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MRAG Americas, Inc.

Alaska Herring

RFM Fishery Announcement

08 May 2025

MRAG Americas, Inc. is pleased to announce the beginning of an RFM assessment of the **Alaska herring fishery**. The assessment will evaluate the fishery for compliance with the Responsible Fisheries Management Fishery Standard.

Table 1.	Relevant RFM Program and scheme documents, including applicable versions and their usage		
Relevant RFM Program	Certified Seafood Collaborative (CSC Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification Program		
Relevant RFM Program Documents	Document Title	Version	Usage
	RFM Procedure 2: Application to Certification Procedures for the RFM Fishery Standard	V6	Process requirements
	Responsible Fisheries Management Certification Program Fisheries Standard	V2.1	Standard and associated Data Limited Framework
	Responsible Fisheries Management Certification Program Guidance to Performance Evaluation for the Certification of Wild Capture and Enhanced Fisheries in North America	V2.1	Guidance to Standard

Table 2 – Fishery Announcement		
1	Fishery name	
	Alaska herring	
2	Certification cycle, assessment type and number	
	Initial assessment	
3	Statement that the fishery is within scope	
	MRAG Americas confirms that the fishery under assessment (as defined by the Units of Assessment described below) is within scope of the relevant RFM Fisheries Standard.	
4	Unit(s) of Assessment – UoA(s)	
	Geographical Area(s)	Alaska waters of the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska encompassed by five ADF&G management areas: Southeast Alaska (Area A), Prince William Sound, Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula (Dutch Harbor), and Bristol Bay (Togiak)
	Management System	Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)
	Fishing gear(s)/method(s)	Whole fish harvest (food and bait, and sac roe): purse seine and gillnet Roe only (eggs on kelp): hand gathering from pounds and the wild
	Client Group	Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute
	Species (common name/scientific name)	Pacific herring (<i>Clupea pallasii</i>)
	Stock(s)	Pacific herring harvested in Alaska
5	Proposed team leader	
	<p>Dr. Nick Hahlbeck has been with MRAG Americas since 2022. His current role is Fisheries Scientist. He serves on MSC assessment teams for a diverse array of fisheries, as an assessor for Principles 1 and 2 and as Team Leader. He also works as a consultant on scientific and technical projects for sustainability certification programs and NGOs. Before joining MRAG Americas, Nick conducted research on the sustainability of freshwater and marine fisheries spanning topics such as fish ecology, resilience to land use and climate change impacts, growth, and bycatch. His research involved extensive collaboration and communication of scientific advice with academic institutions, state and federal agencies, nonprofits, tribes, and anglers. He has authored four peer-reviewed publications and holds a PhD in fisheries science from Oregon State University, as well as a B.S. in marine science and biology from the University of Miami with minors in mathematics, computer science, and chemistry.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms Dr. Hahlbeck has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.</p>	
6	Proposed team members	
	<p>Ms. Erin Wilson joined MRAG Americas, Inc. in February 2015, where she currently serves as Director for the Fisheries Certification Division. She serves as the team leader, and/or team member, on several fishery assessments for both the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Standards for Certification. She also works on the implementation and analysis of fishery</p>	

	<p>improvement projects (FIPs) and provides oversight on social compliance audits and risk assessments. She has over 15 years' experience in marine science and has collaborated on a multitude of projects that focus on conservation in both a biological and social science aspect. Prior to joining MRAG Americas, she worked at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) as a Natural Resource Specialist and Biological Technician for the Oregon Marine Reserves. She has conducted qualitative interviews with commercial fishermen and fishing communities along the west coast regarding catch share programs, limited entry, and proposed designations of marine reserves. She has completed ISO 19011 Lead Auditor for Management Systems, SA8000, the SRA training for Fishery Progress, FISH Standard for Crew and all the MSC and RFM required trainings for team leader and assessment team member. She received a M.Sc. in Marine Resource Management from Oregon State University, a B.S. in Zoology and a Spanish minor from Colorado State University, and attended Auburn University for Marine Science.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms Ms. Wilson has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.</p> <p>A discussion between team members regarding conflict of interest and biases was held and none were identified.</p>
7	Site Visit
	<p>A site visit for the fishery will occur based in Juneau, Alaska the week of 26 May 2025.</p> <p>As part of the site visit a Data Limited Framework workshop will be held. The function of the DLF workshop is to complete a risk assessment for the fishery under consideration and other stocks (e.g. bycatch and ETP species) for which data limitation has been identified.</p> <p>Stakeholders who would like to submit information or request a meeting with the assessment team are asked to do so by 17:00 UTC on 25 May 2025.</p> <p>Contact: MRAG Americas, Inc. certification@mragamericas.com Erin Wilson MRAG Americas, Inc. 8950 Martin Luther King Jr. St. N., Suite 202 St. Petersburg FL 33702 Ph: 1-727-563-9070 Fax: 1-727-563-0207</p> <p>To schedule a meeting please provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your name and contact details • Your association with the fishery • The issues you would like to discuss • Where and when you would like to meet.
8	Stakeholder opportunities
	<p>As part of this assessment, only registered stakeholders will be afforded an opportunity to provide input on a public draft of the assessment report which will be provided for comment when the defined 30-day period in which registered stakeholders may comment is reached.</p> <p>As this stakeholder input opportunity is limited to registered stakeholders only, interested stakeholders should ensure they register as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information on the RFM stakeholder process can be found here: https://rfmcertification.org/stakeholder-involvement/ - Contact MRAG Americas as outlined above requesting to be registered as a stakeholder for the fishery. - The above deadline for requesting to consult with the assessment team and the details stakeholders should provide when requesting to be registered as a stakeholder shall apply here.

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Submitted by: Michealene Corlett

Date: 07 May 2025

Appendix 1: Summary of CVs of team leader and team members

The assessment team for this assessment consists of:

- Nick Hahlbeck (lead assessor and primarily responsible for stock assessment and fish biology and fisheries impact to the ecosystem)
- Erin Wilson (assessor and primarily responsible for fisheries management and fisheries impact to the ecosystem)

Dr. Nick Hahlbeck has been with MRAG Americas since 2022. His current role is Fisheries Scientist. He serves on MSC assessment teams for a diverse array of fisheries, as an assessor for Principles 1 and 2 and as Team Leader. He also works as a consultant on scientific and technical projects for sustainability certification programs and NGOs. Before joining MRAG Americas, Nick conducted research on the sustainability of freshwater and marine fisheries spanning topics such as fish ecology, resilience to land use and climate change impacts, growth, and bycatch. His research involved extensive collaboration and communication of scientific advice with academic institutions, state and federal agencies, nonprofits, tribes, and anglers. He has authored four peer-reviewed publications and holds a PhD in fisheries science from Oregon State University, as well as a B.S. in marine science and biology from the University of Miami with minors in mathematics, computer science, and chemistry.

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