIS: Something that wasn't in the presentation was the River Herring and Shad Bycatch Caps. My understanding is those were kept status quo, essentially, through this specifications package. When this Board meets to set specifications, is the river herring and shad bycatch cap part of that process, or is that something that is strictly Council only, and we don't have any jurisdiction there?

MS. FRANKE: Thanks for the question. Yes, the River Herring and Shad Catch Caps were kept the same from past years. I looked at the motion approving the specs from last year, and they weren't included in the Commission motion, so I don't think that is something the Commission typically has to approve. But on the Council side, those were kept the same from previous years.

SETTING THE QUOTA PERIODS FOR THE 2023 AREA 1A FISHERY

CHAIR WARE: Any other questions from the Herring Board? All right, seeing none; we will move on to our next agenda item, which is Setting the Quota Periods for the 2023 Area 1A Fishery. Emilie is going to provide an overview of the quota period system as a bit of a refresher for us. Then this is an action item for the Board today, so we will be looking for a motion.

MS. FRANKE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll provide an overview of the Atlantic Herring Quota Period System established by Amendment 3. As Chair stated, the Board action for today is to consider setting the quota periods for the 2023 Area 1A fishery. Per Amendment 3, quota periods shall be determined annually for Area 1A, and the Board can consider distributing the Area 1A Sub-ACL using either a bimonthly, a trimester, or a seasonal quota period to meet the needs of the fishery.

The Board can also decide whether quota from January through May will be allocated to later on in the fishing season, and the Board can specify if underages may be rolled from one period to the next within the same year. Here on the screen, this is from the Amendment, are the different quota period options from Amendment 3.

All of these allocation percentages and options are fixed options, and these options can only be changed through an Addendum. Up top are the bimonthly quota period options. In this case quota would be allocated in two-month periods throughout the year, with options for no landings prior to June 1st. The next option on the bottom

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left is the trimester quota period option, so there are three quota periods throughout the whole year.

Then finally on the bottom right you have the seasonal quota options, with one option for landings prior to June 1st, and one for no landings before June 1st. For reference, here are the quota periods approved by the Board in recent years. In 2019, the Board allocated the Area 1A Sub-ACL using the bimonthly quota period option, with no landings prior to June 1st.

Then for the most recent three years, 2020, '21 and '22, the Board has allocated the Area 1A Sub-ACL using the seasonal quota period option, with no landings prior to June 1st. About 73 percent has been allocated for June through September in recent years, and about 27 percent to October through December.

Then in all three years, the Board has allowed underages from one quota period to be rolled into the next quota period. Again, just to wrap up, the Board's action for today is to consider setting these quota periods for Area 1A for 2023. Again, as a reminder, the New England Council's proposed Area 1A Sub-ACL is just under 3,600 metric tons. With that I am happy to take any questions.

CHAIR WARE: Great, any questions for Emilie, before we look for a motion? All right, seeing none, we are looking for a motion today, and we'll see if we have any either in-person or from webinar.

MS. FRANKE: I see a hand from Melanie Griffin on the webinar.

CHAIR WARE: Great, thank you, Melanie. I believe Melanie has sent in a motion via e-mail, and since we're having some difficulties, maybe I will pinch hit for her and read the motion, and we'll see if we get a second. **The motion by Ms. Griffin is Move to allocate the 2023 Area 1A**

Sub-ACL seasonally with 72.8% available from June through September and 27.2% allocated from October through December. The fishery will close when 92% of the seasonal period's quota has been projected to be harvested and underages from June through September shall be rolled into the October through December period. Motion by Ms. Griffin. Do we have a second? Ray Kane, thank you. All right, Ray, you're actually from the same state as Melanie so we need a different second. Eric Reid, thank you. All right, is there any discussion on the motion today? Yes, Dennis Abbott.

MR. DENNIS ABBOTT: Yes, thank you. I'm not particularly opposed to this motion. But one thing that I've noticed with the low quotas is the fact that every year it seems as though we're getting a thousand tons returned from Canada, which ends up in the October to December period, which really causes a shift in those percentages, so to speak. Where if you look at especially this year with the low numbers, that the October through December catch is greater than in the summer.

I don't know if it's good for the summer bait fish, or whether it's bad. I know we've been depending on menhaden, but I just think that we end up with somewhere, you know maybe 40, 45 percent of the catch actually being caught in the final period. I don't know what the affected states, how they feel about that or whether they think we should be looking at that 72/28 percent looking for comments.

CHAIR WARE: Any reaction to Dennis' comment? I will just remind this Board; we actually had a Draft Addendum III that was looking at different changes. I think some of them were the percentages, others were days out measures in that fall/winter period that you've kind of postponed indefinitely, I believe at this point. We did start to have that discussion, but I don't think we have finished that. Any other comments in reaction to Dennis? Steve Train.

MR. STEPHEN TRAIN: I have similar comments to Dennis, not the exact same thing. But unless I'm

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not seeing this fishery for what I think it is. It's the same boats pretty much regardless of the season, it's just when they're allowed to go. They seem to come in and tie up and then go back out when it opens up, maybe just a little bit of geographic difference.

Knowing that we generally get this rolled in, added on, why do we need to close at 92 percent for summer, knowing we have a tremendous amount of quota left, if there is? You know we could go 96, 97, 98 percent. It's the same boats, it's just when they catch it. As long as we don't go over the total by the end.

CHAIR WARE: I'll just point out. I think the difference between the summer and the winter seasons is the gear types that are permitted, so it's purse seines in the summer and then purse seines and midwater trawls in the winter. I think I saw a hand, yes, Ray.

MR. RAYMOND W. KANE: We're never really sure of that thousand metric ton that gets transferred from Canada. Recently, history has shown us yes, we get it every year. That's also a Council FMP plan, and I don't know what jurisdiction we would have in changing percentages. But we never know if we're going to get the thousand metric ton from Canada, so you want to give the fishermen access. I don't know how you go about changing percentages right now.

CHAIR WARE: Any other comments on this topic? I will just point out, we did have that Draft Addendum III, so if Board members are interested, that is something that they can go back to, to refresh themselves on some of the conversations we've had, and we can go from there at a later date. Toni.

MS. TONI KERNS: The Board probably doesn't have access to that Addendum at this point, so it's hard for them to do so. But if it is the will of the Board that you want to change these percentages in some way that is different than

the options that you have through the FMP, then we would need to direct staff and the PDT to do so, to bring something back to you that is different. But we would want to know what it is that you want them to explore.

MS. FRANKE: I can send around via e-mail after the meeting that previous Draft Addendum III if folks want to take a look at that, and we can perhaps discuss it at the next Board meeting.

CHAIR WARE: All right, so I think that sounds like a good plan moving forward. We do have a motion on the board. We have a motion by Ms. Griffin, a second by Mr. Reid. Is there any opposition to this motion?

MS. FRANKE: No hands on the webinar.

CHAIR WARE: **Okay, seeing none; this motion is approved by unanimous consent.** All right, we're going to move on to our next agenda item today, which is **Considering the Vacant ASMFC seat on the New England Fishery Management Council's Atlantic Herring Committee.** Just as a bit of an introduction on this.

We, the Commission received a seat on the New England Council's Atlantic Herring Committee in 2018, and the seat is now vacant with the retirement of Ritchie White. We need to select a new ASMFC representative to fill that seat on today's Herring Committee. I will be looking for a motion to nominate someone, and Dennis, I see your hand.

MR. ABBOTT: It's my pleasure to nominate the gentleman from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, my good friend, Mr. Raymond Kane to be the representative to the New England Council.

CHAIR WARE: Thank you, Dennis. We'll wait for that motion to be put on the board, and then we will look for a second. All right, so we have a motion on the board. We are looking for a second, and I'm hearing Melanie, you have your hand raised

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on the webinar, so it will be a second by Ms. Griffin. Great, is there any discussion on the motion today? Yes, Dennis.

MR. ABBOTT: In addition to planning on having Ray Kane. It crosses my mind that sending someone, it's an LGA, it's not going to be a State Director to take this position. It ends up being something that is outside of our normal duties as Commissioners, and I feel that the person that goes there should be renumerated in some way with a stipend for every meeting he goes to.

I don't think that the person that we send to the Council meetings should go there, you know I won't say as a volunteer. But I do think that we should consider some reimbursement for that individual. I think that would only be fair. I bring it up at this point. Maybe I'll have to bring it up at another. But I do think that whosoever it is, deserves to be reimbursed. Because you know there has been more and more discussions amongst our LGAs about volunteering our time, and basically without compensation. I think, especially in this case, where it's beyond the normal duties of being a commissioner going to Council meetings, that it would only be fair, in my opinion. But that is my opinion.

CHAIR WARE: I will pass it over to Bob to see if he has any thoughts on that.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROBERT E. BEAL: Dennis, thanks for the comments. You used two different words in there. One you said a stipend, then the other you said reimbursement, so I'm not sure if you're talking about reimbursing travel. It sounds like you are actually looking for a stipend above and beyond reimbursement for travel and meals. Okay, so that's what you're looking for?

You're right, the Commission hasn't done that for any positions that attend Council meetings or attend these meetings or anything else, so I

think that would be obviously Executive Committee and Policy Board would need to take that up and look at the budget, see what's available. It would be a pretty significant shift to how we do business, starting to reimburse those positions. But it can be talked about at the Executive Committee if someone would want to bring it up.

CHAIR WARE: Great, thank you, Bob. I'll go back to the motion on the floor. **Is there any other discussion on this motion? All right, is there any opposition to the motion? I see no opposition so the motion passes.** Ray, maybe I'll just have you take a moment now to put on the record you are a member of the Advisory Panel, and so you will be changing your positions of the Council.

MR. KANE: Yes, if elected by this Commission to the Atlantic Sea Herring position on the New England Council. Speaking on behalf of the Commission at the Council meetings, the Herring meetings, the Atlantic Sea Herring Committee meetings, I will resign my seat on the Atlantic Sea Herring AP of the New England fishery Management Council.

CHAIR WARE: Great, thank you, Ray. All right, so I think that concludes that agenda item.

OTHER BUSINESS

We are moving on to Other Business, so I'll turn it over to Toni, maybe? I'll turn it over to Emilie to just provide an update on the funding for the Portside Sampling Program.

UPDATE ON THE FUNDING FOR THE PORTSIDE SAMPLING PROGRAM

MS. FRANKE: At the last meeting we had a discussion about the funding for the Atlantic Herring Portside Sampling, ending in at the end of 2023, previously supported by ACCSP funds. I talked with Executive Director Bob Beal. It's likely that ASMFC can provide some funding for the following year, 2024, so just a very short-term solution. We still are looking to the states for some long-term guidance on the Herring Portside Sampling.

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CHAIR WARE: Okay, great. It looks like we have a few more years of coverage, still a discussion topic we won't need to have in the future. But I think it's good that we have a little bit of buffer, it looks like.

ADJOURNMENT

Is there any other, Other Business today?
Seeing none; I will ask for a motion to adjourn.
Cheri Patterson and a second from Ray Kane.
Thank you all.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 9:30
a.m. on Monday, November 7, 2022)



New England Fishery Management Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 30, 2022

PRESS CONTACT: Janice Plante
(607) 592-4817, jplante@nefmc.org

Atlantic Herring: Council Signs Off on 2023-2025 Specifications; Receives Stock Assessment Overview

The New England Fishery Management Council voted on a 2023-2025 specifications package that will determine catch limits for the Atlantic herring fishery for the next three fishing years.

The Council took this step during its [September 2022 hybrid meeting](#) in Gloucester and based the decision on:

- The most recent [stock assessment information](#) available;
- The Scientific and Statistical Committee’s overfishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) [recommendations](#) for the resource; and
- The herring rebuilding plan in [Framework Adjustment 9](#).

The 2023-2025 annual catch limits (ACLs) are low but represent an increase from recent fishing years. For comparison, here is what the 2022 area-by-area sub-ACLs were:

Atlantic Herring Management Areas	Initial 2022 Sub-ACLs
Area 1A	1,184
Area 1B	176
Area 2	1,139
Area 3	1,598
Total ACL	4,098

The sub-ACLs above are in metric tons (mt).

2023-2025 Atlantic Herring Specifications (in Metric Tons)

Specification	2023	2024	2025
Overfishing Limit (OFL)	29,138	32,233	40,727
Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)	16,649	23,409	28,181
Management Uncertainty*	4,220	4,220	4,220
Optimum Yield / Annual Catch Limit (OY/ACL)	12,429	19,189	23,961
Domestic Annual Harvest	12,429	19,189	23,961
Border Transfer	0	0	0
Domestic Annual Processing	12,429	19,189	23,961
U.S. At-Sea Processing	0	0	0
Area 1A Sub-ACL (28.9%)*	3,592	5,546	6,925
Area 1B Sub-ACL (4.3%)	534	825	1,030
Area 2 Sub-ACL (27.8%)	3,455	5,335	6,661
Area 3 Sub-ACL (39%)	4,847	7,484	9,345
Fixed Gear Set-Aside	30	30	30
Research Set-Aside as % of Sub-ACLs	0%	0%	0%

* If the New Brunswick weir fishery landings through October 1 are less than the associated “trigger” of 2,722 mt, then 1,000 mt will be subtracted from the management uncertainty buffer and added to the Area 1A sub-ACL and the ACL.



New England Fishery Management Council

The specifications must be approved and implemented by NOAA Fisheries before going into place. The new herring fishing year will begin on January 1, 2023.

STOCK ASSESMENT: Before considering the specifications package, the Council received a [presentation](#) from the Northeast Fisheries Science Center on the [peer reviewed results](#) from the [June 2022](#) Atlantic Herring Management Track Stock Assessment.

The assessment results indicate:

- Atlantic herring is overfished but overfishing is not occurring.

- Survey data from 2020 was missing because surveys did not occur due to public health restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. This issue represents a source of uncertainty in the assessment.

- Spawning stock biomass in 2021 was estimated to be at 21% of the biomass target.

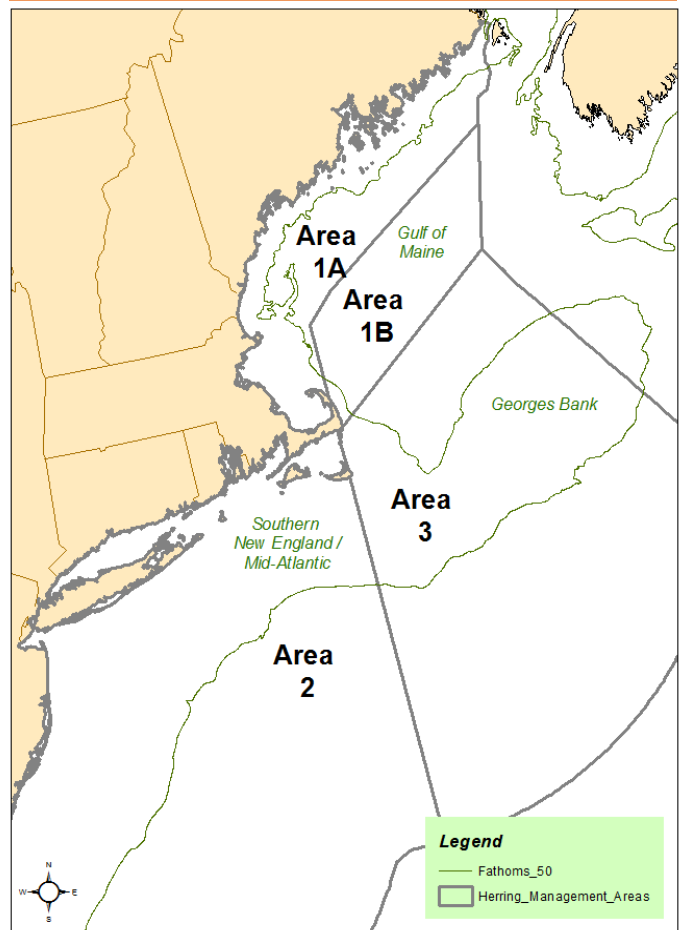
- Fishing mortality in 2021 was very low, estimated at 31% of the overfishing threshold proxy.

- Despite low fishing pressure, recruitment continues to be poor, which is another source of uncertainty. And, among other results,

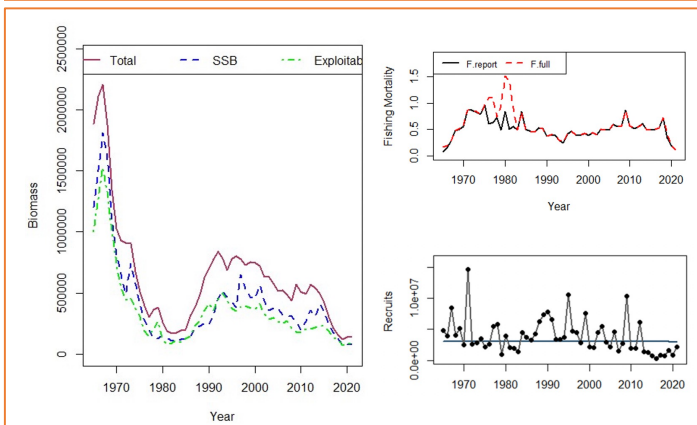
- The assessment used an updated method to develop projections about future recruitment, which the stock assessment peer reviewers, Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), and the Herring Plan Development Team (PDT) consider to be more realistic.



Atlantic Herring Management Areas



2022 Atlantic Herring Assessment Results: Biomass, Fishing Mortality, and Recruitment Trends from 1965 through 2021





New England Fishery Management Council

The SSC considered the assessment results and based its overfishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendations on the Council’s ABC control rule for herring, which was developed in [Amendment 8](#) to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The control rule is biomass-based, so when biomass declines, the allowable level of fishing mortality on the resource also declines. The maximum fishing mortality allowed on the herring resource under the ABC control rule is 80% in order to account for herring’s role in the ecosystem as a forage species. If biomass declines below a specified low level, fishing mortality is reduced to zero.

The specifications also factor in the Council’s rebuilding plan for herring, which was adopted through [Framework Adjustment 9](#) to the Atlantic Herring FMP and [implemented on August 18, 2022](#). Under the framework’s rebuilding projections, the herring resource is expected to rebuild in five years – by fishing year 2026 – assuming long-term average recruitment in the fishery, although updated projections indicate rebuilding may take an additional two years.

The 2023-2025 specifications package will be submitted to the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) for review, approval, and implementation. The package maintains the river herring and shad catch caps that are currently in place for specific gear types as shown in the table below.

FRAMEWORK ADJUSTMENT 7: The Council also discussed [Framework Adjustment 7](#) to the herring plan, which has been under development since 2019. The action proposes measures to protect spawning adult herring on Georges Bank.

The Council considered changing its 2022 herring priorities to discontinue work on the action for several reasons, including: (1) fishing activity for herring on Georges Bank has dropped considerably under the current low catch limits; (2) monitoring and enforcement of offshore spawning areas will be difficult; (3) the Council’s herring staff will be focused on completing and submitting the herring specifications package over the next few months; and (4) much more work needs to be conducted to fully develop the details of Framework 7.

However, many Council members preferred to continue developing the framework, recognizing that focused work on this action will resume in early 2023. Therefore, the Council will proceed with developing the details of this action.

QUESTIONS? Contact Dr. Jamie Courname at jcourname@nefmc.org.

River Herring and Shad Catch Caps Fishing Years 2023-2025 (in metric tons)

Gear and Area	2023	2024	2025
Midwater Trawl Gulf of Maine	76.7	76.7	76.7
Midwater Trawl Cape Cod	32.4	32.4	32.4
Midwater Trawl Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic	129.6	129.6	129.6
Bottom Trawl Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic	122.3	122.3	122.3



Atlantic herring. – Meghan Lapp photo