

Atlantic Herring Technical Committee Conference Call November 6, 2008

Present: Chris Vonderweidt (ASMFC, Staff); Terry Stockwell (Section Chair, ME DMR), Matt Cieri (TC Chair, ME DMR); Bill Overholtz (NEFSC); Steve Correia (MA DMF); Kurt Gottshall (CT DMF) ; Madeline Hall-Arber (MIT); Claire McBane (NH FGD), Lori Steele (NEFMC); Peter Moore (Observer),

The Atlantic Herring Technical Committee (TC) convened via phone conference on November 6, 2008. This conference was in response to the Atlantic Herring Section tasking the TC to give feedback advice for an addendum to achieve the goals of the following motion.

Move to initiate an addendum (Addendum I) to include the following:

- **Monthly or bimonthly quotas with payback and carry over**
- **Determination of landing and fishing days**
- **No fishing prior to June 1**
- **Timely reporting of state registered landings**
- **Restriction on harvest of juvenile fish**

The TC addressed each part of the motion separately but agreed that effort controls through days out, monthly/bimonthly quotas, or a combination of both will not stop fishermen from racing to fish. Dividing the quota among monthly periods will cause smaller races to fish.

Monthly or bimonthly quotas with payback and carry over.

TC Chair Dr. Matt Cieri presented an average of vessel trip report (VTR) landings from 2000 – 2007. The general trend shows that landings are cyclical with the greatest amount from May – October.

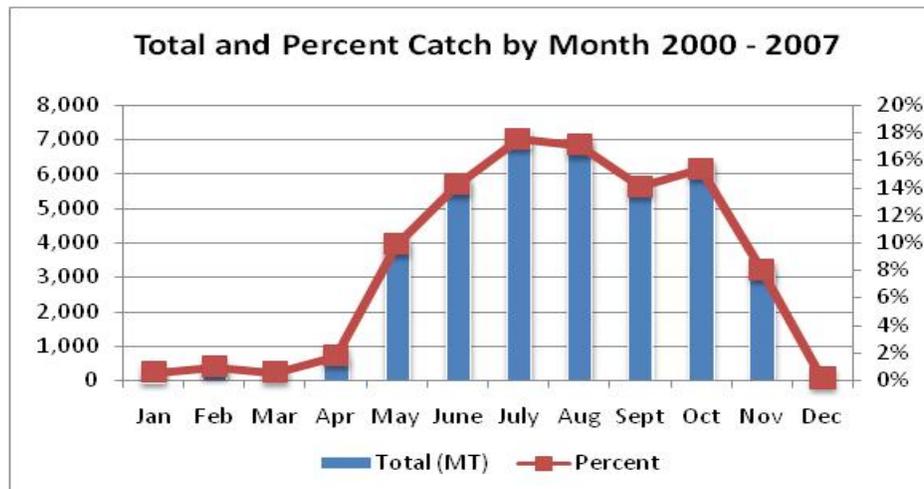


Figure 1. Percent and total catch by month 2000 – 2007. Data is average of VTR landings.

The TC agreed that average VTR landings from 2000 – 2007 is an appropriate method to set monthly or bimonthly quotas. There was discussion that shifting landings to later in the fishing year may have a negative impact on the inshore component of the stock; but more analysis is needed to measure the impact.

There was concern by the TC that landings are not reported quickly enough for accurate monitoring of monthly or bi-monthly quotas and that seasonal quotas may be more feasible given current reporting requirements. One member suggested that if the Section wishes to implement monthly quotas they may be put in a position where one week of the month would be open, but that following weeks in that month maybe closed, depending on catch rates.

For two seasonal quotas, October 1 seems like a natural break point because mid-water trawlers are prohibited from fishing in Area 1A until October 1. ***Based on this, the TC agreed that the most appropriate option to create quotas that can be monitored accurately would be 2 seasonal quotas: January 1 – September 30 and October 1 – December 31.***

The following are monthly, bimonthly, and seasonal quota percentages based on average VTR landings from 2000 – 2007. Each quota type has percentages broken down based on no fishing until June 1 as well as a full year of fishing.

Table 1. Monthly, Bi-monthly, and seasonal quota allocations.

Monthly Quotas				Bi-Monthly Quotas				Seasonal Quotas			
January - December		No Landings Prior to June 1		January - December		No Landings Prior to June 1		January - December		No Landings Prior to June 1	
Month	Percent	Month	Percent	Wave	%	Wave	%	Season	%	Season	%
Jan	0.5%	June	16.4%	1	1.5%	June	16.4%	Jan - Sep	76.5%	Jun - Sep	72.8%
Feb	1.0%	July	20.3%	2	2.3%	4	40.1%	Oct - Dec	23.5%	Oct - Dec	27.2%
Mar	0.6%	Aug	19.8%	3	24.0%	5	34.0%				
Apr	1.8%	Sept	16.3%	4	34.6%	6	9.5%				
May	9.9%	Oct	17.8%	5	29.4%						
June	14.2%	Nov	9.3%	6	8.2%						
July	17.5%	Dec	0.2%								
Aug	17.1%										
Sept	14.0%										
Oct	15.3%										
Nov	8.0%										
Dec	0.2%										

The TC was particularly concerned about rolling catch from one quota period to later periods after Sept 30th. They were concerned that shifting fishing effort from earlier until later in the year, would increase the fishing pressure on the inshore component of

the stock, and would result in lower quotas during the specification process in future years.

Determination of landing and fishing days

The TC agrees that prohibiting *fishing* is more effective than prohibiting *landing* and support the Plan Development Team option to prohibit landing herring *caught* on a day out.

No fishing prior to June 1

Prohibiting landings prior to June 1 will shift fishing pressure to later in the fishing season. Herring from 1A caught in November and December are likely to be made up fish from on the inshore component of the stock, exclusively as outlined in Amendment 2.

Timely reporting of state registered landings

Current reporting requirements are not sufficient to monitor monthly or bimonthly quotas. Overages are likely because of landings that come in after the quota period had closed.

Restriction on harvest of juvenile fish

The TC does not think that the current level of juvenile harvest is problematic, as outlined in a recent report presented to the Section earlier in the year. However, if the Section wants to further restrict harvest of juvenile fish, the TC recommends closing all of 1A during the entire span of the spawning closures in Amendment 2. Specifically, Area 1A would be closed from August 15 – October 19 unless commercial catch samples show spawning earlier than August 15. This closure would directly target the bulk of the juvenile catches given the the current data available