



**Wild
Oceans**
For the future of fishing

Fall Newsletter 2015

The Horizon

FRAGILE ECOSYSTEMS THREATENED BY GLOBAL WARMING

The plight of the polar oceans

by Ken Hinman, Wild Oceans President

There is a place high in the mountains of northwestern Montana, called Triple Divide Peak, where falling rain, but for the push of the wind a few feet in one direction or another, can flow to any one of three oceans: the Pacific, the Atlantic or the Arctic. The summit's utter uniqueness in this respect reminds us how rarely we in the lower 48 think of the third sea to the north. As likely as not we envision a vast ice cap, polar bears, and ice-breakers the only ocean-going vessels.

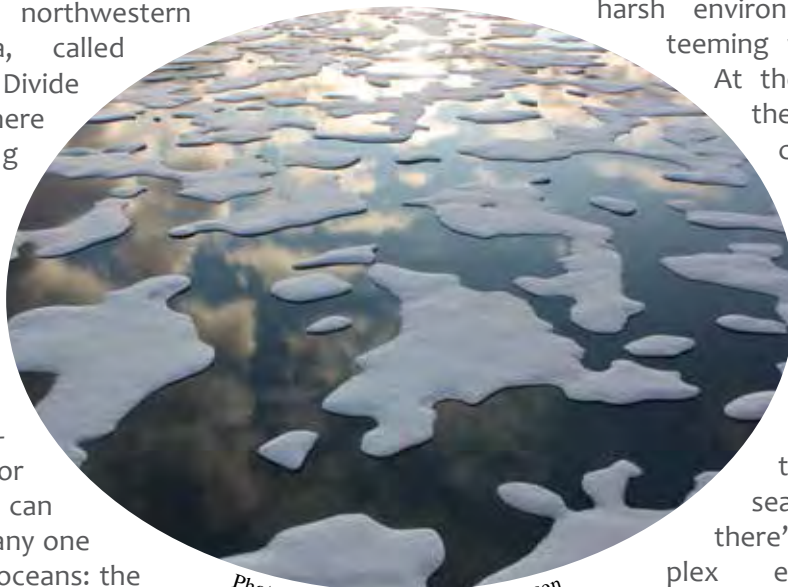


Photo credit: NASA/ Kathryn Hansen

But the Arctic Ocean, despite the harsh environment, is teeming with life. At the top of the food chain are the giant white bears that roam the ice and swim the frigid seas, but there's a complex ecosystem surrounding them, made up of seals, walruses, whales, birds, fish and, at the bottom supporting all life above, plankton.

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

▪ OCEAN VIEW: STATE OF THE OCEAN IS NOT RED OR BLUE	2
▪ FISHERMEN CATCH PACIFIC COUNCIL'S ATTENTION	3
▪ THE 75% SOLUTION	4
▪ 2015: THE YEAR IN REVIEW	6
▪ FORAGE GOES FIRST	8
▪ STAFF TRAVEL LOG	9
▪ OCEAN CALENDAR SUPPORTS WILD OCEANS	10

Our Mission

Wild Oceans was founded by anglers in 1973. Like the sportsmen before us who pioneered wildlife conservation on land, we are passionate protectors of fish and the wild world we share.

Our mission is to keep the oceans wild to preserve fishing opportunities for the future. To do this, we bring conservation-minded fishermen and pro-fishing environmentalists together to promote a broad, ecosystems approach to fisheries management that reflects our expanding circle of concern for all marine life and the future of fishing.

So much of what we love about the sea, about fish, about fishing, is in the wildness. But that wild world, and the future of fishing, now hangs in the balance. Everything we do, every decision we make, must be guided by a clear vision of the future we want for our oceans and of how the fishing public and responsible consumers will fit into that future.

State of the ocean is not red or blue

When the House passed a bill earlier this year proposing changes to the nation's fisheries law, the Magnuson Act, the vote went straight down party lines. YEA votes were 98% Republican, with only 5 Democrats on board. That seems like business as usual for Congress these days, but it wasn't always so. The two previous renewals of the Act, when Congress adopted strict anti-overfishing mandates the House bill seeks to weaken, had broad bipartisan support, with Rs among the key sponsors of reform. But ocean conservation is just another casualty of the ideological divide between "liberals" and "conservatives".

I am bewildered by those who force concern for the environment into their own polarized world view. I am baffled by people who think giving more than lip service to environmental protection is somehow the domain of liberals. I think I'm like most Americans – liberal on some things, conservative on others – and I happen to think my attitude

toward the environment, if it must be categorized, is quite conservative.

Individual choice and self-reliance are hallmarks of being a true conservative and it is these characteristics that make so many outdoorsmen and women conservationists. The quality of our lives depends, equally, on the range of choices we have and the freedom to choose among them. Letting some special interests despoil the environment – our environment, the only one we have – for their own gain is an abuse of this freedom, because it reduces the choices available to the rest of us and to future generations.

Recently, the Administration's move into ecosystem-based fisheries management has come under fire as a "radical environmentalist" threat to the fishing industry and the economy. Nonsense. Fishermen who've seen firsthand how years of overfishing have disrupted food webs and how warming waters are affecting species behavior and survival understand it's the only way to deal with these long-term threats to wild fisheries and the coastal communities that depend on them.

Climate change magnifies the effects of fishing activities on vulnerable populations, while shrinking our margins for error. We can already see impacts on individual species, but we must look to the relationships among species to determine how it affects marine communities – and, in the end, fisheries. Only by taking an ecosystems approach can we maintain the diversity, stability and resiliency that will help insulate fisheries and our dependence on them from the impacts of warming oceans.

What happens when we don't carefully conserve and manage fisheries and protect the ocean environment? It's a conservative's nightmare. Fishermen go out of business, the government tightens regulations, taxpayers shell out hundreds of millions of dollars and – not least of all – it erodes our individual freedom to fish. Let's face it. Freedom that actually empowers the individual must restrict certain choices in order to enhance the choices and opportunities open to everyone, Republican and Democrat alike. When it comes to wild oceans, everyone should be conservative.

– Ken Hinman, President

For the Future of Fishing

Wild Oceans is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to keeping the oceans wild to preserve fishing opportunities for the future.

Our 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 fish habitat and water quality

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Fishermen catch pacific council's attention

By Theresa Labriola,
West Coast Fisheries Project Director

On a blue-sky November day in Orange County, California, with the yellowfin still running strong just offshore, more than 30 recreational fishermen wearing matching teal blue shirts kept their boats tied to the dock and instead attended the Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting. They came to keep multi-mile longlines, baited with thousands of hooks, out of Federal waters and to ask the Council to end the use of mile-long driftnets to catch swordfish. Speaking in favor of a more sustainable swordfish fishery, they asked the Council to transition to new, actively-tended, swordfish buoy gear. The Council listened and prioritized the authorization of deep-set buoy gear to help revitalize the commercial swordfish fishery.

The Council scheduled three hours to discuss swordfish management and policy. But by the end of three hours, they had barely completed public comment. As I testified for Wild Oceans, with a sea of blue shirts sitting behind me, I asked the Council to reflect on the economic contribution of the southern California recreational fishery, the cultural significance of recreational waterfronts where fathers teach daughters and grandsons how to fish, and the negative impact of longlines and drift gillnets on recreational opportunities and the health of the open ocean ecosystem, specifically the big fish we dream of catching – and releasing – to share with future generations.

Many others reminded the Council of the economic value of recreational fishing in California. For instance, in 2011 anglers spent more than \$2.3 bil-

lion on fishing-related purchases while fishing in California waters. Adding in lodging, food and other related items, the economic output swelled to more than \$4 billion supporting 35,000 jobs.

The economics and the public testimony were lopsided in our favor. Only a few asked the Council to expand the drift gillnet fishery, which discards more than 50 percent of its catch, and to authorize a California longline fishery. The Hawaii longline fishery for swordfish has caught more than 8,000 marlin in the past ten years as unavoidable bycatch.

Most anglers attending the Council meeting would have rather been fishing that day, but came instead to listen and participate in the discussion. That made all the difference. The Council listened closely to testimony from members of the International Game Fish Association, Coastal Conservation Association of California, American Fishing Tackle Company, Los Angeles Rod and Reel Club, Laguna Niguel Billfish Club and others and responded accordingly, prioritizing the authorization of deep-set buoy gear as the next step in developing a fishery that more sustainably targets swordfish off California.

Ten years ago, the Council considered allowing commercial longliners within 200-miles of shore, and recreational fishermen played a pivotal role in stopping that proposal. In November, we assured the Council that anglers are still watching. The angling community will answer the call again and stand up for clean fishing if and when the Council reconsiders allowing longlines into our Pacific waters. ■



Special thanks to these fishermen from the Los Angeles Rod and Reel Club (LARRC) and the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) of California for joining us and speaking out. From left to right: Mike Godfrey (LARRC), Joe Mahfetz (LARRC), Theresa Labriola (Wild Oceans), Wayne Kotow (CCA), and Steve Simon (LARRC).

The 75% solution

by Ken Hinman, President

Earlier this year the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission initiated Amendment 3 to adopt new management objectives that better protect menhaden's vital role as forage. In November, however, the ASMFC's menhaden technical committee advised the commissioners to hold off until they've finished developing complex multispecies models they claim will tell them how much prey to allocate to predators and how much to fisheries. The models will be ready for use by 2020, they promise, but that's questionable on so many levels.

First of all, natural systems cannot be replicated with the simplifications and assumptions inherent in fishery models. Is it possible to create a working mathematical model of an intricate marine food web – including all menhaden's predators, fellow prey fish and the environment – and then use it to manage not one but numerous inter-connected fisheries?

It's never been done before and the odds are against it. If the model is too complicated, cause and effect are impossible to understand and the results can be easily manipulated. On

"Never bring the problem solving stage into the decision making stage. Otherwise, you surrender yourself to the problem rather than the solution."

— Robert Schuller

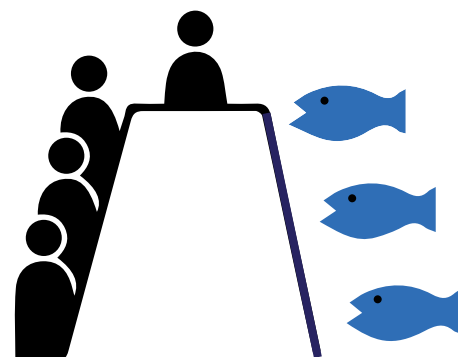
the other hand, if it's made too simple, by omitting key components and variables, the results will be unreliable.

Even so, the ASMFC's menhaden scientists recommend against taking alternative and ready paths; comprehensive standards for allocating forage species between fisheries and predators advocated by a wide range of independent scientists. They denounce them as "arbitrary".

But fishery managers should approach this allocation problem the way they consider allocations of fish among competing fisheries. In other words, it isn't arbitrary, it's *arbitration*.

So the fishing industry and natural predators, competing for a valued prey species, come to the table to negotiate. The industry makes its opening bid, to maximize its catch on a con-

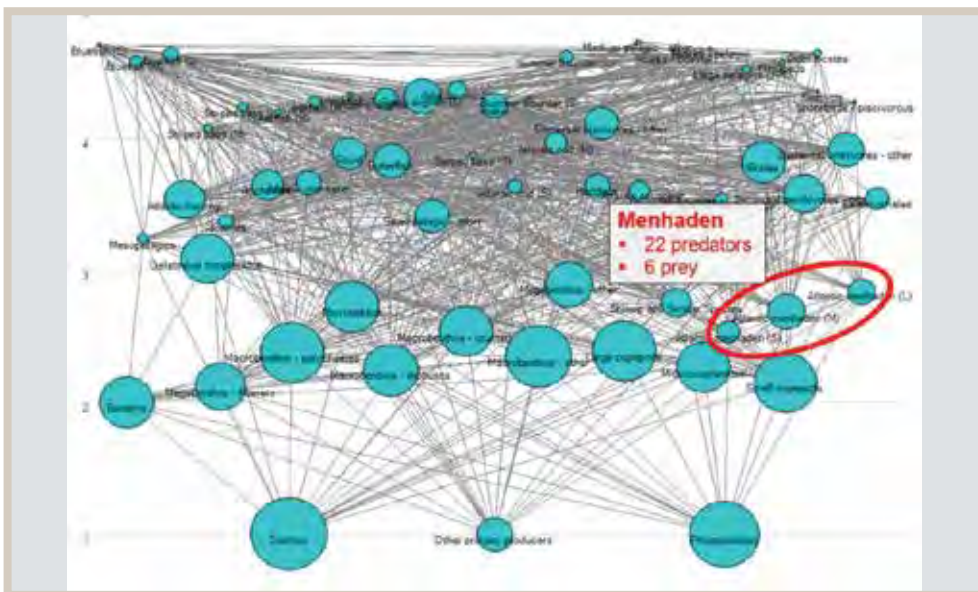
tinuing basis, which means something close to the Maximum Sustainable Yield. The prey population that produces MSY is typically less than half (40-50%) of an un-fished population. The predators – striped bass and the others – counter that they can't live with that, quite literally. They want to maximize food for themselves, too, and ask for something closer to an un-fished population.



The arbitrator knows that choosing something in-between – a resource sharing arrangement that balances the needs of fishermen and predators, of society and the health of the ecosystem – is not something even the most sophisticated mathematical model can tell her; it is a subjective decision. She also knows that it's her job to take the interests of each party into account.

Therefore she makes the only determination she can that will be fair to both sides, and that decision is to ask each party to meet the other half way. She proposes **The 75% Solution** to sustain fishing in a way that also protects the broader ecosystem and its living communities.

As it happens, a wealth of scientific research to determine the amount of precaution necessary for forage

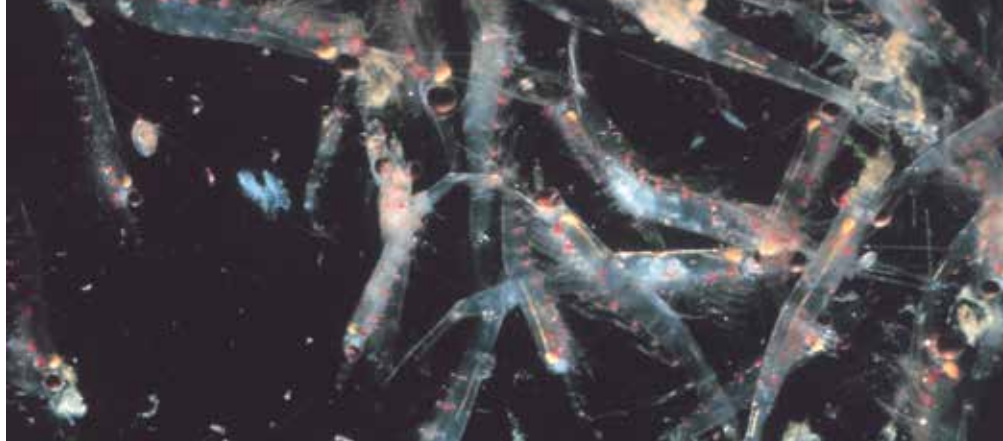


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species has arrived at the same conclusion. In [*Resource Sharing: The Berkeley Criterion*](#), a 2015 report published by Wild Oceans, author Ken Hinman documents and explains why what he calls “the 75% solution” – leaving three-quarters of the un-fished biomass in the ocean for ecosystem services – has become the consensus rule-of-thumb among fishery scientists and ecologists from all over the world.

Download a free copy of [*Resource Sharing*](#) at WildOceans.org.

“The future of fishing lies in the balance.” ■



THE PLIGHT OF THE POLAR OCEANS (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

That fragile ecosystem is now threatened by global warming, which is not only melting the sea ice and altering the landscape, but opening up new areas for oil exploration, new routes to shipping, and new seas to commercial fishing. Nations bordering the Arctic, including the U.S., Canada, Russia and Norway, already lay claim to areas within their territorial limits but the central northern ocean is an unregulated no-man’s-land.

World leaders met this winter in Paris to discuss ways to combat climate change, with mixed results. At the same time, talks were underway in Washington, D.C. aimed at imposing an Arctic fishing moratorium. Canada and other Arctic coastal countries are trying to draw non-Arctic fishing nations into an agreement to prevent commercial fishing on the high seas until more is known about the fish stocks there and a means to regulate fishing is in place.

The Arctic tern, which breeds at the North Pole, makes one of the longest annual migrations of any creature, to the South Pole where it spends the winter. Unfortunately, the Antarctic Ocean faces similar threats, also the result of climate change. Chief among the dangers to marine life is to krill, the tiny plankton-eating animals that make up the foundation of the Antarctic ecosystem.

Krill are caught in large quantities,

for feed in fish farms mainly. Although conservative overall catch limits have been in place for years, the assessments that were used to set the limits are 15 years old, and the environment has changed dramatically in that time. In addition, harvest by commercial trawlers tends to concentrate in coastal areas where land-based predators, such as penguins and shorebirds, are vulnerable to localized depletions.

The changing climate is also changing the ocean chemistry, making it more acidic (see *The Quiet Storm*, No 142). Ocean acidification is a particular threat to krill, limiting egg production and larval survival. Researchers at Australia’s Antarctic Division predict that, given present trends, krill populations could be reduced anywhere from 20 to 70 percent by the end of the century.

Just as most of the rainfall in the continental U.S. goes to either the Atlantic or the Pacific Oceans, it’s too easy to forget about the Arctic, much less the Antarctic another 12,000 miles away. But the largest increases in global temperature are occurring at the poles, endangering life in the polar oceans. At stake is not just the extinction of resident species, including the hunting and fishing communities of native peoples, but the health of the global oceans. It is, after all, one world and one wild ocean. ■

2015: the year in review

A common thread running through *Wild Oceans* programs in 2015 was this: The nearer you get to your goal, the tougher the resistance. For years now we've been making steady progress in getting policy makers to understand and accept what we believe are needed changes in the way we fish, fundamental to our coexistence with wild oceans. And much of that effort has culminated this year in reaching the threshold of historic actions. But for fishery managers, as the Italian proverb goes, there is a deep sea between saying and doing. When it comes to finally implementing these changes – taking them out of the meeting room and onto the water – the reel starts to drag. Whether because of willful opposition from entrenched interests, bureaucratic dysfunction, or simple inertia, it can and will be overcome.

Big Fish

We were denied the full benefits of the Billfish Conservation Act this year because of the Administration's foot-dragging. The BCA halted foreign imports of billfish, an estimated 30,000 marlin a year, but until a final rulemaking is in place, fish landed under an exemption for Hawaii are still being sold on the U.S. mainland. For two years now, *Wild Oceans* has submitted written comments, produced issue papers, and met with NOAA officials and attorneys arguing that the law's exemption should be enforced as sales-for-island-markets-only, as Congress intended. As our board member from Hawaii, Jody Bright, points out, the exemption is in honor of local people and local traditions – not an open door for large-scale commercial fishers to have a monopoly on sales to the mainland. NOAA missed another rulemaking deadline this year, drawing the atten-

tion and the ire of the BCA's original Congressional sponsors. A new deadline was set for February.

After adopting a goal of phasing out drift entanglement nets in the swordfish fishery in favor of cleaner, more sustainable fishing methods, the Pacific Fishery Management Council spent 2015 going in two directions. On the one hand, the Council is trying to keep the nets in the water as long as possible by making them “manageable” with hard caps on bycatch of vulnerable species; e.g., if an endangered turtle or protected marine mammal is caught, the fishery closes. They are considering limits on the take of billfish, too. On the other hand, they are testing low-bycatch alternatives, most notably deep-set buoy gear, which is now in line to become an authorized gear in the fishery next year. Unfortunately, they've revived the option of allowing multi-mile longlines, a gear that, like drift nets, has no place in a sustainable future. The west coast angling community is mobilizing. (see page 3).

Meanwhile back on the Atlantic coast, where fishery managers continue to try and tame longlining, new measures enacted by NOAA Fisheries to reduce bycatch of overfished bluefin tuna took effect in 2015. All longlining must cease if an annual bycatch allowance of bluefin is reached; three new area closures were added in important bluefin feeding and spawning grounds, including the Gulf of Mexico; and reporting and monitoring of all longline vessels was beefed. The early results are encouraging: through October 31 of this year, total bycatch was down by 42% from the same time last year, saving hundreds of giant spawning-age tuna.

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Little Fish

When the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission initiated Amendment 3 to the Interstate Menhaden Plan earlier this year, it acknowledged that the trade-offs associated with managing menhaden to serve only industrial fisheries, as we are now, versus maintaining adequate forage to meet ecosystem needs, cannot be addressed until fishery managers adopt ecosystem goals and use them to inform and guide management decisions. The new amendment is designed to base management on ecological reference points (ERPs). Actions at the ASMFC's year-end meeting, however, cast doubt on the commission's commitment to ecosystem-based management. They've now given themselves the option of making this long-promised change over the next 2 years or studying the issue for another 5 or 6.

As reported in *Forage Goes First* on page 8, the Mid-Atlantic and Pacific Councils made big strides this year toward protecting the overall forage base to ensure sufficient prey for the many predators – larger fish, marine mammals, turtles and birds – resident or migrating offshore. Both councils initiated action to protect unmanaged forage species from new fisheries. It doesn't diminish the value of these precautionary measures to point out they are, when compared to needed reforms in the way we treat managed forage fisheries, low-hanging fruit. More conservative harvest rules for these fisheries, respecting their importance to the ecosystem, are still on the agenda and made more urgent by the collapse of the sardine fishery on the west coast and the drastic decline of mackerel on the east coast.

Another essential component of the Atlantic ecosystem, river herring, is at historic lows. Next year, the Mid-Atlantic Council will be taking a close look at whether or not federal management actions taken thus far, such as the river herring bycatch cap in federal trawl fisheries, have been effective – regrettably, the cap, already hampered by poor observer coverage, was further undermined this year by a refusal to cooperate by the New England, which co-manages the trawl fisheries – and whether or not we need to bring these ocean migratory species into a federal fishery management plan.

We are on the verge of another milestone in ecosystem-based fisheries management, the Deep Sea Corals Amendment approved this year by the Mid-Atlantic Council. It will protect 38,000 square miles of deep sea coral habitat, an area as large as the state of Kentucky, and include coral communities in 15 canyon systems seaward of the Mid-Atlantic States. The Council still has work to do (and so do we) regarding regulatory measures and monitoring inside the zones, and that's after it gets approval from the Administration, but inarguably this is a big win for habitat conservation.

It's been a challenging year, but one in which we saw the goals we've set come closer to fruition. We can't save the ocean, and certainly not the future of fishing, with silver bullets. It's hard work and it takes time. But we firmly believe the long-term answer is in finding ways to co-exist with wild oceans, through a true ecosystems approach, not zoning the ocean into parks, farms and industry shares. ■



More
conservative
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PACIFIC AND MID-ATLANTIC COUNCILS PRIORITIZE
UNMANAGED PREY BASE IN ECOSYSTEM INITIATIVES

Forage goes first



by Pam Lyons Gromen,
Executive Director

In 2006, *Wild Oceans* (then National Coalition for Marine Conservation) launched its Forage First campaign, calling on fishery managers to protect predator-prey relationships as the first step toward an ecosystem-based approach to management. We laid out a blueprint for moving forward that included preventing the expansion of forage fisheries and imposing moratoriums on the development of new fisheries until ecological reference points that provide for predator needs are developed. (see our report *Taking the Bait*, in the WildOceans.org library)

Today, we celebrate substantial progress in forage fish conservation, as federal councils act to protect unmanaged forage fish in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans from commercial exploitation. For both the Pacific and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, protecting unmanaged forage fish rose to the top of potential initiatives to tackle under their newly developed plans for moving to ecosystem-based fishery management. Forage is first.

On the West Coast

In September, the Pacific Fishery Management Council met in Sacramento to complete the first action under its Fishery Ecosystem Plan, adopted in 2013. The action, known as Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 1 (CEBA 1), protects unmanaged and unfished forage fish in the California Current from directed commercial fishing. The

Pacific Council approved regulations, drafted by the National Marine Fisheries Service, that identify a suite of unmanaged forage fish as ecosystem component species in each of the Council's four fishery management plans, a designation that recognizes critical food web links to council-managed predators.

The Pacific Council's action came just in time. The Pacific sardine stock has declined dramatically in recent years, triggering a fishery closure, and the commercial fishery is shifting effort to other managed stocks, like anchovy, to make up the difference. CEBA 1 prevents commercial boats from targeting unmanaged species, such as round herring, Pacific saury and pelagic squids, unless and until we understand the consequence of exploitation.

Notably the Council's action also removed Pacific saury, with historic landings of over 7 million pounds, from a list of pre-approved fisheries. The Council's intent is to prevent revitalization of the fishery without adequate information to prevent harmful impacts.

On the East Coast

In December 2014, the Mid-Atlantic Council initiated a regulatory action "to prohibit the development of new, or expansion of existing, directed fisheries on unmanaged forage species until adequate scientific information is available to promote ecosystem sustainability." This marks the first action to stem from the Council's developing Ecosystem Approaches to Fisheries Management Guidance Document, which features forage fish as a key area of focus.

After soliciting public input earlier this year, the Mid-Atlantic Council, at its October meeting, decided to follow the approach of the Pacific Council by initiating an omnibus amendment to incorporate unmanaged forage fish into all relevant fishery management plans as ecosystem component species.

The need for the action was underscored by news about fisheries the Council has no handle on. An emerging fishery for chub mackerel, an unmanaged forage fish important to swordfish, tuna and sharks, was revealed through public scoping. Landings, nearly all of which occurred in New Jersey, jumped from 63,000 pounds in 2012 to over 4.3 million pounds in 2013. Fishermen characterize the high landings as a rare opportunity; however, they insist they should be able to target the fish when they are available.

Allowing the targeting of unmanaged forage fish by federally-permitted vessels would be inconsistent with ecosystem component species designation, which is not intended for stocks that are targeted and retained for sale. In fact, it would circumvent a crucial piece of the amendment's scope, which is defining a pathway for forage fisheries to develop sustainably, in manner that protects the ecosystem's food web.

Work continued on the unmanaged forage amendment at the December Council meeting in Annapolis, where guidance was given for the development of alternatives that include limits on catch. The Mid-Atlantic Council plans to complete its amendment in June 2016. ■

Staff travel log



Wild Oceans president Ken Hinman was appointed to represent the environmental community at a two-day Menhaden Ecosystem Management Objectives Workshop held August 31-September 1 in **Hanover, Maryland**. The workshop is part of the ASMFC's commitment to develop ecological reference points through its new Amendment 3. Participants included members of the Menhaden Management Board, technical committee, and commercial and recreational stakeholders. The group agreed that a fundamental management objective is to sustain an adequate supply of menhaden for individual predators and the food web as a whole, while maintaining ecosystem resiliency and stability. The unresolved question is how. At the request of Hinman and David Sikorski of the Maryland CCA, the Lenfest Forage Fish Task Force presented its findings in a webinar prior to the workshop. In advance of the ASMFC's November meeting, Wild Oceans, Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Pew Charitable Trusts submitted a joint letter endorsing the 75% solution – leaving three-quarters of un-fished biomass in the ocean for ecosystem services – as a means of “accounting for all predators in the ecosystem with a precautionary balance of ecosystem and fishery needs.” (see *The 75% Solution*, p. 4)



Mary Barley, Wild Oceans board member since 1998, was the featured honoree at an Atlantic Salmon Federation Dinner in **New York, New York** on November 11. The theme of this year's ceremony was Game Changers: Women in Wild Atlantic Salmon and Environmental Conservation. Mary's lifetime commitment as a passionate angler and environmentalist has led her to champion numerous causes, from restoration of the Florida Everglades to preserving wild salmon, wild rivers and wild oceans. Wild Oceans chairman Tim Choate and president Ken Hinman were in attendance to help celebrate Mary's big night.



Wild Oceans Executive Director Pam Lyons Gromen, who serves on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Advisory Panel (AP), participated in the second AP meeting to develop policy documents concerning anthropogenic impacts to fish habitat. At the meeting, held in **Baltimore,**

Maryland on September 9th, advisors refined policies on marine transport and coastal development, which included recommendations regarding water quality impacts. The policies, approved by the Council on December 7th, will be used to communicate habitat concerns and positions to federal and state partners.



Theresa Labriola, Wild Oceans West Coast Fisheries Project Director, attended the Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting held September 10-13 in **Sacramento, California**. The Council was poised to advance ecosystem based fisheries management and clean up the Pacific drift gillnet swordfish fishery. Theresa testified in favor of the proposed regulations to protect unfished and unmanaged forage fish from directed fishing and the commencement of Initiative 2, a review of the indicators to evaluate the health of the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem. The Council moved forward on both ecosystem initiatives. Theresa also asked the Council to protect our ocean ecosystem from indiscriminate driftnets. The Council voted to limit the bycatch of marine mammals and sea turtles through biannual caps, but did not limit finfish bycatch..



Pam took part in a workshop hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) on September 22nd followed by a meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB) on September 23-24 in **Norfolk, Virginia**. Formed by a governors agreement in 2009, MARCO members represent the governments of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. MARCO provides support for the larger Mid-Atlantic RPB, which is comprised of state, federal, tribal and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council representatives. Stakeholder comments from the MARCO workshop fed into the 2-day RPB meeting, where key components of a Regional Ocean Action Plan were discussed. Two over-arching goals shape the plan: 1) healthy ocean ecosystem, and 2) sustainable ocean uses. Pam testified on the need to develop indicators that can be used to both monitor the state of the ocean and inform decision making, insisting that the healthy oceans goal could not be met without these important tools. Working with a number of like-mind-

ed groups and organizations, Wild Oceans continues to engage in opportunities to strengthen the action plan, which is scheduled for completion in 2016.



Theresa attended the September 28 scoping hearing for the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's action to protect unmanaged forage species held in **Narragansett, Rhode Island**. She provided details about the Pacific Council's process and progress towards protecting unmanaged and unfished forage fish.



At its October 6-8 meeting in **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**, the Mid-Atlantic Council voted to move forward with an omnibus amendment to protect unmanaged forage species in Mid-Atlantic federal waters. The omnibus action will amend relevant fishery management plans to recognize the important food web linkages between the forage base and council-managed species. During the public scoping period prior to the meeting, Pam submitted detailed written comments supporting an omnibus approach, which she referenced in her testimony at the meeting. (see *Forage Goes First*, p. 8)



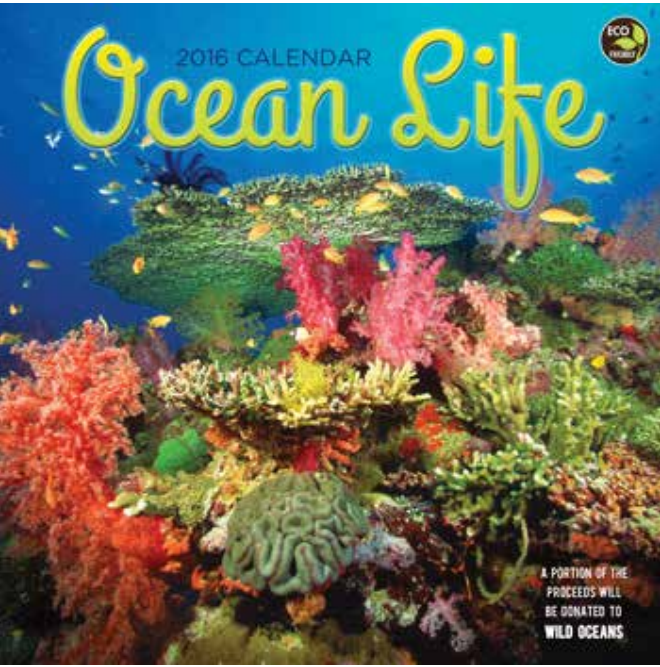
The Pacific Council met in **Garden Grove, California** on November 12-16 for their final meeting of 2015. More than 30 recreational fishermen attended with Theresa to ask the Council to keep longlines out of the Pacific, restrict driftnets and advance more sustainable, actively tended gear like deep set buoy gear. (see *Fishermen Catch Pacific Council's Attention*, p. 3). Theresa also monitored the Council's review of new research on the central subpopulation of northern anchovy and supported the Council's recommendation to complete a stock assessment by November 2016.



Pam traveled to **Annapolis, Maryland** on December 8th where the Mid-Atlantic Council reviewed the progress of the unmanaged forage omnibus amendment and provided guidance to the Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) for the development of alternatives. Importantly, the Council agreed that defining a pathway to sustainable forage fisheries was an essential component of the action and directed the FMAT to develop options for inclusion in the amendment. ■

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