



# Attention Anglers: RIVER HERRING CLOSURE!

The New Jersey DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife is reminding recreational and commercial anglers who fish in New Jersey's fresh, tidal or marine waters of important regulatory changes for river herring made in 2012. These regulations were put in place due to concerns about the significant coastwide decline of river herring stocks. The exact cause for these coastwide declines remains uncertain, but numerous factors such as loss of spawning habitat, impediments to fish passage (i.e. dams), water quality degradation and fishing all likely played a role.

The term river herring is collectively applied to two species of fish, the alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*), and blueback herring (*Alosa aestivialis*). The fresh waters of New Jersey have both migratory and landlocked populations of herring. Migratory populations reside in the marine environment and migrate each spring into freshwater rivers and streams and even into some lakes to

spawn. Landlocked populations do not migrate and complete their entire life cycle in a number of freshwater lakes across the state. There are no distinctive identifying characteristics to determine between a landlocked or migratory herring regardless of species. Individuals in landlocked populations, however, are notably smaller in size than their migratory counterparts.

These changes are necessary to comply with Amendment 2 of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Fisheries Management Plan for Shad and River Herring (FMP). Amendment 2 of the ASMFC fishery management plan for river herring prohibits both the recreational and commercial harvest of river herring in the waters of states that do not have an ASMFC-approved river herring sustainable management plan. New Jersey does not have an approved plan since the available information on river herring stocks is not sufficient

to definitively prove the state's river herring stocks are sustainable. Other states along the East Coast—Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Massachusetts and Rhode Island—have closed their river herring fisheries as well.

## Freshwater Closure— Effective February 18, 2012

In order to comply with the required fishery closure for migratory herring while still allowing landlocked fisheries to remain open, the Fish and Game Council—in coordination with the Division of Fish and Wildlife—has adopted the following:

1. The possession, take, attempt to take, sale or purchase of alewife or blueback herring from **any freshwater stream or river is prohibited.**
2. Up to ten alewife or blueback herring, no greater than six inches in length, may be taken for personal use, from **freshwater lakes in Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren counties, and from Spruce Run Reservoir located in Hunterdon County.** Landlocked herring taken from lakes within these counties may only be used on the lake from which they were taken. Any unused herring must be returned to the waterbody upon the conclusion of the angler's fishing trip. They may not be transported away from the shoreline of the lake by any mechanism. They may not be sold.
3. For all other freshwater lakes, regardless of ownership (public or private), **only purchased herring no greater than six inches in length may be possessed for up to seven days from date of purchase, when accompanied by a receipt.** The receipt must list the name, address and telephone number of the place of purchase, date of purchase and quantity purchased. This receipt must be without erasures or alterations of any kind and must have a control number.

## Marine Closure—January 18, 2012

**No person shall take, possess, land, purchase, sell or offer for sale any river herring (alewife and blueback) in the marine waters of the state.** Only commercial vessels fishing exclusively in federal waters while operating under a valid federal permit for Atlantic mackerel and/or Atlantic herring may possess river herring up to a maximum of five percent by weight of all species possessed. 

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