

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species, or successful restoration well in progress, by the year 2015

ASMFC American Shad and River Herring Technical Committee's Recommendations to the Board concerning WG / A-2 (Working Group / Amendment 2)

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The TC reviewed the WG recommendations via conference call on 29 April 2009.

TC makes the following comments:

- The TC accepts the WG definition of "sustainable fishery," with some modification. The TC notes that all fisheries will diminish future reproduction and recommends that the sustainable fishery definition be amended as follows: "those that demonstrate their alewife or blueback herring stock could support a commercial and/or recreational fishery that will not diminish the **POTENTIAL** future stock reproduction and recruitment."
- The TC would recommend that targets could be applied regionally - in addition to state-wide, river and species specific - which will assist states that may not currently have adequate state monitoring to successfully petition for a fishery for a specific system. The TC agrees that all plans, which included these targets, should be reviewed by the TC before Board consideration and approval.
- Under A-1, there is no mandatory monitoring for river herring

The TC general comments concerning the WG recommendations;

- Instituting Option 4 – as modified by the working group - would close 80% (number to be determined) of the inriver river herring fisheries on the East Coast
- If the Board approves state closures or reductions, at-sea river herring directed or bycatch fisheries will likely benefit through increased catches.
- The recommendations put a significant burden on jurisdictions by closing river-specific herring fisheries that have no data
- Jurisdictions cannot increase monitoring due to budget and monetary constraints and even financial support cannot assist states with present hiring freezes.

The TC would recommend the following concerning A-2:

- The TC recommends an option that gives states more flexibility to states and therefore a combination of Options 2 and 4 is recommended– reduce harvest in all areas unless a state can show that their river has a sustainable river herring fishery
- The TC also recommends clearly defined:
 - State mandatory monitoring requirements
 - Timeline for implementation of the Amendment (2012?)
 - Addition of an addendum listing state mandatory requirements
- States that have closed river herring fisheries, the TC recommends mandatory river herring bycatch reporting

Concerning bycatch the TC would recommend:

- Fast track implementation of the ACCSP Bycatch Module (multi-species bycatch plan) but may need to be more inclusive for ocean fisheries
- Increased portside sampling for river herring
- Increased observer coverage
- Formation of a focus group including ASMFC and the Northeast and Mid Atlantic councils to draft significant river herring reduction plans for the ocean.
- Reduction in river herring ocean bycatch
- Mandatory reporting