

Atlantic Herring Committee and Advisory Panel

SEPTEMBER 2, 2026

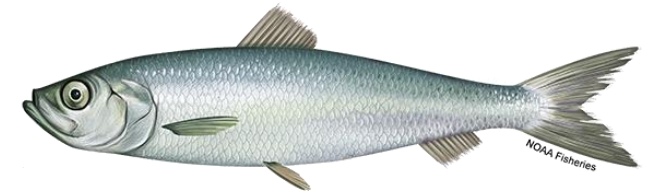
BOSTON, MA & WEBINAR



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MANAGEMENT UPDATES

- NOAA
- ASMFC



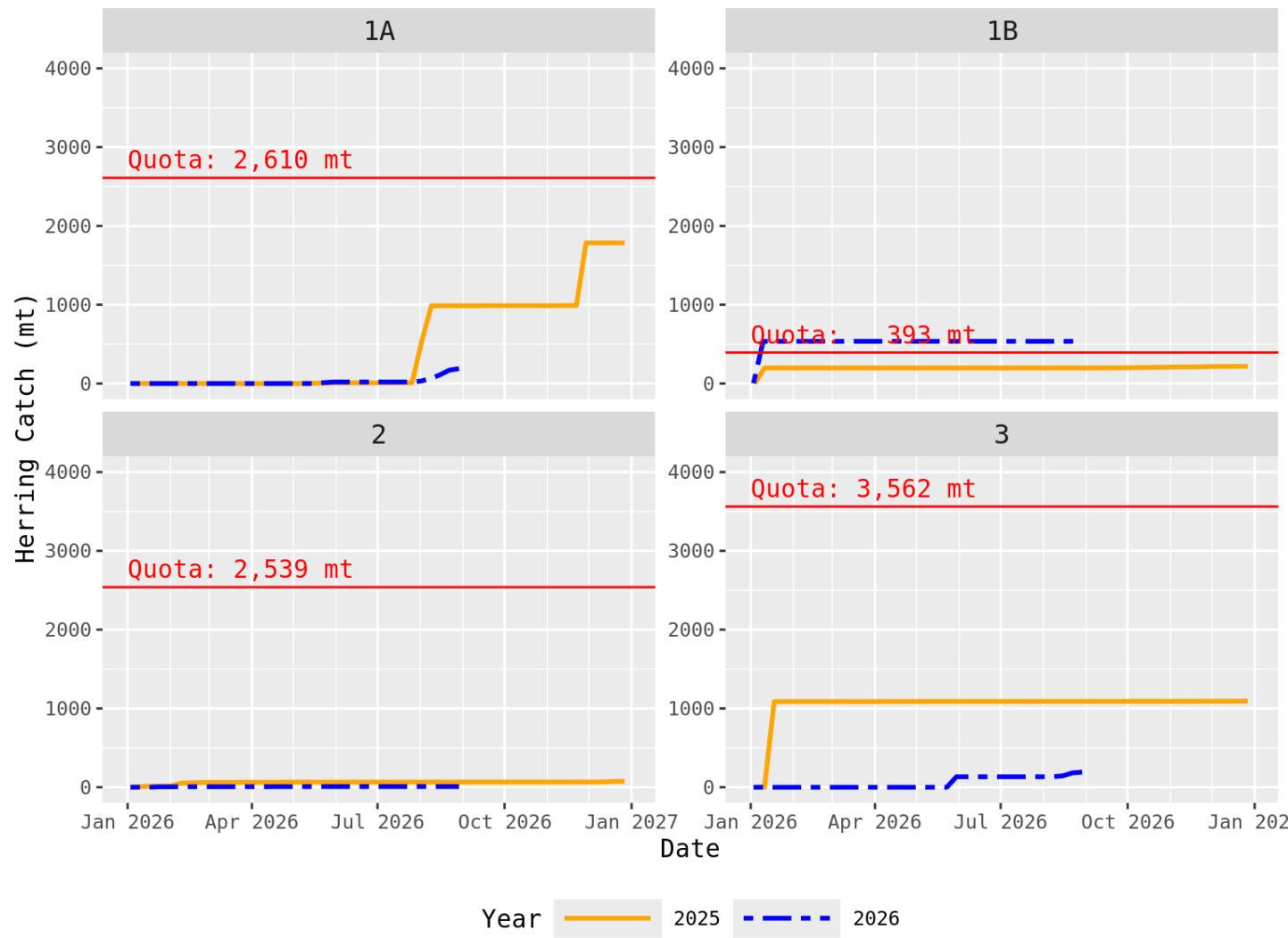
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ATLANTIC HERRING QUOTA MONITORING

As of August 27, 2026

Source: [NOAA/GARFO](#)

Area	Quota (mt)	Cumulative Catch (mt)	% Quota Caught
1A	2,610	189.3	7.3%
1B	393	535.4	136.2%
2	2,539	8.8	0.3%
3	3,562	192.2	5.4%
ACL	9,134	925.7	10.1%



EASTERN ME SPAWNING CLOSURE

ADDITIONAL INFO: [ASMFC PRESS RELEASE](#)

- Eastern Maine spawning closure (shown in blue) in place from August 28, 2026 through October 8, 2026.
- Vessels in the directed herring fishery cannot take/land/possess herring caught in the area during the closure
- 2,000 lb incidental limit applies to vessels in non-directed fisheries

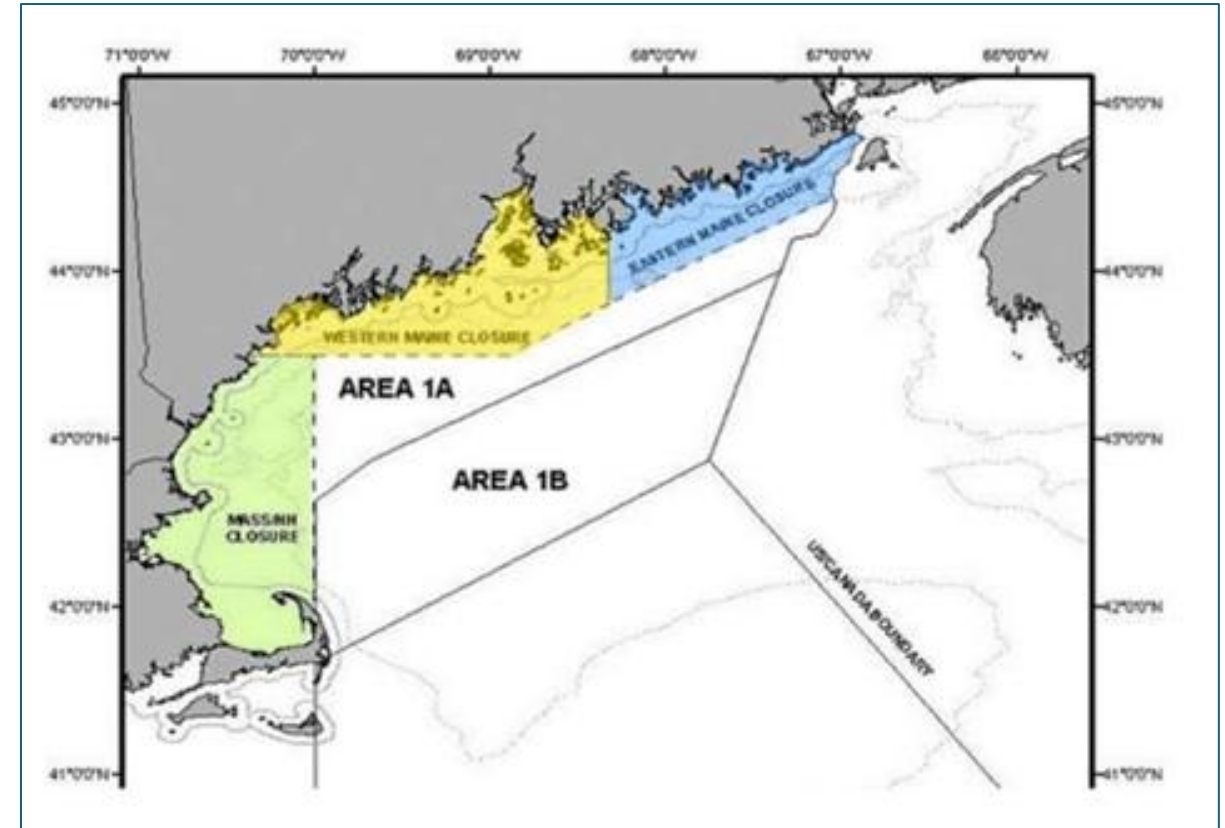


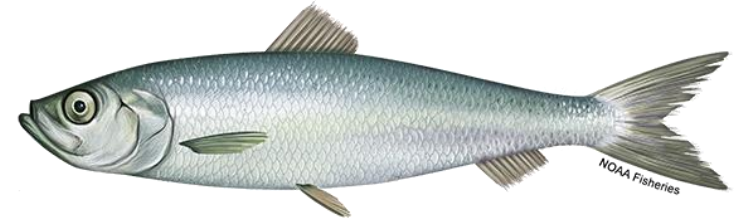
Image Source: Herring FW7



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FOR TODAY

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



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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



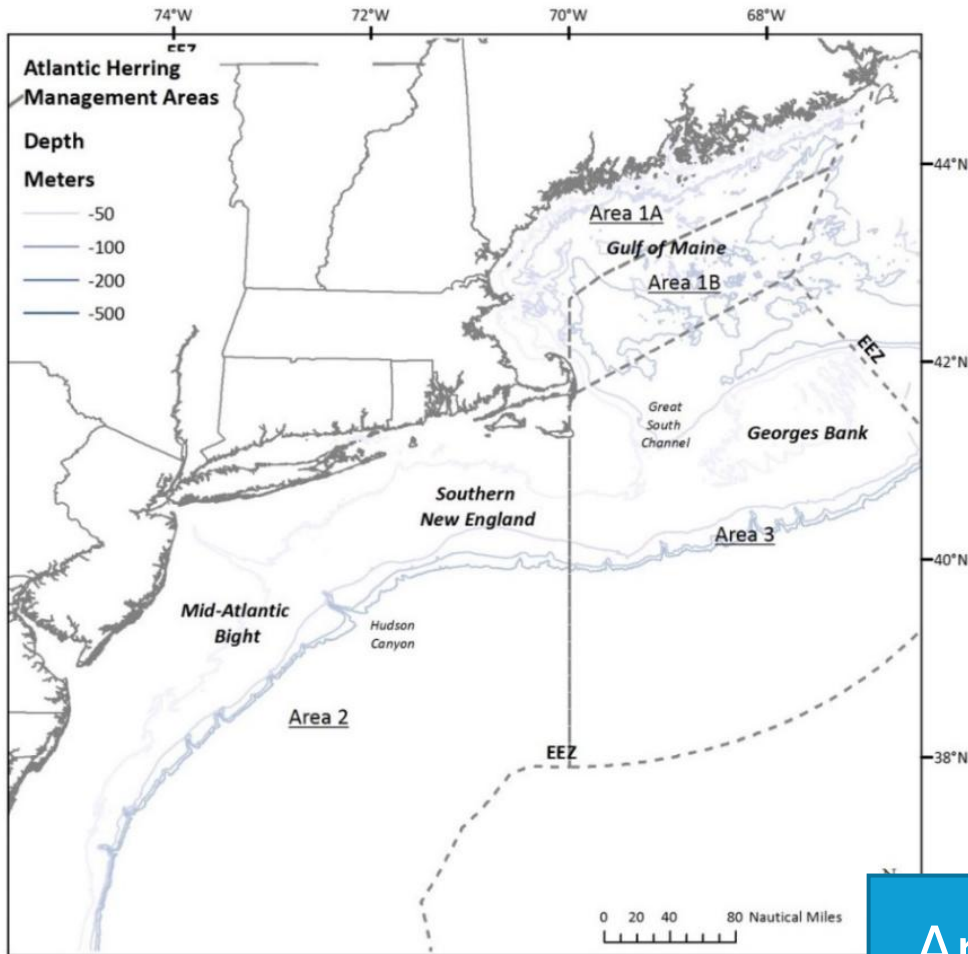
SPECIFICATIONS ACTION TIMELINE

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
August 11-12	SSC Meeting: Herring ABC/OFLs
August 18	Herring AP & Committee webinar
August 31	Herring PDT
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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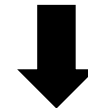
SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT AREAS



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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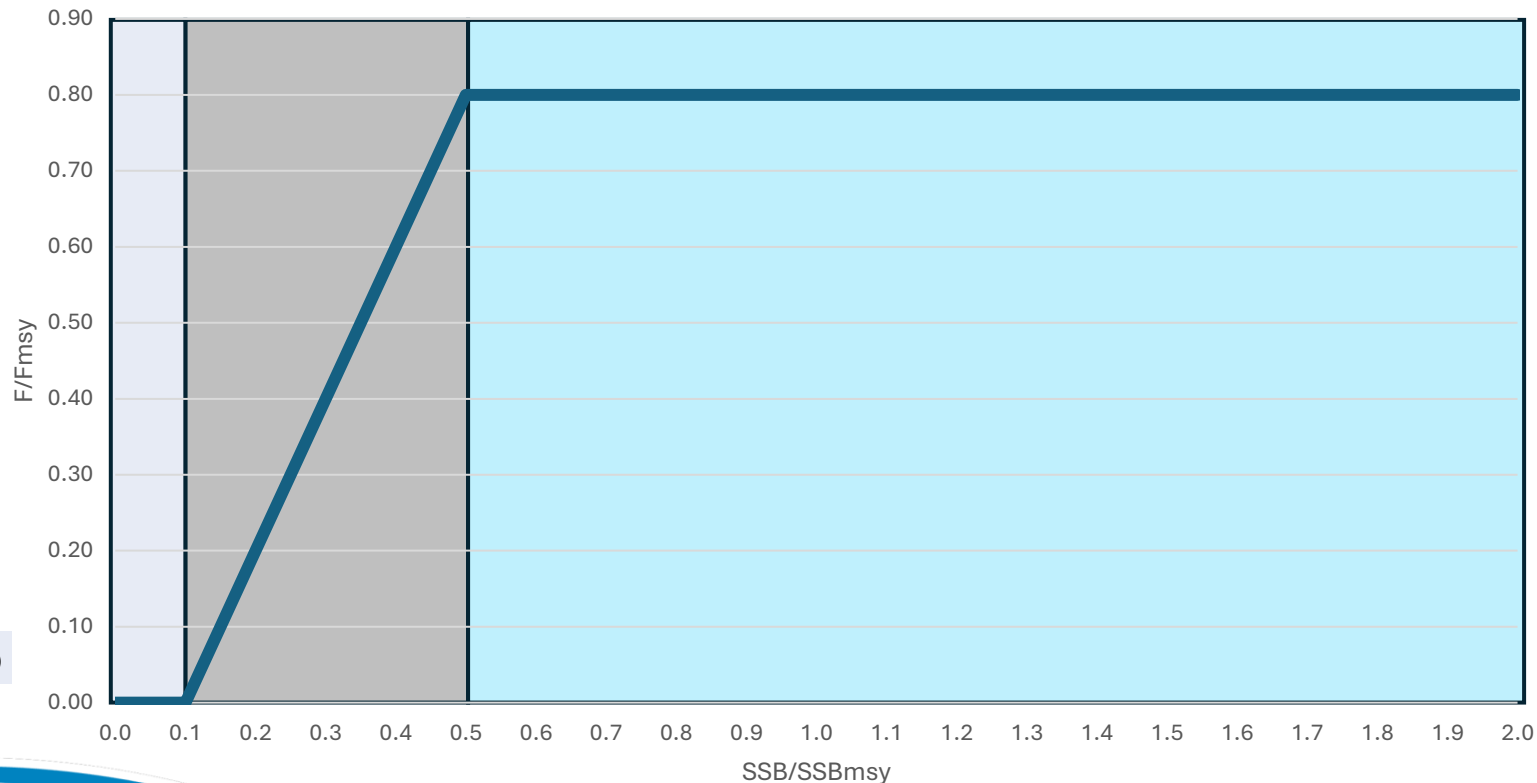
ATLANTIC HERRING ABC CONTROL RULE

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} .



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SSC RECOMMENDATIONS

- SSC recommended establishing constant interim ABC from 2027-2031
- OFL = 13,165 mt (2026 ABC)
- ABC = 10,532 mt (80% of OFL)
- Recommendations aim to prevent overfishing, connect to/are informed by Council's ABC control rule, and consider the Risk Policy statement
- Constant interim ABC “provides a reasonable bridge until an updated assessment and/or additional technical work provides greater confidence in projections, reference points, and their interaction within the control rule”.

Year	OFL (mt)	ABC (mt)
2027-2031	13,165	10,532



SSC RATIONALE

SEE DOCUMENT 4C FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Stock remains in poor condition with persistent low recruitment; warrants a precautionary approach
- Uncertainty in ability to characterize rebuilding trajectory using projections; rebuilding conclusions were highly dependent on assumptions of future survival and recruitment in projections
- Disconnect between herring ABC control rule and WHAM approach; control rule was developed using a different assessment framework, estimation of assessment quantities and reference points have changed
- Council's risk policy indicated low risk tolerance, supporting precautionary reduction in OFL/ABC
- **Sources of Uncertainty:** continued poor recruitment; treatment and interpretation of NAA random effects; mismatch between recent conditions and conditions used for assumptions from some projection and reference point calculations; uncertainty in WHAM biological reference points, comparability to former ASAP framework; missing or limited recent survey information



SSC RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prioritize work on age-1 survey information potentially using VAST to synthesize different available trawl surveys
- Investigate causes for the poor recruitment and negative NAA random effects
- Examine best practices for NAA random effect treatment in projections
- Reevaluate the performance of the Atlantic herring ABC control rule with the changes associated with WHAM
- Investigate potential spatial changes in Atlantic herring distribution



AUGUST 18 JOINT AP & COMMITTEE MEETING

Joint Advisory Panel & Committee Consensus Statement

To add two alternatives under specifications for analysis by the Plan Development Team, for the management uncertainty buffer to be set at either the ten-year average or five-year average Canadian catch.

Committee Consensus Statement

To task the Plan Development Team to investigate the timing of herring and mackerel catches in Herring Management Areas 2 and 3.



ALTERNATIVE 2: UPDATED HERRING SPECIFICATIONS USING 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%)



ALTERNATIVE 3: UPDATED HERRING SPECIFICATIONS USING 5-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 = 6,926 mt

Scientific Uncertainty

Applied 20% reduction to OFL to get ABC

Management Uncertainty = 3,606 mt

- Canadian NB weir fishery 5-year average

Area 1A =
2,002 mt
(28.9%)

Area 1B =
298 mt
(4.3%)

Area 2 =
1,925 mt
(27.8%)

Area 3 =
2,701 mt
(39%)

2025-2027 SPECIFICATIONS ACTION ALTERNATIVES

	Alternative 1: No Action 2027 Specifications (mt)	Alternative 2: Updated 2027- 2031 Specifications, 10-year Canadian catch avg (mt)	Alternative 3: Updated 2027- 2031 Specifications, 5-year Canadian catch avg (mt)
Overfishing Limit (OFL)	31,075	13,165	13,165
Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)	13,165	10,532	10,532
Management Uncertainty*	4,031	5,131	3,606
Optimum Yield (OY) / Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	9,134	5,401	6,926
Domestic Annual Harvest (DAH)	9,134	5,401	6,926
Domestic Annual Processing (DAP)	9,134	5,401	6,926
Area 1A sub-ACL (28.9%)	2,640	1,561	2,002
Area 1B sub-ACL (4.3%)	393	232	298
Area 2 sub-ACL (27.8%)	2,539	1,502	1,925
Area 3 sub-ACL (39%)	3,562	2,106	2,701
Fixed Gear Set-Aside	30	45	45

* The New Brunswick weir fishery landings through October 1 are less than the associated “trigger,” then 1,000 mt will be subtracted from the management uncertainty buffer and added to the Area 1A sub-ACL and the ACL.



MANAGEMENT UNCERTAINTY BUFFER

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

Canadian Catch Assumption	Management Uncertainty Buffer	Annual Catch Limit	Area 1A Transfer Threshold (64.5% of mgmt uncertainty buffer)
10-year recent average catch	5,131 mt	5,401 mt	3,310 mt
5-year recent average catch	3,606 mt	6,926 mt	2,326 mt

- Using 10-year and 5-year Canadian catch averages from the 2026 management track assessment/projections; consistent with methods used to develop 2025-2027 management uncertainty buffer.
- 1,000 mt from the management uncertainty buffer can be reallocated to Area 1A if NMFS determines that the NB weir/shut-off fishery lands less than a specified threshold value through October 1.
- By comparison, the 2026 management uncertainty buffer is 4,031 mt and the Area 1A transfer threshold is 2,600 mt.



AREA 1A TRANSFER ANALYSIS – PRELIMINARY, 2016-2025

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

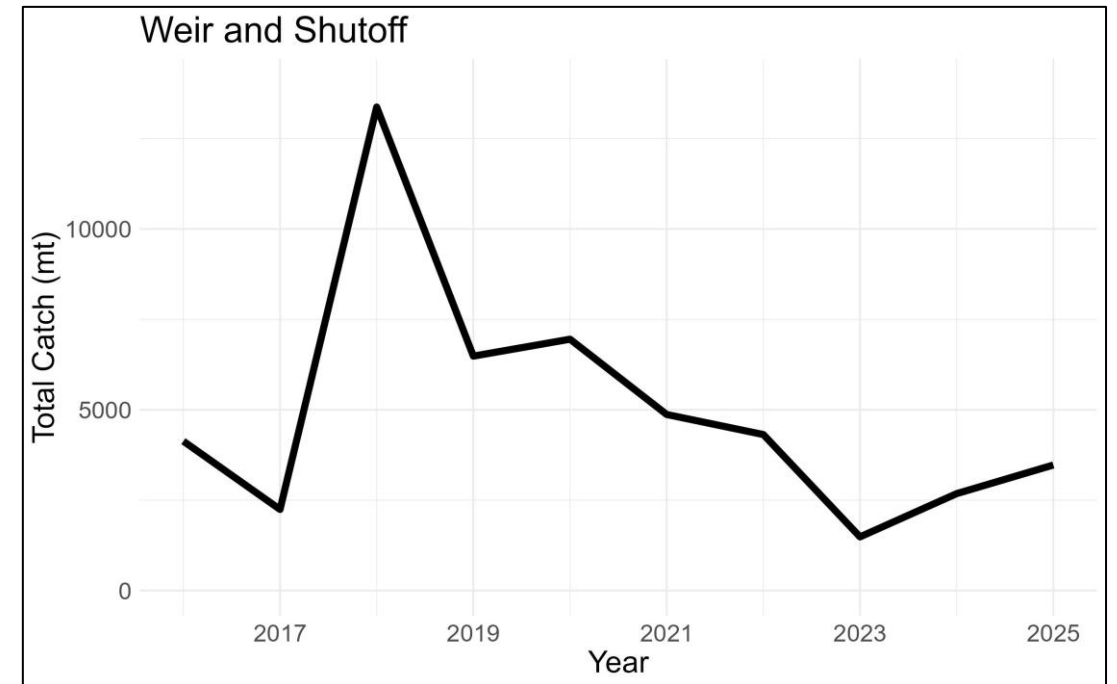
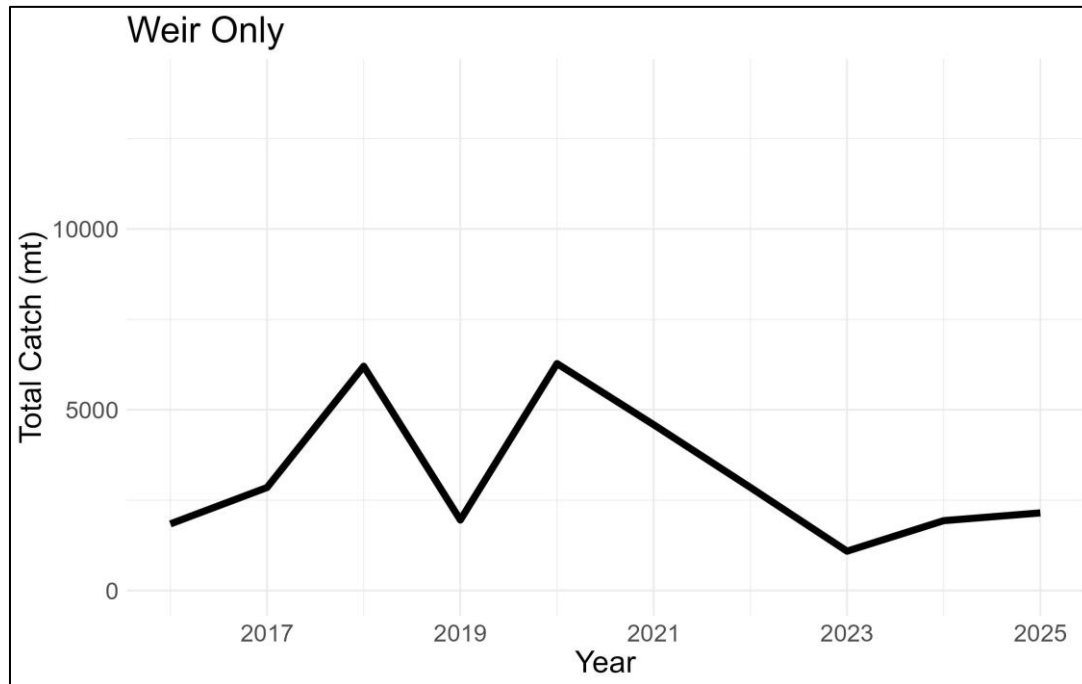
Source: NOAA/GARFO, May 26, 2026.

Note: Landings include both the New Brunswick weir and shutoff portions of the fishery. Analysis is preliminary.



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TOTAL CATCH IN THE NEW BRUNSWICK WEIR & SHUTOFF FISHERY, 2016-2025



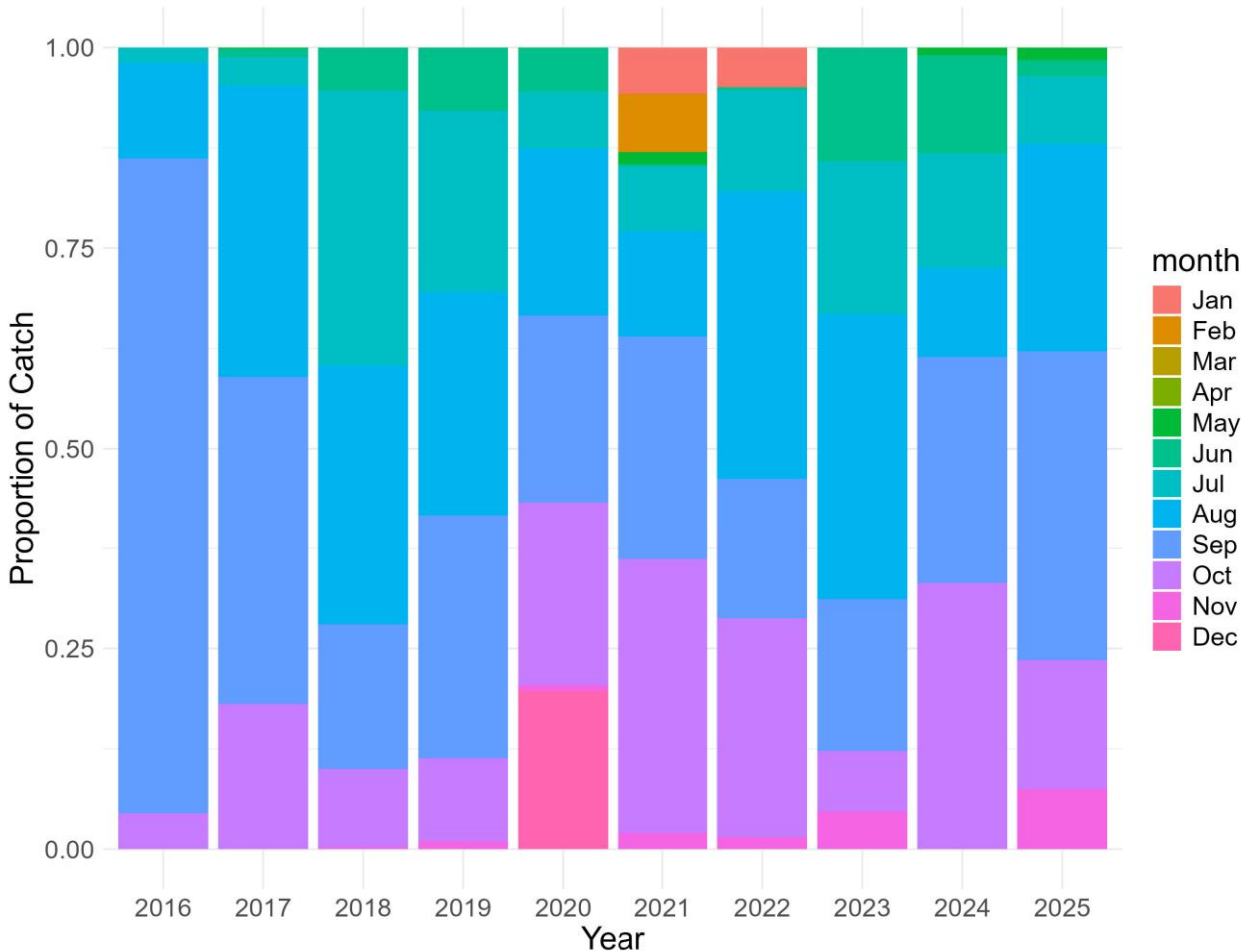
Source: NOAA/GARFO, August 27, 2026.



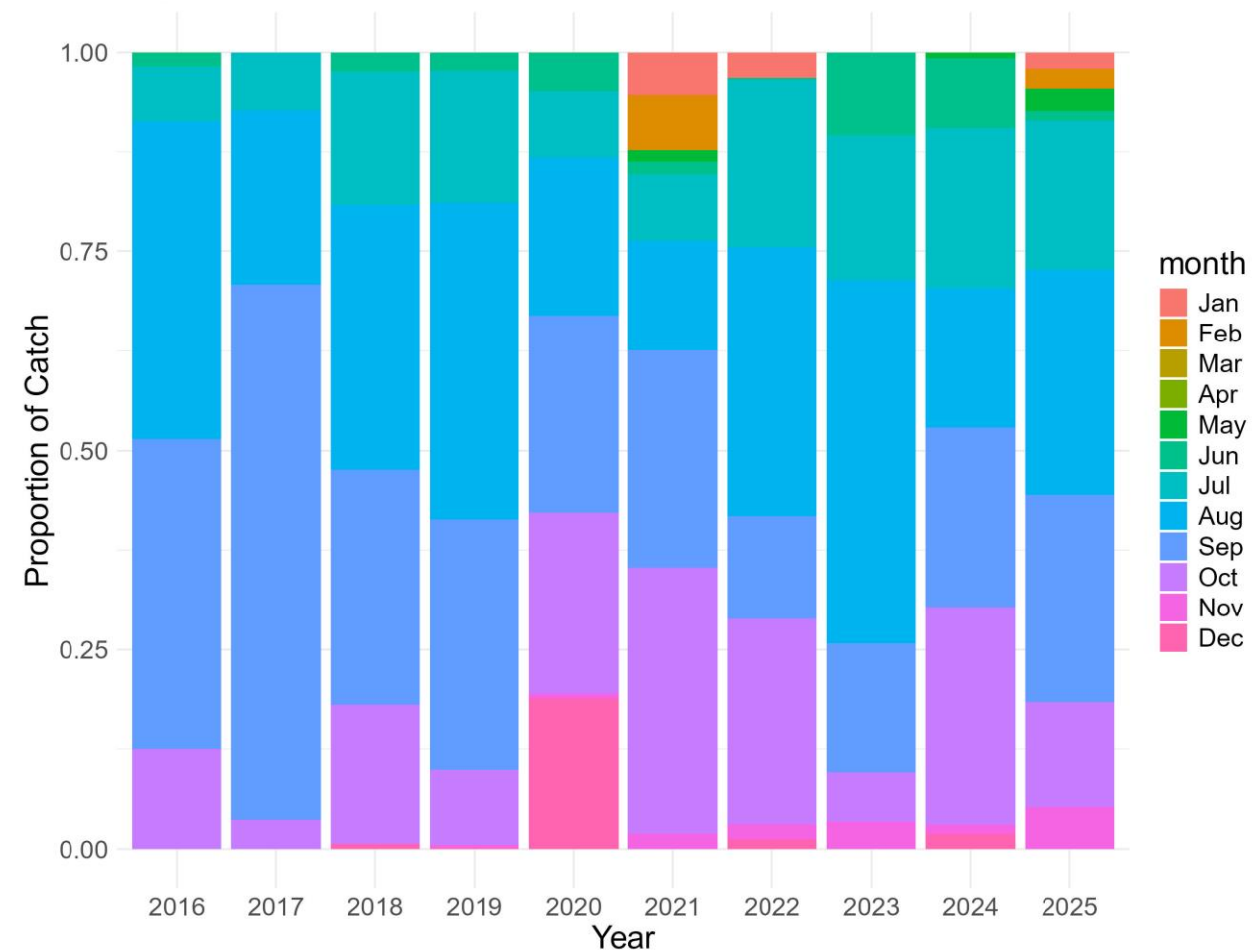
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MONTHLY NEW BRUNSWICK WEIR FISHERY LANDINGS, 2016-2025

Weir Only



Weir and Shutoff



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Source: NOAA/GARFO, August 27, 2026.

ADDITIONAL SPECIFICATIONS

Remaining Status Quo:

- Border Transfer – 0 mt
- US At-Sea Processing – 0 mt
- Herring Research Set-Aside (RSA) – 0%
- Seasonal sub-ACLs for Area 1A
 - January-May: 0%
 - June-December: 100%
- Carryover of unharvested catch
 - Up to 10% of sub-ACL



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 REGULATIONS

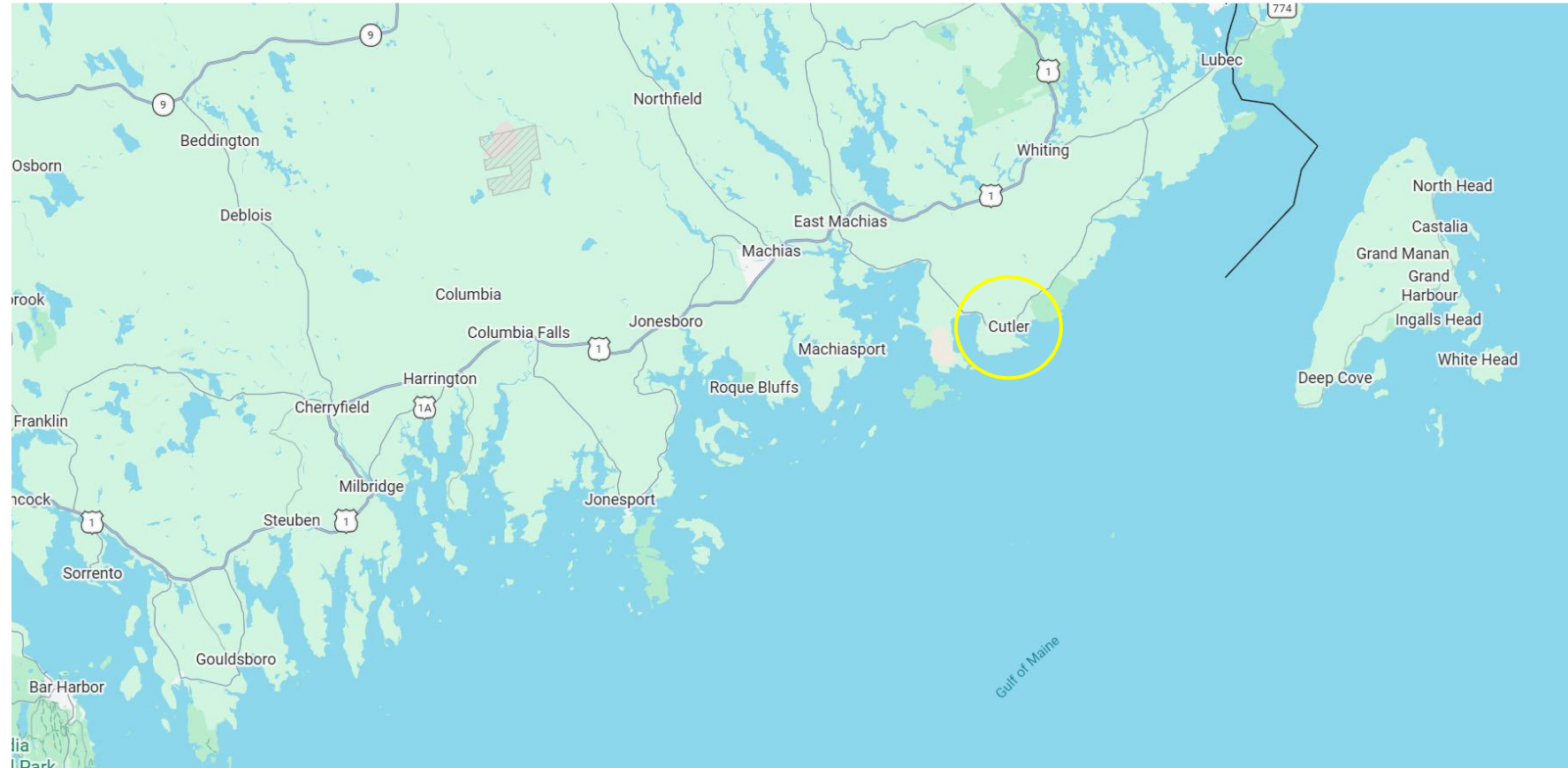
50 CFR 648.201(f): “Up to 500 mt of the Area 1A sub-ACL shall be allocated for the fixed gear fisheries in Area 1A (weirs and stop seines) that occur west of 67°16.8' W. long (Cutler, Maine). This set-aside shall be available for harvest by fixed gear within the specified area until November 1 of each fishing year. Any portion of this allocation that has not been utilized by November 1 shall be restored to the sub-ACL allocation for Area 1A.”



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.



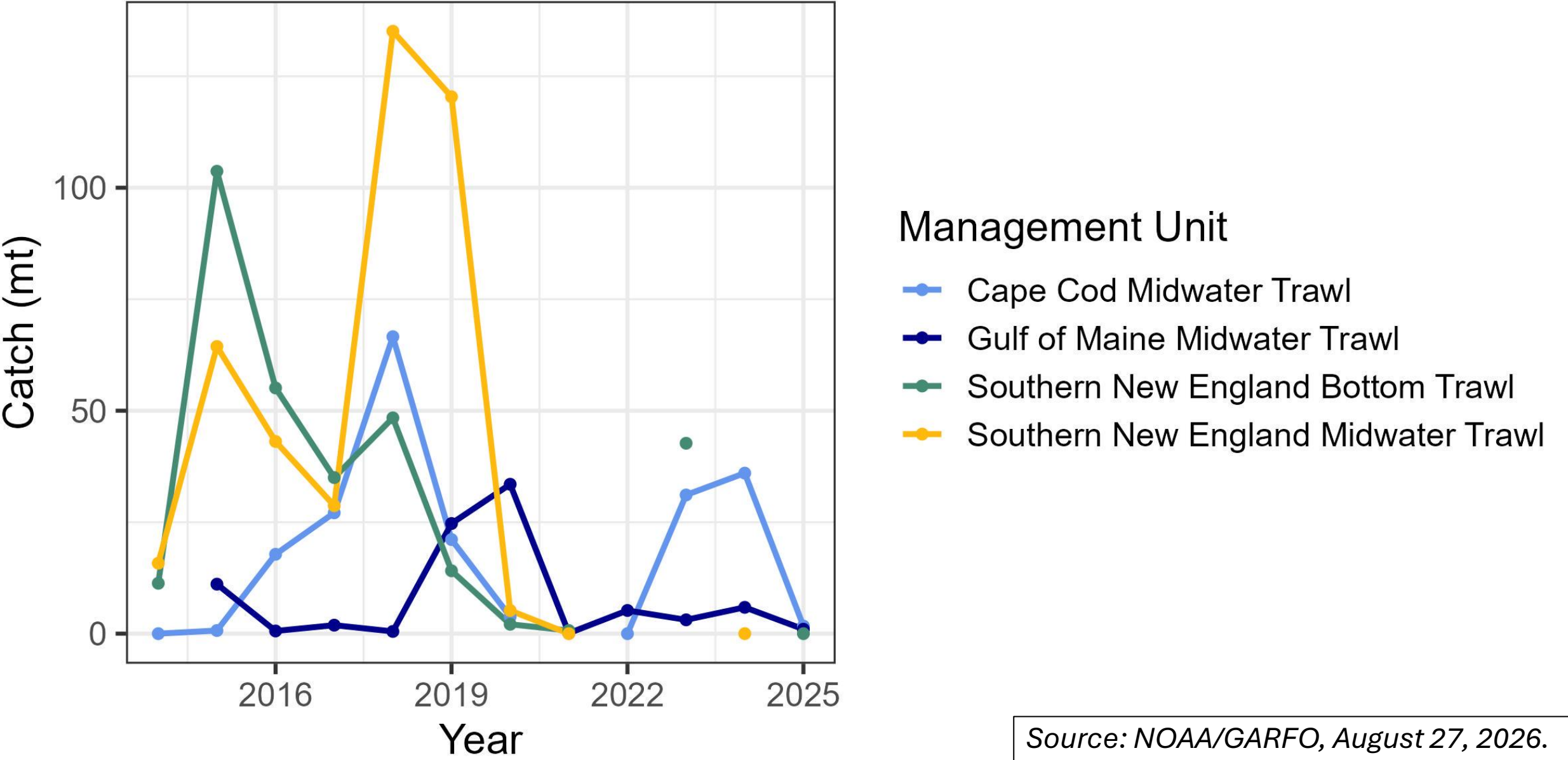
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RIVER HERRING AND SHAD CATCH CAPS

Catch Cap Area	Alternative 1: No Action (mt)	Alternative 2: Updated 2027-2031 Specifications, 10-year Canadian catch avg (mt)	Alternative 3: Updated 2027-2031 Specifications, 5-year Canadian catch avg (mt)
Midwater Trawl Gulf of Maine	76.7	76.7	76.7
Midwater Trawl Cape Cod	32.4	32.4	32.4
Midwater Trawl Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic	129.6	129.6	129.6
Bottom Trawl Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic	122.3	122.3	122.3

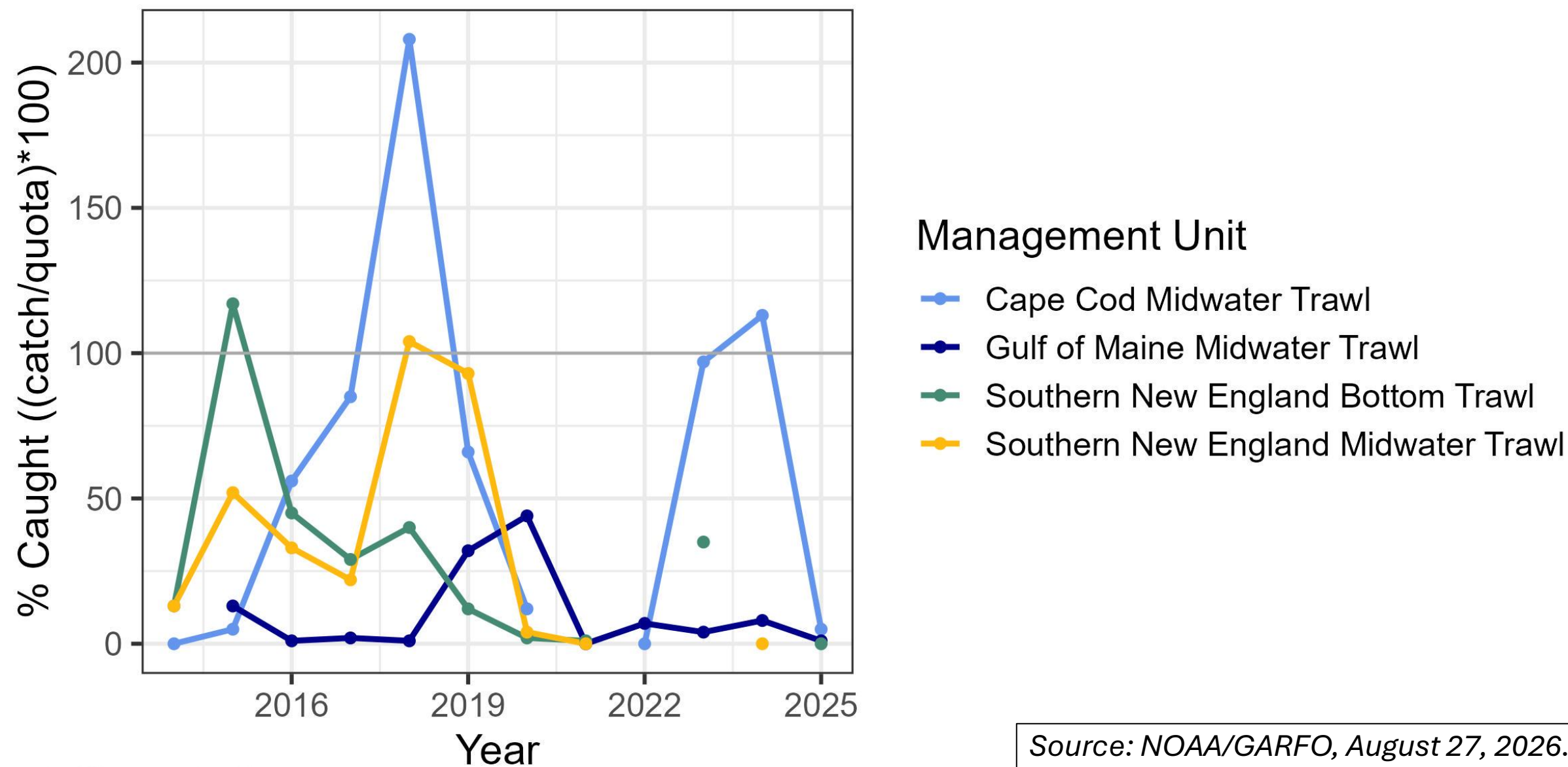


Annual estimated catch of RH/S catch caps by area, 2014-2025



Source: NOAA/GARFO, August 27, 2026.

Annual percentage of RH/S catch cap quotas caught, 2014-2025



Source: NOAA/GARFO, August 27, 2026.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT IMPACTS

Target Species: slight positive to slight negative impacts

- Updated specifications consider latest science from the 2026 management track assessment, and the Council's ABC control rule and rebuilding plan
- The alternatives to the No Action reduce the ABC by 20% and are therefore more likely to prevent overfishing
- Assessment indicates no change from overfished stock status
- Rebuilding possible by 2031 under the most optimistic projection scenario but unlikely under the most pessimistic projection scenario
- Another stock assessment is anticipated in the next few years (i.e., prior to 2031)



PRELIMINARY DRAFT IMPACTS

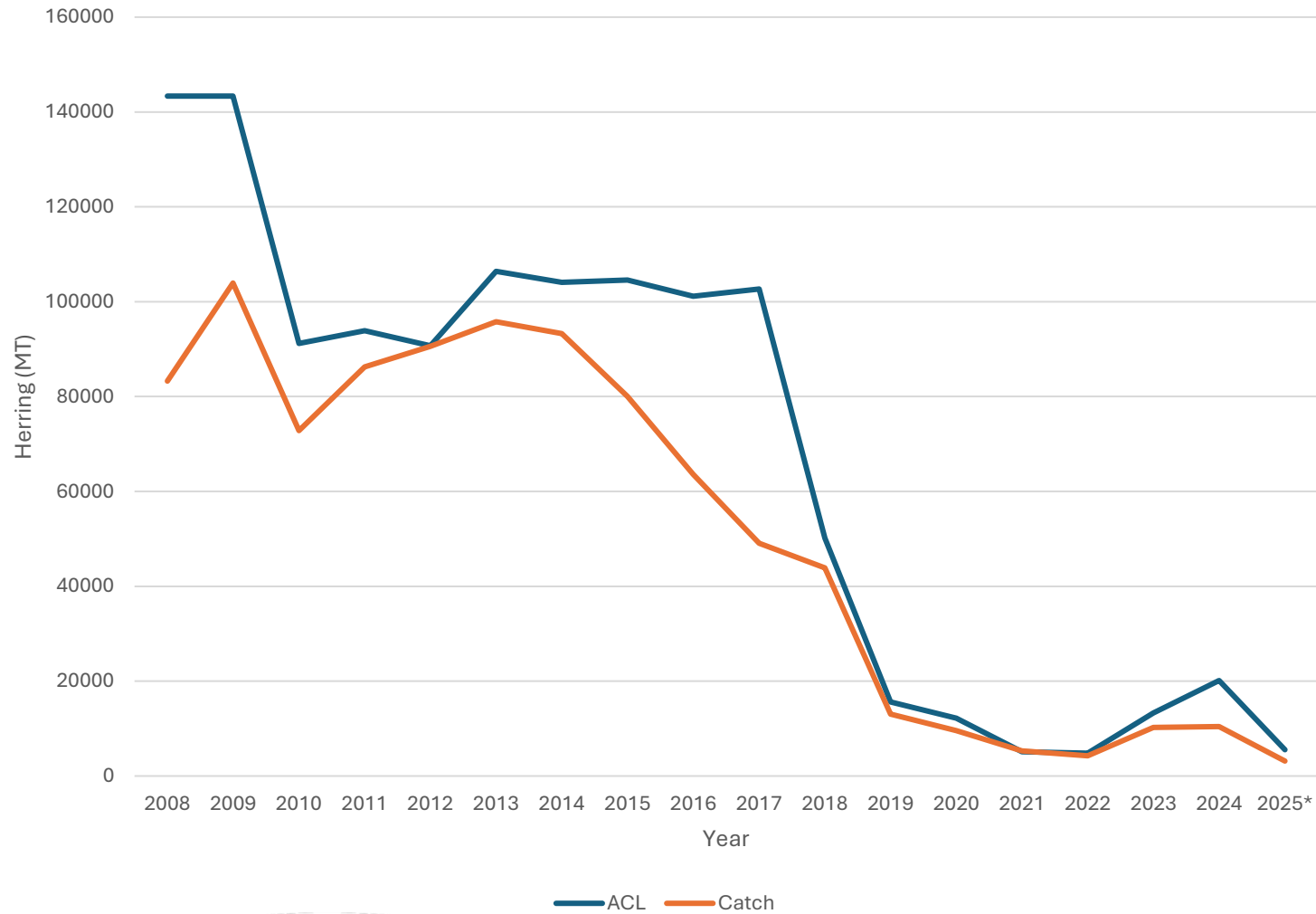
Human Communities: negative impacts

- Alternative 2 or 3 would reduce ABC/ACL from 2026 and default 2027
 - Potential continued reduction in fishing effort, shoreside impacts (processing/cold storage/fuel/ice/supplies)
 - Impacts to Atlantic mackerel fishery, lobster bait market
- Constant OFL/ABC could provide some stability for fishery

Specifications	No Action – 2027 (mt)	Alternative 2 (mt)	% Change from No Action	Alternative 3 (mt)	% Change from No Action
OFL	31,075	13,165	-58%	13,165	-58%
ABC	13,165	10,532	-20%	10,532	-20%
ACL	9,134	5,401	-41%	6,926	-24%
Area 1A Sub-ACL (28.9%)	2,640	1,561	-41%	2,002	-24%
Area 1B sub-ACL (4.3%)	393	232	-41%	298	-24%
Area 2 sub-ACL (27.8%)	2,539	1,502	-41%	1,925	-24%
Area 3 sub-ACL (39%)	3,562	2,106	-41%	2,701	-24%



US Atlantic Herring Catch and ACL, 2008-2025



Year	ACL (mt)	Catch (mt)	% Utilization
2008	143,350	83,239	58.1
2009	143,350	103,942	72.5
2010	91,200	72,851	79.9
2011	93,905	86,245	91.8
2012	90,683	90,561	99.9
2013	106,375	95,764	90.0
2014	104,088	93,247	89.6
2015	104,566	80,011	76.5
2016	101,135	63,581	62.9
2017	102,656	49,072	47.8
2018	50,195	43,878	87.4
2019	15,613	13,079	83.8
2020	12,225	9,591	78.5
2021	5,128	5,268	102.7
2022	4,813	4,234	88.0
2023	13,287	10,228	77.0
2024	20,141	10,439	51.8
2025*	5,556	3,158	56.8

**2025 data is preliminary.*
Data Source: NOAA/GARFO, August 27, 2026.



DECISION DOCUMENT, COMMITTEE VERSION

Specifications for 2027-2031		Preferred by	
<i>Choose one.</i>		AP	CMTE
Alternative1/ No Action	<i>Under the No Action alternative, there are two scenarios for the overfishing limit. If the default specifications for 2027, as recommended by the Council in the 2025-2027 specifications action, were used, the overfishing limit (OFL) would be 31,075 mt. If the 2026 specifications were to roll over into 2027, the OFL would remain 23,491 mt. The ABC was held constant in 2026 and 2027, so no other specifications would differ.</i>		
Alternative 2	<i>Update the annual specifications for FY2027 through FY2031 for Atlantic herring using the 10-year average of Canadian fixed gear catch and set river herring/shad catch caps.</i>		
Alternative 3	<i>Update the annual specifications for FY2027 through FY2031 for Atlantic herring using the 5-year average of Canadian fixed gear catch and set river herring/shad catch caps.</i>		
Decisions/Questions/Information to consider			
• See SSC report from August 11-12, 2026 meeting, which includes a majority and minority report. • See PDT/TC report to SSC for August 11-12 SSC meeting.			
Other important considerations			
• <i>To be updated for Council version.</i>			



SUB-ACL ADJUSTMENTS: POSSIBLE PATH FORWARD

Temporarily modify sub-ACL percentages through in-season adjustment

- Consider recent ACL utilization, changes in herring availability (different times/areas), herring fishery needs (market/availability), needs in Area 2 and 3 to support mackerel fishery
- NMFS/NEFMC consultation at June 2027 meeting
 - Review 2026 catch, in-season catch to date
 - Consider 2026 stock assessment, herring information (feeding, spawning, migratory patterns)
 - NMFS could temporarily modify sub-ACLs via in-season adjustment for remainder of 2027



DISCUSSION ON SUB-ACL REALLOCATION

AP/Cte:

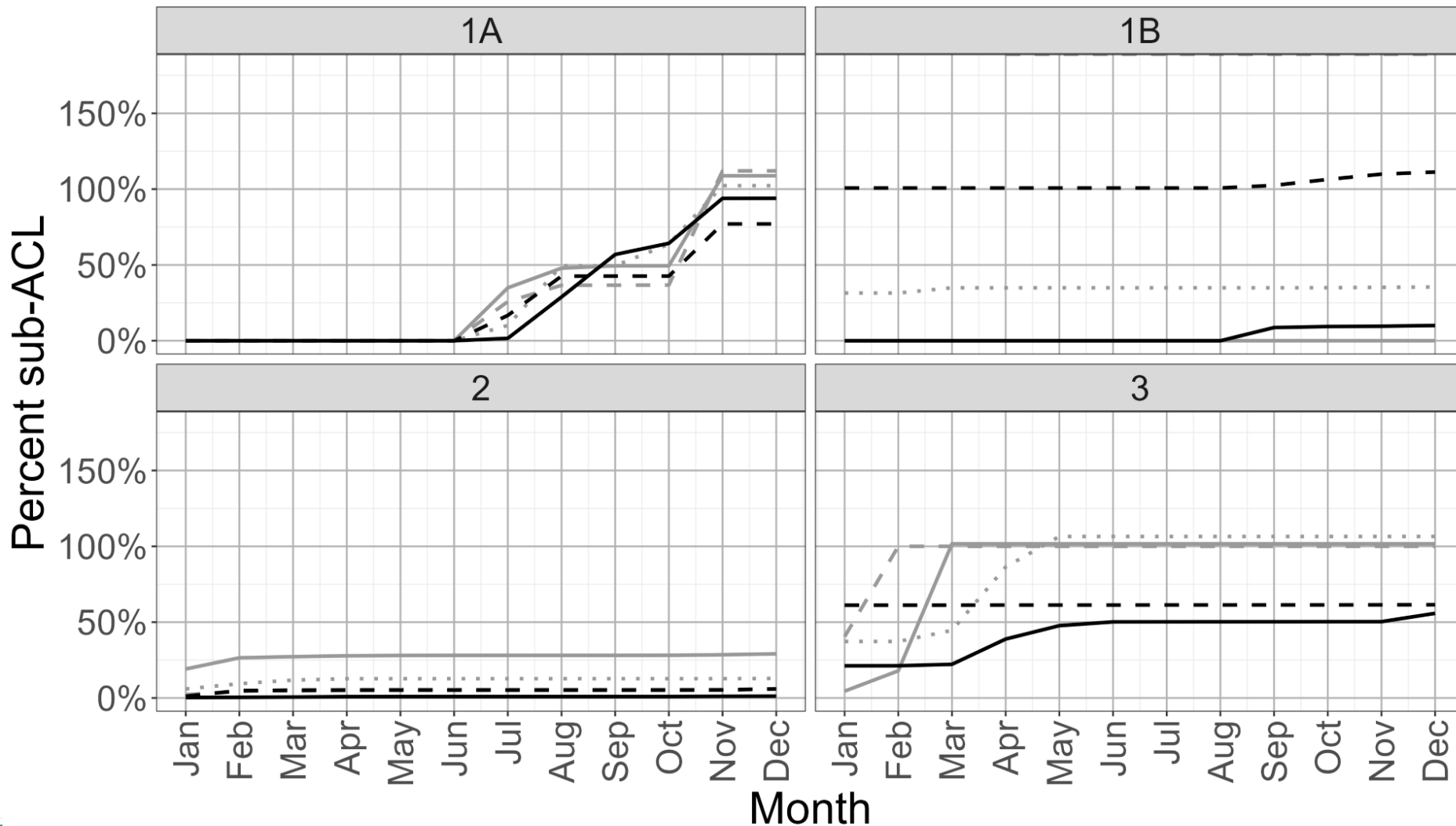
- Could support achieving optimum yield in the fishery; stock appears to be contracting into GOM
- High economic stress on the fishery
- Percentages represent contributions of spawning stocks; hesitant to change until there is more information available
- Potential impacts to winter mackerel fishery if quota changes in Area 2
- Support for considering an in-season adjustment rather than permanent reallocation; could address concerns re: mackerel impacts, would not slow down other work

PDT:

- Sub-area quotas put in place to protect spawning components in certain areas, moving quota could impact effectiveness
- No new biological information to support making changes; herring genomics study is underway to inform potential changes to percentages



Herring sub-ACL Use by Month and Area, 2021-2025



Year — 2021 - - 2022 2023 — 2024 - - 2025

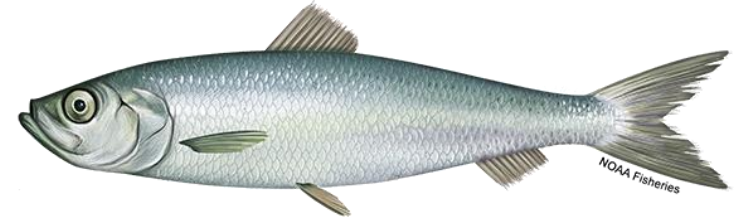
REMINDER: UPCOMING MEETINGS

- 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
- December 8-10 – NEFMC meeting
 - Newport, RI and webinar
 - 2027 Council priorities discussion



FOR TODAY

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



ADDITIONAL SLIDES



New England Fishery
Management Council

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.



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.”

