



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries



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Atlantic Herring Spawning Closures in Effect Starting September 23, 2023 & Days Out Measures for Season 2 of the 2023 Atlantic Herring Area 1A Fishery

MA/NH Spawning Area Closure

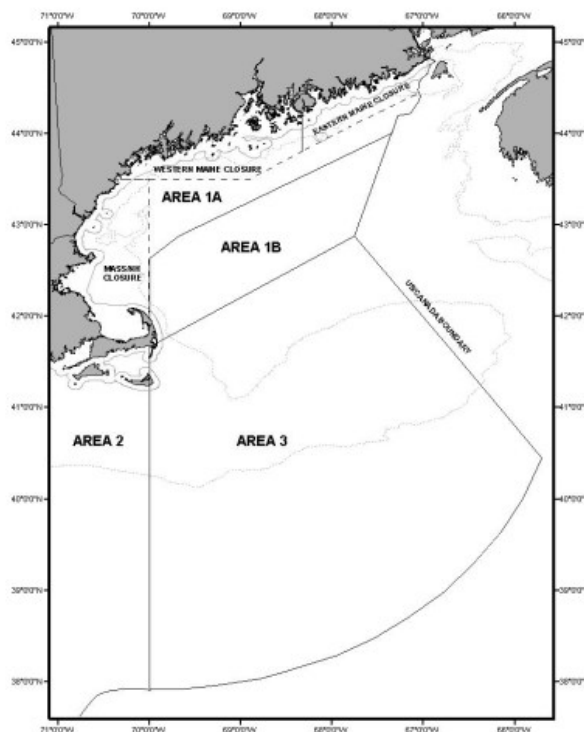
The Atlantic herring fishery in the inshore Gulf of Maine (Area 1A) is subject to seasonal spawning closures for portions of state and federal waters of Eastern Maine, Western Maine, and Massachusetts/New Hampshire. The closures are forecasted based on certain protocols involving the sampling of sea herring catch from the area, and if there are not sufficient samples then the closures begin on certain predetermined dates. For 2022, the default closure will go into effect. Accordingly, the Massachusetts/New Hampshire and Western Maine spawning areas these areas will close September 23, 2023 through November 3, 2023 to directed sea herring fishing.

During the closure period, directed fishing for sea herring is prohibited within these closure areas. However, non-directed fisheries may continue to occur in the closure areas. Vessels participating in these non-directed fisheries may retain an incidental bycatch allowance of up to 2,000 pounds of Atlantic herring per day or per trip, whichever period is longer. All vessels may transit the closure areas in excess of this 2,000 pound non-directed trip limit provided the fish was taken from outside the closure areas, no fishing activity is occurring, and all gear is stowed.

The Western Maine spawning area includes all waters bounded by the following coordinates:

- 43° 30' N Maine coast
- 43° 30' N 68° 54.5' W
- 43° 48' N 68° 20' W
- North to Maine coast at 68° 20' W

The Massachusetts/New Hampshire spawning area includes all waters bounded by the Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine coasts, and 43° 30' N and 70° 00' W.



Landing Days for the 2023 Area 1A Fishery for Season 2

Members of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Atlantic Sea Herring Management Board from Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts met virtually on September 14, 2023. The purpose of the meeting was to review the utilization of the 2023 Atlantic sea herring sub-ACL (or quota) for Management Area 1A (inshore Gulf of Maine) and set effort control measures for the remainder of the Season 2 fishery (October 1 – December 31).

The Season 2 quota is approximately 995 metric tons (mt), which is 27.2% of the Area 1A sub-annual catch limit (ACL) after adjusting for the 30 mt fixed gear set-aside, a slight underage from Season 1, and an 8% buffer (since the Area 1A closes at 92% of the sub-ACL). This does not account for the possible reallocation of 1,000 mt to the Area 1A sub-ACL based on catch information from the Canadian New Brunswick weir fishery.

The days out measures for Season 2 are as follows:

- Landing days will be set at zero (0) from October 1-9.
- The fishery will move to two (2) landing days from 12:01 am October 10 to 11:59 pm October 11.
- The fishery will move to zero (0) landing days from October 12-November 4.
- The fishery will move to four (4) consecutive landing days per week starting on November 5 at 6:00 pm. until 92% of the Area 1A sub-ACL is caught. Landing days are Sundays from 6:00 p.m. through Thursdays at 5:59 pm, weekly.

The fishery will only move to four (4) landing days on November 5 at 6 pm if there is remaining Season 2 quota at that time. Quota availability will depend on how much is landed from October 10-11 and if the 1,000 mt reallocation from the Canadian weir fishery to the Area 1A sub-ACL occurs.

While landing days are set at zero (0), harvesters are prohibited from landing more than 2,000 pounds of Atlantic herring per trip from Area 1A during Season 2.

For more information regarding the management of sea herring in Massachusetts, please visit www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.