



New England Fishery Management Council

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PRESS CONTACT: Janice Plante
(607) 592-4817, jplante@nefmc.org

Atlantic Herring: Council Updates Amendment 10 Problem Statement; Approves Scoping Document and Meeting Schedule

The New England Fishery Management Council will hold six scoping meetings in March and April 2024 to solicit input on the range of alternatives to be considered under Amendment 10 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan. Amendment 10 is an action to minimize user conflicts, contribute to optimum yield, and support rebuilding of Atlantic herring. This action also will enhance river herring and shad avoidance and catch reduction. The deadline for submitting written comments is 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 30, 2024.

The Council approved the scoping meeting schedule and scoping document for Amendment 10 when it met January 30-February 1, 2024 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Both files are posted on the [Amendment 10 webpage](#).

During that meeting, the Council also revised the problem statement for this action to include consideration of river herring and shad avoidance and catch reduction alternatives (see next page for full description).

WHAT IS THE COUNCIL CONSIDERING: To inform the development of Amendment 10, the Council is gathering public input on:

- Measures to attain optimum yield and improve the conservation status of Atlantic herring by accounting for its role as a forage species in the ecosystem (other than adjustments to the acceptable biological catch [ABC] control rule or the rebuilding plan);
- User group conflicts created by competing interests for the Atlantic herring resource by time and management area; and



Atlantic Herring Scoping Meetings

The Council is developing Amendment 10 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan to minimize user conflicts, contribute to optimum yield, and support rebuilding of Atlantic herring, as well as enhance river herring and shad avoidance and catch reduction.

Your input at this early stage is important!

Attend a Scoping Meeting	
March 1 1-2:30 pm	Rockport, ME <i>Maine Fishermen's Forum, Sarnoset Resort</i>
March 4 6-8 pm	Portsmouth, NH <i>Urban Forestry Center</i>
March 19 6-8 pm	South Kingstown, RI <i>Hampton Inn</i>
March 27 6-8 pm	Buzzards Bay, MA <i>Hampton Inn</i>
April 17 6-8 pm	Mystic, CT & Webinar <i>NEEMC Meeting, Hilton Hotel & Virtual</i>
April 22 6-8 pm	Webinar <i>Virtual</i>



Public Comment Period:
March 1 – April 30, 2024
Written Comments due by 8 A.M. on April 30, 2024

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The scoping document and information on how to submit written comments are available on our Amendment 10 webpage: <https://www.nefmc.org/library/herring-amendment-10-2>.



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- Potential management measures designed to address the catch of shad and river herring in the directed Atlantic herring fishery, including catch caps and/or time/area closures.

The Council agreed to consider river herring and shad management measures in Amendment 10 when it set [2024 priorities](#) in December 2023.

Scoping Process

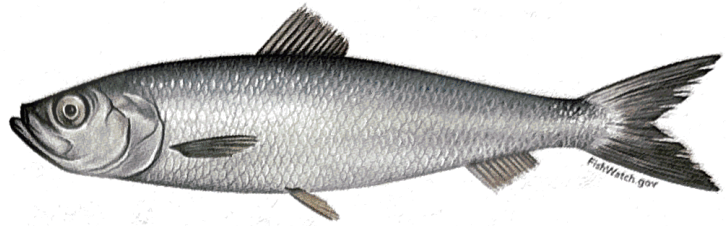
Scoping is an extremely important part of the amendment development process. It's the first and best opportunity for all stakeholders and members of the public to share perspectives and provide input on the issues being considered under the amendment.

The Council uses this feedback to help identify important issues as it develops a complete range of alternatives to address the problem statement.

Offer your input by: (1) attending a scoping meeting either in person or by webinar; and/or (2) writing a letter to let the Council know your thoughts.



Atlantic herring



Atlantic Herring Amendment 10 Updated Problem Statement

The purpose of this action is to develop and implement management actions designed to attain optimum yield and improve the conservation status of Atlantic herring by accounting for its critically important role as a forage species in the ecosystem and minimizing user conflicts created by competing interests on the herring resource between the directed herring fishery and other important user groups, including commercial and recreational fisheries, whale watching, and tourism.

This Council will explore a range of management alternatives to minimize user conflicts, including spatially and temporally explicit gear restrictions, area closures, and possession limits. The geographic scope of potential management measures will consider, but not be limited to, the spatial extent of the Midwater Trawl Restricted Area approved by the Council in Amendment 8, with a particular focus on areas not already subject to seasonal closures to midwater trawling.

The current management measures to address catch of shad and river herring in the directed Atlantic Herring fishery have catch estimation challenges and were instituted when the abundance and landings of Atlantic Herring were much higher than they presently are. This action will augment efforts to restore and maintain runs of river herring and shad through consideration of management alternatives for the directed Atlantic herring fishery that enhance river herring and shad avoidance and catch reduction (e.g., time/area closures and/or reconsideration of catch caps).



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WHAT DOES THE COUNCIL WANT TO KNOW: Here are a few questions to help guide your input.

- What additional spatial and temporal management measures should the Council consider to attain optimum yield and improve the conservation status of Atlantic herring by accounting for its role as a forage species in the ecosystem (other than adjustments to the ABC control rule or the rebuilding plan)?
- What user group conflicts currently exist? What user group conflicts existed when the herring resource was more abundant? Is the low herring abundance exacerbating the user conflict issue? Have user group conflicts changed over time? Has user conflict gotten worse, been stable, or improved in light of reduced directed herring fishing effort?
- Do the current and/or historic user group conflicts differ by herring management area? If so, how? Where/when are user conflicts heightened in space and time? How would the Council know if/when user conflicts were successfully resolved? What data should the Council consider to identify conflicts?
- How should the Council balance optimum yield between the directed herring fishery, other fishing interests, and non-fishing activities?
- What types of management measures should the Council consider to address the catch of river herring and shad in the directed herring fishery?



Atlantic Herring Amendment 10 Scoping Meeting Schedule

State / Webinar	Date and Time	Location
Rockport, Maine	Friday, March 1, 2024 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.	Samoset Resort * 220 Warrenton Street
Portsmouth, New Hampshire	Monday, March 4, 2024 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Urban Forestry Center 45 Elwyn Road
South Kingstown, Rhode Island	Tuesday, March 19, 2024 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Hampton Inn 20 Hotel Drive
Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts	Wednesday, March 27, 2024 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Hampton Inn 12 Kendall Rae Place
Mystic, Connecticut and Webinar Option	Wednesday, April 17, 2024 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Hilton Hotel 20 Coogan Boulevard Webinar Link
Webinar	Monday, April 22, 2024 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Webinar Link

Additional Information

- Download the [scoping meeting schedule](#).
- Download the [scoping document](#), which contains information about how to submit written comments by the April 30 deadline.
- Questions? Contact Dr. Jamie Cournane at jcournane@nefmc.org.

* The March 1, 2024 scoping meeting at the Samoset Resort is being held in conjunction with the Maine Fishermen's Forum. Visit the [forum website](#) for more information.