

Cape Cod River Herring Count Program

Instructions for Conducting Visual Counts of Herring and Reporting Data in 2021

This year, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, count coordinators and volunteers are urged to read and follow the recommendations contained in the “[Recommendations for Counting Herring During a Pandemic](#)” posted on our website.

If you’re a herring count volunteer, thank you for your efforts! Your monitoring work results in the collection of valuable information about river herring populations on Cape Cod. This information is used by fisheries managers for protection and management of river herring.

Equipment needed: Clicker counter, water thermometer on a cord*, air thermometer (keep dry), pen or pencil, blank count form, timepiece, and polarized sunglasses.

Counting Method: We use a method developed by Gary Nelson of the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries. This method has been used for years to conduct visual counts:

Start date for counting groups: April 1 or whenever many herring are seen migrating, whichever occurs first;
End date for counting groups: June 1 or a week after the last herring are counted, whichever occurs first;
Time of day to do counts: Between 7 AM and 7 PM;
Length of time for count: 10 minutes;
Number of counts needed: 9 counts per day at the run (not 9 counts per person);
Comments: Do counts at random times, some in the morning, some in the afternoon.

Count forms and these instructions: Count forms and these Instructions will be available to download at APCC’s Herring Run Program webpage at <https://apcc.org/our-work/science/community-science/herring/> . Click on “Herring Count Volunteers” for Count Forms, Instructions, and our online data entry system.

Recording data: For each 10-minute count, write down your data in a **Count Form:**

Your name

The name of the run you’re monitoring

Date

Start time for 10-minute count (use 24-hour “military” time)

End time for 10-minute count (use 24-hour “military” time)

Number of herring counted in a 10-minute period

Water temperature (degrees Celsius) *

Air temperature (degrees Celsius) *

Weather code (see the Count Form for possible weather conditions and codes)

Comments – anything else you think may be interesting or important.

Reporting data: To report your data to APCC, you have several choices:

- Enter your count data to APCC’s online web site and save paper, postage and hassle! See the directions below.

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Entering count data online: Once you have collected counts on your Count Form, you can enter your count data into our online data entry system.

- First, go to APCC’s **Herring Run Program** website at: <https://apcc.org/our-work/science/community-science/herring/> . This webpage contains links to the following items:
 - **“Cape Cod Herring Run Summary 2007-2020”**, a summary of herring run sizes, number of herring counted, and other herring count statistics for Cape Cod herring runs that are monitored for counts;
 - **“Fish Run Restoration Fact Sheets”**;
 - Video on **“How to Count Herring”**;
 - Fact sheet on **“Volunteer Counts – Why and How”**;
 - **“Herring Identification Guide”**;
 - A link to APCC’s webpage on **“Freshwater Ponds”**;
 - **A link to “Herring Count Volunteers”** (<https://apcc.org/our-work/science/community-science/herring/herring-count-volunteers/>) - click on this link to enter data, download count forms, and get instructions – see below;
 - **Under “Herring Count Volunteers”**:
 - To download a copy of the Herring Count Data Form that you can print, click on **“Count Form Hard Copy”**. This is available in both Word and PDF formats.
 - To enter your count data online, click on **“Enter Herring Count Data Online”**. Enter the password which is **alewife**, then click **OK**. The webpage will open with a list of herring runs that are being monitored. Click on your run. You should then see an electronic **Count Form for your run**. Fill this out, using your computer’s cursor or Tab to move from one box to the next (i.e., don’t hit “RETURN”). To enter your start and end times, use 24-hour time (aka military time) - see below.

12-hour time	24-hour time (use this)
7 AM	7:00
8 AM	8:00
9 AM	9:00
10 AM	10:00
11 AM	11:00
12 noon	12:00
12:30 PM	12:30
1 PM	13:00
2 PM	14:00
3 PM	15:00
4 PM	16:00
5 PM	17:00
6 PM	18:00
7 PM	19:00

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If you weren't able to measure water temperature or air temperature, just enter "0" for these. When you've finished entering your data, hit the "Submit" button. Your count will be automatically saved to an Excel spreadsheet. After you've submitted your data, you can click on your run to enter more count data, choose another run to enter data, or exit the APCC website.

At the end of the counting season (June 1), please mail your completed Count Forms to Jo Ann Muramoto at jmuramoto@apcc.org by the beginning of June.

*Note: This year only: if you don't have your own thermometer and there is no temperature datalogger available, do your count as usual (date, start time, end time, number of herring) but omit the water temperature and air temperature, and enter your data as usual.

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