



# *New England Fishery Management Council*

## *News Release*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### ***New England Fishery Council Approves Catches for Atlantic Herring***

NEWPORT, RI Citing concerns about the long-term sustainability of the herring resource, the New England Fishery Management Council took a conservative approach this week as it set catches of sea herring in the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank for the next three years. By a near unanimous vote, the Council reduced the overall level of the allowable herring catch from 165,000 metric tons, in place during the 2007-2009 period, to 106,000 metric tons.

Based on the expert advice of its Scientific and Statistical Committee, a group of independent scientists appointed by the Council to provide recommendations about acceptable biological catch for all federally managed species in the region, the Council viewed the long-term stability of the herring resource as paramount relative to the negative short-term economic impacts that are likely to result as a consequence of the reduction.

The Scientific Committee based its advice on the lack of certainty about how abundant the herring stock really is, that it is projected to decline over the next several years, and that heavy fishing in some areas of the Gulf of Maine could be depleting the inshore spawning stock components, specific areas in which herring produce enormous quantities of eggs. The Scientific Committee, as well as a number of Council members also acknowledged the important role of herring in the ecosystem --- as a prey species for many other important commercially and recreationally harvested fish as well as protected whales, dolphins and seals in the region.

The overall catch of herring, or total allowable catch/acceptable biological catch, also was allocated by harvest area, as listed below. The levels of inshore catches did not change from those recommended by the Council's Herring Committee last week. To be precautionary, however, members voted to put the extra 16,000 metric tons approved by the Council in Area 3, an offshore area from which the total allowable catch has not been taken historically.

#### **2010-2012 Total Allowable Catch (metric tons)**

**Area 1A – 26,546**

**Area 1B – 4,362**

**Area 2 – 22,146**

**Area 3 – 22,146, plus 16,000**

**Total – 75,200**

**Management uncertainty (to account for Canadian catch) – 14,800**

**Acceptable Biological Catch – 106,000**

The New England Fishery Management Council, one of eight regional councils established by federal legislation in 1976, is charged with conserving and managing fishery resources from three to 200 miles off the coasts of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut.

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