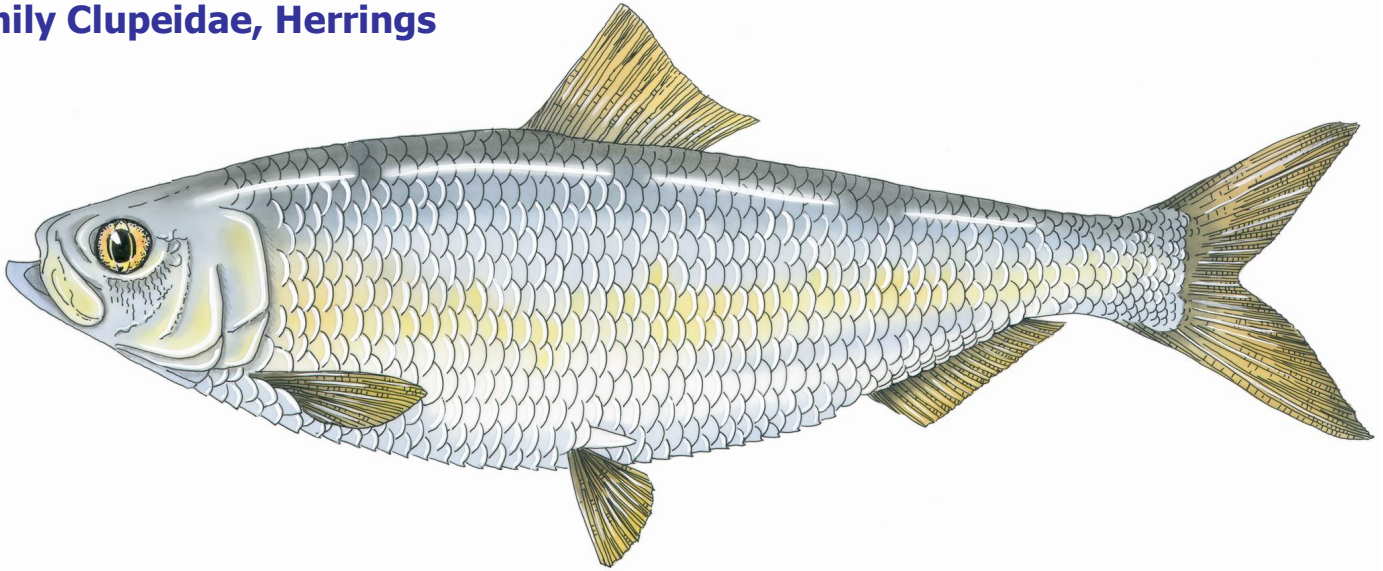


Blueback Herring (*Alosa aestivalis*)

Family Clupeidae, Herrings



Common names: river herring, glut herring, summer herring, kyack, blackbelly

Description: Blueback herring are gray green to blue green on top, which fades down their sides to a silver underbelly. Their body is laterally compressed with the midline of their belly being sharp and saw edged. Their tail fin is forked. Because of the difficulty in visually separating blueback herring from alewives, the two species are often lumped together and referred to as "river herring". Blueback herring can be distinguished from alewives by the facts that alewives have a larger eye and, if you were to cut each open, the body cavity in the blueback herring is black while the alewife's is pink gray. On average, blueback herring grow to be 10 to 11 inches in length and 8 to 9 ounces in weight.

Where found: inshore and offshore.

Similar Gulf of Maine species: alewife, American shad, Atlantic menhaden

Remarks: Like their relatives the alewives, blueback herring are anadromous, living in saltwater and returning to freshwater to spawn. They travel along the coast in large schools, feeding on plankton for most of the year. In the spring, bluebacks run up coastal streams and rivers to spawn. Unlike alewives, blueback herring will spawn in moving water.

Records: MSSAR
IGFA All-Tackle World Record

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