

Suggested changes to the Midwater Herring Trawl Fleet.

The herring industry must match the IFR's with VTR's with SAFIS weights, if they cannot make them accurate, let them park their boats for a year by pulling their LOA's.

TAC, for the area from Point Judith, R.I., east and south of Block Island, to the tip of L.I. and off the east coast of Cape Cod to run from January 2009 to May 31, 2009.

CLOSE AREA 2 TO MIDWATER AND BOTTOM TRAWLS DURING THE SPRING RUNS.

Monies to be derived from: Anyone who commercially catches, sells, transfers or buys herring needs to be licensed. License costs are variable, linked to pounds of fish caught, bought or transferred. Pounds to include all species of fish caught, including all bycatch, not limited to herring.

Use existing VMS or install additional GPS on all herring boats and any F/V doing business with dealer boats. These systems will operate 24/7. No exceptions.

All boats will be assigned a Qualcomm number and said number will be painted on the side of the boat and visible to anyone. This includes any boat that would come alongside a catch/dealer boat (ie: lobster boat).

Their purpose will be to provide information into Qualcomm, for example QN514 is unloading onto QN 689. Also QN689 reports loading fish from QN514. Estimated weights are entered on both qualcomms. . Over time this will build a record of how long it takes to unload 'X' amount of herring. Anything out of the norm becomes suspect. When an at-sea observer is present, only the observer will operate the qualcomm.

Only have two categories of boats, catch and catch/dealer boats. A catch boat is defined as 'the boat where the herring hits the steel. In cases where a purse seine catches and another boat pumps it is recorded as QN XXXX / QN XXXX, net boat first, pump boat second.

Install fish level sonar sensors in fish holds, for stored or real-time data. Use their own, already on-board fish finder equipment, adapt their sonar for the holds or add an additional system. Furuno or Marport would be more than able to design a system.

Considering that sonar fish level monitors are installed:

During Coast Guard inspections or dockside observations if the tank sonar suddenly records an upward spike in the level of fish in the hold and tampering is suspected, boat suffers *forfeiture of load*.

Discards will be stopped or limited, why discard dead fish. Any boat that is capable of keeping bycatch will do so. Discard information is too valuable to be thrown away. All by-catch will be sold at the rate for the target fish of the trip. IE: Any Atlantic Bluefin Tuna caught during a herring trawl will be sold for herring prices. Any profit from this obviously lop-sided transaction will be donated to research. IE: Barbara Bach of Stanford University or given back to pay for observers.

Limit the ports where herring can be landed. This will ease the burden on on-shore observers.

While fishing, if the net is full of non-target fish, those fish are kept, there will be immediate notification to onshore monitors, of species, w/ estimated amounts. The boat then moves, 'X' (10) amount of miles. If non-target catch repeats, boat moves another 'X' amount of miles. If it repeats a third time, boat moves 50 or 100 miles to avoid non-target fish. Miles are arbitrary.

Failure to do so means *forfeiture of load*.

Atlantic Herring catch limits are tied to returns of river herring to the Connecticut, Merrimack and Susquehanna Rivers where they are **counted**, not estimated.

Begin a move to retire herring trawler licenses and promote a herring weir fishery

If the river herring and shad return numbers do not improve in three years than consider,
HALTING ALL HERRING TRAWLER OPERATIONS, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE !!!

*Submitted by,
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