



NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE

River Herring Management in Federal Fisheries

The Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils have both recently adopted fishery management plan (FMP) amendments to address the incidental catch of river herring and shad in marine fisheries (Amendment 14 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP and Amendment 5 to the Atlantic herring FMP respectively).

At their June meetings, the Councils adopted the following management measures related to river herring:

- Increased at-sea observer coverage rates in the herring, mackerel, and longfin squid fisheries.
- A river herring catch cap in the herring fishery, and a river herring and shad catch cap in the mackerel fishery.
- Trip termination after 10 slippage* events in the herring and mackerel fisheries (specific requirements differ for herring and mackerel fisheries).
- River herring bycatch avoidance project administered by the Sustainable Fisheries Coalition, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, and UMASS Dartmouth School of Marine Science and Technology (http://www.smast.umassd.edu/Bycatch_Avoidance/index.php).



Alewife
(Credit: Jerry Prezioso, NOAA)

*Slippage is generally defined as the release of catch that is not brought on board the vessel to be sampled by a fisheries observer.

The management measures to increase the level of monitoring by fisheries observers in the Atlantic herring and mackerel fisheries were adopted with the intent of using NOAA Fisheries and/or industry funds to support the costs associated with increased monitoring. An at-sea observer cost sharing program will be developed by Council/NOAA Fisheries staff during the next year. Both Councils also adopted provisions to establish a catch cap to control the catch of river herring. The level of the catch cap will be implemented in subsequent actions following the implementation of the amendments.

Next Steps

The Councils will finalize the amendments, and the associated Final Environmental Impact Statements (FEISs), to reflect the adopted management measures. The amendments will then be submitted to NOAA Fisheries for approval and implementation.. During the Fall of 2012, NOAA Fisheries will publish proposed rules for each amendment, in the Federal Register, to evaluate amendment approval. If approved, the amendments will be implemented in the Spring of 2013.