Atlantic Herring Committee Report

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
MYSTIC, CT
JUNE 23, 2026

New England Fishery
Management Council

2026 Atlantic Herring Outlook by Quarter

Council Priority	Jan – Mar	Apr - Jun	July - Sept	Oct - Dec
Action: herring specifications 2027-2031, river herring /shad measures & other management measures	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: 8/24 Council: final action	Action submission NOAA: review; target Jan 1 implementation
Management Track Stock Assessment		Peer Review: June 29-30	SSC meets: August 11-12	
2027 Council Priorities			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 June 12, 2026, NEFMC Staff

2026 ACTION - AMENDMENT OR FRAMEWORK ADJUSTMENT

For Today's Meeting:

1) Receive a progress report and
2) Initiate a framework adjustment, if necessary, depending on the range of alternatives

New England Fishery Management Council

DRAFT SCOPE

To set specifications for Atlantic herring for fishing years 2027-2031, modify management measures for river herring (alewife and blueback herring) and shad (American and hickory shad) and modify other fishery management measures (i.e., specifications process and carryover).

COUNCIL'S PROBLEM STATEMENT FOR RIVER HERRING & SHAD FROM AMENDMENT 10

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

Updated June 12, 2026 by Council staff.
Note: Additional meetings of PDT/TC, AP, and CTE to be scheduled.

March 2	Herring PDT
March 23	Herring AP
April 15	Council: update on action
April 27	Herring PDT
May 20	Herring AP
May 21	Herring Committee
May 26	Herring PDT
June 8	Herring AP & Committee
June 9	Herring PDT
June 23-25	Council: progress report, initiate if FW
June 29-30	2026 June Management Track Assessment Peer Review
August 11-12	SSC Meeting: Herring ABC/OFLs
August 24	SSC Subpanel Meeting: Review RH/S work
September 2	Herring AP & Committee meeting
September 15-17	Council: final action
September – December	Action submission
January 1, 2027	Target implementation

Atlantic Herring Peer Review: June 30

PDT completes Council tasking on river herring/shad

PDT develops measures and impacts analysis

JUNE 8 COMMITTEE MOTION 1A

To recommend that the Council prioritize in the scope for the 2026 action to:

1) Set Atlantic herring specifications for fishing years 2027-2031

And the Plan Development Team would continue working on:

2) Modify Atlantic herring management measures to avoid or minimize the catch of river herring and shad through time/area closures with and without the existing catch cap methodology

3) Update the Atlantic herring specifications process

4) Modify carryover provisions for unharvested catch

The motion carried 6/2/0.

ACTION 1 – ATLANTIC HERRING SPECIFICATIONS PROCESS

SPECIFICATIONS PROCESS: DRAFT ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: No Action

- Process for setting herring specifications would remain unchanged
- List of specifications items would remain unchanged

Alternative 2: Update the Specifications Process

- Revise to make the process regulations less prescriptive
    - Committee tasked PDT to continue this work

MAY 21 COMMITTEE CONSENSUS STATEMENT

Consensus Statement 1: For the Plan Development Team to continue to develop Alternative 2 in the Atlantic herring specifications process section as outlined in the presentation to the Committee today. “Alternative 2: Update the Specifications Process: Revise to make the process regulations less prescriptive”

ACTION 2 – ATLANTIC HERRING SPECIFICATIONS FOR 2027-2031

SPECIFICATIONS: DRAFT ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: No Action

- Continue the specifications from the 2025-2027 specifications action

Alternative 2: Updated Specifications

- Based on 2026 management track stock assessment & SSC recommendations
- Evaluation of management uncertainty, including Canadian catch
    - PDT recommends to continue using most recent 10-year average
- Identify status quo specifications
    - PDT recommends no changes to the approach
- Committee tasked PDT to:
    - Preliminarily set border transfer, US at-sea processing, herring RSA at zero, and
    - Add an alternative increasing the fixed gear set-aside from 30 mt to 45 mt

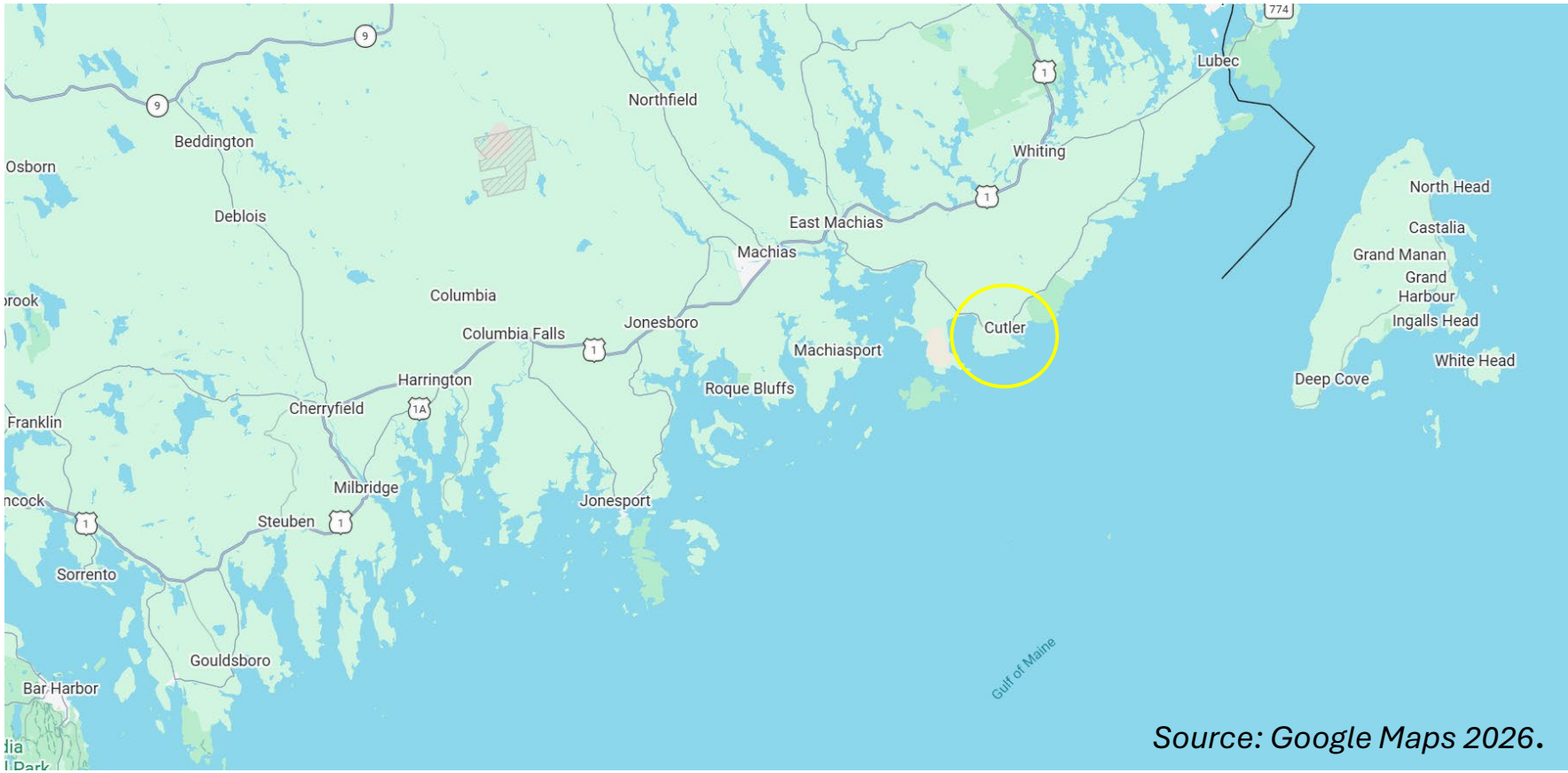
SPECIFICATIONS: CURRENT SPECIFICATIONS (MT)

	2026	2027
Overfishing Limit (OFL)	23,491	31,075
Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)	13,165	13,165
Management Uncertainty*	4,031	4,031
Optimum Yield (OY) / Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	9,134	9,134
Domestic Annual Harvest (DAH)	9,134	9,134
Border Transfer (BT)	0	0
Domestic Annual Processing (DAP)	9,134	9,134
US At-Sea Processing (USAP)	0	0
Area 1A sub-ACL (28.9%)	2,640	2,640
Area 1B sub-ACL (4.3%)	393	393
Area 2 sub-ACL (27.8%)	2,539	2,539
Area 3 sub-ACL (39%)	3,562	3,562
Fixed Gear Set-Aside	30	30
Research Set-Aside (RSA) as % of sub-ACL	0%	0%

FIXED GEAR SET-ASIDE DATA

- Fixed gear data pulled from west of Cutler, Maine
- Average landings 2016 – 2025: 16.1 mt
  - Range from 1 to 48 mt, annually
  - More detailed information not available to ensure confidentiality

Source: ME DMR, May 27, 2026



Source: Google Maps 2026.

AREA 1A/ NEW BRUNSWICK WEIR FISHERY TRANSFER, 2016-2025 PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

Year	Management Uncertainty (mt)	Buffer exceeded? (Using final landings)	Transfer threshold (mt)	Amount of transfer (mt)	Made transfer? (using preliminary landings)	Threshold exceeded? (using final landings)	Preliminary landings at time of transfer (mt)	Final landings (mt)	Difference in landings (mt)
2016	6,200	No	4,000	1,000	Yes	Yes	3,478	4,130	652
2017	6,200	No	4,000	1,000	Yes	No	1,732	2,244	512
2018	6,200	Yes	4,000	N/A	No	Yes	N/A	13,371	N/A
2019	6,200	Yes	4,000	1,000	Yes	Yes	2,250	6,482	4,232
2020	4,560	Yes	2,942	1,000	Yes	Yes	1,125	6,951	5,826
2021	4,669	Yes	3,012	1,000	Yes	Yes	1,209	4,870	3,661
2022	4,669	No	3,012	1,000	Yes	Yes	1,385	4,315	2,930
2023	4,220	No	2,722	1,000	Yes	No	525	1,485	960
2024	4,220	No	2,722	1,000	Yes	No	930	2,681	1,751
2025	4,031	No	2,722	1,000	Yes	Yes	1,223	3,475	2,252

Source: NOAA/GARFO, May 26, 2026.
Note: Landings include both the New Brunswick weir and shutoff portions of the fishery. Analysis is preliminary.

SPECIFICATIONS: UPCOMING MEETINGS

Date	Meeting	Locations
June 29-30	Peer Review: Atlantic Herring Stock Assessment	Woods Hole, MA + Webinar
July TBD	PDT/TC	Webinar
August 11-12	SSC: OFLs/ABCs for Atlantic Herring	New Bedford, MA + Webinar
August TBD	PDT/TC	Webinar

MAY 21 COMMITTEE CONSENSUS STATEMENT & MOTION

Consensus Statement 2: Move to preliminarily set border transfer, research set-aside, and US at-sea processing to zero.

Motion 1: Move to task the Plan Development Team to include an alternative to increase the Fixed Gear Set-Aside from 30 mt to 45 mt.

Motion 1 carried by consensus and without objection.

ACTION 3 – CARRYOVER OF UNHARVESTED CATCH

CARRYOVER OF UNHARVESTED CATCH

- Committee recommended developing 2 alternatives for carryover:
  - No action
  - “An item to allow for improved flexibility such that the Council could recommend annual changes dependent on best available data from the fishery”

CARRYOVER – FISHING YEAR 2025 TO FISHING YEAR 2027 PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

Sub-ACL	1A	1B	2	3	ACL
Initial 2025 sub-ACL (mt)	1,317	196	1,267	1,777	4,556
Adjusted 2025 sub-ACL (mt)	2,317	196	1,267	1,777	5,556
2025 catch (mt)	1,776	216	72	1,093	3,158
Underage/Overage (mt)	541	-20	1,195	684	N/A
Percent Overage (%)	N/A	110	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percent of Overage to deduct (only over 10%) (%)	0	0	0	0	N/A
Amount of overage deduction (mt)	0	0	0	0	0
Carryover (up to 10%) (mt)	132	N/A	127	178	N/A
Initial 2027 sub-ACL (mt)	2,640	393	2,539	3,562	9,134
Adjusted 2027 sub-ACL (mt)	2,772	393	2,666	3,740	9,134
Percent increase with carryover (%)	5	N/A	5	5	N/A

Source: NOAA/GARFO, May 26, 2026. Analysis is preliminary.

MAY 21 COMMITTEE MOTION

Motion 2: Move to task the PDT to develop alternatives for carryover that include a no action item and an item to allow for improved flexibility such that the Council could recommend annual changes dependent on best available data from the fishery.

Motion 2 carried by consensus and without objection.

QUESTIONS

ACTION 4 – RIVER HERRING AND SHAD MANAGEMENT MEASURES

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 AND SHAD: TASK 1

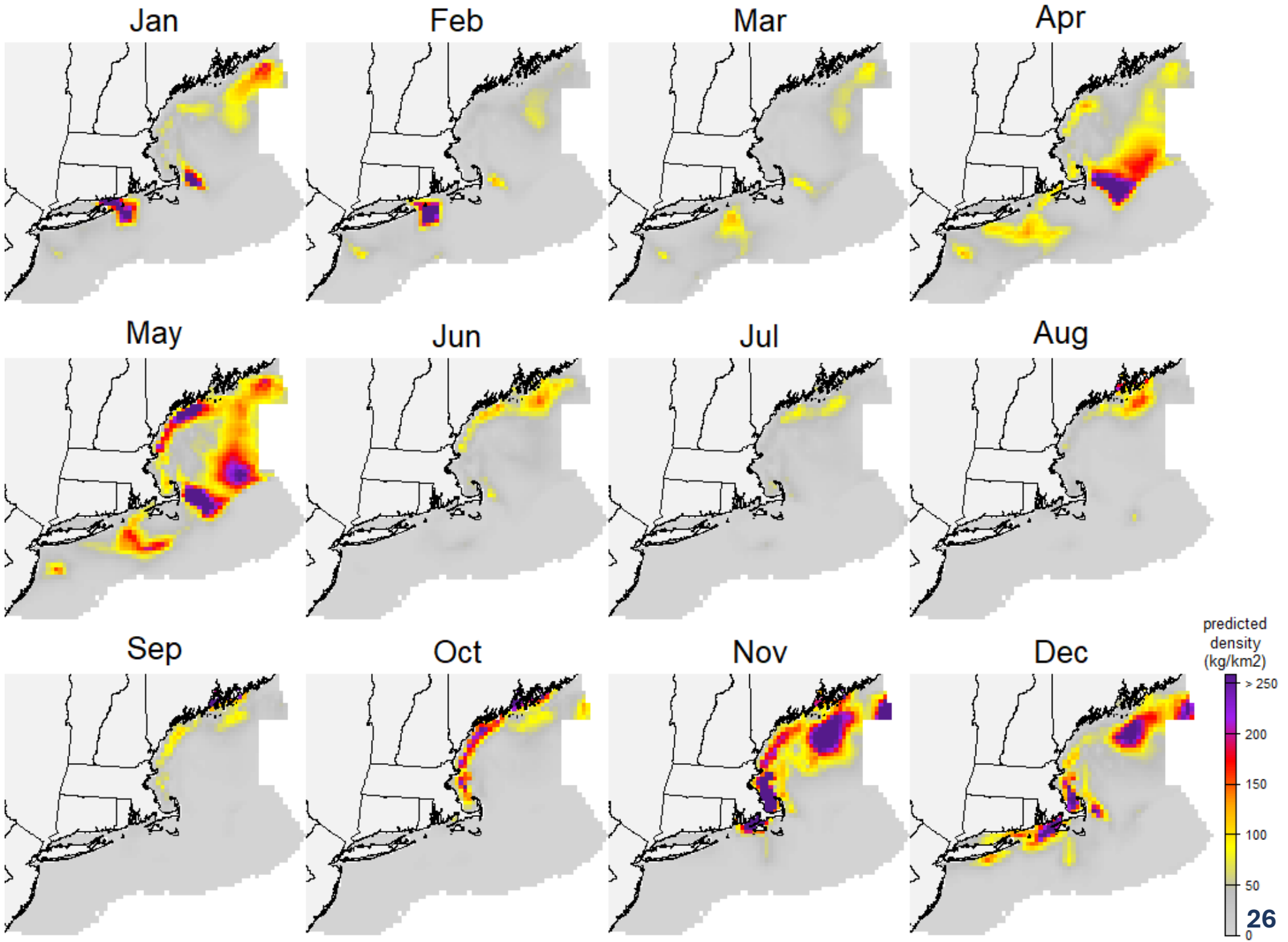
1. That the Atlantic Herring Plan Development Team assess data availability and analyze and develop alternatives for Amendment 10 that implement time/area closures for portions of Atlantic Herring Management Areas 2 and 3 where aggregations of river herring and shad overlap with the directed Atlantic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

STATUS:

- PDT developed species distribution models for river herring, shad and Atlantic herring, along with hypothetical time/area closures.
    - Uses coastwide data from observed fishing hauls (MWT + SMBT) and federal and state trawl surveys
    - Spans the years 2000-2022
    - Includes over 80,000 hauls/survey tows
- PDT presented its work at the joint Advisory Panel and Committee meeting on June 8.

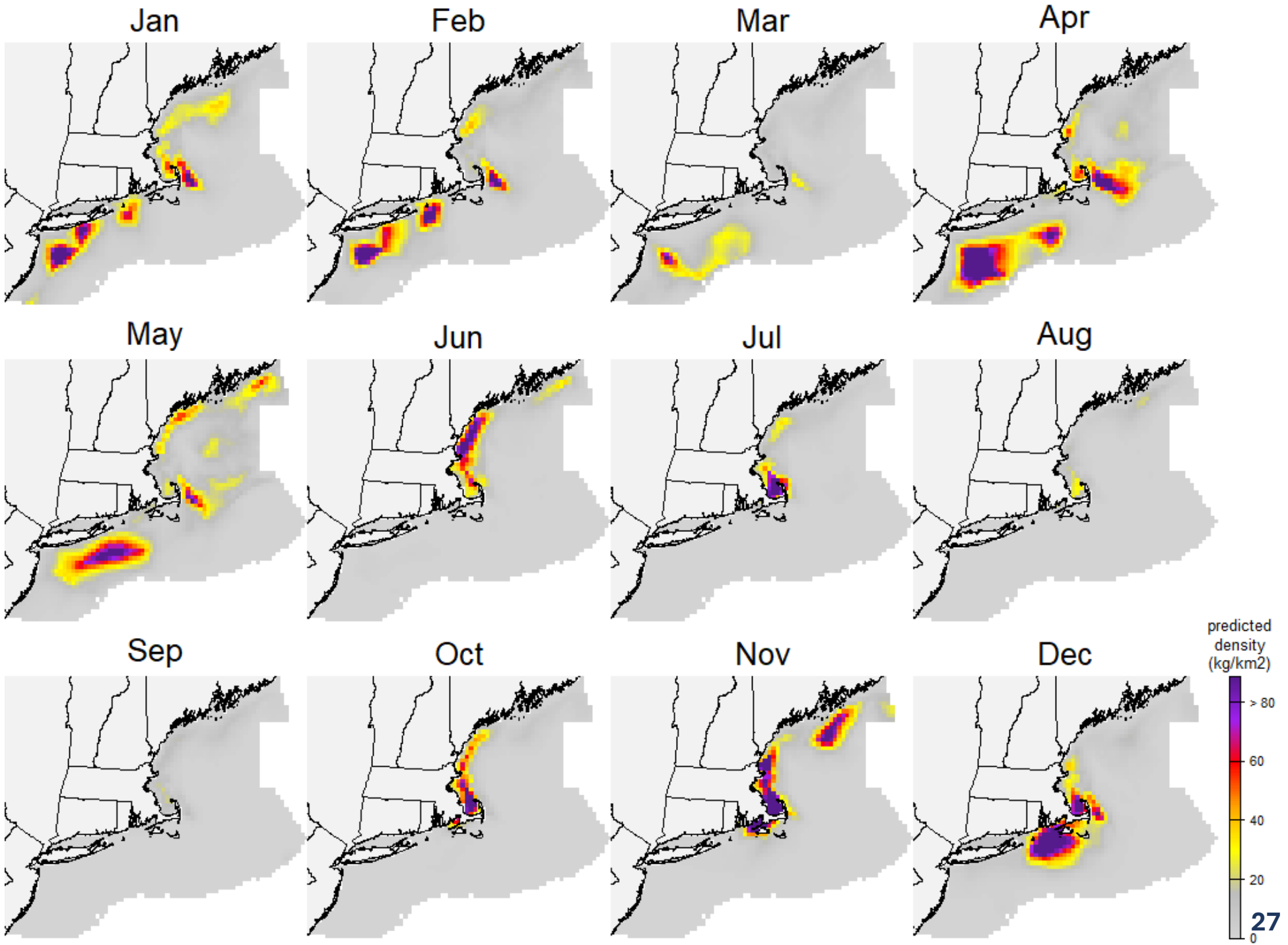
Model Predictions

- **Alewife**
- Predicted Abundance (kg/km2)



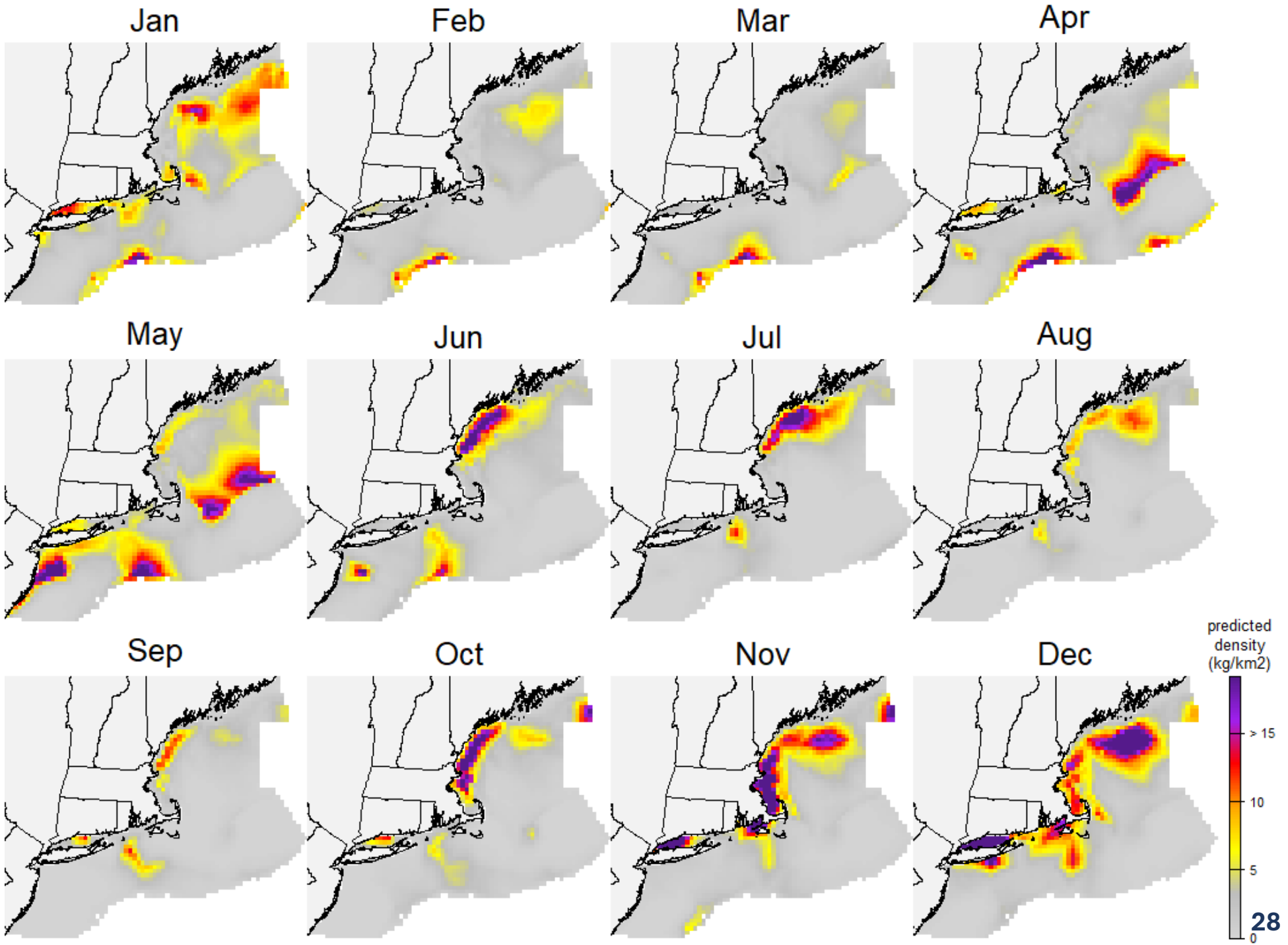
Model Predictions

- **Blueback Herring**
- Predicted Abundance (kg/km2)



Model Predictions

- **American Shad**
- Predicted Abundance (kg/km2)



RIVER HERRING AND SHAD: TASK 2

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 summarized possible catch cap approaches; presented at the May 20-21 AP and CTE meetings.
- The PDT supports using the CAMS modified approach to summarize the river herring and shad catch data by:
    - Gear type (midwater trawl, purse seine, and small-mesh bottom year),
    - Year (2016-2025),
    - Catch cap area (Gulf of Maine, Cape Cod, Southern New England/Mid Atlantic, and Georges Bank),
    - Two trip landings thresholds (2,000 lb and 6,600 lb landings of Atlantic herring)
- Data analysis is ongoing and a progress report is anticipated at an upcoming PDT meeting.

RIVER HERRING AND SHAD: TASK 2

Catch Cap Approach	Description/Methods
River herring and shad catch ratios with expansion factor (NEFMC river herring and shad catch caps)	- Apply RH/S catch ratio from qualifying trips during reference period to total catch on qualifying trips
River herring and shad catch ratios (MAFMC Atlantic mackerel RH/S catch cap)	- Apply RH/S catch rate from trips during a reference period to quota
Set percentage of sub-ACL (NEFMC Georges Bank haddock catch cap)	- Catch cap equals a percentage of the sub-ACL
Dynamic catch caps (proof-of-concept presented in 2024 River Herring Benchmark Stock Assessment)	- Develop a catch multiplier to apply to average catch, would allow caps to increase/decrease based on abundance
Annual bycatch limit – number of individuals (Bering Sea Chinook salmon bycatch cap for pollock fisheries)	- Hard cap set for number of individual fish that can be caught

RIVER HERRING & SHAD: TASK 3

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 and the PDT agreed with the conclusions and finalized the report.
- The PDT presented its report at the May 20-21 AP and CTE meetings.

TASK 3 PDT REPORT

The PDT sub-group conducted 4 analyses:

Analysis 1 → gear-specific global rates

- Used gear-specific (midwater or bottom trawl) global rate when data was available; if not, used global rate across gears

Analysis 2 → all years transition rate

- Tested using all observed trips from 2015-2024 instead of only the previous year

Analysis 3 → Three-year transition rate

- Tested 3-year transition rate instead of one year

Analysis 4 → SBRM stratification

- Tested stratifications by northern and southern regions

TASK 3 PDT REPORT

Conclusions:

- The sub-group did not find suitable methods that improved accuracy/ precision, **did not recommend** any major changes to current RH/S estimation methods
- Supported a gear-specific global rate when data is available
- Modifying transition rate or geographic extent of observer data stratifications did not produce more precise estimates
- Additional observer coverage for midwater trawl fleet would likely reduce frequency of when transition rate or global rate is needed and improve in-season estimations

RIVER HERRING AND SHAD MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Alternative 1: No Action

- All river herring and shad management measures would remain unchanged and in place unless changed in a future action.

Alternative 2: Establish Time/Area Closures within Atlantic Herring Management Areas 1B, 2 and 3

- PDT species distribution models as basis
- Committee recommends developing alternatives in areas 1B, 2, and 3;
- Committee provided initial guidance on criteria for time/area closure and evaluation metrics
- Committee recommends two sets of alternatives: time/area closures to replace the current catch caps or time/area closures in addition to the current catch caps

PDT DISCUSSION: MOTIVATION FOR WORK

Time-area closures = a practical alternative to catch caps?

	Bycatch Caps	Time-Area Closures
In-season monitoring, forecasting, communication	Substantial	None
Closure size	Very Large	Small
Requires analytical assessments for RHS species	Yes	No

JUNE 8 COMMITTEE MOTION 2

That the Plan Development Team (PDT) develop time/area closure alternatives for herring management areas 1B, 2 and 3 to minimize to the extent practicable the amount of river herring and shad catch in the Atlantic herring fishery. The PDT should consider the following input from the Committee when developing the range of options:

- Be based on the PDT's species distribution models,
- Be based on month or season, area, and gear type,
- Refine closure boundaries for compliance and enforcement considerations, and
- Consider existing management measures.

The motion carried by consensus and without objection.

JUNE 8 COMMITTEE MOTION 3

In evaluating time area closures, the PDT should examine the following metrics, if possible, in addition to others it may develop:

- number and value of directed Atlantic herring trips inside and outside of the closure alternative,
- average RHS catch inside and outside the closure alternative,
- total RHS catch inside and outside of closure alternative,
- number of “high”, “medium”, and “low” RHS catch events inside and outside of the alternative,
- frequency of RHS catch events inside and outside of the alternative, by month, season, & gear type.

The motion carried by consensus and without objection.

QUESTIONS

New England Fishery
Management Council

JUNE 8 COMMITTEE MOTION 1A

To recommend that the Council prioritize in the scope for the 2026 action to:

1) Set Atlantic herring specifications for fishing years 2027-2031

And the Plan Development Team would continue working on:

2) Modify Atlantic herring management measures to avoid or minimize the catch of river herring and shad through time/area closures with and without the existing catch cap methodology

3) Update the Atlantic herring specifications process

4) Modify carryover provisions for unharvested catch

The motion carried 6/2/0.

2026 ACTION - AMENDMENT OR FRAMEWORK ADJUSTMENT

For Today's Meeting:

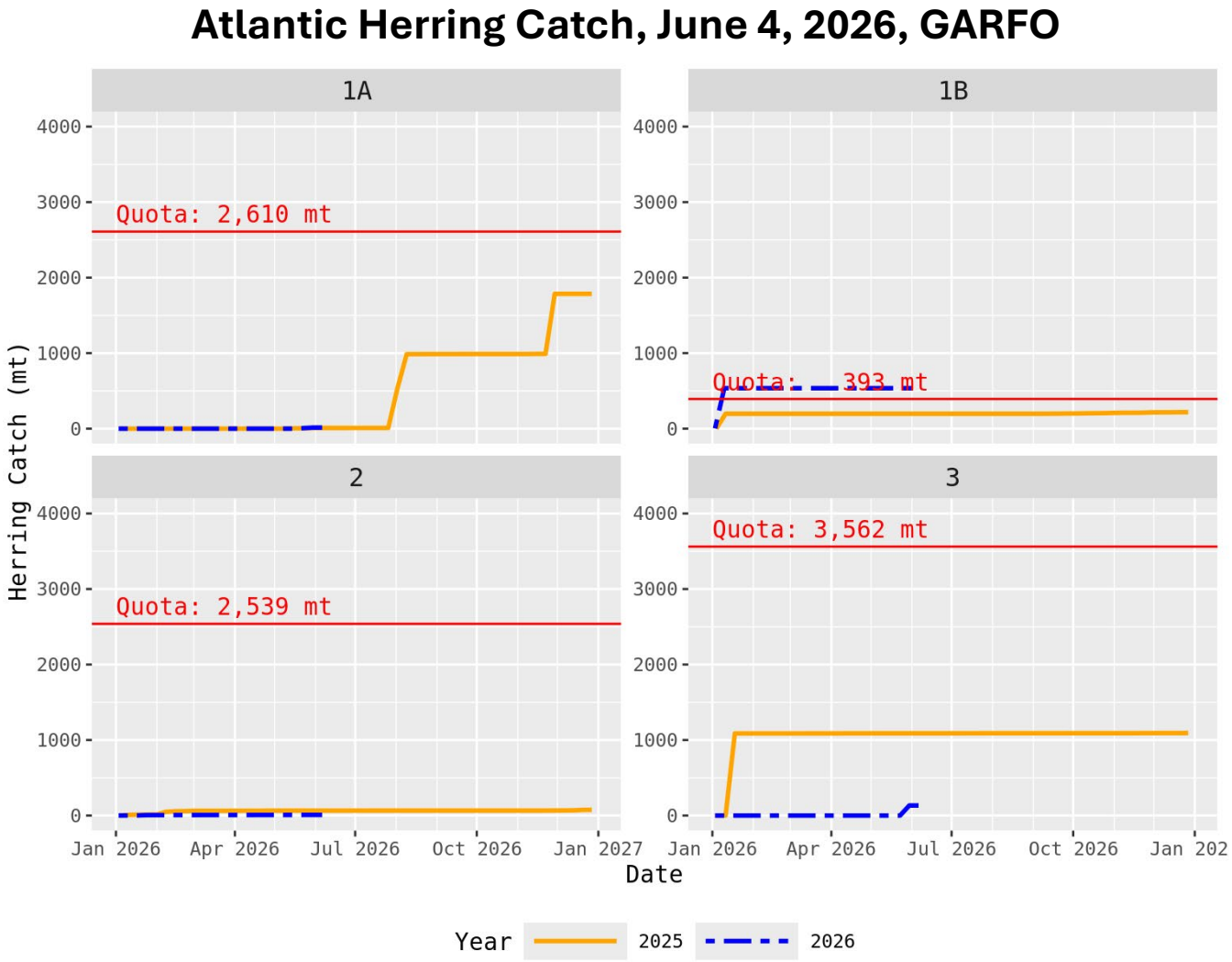
1) Receive a progress report and
2) Initiate a framework adjustment, if necessary, depending on the range of alternatives

ADDITIONAL SLIDES

NOAA Fisheries

Area	Quota (mt)	Cumulative Catch (mt)	Percent Quota Caught
1A	2,610	13.6	0.5%
1B	393	535.4	136.2%
2	2,539	8.5	0.3%
3	3,562	133.0	3.7%
ACL	9,134	690.5	7.6%

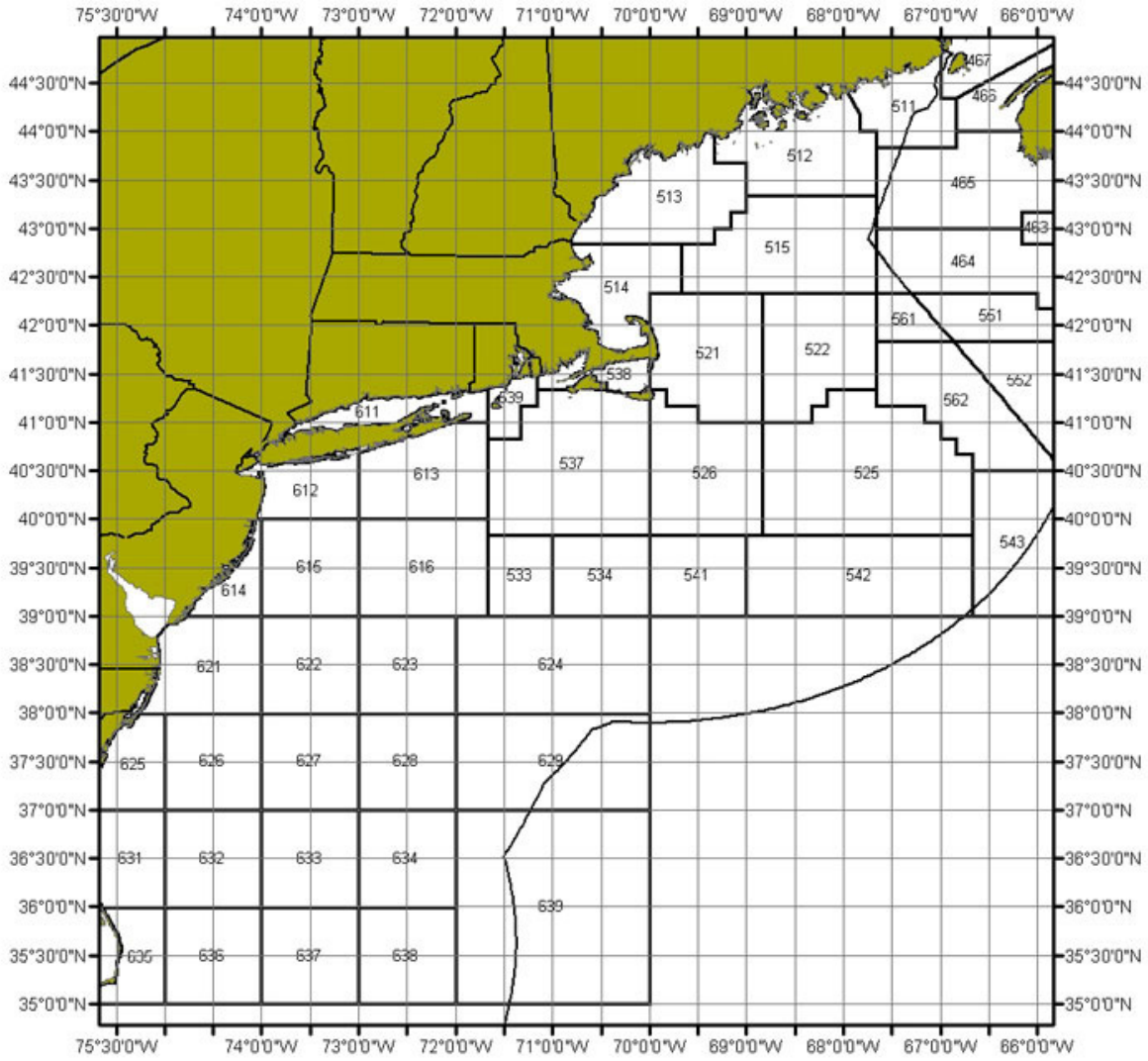
Area 1B under 2,000 lb possession limit for remainder of year



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

Updated April 10, 2026

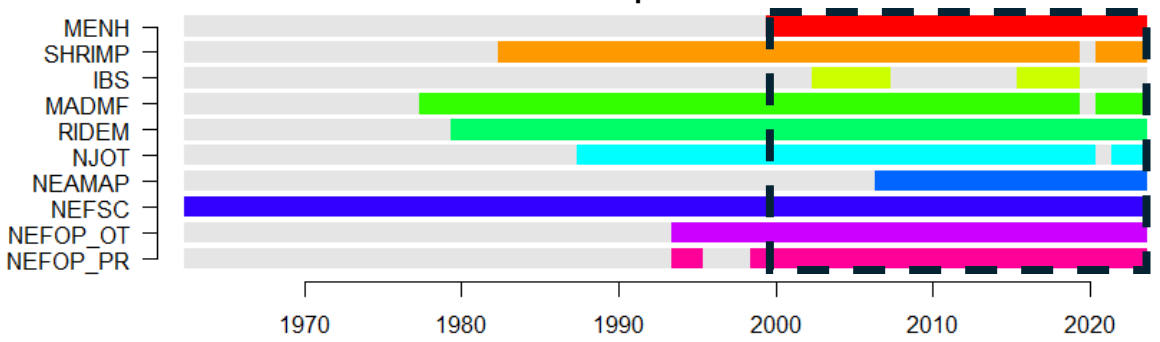
December 2022	Council passes a motion to "revisit Amendment 8 inshore midwater trawl closure"; Council prioritizes an analysis to investigate what combination of factors may have led to low shad & river herring bycatch estimates in 2020-2022.
April 2023	Herring Committee & Advisory Panel discuss priority, 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.
June 2023	Council adopts the draft problem statement.
September 2023	Council passes a motion tasking the Herring Committee and PDT with developing a scoping document for public scoping process; Council initiates Amendment 10 (A10).
December 2023 January 2024	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.
March – June 2024	Public Scoping period for A10 (March 1-April 30); Herring PDT develops summary of public comments.
June 2024	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.
October 2024 – March 2025	Herring PDT works to address Committee & Council tasking; Council receives progress report at January 2025 meeting.
April 2025	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.
December 2025	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

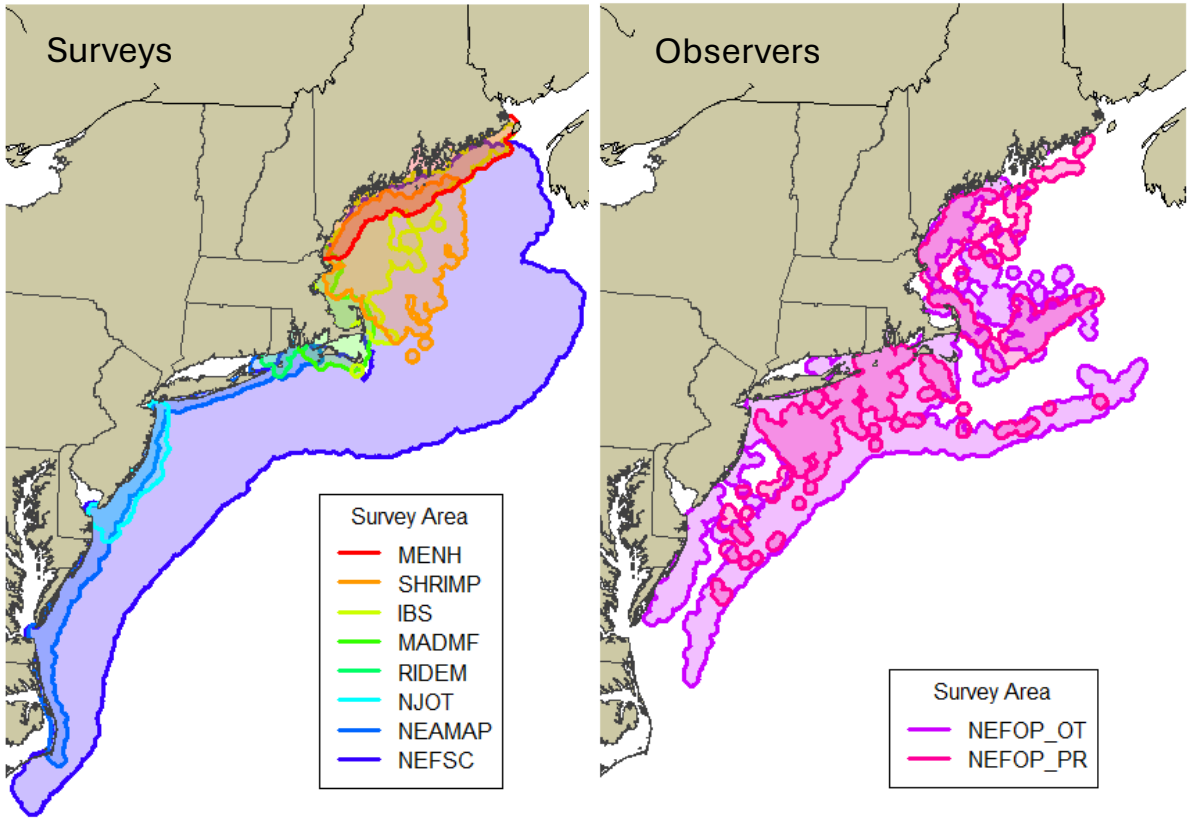
Dataset Extents

Temporal

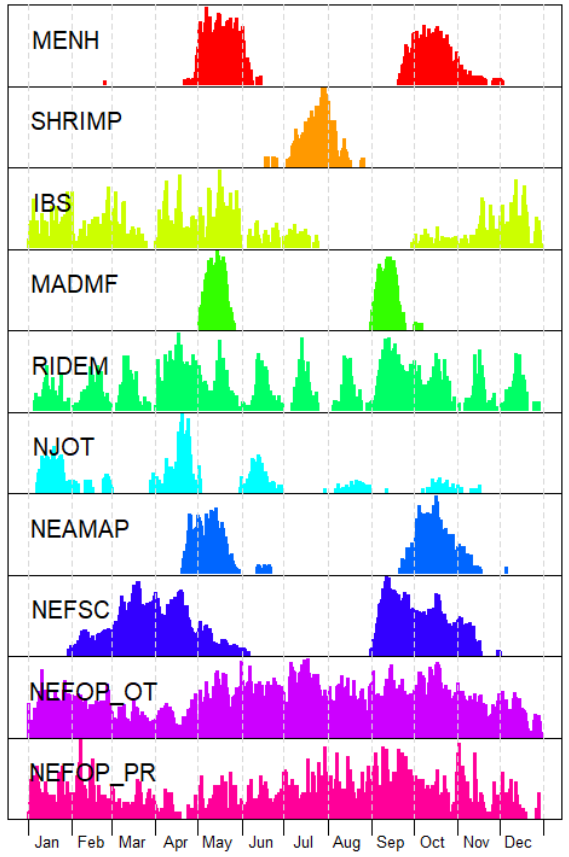


Analysis restricted to 2000-2022

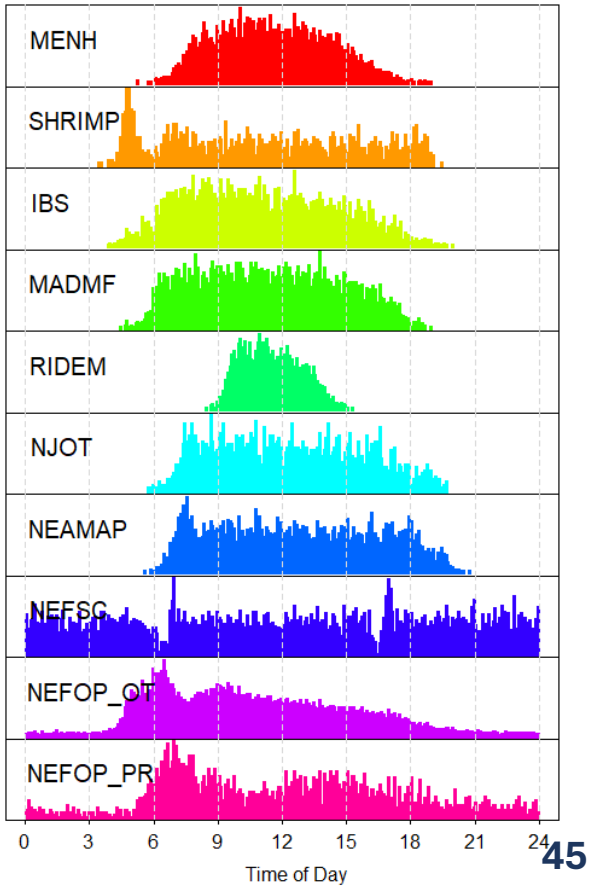
Spatial



Seasonal



Diel



Sample Sizes

SOURCE	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
MENH	0	1	0	33	1770	298	0	0	214	1384	224	13	**3937**
SHRIMP	0	0	0	0	0	40	918	483	0	0	0	0	**1441**
IBS	467	374	310	493	625	135	126	0	0	124	290	522	**3466**
MADMF	0	0	0	0	2187	0	0	0	2026	36	0	0	**4249**
RIDEM	230	246	263	703	459	305	289	274	703	498	264	276	**4510**
CTLISTS	0	0	0	637	864	827	4	0	769	731	110	5	**3947**
NJOT	447	100	25	601	26	263	1	58	4	61	8	0	**1594**
NEAMAP	0	0	0	186	1357	63	0	0	164	1626	100	0	**3496**
NEFSC	16	1013	3372	3164	1042	40	0	0	3498	2839	1035	13	**16032**
NEFOP_SMBT	2563	2454	1828	1720	3381	3809	4578	3369	3575	4321	2659	2054	**36311**
NEFOP_MWT	220	220	139	63	190	150	265	283	378	243	205	119	**2475**
Total	**3943**	**4408**	**5937**	**7600**	**11901**	**5930**	**6181**	**4467**	**11331**	**11863**	**4895**	**3002**	**81458**

N = 81,458 { 90% for training
10% for testing

% Positive

- Alewife = 26%
- Blueback herring = 13%
- American shad = 15%
- Atlantic herring = 29%

SOURCE	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
CTLISTS	185	195	187	189	186	187	112	186	153	191	76	167	191	196	194	199	192	142	164	198	0	135	165	**3947**
IBS	0	0	0	121	811	868	340	347	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	259	324	350	46	0	0	0	**3466**
MADMF	190	194	189	189	182	186	195	202	201	197	192	195	192	197	202	193	187	195	188	192	0	191	200	**4249**
MENH	78	132	119	112	121	107	163	162	158	170	171	169	185	182	190	203	201	221	213	219	91	207	188	**3937**
NEAMAP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	116	231	254	237	235	238	235	236	234	235	179	238	234	120	237	237	**3496**
NEFOP_SMBT	166	255	364	485	1073	1016	983	668	704	1802	1834	2735	1531	2191	2476	1920	2784	4544	3525	2607	444	773	1431	**36311**
NEFOP_MWT	2	2	1	28	90	232	69	47	126	192	350	219	376	262	177	33	91	67	19	16	11	9	56	**2475**
NEFSC	777	813	798	737	767	747	825	811	705	740	734	696	725	747	701	741	716	477	557	696	129	664	664	**16032**
NJOT	76	72	76	85	86	85	75	71	84	91	66	82	69	82	73	72	63	60	67	30	25	0	60	**1594**
RIDEM	157	157	170	166	165	183	172	193	212	205	211	212	206	215	203	192	211	218	204	205	218	217	218	**4510**
SHRIMP	54	54	54	60	48	67	41	73	59	75	72	76	80	74	65	40	70	73	81	105	0	60	60	**1441**
Total	**1685**	**1874**	**1958**	**2172**	**3529**	**3678**	**2975**	**2876**	**2633**	**3917**	**3943**	**4786**	**3793**	**4381**	**4517**	**3827**	**5009**	**6500**	**5606**	**4548**	**1038**	**2493**	**3279**	**81458**