

## Alewife Harvesters of Maine



"Conserving to preserve Maine's heritage."

Madam Chair Fegley,

It is with my pleasure that I come here today to represent the Alewife Harvesters of Maine (AHOM) as the River Herring and Shad Management Board takes on the important task of creating a benchmark stock assessment for these keystone species of the marine ecosystem, but also to coastal fishing communities and fishermen up and down the coast.

This stock assessment is something that is of the utmost importance to the Alewife Harvesters of Maine because we are fortunate enough to still be beneficiaries of healthy runs throughout our state, making our cultural and economic connections strong.

It is my hope that if you remember anything from my testimony today, that it be this: It may be counter-intuitive, but it is not a strange coincidence that the healthiest fish runs, and strongholds for these species are in the same place that we directly harvest the majority of river herring in our country. In fact, it is BECAUSE of this harvest, and this connection to these fish, that we have undertaken the difficult work to restore, to monitor and to locally manage river herring.

It is this connection of ours, to these fish, that makes this stock assessment and the decisions that follow, of such importance to us, and why we would like to be considered in the document and in the discussion.

Stock assessments are a place to look at a resource as a whole. They look at ecological connections and activities that make fish and that take fish, and then are the basis for how we make decisions. Assessments have not taken into account the human dimension and connection, and we believe that is a mistake.

We urge this board to make certain that the technical committee and stock assessment staff look at these human connections. Look at the benefits of stewardship connected to harvest. Look at what has been done in Maine (by harvesters and other stewards) to restore habitat and monitor and to make fish, and find ways to incentivize those beneficial connections and activities, in the same way that they would disincentivize a practice that harms fish populations.

The current metrics that are in place for alewife harvesters to be able to prosecute a fishery, act more as a deterrent to monitoring and data collection, than as an incentive.

We believe that Maine's socio-economic and cultural connection to these fish is directly related to the work that we have done in monitoring and restoring these fish. Our connection to these fish, and the successes we have had in making fish, should be used as an example of how fishermen and managers can share goals and objectives and work together. But we need to be considered, and that is what we ask for today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey Pierce". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Jeffrey Pierce, Executive Director

**Selected Summary of Coastal River and Stream Restoration Activities  
2012-2023**

<b>Restoration Activity</b>	<b>Waterway</b>	<b>River Miles</b>	<b>Lake Acres</b>	<b>Year</b>
Fishway	Flander's Stream	9	534	2012
Patten Stream Fishway	Union River Bay	20	1,200	2016
Wight's Pond Fishway	Bagaduce River		191	2017
Pierce Pond Fishway	Bagaduce River		110	2017
Cooper's Mill Dam Removal	Sheepscot River	20	700	2018
Dam Removal	Smelt Brook, Frenchman Bay	1.5		2018
Dam Removal	Branch Lake Stream, Union River	5		2019
Head tide dam passage	Sheepscot River	95	3,377	2019
Saccarappa Dam removal	Presumpscot River	5		2019
Fishway	Togus Pond		648	2019
Fishway Reconstruction	Pennamaquan River	2.5		2020
Fish passage/dam removal	China Lake	6.8	3,850	2020
Walker Pond Fishway	Bagaduce River		692	2020
Culvert removal	Jellison Brook, Union River	12		2020
Fish passage improvement	Cobbosseecontee River		20	2020
Frost Pond bridge	Bagaduce River	5	144	2021
Fishway construction	Denny's River		10,481	2022
Walton's Mill Dam removal	Temple Stream	52		2022
Seal Cove Pond Fishways	Blue Hill Bay		299	2022
Milltown Dam Removal	Schoodic River	10		2023
Branch Pond Outlet Dam	Sheepscot River		325	2023
Baskahegan Lake	Penobscot River	137	9,000	2023
	<b>Totals:</b>	<b>380.8</b>	<b>31,571</b>	

<b>Newly accessible stream habitat</b>	<b>Newly accessible Atlantic salmon habitat</b>	<b>Newly accessible lake/pond spawning habitat</b>	<b>Increased alewife production at 400 fish per acre</b>
<b>Lemon Stream dam removal</b> 25.68 miles	937.93 units of surveyed and modeled Atlantic salmon habitat	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesterville dam removal</b> 28.68 miles	396.44 units modeled Atlantic salmon habitat	388.2 acres	155,280 adults
<b>Threemile Pond project</b> 2.4 miles	N/A	1,174 acres	469,600 adults
<b>Wesserunsett Lake</b> 8.66 miles	30.55 units of modeled Atlantic salmon habitat	1,446 acres	578,400 adults
<b>Center Pond fishway repair</b> N/A	N/A	N/A	53,000 adults
<b>Sabattus River restoration</b> (5 sites) 84.5 miles	741.5 units of modeled Atlantic salmon habitat	2,749 acres of lake/pond alewife spawning habitat	1,099,600 adults
<b>Sandy River culverts</b> 2.2 miles	30.7 units of modeled Atlantic salmon habitat	N/A	N/A
<b>TOTAL: 152.12 miles</b>	<b>2,137.12 units</b>	<b>5,757.2 acres</b>	<b>2,355,880</b>

### Stock Enhancement Activity Summary

From 2012 to 2016 six major restoration and habitat enhancement activities were completed on the Lower Penobscot River and its major tributaries (the Stillwater and Piscataquis Rivers) as part of the Penobscot River Restoration Project. Collectively these projects directly reconnected over 1,000 river miles and nearly 75% of the area of the Penobscot River Watershed (*Strategic Plan for the Restoration of Diadromous Fishes to the Penobscot River* Maine resource agencies, March 2008) and are the result of major investments from State, Federal, and Tribal governments and nongovernmental organizations.

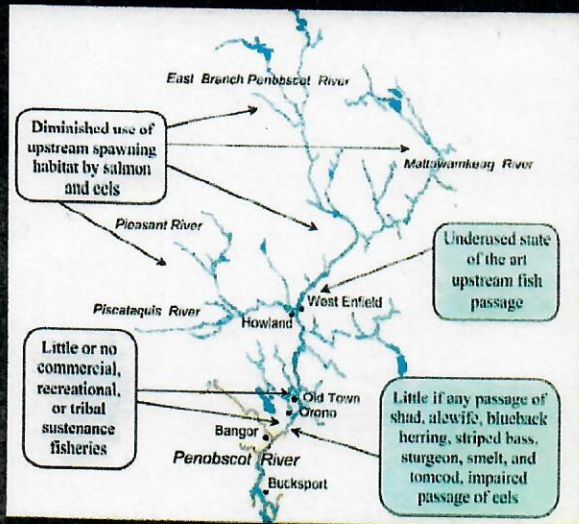
#### Summary of Major Activities of the Penobscot River Restoration Project:

Activity	Year	Passage Direction
Veazie Dam Removal	2013	up/down
Great Works Dam Removal	2012	up/down
Howland Bypass	2015	up/down
Milford fish lift	2014	up
Orono Dam eel passage	2014	up/down
Stillwater dam eel passage	2016	up/down

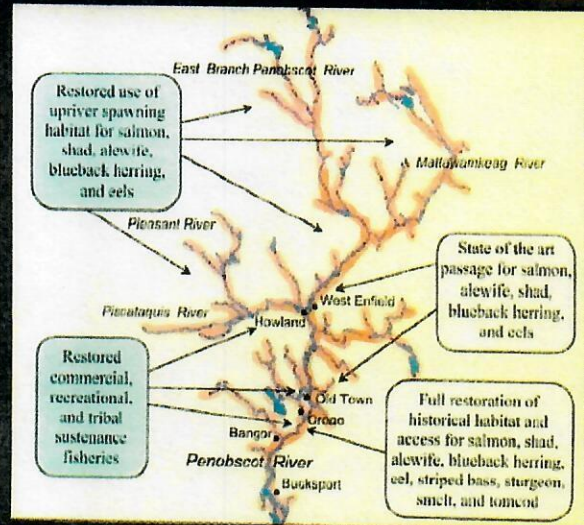
These mainstem passage improvements reconnected a watershed drained by over 1,600 miles of river and streams, and over 600 lakes with 254,600 acres of surface area (*Strategic Plan for the Restoration of Diadromous Fishes to the Penobscot River* Maine resource agencies, March 2008).

Supporting work throughout the watershed continues to reconnect smaller tributaries and sub-drainages and is guided and funded by State, Federal, and Tribal governments and nongovernmental organizations.

# Penobscot River Restoration Project Before and After Habitat Access



Existing Access for Sea-Run Fish



Significantly Improved Access for Sea-Run Fish to Nearly 1,000 Miles

Map by the Natural Resource Council of Maine:

<https://www.nrcm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/HabitatAccessbeforeandafterPRRP.pdf>