



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
703.842.0740

NOAA Fisheries Status Review of River Herring Finds Listing Unwarranted; State Management Aiding in Species Recovery

Arlington, VA – Today, NOAA Fisheries published its status review of alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*) and blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*) stocks (collectively referred to as river herring) along the U.S. coast. The status review, performed under the auspices of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), determined listing these species under the ESA is not warranted at this time.

The review noted while river herring have declined from historical numbers and overutilization remains a risk while population numbers are low, fisheries management efforts at the federal and state levels have helped to reduce the risks from fishing mortality. In particular, state implementation of the Commission's Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Shad and River Herring, which requires the closure of state river herring fisheries without an approved sustainable fisheries management plan, has been central in managing fishery impacts to these species.

The Commission's 2017 River Herring Stock Assessment Update was an important component of the status review. The Update found while population abundance of river herring within certain rivers continues to be depleted, other river systems are showing positive signs of improvement, with increasing abundance trends for a number of rivers in the Mid-Atlantic and throughout New England. Although abundance in these river systems remains at low levels, dam removals and improvements to fish passage have had a positive impact on run returns.

"Though the findings of the status review are encouraging, river herring still face a variety of threats throughout their range and populations are still historically low in many areas of their ranges," stated Kimberly Damon-Randall, Deputy Regional Administrator with NOAA Fisheries' Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office. "Accordingly, continued management is essential to ensure recovery of these species."

Since 2012, NOAA Fisheries, in partnership with the Commission, have undertaken a number of initiatives to aid in the restoration of river herring populations. These include providing state and local agencies with restoration project funding, leading to dam removals and fish passage improvement

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

1050 N. Highland Street – Suite 200 A-N – Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0740 (phone) 703.842.0741 (fax) www.asmfmc.org

projects; coordinating the River Herring Technical Expert Working Group to increase public awareness about river herring and foster cooperative research and conservation efforts; and working with the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils to establish shad and river herring catch caps in fisheries that are known to indirectly target these species.

The Listing Decision and Status Review Report can be found at

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/not-warranted-listing-determination-alewife-and-blueback-herring>.

For more information on the Commission's river herring management program, please visit our website at <http://www.asmfc.org/species/shad-river-herring> or contact Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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