



# **Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

*Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

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### **ASMFC Approves Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Herring**

Alexandria, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Herring. The Amendment refines the spawning closure system, modifies the fixed gear set-aside, and includes an empty fish hold provision contingent on federal adoption. The Amendment consolidates prior amendments (and associated addenda) and recent management decisions into a single document; it is now the comprehensive document for Atlantic herring management in state waters.

The Amendment allows for the use of a modified GSI-based spawning monitoring system to track reproductive maturity in an effort to better align the timing of spawning area closures with the onset of spawning. This new method will be tested and evaluated for effectiveness during the 2016 fishing season. If found to be ineffective the Section has the option to revert back to using the prior monitoring system. Default closure dates have been modified to late August or early October depending on the area. The spawning closure period remains four weeks.

Previously, the fixed gear set-aside was available to fixed gear fishermen through November 1, after this date the remaining set-aside became available to the rest of the Area 1A fishery. The November 1 date had been established because, typically, herring have migrated out of the Gulf of Maine by that time. Anecdotal evidence suggests herring are in the Gulf of Maine after November 1, therefore, fixed gear fishermen requested the set-aside be made available to them for the remainder of the calendar year. Under Amendment 3, fixed gear fishermen will now have access to the quota as long as the directed fishery is open.

Amendment 3 also requires fish holds to be empty of fish prior to trip departures. This measure, which is contingent on adoption in federal waters, seeks to minimize wasteful fishing practices and encourage harvest based on market demand. The New England Fishery Management Council has included a similar provision in its Framework Adjustment 4 to the Federal Atlantic Herring FMP. Framework Adjustment 4 is currently under review by NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office.

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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.

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