

River Herring Technical Expert Working Group (TEWG)
Conference Call Summary
March 27, 2014
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

The River Herring Technical Expert Working Group (TEWG) held its first conference call on March 27, 2014 to discuss the following: 1) river herring conservation planning; 2) TEWG structure and process; and 3) TEWG membership and any gaps. Below is a summary of the discussions.

1). River Herring Conservation Planning

NOAA Fisheries and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) goal is to produce a fully coordinated and proactive plan for the conservation of both river herring species that is dynamic, easily accessed and updated. While there are many ongoing efforts for river herring from Canada to Florida, there is not an integrated plan to restore the species throughout their full range. Given the life history and distribution of these species, a coordinated approach must be taken. The goal of the effort is to develop a list of actions and consequently research projects that will contribute to river herring conservation. NOAA Fisheries and ASMFC are not trying to have a group reach consensus on these actions or research projects, but rather are seeking individual expert opinions.

Ideally, the TEWG will serve as an umbrella for the many different river herring initiatives that are occurring (including the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership/The Nature Conservancy habitat project and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council river herring group). The information brought out by the TEWG meetings can be useful to various management bodies, should they choose to take advantage of the information. For example, NOAA Fisheries will monitor progress toward implementing river herring conservation efforts and addressing data gaps and uncertainties to help better inform a future ESA status review. ASMFC will also relay pertinent information to their shad/river herring technical committee and management board. The same would apply for research projects.

The timeframe for the conservation planning and website is approximately one year. NOAA Fisheries has already provided the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) with \$95,000 to support independent research projects to help fill in data gaps and implement conservation actions for river herring. NOAA Fisheries is planning to supplement this with up to \$100,000 from Fiscal Year 2014 funds to further support these efforts. The details of this joint initiative are being finalized. Funds will be disseminated through an open and competitive process by NOAA Fisheries and ASMFC, the specifics of which will be detailed in the future. Through this effort, other alternative sources of funding can be identified for other research needs. Additionally, TEWG members are encouraged to collaborate to implement conservation actions and facilitate needed research for river herring. This part of the TEWG will be a long-term effort.

2).TEWG Structure and Process

Documents of the TEWG

The TEWG reviewed the Terms of Reference, mission statement and expected products of the group. Several members were concerned because the TEWG will not come to consensus on any issue. While the TEWG will not provide recommendations or advice, NOAA Fisheries and ASMFC intend to capture expert opinions from the TEWG and turn those opinions into usable products. A few changes were discussed to the documents to communicate the importance of taking an integrated ecosystem approach to the issues including:

- a) clarifying that many management bodies (not just NOAA Fisheries and ASMFC) would benefit from the information;
- b) the TEWG can provide individual expert opinion on data needs but may not be able to answer questions; and
- c) the TEWG would inform and not implement actions.

These changes were made to the documents, and final versions will be available on the TEWG website (<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/protected/riverherring/tewg/index.html>).

Structure of the TEWG and subgroups

NOAA Fisheries and ASMFC established the TEWG so that it consists of expertise from throughout the range of these species and in order to take a holistic look at all of the issues facing these species. Subgroups will be used to address target issues or regions.

The full TEWG will meet every three months to discuss overarching issues and to receive updates from each of the subgroups. Guest speakers will be invited as needed. Doodle polls will be distributed as far in advance as possible to ensure as many members as possible are available to attend. Where members cannot attend, ideas can be sent to Diane and Marin in advance of the meeting. All calls will be open to the public, and there will be an opportunity for public comment. Meeting summaries will be made available for all TEWG meetings.

The subgroups will meet as needed and be structured based on the discretion of the chair(s) and respective subgroup. A majority of subgroup discussion will take place via conference call, but if face-to-face meetings are necessary, this can be accommodated. The chair(s) of the subgroups will report to the larger TEWG on any progress made since the previous meeting. Diane and Marin will help coordinate the subgroups as needed. Participation in the subgroups is voluntary. It is up to each member of the TEWG whether they will participate in the subgroups, and on which subgroups they will participate. Additional NOAA Fisheries staff with expertise on specific subgroup topics will also be added to the subgroup rosters. All subgroup calls will be open to the public have an opportunity for public comment. Date and time of the subgroup meetings, as well as discussion topics, should be made available to Diane and Marin to

communicate to the rest of the TEWG and public at least a week before a call will occur. Meeting summaries of each subgroup discussion will be made available.

The TEWG discussed additional topics for the larger group and subgroups to address (e.g. cultural, socio-economic). One member proposed a new subgroup focused on ecosystem based management (EBM). There were mixed reactions to this recommendation. Some members felt that this was a good idea, while others felt that ecosystem-based management is already addressed due to the structure of the TEWG. It was suggested that EBM become a part of the stock status subgroup. However, some members were concerned that this could dilute the stock status subgroup and hinder their progress. During the subgroup discussions, members of the TEWG stressed the need for an integrative approach between the subgroups. Various options were discussed such as subgroup chairs/co-chairs meeting to ensure this occurs throughout the TEWG process. NOAA Fisheries and ASMFC committed to looking at the formation of another group that would consider an integrated approach while considering how this would impact already established groups.

3). TEWG Membership

Many agencies and stakeholders were contacted to nominate members to the TEWG. Despite this, there are still some gaps in membership. There is a lack of Canadian representation because some invited members declined to participate in the TEWG. NOAA Fisheries will continue to work with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) for feedback and to encourage membership in that area.

Members also raised concern with the lack of economist representation on the TEWG. If a topic warrants economic or social considerations, NOAA Fisheries will work to incorporate an expert into the discussions. Many members expressed concern about adding additional members based on the current size unless an identified gap was identified.

V. Related Timelines

1. ASMFC River Herring Stock Assessment: The last one was done in 2012. The Commission aims to conduct an assessment every five years, so it will tentatively be done in 2017. This has not been confirmed or approved, so it is subject to change.
2. NMFS ESA Status Review: NMFS plans to initiate a new review of the status of these two species within the next five years. This conservation planning initiative is important to help fill in data gaps and continue/initiate conservation actions so this information can be considered.
3. New England Fishery Management Council: Amendment 5 recently became effective on March 17th, and it includes a comprehensive catch program for participants in the fishery, and it addresses river herring bycatch. It identifies monitoring areas with high counts of river herring and issued more monitoring and no waivers. The Council will be following that program carefully.
4. Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council: The Mid-Atlantic Council took a similar approach in its mackerel fishery and to a lesser degree in long fin fishery. They implemented a catch cap in the mackerel fishery. That was approved last year, and the

specifications are in final review in NMFS headquarters. The Council is mostly focused on that cap and some monitoring issues similar to New England.

5. Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Habitat Program/The Nature Conservancy Habitat Project (funded by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation): This project will develop restoration plans for river herring for several major basins which include the Connecticut, the Hudson, the Delaware, the Chesapeake, Santee Cooper, and South Carolina. Group projects will be identified for funding by the end of the calendar year. The project will gather together experts in different areas. There will be a Chesapeake Bay workshop in May and webinars for each of the basins.

VI. Public Comment

One member of the public noted that there is an issue with impingement and entrainment in Cape Cod Bay, Massachusetts. NOAA Fisheries and the co-chairs of the Habitat Subgroup noted that this will be a discussion in the Habitat Subgroup.

VII. Next Steps

1. Jake Kritzer's comments specific to subgroups will be passed along to respective chair/co-chairs. Jake could not be on the call but provided input in advance of the meeting.
2. Doodle polls should be completed.
3. Interest or changes in any subgroups should be communicated to Diane and Marin.
4. Any future speaker ideas for the TEWG should be sent to Diane and Marin.
5. Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Habitat Program/The Nature Conservancy grant information will be distributed.
6. NOAA Fisheries and ASMFC will look at ecosystem issues as it relates to TEWG and any other needed group.
7. Feedback on how to improve future calls and communications should be sent to Diane and Marin.

Note: Draft Agenda and background materials can be found at:
<https://www.nero.noaa.gov/protected/riverherring/tewg/index.html>

TEWG Members

Alan Weaver
Les Kaufman
Pingguo He
Jeff Kaelin
Kim de Mutsert
Karin Limburg
Eric Schultz
Jon Hare
Joseph Gordon
Roger Rulifson
David Bethoney
Janet Nye
Erica Fuller
Bob Richter
Tom Schultz
Lindsay Staszak
Bennett Wynne
David Coughlan
Jason Didden
Kevin Sullivan
Daniel Hasselman
Adrian Jordaan
Joe Hightower
Wilson Laney
Katie Drew
Mary Beth Tooley
Eric Palkovacs
Michael Bailey
Trevor Avery
Diane Borggaard
Marin Hawk
Kim Damon-Randall
Paul Jacobson
Hugh Carberry

Fritz Rohde
Lee Anderson
James Sykes
Michael Alexander
Eric Nelson
Theodore Willis
Kiersten Curti
Ben Gahagan
Genine Lipkey
Carolyn Hall
Greg DiDomenico
Phil Edwards
Paul Jacobson
Jud Crawford
Jeffrey Pierce
Lori Steele
Alison Bowden
Tim Brush
Bill Post
Ruth Haas-Castro
Matt Ogburn
Desiree Tommasi
Steve Gephard
Karen Capossela
Frank Borsuk
Claire Enterline
Drew Trested
Johnny Moore
Dennis Logan
Phong Trieu
Michael Piehler
Stephen McIninch
Stephanie Lamster

Public

Erica Fuller
Gerry O'Neill
Dennis Erkan
Derek Orner
Toni Kerns
Kate Taylor
David Sutherland
Jacque Benway
Benson Chiles
Brad Schondelmeier
Kristine Reed
Steve Meyers
Mary Andrews
Steven Leach
Matt Cieri
Dan Kircheis
Sarah Laporte
Pine duBois
Scott McNamara
Andrew Jones

James Becker
Ray Brown
Steve Meyers
Glenn Chamberlain
Marjorie Mooney-Seus
Tara Trinko Lake
Joel Llopiz
L. Axelsson
Jim Turek
Aaron Kornbluth
Paul Bisulca
Patrick Paquette
John Duane
John Irving
Kristen Cevoli
Joel Sohn
Ellen Cosby
Julia Beaty
Beth Casoni
Leigh Habegger
Laura Williams

**River Herring Technical Expert Working Group (TEWG)
Genetics Subgroup Conference Call and Webinar
April 24, 2014
1:00 pm**

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

Passcode: 815277

Webinar: <https://www3.gotomeeting.com/join/240923214>

Draft Agenda

- 1) Welcome and brief introductions (*D. Hasselman*)
- 2) Discuss extending invitation to important potential west coast participants (NOAA/NMFS)
- 3) Brainstorm to create a 'masterlist' of research priorities:
 - i) Identify areas of research that are considered 'high priority' as listed in the ASMFC River Herring Stock Assessment and NMFS ESA listing decision, and determine which ones can be addressed with genetic data
 - ii) Identify additional research needs that genetics information can support
- 4) Begin the process of prioritizing the research needs from the 'masterlist'
- 5) Public comment period