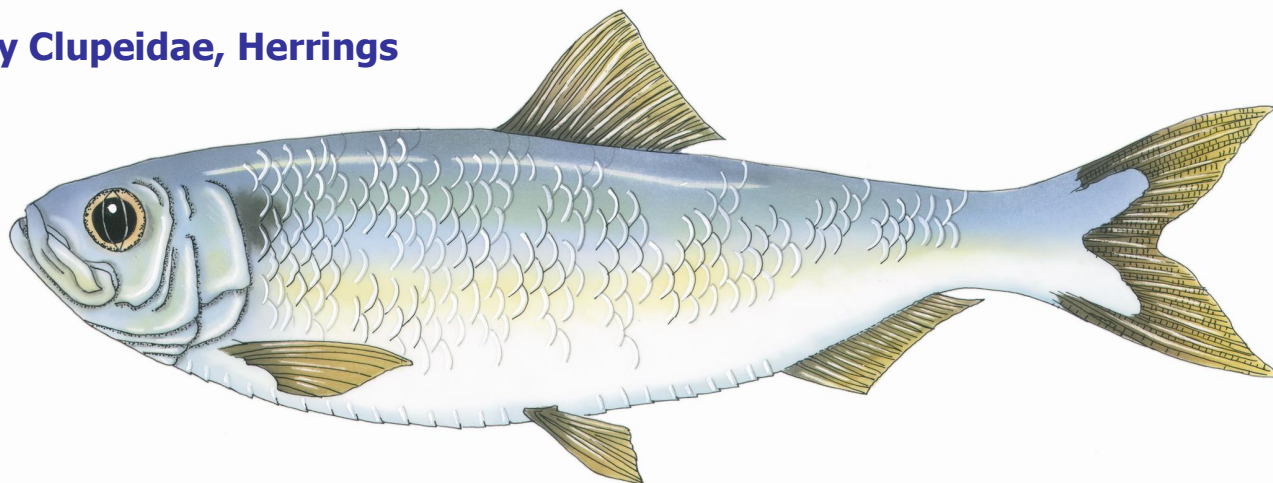


## Alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*)

### Family Clupeidae, Herrings



**Common names:** River herring, sawbelly, kyak, branch herring, freshwater herring

**Description:** Alewives are an iridescent gray green or violet shade on top that fades down their sides to a silver underbelly. They usually have a distinct dusky spot just behind the upper margin of their gill cover. Their strongly laterally compressed (skinny) body is three and one-third times as long as it is deep and has a forked tail fin. The midline of their belly is sharp and saw edged. Serrations located on the midline of their belly are much stronger and sharper than the ones found on most other members of their family. Adult alewives normally 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:** blueback herring, Atlantic herring, American shad, Atlantic menhaden

**Remarks:** Alewives are anadromous fish, living in saltwater and seasonally returning to freshwater to spawn. Throughout most of the year they travel the coast in large schools, foraging on plankton. Then, in the spring, they run up coastal streams and rivers toward ponds and lakes where they spawn. As a rule, alewives spawn in slack water. Because they are not jumpers, manmade or natural barriers sometimes block their spawning migration. Generally, alewives are only an incidental catch for saltwater recreational fishermen. However, they are harvested commercially both for human consumption and for bait.

**Records:** MSSAR:

handline: vacant

rod and reel: vacant

fly rod: vacant

junior male: vacant

junior female: vacant

IGFA All-Tackle World Record: vacant

Fish Illustrations by: Roz Davis Designs, Damariscotta, ME (207) 563-2286

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