

Proposal: Conduct interviews of current and retired commercial and recreational harvesters of alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*) and blueback herring (*A. aestivalis*) from Maine to North Carolina.

Objectives:

Obtain information from harvesters on their observations of river herring while participating in the fishery. We hope to gather information on topics such as:

- How long they have/were engaged in the fishery
- What their target species was (alewife/blueback/both)
- Primary and secondary gear types used for fishing
- Observations of changes in abundance, run timing, distribution, and individual size
- Changes in effort relative to annual catch
- Knowledge of external differences between alewife and blueback and to what extent they made an effort to distinguish between the two and why

Purpose:

To obtain historical and current observational data from key stakeholders (e.g., fishermen that rely(ied) on the resource) that can be used in conjunction with scientific data to make more informed decisions in respect to the current and future management of both species.

The purpose of this information collection is to gather historical and current population and biological information from key stakeholders (e.g., commercial and recreational harvesters) of the two species of river herring. Given that commercial and recreational fishermen have a unique and important understanding of the long term status of the species for which they are fishing, NOAA intends to contact commercial and recreational harvesters of river herring to inquire about recent and long-term observations of changes in run timing, abundance, distribution, individual size and species composition. Respondents will represent both current and retired commercial and recreational harvesters of river herring from Maine to North Carolina. Results will be used to assist NOAA in identifying observational trends among river herring populations throughout their range to make more informed decisions in respect to their management.