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THE WATCH (from page 3)

River Herring Stock Status

There was a hard push by environmental groups to get river herring (alewife and blueback herring) classified as *endangered species* due the prolonged period that the stocks have declined from historical numbers and overutilization remains a risk for reduced populations, even though fisheries management efforts at the state and federal levels have helped to diminish the impacts of fishing mortality.



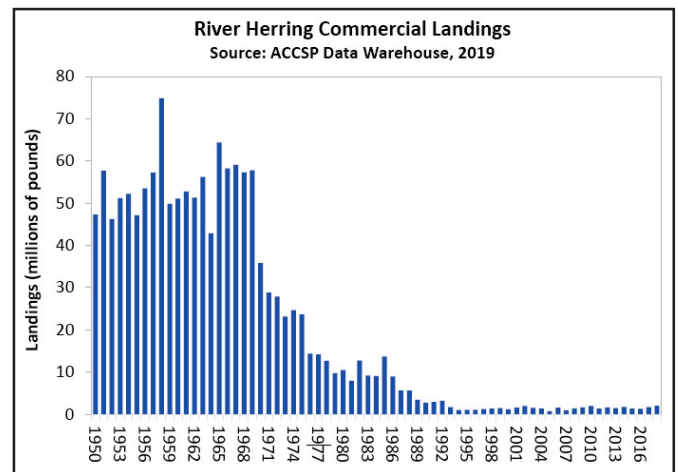
The result of surveys along the Atlantic coast from Maine to Florida (of the 54 stocks for which data were available) showed that 16 experienced increasing abundance, two experienced decreasing abundance, eight experienced stable abundance and ten experienced no discernable trend in abundance over the final ten years of the time series (2006-2015). (see page 11 this issue for more information)

In Rhode Island there are three streams that are surveyed with the following results (as published by ASMFC):

- Buckeye Brook (increasing) • Gilbert Stuart (stable)
- Nonquit (decreasing)

Commercial River Herring

While the graph below only represents commercial landings, it is readily apparent that the stocks are nowhere near the numbers they were historically.



harvest.

The ongoing issue of river herring catch in federal waters by boats seining for other species, such as mackerel and ocean herring, is problematic. While catch caps of these fish on commercial fishing boats have been in place since 2004, it doesn't seem very clear how well it is actually monitored or recorded. I think it is still going to be a long time before we can take out kids or grandkids down to a brook in the spring to catch these fish for bait.

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