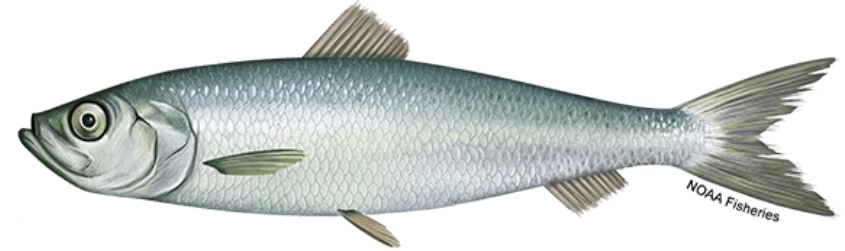


# Atlantic Herring Committee Report

**NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

**PORTLAND, MAINE**

**APRIL 15, 2026**



New England Fishery  
Management Council

# 2026 COUNCIL OUTLOOK

## Atlantic Herring

- 2026 Action
- Stock Assessment
- 2027 Priorities
- Ongoing, Multi-year, and New for 2026



# 2026 Atlantic Herring Outlook by Quarter

Council Priority	Jan – Mar	Apr - Jun	July - Sept	Oct - Dec
<b>Action: herring specifications 2027-2031, river herring /shad measures &amp; other management measures</b>	PDT completes Council tasking on river herring/shad		PDT develops measures and impacts analysis	
		Council: update on action	Council: update on action/initiate if FW	Sub-Panel SSC meets RH/S: TBD
			Council: final action	NOAA: review; target Jan 1 implementation
<b>Management Track Stock Assessment</b>		Peer Review: June	SSC meets: August	
<b>2027 Council Priorities</b>			Preliminary discussion/list	Council: Set 2027 Priorities

Ongoing: Coordinate with MAFMC/ASMFC on Atlantic herring, Atlantic mackerel and river herring and shad issues

Multi-year: Amendment 10/user group conflicts (paused)

New: Modifications to Vessel Baseline Restrictions (in response to EO 14276)

Updated April 8, 2026, NEFMC Staff



# 2026 ACTION - AMENDMENT OR FRAMEWORK ADJUSTMENT

For Today's Meeting:

Receive an update on the development of the action.



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# SCOPE

To set specifications for Atlantic herring for fishing years 2027-2031 and to modify other management measures (i.e., specifications process and carryover), and to enhance river herring (alewife and blueback herring) and shad (American shad and hickory shad) avoidance and other catch reduction measures to better support ongoing coastwide restoration efforts for those species.



# COUNCIL'S PROBLEM STATEMENT FOR RIVER HERRING & SHAD

The current management measures to address catch of shad and river herring in the directed Atlantic herring fishery have catch estimation challenges and were instituted when the abundance and landings of Atlantic herring were much higher than they presently are. This action will augment efforts to restore and maintain runs of river herring and shad through consideration of management alternatives for the directed Atlantic herring fishery that enhance river herring and shad avoidance and catch reduction (e.g., time/area closures and/or reconsideration of catch caps).



# LIKELY RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

Action 1 – Atlantic Herring Specifications Process

Action 2 – Atlantic Herring Specifications for 2027-2031

Action 3 – Carryover of Unharvested Catch

Action 4 – River Herring and Shad Management Measures



# TIMELINE

*Note: Additional meetings of PDT/TC, AP, and CTE to be scheduled.*



<b>March 2</b>	Herring PDT
<b>March 23</b>	Herring AP
<b>April 15</b>	Council: update on action
<b>May 20</b>	Herring AP
<b>May 21</b>	Herring Committee
<b>June 8</b>	Herring AP & Committee
<b>June 23-25</b>	Council: update on action, initiate if FW
<b>June 29-30</b>	2026 June Management Track Assessment Peer Review
<b>August 11-12</b>	SSC Meeting: Herring ABC/OFLs
<b>August – September</b>	Herring AP & Committee meetings
<b>September 15-17</b>	Council: final action
<b>September – December</b>	Action submission
<b>January 1, 2027</b>	Target implementation

PDT completes Council tasking on river herring/shad

PDT develops measures and impacts analysis

SSC Subpanel meets to review RH/S work: Date TBD



# SPECIFICATION ITEMS

- Several values updated via specifications actions
- Some are updated each specifications cycle, others have remained static
- Border transfer, US at-sea processing, and research set-aside have been set to 0 mt in recent years

Herring Fishery Specifications	
Overfishing Limit (OFL)	
Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)	
Optimum Yield (OY)/Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	
Management Area sub-ACLs	Area 1A (28.9%)
	Area 1B (4.3%)
	Area 2 (27.8%)
	Area 3 (39%)
Management Uncertainty buffer	
Domestic annual harvest (DAH)	
Domestic annual processing (DAP)	
Border Transfer (BT)	
US at-sea processing (USAP)	
Fixed gear set-aside	
Research set-aside (RSA)	
River herring and shad (RH/S) catch caps	



# SPECIFICATION ITEMS

## PDT Discussion:

- Transshipment is included in MSA; tied to border transfer. May need to remain on specifications list
- Suggest retaining RSA specification for future renewed interest; removing and adding back would require reestablishing the Herring RSA
- Unaware of recent interest in US at-sea processing - possible candidate for removal from specifications
- Question to Herring AP: is there industry interest in conducting at-sea processing?



# MANAGEMENT TRACK STOCK ASSESSMENT

## Overview of Assessment Plan:

- Update 2025 Research Track WHAM model
- Data inputs will remain relatively unchanged, updated through 2025
- Model configuration will remain the same unless required to resolve problematic diagnostics
- Began work to address some Research Track recommendations, not expected to be ready for use in Management Track
  - Combine federal survey data with other surveys that catch age-1 herring more frequently
  - Consider using seabird diet data for herring recruitment index
- Backup Assessment Plan: Ismooth (empirical, index-based approach)



# COUNCIL TASKING, JUNE 24, 2024

1. That the Atlantic Herring Plan Development Team assess data availability and analyze and develop alternatives for Amendment 10 that implement time/area closures for portions of Atlantic Herring Management Areas 2 and 3 where aggregations of river herring and shad overlap with the directed Atlantic herring fishery.
2. That the Atlantic Herring Plan Development Team assess data availability and analyze and develop alternatives for Amendment 10 that implement revisions to the basis of river herring and shad catch cap values that: (1) are reflective of regional river herring/shad abundance, and (2) scale (with ceilings and floors) to changes in Atlantic herring abundance and/or regional river herring abundance.
3. That the Atlantic Herring Plan Development Team analyze and develop recommendations for implementing improvements to the accuracy and precision of river herring and shad catch estimates in the directed Atlantic herring fishery.



# RIVER HERRING & SHAD

**3. That the Atlantic Herring Plan Development Team analyze and develop recommendations for implementing improvements to the accuracy and precision of river herring and shad catch estimates in the directed Atlantic herring fishery.**

## **STATUS:**

- A sub-group of the PDT completed the tasking including drafting a summary report between November 2024 and February 2026.
- The draft report was reviewed by the entire PDT by correspondence and at its meeting on [March 3, 2026](#).
- The PDT agreed with the conclusions and recently finalized the report.
- The PDT analysis and report will be presented at the May 20, 2026 Advisory Panel and May 21, 2026 Committee meetings.
- The Council will also receive the report at its June 23-25, 2026 meeting.



# RIVER HERRING AND SHAD

**1. That the Atlantic Herring Plan Development Team assess data availability and analyze and develop alternatives for Amendment 10 that implement time/area closures for portions of Atlantic Herring Management Areas 2 and 3 where aggregations of river herring and shad overlap with the directed Atlantic herring fishery.**

## **STATUS:**

- The PDT received a presentation on species distribution modeling work in [January 2025](#).
- The PDT continues to develop the model.
- The PDT plans to present its work at the joint Advisory Panel and Committee meeting on June 8, 2026.
- The Council will also receive the report at its June 23-25, 2026 meeting.
- A peer review by a sub-panel of the SSC is being organized to review the PDT's analysis.



# RIVER HERRING AND SHAD

2. That the Atlantic Herring Plan Development Team assess data availability and analyze and develop alternatives for Amendment 10 that implement revisions to the basis of river herring and shad catch cap values that: (1) are reflective of regional river herring/shad abundance, and (2) scale (with ceilings and floors) to changes in Atlantic herring abundance and/or regional river herring abundance.

## STATUS:

- The PDT received a presentation on ASMFC's 2024 River Herring Benchmark Stock Assessment in [November 2024](#). One of the Terms of Reference was on developing a biological basis for the catch caps.
- The PDT will explore the approaches developed in the Benchmark and other options.
- The PDT plans to present its work at the joint Advisory Panel and Committee meeting on June 8, 2026.
- The Council will also receive the report at its June 23-25, 2026 meeting.
- A peer review by a sub-panel of the SSC is being organized to review the PDT's analysis.



# ADVISORY PANEL MEETING, MARCH 23, 2026

Overview of Discussion:

## ***2027-2031 Herring Specifications***

- Economic stress on the fishery; try to follow outlined timeline to implement new specs ASAP
- Support for leaving border transfer/ US at-sea processing/ RSA specifications in place
  - Likely limited interest in US at-sea processing given current status of fishery/ shoreside infrastructure
  - Could be interest in border transfer sardine market returns
  - May be more efficient to maintain specification items rather than remove and restart
- Concerns about setting 5-year specifications



# ADVISORY PANEL MEETING, MARCH 23, 2026

Overview of Discussion:

## ***River Herring and Shad***

- Suggestion to include data from prior to 2019 for species distribution modeling; examine results from before and after 2014 to determine impacts of RH/S catch caps
- Could incorporate river herring tagging data into distribution models
- PDT developing species distribution models; discussion around using River Herring Avoidance Project work if appropriate, but some concerns about accuracy, work is also preliminary
- Some interest in PDT evaluating scaling river herring bycatch allowances as percentage of total Atlantic herring catch – no formal recommendation or consensus (covered under RH/S Task 2)



# 2026 ACTION- AMENDMENT OR FRAMEWORK ADJUSTMENT

For Today's Meeting:

Receive an update on the development of the action.

Thank you for your time today.



# ADDITIONAL SLIDES

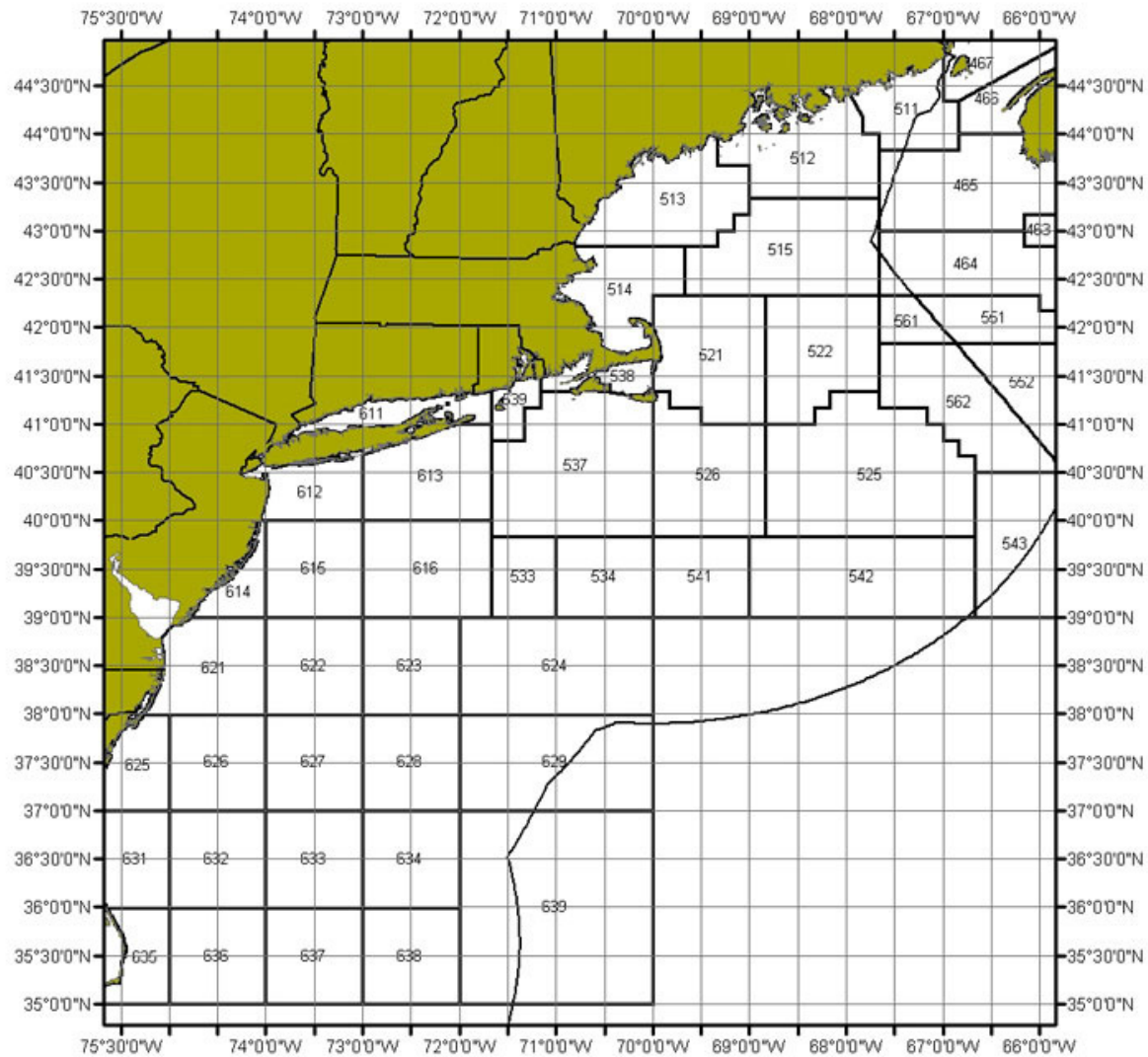


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## Amendment 10 to the Atlantic Herring FMP: Action Development to Date

Updated April 10, 2026

<b>December 2022</b>	Council passes a motion to “revisit Amendment 8 inshore midwater trawl closure”; Council prioritizes an analysis to investigate what combination of factors may have led to low shad & river herring bycatch estimates in 2020-2022.
<b>April 2023</b>	Herring Committee & Advisory Panel discuss priority, develop tasking motions for Herring PDT; Herring PDT develops memo re: river herring and shad priority; Council passes a draft problem statement, remanded it to the Committee for refinement.
<b>June 2023</b>	Council adopts the draft problem statement.
<b>September 2023</b>	Council passes a motion tasking the Herring Committee and PDT with developing a scoping document for public scoping process; Council initiates Amendment 10 (A10).
<b>December 2023 January 2024</b>	Council adds consideration of river herring and shad management measures to A10; Revises problem statement for river herring and shad; Council approves the scoping document; scoping process commences.
<b>March – June 2024</b>	Public Scoping period for A10 (March 1-April 30); Herring PDT develops summary of public comments.
<b>June 2024</b>	Herring Committee & Advisory Panel, Council receive summary of public comments, provide tasking to the Herring PDT re: analyzing user group overlap on the Atlantic herring resource, analyzing and developing alternatives/recommendations related to river herring and shad.
<b>October 2024 – March 2025</b>	Herring PDT works to address Committee & Council tasking; Council receives progress report at January 2025 meeting.
<b>April 2025</b>	Council moves to substitute the 2025 priority regarding A10 to develop an omnibus action to address management flexibility measures. Resuming work on A10 will be considered during the Council’s annual priority setting process in December 2025.
<b>December 2025</b>	Council considered resuming with on A10 during its annual priority setting process. The Council shifted the river herring and shad aspects of A10 into a new action, under development in 2026.



<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/map/greater-atlantic-region-statistical-areas>



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