

Atlantic Herring Advisory Panel Meeting by Webinar

March 23, 2026



New England
Fishery Management
Council

Welcome and Introductions



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Meeting Norms and NEFMC's Advisory Panel Policies



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NEFMC Advisory Panel Policies

- **Welcome and thank you for serving!**
- *Role:* Support developing or amending an FMP or special issue or problem.
- Your input matters! AP discussions and recommendations are shared with each Fishery Management Plan Committee, and made available to the Council.
- AP recommendations are advisory and are considered alongside other information in Committee and Council decision-making.



- Membership:
 - 1) Actively engaged in some aspect of commercial or recreational fisheries.
 - 2) Knowledgeable in the conservation and management of a fishery.
 - To the extent possible, membership shall reflect broad cross-section of interests and expertise from geographical distribution, user groups, etc.
 - The recreational fishing industry shall have at least one seat on the herring and habitat APs.
 - Other Councils may be invited to name advisors to serve.



- Organization:

- AP Chair designated by Committee Chair, reviewed by Executive Committee and approved by Council Chair.
- AP Chair expected to routinely communicate meeting results to relevant committee.
- *AP Chair will be seated at the Committee table. They may not vote but can freely enter the discussion. AP Chairs must identify comments as “discussed by the AP” or “personal input”. AP Chairs must leave committee table when providing personal comments.*
- A vice-Chair can be designated but is not required. The vice-Chair may be authorized to attend committee meetings in place of the AP Chair with advance approval of the Executive Director.

- Commitment:

- Number of meetings varies by panel and year – range of 0-5 per year.
- Meeting may be conducted in-person or by webinar.
- If an in-person meeting is scheduled, we ask that you plan to come to the meeting in-person. The Council provides travel reimbursement (following slide).



- Appointments:
 - After three years performance and attendance will be reviewed. If needed, new members will be solicited to fill any vacancies.
 - All members must apply for re-appointment at the end of each 3-year term.
 - Neither proxies nor designees shall serve in place of appointed advisor.
 - Prior to selection, nominees are subject to additional level of review by NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement.
- Termination: The Council *may* replace an AP members at it's discretion if he/she:
 - 1) transfers employment or moves;
 - 2) absent for two or more consecutive meetings without adequate notification;
 - 3) appears unable or unwilling to fulfill obligations;
 - 4) area of expertise no longer required; or
 - 5) for just cause (e.g. marine violation, failure to show respect for other panel members, disruptive behavior, etc.).



- *Travel Authorization and Reimbursement:*

- Eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses incurred while attending authorized meetings (e.g. mileage, hotel overnight, meals, etc.), subject to availability of funds.
- Reimbursed from APs primary residence, as reflected on application.
- To qualify for overnight lodging, your travel distance must be over 50 miles or requires you be available before 6 a.m. or after 8 p.m.
- Additional guidance found in [Operations Handbook pages 38-41](#).
- Questions on travel? Contact us before travel takes place.

- *Meal Reimbursement:*

- The Council will reimburse you for the actual cost of meals, including gratuity. Alcohol is not a reimbursable expense. You do not need to submit receipts for your meals.



Meeting Planning and Preparation

What to expect:

- Staff may send poll by email before a meeting to identify possible meeting dates, and sometimes a date will just be selected by the Committee Chair.
- Prior to a meeting staff will email memo from Chair with meeting purpose. Monitor your emails from staff and check website frequently.
- The Council has gone paperless – all meeting materials will be sent to you electronically. If you plan to review materials during the meeting, it is suggested that you bring a device that can connect to the internet.
- To the extent possible, come prepared with draft motions and discussion points.



Meeting Ground Rules

- Come to every meeting prepared, when possible, review documents from staff before arriving at the meeting.
- Follow the agenda as managed by the Chair (i.e. stay on topic).
- Participate in the discussion! You are here for a reason – share your knowledge.
- Listen respectfully to the comments of others; give other opinions honest consideration.
- Be open to points of view that may differ from your own.
- Discuss the issues – avoid personal attacks.
- Avoid profane language.
- Sustain a professional meeting environment before, during and after meetings.



Behaviors that are unacceptable

- Ridicule of another person's opinions or suggestions.
- Threats aimed at anyone.
(Council/AP/PDT member, staff, public).
- Harassment.
- Discrimination.



Unlawful Harassment

- NOAA and the Councils are committed to ensuring a safe working environment for everyone involved in Council process.
- Two model policies adopted by the Council:
 - Council staff policy
 - Council process participant policy
- Policies incorporated into the Council SOPP



Unlawful Harassment

- Based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy), national origin, older age (beginning at age 40), disability, or genetic information (including family medical history).
- Unlawful when:
 - Condition of employment
 - Severe or pervasive enough create an intimidating, hostile, or abusive environment



- **The Council will not tolerate harassment or retaliation against those who report harassment.**
- Preventing harassment is everyone's responsibility and individuals who experience or observe harassment are strongly encouraged to come forward to ensure a safe working environment for everyone involved in the Council process.
- Council Process Participants who observe or are subject to harassment by any Council member, Council employee, or other Council Process Participants may report incidents in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:
 - The Council Executive Director;
 - The Council chair or vice-chair;
 - Appropriate law enforcement authorities, as needed.



Key Policy Elements

- All participants have responsibility to prevent harassment in the Council process
- Those subject to harassment, or observing it, should report it as soon as possible
- The Council should conduct an inquiry
- Appropriate action should be taken after inquiry
- Participants identified in the policies are required to take periodic training



Key Policy Elements (cont.)

- Reports can be made to Chair, Vice-Chair, Executive Director, or others (employee's supervisor, for example)
- Executive Director responsible for initiating inquiry
- Time limits for response
- Federal/state employees can report within their own organization.



Future Action

- Policies included in SOPP as appendices
- Periodic briefings of Council/SSC/AP/Staff on policy
- Required training for Council members, SSC, staff, and some AP members



Thank you!

- The Council appreciates your time and effort.
- Your participation is a critical step in this overall process.
- Your input is important and valuable.
- We look forward to working with you.
- Any questions, contact our staff anytime.

(978) 465-0492

Council Operations Handbook

Located here: <https://www.nefmc.org/about>



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Management Updates



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NOAA Fisheries



- Specifications approved for 2025-2027
- Confirmed specifications for 2026
- Area 1B under 2,000 lb possession limit for remainder of year



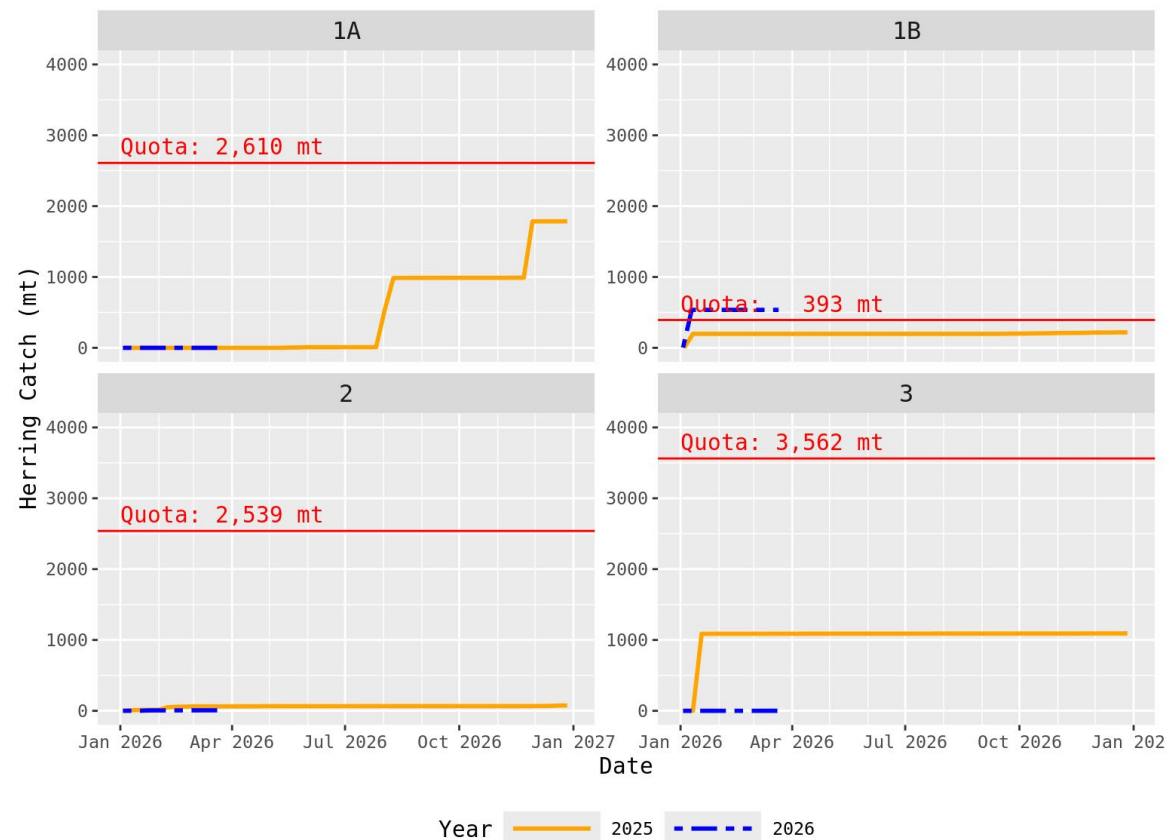
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NOAA Fisheries



Atlantic Herring Catch, March 19, 2026, GARFO

Area	Quota (mt)	Cumulative Catch (mt)	Percent Quota Caught
1A	2,610	0.0	0.0%
1B	393	535.4	136.2%
2	2,539	6.8	0.3%
3	3,562	0.1	0.0%
ACL	9,134	542.3	5.9%



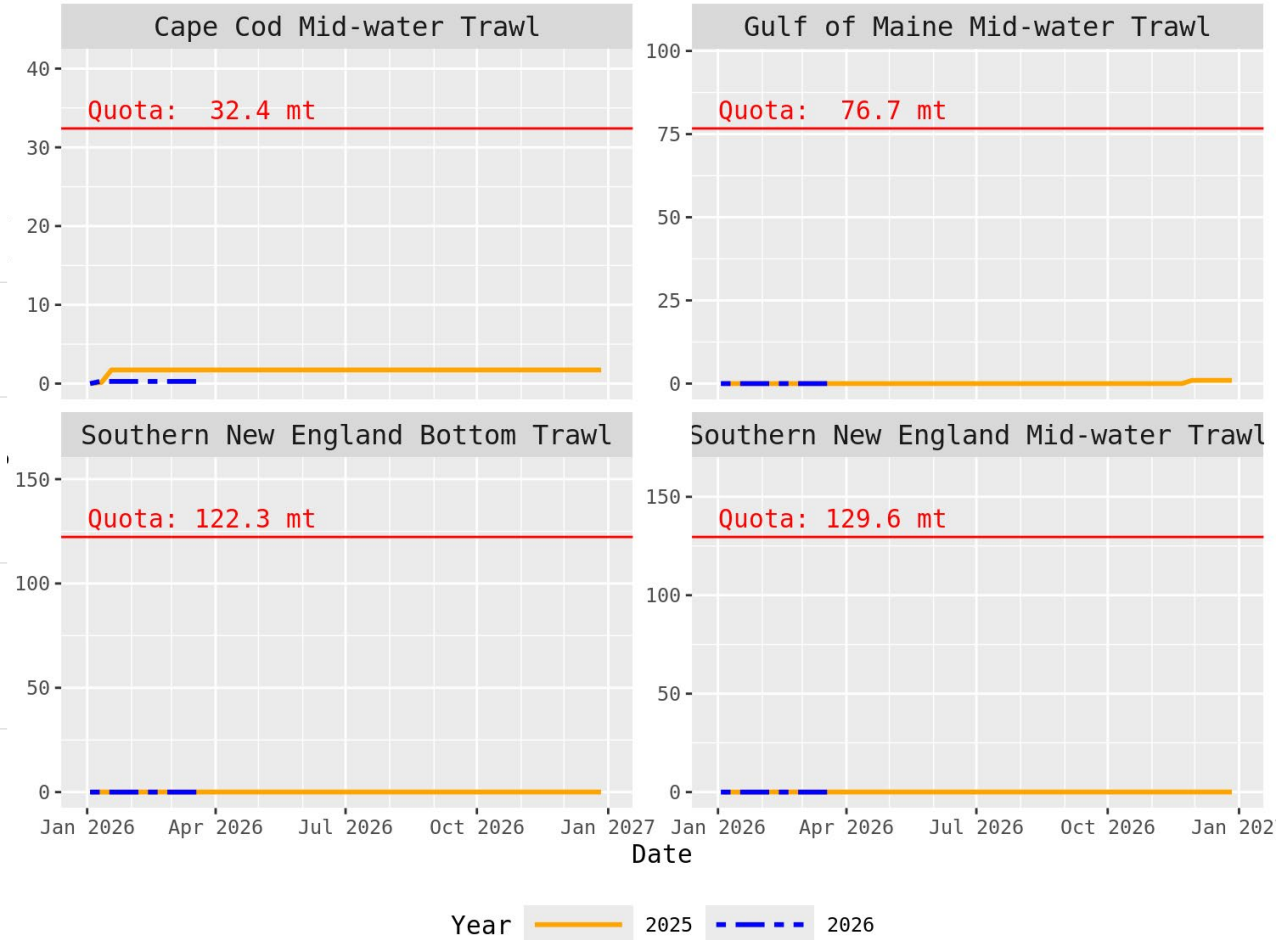
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RH/S Catch Caps for Herring, March 19, 2026, GARFO

Catch Cap	Quota (mt)	Cumulative Catch (mt)	Percent Quota Caught
Cape Cod Mid-water Trawl	32.4	0.3	0.9%
Gulf of Maine Mid-water Trawl	76.7	0.0	0.0%
Southern New England Bottom Trawl	122.3	0.0	0.0%
Southern New England Mid-water Trawl	129.6	0.0	0.0%



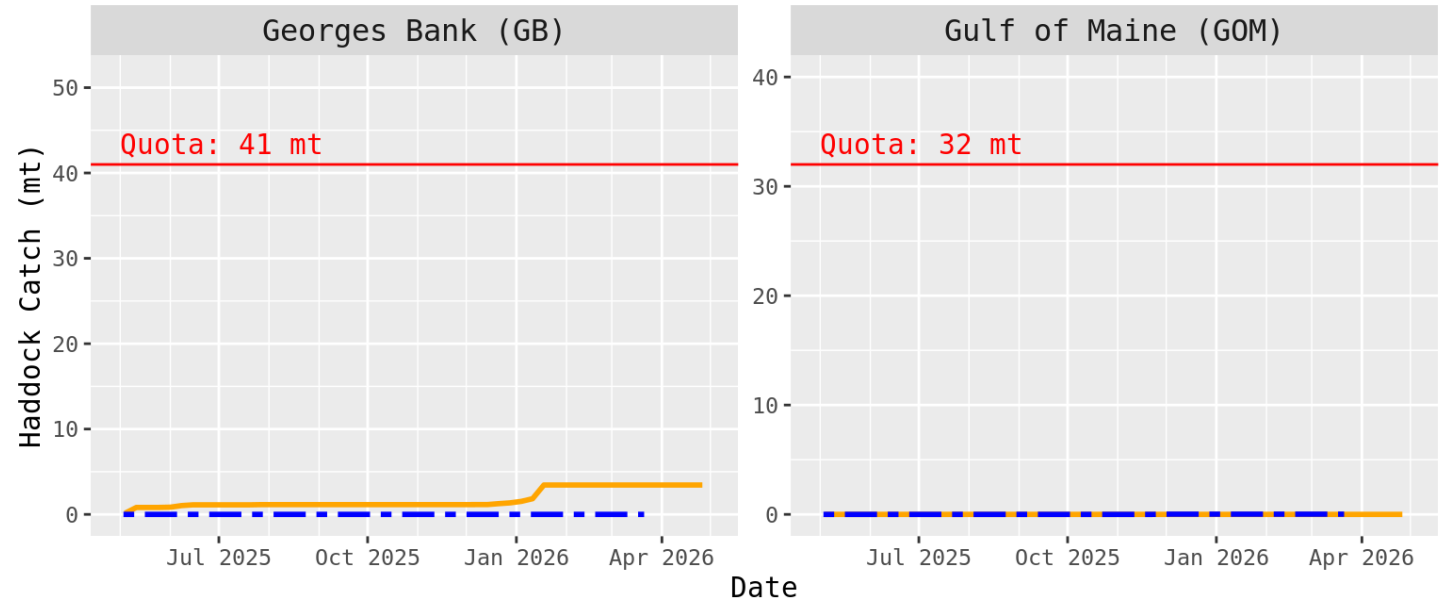
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Haddock Catch Caps for Herring, March 19, 2026, GARFO

Catch Cap	Quota (mt)	Cumulative Catch (mt)	Percent Quota Caught
Georges Bank (GB)	41	0	0%
Gulf of Maine (GOM)	32	0	0%



Fishing Year — 2024 - - - 2025
 May 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026



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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission



- For the 2026 Area 1A quota, the Atlantic Herring Management Board approved a seasonal distribution of quota with 72.8% available from June through September (Season 1) and 27.2% from October through December (Season 2).
- Board members from Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts will meet via webinar in late April to discuss effort controls for Season 1 of the Area 1A fishery.
- The April webinar date will be announced soon via press release and posted on the Commission's website.



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Council Priorities for 2026



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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	Council: final action
				Action submission
				NOAA: review; target Jan 1 implementation
Management Track Stock Assessment			Peer Review: June	SSC meets: August
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
New: Modifications to Vessel Baseline Restrictions (in response to EO 14276)

Updated February 11, 2026, NEFMC Staff

2026 Action Amendment or Framework Adjustment



2026 Action 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.



2026 Action

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).



2026 Action

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

See detailed outline in the Attachment to PDT meeting summary, December 15, 2025

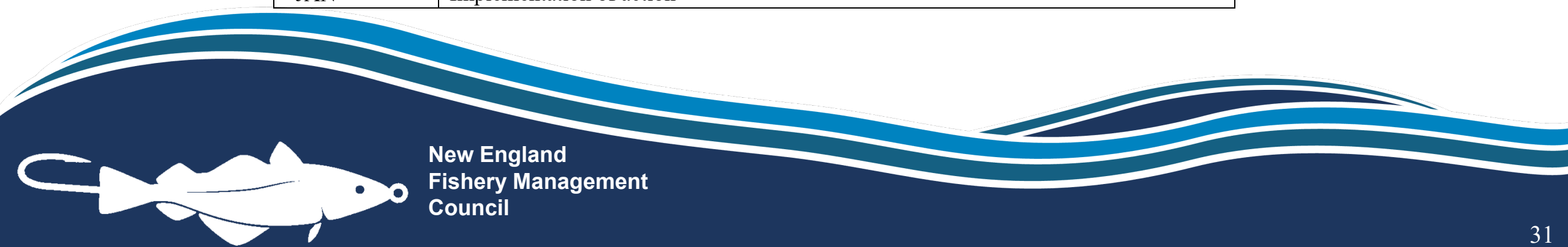


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2026 Action Timeline

**Next Meeting
Council: April 15
Portland, Maine**

2026	
JAN-JUL	Plan Development Team develop supporting analysis for alternative development. ASMFC's Atlantic Herring Technical Committee meets with Plan Development Team to develop specifications, as appropriate.
APR	Council receives a progress report including discussing the timeline and PDT analysis
JUN	Council approves range of alternatives for Draft Environmental Assessment, with exception of Atlantic herring specifications. Initiate a Framework Adjustment if necessary.
JUN	Peer Review of the Management Track Stock Assessment for Atlantic Herring
JUL/AUG	Scientific and Statistical Committee reviews and makes recommendations to the Council
JUL-SEP	Plan Development Team drafts impacts analysis
SEP	Council receives specifications alternatives. Takes final action
NOV-DEC	Preliminary and Final Submission of Environmental Assessment
2026	
JAN	Implementation of action



2026 Action Atlantic Herring Specification Items

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



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2026 Action

Atlantic Herring 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

Herring AP: is there industry interest in conducting at-sea processing?



2026 Action

Council Tasking to PDT on River Herring & Shad

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.

Status: Ongoing. Species distribution model under development by PDT.

Status: Ongoing. Including building off analysis completed for ASMFC's River Herring Benchmark.

Status: Completed. Summary to be presented at future meeting.



For Today

Discuss a 2026 action to include Atlantic herring specifications for 2027-2031, river herring and shad management measures, and other measures, and make recommendations to the Atlantic Herring Committee, as appropriate



Other Business



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