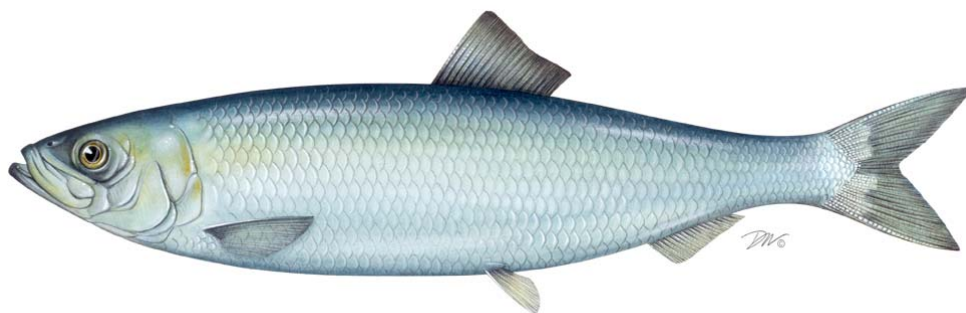




Draft Amendment 3 to the Atlantic Herring FMP



Presented to ASMFC Atlantic Herring Section
October 27, 2014

Issues Presented in PID



- 1. Spawning Area Efficacy (Area 1A)**
- 2. Fixed Gear Set-Aside Provision**
- 3. Empty Fish Hold Provision**

Timeline



February 2014 Section tasks the Plan Development Team to develop Public Information Document

May 2014 Section receives the PID and considers approval for public comment

May – July 2014 Public Comment on the PID

August 2014 Section reviews public comments, considers initiation of Draft Amendment

 October 2014 Section reviews Draft Amendment for public comment

~~November 2014~~
~~– January 2015~~ Public comment on Draft Amendment

~~February 2015~~ Section reviews and approves Amendment

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1.1. Background Information

1.2 Description of the Resource

1.3 Description of the Fishery

1.4 Habitat Considerations

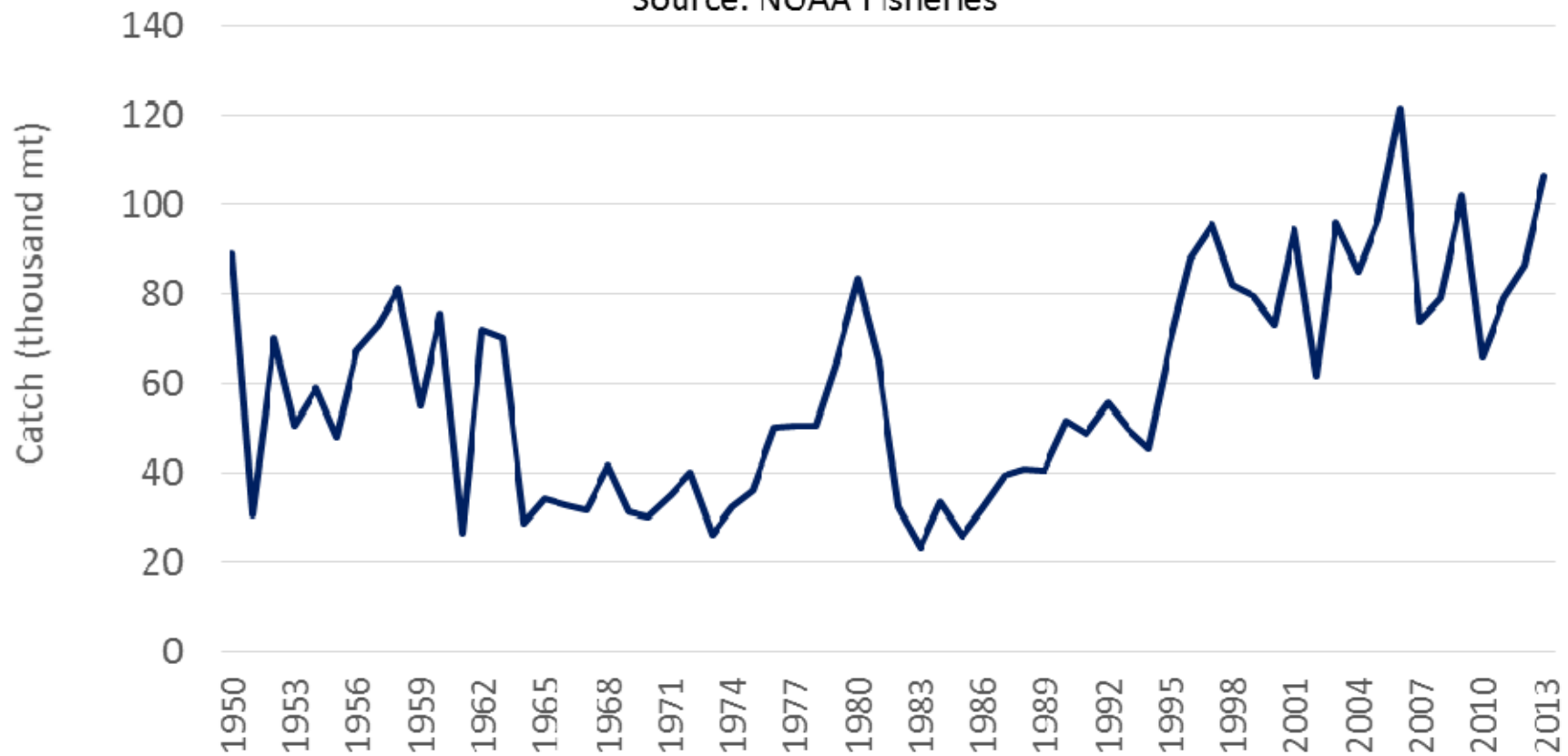
1.5 Impacts of the Fishery Management Program

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Atlantic Herring Commercial Catch

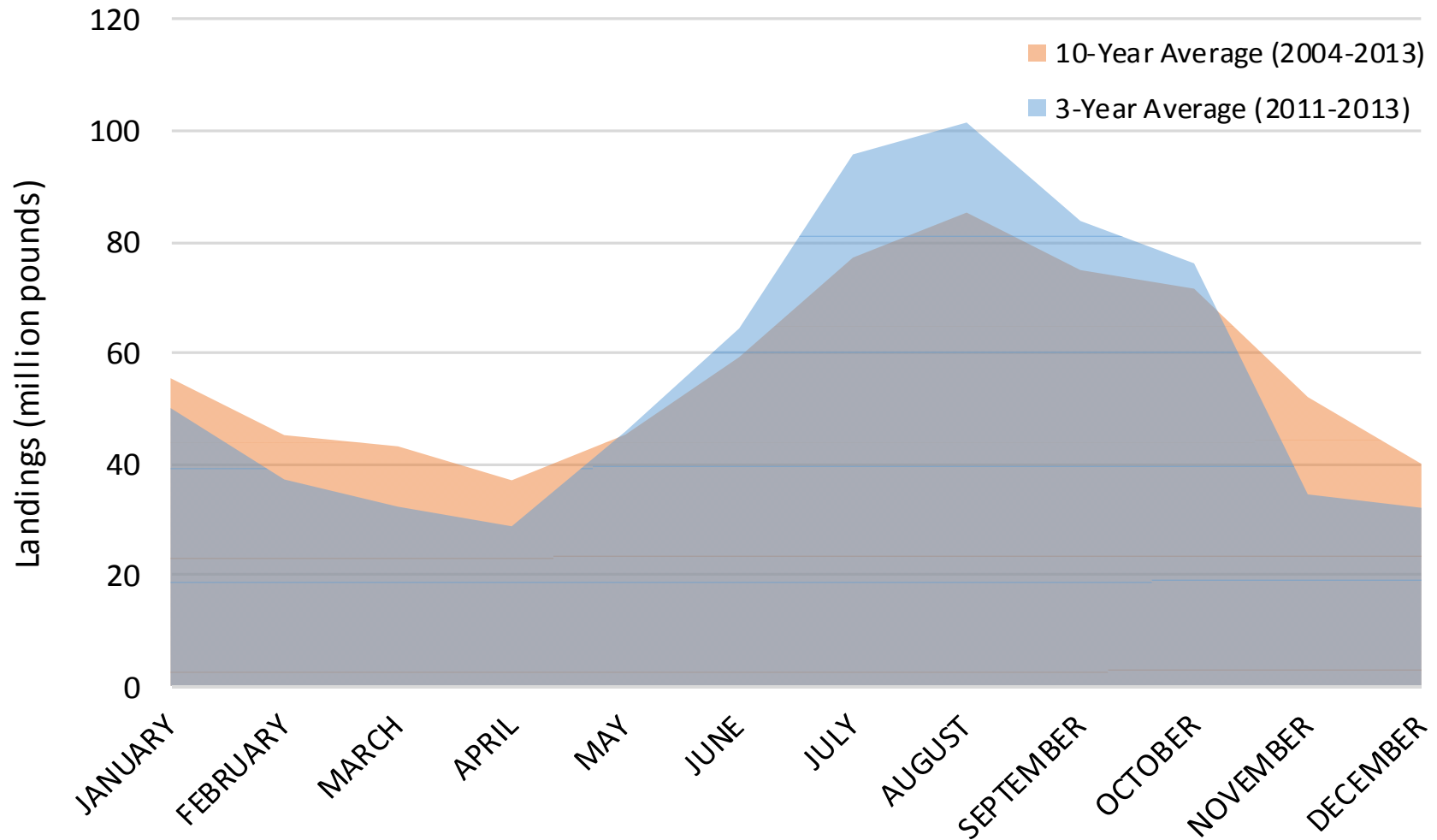
Source: NOAA Fisheries



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Monthly Landings of Atlantic Herring



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Issue 1: Spawning Area Efficacy



Statement of Problem

- There may be variations to the spawning season in the MA-NH spawning area.
- If herring are still spawning after the four-week closure and fishing resumes, there is potential to catch a large amount of spawning herring.
- Current mechanism to extend closure (reclosure) is different from original trigger because it is based on 25% of herring still in spawning stages.

Issue 1: Spawning Area Efficacy



Plan Development Team Considerations

- PDT finds the current spawning area boundary for MA/NH area to be adequate and further sub-areas are not warranted. However, it recommends extending spawning closure by at least 2 weeks in the MA/NH area.
 - Gear bias due to spawning herring's vertical stratification

Issue 1: Spawning Area Efficacy



Socioeconomic Impact Analysis

- Negative impact on industry.
 - Cost to business outweighs the need for additional protection of a rebuilt stock.
 - 2012 case study: extended spawning closure reduced fishing days
 - Concern for midwater trawlers being displaced farther northeast, where smaller fish are located.

Issue 1: Spawning Area Efficacy



Management Options

Option 1: Status Quo: By default, spawning area closure will last four (4) weeks. Catch sampling of the fishery will resume at the end of the initial four-week closure period. If catch sampling indicates significant numbers of spawn herring are still ~~being harvested~~ *in the area*, closures will resume for an additional two weeks. Significant numbers of spawn herring is defined as 25% or more mature herring, by number in a catch sample, have yet to spawn. Mature or “spawn” herring are defined as Atlantic herring in ICNAF gonadal stages V and VI.

Option 2: Two-Week Extension to the Massachusetts-New Hampshire Spawning Area: The MA-NH spawning area closure will last six (6) weeks. The additional two weeks will serve as a default extended closure in lieu of continued sampling and reclosure.

Issue 2: Fixed Gear Set-Aside



Statement of Problem

- Anecdotal evidence of sea herring in Gulf of Maine after November 1.

Issue 2: Fixed Gear Set-Aside



Plan Development Team Considerations

- No biological basis for or against adjusting fixed gear set-aside provision.
- Historically, sea herring migrate off the coast of Maine by November.
- Fixed gear landings have not fully utilized set aside in past 10 years.
- If fixed gear set-aside is exceeded, can still access total Area 1A sub-quota.
- If adjusted, state and federal rules would be inconsistent.
- Additional studies are needed to verify shift in migration patterns (occurring in the GOM after November 1)

Issue 2: Fixed Gear Set-Aside



Socioeconomic Impact Analysis

- Neutral impact on industry.
 - Costs needed for complementary plan action outweighs the need to adjust set-aside.
 - Set-aside is a small portion of the total allowable catch (2013-2015: 295 mt of 31,200 mt in Area 1A)
 - Landings data from past 10 years shows no landings from November – December.

Issue 2: Fixed Gear Set-Aside



Management Options

Option 1: Status Quo: The fixed gear set-aside will be available to fixed gear fishermen in Area 1A until November 1. If the set-aside has not been utilized by the fixed gear fisheries west of Cutler by November 1, it will then be made available to the remainder of the herring fleet fishing in Area 1A until the directed fishery in 1A closes. *Fixed gear fishermen can continue fishing and landings will count towards the Area 1A sub-quota.* If 92% of the Area 1A TAC has already been reached by November 1 (and the directed herring fishery in 1A is therefore closed), the set-aside will be released as part of the 5% set-aside for incidental catch in 1A (at a 2,000 lb trip limit).

Issue 2, Option 2: Remove the fixed gear set-aside rollover provision: The fixed gear set-aside will be available to fixed gear fishermen west of Cutler through December 31. When 92% of the Area 1A TAC has been reached, all directed herring fisheries in Area 1A will closed. Unused portions of the fixed gear set-aside will not be rolled from one year to the next.

Issue 3: Empty Fish Hold Provision



Statement of Problem

- Instances of large catches resulting in unsold fish that is a challenge to dispose
- Issue of mixing and double-counting of catch landed from multiple trips (impacts monitoring of bycatch and incidental catch).

Issue 3: Empty Fish Hold Provision



Plan Development Team Considerations

- The PDT recognizes fishermen may have surplus catch that cannot be sold and is a challenge to dispose.
- The proposed requirement to empty vessel holds of fish may be an incentive to curb wasteful fishing practices and harvest more efficiently to meet market demands.
- Could eliminate the practice of keeping fish in a hold from one fishing trip and mixing with catch from another trip.
- Needs considerations for enforcement, unforeseen events that make it impossible to sell fish, and vessels that land at multiple ports.
- At this time, not enough information to inform number/limit of waivers.

Issue 3: Empty Fish Hold Provision



Socioeconomic Impact Analysis

- Positive impact on industry.
 - Incentive for fishermen to better plan fishing activities to meet market demand
 - Waiver system can serve as a way to collect data on frequency and reasons for unmarketable fish.
 - Safer conditions on vessels.

Issue 3: Empty Fish Hold Provision



Management Options

Option 1: Status Quo: No empty fish hold provision. There is no requirement to empty vessel holds of fish prior to a fishing trip departure.

Option 2: Empty Fish Hold Provision: This option would require that fish holds on Category A/B Atlantic herring vessels are empty of fish before leaving the dock on any trip when declared into the Atlantic herring fishery. A waiver may be issued for instances when there are fish in the hold after inspection by an appropriate law enforcement officer (the intent is for waivers to be issued for refrigeration failure and non-marketable fish that have been reported by the vessel). Only vessels departing on a fishing trip (i.e. declared into the fishery) are required to have holds empty of fish. As such, waivers would not be required for vessels transporting fish from dock to dock.

A government official must be verify the amount of fish in a hold, reason(s) for unmarketable fish, and vessels transporting fish to multiple ports.

Update on Development



- PDT requests additional time for complete analysis of spawning efficacy.
- Advisory Panel is interested in holding an in-person meeting.



Questions?

