

The Alewife Interaction Committee developed a long-term monitoring (LTM) project which began in the spring of 2022 to better understand how sea-run alewives may influence established landlocked salmon fisheries. This monitoring project will run through 2031 and will include six Maine lakes that each currently provide spawning and nursery habitat for sea-run alewives and support landlocked salmon and landlocked rainbow smelt populations. Monitoring goals include an estimate of the number of adult sea-run alewives entering each water and an assessment of the condition and quality of the landlocked salmon population. The collection of water quality information is also planned. Sampling frequency and intensity will vary based on logistics and funding. The data gathered through the LTM project will be used by MDIFW and MDMR to inform and support co-management in waters that support sea-run alewives, landlocked rainbow smelt, and landlocked salmon.

In addition, incoming data from the LTM project may also be used to identify and support concurrent research to address interaction-related questions that cannot be answered through routine population level monitoring. The committee will identify additional study plans to investigate focused research questions through a collaboration with a PhD student at the University of Maine, Orono. This student will help design a study that uses stocked alewives in waters supporting cold water fisheries to better understand density-dependent effects and allow for more control than is possible within wild alewife populations. The committee has compiled a running list of research questions that will be used to plan and prioritize further research if additional funding can be secured.