

Atlantic Herring Committee and Advisory Panel

AUGUST 18, 2026

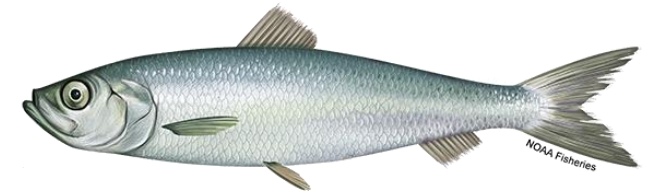
WEBINAR



New England Fishery
Management Council

MANAGEMENT UPDATES

- NOAA
- COUNCIL
- ASMFC



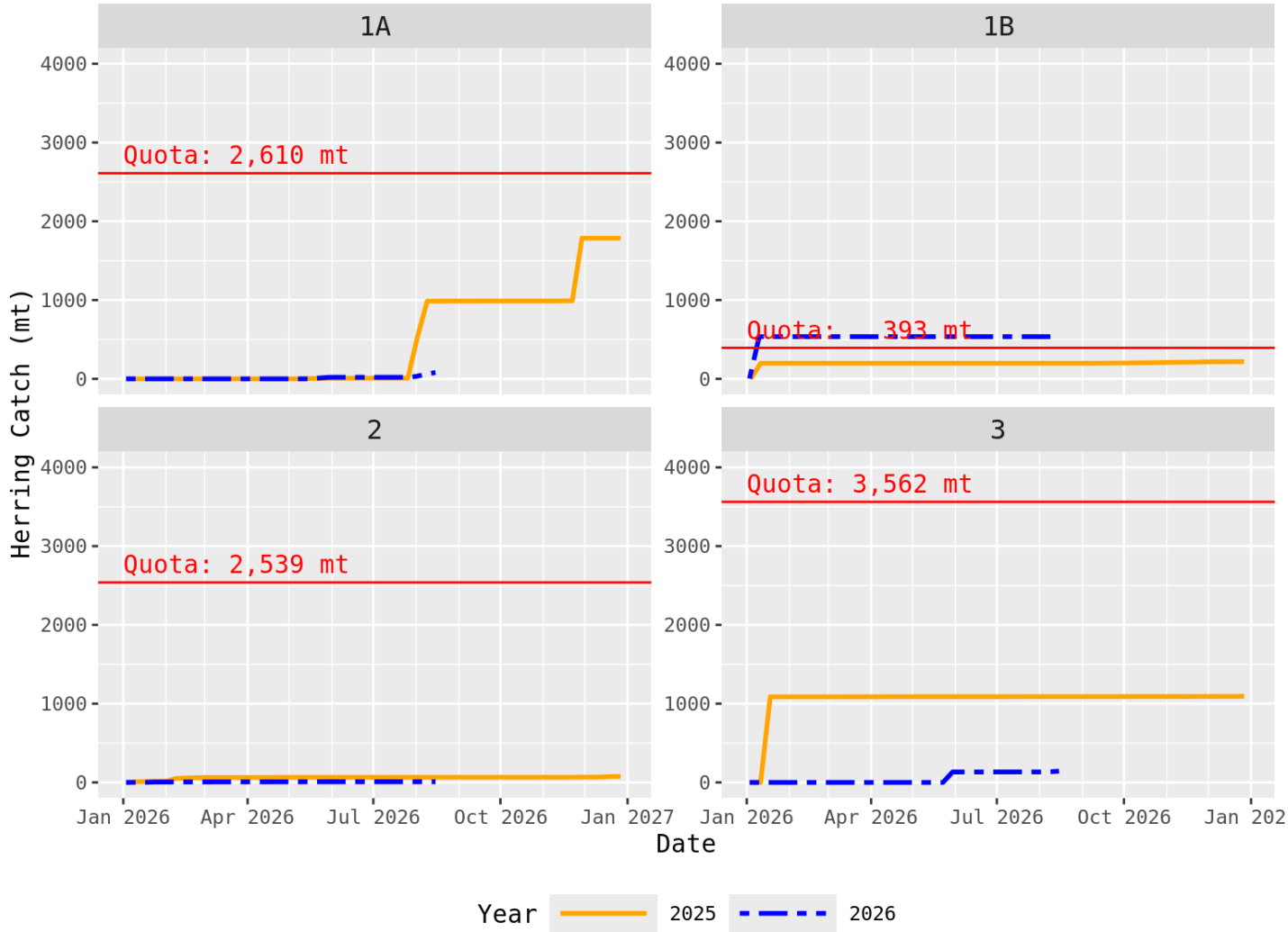
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ATLANTIC HERRING QUOTA MONITORING

As of August 14, 2026

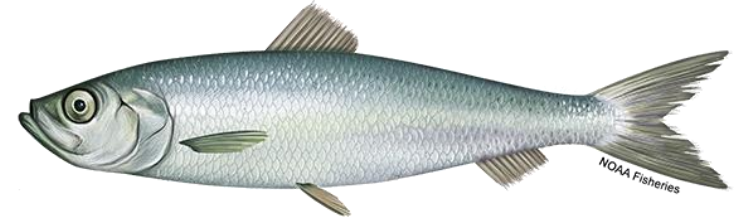
Source: [NOAA/GARFO](#)

Area	Quota (mt)	Cumulative Catch (mt)	% Quota Caught
1A	2,610	80.7	3.1%
1B	393	535.4	136.2%
2	2,539	8.8	0.3%
3	3,562	143.5	4.0%
ACL	9,134	768.4	8.4%



FOR TODAY

- Discuss Atlantic herring specifications for 2027-2031
- Make recommendations to the Committee/Council as appropriate



JUNE 2026 COUNCIL MEETING

Motion:

To set Atlantic herring specifications for fishing years 2027-2031 as a stand alone action for final action in September.

In a separate action, for April 2027 final action target date, the Plan Development Team would continue working on:

- 1) 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
- 2) Update the Atlantic herring specifications process
- 3) Modify carryover provisions for unharvested catch

The main motion as amended carried by consensus.



2027-2031 SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications include:

1. Overfishing limit (OFL), acceptable biological catch (ABC), using ABC control rule and rebuilding plan
2. Management uncertainty, annual catch limit (ACL), management area sub-ACLs, river herring and shad catch caps (status quo), and other components



SPECIFICATIONS ACTION TIMELINE

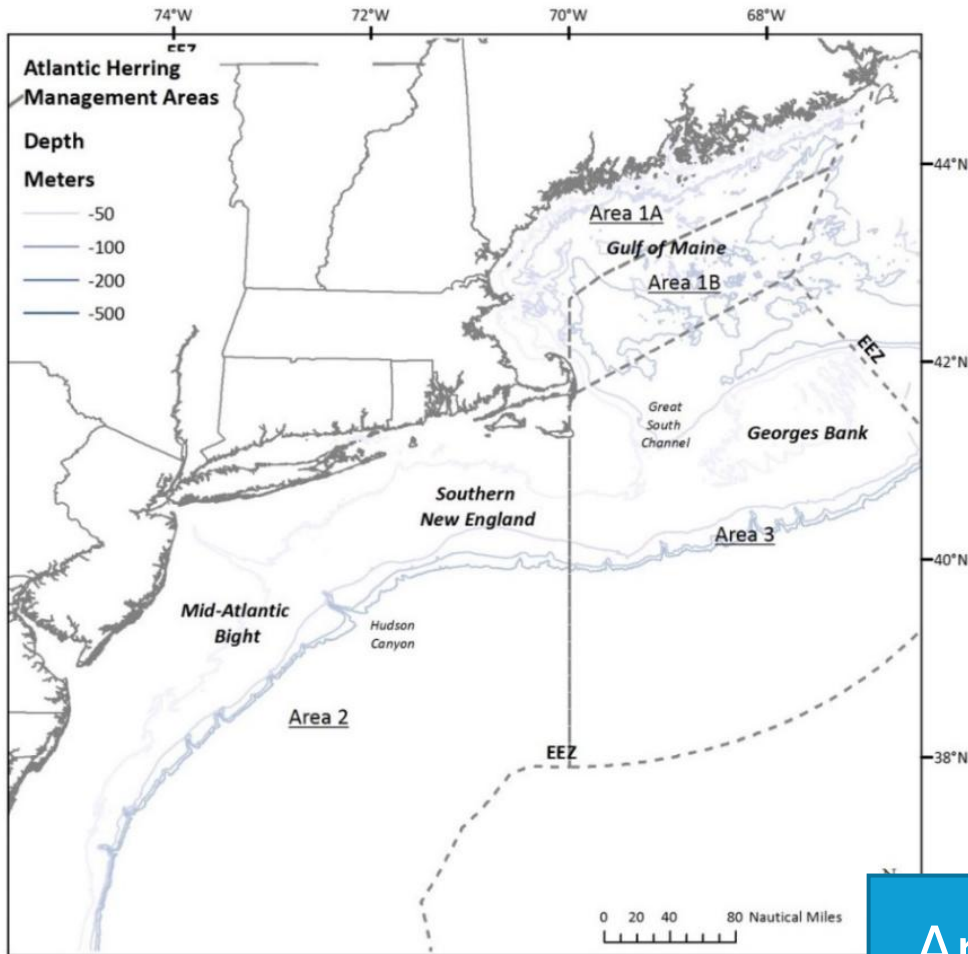


March 2	Herring PDT
March 23	Herring AP
April 15	Council: update on action
April 27	Herring PDT/TC
May 20	Herring AP
May 21	Herring Committee
May 26	Herring PDT/TC
June 8	Herring AP & Committee
June 9	Herring PDT/TC
June 23-25	Council: progress report
June 29-30	2026 June Management Track Assessment Peer Review
July 7	Herring PDT/TC
July 14	Herring PDT/TC
August 4	ASMFC: Update to Atlantic Herring Management Board
August 7	Herring PDT/TC
August 11-12	SSC Meeting: Herring ABC/OFLs
August 18	Herring AP & Committee webinar
September 2	Herring AP & Committee meeting
September 15-17	Council: final action
September – December	Action submission
November 9-12	ASMFC: Atlantic Herring Management Board sets specifications
January 1, 2027	Target implementation



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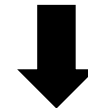
SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT AREAS



OFL



ABC



ACL

Scientific Uncertainty

- ABC control rule and rebuilding plan

Management Uncertainty

- Canadian NB weir fishery
- State water catch
- Discards

Area 1A
(28.9%)

Area 1B
(4.3%)

Area 2
(27.8%)

Area 3
(39%)



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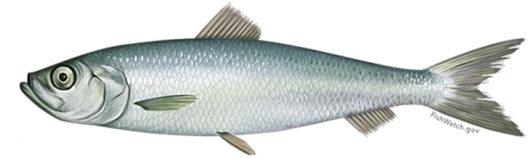
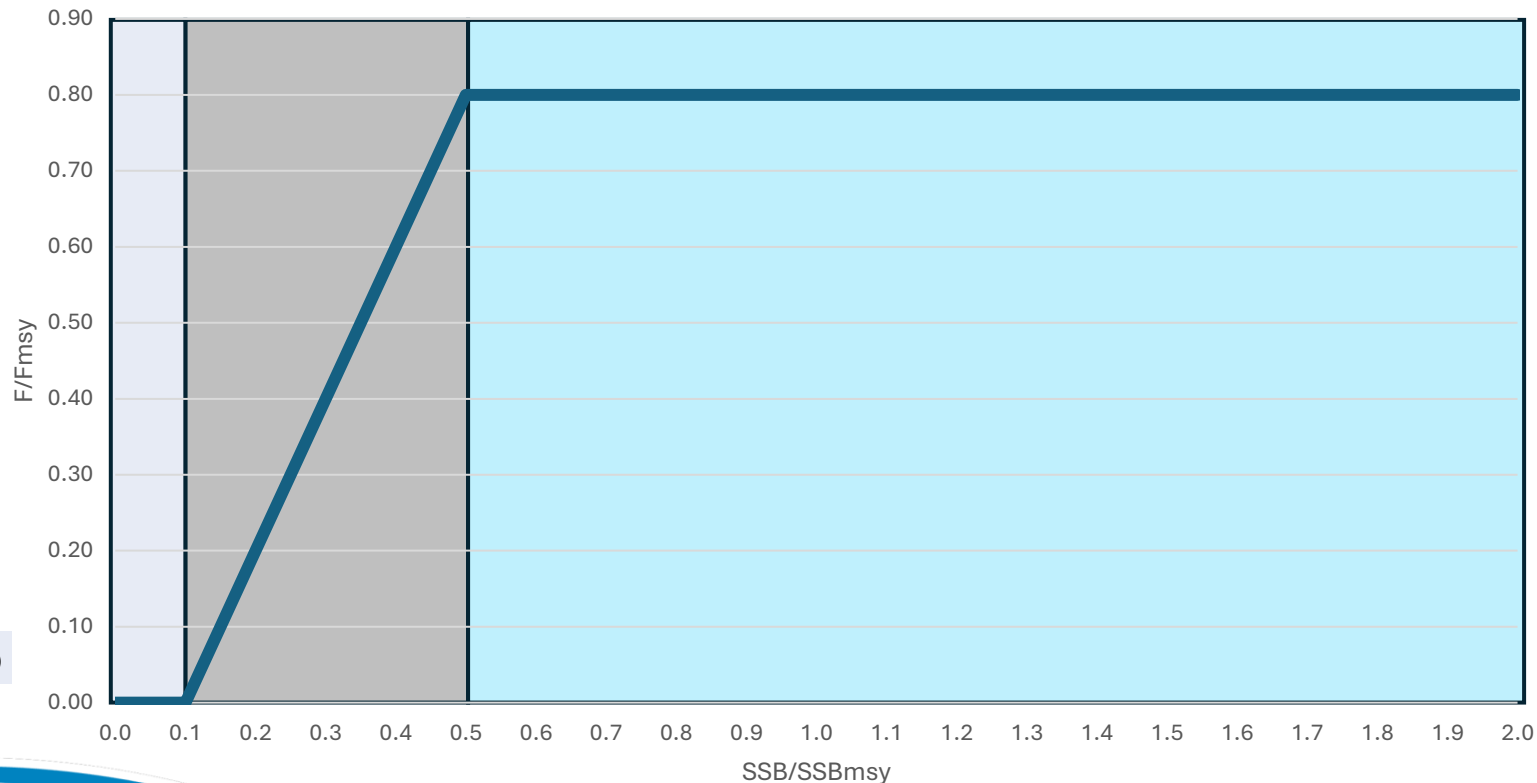
ATLANTIC HERRING ABC CONTROL RULE

Biomass-based

When biomass is greater than 0.5 for the ratio of SSB/SSB_{MSY} , the maximum fishing mortality allowed is 80% of F_{MSY} .

As biomass declines, fishing mortality declines linearly, and if biomass falls below 0.1 for the ratio of SSB/SSB_{MSY} , then ABC is set to zero, no fishery allocation.

The Council's ABC control rule explicitly accounts for the role of Atlantic herring as forage in the ecosystem by limiting fishing mortality at 80% of F_{MSY} .



2026 MANAGEMENT TRACK STOCK ASSESSMENT

- First application of WHAM → no changes in methods since 2025 Research Track Assessment
- Added 2 years of data from all relevant sources (1987-2025)
- Updated Canadian catch data
- No changes to stock status → overfished, but not subject to overfishing in 2025
- Peer Review: June 29-30
 - Assessment was accepted for management use
 - TOR 5 was partially met:
 - “This TOR was Partially Met as the Panel considered the OFLs (or Fmsy) and ABC projections based on the RT methodology to be useful by likely to be overly optimistic especially in light of the sensitivity analyses... After considerable discussion, the Panel concluded that the PDT and SSC should view the projection and sensitivity analysis as context for catch advice setting by that each has challenges that limit their utility.”



SSC RECOMMENDATIONS

- SSC recommended establishing constant interim ABC from 2027-2031
- OFL equal to the 2026 ABC of 13,165 mt, reducing commensurate with low risk tolerance & considering herring ABC control rule
 - $ABC = 10,532 \text{ mt}$ (80% of OFL)
- Interim ABC would remain in place until an updated assessment and/or updated technical work provides more confidence in treatment of items such as recruitment, NAA random effects, WHAM biological reference points, projections, interactions with current ABC control rule.

Year	OFL (mt)	ABC (mt)
2027	13,165	10,532
2028	13,165	10,532
2029	13,165	10,532
2030	13,165	10,532
2031	13,165	10,532



DRAFT RATIONALE

***Final SSC report is forthcoming*

- Technical uncertainties about the transition from ASAP to WHAM → did not suggest applying a singular projection scenario or ABC control rule until technical issues are addressed/resolved
- Peer review found that TOR 5 was only partially met, suggested using projections for context but not catch advice; ability to characterize rebuilding trajectory is uncertain
- Disconnect between the ABC control rule and the current assessment framework (evaluated under ASAP, now using WHAM)
- WHAM reference points are not fully settled, not directly comparable to ASAP reference points
- Indices are low, but not seeing precipitous declines/dramatic changes in recent surveys; some missing information in surveys
- ABC is higher than in year 1 of most projection runs, but aligns with the out years of the more conservative projections



HERRING SPECIFICATIONS WITH SSC RECOMMENDATIONS & 10-YEAR AVERAGE CANADIAN CATCH

Current Specifications

Year	OFL	ABC	ACL
2025	20,802	8,587	4,556
2026	23,491	13,165	9,134
2027	31,075	13,165	9,134

OFL = 13,165 mt



ABC = 10,532 mt



ACL = 5,401 mt

Scientific Uncertainty
Applied 20% reduction to OFL to get ABC

Management Uncertainty = 5,131 mt
- Canadian NB weir fishery 10-year average

Area 1A =
1,561 mt
(28.9%)

Area 1B =
232 mt
(4.3%)

Area 2 =
1,502 mt
(27.8%)

Area 3 =
2,106 mt
(39%)



MANAGEMENT UNCERTAINTY BUFFER

Under an **ABC** of **10,532 mt...**

Canadian Catch Assumption	Management Uncertainty Buffer	Annual Catch Limit
10-year recent average catch	5,131 mt	5,401 mt
5-year recent average catch	3,606 mt	6,926 mt



AREA 1A TRANSFER 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.



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ADDITIONAL SPECIFICATIONS

May 21 Committee motion:

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

May 21 Committee consensus statement:

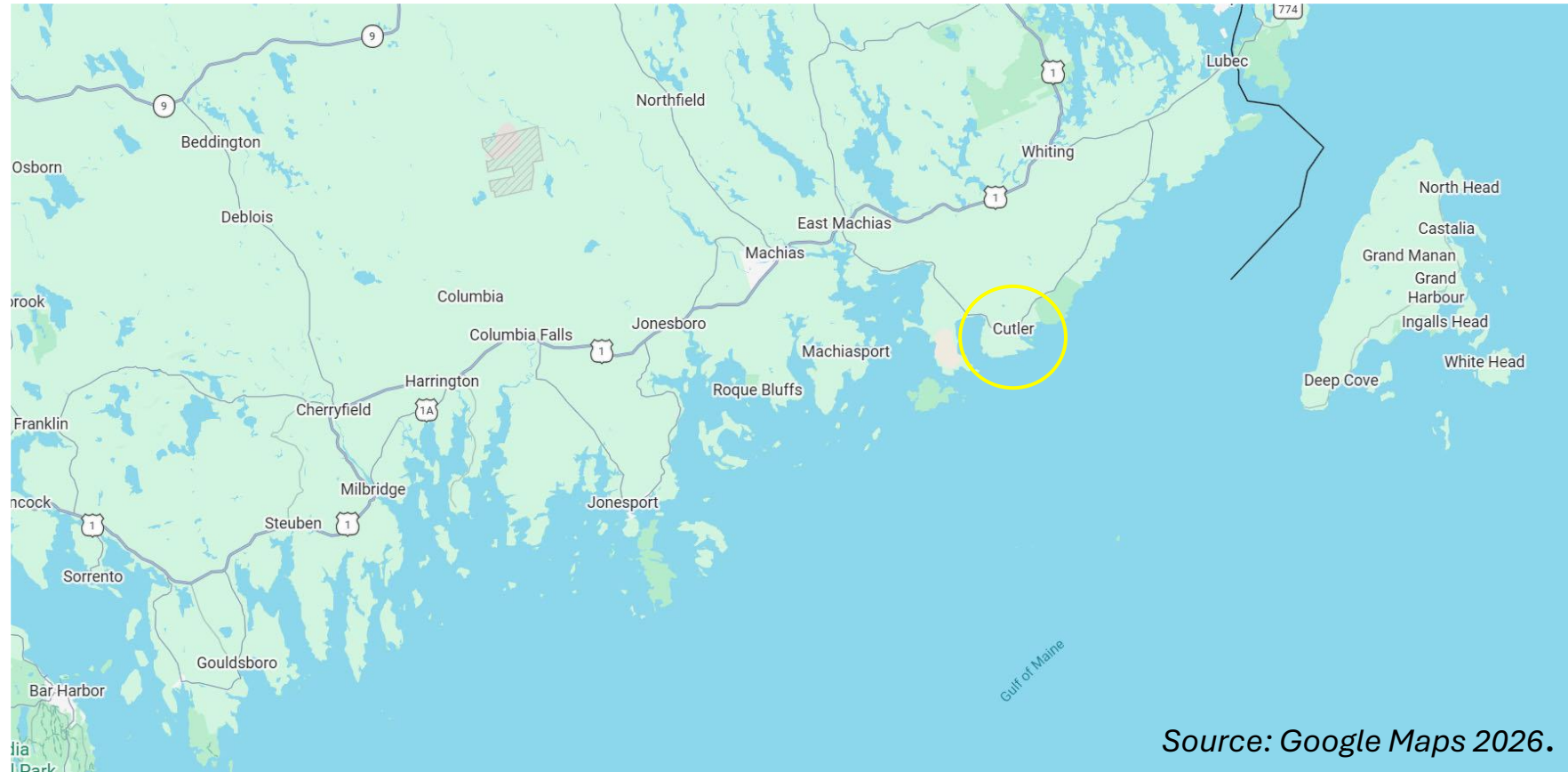
Move to preliminarily set border transfer, research set-aside, and US at-sea processing to zero.



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.



ADDITIONAL SPECIFICATIONS

	2027-2031 Value
Domestic Annual Harvest (DAH)	5,401 mt* (> or = ACL)
Border Transfer (BT)	0
Domestic Annual Processing (DAP)	5,401 mt* (DAH – BT)
US At-Sea Processing (USAP)	0
Research Set-Aside (RSA)	0%

River Herring and Shad Catch Caps (status quo)

Catch Cap Area	2027-2031 catch cap (mt)
Midwater Trawl Gulf of Maine	76.7
Midwater Trawl Cape Cod	32.4
Midwater Trawl Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic	129.6
Bottom Trawl Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic	122.3



UPCOMING MEETINGS

- September 2 – Herring AP & Committee meeting
 - Boston, MA and webinar
- September 15-17 – NEFMC meeting
 - Plymouth, MA and webinar
 - Final action on specifications
- November 17 – SSC sub-panel review of river herring and shad work
 - Webinar

