

## DRAFT



### New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116  
Frank Blount, *Chairman* | Paul J. Howard, *Executive Director*

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### JOINT NEFMC/ASMFC HERRING ADVISORY PANEL MEETING

Sheraton Ferncroft, Danvers, MA

Monday, September 11, 2006

**Meeting Attendance:** Dave Ellenton, Joint AP Chair; Peter Moore, Herring AP Vice-Chair; Gib Brogan, Spencer Fuller, Jim Kendall, Vito Calomo, Glenn Robbins, Rich Ruais, Mary Beth Tooley, David Turner, Al West, Jeff Reichle, NEFMC Herring AP members (**12 of 15 NEFMC advisors present; 6 ASMFC advisors present**); David Pierce, Herring Committee Chair; Jim Ruhle and Terry Stockwell, Herring Committee members; Lori Steele, NEFMC Staff; Ruth Christiansen, ASMFC Staff; Eric Dolin and Hannah Goodale, NERO Staff; Steve Correia, MA DMF and Herring PDT; Matt Cieri, ME DMR and Herring PDT; Jeff Kaelin, Zach Klyver, Mark Griffin, Geir Monsen, and other members of the public.

The AP received a presentation summarizing the alternatives under consideration for the 2007-2009 herring fishery specifications and the additional background information and analysis in the document. The AP briefly discussed available information about the status of the inshore component of the resource. Advisors also reviewed the analysis of economic impacts of the TAC alternatives under consideration and noted that Alternatives 2 and 4 are projected to produce substantial negative impacts on participants in the fishery. The advisors also noted that the impacts of the proposed Amendment 1 measures remain unclear at this time.

Steve Correia from the Herring PDT presented the methodology and results of the updated risk assessment. The AP members discussed the PDT's risk assessment and asked several questions:

- Ms. Tooley wondered why all stock mixing combinations were analyzed (0-100% for both winter and summer) when a much smaller range is considered to be realistic. Mr. Correia explained that with the existing uncertainty about the actual mixing rates, the Herring PDT opted to present the entire range so that comparisons could be made in a more relative sense without relying on a few specific mixing combinations. He added that all of the graphics in the analysis highlight the range of mixing rates that the PDT believes to be most realistic, based on available science – 0.5 in the summer (50%) and 0.1-0.3 in the winter (10-30%). When interpreting the results, one should focus on this range.
- Several advisors expressed concern about the way the PDT applied the estimated inshore stock size from the 2006 TRAC Assessment (18% of the total stock size). Dr. Cieri explained how the 18% estimate was derived at the assessment meeting, and Mr. Correia explained how it was applied in the risk assessment. The TRAC scientists estimated that the inshore stock represents about 18% of the total stock size at this time; the estimate is a median value derived from three estimates ranging from 10-30% of total stock size. In the second part of the risk assessment, projected removals of the inshore component were converted to relative exploitation rates using 180,000 mt as an estimate of inshore stock size (18% of 1 million mt total stock size). The relative exploitation rates for each of the alternatives (across all mixing combinations) were graphed, and a reference line was added at 0.31 – the exploitation rate associated with  $F_{MSY}$  for the stock complex. Mr. Correia added that the analysis also can be utilized for comparing alternatives to each other without anchoring the results to

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$F_{MSY}$  for the stock complex if there is question or concern over that estimate. Some advisors expressed concern about this element of the analysis, given the existing uncertainty about the biomass of the inshore component and the lack of a separate assessment for this stock.

- Some advisors noted that the risk assessment assumes that the TACs will be fully utilized in all management areas, which is not likely to occur in the short-term. They felt that removals of the inshore component, therefore, may be lower than those predicted in the risk assessment.

The advisors briefly discussed agenda items for Other Business and agreed to address these issues at the end of the meeting (see *Other Business*).

### **Recommendations for 2007-2009 Herring Fishery Specifications**

No AP members expressed opposition to the proposed specifications for:

- ABC
- DAH/TALFF
- DAP/JVP
- BT (although there was some discussion because only a small amount of the 4,000 mt specification is utilized for border transfer)

### ***U.S. At-Sea Processing (USAP)***

Several advisors expressed opposition to the proposed USAP specification of 20,000 mt. While they acknowledged that one vessel is scheduled to begin USAP operations this year, the advisors' primary concern is that such a large allowance will encourage additional processing capacity to enter the fishery. Mr. Reichle noted that except for the sardine cannery, very few shoreside processors utilize 20,000 mt of herring annually. He felt that this specification is too high for one vessel and would encourage additional investment in at-sea processing. With the precedent set, NMFS would have no basis to deny additional vessels that may express interest in this activity. Several advisors agreed, and Mr. Calomo reiterated his continued support for the development of the shoreside processing sector of this fishery. Mr. Reichle also noted that the Council already has favored one type of processing over another by prohibiting mealing in this fishery.

#### **1. MOTION: Vito Calomo/Jim Kendall**

That the Advisors recommend a 5,000 mt total USAP specification, from Areas 2 and 3 only

Some advisors were concerned that 5,000 mt may be considered too low since there is already one vessel anticipated to utilize part of the current 20,000 mt specification in 2006.

#### **MOTION PERFECTED:**

**That the Advisors recommend that the Committee consider a USAP specification ranging from 5,000 mt -10,000 mt from Areas 2 and 3 only, but the specification should not exceed 10,000 mt**

**Motion carries 8 yes, 0 no, 3 abstention.**

The AP briefly discussed the proposed administration of the research set-asides. No AP members expressed opposition to the proposed Research Set-Asides (3% for 2008 and 2009).

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### *Area-Specific TACs*

The AP agreed that the no action alternative is not likely to be a feasible alternative because the proposed ABC specification of 220,000 mt is inconsistent with the recent stock assessment (MSY = 194,000 mt). Mr. Ellenton encouraged the AP to develop recommendations based on the four alternatives in the document (versus developing a new alternative).

- 2. MOTION: Mary Beth Tooley/Vito Calomo**  
**That the AP recommends Alternative 1, which maintains the current TACs and includes a buffer between ABC and OY (includes the AP recommended adjustment to the USAP specification)**

Several Advisory Panel members expressed support for this motion and Alternative 1. They felt that the lack of biological information on which to base a status determination for the inshore component, combined with the substantial negative economic impacts expected under Alternatives 2 and 4, support maintaining the current TACs for 2007-2009. A couple of advisors also noted that the encounter rates for herring in the NMFS trawl survey and available recruitment indices (ME DMR and MA DMF surveys) are not showing signs of decline.

Mr. Ruais expressed opposition to this motion because he feels that it is inconsistent with the scientific information in the specifications document. Mr. Kaelin (audience) provided a letter from the Raber family (FV Providian) and expressed support for this motion. He suggested that the information in the specifications document indicates that more information is needed about the status of the inshore stock, and he highlighted the importance of addressing problems with the acoustic surveys as one example. He also noted that the economic analysis in the document predicts substantial impacts on the fishery participants from reducing the Area 1A TAC, including potential losses of more than \$100,000 for each of the vessels he represents. He stated that it would be irresponsible to do anything but maintain the status quo TACs at this time, especially since significant uncertainty surrounds the outcome of the Amendment 1 management measures, which have yet to be approved and implemented.

**Motion carries 9 yes, 2 no, 0 abstentions.**

### *Other Business*

Some AP members expressed concern about the current list of allowable species when fishing for herring in the GOM and GB exemption areas. The Letter of Authorization for herring fishing in these areas only allows vessels to possess Atlantic herring, blueback herring, mackerel, and in some areas, squid. Ms. Goodale explained that regulations regarding allowable species in the herring fishery are derived from the Groundfish FMP since the herring fishery is considered an "exempted fishery" in the GOM and GB areas (less than 5% groundfish bycatch); changes to this list of allowable species must be considered by the Council through a groundfish action. The AP noted that dogfish, whiting, and squid are of particular concern, as these are species that are frequently caught as incidental catch in the directed herring fishery.

- 3. MOTION: Mary Beth Tooley/Rich Ruais**  
**The AP recommends that the Council consider action to allow for incidental catch of dogfish in the herring fishery**  
**Motion carries unanimously (11 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions).**

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- 4. MOTION: Mary Beth Tooley/Spencer Fuller**  
**That the Council address the incidental catch of whiting and squid in the herring fishery north of 42-20 through the next available action**  
**Motion carries 10 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention.**

The Herring AP also expressed concern about herring bycatch in the directed mackerel fishery for those vessels that will not qualify for any limited access permit under the current Amendment 1 limited access program and agreed that this issue should be investigated further.

### *ASMFC Issues – Spawning Restrictions*

Several advisors expressed concern about issues related to changes to the spawning restrictions that the ASMFC recently adopted.

- 5. MOTION: Dave Turner/Mary Beth Tooley**  
Recommend that the Atlantic Herring Section initiate the process of developing an impact analysis of the spawning regulations as contained in Interstate Amendment 2 (and clarified by Technical Addendum 1), including consideration towards development of an Addendum or Amendment as deemed appropriate.  
Motion carries unanimously (6 ASMFC advisors).