

River Herring Technical Expert Working Group (TEWG)

Fisheries Subgroup Webinar/Conference Call

May 1, 2014

1 - 2:30pm

Summary

I. Overview

The Fisheries Subgroup of the River Herring Technical Expert Working Group was established to “consider the impacts from state and federal fisheries rangewide” in order to help contribute to the expected products of the TEWG. Jason Didden and Mary Beth Tooley, co-chairs of the Fisheries Subgroup, convened a call on May 1, 2014, to “kick-off” discussions and obtain input on potentially productive approaches to move the subgroup forward. The draft agenda for the meeting included topics such as: 1) how to organize the discussions around identifying data needs and gaps related to fisheries and river herring, as well as fishery conservation actions; 2) next steps, and 3) public comment. Meeting materials included a sample working spreadsheet to help illustrate ways to identify data sources for river herring landings and discards from Canada to Florida. This meeting summary includes the primary discussion topics and outcomes to contribute to future TEWG discussions. The information provided below reflects individual expert opinion and not consensus.

II. Key Topics

Following is a list of individual expert opinion provided by Fisheries Subgroup members or the public on various overarching topics. Some ideas have been combined where appropriate.

- The subgroup spent much of the meeting discussing the documentation of catch and the importance of obtaining good data. The sample spreadsheet was provided as an initial attempt to help inform what is known about the available information on landings and discards (i.e., establish a baseline for the subgroup) which many members thought would be important for the TEWG. Many members provided feedback on the spreadsheet noting that the identification of what is known and unknown about the catch of river herring will be important to this subgroup. Also important is whether catch is from state or federal waters, U.S. or Canadian waters, and recreational or commercial fisheries (both in terms of data collection and potential future management options). Delving through some of the assessment data could help the subgroup determine what is known, identify areas for improvement and develop ideas on how to fill the gaps. Some topics that arose during the discussions for consideration around the topic of documenting catch included, but were not limited to:

- State landings are recorded but federal landings may be handled differently in the state landings data.
- There are some situations where river herring do not get reported as such.
- It is important to fully understand the current data to avoid double counting, obtain quality estimates, etc.
- One member thought considering trends in river herring was important to capture and other members suggested this was important (and possibly more appropriate) for the Stock Status Subgroup to consider this kind of information.
- Considering options to remove the data overlaps in data considered for the Atlantic herring and mackerel fisheries is important.
- One member thought that completing the table fishery by fishery may be the best option as it may be difficult to develop the matrix looking across the fisheries. Another member thought that teasing out fisheries is important so consideration of the sampling design is needed (e.g., how observer data is collected), but a coastwide look at the issues is important for this subgroup.
- For management purposes, it may be important to disaggregate data between fisheries (e.g., Atlantic herring and mackerel fisheries). Understanding where the overlap is in terms of discards/landings is important.
- It may be important to start the discussions on data by considering NOAA Fisheries' Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (e.g., tease out estimates for federal fisheries based on this), as well as NOAA Fisheries' Marine Recreational Information Program. The discard methods used are an important consideration.
- Consideration of a time frame is important in the working spreadsheet provided (e.g., column could be added). Some members thought considering previous years of information was important and other members thought focusing on current years and into the future was a better approach. Jason suggested to the subgroup that based on the overarching TEWG purpose and to ensure good fisheries catch data is generated, the subgroup should focus on the most recent complete year and into the future to identify where gaps are continuing to occur. Consideration of the quality of estimates and relative importance of the historic data would still be a discussion topic as this subgroup progressed. Members suggested various starting points when looking at previous years.
- It would be important for this group to discuss how to obtain good catch data in relation to stock assessments.
- Coordination with other management groups will be important. Additionally, coordinating with other subgroups, especially the Stock Status Subgroup, on cross-cutting issues will be important. The coordination will occur more formally through the TEWG's Ecosystem Integration Subcommittee which is composed of TEWG

chairs/-co-chairs, and there are TEWG members who are involved in both the Fisheries and Stock Status Subgroups.

- The goal of the larger TEWG effort is to develop a list of actions and consequently research projects that will contribute to river herring conservation. NOAA Fisheries and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will support independent research projects to help fill in data gaps and implement conservation actions for river herring through an open and competitive process. Through the TEWG effort, NOAA Fisheries and ASMFC hope that other alternative sources of funding can be identified for other research needs. Additionally, the ideas generated for conservation actions will be useful for various management bodies.

III. Key Outcomes

Below is a list of individual expert opinions provided by participants related to specific threats, data gaps, research projects, conservation actions, information to be considered and/or monitoring (i.e., the identified research projects and/or conservation actions).¹ Some ideas have been combined where appropriate. These outcomes are listed in no particular order, and those related to other subgroups are also included in the “Cross-Cutting Issues” section below).

a. Data Gaps

- Additional information on catch is needed. Suggested methods to date include increased observed trips or other monitoring programs, but additional ideas will be further fleshed out as the subgroup develops a working spreadsheet of catch metadata.

b. Research Projects

- Consider researching vertical segregation of river herring in water column to inform any gear modification.
- Investigate stock structure of river herring catch.

c. Conservation Actions

- Discuss the butterfish avoidance model in the context of river herring (i.e., ongoing river herring avoidance program in the Atlantic herring and Atlantic mackerel fisheries that uses near-real time catch data to help fishing vessels avoid areas with high river herring interactions²).

d. Information To Be Considered (e.g., published papers)

- Current status of fishery catch conservation measures.
- Information on landings and discards.

IV. Next Steps

¹ It is important to note that the agenda focused discussions on how to organize the subgroup, however, some ideas related to the categories listed were mentioned.

² The program is a collaborative effort of the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology, the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and the Sustainable Fisheries Coalition.

The Fisheries Subgroup discussed the following next steps:

- Jason will work with Mary Beth to solicit information from the subgroup on additional research ideas and conservation actions. They will also work on obtaining additional input from members to help develop and complete the working spreadsheet.
- Jason and Mary Beth will consider additional e-mail conversations with the subgroup on topics as needed before the next call. A future subgroup call will be scheduled in mid to late June.
- Jason will work with other subgroup members as needed to pull together some various background material (e.g., current status of fishery catch conservation measures) to help facilitate future discussions.
- A draft meeting summary will be distributed to the subgroup and additional ideas can be provided.

V. Cross-Cutting Subgroup Issues

The following cross-cutting subgroups issues were discussed and will be further considered by the TEWG and its Ecosystem Integration Committee.

- Stock Status Subgroup should consider historic trends of river herring as this information is of interest to some members of the Fisheries Subgroup. Some members noted that consideration of issues such as the fisheries moratorium and river herring bycatch avoidance program(s) should be considered when looking at trends over time.
- Investigate stock structure of river herring catch.

VI. Participants

a. Subgroup Members

The affiliation of each member can be found on the subgroup roster available at the TEWG Fisheries Subgroup website:

<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/protected/riverherring/tewg/fisheries/index.html>

Greg DiDomenico

Jeff Kaelin

Lee Anderson

Mary Beth Tooley

Trevor Avery

Lee Anderson

Ruth Haas-Castro

Joseph Gordon

Jon Hare

Carrie Nordeen
Diane Borggaard
Theo Willis
Marin Hawk
Peter Moore
Genine Lipkey
Kiersten Curti
Mike Bailey
Ben Gahagan
Lori Steele
Claire Enterline
Pingguo He
Johnny Moore
Jason Didden
Mike Bailey

b. Public

Erica Fuller
Edith Carson
Andrew Jones
Ray Jarvis

VII. Meeting Materials

The following materials were provided to support the meeting. Additional information can be found at the TEWG Fisheries Subgroup website:

<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/protected/riverherring/tewg/fisheries/index.html>

- a. Draft Agenda
- b. Sample Working Spreadsheet