

ATLANTIC HERRING FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

2027-2031 SPECIFICATIONS ACTION DRAFT ALTERNATIVES

ALTERNATIVE 1 – NO ACTION

The No Action alternative is the specifications from the [2025-2027 specifications action](#).

Table 1. Summary of current Atlantic herring fishery specifications (mt).

	Current Specifications (mt)*		
	2025	2026	2027
Overfishing Limit (OFL)	20,802	23,491	31,075
Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)	8,587	13,165	13,165
Management Uncertainty**	4,031	4,031	4,031
Optimum Yield (OY) / Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	4,556	9,134	9,134
Domestic Annual Harvest (DAH)	4,556	9,134	9,134
Border Transfer (BT)	0	0	0
Domestic Annual Processing (DAP)	4,556	9,134	9,134
US At-Sea Processing (USAP)	0	0	0
Area 1A sub-ACL (28.9%)	1,317	2,640	2,640
Area 1B sub-ACL (4.3%)	196	393	393
Area 2 sub-ACL (27.8%)	1,267	2,539	2,539
Area 3 sub-ACL (39%)	1,777	3,562	3,562
Fixed Gear Set-Aside	30	30	30
Research Set-Aside (RSA) as % of sub-ACL	0%	0%	0%
*Implemented December 11, 2025.			
** If 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.			

Table 2. Summary of river herring and shad (RH/S) catch caps (mt).

Catch Cap Area	Current Specifications, FY 2025-2027 (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

ALTERNATIVES 2 AND 3 – UPDATED SPECIFICATIONS

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.

Alternatives 2 and 3 would update Atlantic herring specifications based on the 2026 management track stock assessment and recommendations from the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). Alternatives 2 and 3 would also increase the fixed gear set-aside from 30 to 45 mt. Under both alternatives, border transfer, US at-sea processing, and the research set-aside (RSA) would all remain set to 0, and river herring and shad catch caps would remain status quo.

Alternative 2 would use the 10-year average of Canadian fixed gear catch for the management uncertainty buffer (5,131 mt), resulting in an ACL of 5,401 mt, and management area sub-ACLs of 1,561 mt in Area 1A, 232 mt in Area 1B, 1,502 mt in Area 2, and 2,106 mt in Area 3.

Alternative 3 would use the 5-year average of Canadian fixed gear catch for the management uncertainty buffer (3,606 mt), resulting in an ACL of 9,926 mt and management area sub-ACLs of 2,002 mt in Area 1A, 298 mt in Area 1B, 1,925 mt in Area 2, and 2,701 mt in Area 3.

Table 3. Atlantic herring 2027-2031 specifications 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 Council's prior proposal 23,491 Status quo 2026 OFL in the event of roll-over specifications	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
Border Transfer (BT)	0	0	0
Domestic Annual Processing (DAP)	9,134	5,401	6,926
US At-Sea Processing (USAP)	0	0	0
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
Research Set-Aside (RSA) as % of sub-ACL	0%	0%	0%
<i>*Implemented December 11, 2025.</i> <i>** 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.</i>			

Table 4. Summary of river herring and shad (RH/S) catch caps under each alternative.

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