

Herring Committee Report

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Agenda

1. Potentially approve OFL/ABC recommendations for 2019-2021.
 2. Approve the range of alternatives for 2019-2021 specifications (Framework 6).
- About a dozen Herring Committee motions to consider (**Document #4**)



SSC Recommendations (Oct 2018)

Specification	2019 (mt)	2020 (mt)	2021 (mt)
OFL	30,668	38,878	59,788
ABC	21,266	16,131	30,659 16,131

- **Document #6**
- Council reviewed this report at December 2018 meeting.
- TOR - use results from 2018 assessment and new control rule proposed in Amendment 8 (A8).
- SSC expressed concern that projections used assumption of long-term average for recruitment resulting in large projected biomass increase for 2021.

Alternative 2 original

	2019	2020	2021
OFL	30,668	38,878 41,830	59,788 69,064
ABC	21,266	16,131	30,659 16,131

Herring Fishery Specifications (Doc. #3)

- **Typical measures:**

1. OFL/ABC/ACL
2. Management uncertainty buffer
3. Border Transfer (BT)
4. US at-sea processing by domestic vessels (USAP)
5. Seasonal sub-ACL restrictions (IA and IB)
6. Research Set-aside (RSA)
7. Fixed gear set-aside (FGSA)
8. River herring/shad (RH/S) catch caps

- **Atypical measure:**

1. Update overfishing/overfished definition

This action may be for one year only (2020)

- Herring Assessment schedule has been modified from every three years, to an update every two years.
- Next assessment scheduled for Spring 2020 (will incorporate data from 2018 and 2019).
- Current specs action (2019-2021) includes 2019, which was already set by NMFS through 2019 in-season adjustment.
- This action will include 2021, but intend to review results of 2020 assessment and then develop a new 3-year package for 2021-2023.
- Therefore, for this action the focus should be on 2020 since 2019 already set and 2021 may be replaced.



Draft Purpose and Need (Table I)

Need	Purpose
To prevent overfishing while providing additional flexibility and promoting the full utilization of optimum yield (OY).	Specify OFL and ABC and set specifications for the 2019-2021 fishing years.
Continue to address and minimize the catch and bycatch mortality of river herring and shad to the extent practicable.	Implement RH/S catch caps that are intended to provide strong incentive for the industry to continue to avoid RH/S and reduce RH/S catch to the extent practicable and promote flexibility to adjust catch caps in the future as more information becomes available.
Update the overfishing definition to be consistent with the best available science regarding the status of the Atlantic herring resource.	Update the overfishing definition to be consistent with the 2018 Atlantic herring benchmark assessment.

By Consensus, the Committee recommends the Council adopt the purpose and need as drafted in Section I.1 (page 5), and delete purpose #2 related to RH/S.

Overfishing/Overfished Definition (Section 2.1, p.11)

- Alternative 1 – current definition (No Action)
- Alternative 2 – updated definition (to clarify and make consistent with 2018 assessment)

PDT drafted an updated definition, see underlined text.

- Clarify MSY or MSY proxy

- Update biomass to spawning stock biomass

By Consensus, the Committee recommends the Council include the two alternatives drafted for overfishing/overfished definition (Section 2.1).



OFL / ABC (Section 2.2.1)

- Alternative 1 (No Action – 2019 measures rollover)
- Alternative 2 (Consistent with A8 CR (“original” or “updated”))
- Alternative 3 (If A8 disapproved – interim ABC CR could be anything, currently drafted to be consistent with interim ABC CR for 2016-2018 specs)
- *Note: 2019 measures the same under all alternatives, and 2021 measures expected to be replaced by subsequent action after 2020 assessment update.*

See Committee Motions #1, #2, and #3
Recommend the Council include Alternative 2 original,
Alternative 2 updated, and Alternatives 1 and 3.

OFL/ABC – “Original” vs. “Updated”

- **PDT Memo (Document #5)**
- PDT explored updating projections for 2 reasons:
 - 1) updated estimate of 2018 landings; and 2) 2019 measures more certain.
- Original used 49,900 mt for 2018 landings, but update is 55,000 mt (driven by higher Canadian landings – over 11,000 mt).
- 2019 ABC now certain from NMFS in-season action (21,266 mt).
- Results (Table 2 vs. Table 3):
 - Probability of overfishing in 2018 now 69%, compared to 50%.
 - Probability of overfished in 2018 now 76%, compared to 72%.
 - Probability of overfishing in 2019 now 20%, compared to 15%.
 - 2020 “updated” ABC is about 2,000 mt less than “original” alternative.

Is Alternative 3 “Required” ?

- At Herring Cmte meeting assumed this action needed an alternative ABC CR in the event A8 was disapproved.
- Staff has continued this discussion with NMFS and now advises the Council can consider Alt. 3, but it does not have to.
- If desired, the Council could use the A8 CR, if there’s a basis for finding it’s suitable for use on a short term or interim basis, regardless of whether it is approved as a long-term strategy in A8.
- Council can consider Alternative 3 or any other CR on a short term basis before A8 approved. After A8 approved, intent would be to apply that CR moving forward, unless modified by FW or Amendment.

Cmte discussion of ABC CR alternatives

- Timing issue - would SSC have recommended a lower ABC if the updated projections were presented to them?
- Poverfishing relatively low for Alt. 1, Alt. 2 original and Alt 2 updated, all risk averse.
- Alt. 2 updated should be considered as an alternative since it uses the most accurate estimate of catch.
- Support Alt. 2 updated being considered, but not as the final alternative (*differences in Poverfishing very small and there are real socioeconomic considerations, this is a one year action only, Canadian catch very variable, facing large quota reductions already, new assessment early next year*).

Potential 2020 OFL/ABC Alternatives

2020	Alternative 1	Alternative 2 (Original)	Alternative 2 (Updated)	Alternative 3
OFL	30,668	38,878	40,574	???
ABC	21,266	16,131	14,265	???

- Alternative 3 can be included, it does not have to be.
- ABC for Alt 1 and possibly Alt 3 will be higher than the current SSC recommendation.
- If range is Alt. 1, Alt 2 original and Alt.2 updated that would be sufficient in terms of reasonable range.

Questions and Discussion of Committee Motions on:

- 1) Purpose and Need
- 2) OFL/ABC alternatives for 2019-2021

(Five relevant motions expected)



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Management Uncertainty – Sect. 2.2.2.2, p.20

- Diff. between ABC and ACL – helps ensure ABC not exceeded.
- In the past, based on evaluation of uncertainty in estimating:
 1. Canadian catch - overall trend downward, but very variable. Dramatic increase in NB shutoff fishery in 2018.
 2. State water catch – less than 20 mt recently, and accounted for under fixed gear set-aside.
 3. Discards – counted against sub-ACLs, relatively low, but may be more uncertain with lower observer coverage rates.
- 1,000 mt can rollback to Area 1A sub-ACL after Oct 1 if unused.

See Committee Motion #8:
Recommend the Council include 3 options
(3-year, 5-year, and 10-year) and adjust trigger value.

BORDER TRANSFER (Section 2.2.3, p.21)

- US caught herring transshipped to Canada via Canadian carrier vessels, must be used for human consumption.
- Not a set-aside – it is a maximum allowance caught in Area 1A by US vessels and transferred to Canadian vessels.
- Separate dealer code tracked by NMFS.
- Has been 4,000 mt since FMP was implemented, but in 2019 action it was set to zero (as recommended by the Council).
- Recent usage very small (well under 1,000 mt).

See Committee Motion #4a – set BT at 250mt.

US AT-SEA PROCESSING (Section 2.2.3, p. 23)

- Part of allocated catch that may be allocated for at-sea processing by US vessels that exceed the vessel size limits.
- Was set at 20,000 mt at one time; however, operations never materialized. Has been set to 0mt more recently.

See Committee Motion #5 – set USAP at 0mt

MANAGEMENT AREA SUB-ACL %s

- Committee discussed if alternatives should be added to this action to consider modifying the current allocations by area.

By consensus, do not include alternatives in this action.

SEASONAL (MONTHLY) SUB-ACL DIVISIONS

- Area 1A (0% Jan – May) and Area 1B (0% Jan – Apr)
- Committee did not specify for this action (so assume they remain the same).

RESEARCH SET-ASIDE (RSA) (Section 2.2.6, p.23)

- Regulations allow up to 3% of the sub-ACL for each management area.
- Council already approved research priorities for 2019-2021.
- Announcement published in summer 2018; final awards expected soon.
- 2019 in-season action specified RSA as 3% of each sub-ACL.
- Potential for RSA generated research greatly reduced compared to previous years with quota reductions.

See Committee Motion #6 – set RSA at 3%

FIXED GEAR SET-ASIDE (FGSA) (Section 2.2.7, p.24)

- Up to 500mt of the Area IA sub-ACL can be set-aside until November 1 for fixed gear fishermen west of Cutler, ME.
- Set-aside is removed from Area IA sub-ACL and returned after November 1 if set-aside is not used.
- It has been set at 500mt, 295mt for 2013-2018, set to 0mt in earlier years, and was 39mt in 2019, as recommended by the Council.

See Committee Motion #7 – set at a level equivalent to the same proportional reduction as the total reduction from 2019 to 2020.

RH/S catch caps – Section 2.3 p. 25

- **No Action**
- **Other Alternatives?**

The PDT discussed 5 possible alternatives – does not recommend any be developed further (*rationale in italics*).

1. Adjust RH/S catch caps proportional to herring ACLs
 2. Same method (average of last 3 years) but with updated data
 3. Survey index based cap
 4. Original allocations
 5. Two-phase approach (similar to MAFMC with mackerel)
- The PDT provided 3 additional comments of general input related to RH/S catch caps (p.27-28)

Other Business

- **Motion #9**
- For discussion of future 2020 work priorities: consider modifying measures in the herring plan that potentially inhibit optimizing yield in the mackerel fishery
 - modify the relatively low possession limit after directed herring fishery closes (2,000 lbs).
 - modify seasonal closure of Area 1B from Jan – April.
- No need to act on this today, Committee can discuss further in September when 2020 priorities are discussed.

Questions and Discussion of Committee Motions on:

- 3) Management uncertainty
- 4) BT
- 5) USAP
- 6) sub-ACL %s
- 7) RSA
- 8) FGSA
- 9) RH/S catch caps

(Seven relevant motions expected)