

DECISION DOCUMENT

For

2027 – 2031 Specifications

Atlantic Herring

Fishery Management Plan



This document was developed to help the Council select a final proposed action.

For September 15-17, 2026 – Council Meeting

Council Version, September 3, 2026

Anticipated Council Action:

Prior to selecting a final proposal, Council staff will present the draft alternatives and analysis prepared by the Atlantic Herring Plan Development Team (PDT and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Atlantic Herring Technical Committee (TC). Council staff will also answer questions, as needed, about the draft action document. The following are anticipated Council actions:

1. Motion to select a preferred alternative for 2027-2031 Atlantic herring specifications.
2. Motion to submit the 2027-2031 Atlantic herring specifications document to NOAA Fisheries.

Atlantic Herring Specifications for 2027-2031

Specifications for 2027-2031 <i>Choose one alternative.</i>		Preferred by	
		AP	CMTE
Alternative 1/ 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>	X Carried 5/4/0	
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>		X Consensus
Decisions/Questions/Information to consider			
• See Appendix I – Supporting Reports (SSC report from the August 11–12, 2026 meeting, which includes both a majority and a minority report, PDT/TC report to the SSC for August 11-12 SSC meeting, and Risk Policy Report) • See Council staff presentation for draft analysis of biological and economic impacts			
Other important considerations			
• The Committee recommends using the recent five-year average of Canadian catches from the 2026 management track stock assessment to determine the management certainty buffer between the ABC and the ACL. • Under Alternative 2 or 3, the fixed gear set-aside would be set to 45 mt. • Under each alternative, the river herring and shad catch caps would continue to be set at status quo values. The Council is working on a separate action (Amendment or Framework Adjustment) to address river herring and shad measures, which is a multi-year priority. • NOAA and Council staff reviewed the draft alternatives following the Committee meeting and preliminarily determined that this specifications action would include preparation of a supplemental Environmental Assessment to Framework Adjustment 8.			