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Marine Fisheries Advisory

Atlantic Sea Herring Research Set-Aside Program For Management Area 1A

The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology (SMAST) 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 909 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 that have collaborated with DMF/SMAST for multiple years.

Despite the current closure to the directed sea herring fishery in Management Area 1A, vessels participating in the RSA fishery may continue to fish for sea herring in Management Area 1A and land sea herring taken from this area in excess of the current 2,000 pound incidental bycatch limit. Participating vessels are reminded that the MA/NH Sea Herring Spawning area remains closed until Sunday, October 30, 2016 and directed fishing on sea herring in this area is prohibited.

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 [SMAST Bycatch Avoidance Program](#). Additionally, RSA catch will be sampled for spawning herring.

A [Text Message Notification System](#) has been established to notify fixed-gear fishermen of ongoing RSA fishing activity. For more information about the RSA Project please contact Brad Schondelmeier of DMF (brad.schondelmeier@state.ma.us) or Dr. David Bethoney of SMAST (nbethoney@umass.edu).

Please visit our website:

www.mass.gov/marinefisheries