



New England Fishery Management Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 28, 2020

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Atlantic Herring: Council Receives Progress Report on Two Framework Adjustments; New Stock Assessment Underway

The New England Fishery Management Council received a progress report during its April 14-15, 2020 webinar meeting on two framework adjustments to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan. Here's what's in the works.

- **[Framework Adjustment 7](#)** – This framework is being developed to protect Atlantic herring spawning on Georges Bank. Here's the [discussion document](#). During this meeting, the Council voted to clarify that:
 - The **goal** of this action is to “develop measures to protect spawning adults of Atlantic herring and/or Atlantic herring egg mats to increase overall herring biomass”; and
 - The **objective** is to “consider similar measures as in Area 1A – the inshore Gulf of Maine – for other spawning components of this resource,” namely on Georges Bank and Nantucket Shoals.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission ([ASMFC](#)) and the Council collaboratively manage the Area 1A fishery. The Council is discussing the role of state versus federal herring management with the Commission.

On a related note, ASMFC is working on [Addendum III](#) to Amendment 3 of its interstate herring plan, which addresses Area 1A catch limits under low quota scenarios. Final action is scheduled for [May 5](#). The Council intends to reiterate its opposition to the use of any new tools that exclude segments of the fishery and do not allow for

Atlantic Herring Management Track Stock Assessment



A Spring 2020 Management Track Assessment is being conducted for Atlantic herring that will help guide the Council in setting 2021-2023 specifications. Here are the next two key meetings:

- **[April 29, 2020](#)** – This is a follow-up to the Assessment Oversight Panel's February meeting, which is being held to review potential changes to the previously approved stock assessment plans for Atlantic herring and Atlantic mackerel.
- **[June 22-26, 2020](#)** – This is the Spring 2020 Management Track Assessment Peer Review meeting. More information about what's involved in management track assessments is available on the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's stock assessment [webpage](#).



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fair and equitable access to the Area 1A fishery by all gear types. The Council's position is that reallocation of the resource should not be the purpose or result of Addendum III.

- **Framework Adjustment 8** – This framework is being developed to establish fishing year 2021-2023 specifications and adjust measures in the herring plan that potentially inhibit the mackerel fishery from achieving its optimum yield (OY).
 - The specifications will be influenced by new information from the Atlantic Herring Management Track Assessment, which the Council will discuss in June and September; and
 - The mackerel fishery is managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. However, many herring fishermen work on mackerel during certain times of the year. This is why the New England Council is addressing ways to help participants remain operational under the herring fishery's requirements.
- Two specific measures in the herring plan have been identified that potentially inhibit the mackerel fishery.
 1. A 2,000-pound herring incidental catch possession limit is implemented when specific annual catch limit (ACL) triggers are reached, making it extremely difficult for fishermen to target mackerel without exceeding the incidental catch limit for herring. Framework 8 will include options to increase the limit above 2,000 pounds.
 2. The federal herring plan also contains a seasonal closure of Area 1B from January through April. Framework 8 will include options to modify or eliminate this closure.

At its June 23-25, 2020 meeting, the Council may approve the range of mackerel-related alternatives that will be fully analyzed for further consideration. Final action on the full framework, including the 2021-2023 specifications, is scheduled to take place during the Council's September 29-October 1, 2020 meeting.



– University of Massachusetts Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology photo

Looking for more info?

- All herring-related documents used during the Council's April meeting can be found [here](#).
- Visit the Council's Atlantic herring [webpage](#).
- Questions? Contact Deirdre Boelke, the Council's herring plan coordinator, at:
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