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## River Herring Conservation Plan Proposal Abstracts - October 2014



Atlantic States  
Marine Fisheries  
Commission

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and NOAA Fisheries announced that they are awarding over a quarter of a million dollars in federal funds to support two research projects to learn more about river herring populations. These projects will help enhance our broader understanding of species' coastwide abundance and overall population health.

### **Project Title: Linking life stages: marine bycatch mortality, freshwater productivity, and spawning stock recruitment**

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and the University of California-Santa Cruz in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, The Nature Conservancy, the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and the U.S. Geological Survey's Massachusetts Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit are receiving \$166,659 to continue the MADMF-led Portside sampling program to collect and age river herring caught as bycatch in the mid-water and small mesh bottom trawl fisheries in 2015 and perform genetic stock identification on bycatch collected in 2014 and 2015 using novel markers. They will concurrently measure freshwater productivity in six natal systems between ME and CT and evaluate land use, habitat, and water quality factors that may be influencing productivity in 26 lakes and ponds. Finally, the results will be synthesized to inform conservation and management.

Objectives of the project are as follows:

1. Quantify bycatch of river herring in Atlantic herring and mackerel fisheries
2. Determine the region of origin for river herring bycatch
3. Evaluate factors influencing freshwater productivity
4. Examine how bycatch mortality and productivity interact to influence recruitment to spawning populations

### **Project title: Determination of extant herring runs in the Barnegat Bay and Raritan River watersheds**

Barnegat Bay Partnership and Rutgers University (The State University of New Jersey) are receiving \$77,000 to conduct surveys for river herring via gillnetting in select waterways of the Raritan River and Barnegat Bay, use scale ageing techniques to gather demographic data, and collect genetic material to be used as part of an ongoing project identifying river of origin in by-catch.

Objectives of the project are as follows:

1. Investigate select portions of the Raritan River and Barnegat Bay watersheds for the presence of historic herring runs
2. Collect relative abundance and key demographic data on extent runs
3. Provide samples to a separate project for genetic identification of river origin of incidental catch in ocean fisheries

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For more detailed information on the River Herring Conservation Plan and the Technical Expert Working Group, please visit:

<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/protected/riverherring/tewg/index.html>



Picture credit: Jerry Prezioso, NOAA