



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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*Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

## **Atlantic Herring Technical Committee Meeting Summary Conference Call March 10, 2016**

*Technical Committee Members:* Renee Zobel (Chair), Matt Cieri (ME), Micah Dean (MA)

*ASMFC Staff:* Ashton Harp

Technical Committee members from Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts reviewed essential elements of the new spawning area closure monitoring system including tasks, individual participation and dates. A draft protocol was devised from this discussion (Appendix 1). It was determined that ACCSP is the most appropriate data warehouse for the sampling data provided TC members are able to upload the sampling data and the table parameters have the ability to be edited at any time. A call with ACCSP to discuss implementation was scheduled for the following week.

TC members discussed the timeline for potential reporting requests. A comparison report that informs managers of how the season operated when using the GSI30-Based Forecasting System compared to the size-based closure system used in prior years could be ready in time for the February 2017 Atlantic Herring Section meeting. If requested, a full analysis including trip level data could be presented at the May 2017 Section meeting (i.e. after the VTRs are finalized in March).

Each state is coordinating with each other to draft consistent spawning area closure regulations. As determined at the Section meeting, all regulatory changes should be implemented by June 1, when the fishery opens for the 2016 fishing season.

**Appendix 1. Draft Protocol for Atlantic Herring Spawning Area Closures using the GSI30-Based Forecast System**

Amendment 3 to the Atlantic Herring Interstate Fishery Management Plan 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, GSI30-Based Forecast System, will be tested during the 2016 fishing season. If applicable, default closure dates were modified to late August or early October depending on the area.

The Atlantic Herring Technical Committee (TC) members have identified essential tasks, individuals and dates for the new closure system, which are outlined in the following protocol.

Protocol for Atlantic Herring Spawning Area Closures using the GSI30-Based Forecast System	
Spawning / Sampling Areas	
Sample Criteria	A minimum of three fishery dependent or independent samples, each containing at least 25 female herring in ICNAF gonadal stages III-V.
Sampling Timeframe	Sampling shall begin by at least August 1 for the Eastern and Western Maine areas, and by at least September 1 for the Massachusetts/New Hampshire area.
Data Warehouse (Tentative)	Individual fish samples will be uploaded into the ACCSP Biological Component Database. Sampling data will be uploaded by the respective TC member. TC members will have immediate access to the data and the ability to download data to incorporate into the model.

<b>Modeling Analysis</b>	Matt Cieri (alternate is James Becker) will run the model for Eastern Maine and Western Maine spawning areas. Brad Schondelmeier (alternate is Micah Dean) will run the model for the Massachusetts/New Hampshire spawning area.
<b>Method For Triggering A Closure</b>	A GSI30 value of 25 (80 <sup>th</sup> percentile) will trigger a closure. This trigger value is expected to close the fishery in the later stages of maturity, but before spawning.
<b>Determining A Closure Date</b>	TC members from ME, NH and MA will review the model results to forecast an appropriate closure date. The TC Chair will notify the Atlantic Herring Section of the date.
<b>Announcing A Closure</b>	Once the forecasted date is within 5 days, the spawning area closure will be announced to the public.
<b>Initial Closure Period</b>	Each spawning area closure will last four weeks (28 days) from the initial closure date.
<b>Closure Extension (if applicable)</b>	Sampling will resume in the final week of the initial closure period or at the end of the initial closure period. If one sample indicates significant numbers (25% or more) of spawn herring then closures will resume for an additional two weeks (14 days).
<b>Default Dates</b>	If sufficient samples are not available, closures will begin on the following dates:  Eastern Maine: August 28 Western Maine: October 4 Massachusetts/New Hampshire: October 4