

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
ATLANTIC HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD

Hyatt Place Dewey Beach
Dewey Beach, Delaware
Hybrid Meeting

October 27, 2025

Approved August 4, 2026

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1. **Approval of agenda** by consent (Page 1).
2. **Approval of Proceedings of May 2025** by consent (Page 1).
3. **Move to implement seasonal distribution of quota for the 2026 Area 1A sub-ACL with 72.8% available from June through September and 27.2% allocated from October through December, with no landings prior to June 1. Underages will be rolled over into the next quota period. The fishery will close when 92% of the seasonal period's quota is projected to be caught** (Page 2). Motion by Megan Ward; second by Renee Zobel. Motion approved by unanimous consent (Page 3).
4. **Move to approve the Atlantic Herring FMP Review for the 2024 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* request for New York** (Page 6). Motion by Jeff Kaelin; second by Matt Gates. Motion approved by unanimous consent (Page 6).
5. **Move to elect Eric Reid as Vice-Chair** (Page 6). Motion by Megan Ware; second by Ray Kane. Motion passes by unanimous consent (Page 6).
6. **Move to adjourn** by consent (Page 6).

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Megan Ware, ME, proxy for C. Wilson (AA)	Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)
Steve Train, ME (GA)	Matt Gates, CT (AA)
Rep. Allison Hepler, ME (LA)	Bill Hyatt, CT (GA)
Renee Zobel, NH (AA)	Robert LaFrance, CT, proxy for Rep. Gresko (LA)
Doug Grout, NH (GA)	John Maniscalco, NY, proxy for M. Gary (AA)
Melanie Griffin, MA, proxy for D. McKiernan (AA)	Scott Curatolo-Wagemann, NY, proxy for E.
Raymond Kane, MA (GA)	Hasbrouck (GA)
Rep. Sarah Peake, MA, proxy for Rep. Armini (LA)	Heather Corbett, NJ, proxy for J. Cimino (AA)
Nicole Lengyel Costa, RI, proxy for J. McNamee (AA)	Jeff Kaelin, NJ (GA)

(AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)

Ex-Officio Members

Delayne Brown, Law Enforcement Committee Rep.

Staff

Bob Beal	Caitlin Starks	Emilie Franke
Toni Kerns	Tracey Bauer	Katie Drew
Tina Berger	Chelsea Tuohy	Jeff Kipp
Madeline Musante	James Boyle	Samara Nehemiah

The Atlantic Herring Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Ballroom East/West via hybrid meeting, in-person and webinar; Monday, October 27, 2025, and was called to order at 11:15 a.m. by Chair Douglas E. Grout.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR DOUGLAS E. GROUT: Okay, folks, welcome to Delaware and welcome to a meeting of the Atlantic Herring Management Board. We have three tasks at hand today, one, set the quota period for the 2026 Area 1A Fishery. We are also going to Consider Approval of the FMP Review and State Compliance for the 2024 Fishing Year, and we're going to elect a Vice-Chair. My name is Doug Grout; I'm Chair for the moment, and before we go on Toni needs to make an announcement.

MS. TONI KERNS: Just to let everybody know that Scott Curatolo-Wagemann is online, John Maniscalco and Melanie Griffin for Commissioners.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIR GROUT: We have in our documents an agenda. Are there any changes that people would like to make to the agenda? Seeing none; is there any objection to the agenda? Seeing none; it is approved by unanimous consent.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR GROUT: We also have the proceedings from the May 2025 meeting. Are there any comments, edits? Are there any objections to approving the minutes? Seeing none; that is approved by unanimous consent too. We're now down to setting our quota period for, oh one more thing I forgot.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIR GROUT: This is an opportunity we have right now for public comment on Atlantic herring for items that are not on the agenda? Is

there anybody in the audience that would like to speak to something that is not on the Atlantic herring agenda? Is there anybody online? Okay.

SET QUOTA PERIOD FOR THE 2026 AREA 1A FISHERY

CHAIR GROUT: Now we'll move on to Setting the Quota Period for 2026 Area 1A Fishery. Emilie is going to give a brief presentation on this.

MS. EMILIE FRANKE: Great, thank you, Mr. Chair. Just on the next slide I'll just go over first the potential quota for Area 1A for 2026. There are two different possibilities for next year. Then I will review the FMP details on the quota periods for Area 1A, and the Board action for consideration today is to set the quota periods for the 2026 Area 1A Fishery.

As far as the quota for next year, just a little bit of background. This Board did approve a set of revised specifications for Atlantic herring for all of the areas back in May, and these were substitutions as recommended by the New England Fishery Management Council.

The Board approved those specifications contingent on a Final Rule being published by NOAA Fisheries. In June, NOAA did issue a proposed rule for those specifications. However, the Final Rule has not yet been implemented and the timeline is TBD. We do not know when those specifications will be implemented, so far these specifications for 2026 are not in place. If NOAA Fisheries does publish that Final Rule in time for next year's season, then the sub-ACL for Area 1A would be 2,640 metric tons.

However, if the Final Rule is not implemented in time for next year's fishery, then the current year's specification, so it would be 2025 specifications would roll over to be the 2026 specifications, that is per the Federal FMP. In that case, the sub-ACL would be 783 metric tons. There are two quota scenarios. Again, we don't have any details on the timeline for implementation of those specifications.

Then as far as how the quota period worked for Area 1A, just as a reminder, per Amendment 3 to the Interstate FMP, these quota periods shall be determined annually by the Board for Area 1A. The Board can distribute the Area 1A sub-ACL to meet the needs of a fishery across the year using, there are a couple options for different types of quota periods.

There is the bi-monthly, the trimester or the seasonal quota periods. The Board can also decide whether any quota from January 1st to May 31st should instead be allocated to June 1st or later. The Board would also specify whether any underages from one period would be rolled into the next period.

Up on the screen, I know it's a lot of tables, but Amendment 3 outlines all of the options for these quota periods. It's important to note that these percentages are fixed. The only way we can change these percentages would be through an Addendum. At the top of the screen that is the bi-monthly option, where the quota is allocated to two-month periods throughout the year.

There are also separate options if you would like no landings prior to June 1st. The first option if you want to include the first part of the year, and then the second two options are no landings before June 1st. Then at the bottom on the left is the trimester option, where you have three quota periods throughout the year.

Then at the bottom on the right are the seasonal quota periods. Again, you have an option for landings before June and then options for no landings before June. What is happening in the last few years. Back in 2019 the Board decided to go with bi-monthly quota periods for Area 1A with no landings prior to June 1st. The underages were rolled into the next period.

Then for the last six years the Board has opted to go with the seasonal quota period approach,

with no landings prior to June 1st, and underages rolled into the next period. That is all I have in terms of background. Happy to answer any questions.

CHAIR GROUT: Questions for Emilie. Seeing no questions; we do need to set a season. Megan Ware:

MS. MEGAN WARE: Yes, I have sent staff a motion to set the season. Obviously a really frustrating situation on the herring specs. I hope that resolves itself soon. I think regardless, I would support continuing to use the same season split we've used recently. **Move to implement seasonal distribution of quota for the 2026 Area 1A sub-ACL with 72.8% available from June through September and 27.2% allocated from October through December, with no landings prior to June 1. Underages will be rolled over into the next quota period. The fishery will close when 92% of the seasonal period's quota is projected to be caught.**

CHAIR GROUT: Renee Zobel seconding it. Megan, would you like to provide rationale?

MS. WARE: Just obviously still working under very low quotas. There is not a lot of room to move here, so I think keeping what we've been doing works as best as we can.

CHAIR GROUT: Renee as seconder do you have? Ray Kane.

MR. RAYMOND W. KANE: Megan, do you think we should include in this motion something about the rollover from Canada, with the weir fishery up there? It doesn't happen until what, the middle of October, but should something be in this motion? Should it be mentioned?

CHAIR GROUT: Megan.

MS. WARE: My understanding is that that is a Federal Process, unfortunately. For us right now with the Federal Government shut down, so I don't think that is something the Commission has control of or going through that now.

CHAIR GROUT: Rob LaFrance.

MR. ROB LaFRANCE: Just a quick question, Megan. Is the 92%, is that current practice? Thank you.

CHAIR GROUT: Any other questions? Jeff Kaelin.

MR. JEFF KAELIN: I just wanted to speak in support of the motion, Mr. Chairman. No questions.

CHAIR GROUT: Okay, thank you, is there any other comments from the Board? Seeing none; I'm going to try this the easy way first. **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing no objection it is approved by unanimous consent.** Thank you very much.

This will also give us time, since there is not going to be any landings before June, that if we come up with a situation where we have to adjust what we approved back in May for a quota, that we can make that adjustment at the spring meeting, or even the winter meeting if we find that out.

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF FMP REVIEW AND
STATE COMPLIANCE FOR THE 2024 FISHING
YEAR**

CHAIR GROUT: Next item is Approval of the FMP Review and state Compliance.

MS. FRANKE: On the next slide I'll just briefly go over the main points of our FMP Review, including a couple of recommendations from the Plan Review Team. Again, the Board is considering approving the FMP Review, Compliance Reports and one de minimis request for 2024. Just a reminder, as far as the FMP. We have complementary management plans between the Commission and the New England Fishery Management Council. As far as the Interstate FMP we are operating under Amendment 3, as well as its addenda. Addendum I, which further specifies the Days

Out Program for Area 1A and Addendum II, which further specifies the Gulf of Maine spawning closures. On the next slide, as far as the status of the stock, we are currently under a rebuilding plan that's at the Federal level.

As far as stock assessments, the last stock assessment to provide an update on stock status, that was the 2024 management track assessment, conducted by the Northeast Fishery Science Center. They found the stock was overfished but not experiencing overfishing. One of the things it noted, as well as previous assessments has noted is the poor recruitment for the stock for the past several years, and the difficulty of identifying a particular mechanism that is really driving that low recruitment.

There was a research track assessment earlier this year, it was peer reviewed in March 2025. Notably that transitioned the stock to the WAM model. I think we'll have a presentation to the Board on that benchmark at one of the upcoming meetings. Then as you may recall, the research track assessments through NOAA do not provide stock status, so the next assessment that will provide stock status relative to the reference points will be a management track assessment that is scheduled for this coming year in 2026.

On the next slide this is Atlantic herring landings, U.S. landings are in orange and Canadian landings are in that kind of darker red. Over time you can see as was mentioned during the last agenda item, you know we are really in a low quota situation here for the past several years. Landings have really dropped off as those quotas have decreased quite a bit in the recent years.

On the next slide, these are preliminary 2024 landings from NOAA Fisheries quota monitoring. You can see the landings are listed by area. That first column you see the sub-ACL for each area, the landings and then the last column is the approximate percent of that sub-ACL that has been caught. At the bottom you can see overall last year across all areas, about 51% of the sub-ACL was

harvested, primarily from Areas 1A and Area 3. That is about 22 million “ish” pounds.

As far as sort of comparing to recent year’s landings in 2023 and 2024 were more than double ’21 and ’22. We’re now at about 22 million pounds as compared to about 10 or 11 million pounds in ’21 and ’22. We’re still in this very low quota situation. Maine and Massachusetts do typically account for more than 90% of landings, and it is important to note that some vessels do land herring outside of their home port state.

On the next slide the PRT typically discusses every year, we also get updates from the fixed gear fishery. Obviously, most of the landings are coming from the mobile gear. But we do get updates from Maine, where there is a small portion of landings from fixed gear and fixed gear does get a 30 metric ton set aside in Area 1A.

Maine noted that last year in 2024 there was low fixed-gear harvest. But this was due to some overlap with other species on the shores, particularly menhaden arrived a little bit early last year and that sort of impeded the transit of Atlantic herring into those fixed gears, those stop seines. However, despite those low landings the past few years, these fixed gear harvesters in Maine waters have consistently reported adult herring returning to Maine waters in early spring. As far as comments, the PRT finds that all states have regulations in place that meet the requirements of the FMP. New York is requesting de minimis and they do meet that requirement. The average of the last three years of commercial landings is less than 1% of the coastwide total for that period. New York has had de minimis status for quite a while.

Then on the next slide the PRT had a couple of recommendations for the Board to consider. First, a short-term recommendation is for the Board to discuss long term funding solutions for the Maine DMR portside sampling program. I’ll

let Maine speak to this after the presentation in detail. But essentially, funding is needed to collect biological samples out of state.

These are really important to inform the spawning closures to Area 1A and overall, for the entire coast for the stock assessment. A medium-term recommendation from the PRT is for the TC to at some point review the Area 1A spawning closure protocol to determine if there are any concerns with the prolonged period we’ve had of insufficient samples and using the default closure date.

Essentially, in recent years there haven’t been enough samples to forecast a closure date, so we’ve been using the default closure dates in the FMP. The PRT recommends the TC discuss this. The Board has noted this should not be a short-term priority, because we’re working with such low quotas. But at some point, the PRT recommends the TC discuss this.

Finally, the last recommendation is, the next time the Board does a management action, for the Board to also look at the definition of fixed gear in the FMP. Right now, fixed gear is only defined as stop seines and fish weirs only. But there are other gears being used like pound nets and gill nets.

Just sort of for context I mentioned there was the low fixed gear harvest in Maine last year. However, this year the Maine fixed gear harvest was quite a bit higher, and they actually used the entire fixed-gear set aside by summertime, so just something we’ll need to continue to monitor closely so we’ll take a look at this definition in the future. But that’s it, happy to take any question.

CHAIR GROUT: Questions for Megan, I mean Emilie, sorry. Yes, Ray.

MR. KANE: Emilie, you spoke about the Maine DMR. What about an observer program in Massachusetts, because those vessels fish in Area 4 would be Georges Bank, and they fish it in the spring primarily and they catch their quota. What is the coverage there? I would like to know that

we've got coverage defining Atlantic Sea herring and river herring.

MS. FRANKE: As far as observer coverage I can't really speak to the specifics. I know NOAA Fisheries has noted in the past, especially during COVID there were some challenges with observer coverage. But that would be a question for Federal Staff once they return, on sort of what the specifics are for Area 3 observer coverage.

CHAIR GROUT: Follow up, Ray.

MR. KANE: Yes, please, thank you. We're looking for funding for Maine DMR for a dockside program, how about Massachusetts?

MS. FRANKE: I think, and I'll let Megan speak to this, but I think typically Maine DMR has been able to collect and process the samples from multiple states. Massachusetts DMF staff definitely assist with that sample collection in coordination, but I think a lot of the program for samples is run by Maine DMR.

MR. KANE: Thank you.

CHAIR GROUT: Megan.

MS. WARE: Yes, maybe just a little bit about that. Yes, Maine has been doing the herring samples basically coastwide for all the states. It was originally an ACCSP Grant, we graduated from that and have been trying to hang on with some funds. But at this point the funds are out.

We in November of 2024, amended our Herring Disaster Spend Plan to include some funds for this. That was almost two years ago and we still have not gotten approval of that Herring Spend Plan. A really frustrating situation there. In the absence of that we don't have any funds, so we can carry on for just the Maine portion of the herring sampling, but we don't have funds to send staff up and down the coast right now.

I think what would be a good step is maybe I can ask Emilie to coordinate a call of the administrative commissioners or if any other commissioners that want to join, to start talking about other options. I know at one point we talked about states collecting their own samples, sending them to Maine for processing. I think that is an option. Otherwise, it's states kind of taking that on themselves. But definitely something we need to figure out, because we are out of ACCSP funds at this point.

CHAIR GROUT: Emilie.

MS. FRANKE: I believe the amount is about \$25,000.00 per year.

MS. WARE: Yes, it's a really low amount. I think in our herring amended spend plan we have tried to ask for two or three years of funding. That's obviously not that much. Just a little background on that. We had a provision in our original Herring Disaster Spend Plan that said if someone is undergoing litigation regarding that herring harvest, we would basically hold their portion of the disaster funds until that litigation was complete.

We had that happen. The result of the litigation basically said that person was no longer eligible based on our criteria for their portion of the funds, so we have an individual's funds that we are trying to reallocate, and we were going to use some of that for herring port sampling and then distribute the rest to the herring harvesters, but we have not been able to get that approved.

CHAIR GROUT: Nicole.

MS. NICOLE LENGYEL COSTA: Megan, is the majority of the portion for that funding just due to stopped traveling to the other states? If the other states were able to continue the sampling and send the samples to Maine, would you still be able to do the processing and aging without funding?

MS. WARE: Yes, that is correct, it's mostly travel cost at this point. We can do the processing if folks are sending us stuff.

CHAIR GROUT: Further questions about this?
Okay, we need a motion to approve the FMP Review and a de minimis request from New York. Go ahead, Jeff Kaelin.

MR. KAE LIN: **I move to improve the Atlantic Herring FMP Review for the 2024 fishing year, state compliance reports and de minimis request for New York.**

CHAIR GROUT: The second is Matt Gates.
Would you like to provide any rationale for this?

MR. KAE LIN: The end of the meeting and let's get it over with, no it speaks for itself, Mr. Chairman, I think.

CHAIR GROUT: Does anybody have any comments on this? **Is there any objection to this motion? Okay, motion is approved by unanimous consent.** Thank you very much.

ELECT VICE-CHAIR

CHAIR GROUT: Next agenda item is to elect a Vice-Chair. Megan Ware.

MS. WARE: **I would like to nominate Eric Reid as Vice-Chair.**

CHAIR GROUT: Ray Kane will second that nomination. Do you have any objection to that, Eric Reid? **Are there any objections to having Eric Reid as your next Vice-Chair? Seeing none; it is approved by unanimous consent.** Thank you very much, Eric. We'll start calling you Mr. Chairman again soon.

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIR GROUT: Okay, only other thing is Other Business. Any other business that people would like to bring up? Seeing none; I'll take a motion to adjourn. So, moved. Thank you very much for an efficient meeting.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m. on Monday, October 27, 2025)