



New England Fishery Management Council

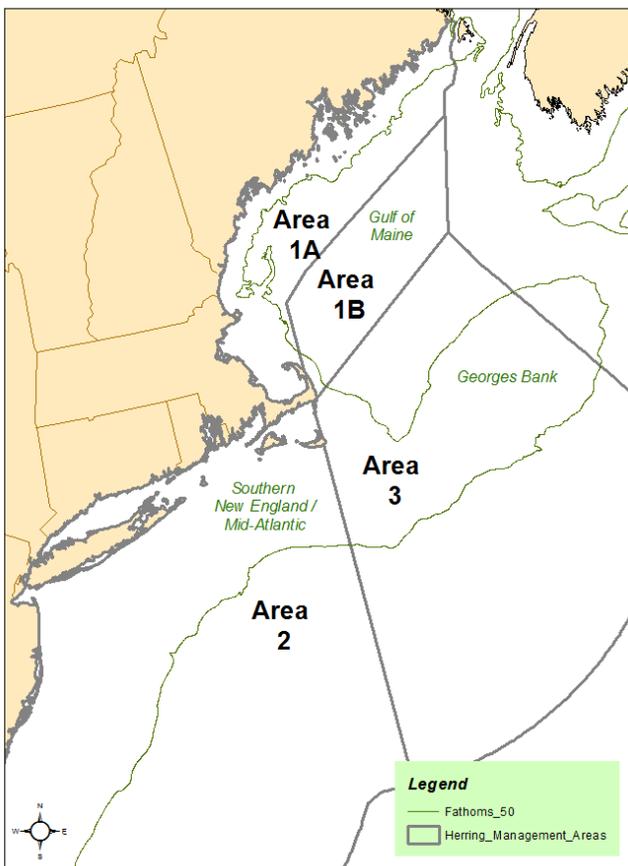
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Atlantic Herring Framework 6: Council Discusses Options for 2019-2021 Specifications and Revised Overfishing Definition

The New England Fishery Management Council has approved the range of alternatives for Framework Adjustment 6 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan, which contains 2019-2021 specifications for the fishery and a new overfishing definition for Atlantic herring. The Council is expected to take final action on the framework during its June meeting with the goal of having updated 2020 specifications in place by the start of the new fishing year.

The fishing year for Atlantic herring runs on a calendar basis:
January 1 through December 31



Atlantic Herring Management Areas 1A, 1B, 2, and 3. – NEFMC graphic

Key Factors Related to Framework 6

Here are three important points to be aware of with this framework:

1. Fishing year 2019 specifications are in place already. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS/NOAA Fisheries) implemented an [in-season adjustment](#) at the request of the Council to ensure that appropriate catch limits were in affect for the current fishing year in a timely manner to prevent overfishing. These existing 2019 specifications will be included in the 2019-2021 package without revisions.
2. The **primary focus of Framework 6** will be: (a) 2020 specifications; and (b) the updated overfishing definition.
3. The framework will include 2021 specifications, but these numbers likely will be revised in a subsequent action to reflect the results of the next stock assessment, which now is scheduled for spring 2020. At that time, the 2018 [Atlantic Herring Benchmark Stock Assessment](#) will be updated to incorporate 2018 and 2019 resource survey and fishery catch data.

The Council intends to review the results of this assessment update and develop a new three-year specifications package for fishing years 2021-2023.



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The Council agreed to include two overfishing definition alternatives in Framework 6: (1) no action, which would maintain the current overfishing definition; and (2) an updated overfishing definition that is more consistent with the 2018 benchmark stock assessment for Atlantic herring.

2020 Overfishing Limit and Acceptable Biological Catch Alternatives At a Glance in Metric Tons (mt)

Fishing Year 2020	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2 Original	Alternative 2 Updated
OFL	30,668 mt	41,830 mt	40,574 mt
ABC*	21,266 mt	16,131 mt	14,265 mt

* The ABC alternatives are described in more detail in the blue box directly below.

Framework 6 Components

In addition to the OFL, ABC, and overfishing definition alternatives, the Council approved the following additional specifications for inclusion in the document.

MANAGEMENT UNCERTAINTY BUFFER: Before U.S. catch limits are set, the ABC is reduced to account for potential harvest in the New Brunswick, Canada weir fishery and other potential sources. In recent years, the Council has subtracted 6,200 mt as a management uncertainty buffer. In Framework 6, the Council will consider three alternatives based on updated three-year, five-year, and 10-year averages of New Brunswick weir catch. These averages totaled 5,888 mt, 3992 mt, and 4,560 mt respectively.

- The Council agreed that 1,000 mt of the management uncertainty buffer would continue to “roll back” into the Area 1A catch limit on October 1 if the New Brunswick weir fishery has not landed the majority of the uncertainty buffer at that point.

BORDER TRANSFER: The framework will include two alternatives for border transfers of U.S. caught fish that is transshipped to Canada via Canadian carrier vessels and used for human consumption. The alternatives are: 0 mt and 250 mt. While the two options will be analyzed on their own accord, the Council will be able to select a number anywhere between 0 and 250 when it takes final action in June.

What’s Behind the Alternatives for Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)

- **Alternative 1** – This is the “no action” alternative, which in this case rolls over the 2019 specifications as implemented through the NOAA Fisheries [in-season adjustment](#);
- **Alternative 2 Original** – This alternative was recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee in October 2018 based on the proposed [Amendment 8 Control Rule](#); and
- **Alternative 2 Updated** – This alternative also is consistent with the proposed Amendment 8 Control Rule but was updated by the Herring Plan Development Team to include more accurate catch data for 2018.



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U.S. AT-SEA PROCESSING (USAP): The Council agreed to set USAP at 0 mt. This specification, when allocated, applies to U.S. vessels that want to process herring at sea but do not meet the vessel size limit.

SUB-ANNUAL CATCH LIMITS (SUB-ACLs): The Council agreed to make no changes to the current sub-ACL split between management areas, which now is set at:

- Area 1A = 28.9%
- Area 1B = 4.3%
- Area 2 = 27.8%
- Area 3 = 39%

SEASONAL SUB-ACLs: The Council voted to maintain the same seasonal sub-ACL divisions for Area 1A and 1B that currently are in place. These are:

- Area 1A January through May – 0%
- Area 1A June through December – 100%
- Area 1B January through April – 0%
- Area 1B May through December – 100%

RESEARCH SET-ASIDE (RSA): The Council voted to set RSA at 3% of the sub-ACL for each management area for 2020 and 2021. The 2019 RSA value was set at 3% through the NMFS in-season adjustment.

FIXED GEAR SET-ASIDE: The Council voted to set the fixed-gear set-aside at a level that is equivalent to the same proportional reduction from 2019 to 2020 as the total fishery reduction. The set-aside applies to fixed gear fishermen west of Cutler, ME and is removed from the Area 1A sub-ACL. It's returned to the Area 1A sub-ACL if not used by November 1.

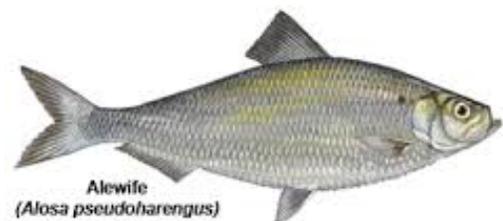
The Council's Herring Plan Development Team, Herring Advisory Panel, and Herring Committee will meet May 8, 29, and 30 respectively to continue working on Framework 6 and determine area-specific catch limits. Details about all these meetings will be posted on the Council's [herring webpage](#).

Final action is scheduled for the Council's [June 11-13, 2019 meeting in So. Portland, ME](#).

River Herring/Shad Catch Caps

As part of Framework 6, the Council voted to maintain the 2019 river herring/shad catch caps for 2020 and 2021 as follows.

River Herring/Shad Catch Caps	Allocation in Metric Tons
Midwater Trawl Gulf of Maine	76.7 mt
Midwater Trawl Cape Cod	32.4 mt
Midwater Trawl Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic	129.6 mt
Bottom Trawl Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic	122.3 mt



Alewife
(*Alosa pseudoharengus*)



Blueback Herring
(*Alosa aestivalis*)

Two species of river herring. – Courtesy of NOAA Fisheries

Questions? Contact Deirdre Boelke, the Council's herring plan coordinator, at (978) 465-0492, ext. 105, email dboelke@nefmc.org. All herring documents and the presentation used during this meeting are available at [Council meets April 16-18, 2019 in Mystic, CT](#).