

# **RIMFC Ad Hoc Atlantic Herring Advisory Panel**

**June 27, 2012**



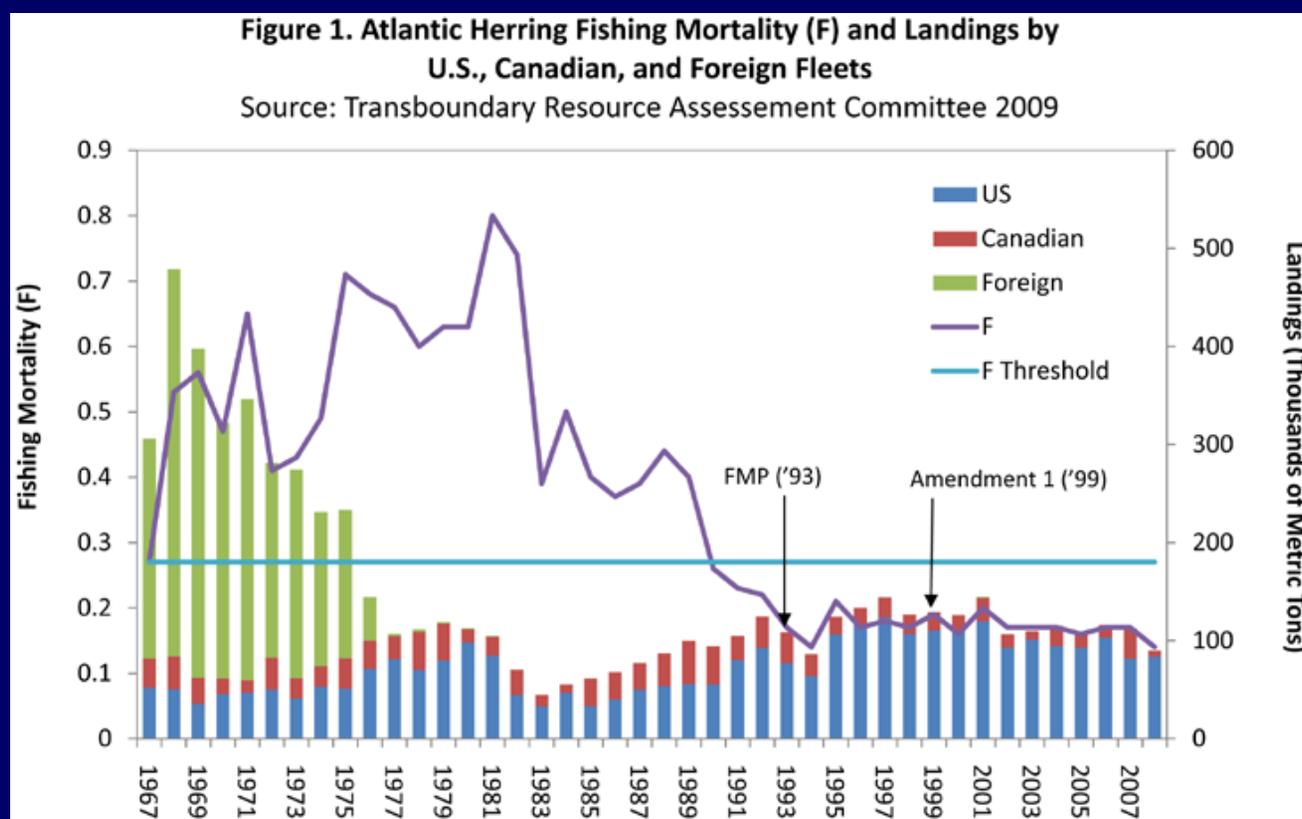
# Introduction

- ♦ The current meeting was convened to discuss Atlantic herring management in state waters
- ♦ There are currently little to no regulations governing the taking of Atlantic herring in RI with the following exceptions:
  - ♦ A vessel length and horsepower limit restriction
  - ♦ A mid-water/pair trawl endorsement if those gear types are being used
  - ♦ The state mirrors federal closures by area
- ♦ A group at the DFW discussed various mechanisms that could be used to better monitor and regulate this fishery while in state waters
- ♦ The group came up with four main categories of management options, which are itemized in this presentation with rationale



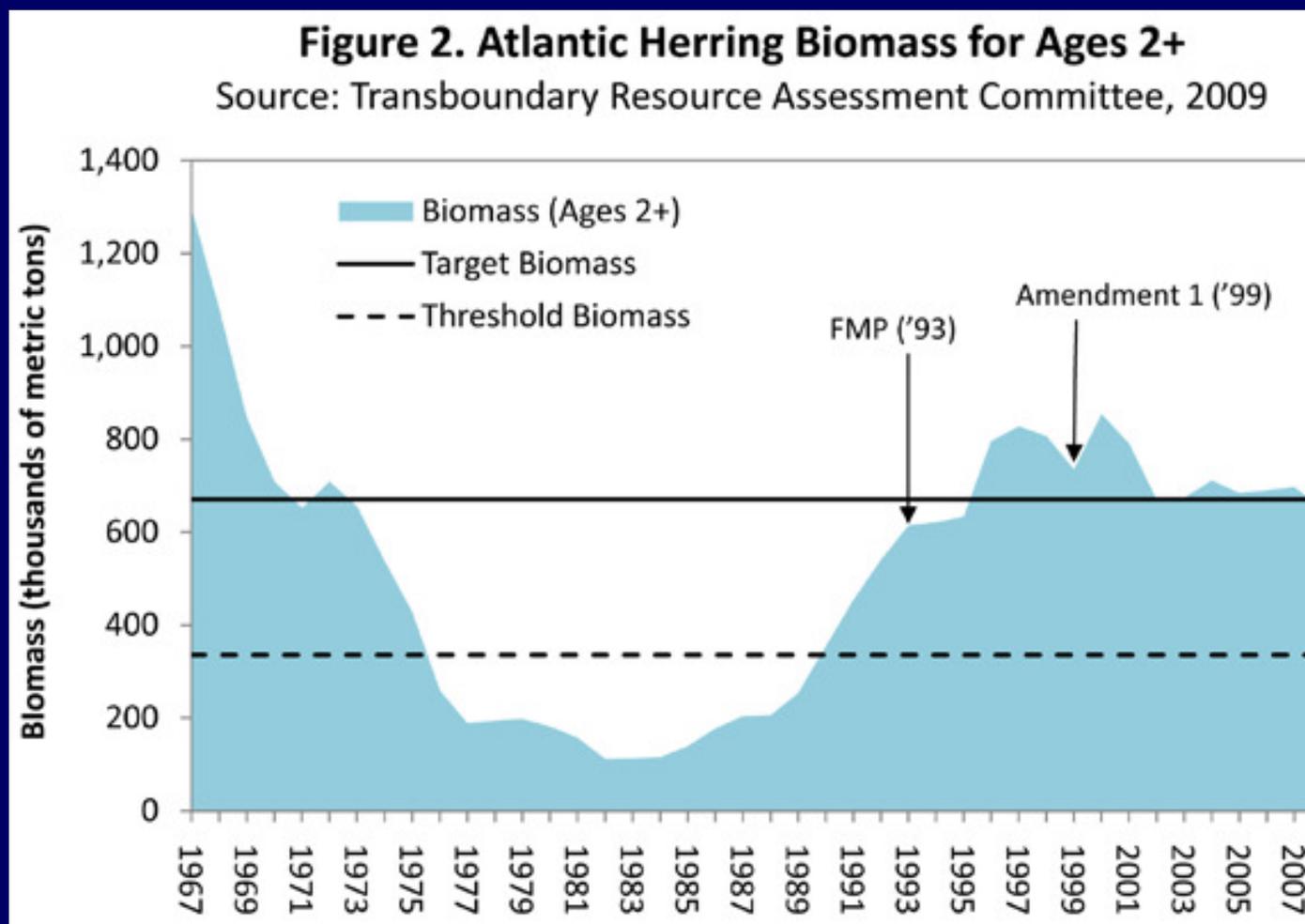
# Atlantic Herring Stock Status

- 2009 TRAC assessment update found that the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring
- 2009 Fishing Mortality:  $F = 0.14$  is less than  $F_{MSY}=0.27$

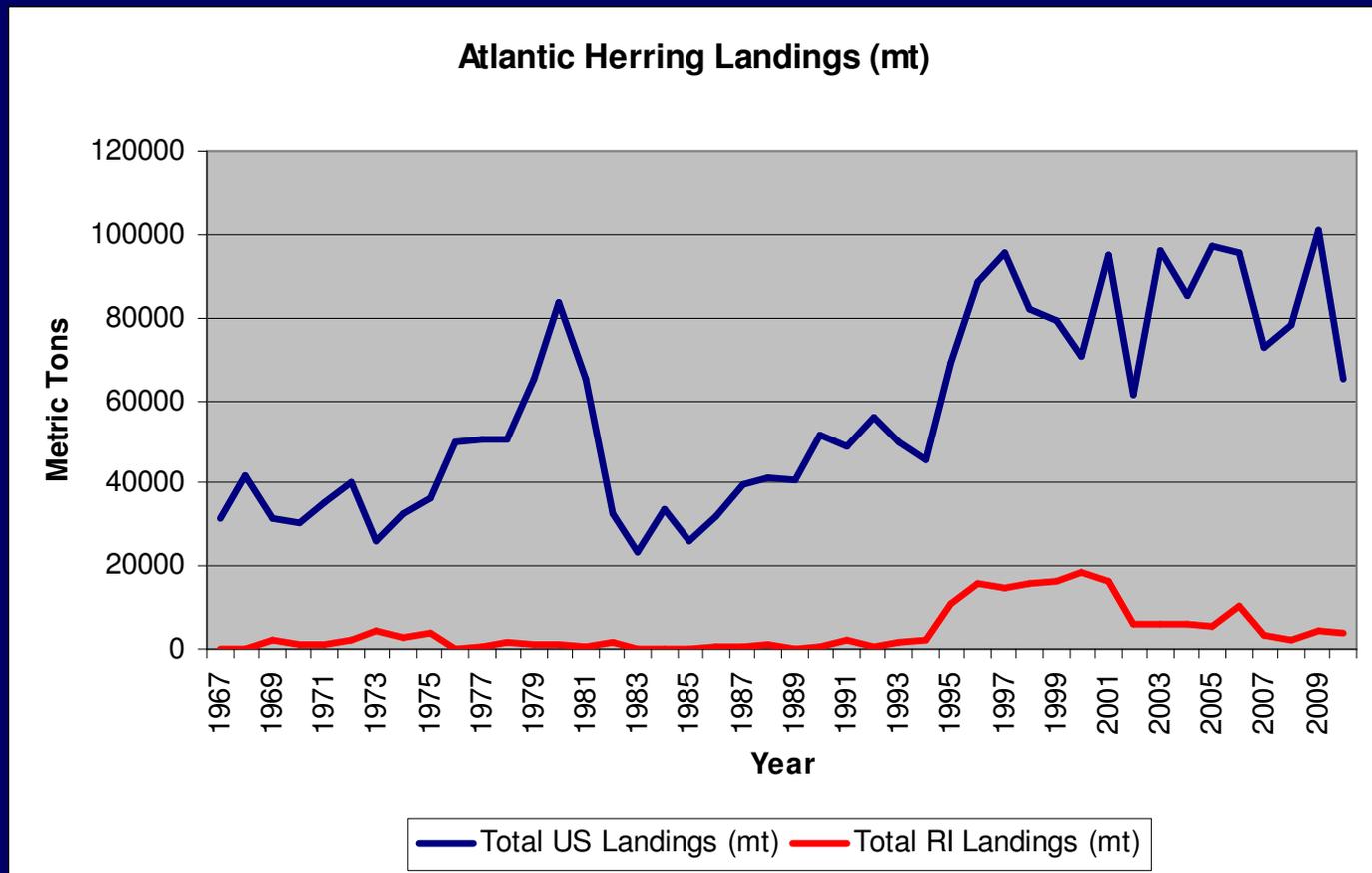


# Atlantic Herring Stock Status (Cont)

- 2009 Biomass:  $B = 652,00$  mt close to  $B_{MSY} = 670,600$  mt



# Atlantic Herring Landings



## NEFMC Amendment 5

- Primary Purpose:
  - Collect real-time, accurate data via changes to reporting and fishery management
  - Enhance at-sea monitoring and sampling of herring catch
  - Address by-catch issues (emphasis on river herring) through responsible management



## Recommended Adjustments to the Herring FMP (Sec 3.1)

- Redefines transfer at sea and offload
- Clarifies VMS requirements as well as possession limits for multiple vessel operations and provisions for at-sea transfers
- Creates an at-sea herring dealer permit
- Modifies pre-trip and landing notification requirements
- Requires dealers to accurately weigh all fish
- Allows higher possession limit (20,000 lbs) to mackerel permit holders



## Recommended Catch Monitoring: At-Sea (Sec 3.2)

- Require 100% observer coverage on limited access herring vessels (Categories A/B/C)
- Funding of observers shared between NOAA Fisheries and industry with a maximum cost to industry of \$325 per sea day
- Allows State Agencies to act as service providers
- If no observer within 24 hours of a trip a waiver will be granted provided no river herring protection measures are in place in that area
- Implement additional measures to improve at sea sampling
- Addresses net slippage events allowing 10 per trip



## Recommended Management Measures to Address River Herring Bycatch (Sec 3.3)

- The council will pursue river herring catch caps when better data is available
- Two-phase bycatch avoidance approach:
  - Currently underway conducted by SFC, SMAST, MADMF
  - P1 Identifies bycatch avoidance areas, focuses monitoring in these areas during the appropriate season, and issues warnings if areas with high potential bycatch are observed
  - P2 Will evaluate success of project, refine rules governing fleet tracking, notification, monitoring triggers, and avoidance for a potential framework adjustment

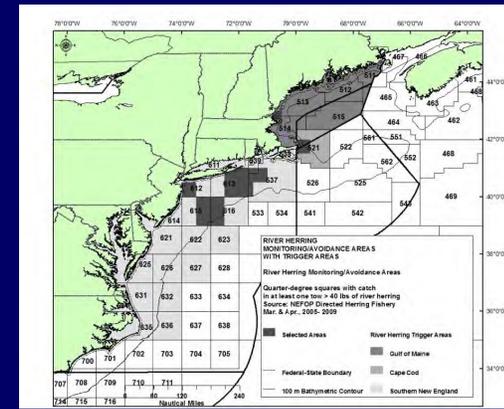
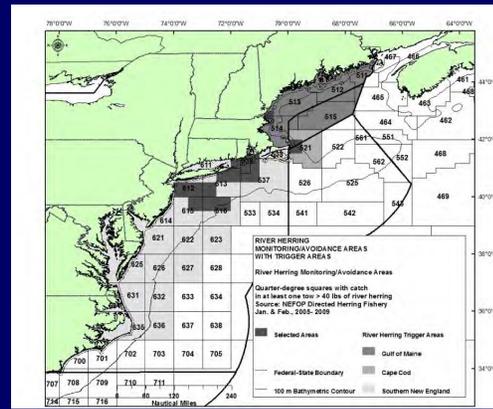
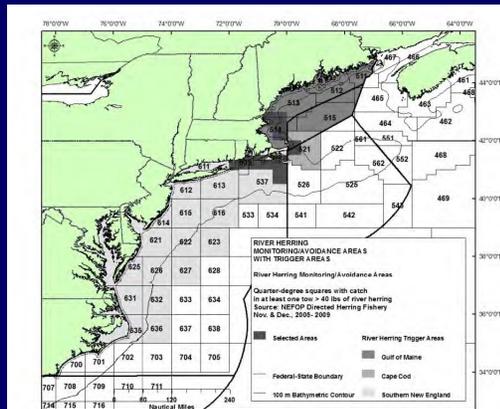


# Recommended River Herring Monitoring/Avoidance Areas (Sec 3.3)

Nov - Dec

Jan - Feb

Mar - Apr



## ASMFC / RIDFW Management

- Mirrors NEFMC regulations for Area 2 (SNE)
- Area 2 managed on a quota / ACL system
- RIDFW regulations limit vessels harvesting Atlantic herring to 165 feet in overall length and 300 horsepower



# Background

- ♦ In 2012, 11 vessels fished for and landed herring in RI
- ♦ These 11 vessels were captained by 14 fishermen
- ♦ Landings ranged from 1 lbs to 639,169 lbs, average of 59,966 lbs per trip
- ♦ These statistics represent what was landed in RI, but there was a significant amount of herring removed from state waters that was landed out of state
- ♦ There were only a few of these vessels in number, but the volume of landings from these vessels was very high
- ♦ The herring that was landed in RI were roughly 46% of all the fish harvested in state waters, 54% of all the herring harvested in state waters was sent out of state (note: these proportions are a best approximation based on various data sources)
- ♦ There are many unknowns involved with the vessels that are harvesting in RI waters but then landing in other states:
  - ♦ Who the licensed captain was
  - ♦ Exact poundage harvested



# Move in to restricted species endorsement category

- ♦ This would limit the fishery to :
  - ♦ Multipurpose
  - ♦ PEL with restricted endorsements
- ♦ This would reduce the pool of eligible participants from its open and unrestricted access status, fixing number of eligible people
- ♦ Based on 2011, this would not impact the existing fishery that is landing in RI, with two unknown participants
- ♦ The effect on those landing herring out of state is unknown
- ♦ Will not solve the presumed issue of an out of state vessel hiring an eligible license holder while fishing in state waters
- ♦ There is potential for unintended consequences as the number of non restricted endorsement holders who may have harvested herring at some point during the year was unclear
- ♦ Bycatch of prohibited species (i.e. river herring) may provide a viable justification for the restricted categorization



# Develop a set of traditional management rules for herring

- ♦ *Quota*
- ♦ Out of state landings would not be impacted by the existence of a quota.
- ♦ All fishers would be impacted if there were a state waters closure
- ♦ There would be difficulties in the justification for developing a quota such as:
  - ♦ Why develop a quota on a species that is not currently in a stressed stock status
  - ♦ How would you set the quota, would it be by a historical period of time, an average of landings over a number of years, ect.



# Develop a set of traditional management rules for herring

- ♦ *Possession Limits*
- ♦ Might not be effective because it would have to be set at a high level in an effort to not impact the current state waters fishery
- ♦ A possession limit could increase effort:
  - ♦ existing boats might fish more frequently to make up for the inefficiencies due to the possession limit
- ♦ A tiered possession limit strategy could be employed keeping non restricted finfish endorsement holders to a  $\frac{1}{2}$  possession limit of herring
- ♦ The DFW cautions that this may have little to no effect on constraining the fishery due to the unknown status of the vessels that land out of state



# Develop a set of traditional management rules for herring

- ♦ *Closed Areas*
- ♦ The use of closed areas would be difficult because the areas could not be made large enough to be effective
- ♦ Consolidating vessels in to smaller areas could create both a safety concern as well as a potentially increasing bycatch of species like river herring
  - ♦ the effort would be concentrated so if bycatch were to occur in an area, there would be more vessels involved



# Equipment Restrictions

- ♦ Equipment restrictions could consist of vessel length, vessel capacity, vessel horse power, gear type/size, ect
- ♦ The DFW feels that setting limits like this without supporting evidence is arbitrary
- ♦ Two potential justifications:
  - ♦ Safety - having several very large boats operating in close proximity was inherently dangerous
  - ♦ Monitoring – some vessels are so large they can not be boarded by state enforcement vessels
- ♦ A biological component that may consider localized depletion
  - ♦ The DFW was not aware that this issue was or could be quantified without a large amount of work.



# Exercise Control Date on Mid-Water Pair Trawl (MWPT) Endorsement

- ♦ There is a control date for this endorsement; December 31, 2007
- ♦ Research could be done to generate the list of active fishermen landing herring in RI from this date retrospectively to 2005 through SAFIS
- ♦ If enacted only vessels who can document state landings from 2005 through 2007 could continue to maintain their MWPT endorsement
- ♦ Would impact any fisherman that did not have a state landing during this period, but it would only impact their ability to use a mid-water or pair trawl
- ♦ There are concerns about reciprocity issues with other states
- ♦ An additional benefit was keeping with the philosophy that if natural resources are removed from state waters, the state should benefit
- ♦ Even if it gets shipped out of state, commerce was done in the state between the fisherman and the seafood dealer, and there will most likely be ancillary benefits such as purchase of fuel, purchase of ice and food, boat repairs, work for shoreside handlers, etc.



# Conclusions

- ♦ The DFW has outlined a number of options with enough detail to make an informed decision
- ♦ The DFW would be willing to conduct any further research deemed necessary
- ♦ The DFW notes a number of easy steps that could be taken to help clarify some existing rules:
  - ♦ Relevant sections of licensing regs for reporting and documentation requirements could be amended for clarity
  - ♦ Permitting and documentation could be checked prior to allowing a vessel to commence fishing
- ♦ Given the above information, the DFW feels that exercising the control date on the mid-water/pair trawl endorsement may be a useful option to consider
- ♦ The DFW would like to re-emphasize that very little is known about the vessels that are landing out of state therefore caution should be exercised when developing new or additional rules as there could be unintended consequences, or no impact at all from the changes.

