

River Herring Technical Expert Working Group (TEWG)

Habitat Subgroup Webinar/Conference Call

November 14, 2014

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Summary

I. Overview

The Habitat Subgroup of the River Herring Technical Expert Working Group was established to “consider the impacts from various factors affecting river herring habitat including, but not limited to, connectivity (e.g., fish passage), water quality/quantity, and appropriate habitat characteristics”. Alison Bowden and Jeffrey Pierce, co-chairs of the Habitat Subgroup, convened a call on November 14 to continue discussions with the group. The draft agenda included discussing the spreadsheet of watershed characteristics and prioritizing research needs in light of current research. 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

The below includes a list of individual expert opinion provided by Habitat Subgroup members or the public on various overarching topics:

- Members agreed the spreadsheet contains a significant amount of information on work performed to date and the spreadsheet should be used to develop research priorities by the subgroup.
- Of research priorities previously identified, a relatively large number of studies throughout the region are currently investigating aspects of in-stream productivity; few current studies were identified for acoustic tagging, estuary habitat use, and novel detection techniques
- Of data gaps previously identified, estuary habitat use and effects of nonpoint pollution/landuse are being investigated to some extent in southern New England and the Mid-Atlantic. River herring distribution and habitat use in the southern portion of the range remains a significant gap.

III. Key Outcomes

The below includes 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). 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. Threats

- Sea level rise on eastern shore of Maryland and Virginia could lead substantial loss to non-tidal habitat.
- Water abstraction for other uses may impact habitat availability for river herring.
- Legacy contaminants, especially in impoundments, are a concern

b. Data Gaps

- Information on rearing herring in estuaries.
- River herring mortality at dams.
- Comparative studies at locations across the range are generally lacking

IV. **Next Steps**

The Habitat Subgroup discussed the following next steps:

- The spreadsheet will be finalizing with the following information:
 - Monitoring of Maryland river from MD DNR (Chris Hager)
 - Gillnet monitoring in the Chicahominy River (Eric Hilton)
 - Chesapeake Bay monitoring (Alan Weaver)
 - A potential monitoring project may be in development (Trevor Avery)
- Alison and Marin will work to develop a separate priority research document, based on information in spreadsheet and data gaps previously identified.

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.

- Sea level rise on eastern shore of Maryland and Virginia could lead substantial loss to non-tidal habitat (Climate Change Subgroup).
- Current impacts such as water withdrawals may worsen with climate change (Climate Change Subgroup)
- Link freshwater habitat productivity and ocean mortality (Stock Assessment Subgroup)

VI. **Participants**

a. Subgroup Members

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

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

Alison Bowden
Ben Lenz
Jeff Pierce

Phil Edwards
Kim deMutsert
Alan Weaver

Eric Hilton
James Turek
Matt Ogburn
Sean McDermott
Karin Limburg
Sara Turner

Mary Andrews
Dan Kircheis
Trevor Avery
Peter Kube
Rob Vincent

b. Staff

Marin Hawk
Diane Borggaard

VII. Meeting Materials

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

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

- a. Draft Agenda
- b. Draft Working Spreadsheet
- c. Draft River Herring Research list

**River Herring Technical Expert Working Group (TEWG)
Habitat Subgroup Conference Call and Webinar
November 14, 2014
1:00 pm**

Call-In Number: 1-888-394-8197

Passcode: 815277

Webinar: <https://www3.gotomeeting.com/join/251833126>

Draft Agenda

Meeting Purposes:

Discuss Habitat research priorities and framework for existing research compilation

1 PM Welcome, Introductions and Getting Organized (*A. Bowden and J. Pierce*)

1:15 PM Review spreadsheet of watershed characteristics

2:00 PM Discuss habitat priorities in light of the current work, and begin development of a stand-alone, updated list of Habitat priorities

2:30 PM General questions and comments from Habitat subgroup

2:45 PM Public comment

3:00 PM Wrap up, next steps and adjourn