

Summary of River Herring Management Measures in Herring Amendment 5

The New England Fishery Management Council, in consultation with NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service, has proposed to adopt Amendment 5 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP) pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). The proposed alternatives focus on establishing a comprehensive catch monitoring program for the limited access herring fishery, addressing river herring bycatch in the herring fishery, establishing criteria for midwater trawl vessel access to groundfish closed areas, and adjusting other aspects of the fishery management program to keep the FMP in compliance with the MSA and other applicable laws. Measures to address river herring bycatch in the herring fishery include increased monitoring through increased observer coverage, closed areas for river herring protection, and river herring catch caps. The alternatives proposed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) are summarized in the table below.

Proposed Measures/Alternatives	Description	Measure also proposed in MSB Amendment 14
Monitoring/Avoidance Areas	These are defined monitoring areas that rotate on a bimonthly basis. The areas are defined by observed trips in the directed Atlantic herring fishery where there was at least one observed tow of river herring catch greater than 40 pounds from 2005-2009.	Yes. These areas and measures are also proposed for the Atlantic mackerel and longfin squid fisheries.
100% Observer Coverage in Monitoring/Avoidance Areas	This option would require 100% observer coverage in the bimonthly monitoring/avoidance areas	Yes.
Less than 100% Observer Coverage in Monitoring/Avoidance Areas	This option would require herring vessels to notify the Observer Program when intending to fish in the Monitoring/Avoidance areas, but would not require an observer to fish in such areas.	No.
Groundfish Closed Area 1 Sampling	This option would require the same sampling protocols that are currently required in Closed Area 1. Vessels would be required to pump aboard all fish from the net for inspection and sampling by the observer, would be allowed to make short test tows, and would have to submit a Released Catch Affidavit to NMFS for any incidences of slipped catch.	Yes.
Trigger Based Monitoring	This option would designate three trigger areas: Gulf of Maine, Cape	Yes.

	Cod, and Southern New England. When a particular level of river herring catch is harvested, then some additional level of monitoring would be put into place (either 100% observer coverage or Closed Area 1 Sampling Requirements).	
Two-Phase Bycatch Avoidance	This option would develop a river herring avoidance program based on the methodology used by the Sustainable Fisheries Coalition, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, and UMASS Dartmouth School of Marine Science and Technology. It would be implemented in two phases, first identifying the bycatch avoidance areas, then development of long-term avoidance strategies.	Yes.
Protection Areas	These are defined closed areas that rotate on a bimonthly basis. The areas are defined by observed trips in the directed Atlantic herring fishery where there was at least one observed tow of river herring catch greater than 1,233 pounds from 2005-2009.	Yes. These areas and measures are also proposed for the Atlantic mackerel and longfin squid fisheries.
Closed Areas	This option would prohibit directed fishing for herring in the River Herring Protection Areas.	Yes.
Trigger Based Monitoring	This option would designate three trigger areas: Gulf of Maine, Cape Cod, and Southern New England. When a particular level of river herring catch is harvested in an area, that area would be closed to directed fishing for herring for the rest of the Protection Area period.	Yes.
Increased Observer coverage	This option would increase at-sea observer coverage by varying decrease to increase estimates of river herring catch in mackerel and longfin fisheries.	Yes.
100% Observer Coverage	100% observer coverage on directed herring trips.	Yes. Amendment 14 also includes options for 25, 50, and 75% observer coverage.
Require level of	This option would require the level of	No.

observer coverage set by the Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM)	coverage set by the SBRM process is obtained and observer coverage does not get reallocated during the prioritization process.	
Require observer coverage to meet a specified level of precision set by the Council.	Options include requiring NMFS to allocate observer coverage based on a targeted level of precision for river herring bycatch monitoring.	Yes. Amendment 14 includes precision based targets for river herring bycatch monitoring.
River herring catch caps	A river herring catch cap will be considered by the Council through a framework adjustment to the Herring FMP or the Atlantic herring fishery specifications process after the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission completes its river herring stock assessment.	Yes.