

November 1, 2011

**90-Day Finding for Petition to List River Herring  
Q&As**

**Q: What was your finding on the petition to list blueback herring and alewife under the Endangered Species Act?**

**A:** NOAA Fisheries has concluded that the petition does present substantial scientific or commercial information indicating the petitioned action *may be* warranted based on ongoing multiple threats to both species as well as potential declines in both species throughout their range. NOAA Fisheries will initiate a review of the status of these species, and, as such, they are now considered to be candidate species.

**Q: What information led to your finding that listing blueback herring and alewife under the Endangered Species Act may be warranted?**

**A:** NOAA Fisheries considered the information presented in both the petition as well as what was readily available in our own files on the biology and habitat of these two species including historical and current distribution; physical and biological characteristics of their habitat and ecosystem relationships; population status and trends; and threats to these species.

**Q: What are the next steps?**

**A:** Following a positive 90-day finding, a review of the status of both species must be undertaken. Within 12 months of receiving the petition (August 5, 2012), NOAA Fisheries must publish a determination as to whether listing alewife and blueback herring as endangered or threatened is warranted. This determination is made on the basis of the best available scientific and commercial information. If warranted, a proposed rule will be published, public hearings will most likely be held, and we will request public comment before developing and publishing a final determination (within 12 months of the publication of the proposed rule).

**Q: Will this require that critical habitat also be identified?**

**A:** If it is determined that alewife and blueback herring warrant listing under the Endangered Species Act, critical habitat must also be designated within 12 months of the final determination.