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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES  
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04333-0021

PATRICK C. KELIHER  
COMMISSIONER

October 15, 2019

Michael Pentony  
Regional Administrator  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
55 Great Republic Drive  
Gloucester, Massachusetts 01930

Robert Beal  
Executive Director  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N  
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Dear Mr. Pentony and Mr. Beal,

On September 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, Maine Marine Patrol issued citations to individuals for violating regulations designed to protect Atlantic herring. The citations included exceeding the weekly Area 1A landing limit of 160,000 pounds, as set by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), failing to file accurate reports of harvest, and failing to hold a permit to buy and sell herring. While these violations are concerning, they are made more egregious by the current status of the Atlantic herring stock, which has experienced low levels of recruitment and subsequent declines in spawning stock biomass over the last few years.

Given the need to ensure accurate reporting of all Atlantic herring harvest, the Maine Department of Marine Resources requests NOAA Fisheries increase the harvest attributed to the Area 1A fishery in 2019 by 175,000 pounds. While it is disappointing that the imprudent actions of a few have consequences for all Area 1A harvesters, it is critical that we fully account for all catch and landings. This will ensure the Area 1A fishery closes when the sub-ACL is projected to be reached, safeguarding against overfishing, and that harvest data used for future stock assessments is as accurate as possible.

I appreciate your consideration of this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Pat Keliher, Commissioner