Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

Atlantic Herring Specifications for 2027-2029 Fishing Years

Atlantic Herring Management Board

November 9, 2026



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Background

- June 2026: 2026 Management Track Assessment for Atlantic Herring completed and peer reviewed
- August 2026: New England Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee recommendations on OFL and ABC
- August-September 2026: Council's Herring Committee and Advisory Panel meetings to discuss specifications
- September 2026: Council final action on 2027-2031 specifications package to be submitted to NOAA Fisheries
- November 2026: Commission's Atl Herring Board set specifications for 2027-2029, pending a rule by NOAA Fisheries

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Council Proposed Specs

	2026 (mt)	2027-2031 Council Proposed (mt)
Overfishing Limit (OFL)	23,491	**13,165**
Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)	13,165	**10,532**
Management Uncertainty*	4,031	**3,606**
Optimum Yield/Annual Catch Limit	9,134	**6,926**
Domestic Annual Harvest	9,134	**6,926**
Border Transfer	0	**0**
Domestic Annual Processing	9,134	**6,926**
US At-Sea Processing	0	**0**

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

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Council Proposed Specs

	2026 (mt)	2027-2031 Council Proposed (mt)
Area 1A sub-ACL (28.9%)	2,640	**2,002**
Area 1B sub-ACL (4.3%)	393	**298**
Area 2 sub-ACL (27.8%)	2,539	**1,925**
Area 3 sub-ACL (39%)	3,562	**2,701**
Fixed Gear Set-Aside (FGSA)	30	**45**
Research Set-Aside (RSA) as % of sub-ACL	0%	**0%**

- Status Quo River Herring and Shad Catch Caps

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2026 Assessment Peer Review

- Peer Review Panel determined the projection term of reference was only partially met
- Uncertainty in projections and concern they are overly optimistic
- Peer Review Panel concluded “the PDT and SSC should view the projections and sensitivity analysis as context for catch advice setting but that each has challenges that limit their utility”

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SSC Recommendations

- Due to uncertainty, Council's SSC did not use projections to inform catch advice
- SSC recommended constant interim OFL and ABC for 2027-2031
- Aim to prevent overfishing, informed by the Council's ABC control rule, and consider Council's risk policy

	2026 (mt)	SSC 2027-2031 (mt)
Overfishing Limit (OFL)	23,491	13,165
Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)	13,165	10,532 (80% of OFL)

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SSC Recommendations

- SSC concluded that a constant interim ABC “provides a reasonable bridge until an updated assessment and/or additional technical work provides greater confidence in projections, reference points, and their interaction within the control rule”.

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Management Uncertainty Buffer

- ABC minus Management Uncertainty Buffer = Annual Catch Limit
- Management uncertainty buffer accounts for Canadian catch
- Council recommends using a 5-year average of Canadian catch as the buffer instead of the 10-year average
- Council discussion included:
  - Using more recent data better represents the current fishery
  - 5-year average leaves more quota available for US fleet at this time when quotas are very low

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Fixed Gear Set-Aside

- Council recommends increasing fixed gear set-aside from 30 mt to 45 mt
- Average Maine fixed gear landings ranged from 1 mt to 48 mt annually from 2016-2025
- High utilization of the set-aside in 2025 and 2026

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Council Discussion

- Proposed Annual Catch Limit for 2027-2031 is 24% lower than the 2026 level
- Council recognizes the potential for continued negative economic impacts to the fishing industry

Questions?

Board action for consideration:
Set specifications for the 2027-2029 fishing years, contingent on a rule being published by NOAA Fisheries.

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Quota Periods for the 2027 Area 1A Fishery

Atlantic Herring Management Board

November 9, 2026



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Area 1A Quota Periods

- Per Amendment 3, quota periods shall be determined annually for Area 1A
- Board can distribute the Area 1A sub-ACL to meet the needs of the fishery using quota periods:
  - Bi-monthly
  - Trimester
  - Seasonal
- The Board can also decide whether quota from Jan 1 – May 31 will be allocated to later in the fishing season
- Underages may be rolled from one period to the next within the same year
- **2027 Area 1A sub-ACL = 2,002 MT** (pending final rule from NOAA Fisheries)

Bi-Monthly Quotas								
January – December			No Landings Prior to June 1 (with June as a one-month period)			No Landings Prior to June 1 (with December as a one-month period)		
Period	**Months**	**%**	**Period**	**Months**	**%**	**Period**	**Months**	**%**
1	Jan/Feb	1.5%	1	June	16.4%	1	June/July	36.8%
2	Mar/Apr	2.3%	2	July/Aug	40.1%	2	Aug/Sep	36.0%
3	May/June	24.0%	3	Sep/Oct	34.0%	3	Oct/Nov	27.1%
4	July/Aug	34.6%	4	Nov/Dec	9.5%	4	Dec	0.2%
5	Sep/Oct	29.4%						
6	Nov/Dec	8.2%						

Trimesters			Seasonal Quotas					
January – December			January - December			No Landings Prior to June 1		
Trimester	**Months**	**%**	**Season**	**Months**	**%**	**Season**	**Season**	**%**
1	Jan - May	13.7%	1	Jan - Sep	76.5%	1	Jun - Sep	72.8%
2	Jun - Sept	62.8%	2	Oct - Dec	23.5%	2	Oct - Dec	27.2%
3	Oct - Dec	23.5%						

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Area 1A Quota Periods

- **2019**: bimonthly quota periods with no landings prior to June 1 (with June as a 1-month period)
  - Underages rolled to next period

June	16.4%
July/Aug	40.1%
Sep/Oct	34.0%
Nov/Dec	9.5%

- **2020-2026**: seasonal quota periods with no landings prior to June 1
  - Underages rolled to next period

June-Sep	72.8%
Oct-Dec	27.2%

Questions?

Board action for consideration:
Set quota periods for the 2027 Area 1A fishery.

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FMP Review for Atlantic Herring for Fishing Year 2025

Atlantic Herring Management Board

November 9, 2026



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Outline

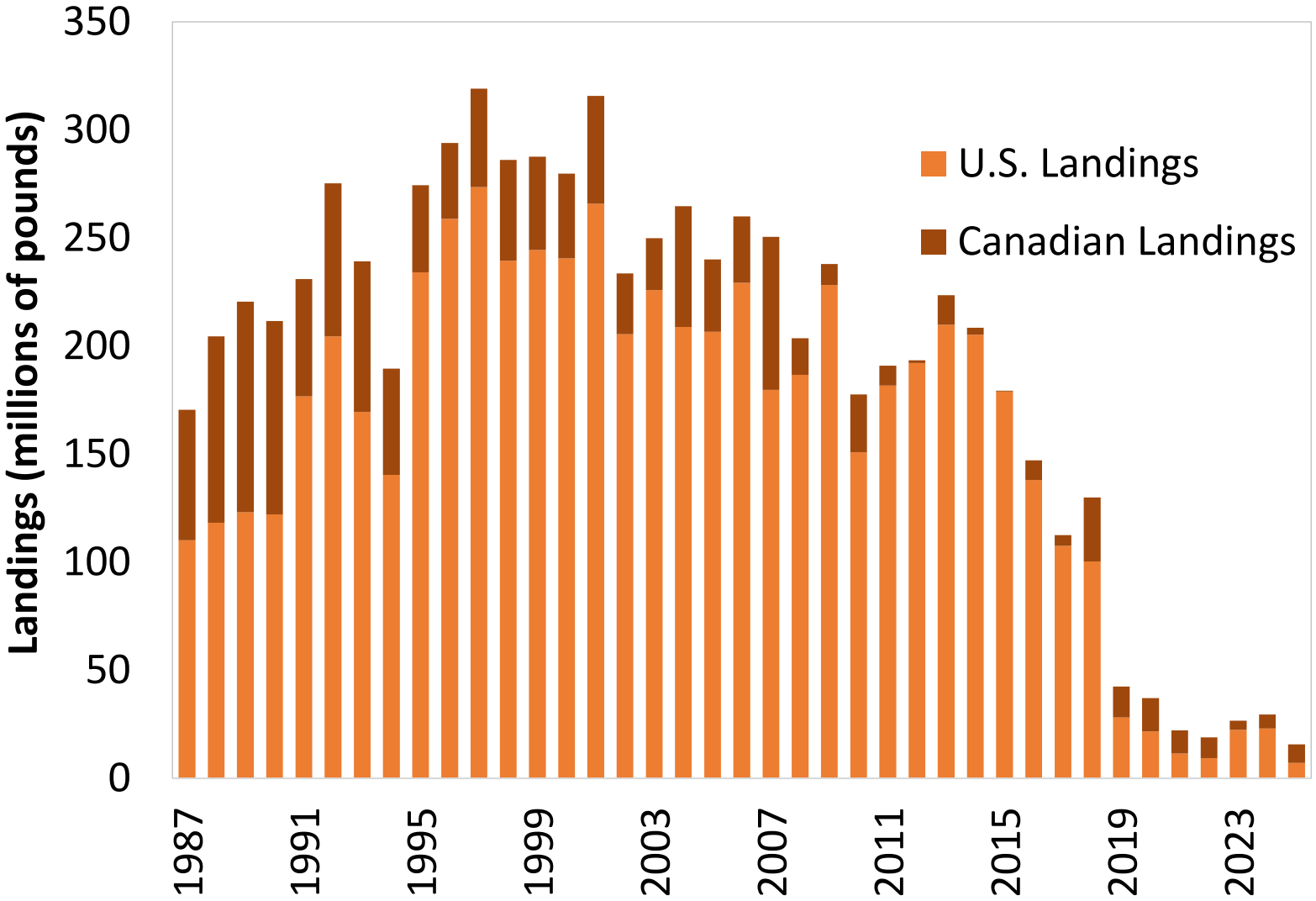
- Status of the Fishery
- PRT Comments and Recommendations

Board action for consideration: Approve the FMP Review for the 2025 fishing year, state compliance reports, and de minimis requests.

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Status of the Fishery

Commercial landings of Atlantic herring. Source: 2026 Management Track Assessment



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Status of the Fishery

- 2025 Landings (Source: NOAA Fisheries)

Year	Area	Sub-ACL (mt)	Catch (mt)	% Utilized
2025	1A	2,317	1,786	77%
	1B	196	215	110%
	2	1,267	77	6%
	3	1,777	1,093	61.5%
	Overall	**5,556**	**3,171.5**	**57%**

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Status of the Fishery

- 2025 landings were ~6.9 million pounds
  - 68% decrease from 2024
  - Aligns with 72% decrease in quota relative to 2024

- Maine and Massachusetts account for majority of landings (>98% of total)

- Note: Some vessels regularly land Atlantic herring outside homeport state

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Status of the Fishery

- Small portion of total landings from fixed gear, primarily Maine
- Maine fixed gear landings depend on several factors each year (e.g., timing of herring availability relative to other species, associated bycatch limitations)
- In 2025, Maine fixed gear harvesters utilized the entire fixed gear set-aside by early June
- Fixed gear harvesters note consistent sightings of adult Atl herring returning to state waters in early spring, and seeing more mixed size range

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PRT Comments

- PRT finds all states have regulations in place that meet the requirements of the FMP
- New York is requesting *de minimis* status and does meet the requirements
  - Average of last three years of commercial landings must be <1% of coastwide total for same period
  - New York landings are <0.1%

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PRT Recommendations

- Previous PRT recommendation for Board to discuss portside sampling capacity given loss of funding for MEDMR staff to travel to other states to collect samples
- Samples inform Area 1A spawning closures and document size/age of harvested fish → important data for WHAM (age-structured model)
- **<u>In Progress</u>: States are coordinating for each state (and NOAA samplers, where available) to collect samples and send to MEDMR for processing**

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PRT Recommendations

- **<u>Medium-Term Recommendation</u>: TC review Area 1A spawning closure protocol to determine if any concerns with prolonged periods of insufficient samples and default closure dates.**
  - Insufficient samples to forecast spawning closures in recent years → timing of fishery and low quotas
  - Medium-term; the Board previously noted this should not be a near-term priority

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PRT Recommendations

- **<u>Medium-Term Recommendation</u>: Board consider FMP definition of ‘fixed gear’ in next management action.**
  - FMP defines ‘fixed gear’ as stop seines and fish weirs only
  - Other gears are being used like pound nets and gill nets
  - Maine’s fixed gear harvest was high in 2025 and 2026
  - Continue to monitor fixed gear landings closely

Questions?

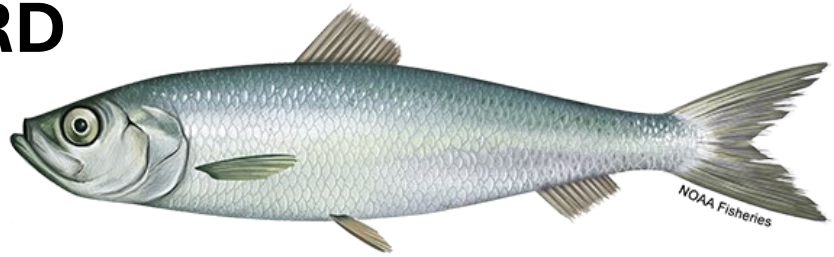
New England Fishery Management Council
Atlantic Herring Update

ATLANTIC HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD

ASMFC ANNUAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 9, 2026

NEWPORT, RI AND BY WEBINAR



New England Fishery
Management Council

2027-2031 SPECIFICATIONS ACTION

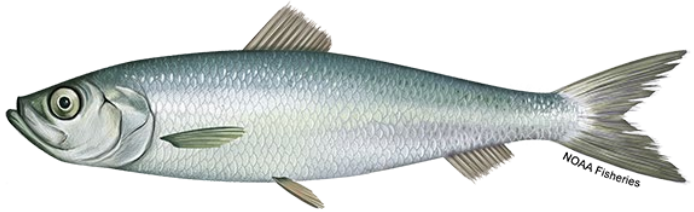
Specifications include:

- Overfishing limit (OFL), acceptable biological catch (ABC), using ABC control rule and rebuilding plan
- Management uncertainty, annual catch limit (ACL), management area sub-ACLs, river herring and shad catch caps (status quo), and other components
    - Council increased the fixed gear set-aside in Area 1A to 45 mt (up from 30 mt)

	Proposed Action 2027-2031
Overfishing Limit (OFL)	13,165 mt
Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)	10,532 mt
Management Uncertainty**	3,606 mt
Optimum Yield (OY) / Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	6,926 mt
Domestic Annual Harvest (DAH)	6,926 mt
Border Transfer (BT)	0
Domestic Annual Processing (DAP)	6,926 mt
US At-Sea Processing (USAP)	0
Area 1A sub-ACL (28.9%)	2,002 mt
Area 1B sub-ACL (4.3%)	298 mt
Area 2 sub-ACL (27.8%)	1,925 mt
Area 3 sub-ACL (39%)	2,701 mt
Fixed Gear Set-Aside (FGSA)	45 mt
Research Set-Aside (RSA) as % of sub-ACL	0%

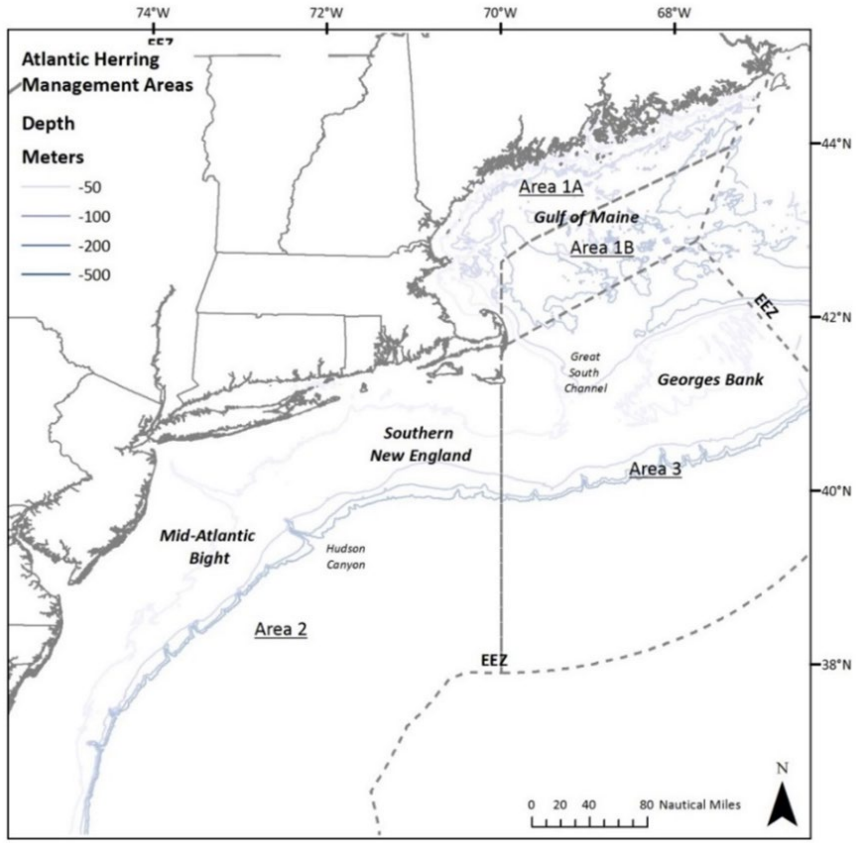
** The New Brunswick weir fishery landings through October 1 are less than the associated "trigger," then 1,000 mt will be subtracted from the management uncertainty buffer and added to the Area 1A sub-ACL and the ACL.

SPECIFICATIONS ACTION TIMELINE



March 2	Herring PDT
March 23	Herring AP
April 15	Council: update on action
April 27	Herring PDT/TC
May 20	Herring AP
May 21	Herring Committee
May 26	Herring PDT/TC
June 8	Herring AP & Committee
June 9	Herring PDT/TC
June 23-25	Council: progress report
June 29-30	2026 June Management Track Assessment Peer Review
July 7	Herring PDT/TC
July 14	Herring PDT/TC
August 4	ASMFC: Update to Atlantic Herring Management Board
August 7	Herring PDT
August 11-12	SSC Meeting: Herring ABC/OFLs
August 18	Herring AP & Committee webinar
August 31	Herring PDT
September 2	Herring AP & Committee meeting
September 15-17	Council: final action
September – December	Action submission
November 9-12	ASMFC: Atlantic Herring Management Board sets specifications
January 1, 2027	Target implementation

COUNCIL'S PROPOSAL: UPDATED HERRING SPECIFICATIONS USING 5-YEAR AVERAGE CANADIAN CATCH



Year	Current ACLs (mt)
2025	4,556
2026	9,134
2027	9,134

OFL = 13,165 mt

Scientific Uncertainty
Applied 20% reduction to OFL to get ABC

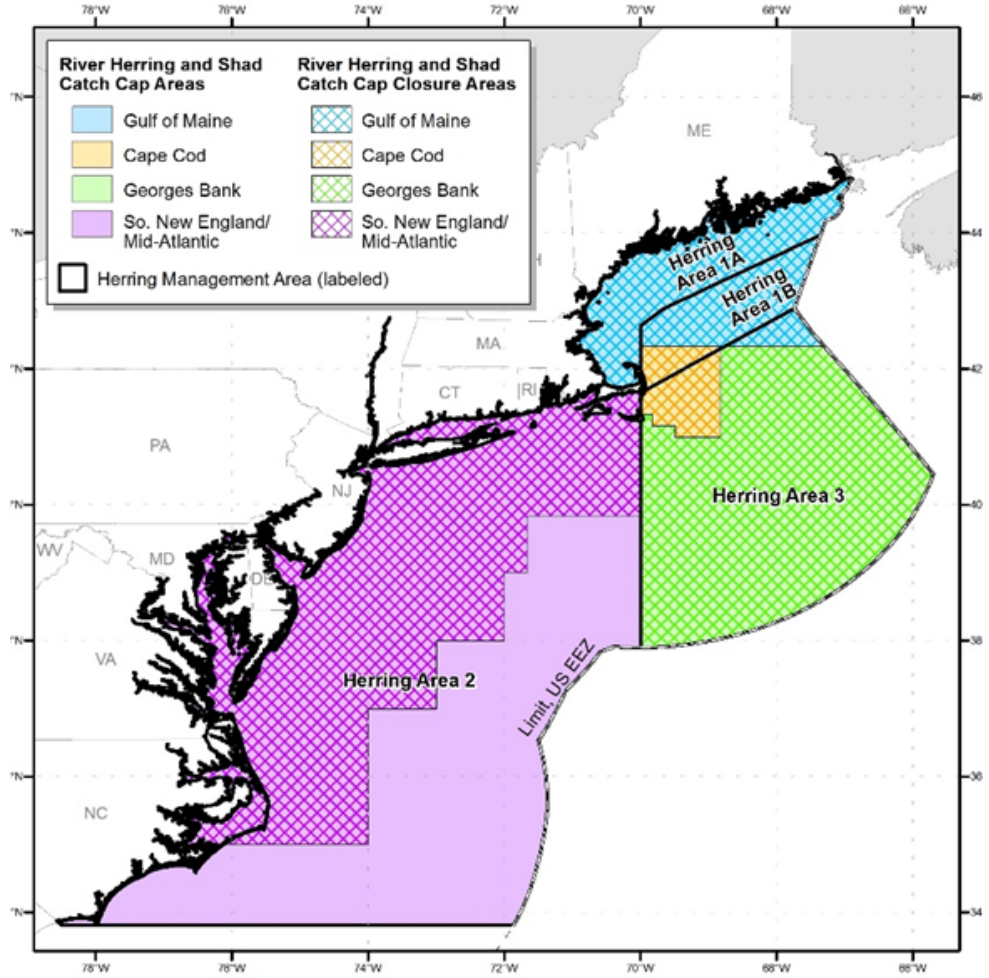
ABC = 10,532 mt

Management Uncertainty = 3,606 mt
Canadian NB weir fishery 5-year average

ACL = 6,926 mt

- Area 1A = 2,002 mt (28.9%)
- Area 1B = 298 mt (4.3%)
- Area 2 = 1,925 mt (27.8%)
- Area 3 = 2,701 mt (39%)

RIVER HERRING AND SHAD CATCH CAPS



Catch Cap Area	Alternative 1: No Action (mt)	Council's Proposal: 2027-2031 Specifications (mt)
Midwater Trawl Gulf of Maine	76.7	76.7
Midwater Trawl Cape Cod	32.4	32.4
Midwater Trawl Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic	129.6	129.6
Bottom Trawl Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic	122.3	122.3

SEPTEMBER 2026 COUNCIL MEETING

- Council reviewed the July 2, 2026 correspondence from NOAA Assistant Administrator Eugenio Pineiro Soler re: EO 14276

EXCERPT
Rescind Industry Funded Monitoring (IFM) Requirements: *The current at-sea monitoring costs are actively eroding fleet profitability. As I recently requested in a letter dated May 1, 2026, pertaining to the Herring IFM, I request that the Council initiate an action to consider rescinding IFM requirements from the Herring FMP.*

- Council voted to add IFM recission to ongoing RH/S management action (now Amendment 12)

AMENDMENT 12

- To modify Atlantic herring management measures to avoid or minimize the catch of river herring and shad
- To consider rescinding the Industry Funded Monitoring program and slippage measures for Atlantic herring and reconsidering the haddock catch caps
- To modify carryover provisions and the specifications process

Anticipated Final Action → April 2027

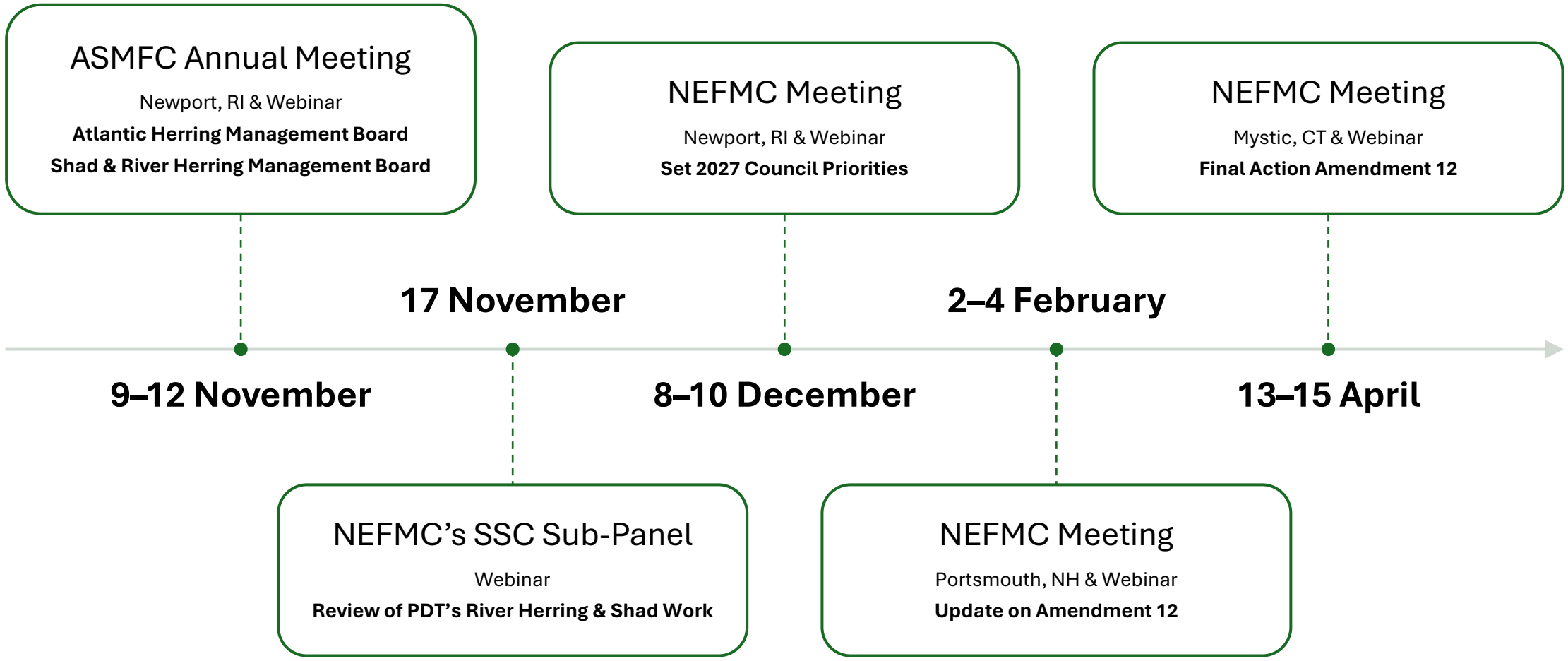
RIVER HERRING AND SHAD MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Alternative 1: No Action

- All river herring and shad management measures would remain unchanged and in place unless changed in a future action.

Alternative 2: Establish Time/Area Closures within Atlantic Herring Management Areas 1B, 2 and 3

- Plan Development Team's species distribution models as basis
- Committee recommends developing alternatives in Areas 1B, 2, and 3;
- Committee provided initial guidance on criteria for time/area closure and evaluation metrics
- Committee recommends two sets of alternatives: time/area closures to replace the current catch caps or time/area closures in addition to the current catch caps


ASMFC Annual Meeting
Newport, RI & Webinar
Atlantic Herring Management Board
Shad & River Herring Management Board
NEFMC Meeting
Newport, RI & Webinar
Set 2027 Council Priorities
NEFMC Meeting
Mystic, CT & Webinar
Final Action Amendment 12
9–12 November
17 November
8–10 December
2–4 February
13–15 April
NEFMC's SSC Sub-Panel
Webinar
Review of PDT's River Herring & Shad Work
NEFMC Meeting
Portsmouth, NH & Webinar
Update on Amendment 12

THANK YOU.

ANY QUESTIONS?

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Other Business

- Questions about Atl Herring spawning closures
- Mid-water trawl vessels targeting mackerel on Stellwagen in October, including within the MA-NH Atl Herring spawning closure area
- MA-NH spawning closure closed to directed herring fishing from September 23 – November 3 (default dates)
- Vessels participating in other fisheries are subject to a 2,000 pound bycatch allowance

