

The NCMC

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A BRAND NEW DAY FOR MENHADEN

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ASMFC PUTS FORAGE FIRST!

East coast fishery managers are now treating menhaden as if it really were one of "the most important fish in the sea." On August 9th, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) voted to end years of overfishing and triple the population of this small silvery prey fish, an essential source of food for countless marine predators, in order to "increase menhaden abundance and availability as a forage species."

"This is an historic moment," says Ken Hinman, president of the National Coalition for Marine Conservation. "The benefits of leaving more menhaden in the water will ripple throughout the coastal ecosystem, improving the environment for so many other species and so many other fisheries."

The 15-state/federal commission, meeting in Boston for its 70th Annual Meeting, approved new targets and limits for the menhaden fishery. The overfishing threshold - the fishing level that must be avoided - was raised to 15% of the population's maximum spawning potential (or %MSP, a measure used to assess a fish stock relative to its pristine state). Most importantly, a new population target - the level that management measures aim to achieve - was set at 30%MSP. To put this into perspective, the ASMFC's 2010 stock assessment estimated the current population at less than 10% of the un-fished level. It's been kept at or near this low level for decades in order to keep catches high for the reduction industry, whose vessels caught 183,000 metric tons in 2010.

The new target and threshold, now part of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for

Atlantic Menhaden, will require a reduction in landings of 37% percent from 2010 levels. New management and allocation measures for the reduction fishery along with the fisheries that catch menhaden for the bait market will be developed through an amendment to the FMP in 2012, with a goal of implementing the catch limits in the 2013 fishing season.

The menhaden fishery, one of the oldest in America, has never had any catch limits other than a cap on what can be taken from Chesapeake Bay. So, why the historic change in how menhaden are managed? Why now?

The short answer is that the ASMFC took a fresh look at the state of the resource, considered emerging standards for conserving forage fish like menhaden, and listened, not just to the industry, but to the broad public constituency the commission represents and that the resource belongs to. The long answer is that it took an awful lot of work, over many years, to get to this day. "Over the last 10 years, NCMC participated in nearly every meeting that had anything to do with menhaden held by ASMFC and other state/federal management and research institutions," says NCMC's Hinman. "We dedicated ourselves, more than any other organization, to getting where we are today. And I'm happy to say our work has paid off, big-time." (See *Ocean View*, page 2)

PROTECT THE LINK, STRENGTHEN THE FOOD CHAIN

The largest commercial fishery for Atlantic menhaden, and long the most powerful agent against change, is the reduction fishery, which takes about 80% of the total catch. The reduction fishery, which

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Plus:

- Special TMOM edition Guy Harvey poster available for a limited time to our supporters! (see page 5)
- NCMC's recent travels are detailed on page 6.

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WINNING REQUIRES PLAYING THE WHOLE GAME

The secret of success is constancy to purpose. Benjamin Disraeli

Sixty fishing and environmental organizations and over 91,000 individuals contacted the ASMFC in support of strong new measures to protect Atlantic menhaden. (See lead story, page 1) Public input on this issue, according to the commission, was unprecedented, nearly four times the old record for most comments received.

If overwhelming public support was all it took to save menhaden, however, we would have won this battle long ago. We always believed that, given the opportunity to back real change, the many thousands of fishermen and wildlife enthusiasts up and down the coast who understand how important these little fish are would make their voices heard. But that opportunity, which came this year in the form of Addendum V to the Atlantic Menhaden Plan, was years in the making.

For over a decade, the NCMC was always there - at meetings of the Menhaden Management Board, Technical Committee, Advisory Panel and Stock Assessment Subcommittee, and dozens of ecosystem-based management meetings and workshops sponsored by NOAA, the Chesapeake Bay Program and others. We were tireless in informing, assisting and, yes, pushing the commission toward an ecosystems approach, making certain that menhaden's importance as forage would be a topic at every single meeting where it was discussed.

When the ASMFC finally moved to adopt a new overfishing threshold that would trigger rebuilding, the commission neglected to suggest specific rebuilding *targets* to manage the fishery *to*. So we immediately went to work providing the Plan Development Team with information on a range of targets that would protect menhaden's ecological role while still providing fishing opportunities.

Here's where our previous work within ASMFC and with other institutions came into play. It was NCMC that initiated the recent changes to federal fisheries guidelines calling for forage fish to be maintained at a higher population size than other species, or more than 40% of the un-fished level. We started the campaign to get the Marine Stewardship Council to consider ecological standards for certifying forage fish as "sustainable," resulting in new MSC criteria, including a target reference point for forage species like menhaden of at least 40%. (See page 3)

We submitted reviews of scientific papers on setting targets safely above thresholds and rebutting industry claims that only the environment, not fishing, affects menhaden abundance. We brought forward authoritative science showing that, even if ecological considerations are ignored, a target of 30% is a standard measure for a sustainable fishery. In the end, an addendum that began in March with only a 15% threshold offered target options of 30% and 40%.

The rest, as they say, is history. To use a sports analogy, we played the game for the full nine innings, eventually moving a runner into scoring position. Then, in the bottom of the ninth, out came the heavy hitters - 91,000 of them - to drive it home.

-Ken Hinman, *President*

NATIONAL COALITION FOR MARINE CONSERVATION

Founded in 1973

The NCMC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the following goals:

- ◆ preventing overfishing and restoring depleted fish populations to healthy levels
- ◆ promoting sustainable use policies that balance commercial, recreational and ecological values
- ◆ modifying or eliminating wasteful fishing practices
- ◆ improving our understanding of fish and their role in the marine environment
- ◆ preserving coastal habitat and water quality.

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RIVER HERRING BYCATCH AMENDMENTS MOVE FORWARD

... But in Different Directions

Thanks to an outpouring of support from fishermen and conservationists, the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils are sending alternatives for addressing river herring and shad bycatch out for public comment. The measures were developed as part of New England's Amendment 5 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and the Mid-Atlantic's Amendment 14 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid and Butterfish FMP. If all goes as scheduled, the comment periods will open in mid-February, hearings will be held in March, and final action will be taken in April for implementation in 2013.

While the time lines for these amendments have conveniently aligned (Amendment 5 originated in 2008 and Amendment 14 began over a year later), the Councils' strategies for reducing shad and river herring bycatch have taken separate paths. New England's plan focuses on bycatch hotspots and includes a number of time and area-based measures including area closures. Analyses conducted for the Mid-Atlantic Council's amendment, however, suggest that river herring and shad distribution is too variable year-to-year for area closures to be effective. Instead, the Mid-Atlantic put forth options for incidental catch (i.e., bycatch) caps as a more viable method for reducing river herring and shad mortality at sea.

In an October 17th letter to New England Council Chairman Rip Cunningham, Mid-Atlantic Council Chairman Rick Robins wrote: "In order to facilitate public comment on alternatives that would allow alignment between these important amendments, and since both plans in part manage the same fleet, we request that the New England Fishery Management Council include alternatives for these incidental catch caps in Amendment 5." The previous week, the Mid-Atlantic Council extended a similar courtesy by voting to maintain the New England Council's closed area alternatives in Amendment 14 for public comment.

The New England Council considered the request when it convened in Newport, RI on November 15th. Rather than including bycatch cap alternatives that complement those developed by the Mid-Atlantic Council, New England decided that there was no scientific basis for the caps and instead included language in Amendment 5 to allow caps to be developed at an uncertain time in the future.

The Amendment 5 and Amendment 14 divergence is troubling because the councils both manage the mid-water trawl fishery, which is responsible for over 75% of river herring bycatch and 40% of shad bycatch from ocean waters. Mid-water trawls pursue both Atlantic mackerel and Atlantic herring, at times targeting both species on the same trip. Loopholes will occur if the councils' amendments do not result in a cohesive strategy to address the problem, weakening river herring and shad protections.

"The public comment period will be crucial for pushing the councils to reconcile the differences in their plans," says NCMC Executive Director Pam Lyons Gromen. "With river herring now undergoing a status review for Endangered Species Act listing, it is unacceptable to allow these species to continue to fall through the cracks in our fisheries management system." □

MSC STRENGTHENS FORAGE FISHERY STANDARDS

As of August 15th, fisheries that harvest sardines, anchovies, herring and other important prey fish must meet tougher standards if they wish to be certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). The new requirements for forage fish, referred to as "lower trophic level species" by the MSC, are the product of a two-year MSC-funded initiative that included extensive stakeholder participation and scientific research.

MSC's lower trophic level species project was launched in 2009, after nearly three years of work by NCMC to draw attention to the inadequacies of MSC's certification criteria for forage fish. In October 2006, MSC announced that it was assessing the Gulf of California, Mexico sardine fishery, the first feed-grade (i.e., reduction) fishery to undergo a full certification. MSC called on other reduction fisheries to follow suit and apply for certification "in order to ensure the sustainability of these wild-capture fish used for feed stocks in aquaculture."

The aquaculture industry's dependence on wild-caught fish for feed is widely recognized as a serious risk to marine ecosystems. NCMC's 2006 review of MSC certification methodology revealed major weaknesses in the criteria. Forage fisheries could be awarded certification without adequate safeguards for the ecosystem and dependent predators. NCMC encouraged other NGOs to get involved, resulting in a number of meetings, workshops and letters to the MSC, urging the organization to raise the bar for forage fishery certifications.

NCMC was pleased when MSC announced its lower trophic level species project in 2009, which included the formation of a working group of experts. The new guidance crafted by this working group and implemented by the MSC in August 2011, clarifies levels of stock abundance to be maintained to protect the ecosystem. For a minimum passing score, a fishery must be maintained at no less than 40% of its un-fished biomass. Within 5 years of certification, fisheries must be maintained at 75% of an un-fished level.

In a September 8th press release, Dr. Dan Hoggarth, Senior Fisheries Assessment Manager for the MSC said, "We trust these new requirements will assure the sustainability of low trophic level fisheries and the myriad species that depend upon these same resources." □

A BILL TO SAVE BILLFISH, THE LIONS AND TIGERS OF THE SEA

The following op-ed by NCMC President Ken Hinman appeared in the October 19th Care2 blog featuring environment and wildlife causes. The blog reached over one million subscribers, generating awareness and support for the Billfish Conservation Act of 2011.

Like many Americans, I was first introduced to the blue marlin by Ernest Hemingway in his classic 1952 novella, *The Old Man and the Sea*, which chronicles an existential battle between an old Cuban fisherman and a great fish longer than his boat.

Reading the story then, I could only imagine how much that fish weighed, but today I know the real-world record for a blue marlin caught on rod-and-reel is an astounding 1,500 pounds. And they get a lot bigger than that. The blue marlin is, by any measure, a magnificent fish; an unparalleled combination of size and speed that, coupled with a powerful sword-like bill, make it one of the ocean's top predators.

Blue marlin and other billfish, a family that includes four species of marlin as well as the smaller sailfish and spearfish, are the lions, tigers and wolves of the sea, wild creatures as awe-inspiring as any animals on earth. They sit at the top of the ocean food chain, where they play the critical role of maintaining balance and diversity in marine ecosystems.

Unfortunately, although billfish have few natural predators, they are among the most threatened fish in the sea. Man, after all, is the most dangerous predator of all, since we are limited only by the limits we set for ourselves. Here in the United States, where fishermen revere and protect billfish, we've set limits. On the high seas, however, commercial overfishing by foreign fleets has reduced billfish populations to a mere fraction of what they were just decades ago.

According to a recent global assessment by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), three species of billfish are in serious trouble. The

IUCN, which maintains the well-respected Red List of Threatened Species, classified blue marlin and white marlin as "vulnerable" to extinction, while striped marlin was assessed as "near threatened."

The key to recovery of billfish is to reduce commercial fishing pressure, says the IUCN. As it happens, Congress is now considering legislation that would strengthen current U.S. law and enhance conservation of billfish worldwide.

The Billfish Conservation Act of 2011 (S. 1451 and H.R. 2706), introduced this summer, would prohibit the sale of all species of billfish (swordfish are not included) in

the U.S., with an exception for traditional fisheries within Hawaii and the Pacific islands. Sale of Atlantic billfish is already prohibited, as is striped marlin in California.

But we are the number one buyer of foreign-caught fish, importing about 1,335 metric tons - an unthinkable 30,000 Pacific marlin and other billfish - each year for sale in our mainland restaurants and seafood markets. The Billfish Conservation Act, if passed by Congress, would take marlin off the menu in the mainland U.S.

Throughout history, animals once offered for sale are no longer. Societies determine that certain species need to be protected from the demands of commerce. The reasons may be social, economic, ecological or all three. It doesn't happen overnight; it takes many decades, even centuries. Today, we've reached that point in history with billfish.

It's a natural progression. Hemingway hunted big marlin and hung them on the dock. Today, the billfish anglers I know don't "catch" the fish at all, but let them go alive, modifying their gear to make sure every released fish survives. Some say the tipping point occurred in 1958, off Cape Hatteras, when my late friend Jack Cleveland caught a blue marlin he guessed weighed somewhere between 300 and 400 pounds. When he shocked everyone by letting it go, it was the talk of the docks up and down the coast, the first known voluntary release of a big blue. Fifty years later,

continued next page

Tell Your Congressmen to Support the Billfish Conservation Act of 2011

Visit the Keep America Fishing Action Center to send a message to your Members of Congress, urging their support for the Billfish Conservation Act of 2011. (<http://keepamericafishing.org/action> - Click on "National Issues" and from there select, "Conserving the Magnificent Billfish.")



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it's the angler who lands a billfish who's got some explaining to do.

Marlin are hard to find and even harder to catch. Just as hard to find are bills like The Billfish Conservation Act. It's picking up broad bipartisan support in Congress, as well as the backing of the environmental and sport fishing communities, because it's good for the fish and good for the economy. U.S. commercial fishermen don't target billfish. Sales of imports amount to less than 0.1% of our seafood industry. Consumers have plenty of sustainable alternatives. The catch-and-release recreational fishery, while leaving a negligible salt water footprint, contributes thousands of jobs and many millions of dollars to the national economy.

Santiago, the aging fisherman in *The Old Man and the Sea*, pays homage to his mortal adversary. "...Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother." With this bill, we can show our respect while sending the message that the future of these majestic fish is not for sale. □

Key to passage of The Billfish Conservation Act is obtaining strong support among both Republicans and Democrats. On many issues, the current Congress is polarized by partisan politics. That's why it's been so crucial to highlight this legislation as good for both the environment and the economy.

To emphasize the broad political support for billfish conservation, we obtained sign-on letters to members of Congress from the recreational fishing and environmental communities. A July letter signed by the American Sportfishing Association, The Billfish Foundation, Coastal Conservation Association, National Marine Manufacturers Association, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, NCMC, IGFA and others asked Congress to "Restore Billfish Populations and Create Jobs." In October, a letter signed by 70 environmental groups told members that The Billfish Conservation Act "is a win for the environment and the economy."

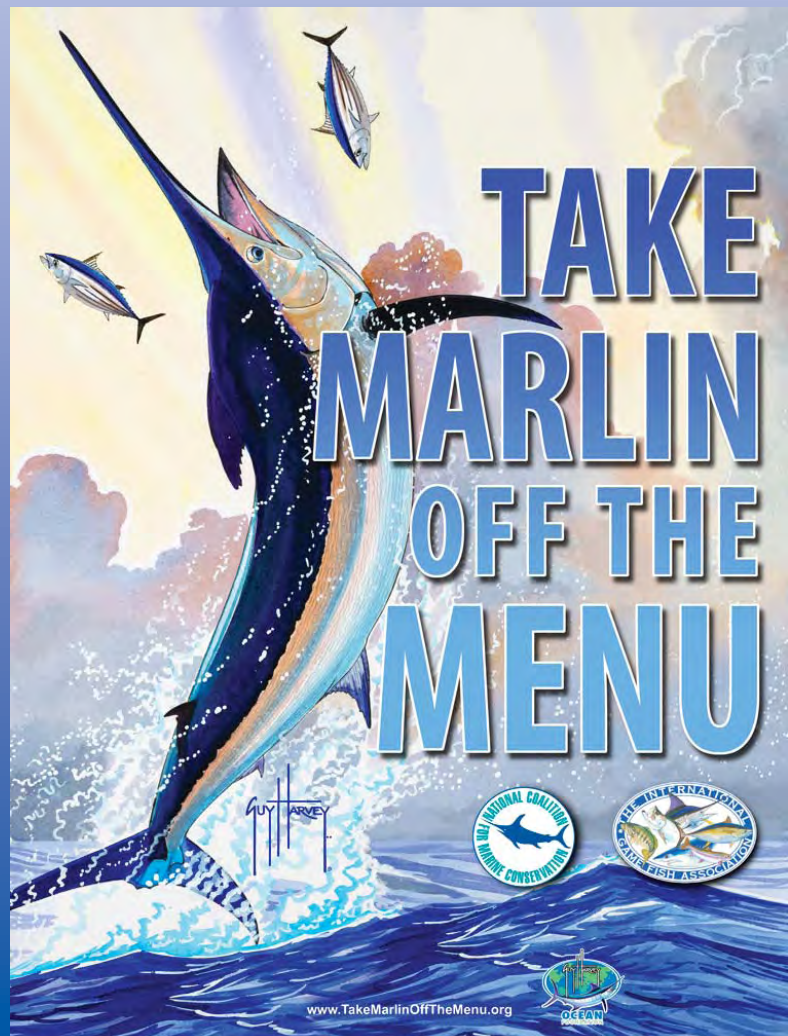
As of this writing, the House bill (HR 2706) had 21 co-sponsors, 14 Republicans and 7 Democrats. Of these, 8 are members of the Resources Committee, whose approval the bill will need before it goes for a full vote in the House. On the Senate side, S. 1451 has 6 co-sponsors, split evenly among Rs and Ds. Three sit on the critical Commerce Committee.

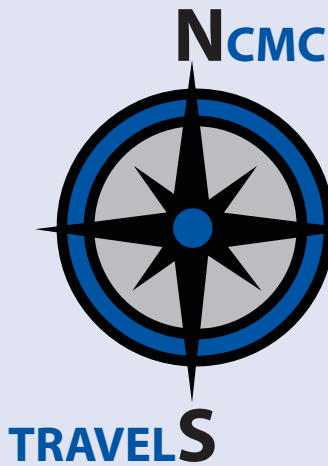
GUY HARVEY SPECIAL EDITION "TAKE MARLIN OFF THE MENU" POSTER

**Available for a Limited Time With Your
Year-end Gift of \$50 or More**

In August, the Guy Harvey Foundation joined with the National Coalition for Marine Conservation and the International Game Fish Association to promote the "Take Marlin Off the Menu" campaign. The Foundation, which supports marine conservation through research and education, is led by marine biologist Guy Harvey, who is also the world's best known and most popular billfish artist. To support our efforts, Guy created the amazing blue marlin poster pictured below.

The poster, which measures 18"X 24", will be sent to our supporters who donate \$50 or more to help us meet our 2012 conservation program goals. At the top of the list is the passage of the Billfish Conservation Act of 2011! Please consider making a donation today. Donations can be made through our web site, www.savethefish.org (click on "donate") or by contacting our office at 703-777-0037.





A log of where we have traveled to fight for the fish in the last quarter...

- ✦ President Ken Hinman attended the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) meeting in **San Mateo, CA** September 13-15. He presented the council with information on swordfish buoy gear as an alternative to drift entanglement nets and pelagic longlines, noting a new study underway off the California coast by the Pflieger Research Institute.
- ✦ Ken joined the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) for a meeting of its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) in **Baltimore, MD** on September 22nd. The committee is looking into a pilot project with the National Marine Fisheries Service to develop a "road map" for moving to ecosystem-based management, in particular how it might provide the council advice on issues such as quota-setting for forage fish.
- ✦ Ken and Executive Director Pam Lyons Gromen attended the 4th National SSC Workshop October 4-6 in **Williamsburg, VA**, devoted to ecosystem-based approaches to management at the regional council level. A special forage fish session was included on the agenda. The group recommended, among other things, that forage fish conservation should include more fully accounting for predation in stock assessments and consider estimating forage abundance and forage demands as a whole, not just by species.
- ✦ Pam was at the MAFMC meeting in **Galloway, NJ** October 12-14, where the Council voted Amendment 14 to the Atlantic mackerel, squid and butterfish plan out for public comment with a variety of alternatives for monitoring and reducing ocean bycatch of shad and river herring. Pam and other organization representatives from the Herring Alliance provided written and oral testimony supporting public comment on a full suite of alternatives and were pleased to see the amendment move forward. The official public comment period and hearings will likely begin in February.
- ✦ The U.S. advisory committee to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas met in **Silver Spring, MD** October 13-14 to develop positions for the annual ICCAT meeting November 11-19. Ken Hinman attended as a member of the committee (as did NCMC vice chair Rick Weber). NCMC made recommendations on renewing international agreements on blue marlin and swordfish, new measures for silky sharks, and better accounting of bycatch in Atlantic-wide fisheries.
- ✦ Ken went to **Baltimore, MD** on October 25th for a meeting of the ASMFC's Menhaden Advisory Panel. He helped draft panel advice to the commission on choosing new targets and limits for managing menhaden. Ken also met with NMFS chief Eric Schwaab in **Silver Spring, MD** to talk about the ASMFC's upcoming decision on menhaden.
- ✦ The PFMC convened in **Costa Mesa, CA** November 1-7. Pam was on hand to provide recommendations on the draft outline of the Council's developing Fishery Ecosystem Plan, urging the Council to further develop strategies for monitoring and managing the California Current forage base, including a prohibition on new forage fisheries. Pam also testified on sardine quotas for 2013, asking the Council to initiate steps to formally review and revise outdated methods for determining harvest levels and to take a risk-adverse approach to avoid overfishing this keystone prey fish.
- ✦ Ken attended the Annual Meeting of the ASMFC in **Boston, MA**. The Menhaden Management Board met on November 9th and approved Addendum V with a new goal of increasing menhaden abundance and availability as a forage species. (see story page 1).
- ✦ Pam also attended the **Boston, MA** ASMFC meeting as Chair of the Shad & River Herring Advisory Panel. The Shad & River Herring Management Board received a presentation from NMFS Protected Resources Division on the NRDC petition to list river herring (both alewife and blueback herring) as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. NMFS issued a 90-day finding that the petition may be warranted and is now conducting a thorough status review for these species.

A BRAND NEW DAY FOR MENHADEN

(continued from page 1)

has been around since the early part of the 19th century, nets menhaden and “reduces” the fish down to fish meal and oil for industrial and agricultural uses. Combined with the bait catch, it’s the biggest fishery, by volume, on the eastern seaboard, landing on average 200,000 metric tons of menhaden a year.

If the commercial menhaden fishery has been around for nearly 200 years, why are we enacting the first measures to regulate the total catch now? For one thing, we’re a lot smarter than we used to be. We better understand the fragile links in overstressed ocean food chains and how overfishing a critical species like menhaden impacts others. We are moving toward an ecosystem-based approach to managing our fisheries. But even more than that, we were overtaken by events.

Ironically, it was one of our biggest fish conservation success stories - the recovery of striped bass in the 1990s - that turned what had always been a chronic concern among anglers about commercial operations removing too many prey from our coastal waters into an acute problem. Even as we celebrated the return of the striper, the resurgent population was not finding enough to eat. The fish were growing in number and size, but many were skinny and diseased. While restoring the populations of bass and a number of other predators, including seabirds and marine mammals, we’d been fishing down one of their principal sources of food - menhaden.

In the 1950s, 25 menhaden processing plants dotted the coast from Maine to Florida. But one by one, states began closing their waters to industrial-scale fishing for menhaden, for a number of reasons, including concerns about the local forage base and overfishing. The stock and the fishery were both in decline, both contracted until, in the 1990s, fishing was concentrated in Chesapeake Bay – the breeding ground for the majority of the east coast’s striped bass population - and surrounding waters of the mid-Atlantic region. Today the reduction fishery is run by one company, Houston-based Omega Protein, with one plant, in Reedville, Virginia, whose 10 boats fish from New Jersey to North Carolina.

Going back to the ‘50s, menhaden typically comprised from 50-70% of the diet of a healthy striped bass population. The most recent surveys in Chesapeake Bay show menhaden now account for less than 8%. Stripers feed on alternate prey when menhaden are not abundant, reducing availability to competing predators, like weakfish, whose numbers are dangerously low due to natural mortality. The lack of menhaden is harming other species, too. Ospreys, for instance, rely heavily on young menhaden. Studies in Virginia have shown that menhaden made up 75% of the diet of osprey nestlings in the 1980s. Today it’s only 28%. As a result, survival of nestlings is poor.

Concern about depletion of menhaden in the Chesapeake led the ASMFC to freeze the bay catch in 2006 and initiate studies to assess the ecological damage. That cap, the first limit ever put on menhaden fishing, is still in effect, but it



hasn’t constrained the total coast-wide catch. Nor did it change the fact that the overall population of menhaden has declined by 86% since 1980.

MORE MENHADEN FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL

Which brings us back to the question of why a population that is so depleted – that has been depleted for many years - wasn’t made the object of a rebuilding plan long ago? Why, despite abundance at an all-time low, did stock assessments for menhaden regularly conclude that the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring?

At first, the 2010 ASMFC stock assessment ran true to form, but when it was subjected to an independent peer review last spring, the reviewers pulled back the curtain on the wizard. They said the bar for judging the health of the menhaden stock was set way too low, thereby masking problems in the fishery. The bar is the reference points, the targets and thresholds used to assess the condition of the stock.

The ASMFC’s menhaden management board responded to this wake-up call by initiating development of an addendum to its Interstate Fishery Management Plan, to replace the current reference points with new ones that would increase abundance. In August of this year, the commission approved Addendum V for public comment. The Addendum proposed a new overfishing threshold, twice the old limit, and most importantly, proposed that management measures be implemented to achieve new target population levels more in line with the minimum standards set for other species, including what is recommended for key forage fish. The public weighed-in in support of the most conservative options in Addendum V, in record numbers.

So what can we expect as a result of the ASMFC’s decision to put more menhaden back in the water? In the near-term, many predator species will benefit: striped bass, bluefish, weakfish, sharks, tuna, whales and dolphin, sea turtles, ospreys and loons. Over the long-term, an increased abundance is likely to improve spawning success and the chances for stronger year-classes, which will mean even greater abundance in the future with higher yields for the fisheries, including returning menhaden to their northern range in New England, where bait fisheries used to thrive. In other words, more menhaden will benefit everyone, not just the reduction fishery, and that’s as it should be. □



MID-ATLANTIC COUNCIL NEEDS TO HEAR FROM NCMC'S FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) has launched an online survey to hear from stakeholders about how Mid-Atlantic fisheries should be managed in the future as well as what is working and not working now. The survey is an important part of the MAFMC Visioning Project, an initiative that will ultimately result in a strategic plan that will be implemented by the Council.

"This is a rare opportunity for stakeholders to have a positive, long-term impact on fishery resources," says NCMC Executive Director Pam Lyons Gromen who serves on the MAFMC Visioning Project Advisory Panel. "NCMC members, many of whom are anglers, represent a unique perspective as conservationists that would be of great value for shaping a vision for sustainable Mid-Atlantic fisheries."

The MAFMC manages a number of species that are not only vital to fisheries, they are critical to a healthy ecosystem. For over a decade, NCMC has closely followed the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan, advocating for ecosystem-based approaches to managing these important forage species.

The main visioning survey takes just minutes to complete. There are also optional fishery-specific surveys

Share Your Vision, Take the Survey

www.mafmc.org/vision




for summer flounder, bluefish, black sea bass, scup, spiny dogfish, surfclams, ocean quahogs, tilefish, Atlantic mackerel, shortfin squid, longfin squid and butterfish.

"This is a stakeholder-driven initiative in every way. Our top priority is to hear from our constituents and then act on that input in a timely manner," says council chairman Rick Robins.

Hard copies of the surveys can be obtained by contacting the MAFMC office at (302) 674-2331. □

Your mailing label now includes your membership renewal date.



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