

Amendment or Framework Adjustment to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan

DRAFT Action Plan

Council: New England Fishery Management Council (Council)

Fishery: Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP)

Title of Action: Amendment ? or Framework Adjustment ? to the Atlantic Herring FMP

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.

Council's Problem Statement for River Herring and 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).

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

Applicable Laws/Issues:

NEPA Analysis (EIS/EA/CE/SIR): This amendment or framework adjustment is expected to require an environmental assessment (EA). A formal determination will be made once the range of alternatives is identified and analyzed.

Endangered Species Act/Marine Mammal Protection Act: This action is expected to have an informal ESA consultation.

Other Applicable Laws and Regulatory Requirements: Typical issues and analyses expected at this time.

Timeline for Development of the Action (*additional meetings to be added*)

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