

In-Season Adjustment to Atlantic Herring Specifications for 2019

New England Fishery Management Council

Newport, Rhode Island

December 5, 2018

Recent Herring Actions

- 2018 herring assessment concluded stock not overfished and overfishing not occurring in 2017
- Recent low recruitment is projected to result in biomass decline
- Assessment projected catch needs to be reduced to prevent overfishing and lower the risk of the stock becoming overfished
- NMFS, in consultation with the Council, used an in-season adjustment to reduce the 2018 herring ACL to 49,900 mt to prevent overfishing
- Revised 2018 herring specifications will remain in effect until replaced
- But catch needs to be further reduced in 2019 to prevent overfishing and lower the risk of the stock becoming overfished

Council Recommendations for Adjustment to Herring Specifications

- Council requested NMFS use an in-season adjustment to modify specifications for 2019 at its September 2018 meeting
- Council recommendations include:
 - Use the most recent assessment and projections to adjust the specifications
 - Use the ABC control rule approved by the Council in Amendment 8
 - Maintain the sub-ACL allocations used in most recent specifications
 - Area 1A - 28.9%
 - Area 1B - 4.3%
 - Area 2 - 27.8%
 - Area 3 – 39.0%
 - Proportionally reduce the fixed gear set-aside for west of Cutler, ME
 - Reduce border transfer to 0 mt

SSC Recommendations for Herring Specifications

Specification	2019 (mt)	2020 (mt)	2021 (mt)
OFL	30,668	38,878	59,788
ABC	21,266	16,131	16,131

- SSC recommended herring OFLs and ABCs for 2019-2021 at its October 2018 meeting
- OFL recommendations were generated by the recent stock assessment
- ABC recommendations were based on new control rule in Amendment 8
- SSC was concerned that recruitment projections used a long-term average resulting in large projected biomass increase for 2021
- SSC recommended the following to mitigate uncertainty around recruitment and biomass estimates:
 - Maintain the 2020 ABC for 2021
 - Update the herring assessment in 2020
 - Investigate herring's recent low recruitment

Proposed Adjustment to Herring Specifications for 2019

- FMP allows NMFS to make an in-season adjustment to the specifications, after consultation with the Council, consistent with FMP objectives and other provisions
- NMFS published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* on November 30, 2018 (83 FR 61593)
- NMFS is seeking public comment on adjustments to herring specifications for 2019 and exempted fishing permits for RSA compensation fishing for 2019-2021
- Comments will be accepted via mail and electronically
- Comment period is open until December 31, 2018

Alternatives for Adjustment to Herring Specifications in 2019

Specification*	2018 (No Action) (mt)	Council-Recommended (mt)	NMFS-Proposed (mt)
OFL	111,000	30,668	30,668
ABC	111,000	21,266	30,668
Management Uncertainty	6,200	6,200	6,200
ACL/OY	49,900	15,065	24,468
BT	4,000	0	0
Area 1A Sub-ACL	27,743	4,354	7,071
Area 1B Sub-ACL	2,639	647	1,052
Area 2 Sub-ACL	8,200	4,188	6,802
Area 3 Sub-ACL	11,318	5,876	9,543
FGST	295	39	63

**All other herring specifications would be consistent with the values/methods used to set them in 2018.*

Rationale for Proposed Adjustment to Herring Specifications

Specification	Amount (mt)	Rationale
OFL	30,668	50% chance of preventing overfishing; Council and SSC recommendation
ABC	30,668	Maintain interim control rule; 50% chance of preventing overfishing; Short-term ABC while NMFS considers the long-term control rule in Amendment 8
ACL/OY	24,468	ABC – Management Uncertainty = ACL/OY
BT	0	No BT used since 2015; Council recommendation
Area 1A Sub-ACL	7,071	28.9% of ACL; Council recommendation
Area 1B Sub-ACL	1,052	4.3% of ACL; Council recommendation
Area 2 Sub-ACL	6,802	27.8% of ACL; Council recommendation
Area 3	9,543	39.0% of ACL; Council recommendation
FGST	63	FGST averaged < 12 mt in past 5 years; Council recommendation

Impacts of Adjustment to Herring Specification Alternatives

Alternative	Herring Resource	Non-Target Species	Physical Environment	Protected Resources	Fishery-Related Businesses and Communities
2018 (No Action)	High Negative	Slight Positive	Slight Negative	Slight Negative to Slight Positive	Negligible
Council-Recommended	Moderate Positive				High Negative
NMFS-Proposed	Slight Positive				Moderate Negative

Impacts of Adjustment to Specification Alternatives on Herring Resource

	2019*		2020**		2021**	
	Council-Recommended	Proposed	Council-Recommended	Proposed	Council-Recommended	Proposed
ABC	21,266	30,668	16,131	12,672	30,659	27,394
F (ages 7-8)	0.33	0.51	0.18	0.15	0.21	0.19
SSB	52,874	46,237	58,617	54,146	126,394	125,127
P (Overfishing)	0.15	0.50	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.02
P (Overfished)	0.88	0.87	0.84	0.84	0.26	0.28
SSB/SSB _{MSY}	0.28	0.24	0.31	0.29	0.67	0.66

**Projections for 2019 used the interim control rule.*

***Projections for 2020 and 2021 used the new control rule in Amendment 8.*

Impacts of Adjustment to Specification Alternatives on Herring Vessels

Alternative	Projected Reduction in Herring Revenue from 2017 to 2019		
	Purse Seine	Trawl	Overall
Council-Recommended	86%	87%	87%
NMFS-Proposed	78%	80%	80%

Alternative	Projected Reduction in Total Revenue from 2017 to 2019		
	Purse Seine	Trawl	Overall
Council-Recommended	63%	17%	22%
NMFS-Proposed	57%	16%	20%

Catch of Herring in 2018

Area	Sub-ACL (mt)	Cumulative Catch (mt)*	Percent Caught
Area 1A	27,743	24,130	87.0%
Area 1B	2,639	2,165	82.0%**
Area 2	8,200	6,786	82.8%
Area 3	11,318	8,815	77.9%
Total	49,900 mt	41,896	84.0%

**Cumulative catch is through December 4, 2018.*

***A 2,000-lb herring possession limit was implemented in Area 1B on October 22, 2018. Corrections to reporting errors reduced the catch to 82% of the sub-ACL.*

As of October 18, 2018, a total of 10,999 mt has been caught in the New Brunswick weir fishery.

Exempted Fishing Permits for RSA Compensation Fishing in 2019-2021

- EFPs have exempted vessels from certain regulations while compensation fishing to fund research since 2007
- Continuing to issue EFPs would facilitate RSA compensation fishing
 - Vessels would be exempt from 2,000-lb herring possession limit implemented in a management area once 92% the sub-ACL has been caught
 - Vessels would be exempt from seasons when sub-ACL is not available
 - Area 1A – January through May
 - Area 1B – January through April
- Herring RSA proposals for 2019 are currently under review with the NEFSC
- NEFSC is expected to make selections before the end of the year
- RSA compensation fishing may be allowed as early as January