Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Shad & River Herring Technical Committee
Meeting Summary

October 6, 2026

Technical Committee Members: Matthew Jargowsky (Chair, MD), Wes Eakin (NY), Patrick McGee (RI), Patrick McGrath (VA), Conor O'Donnell (NH), Reid Hyle (FL), Brian Neilan (NJ), Kyle Rachels (NC), Coja Yamashita (PA), Brad Chase (MA), Kyle Hoffman (SC), Jim Hawkes (NOAA), Jim Page (GA), Johnny Moore (DE), Ted Castro-Santos (USGS), Ingrid Braun-Ricks (PRFC), Kevin Job (CT), Mike Brown (ME)

ASMFC Staff: James Boyle and Katie Drew

The TC met via webinar on October 6, 2026, to review updates regarding the Sustainable Fishery Management Plans (SFMPs) for Maine and Florida (American shad), as well as updates to the Alternative Management Plan (AMP) for South Carolina (river herring) and the Habitat Plan for the Delaware River Basin Cooperative (DE COOP). Additionally, the TC reviewed the sustainability metrics and management responses in South Carolina and New York, discussed the timing of the next stock assessments, and provided feedback on American shad tagging to Pennsylvania.

1. Delaware River Basin Cooperative

Sheila Eyler presented an update to the American shad habitat plan. The 2021 plan remains accurate and active, and DE COOP intends to continue using the plan for the next five years. The plan notes the removal of 33 dams since 2020, with 4 more planned in Delaware and New Jersey. Additionally, the plan notes the increase of invasive species in the river basin in recent years, which may increase predation on American shad.

DE COOP also requested a 1-year extension to submit an updated SFMP for American shad to incorporate the results of the 2026 creel survey, which is the first creel survey since 2002. Furthermore, the sustainability metric tracking adult spawning shad has exceeded its benchmark in the current SFMP. The benchmark is based on a survey from a single location, and the Coop will consider updating this benchmark to ensure it is more reflective of adult spawning populations in the river.

TC recommended approval of habitat plan update and extension of current SFMP through 2027.

The TC discussed the necessity for jurisdictions to update habitat plans every 5 years and considers the plans to need updating less frequently than SFMPs. According to Amendment 3, "All plans are to be regularly reviewed, assessed and updated as needed on five-year basis by the state or jurisdiction that prepared them, with a summary report of the review provided to the Board." **The TC recommends jurisdictions review their plans every 5 years but only submit new habitat plans when new information requires them to be updated.**

2. **Maine American Shad SFMP Update**

M. Brown presented the updated SFMP, which contained no significant changes from the previous version. Maine will continue to prohibit commercial harvest and maintain a recreational limit of 2 American shad per day, and the sustainability metrics were updated with data through 2025. **The TC recommended the updated plan for approval by consensus.**

3. **South Carolina River Herring AMP Update**

K. Hoffman presented the updated AMP. which contained no significant changes from the previous version. South Carolina's recreational fishery has a 1-bushel (22.7 kg) fish aggregate daily creel for blueback herring in all rivers throughout the state; however very few recreational anglers target blueback herring, and none have been observed outside of the Santee-Cooper system. Additionally, legislation to change the current daily limit to a more enforceable creel (e.g., a specific number of fish) has been developed and vetted through an internal working group and is awaiting introduction to the South Carolina General Assembly. SCDNR plans to continue current fishery-dependent and fishery-independent monitoring for the foreseeable future. **The TC recommended the updated plan for approval by consensus.**

4. **South Carolina Sustainability Metric and SFMP Update**

South Carolina reported that the Edisto River fishery-dependent gillnet CPUE index has reached 3 years below the benchmark, triggering a management response. Beginning in 2025, South Carolina reduced allowable yards of nets in the commercial fishery (67-78% reduction). Additionally, due to attrition in the commercial fishery, the sustainability metric will be updated to a more useful index in the next iteration of the SFMP. The TC did not recommend further action.

5. **Florida American Shad SFMP Update**

After 9 consecutive years below sustainability metrics, FWC voted to remove American shad from the statewide bag limit and become catch and release only. Therefore, Florida has determined to remove their SFMP until harvest may be permitted again.

6. **Review New York Sustainability Metrics**

In 2025, New York's Young-of-Year sustainability targets for both species of river herring were below their respective 25th percentile targets for the third consecutive year, triggering a

management response. However, positive results in total mortality and adult relative abundance indices suggest that recruitment is being affected by environmental conditions rather than fishing mortality making selecting the appropriate management response challenging. New York will be closing a loophole in permitting that allows some unregulated inland river herring harvest and will consider further action dependent on the outcome of an updated creel survey scheduled for 2028, which is the first since 2003. The TC did not recommend further action.

7. Discuss Timing of Shad Benchmark and River Herring Assessment Update

The TC reviewed the assessment schedule, which includes a river herring assessment update and American shad benchmark to be completed in 2029 and 2030, respectively. Given the significant overlap of workload and staff that this would require, the TC is recommending maintaining the 2029 river herring assessment update and postponing the American shad benchmark.