

2025-2027 Specifications for the Atlantic Herring Fishery: Potential Revisions

Atlantic Herring Management Board

May 5, 2025



- October 2024: Atlantic Herring Board adopted 2025-2027 specifications as recommended by the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) based on the 2024 stock assessment and ABC control rule. Council sent 2025-2027 specifications action preliminary submission to NOAA Fisheries for review.
- December 2024: NOAA Fisheries revised 2025 specifications via in-season adjustment.

- January 2025: Council requested updated recommendations from Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) based on available 2024 catch information
- Feb-March 2025: Council PDT and Commission TC developed updated projections and risk analysis
- April 2025: SSC recommended using updated projections, and the Council voted on revised specifications for recommendation to NOAA Fisheries
- May 2025: **Atlantic Herring Board consider adopting revised specifications**

Updated Projections

- 2024 stock assessment projections assumed 100% of 2024 annual catch limit (ACL) was caught
- Preliminary data for 2024 indicate only 51% of ACL caught
- Projections were updated to reflect 2024 preliminary catch data and account for the adjusted management uncertainty buffer due to 1,000 mt transfer to Area 1A in October 2024
- No other changes to the projections were made from the original projections from Summer 2024

- SSC recommended revising specifications based on the updated projections
 - Use the available 2024 catch information
 - Projections consistent with the ABC control rule for Atlantic herring
 - Projections indicate same rebuilding timeline as the original projections (50% chance of rebuilding by 2031, within 10 years of start of rebuilding plan)

Revised Specifications

- Using updated projections results in increased specifications (increase of ~1,850 mt available to harvest in 2025)
 - Still relatively low ACLs
- Council voted to increase 2025-2026 specifications per the SSC recommendation, but decided to hold 2027 constant at the 2026 level
 - 2026 management track assessment intended to inform 2027
 - Precautionary for 2027 given poor stock status and uncertainty
- Council voted to nullify quota carryover for 2025 and 2026

Revised Specifications

	Current	Council Recommendation		
Specification	2025	2025	2026	2027
Overfishing Limit (OFL)	18,273	20,802	23,491	31,075
Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)	6,741	8,587	13,165	13,165
Management Uncertainty*	4,031	4,031	4,031	4,031
Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	2,710	4,556	9,134	9,134
Border Transfer	0	0	0	0
Domestic Annual Harvest	2,710	4,556	9,134	9,134

**If the New Brunswick weir fishery catch through October 1 is less than the associated trigger, then 1,000 mt of the management uncertainty buffer will be added to the Area 1A sub-ACL and the ACL.*

Revised Specifications

	Current	Council Recommendation		
Specification	2025	2025	2026	2027
Area 1A Sub-ACL* (28.9%)	783	1,317	2,640	2,640
Area 1B Sub-ACL (4.3%)	117	196	393	393
Area 2 Sub-ACL (27.8%)	753	1,267	2,539	2,539
Area 3 Sub-ACL (39%)	1,057	1,777	3,562	3,562
Fixed Gear Set-Aside	30	30	30	30
Research Set-Aside as % of sub-ACLs	0%	0%	0%	0%

**If the New Brunswick weir fishery catch through October 1 is less than the associated trigger, then 1,000 mt of the management uncertainty buffer will be added to the Area 1A sub-ACL and the ACL.*

Impacts by Area

- **Area 1A: increase by 534 mt in 2025**

- Current catch: 0% of quota (not open until summer)
- Timing of increased specs need to be considered relative to effort controls

- **Area 1B: increase by 79 mt in 2025**

- Current catch: 168.8% of quota (exceeded by ~80.5 mt)
- Unlikely to reopen in 2025 fishing year; increased sub-ACL would offset overage

- **Area 2: increase by 514 mt in 2025**

- Current catch: ~8% of quota
- Sub-ACL generally underutilized in recent years; not restricted by quota
- Lack of fish/effort
- Likely not much impact from more quota

- **Area 3: increase by 720 mt in 2025**

- Current catch: ~103% of quota (exceeded by ~30 mt)
- Could consider reopening if new specs are implemented depending on amount of increase and potential for harvest
- Some late fall/early winter fishing effort in FY 2024, unknown if this would happen again in 2025

- Council sends recommendation to NOAA Fisheries
- Implementation by NOAA Fisheries in Summer 2025
- Today: Board considers revising specifications for the 2025-2027 fishing years, pending release of a rule by NOAA Fisheries



Questions?