



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations of all Atlantic coast fish species, or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 23, 2006

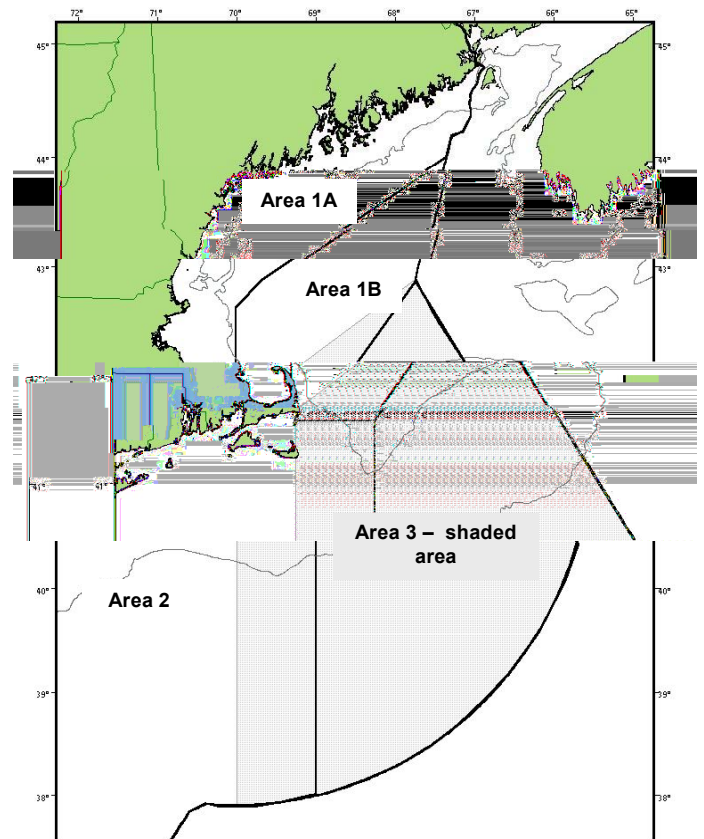
PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
(202) 289-6400

ASMFC Approves Atlantic Herring Amendment 2 *Amendment Aims to Maintain High Abundance* *While Balancing Stakeholder Needs & Ecosystem Functions*

Arlington, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s Atlantic Herring Section approved Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Herring. The Amendment revises management area boundaries (see map below), biological reference points, the specification process, research set-asides, internal waters processing operations, and measures to address fixed gear fisheries. These measures are intended to maintain the resource’s currently high abundance level while also maintaining traditional use patterns in the fishery, allowing for an expanded bait fishery, and protecting herring’s role as forage in the northwest Atlantic ecosystem.

Amendment 2 contains complementary management measures to those contained in Amendment 1 to the Federal FMP, recently approved by the New England Fishery Management Council and awaiting consideration and approval by NOAA’s Northeast Regional Administrator. Amendment 2 differs from the Federal Amendment with regard to its effort control program (‘days out’ provision) and spawning restrictions.

Amendment 2’s effort control program is based on a ‘days out’ provision intended to allow the fishery to be prosecuted throughout the season by closing one or more days each week to fishing. It establishes a process whereby the states would meet each spring to review projected harvest by area and, if necessary, set additional management measures to control fishing effort (i.e., the start date to begin ‘days out’ measures, number of ‘days out’, and which consecutive days of the week will have landings prohibitions). Fixed gear fisheries are exempt from the ‘days out’ provision and off-loading of herring is permitted during closure days. Additionally, vessels with



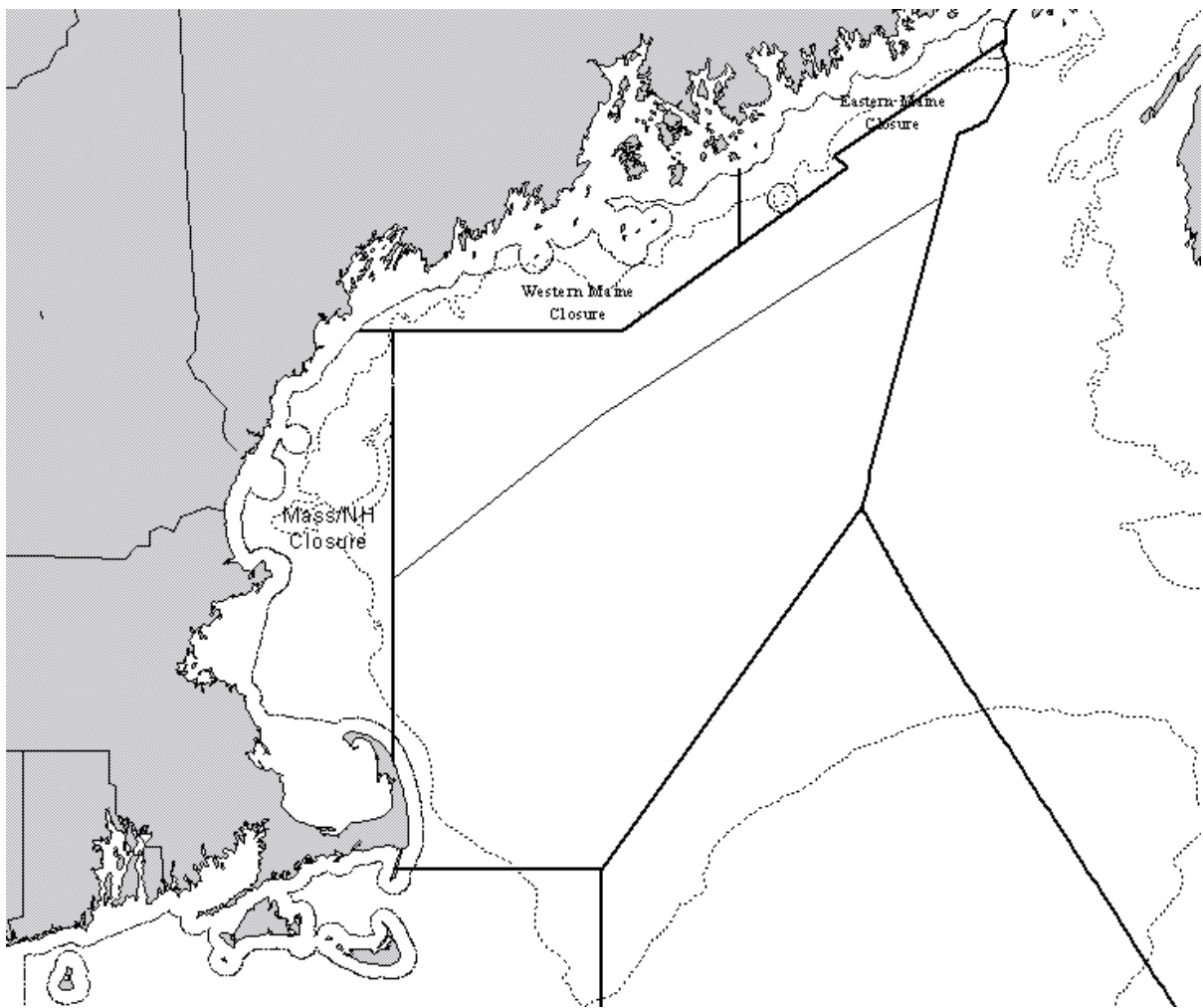
Map of Amendment 2 Management Areas

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

an Atlantic herring permit will be allowed to prosecute fisheries for other species in restricted areas during the ‘days out’ provision. Amendment 2 also implements a ‘zero tolerance’ provision during spawning closures, prohibiting any vessel from fishing for, taking, landing, or possessing spawn herring from or within a restricted spawning area (see map below). Eastern Maine fixed gear fisheries will be exempt from spawning restrictions.

While scientists from both the US and Canada have determined that the herring stock complex is at a high level of abundance, is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, they could not reach consensus on the most appropriate model to assess the magnitude of herring abundance. To address this issue, Amendment 2 establishes biological reference points (biomass and fishing mortality thresholds and targets) as precautionary measures until the next stock assessment is completed in May/June 2006.

The Amendment has an implementation date of January 1, 2007 and requires participating states from Maine through New Jersey to submit implementation proposals by April 1, 2006. The Atlantic Herring Section will meet in May 2006 to review and consider approval of the state proposals. Annual compliance reports are due on February 1 of each year. Copies of Amendment 2 will be made available by mid-March and can be obtained via the Commission’s website at www.asmf.org (Breaking News) or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. For more information, please contact Ruth Christiansen, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or rchristiansen@asmfc.org.



Map of Amendment 2 Spawning Area Closures