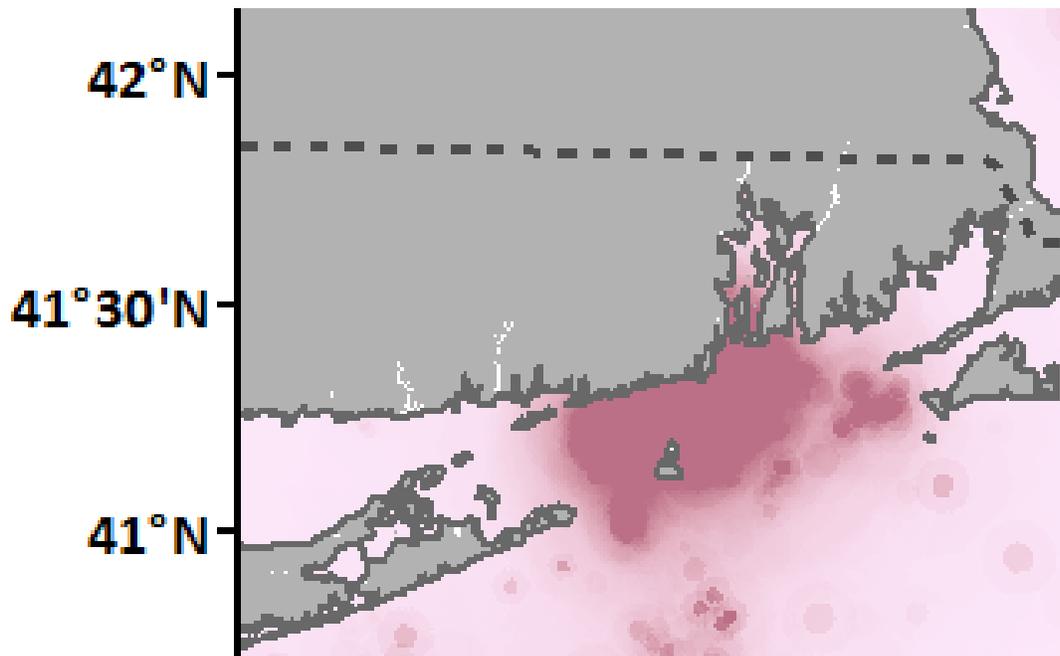


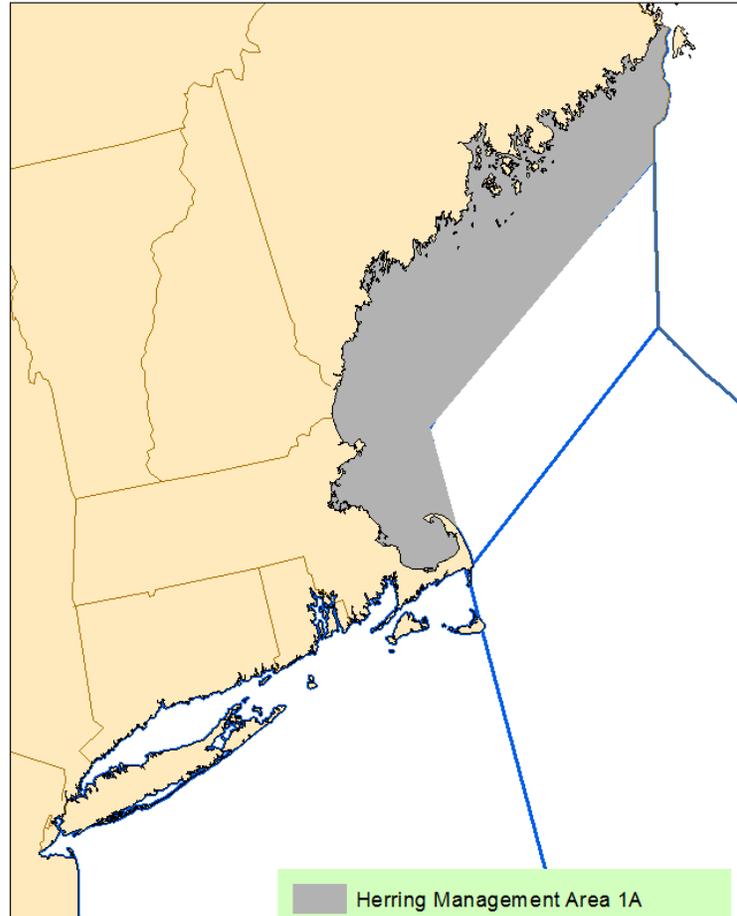
RIVER HERRING CONSERVATION ALERT

It appears that the main factor that is depressing river herring abundance is catch at sea. One likely culprit is the inadvertent netting of river herring in fisheries directed at Atlantic Herring, a very similar appearing and closely related species. The New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC) regulates that fishery with a Fishery Management Plan. It is considering an amendment (Amendment 8) to the Plan that could impact river herring. We need individuals and organizations that are concerned about river herring to write and speak to this matter.

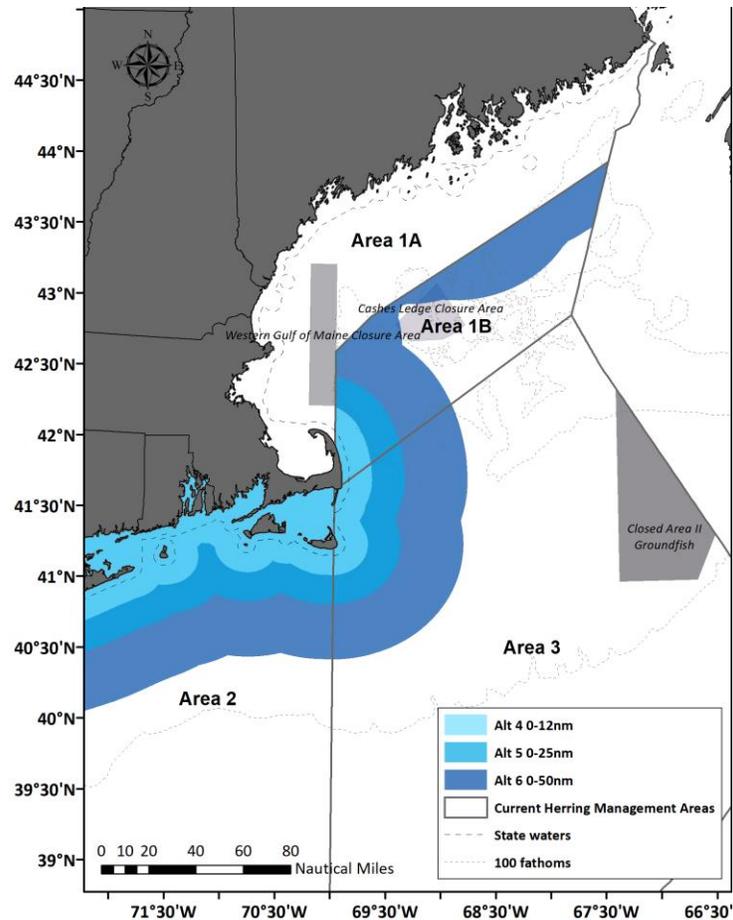
The map below shows where there is intense fishing by trawlers for Atlantic Herring in January, February and March—the same time river herring destined for Long Island Sound are staging for their spring spawning runs in the exact same area. Sampling has shown that our river herring end up in the nets as 'bycatch', although industry and others have been working to reduce the catch. We are interested in a time/place closure to protect these staging river herring.



Many have argued that river herring are doing fine and do not need protection due to the strong runs occurring in Maine, ignoring the data from southern New England. But the map below shows fishing area 1A, which has been closed to the Atlantic Herring fishery during the winter for many years. This closure is a likely factor in the strong river herring runs in Maine.



We need that kind of protection for southern New England fish. There are proposals to close the waters off southern New England using one of the three alternatives shown below:



We are concerned that extending the closure southerly beyond New York will be considered an overreach and not supported, but Alternatives 4 (out to 12 miles), 5 (out to 25 miles), and 6 (out to 50 miles) are the only ones that include the area of our concern. We seek public support for these alternatives with the idea that Commissioners may later agree to maintain the spirit of those alternatives but limit the length that a closure would extend southerly.

Here is the tricky part: Amendment 8, which is being considered, does not specifically address the problem of bycatch of river herring. It is intended to address the problem of localized depletion of ATLANTIC HERRING. While everyone knows that a closure to address that problem would also benefit river herring and that many people are concerned with this, comments need to address localized depletion of Atlantic Herring. River herring can be mentioned. We need you to either attend a meeting and or write letters. Comments should follow this tack:

- State who you are and that you are concerned about the ecological health of our coastal waters and the abundance of fish stocks, especially forage species.
- Species like Atlantic Herring, river herring, and menhaden are critically important to all marine creatures and must be maintained in high abundance. (Customize this to your interests, e.g. birds, marine mammals, striped bass, etc.)

- If Atlantic Herring decline in numbers, predators will shift more to river herring which are severely depressed in southern New England.
- Some localized Atlantic Herring fisheries are threatening the local abundance of Atlantic Herring and river herring and then have ripple effects throughout the ecosystem.
- The fishery off the eastern end of Long Island and Block Island has had a particularly strong impact on the numbers of Atlantic Herring and river herring entering Long Island Sound, which have declined to alarmingly low levels.
- The State of Maine has good abundance of these species and they have a coastal area closure.
- You support a coastal area closure for southern New England along the lines of Alternative 4, 5, or 6 or some reduced version of those as long as it includes the area described above.

Try to put these points in your own words and tie them into your own experiences and activities. If you've been working to restore river herring in your watershed, you can mention it.

The closest public hearing for this Amendment will be in Narragansett, RI on Tuesday, May 22 at the University of Rhode Island, Coastal Institute Building, Hazard Room, 215 S. Ferry Road, 6 p.m. It would be great if some folks from CT could attend and present their comments in person. There is also a webinar where one can submit comments. See the press release referenced at the bottom of the page. Regardless, letters are encouraged:

Public Comment Deadline

Written comments are welcome.

*The deadline for submitting written comments is **Monday, June 25** at 5 p.m., although earlier submissions are highly encouraged.*

Label correspondence as "DEIS for Amendment 8 to the Atlantic Herring FMP" and send to:

Tom Nies, Executive Director

New England Fishery Management Council

50 Water Street, Mill 2

Newburyport, MA 01950

Fax: (978) 465-3116

Email: comments@nefmc.org

For more information including a webinar where comments may be left, go to NEFMC's press release at: <http://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/Atlantic-Herring-Amendment-8-Public-Hearings.pdf>