New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street • Newburyport, MA 01950 • (978) 465-0492
Daniel Salerno, Chair • Cate O'Keefe, PhD, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 10, 2026

TO: Scientific and Statistical Committee Subpanel

FROM: Cate O'Keefe, Executive Director

SUBJECT: **Terms of Reference for November 17 meeting regarding river herring and shad catch in the Atlantic herring fishery**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

A. Consider background information including the performance of the current river herring and shad catch caps in the Atlantic herring fishery and previous ocean studies of river herring and shad.
B. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the methods and summary products of the Atlantic Herring Plan Development Team's work on species distribution models and closure options. Provide suggestions for improvements to the methods and/or summary products where appropriate. Topics to consider include, but are not limited to, the following:
    a. Does the work clearly define and describe the data sources, methods, and assumptions with a level of detail sufficient to assess results and applicability to management?
    b. Does the project appropriately characterize river herring and shad catch in the Atlantic herring fishery? Are there additional data sources, aggregations, resolutions, etc. that should be considered? Are key areas of uncertainty identified and addressed?
    c. Are the conclusions scientifically robust?

C. Provide feedback about whether and how outcomes could inform management approaches.

BACKGROUND

The Council is developing Amendment 12 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan to consider modifying management measures related to river herring and shad catch in the Atlantic herring fishery among other fishery measures. Final action is planned for the Council's April 2027 meeting. The Atlantic Herring Plan Development Team has been working to assess data availability and analyze and develop alternatives under the direction of the Council's Atlantic Herring Committee.

The work to be reviewed by the SSC Subpanel includes species distribution models for river herring, shad, and Atlantic herring. These models include observation data and several factors (year, environmental variables, etc.) to map species distribution across a defined spatial area and can predict abundance across the area. The models were developed to support identification of potential time-area closures and understanding the impacts of these closures on river herring and shad species as well as the Atlantic herring fishery.

Webinar Registration. To be able to view the webinar, listen and speak, you must: 1) register for the webinar in advance and 2) join the webinar on the day of the meeting (you can then select phone or computer for your audio connection). For the best audio and visual experience, update your Zoom desktop application prior to the meeting. Please join the webinar ten minutes prior to test audio and help the meeting start on time.

Questions/Technical Support. If you have any questions about the meeting documents, agenda, or how to participate, please contact Rachel Feeney (rfeeney@nefmc.org, 978-465-0492x110). Staff would be happy to set up a practice webinar for you ahead of the meeting if that would be helpful.

Meeting Materials. To make the most of our meeting time, please familiarize yourself with the documents beforehand and come ready to make any recommendations. As documents become available, they will be posted on the Council webpage: https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/nov-17-2026-ssc-subpanel-webinar.

Meeting Notice

Agenda

Terms of Reference

1. **Atlantic Herring Plan Development Team**
    a. Presentation: Management and project context, Dr. Jamie Cournane, PDT Chair
    b. Presentation: Species distribution modeling, Dr. Micah Dean, MADMF
    c. Report: *Species Distribution Models to Inform Time-area Closures to Minimize River Herring and Shad Catch in the Atlantic Herring Fishery*, November 10, 2026
    d. Relevant background information
2. **Correspondence** (if any)