



# Friends of Herring River

## Wellfleet and Truro, Massachusetts

Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director  
New England Fishery Management Council  
50 Water Street, Mill #2  
Newburyport, MA 01950  
Fax: (978) 465-3116

October 17, 2017

Attn: Atlantic Herring Localized Depletion Alternative

Dear Mr. Nies,


Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Amendment 8 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan. Our organization, Friends of Herring River, is based in Wellfleet and Truro, MA. As the two towns prepare for a major project to restore tidal flow to the Herring River, we strive to promote education, research and public awareness of the Herring River estuary as one of critical environmental concern; to preserve the native environmental integrity of the river and estuary; to ensure habitat protection and retention of the native biological diversity and productivity of the river and estuary; to retain and enhance public access to the river and estuary; and to preserve natural and historic sites.

As documented in Town reports, the Herring River in Wellfleet once had a thriving river herring fishery. In our river, the numbers of river herring have declined dramatically, even after the State-imposed moratorium 12 years ago. This trend has been echoed in runs across Cape Cod. If river herring continue to be caught in large numbers by federally-permitted midwater trawlers, how can they return to freshwater spawning grounds?

In Wellfleet, we rely on a network of dedicated local volunteers to monitor our herring run to demonstrate the success of our restoration projects, but that success may be fleeting if the nearshore bycatch from midwater trawls is not stopped. The significant irony in this is that restoration projects such as ours that seek to improve habitat are funded in no small part by federal grants.

We urge the Council to vote in favor of implementing a buffer zone that protects river herring and other species vulnerable to the impacts of midwater trawl gear so that critical ecosystems inshore and offshore can flourish. By doing this, the Council takes into consideration the vulnerability of forage fish to overfishing, their importance to all fisheries, the impact on river herring, and thereby protecting other key species for future generations.

Sincerely,



Don Palladino, President  
Friends of Herring River