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### Marine Fisheries Advisory

## **Atlantic Sea Herring Research Set-Aside Project Being Conducted in Management Area 1A**

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The Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) and University of Massachusetts School for Marine Science and Technology (SMASST) are currently conducting a joint project to characterize and reduce the incidental bycatch of river herring in the Atlantic sea herring mid-water trawl fishery. To accommodate this project, the National Marine Fisheries Service has set aside 936 metric tons - 3% of the annual Atlantic sea herring quota for Management Area 1A - as research set-aside (RSA). This RSA has been distributed among certain qualifying mid-water trawl vessels with the goal of sampling 100% of RSA trips.

Despite the current closure to the directed sea herring fishery in Management Area 1A, vessels participating in the RSA fishery may continue to fish in Management Area 1A for and land sea herring taken from this area in excess of the current 2,000 pound incidental bycatch limit. All vessels participating in the RSA fishery must fish in accordance with the criteria set forth in the project's [Responsible Fishing Agreement](#). This agreement includes certain strict guidelines regarding reducing bycatch and discards, submitting accurate and timely reporting, and avoiding negative interactions with other fisheries. RSA effort and sampling updates are available through the [SMASST Bycatch Avoidance Program](#).

Additionally, RSA catch will be sampled for spawning herring. The MA/NH Sea Herring Spawning Area opened on Tuesday, November 3, 2015. Vessels participating in the RSA program may now lawfully fish in that area. Sampling of sea herring taken from the MA/NH Spawning Area beginning on November 3, 2015 has indicated that spawning catch is below the 25% threshold for extending the spawning area closure.

For more information about the RSA Project please contact Bill Hoffman of *Marine Fisheries* ([bill.hoffman@state.ma.us](mailto:bill.hoffman@state.ma.us)) or Dr. David Bethony of SMASST ([nbethoney@umassd.edu](mailto:nbethoney@umassd.edu)).

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