



New England Fishery Management Council

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FINAL MEETING SUMMARY

Herring Committee

Sheraton Harborside, Portsmouth NH

January 16, 2015*

**There was no quorum at the Herring Advisory Panel meeting on January 15, 2015; discussion from the AP members who attended the January 15 Herring AP meeting is summarized in this document (see attached summary slides).*

The Herring Committee met on January 16, 2015 in Portsmouth NH to: receive a report from the January 5 Herring Plan Development Team (PDT) and January 15, 2015 Herring Advisory Panel (AP) meetings; review Action Plans for the 2016-2018 Atlantic herring fishery specifications and an amendment to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to consider control rules for the Atlantic herring fishery that account for herring's role as forage in the ecosystem (Amendment 8 to the Herring FMP); discuss possible cooperative research priorities for any research set-aside that may be allocated in 2016-2018 during the Atlantic herring fishery specifications process and develop recommendations; and review/approve a draft scoping document for Amendment 8; and develop recommendations regarding the options under consideration in the NMFS-led omnibus Industry-Funded Monitoring (IFM) Amendment to address observer coverage on Atlantic herring vessels.

MEETING ATTENDANCE: Doug Grout (Chairman), Matt McKenzie (Vice Chair), Pete Kendall, Vincent Balzano, Mary Beth Tooley, Jeff Kaelin, John McMurray, Terry Stockwell, Peter Christopher (9 Herring Committee members present, Gibson and Pierce absent); Lori Steele, Rachel Feeney (NEFMC staff); Carrie Nordeen, Aja Szumylo (NMFS GARFO staff); Mitch MacDonald (NOAA General Counsel); Wendy Gabriel and Kiersten Curti (NEFSC); Chris Weiner, Gerry O'Neill (Herring AP); Brad Schondelmeier (MA DMF), Matt Cieri (ME DMR), Erika Fuller, Glenn Robbins, Patrick Paquette, JJ Bilodeau, Shaun Gehan, Ray Kane, other interested parties.

KEY OUTCOMES

- The Herring Committee recommends the Council approve the Amendment 8 scoping document (with some revisions to the discussion on p. 4 to address a broader ecosystem context, i.e., herring as predator, prey, competition – See Motion #1).
- The Herring Committee approved two motions related to the options under consideration in the omnibus IFM amendment related to coverage targets on Atlantic herring vessels: Motion #6 relates to providing a mechanism to allow for at-sea monitoring (versus NEFOP-level

sampling) for the herring/mackerel fisheries; Motion #7 proposes a clarification for coverage on pair trawl vessels that do not take on fish (wing vessels).

- The Herring Committee did not develop a recommendation for the Council to consider regarding the selection of a ***Preferred Alternative*** for the options to address Atlantic herring coverage targets in the omnibus IFM amendment.

Detailed minutes of the January 16, 2015 Herring Committee meeting are provided below.

HERRING PDT AND HERRING AP MEETING REPORTS

Ms. Steele, Herring Plan Development Team (PDT) Chairman, provided the Herring Committee with a summary of the January 5, 2015 joint meeting between the Herring PDT and the Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) PDT. She also summarized recent information about some challenges that assessment scientists are facing related to the upcoming stock assessment for Atlantic herring (see January 5, 2015 PDT Report for more information).

Chris Weiner, Herring Advisory Panel (AP) Chairman, summarized the discussion from the January 15, 2015 Herring AP meeting. There was no quorum at the Herring AP meeting; discussion from the AP members who attended the meeting is summarized in this document (see attached summary slides).

AMENDMENT 8 SCOPING DOCUMENT

The Herring Committee reviewed a draft scoping document for an amendment to establish a control rule for acceptable biological catch (ABC) in the Atlantic herring fishery. The Committee considered the language in the draft scoping document relative to the language in the November 2014 Council motion, particularly the first part of the motion: *That for herring priorities, the Council prioritize an amendment to consider control rules for the Atlantic herring fishery that account for herring's role as forage in the ecosystem.* The majority of the Committee members were comfortable with the language in the draft scoping document and felt that it communicates the Council's intent to consider control rules that address forage/ecosystem issues.

- Mr. Kaelin suggested that the paragraph on p. 4 could be revised to reflect Atlantic herring's role not only as a prey species, but also as a predator. Ms. Tooley added that the discussion could reflect consideration of broader ecosystem issues.
- Dr. McKenzie proposed some language regarding goals/objectives, which Committee members generally agreed need further discussion and may be too specific for a scoping document.
- Several members of the audience commented on the draft scoping document for Amendment 8 and expressed support for moving the document forward.

1. MOTION: KAELIN/MCKENZIE

That the Council approve the Amendment 8 scoping document (with some revisions to the discussion on p. 4 to address a broader ecosystem context, i.e., herring as predator, prey, competition)

Discussion on the Motion: Ms. Steele agreed to provide some revised text for p.4 of the scoping document for the January 2015 Council meeting. Dr. McKenzie agreed to forward his suggestion for goals/objectives to Council staff, not for inclusion in the scoping document, but for generating ideas for the discussion on p. 4 (issues, concepts).

MOTION #1 CARRIED 7-0-1.

2016-2018 ATLANTIC HERRING RSA RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The Herring Committee reviewed the priorities for cooperative research under the 2014-2015 research set-aside (RSA) program and developed recommendations regarding research priorities for the upcoming Atlantic herring fishery specifications, should the Council choose to allocate RSA. The Committee considered the Herring PDT recommendations and the discussion from the Herring AP members present at the January 15, 2015 meeting.

2. MOTION: TOOLEY/KAELIN

To amend the 2014-2015 priorities under any RSAs allocated in the upcoming Atlantic herring fishery specifications by:

- Maintaining priorities of portside sampling, river herring bycatch avoidance
- Including electronic monitoring as a priority
- Adding the Herring AP members' recommendation #1 – research to improve the Atlantic herring stock assessment
- Eliminating the research priority related to exploring net sensor technology

These four priorities would be listed without ranking (equally important).

Discussion on the Motion: This motion would result in four equally-important research priorities for any RSA that is allocated during the upcoming Atlantic herring fishery specifications: (1) portside sampling; (2) river herring bycatch avoidance; (3) electronic monitoring; (4) research to improve the Atlantic herring stock assessment.

MOTION #2 CARRIED 6-1-1.

3. MOTION: KENDALL/BALZANO

Recommend that the Council send a letter to the NEFSC asking for input on the Herring AP member-recommended research priority to identify which ideas can help with the Atlantic herring stock assessment

Discussion on the Motion: No further discussion.

MOTION #3 CARRIED 6-0-2.

HERRING OBSERVER COVERAGE OPTIONS IN OMNIBUS IFM AMENDMENT

The Herring Committee reviewed the range of options under consideration in the NMFS-led omnibus amendment to establish provisions for industry-funded monitoring (IFM) across all fisheries. Ms. Szumylo and Ms. Nordeen (GARFO staff) presented an overview of the options under consideration and the analyses in the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the omnibus IFM amendment. This amendment also addresses the disapproved elements of Amendment 5 to the Herring FMP (observer coverage requirements) and proposes a range of options for coverage targets for the Atlantic herring and mackerel fisheries. Several Herring Committee members asked questions and provided comments regarding the information and analyses in the draft EA.

- Ms. Tooley and Mr. Kaelin expressed concern about the economic impact analyses provided in the Draft EA for the herring/mackerel coverage target options. Ms. Tooley noted that the estimates of fixed costs do not appear to accurately reflect costs for the herring fishery. For example, the document includes costs for ice, but most herring vessels use refrigerated seawater systems. Dockside pumping fees (for offloading) do not seem to be accounted for, and estimates of insurance seem low.
- The Committee members also discussed concerns related to the overall costs for the industry to pay for NEFOP-level sampling and expressed interest in exploring cost savings that may be associated with at-sea monitoring versus NEFOP-level observer coverage.

4. MOTION: KAELIN/TOOLEY

To recommend to the Council to add an alternative in the industry-funded monitoring amendment that would analyze the costs of a maximized retention/shoreside monitoring/electronic monitoring option

Discussion on the Motion: Mr. Kaelin emphasized the need to develop a program that meets the needs of the fishery and is affordable for the industry. Ms. Balzano asked for clarification on the maximized retention element in the motion. Mr. Kaelin recognized that some details like the maximized retention provisions could be implemented in a trailing action but noted that his intent is to develop an option that allows the industry to move forward with something to address monitoring needs in the herring and mackerel fisheries now. Otherwise, he feels that no action would be the only viable option in the document. Mr. Kaelin feels that the current range of options for herring/mackerel in the document are unrealistic because the industry cannot afford a sampling program based on requirements to meet standards for NEFOP data.

MOTION #4 PERFECTED:

To recommend to the Council to add an alternative in the industry-funded monitoring amendment that would include a maximized retention/shoreside monitoring/electronic monitoring option

Further Discussion: Dr. McKenzie expressed concern about moving forward too quickly with developing EM standards/provisions without considering the implications that may be outside the scope of the herring fishery. Ms. Nordeen suggested that one way to proceed may be to move forward with the omnibus elements of the IFM amendment and spend more time

developing the options herring/mackerel coverage targets. The Committee members agreed that this may be a good approach to consider.

MOTION #4 (PERFECTED) FAILED 2-4-2.

5. MOTION: TOOLEY/KENDALL

To recommend to the Council to add Alternative 2.2.2.5 for 100% coverage on fishing in groundfish closed areas to the document

Discussion on the Motion: GARFO staff confirmed/clarified that the provisions requiring 100% observer coverage in the year-round groundfish closed areas would be considered/prioritized as an IFM program when the amendment is implemented; this program was therefore added to the options for coverage targets in the herring fishery in the IFM amendment. (The motion is essentially a formality for the record, assuming the document eventually moves forward.)

MOTION #5 CARRIED 4-0-2.

6. MOTION: TOOLEY/KAELIN

To recommend to the Council to add an alternative that would allow the use of at-sea monitors to replace NEFOP observers in the observer program for the herring fishery

Discussion on the Motion: Ms. Tooley stated that her intent is to include an alternative in the document that offers some costs savings for the industry.

MOTION #6 PERFECTED:

To recommend to the Council to add an alternative that would allow the use of at-sea monitors to replace NEFOP observers in the industry-funded observer program for the herring fishery

MOTION #6 (PERFECTED) CARRIED 4-0-2.

7. MOTION: TOOLEY/KAELIN

To recommend to the Council to add an alternative that would allow a wing vessel to be exempt from observer coverage. These vessels would be prohibited from carrying fish.

MOTION #7 CARRIED 5-0-1.

The Herring Committee did not develop a recommendation regarding the selection of a *Preferred Alternative* for the options to address Atlantic herring coverage targets in the omnibus IFM amendment.

ATTACHMENT
SUMMARY OF HERRING ADVISORY PANEL DISCUSSION (NO QUORUM)
JANUARY 15, 2015

Herring AP mtg January 15

- Six AP members present, so no quorum
- Discussed assessment, specifications, RSA priorities, Amendment 8, & industry-funded monitoring amendment
- Formulated lists of comments, but no consensus recommendations or motions.

Herring Assessment and Specifications

Comments from AP members present

- In the face of assessment uncertainty, the prudent thing to do is to roll over the specifications with a constant catch.
- A summer survey in the Gulf of Maine would be timed well with fish aggregations.
- Acoustic technology should be used more.
- Schedule the benchmark ASAP.

2016-2018 Herring RSA priorities

*Revised and prioritized
by AP members present*

1. Cooperative research to improve the stock assessment (acoustic surveys, tagging projects with scientists and fishermen during traditional fishing seasons). This would augment the NEFSC surveys.
2. River Herring Bycatch Avoidance – Develop and/or demonstrate methods that will enable river herring bycatch avoidance in the Atlantic herring fishery.
3. Portside Sampling – Develop and/or demonstrate a portside sampling program that will comprehensively characterize catch landed by Atlantic herring vessels.
4. Explore Video Monitoring Through a Pilot Program – Investigate the feasibility of electronic video monitoring in the Atlantic herring fishery as a means to document vessel fishing and catch processing operations.
5. Explore Net Sensor Technology Through “Study Fleet” – Investigate applications of passive monitoring systems for midwater trawl, small-mesh bottom trawl, and purse seine vessels in an attempt to identify conditions leading to higher rates of bycatch, improve the quality and timeliness of reporting, and, potentially help measure the extent of slippage.

Amendment 8

Comments from AP members present

- Having a control rule formalizes the ABC decision-making process. It has value.
- Some concern about developing a control rule without a good understanding of the stock status (assessment issues). Can you move forward conceptually at this time?
- Take into consideration herring as predator and prey (as forage) in setting the control rule.
- Is herring as predator and prey already taken into consideration in the assessment (within natural mortality)? If so, would considering forage in a control rule be “double dipping”?
- Factor in environmental aspects (e.g., temperature, salinity, pollution) into the control rule.
- What is the range of this control rule? Is this just for setting overall ABC or is there scope for temporal/spatial aspects?

Industry-funded monitoring

Comments from AP members present

- Support including alternatives for electronic monitoring and portside sampling.
- Good fisheries management requires good data, not just for the herring fishery.