

**Wild
Oceans**
For the future of fishing

The Horizon

Parks and recreation

by Ken Hinman, Wild Oceans President

Cashes Ledge in the Gulf of Maine and canyons and seamounts offshore of New England are being proposed as national monuments, making these unique areas “ecological reserves,” protected from the ocean floor to the surface. Most advocates want all resource uses prohibited, including fishing.

The move to designate marine parks, including candidate areas in Florida’s Biscayne Bay and waters around the Hawaiian Islands, is modeled after our National Park System, which preserves cultural and natural resources of outstanding beauty and ecological value. Noted marine biologist Sylvia Earle, a proponent of monument status, has called Cashes Ledge “the Yellowstone of the North Atlantic.”

But Yellowstone National Park allows fishing. According to the U.S. Park Service, “Fishing has been a major visitor activity for well over a century. Because of this history, fishing continues to be allowed and can complement, and in some cases even enhance, the park’s primary purpose to preserve natural environments and native species.” Rules vary from park to park; commercial fishing is never permitted and some allow no fishing at all.

Wild Oceans believes that marine parks can play an important role in preserving ocean ecosystems for the generations to come, even as we stay mindful of protecting the ability of the fishing public to enjoy the ocean’s wildness. It’s a delicate balance that requires assessing the purpose of each park and its regulations, including whether or not to allow fishing, on a case-by-case basis.

Fishing may be prohibited where it is impossible to sustain, as in the case of a compromised coral reef system. Or for study purposes, where a pristine area is maintained in its natural state, free from any human influence, a place where we can observe what an undisturbed ecosystem looks like and how it functions.

But we must be very careful not to use marine parks as a substitute for sound resource management. We believe that learning to coexist with the sea, by changing the way we fish, by fishing as part of the natural system, is ultimately the best way to protect wild oceans. Our park system on land provides both a model and a warning. We’ve given extraordinary protection to a few prescribed areas while allowing helter-skelter exploitation outside their boundaries, where we live, work and play. In the ocean, that kind of dichotomy can only undermine the future of fishing. ■

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- OCEAN VIEW: FEAR OF THE KNOWN 2
- WILD OCEANS CHAIR TIM CHOATE JOINS FISHING HALL OF FAME 3
- HINMAN TO GIVE KEYNOTE SPEECH AT INTERNATIONAL BILLFISH SYMPOSIUM 3
- NEXT YEAR’S MODEL (MENHADEN) 4
- A WIN FOR MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN PREDATORS 6
- A GENERATION’S CHANCE TO TIP THE SCALES FOR BLUEFIN 7
- STAFF TRAVEL LOG 8
- NEW WILD OCEANS LOGO CAP 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.

Fear of the known

Get this.

- The California Department of Fish & Wildlife, which is consistently looking for ways to keep mile-long drift entanglement nets in west coast waters, even in known sea turtle habitat, is holding up authorization of new, cleaner ways of catching swordfish – namely deep-set buoy gear – because they're worried about “effects to the environment, as well as interactions with both habitat and non-target species.” They want a full analysis of the gear under NEPA, the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act – the same federal laws the drift net fishery has been running afoul of for years – before the Pacific Council approves an actively-tended hook-and-line fishery with no history of bycatch. (see *Pacific Council Flip-Flops on Greener Gear* at wildoceans.org)
- The Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee, which is just fine with a *status quo* fishing regime they admit does not account for the impact on predators and the ecosystem, rejects “best practices”

ecological reference points recommended by numerous outside science panels because they can't quantify the effect of leaving more menhaden in the water on populations of striped bass *et al.* They want to build new, complex models first. (see *Next Year's Model*, page 4)

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"The manager accepts the status quo; the leader challenges it."

— Warren Bennis

What we've got is the precautionary principle turned against itself.

Does it really make sense to allow our fishermen to continue using an indiscriminate, industrial-scale method of fishing with known bycatch problems, and not let them switch to a new, small-scale fishing gear that's already undergone 5 years of research, development and experimental fishing, with no bycatch problems whatsoever? Or to demand a level of certainty about the impacts of setting aside more prey fish for predators that we do not de-

mand of our current single-species catch levels, even though our avowed goal is providing adequate forage?

In each case, the precautionary thing to do is to fish more conservatively while we continue our studies, because we *know*, right now, that promoting cleaner alternatives to drift netting and maintaining a higher abundance of menhaden and other forage species will benefit other fish and wildlife and the ecosystem as a whole. It's not being precautionary to hold off making these changes until we know exactly how *much* they will benefit.

There's an old Persian proverb that goes, in part, “He who knows, and knows not that he knows, is asleep, wake him.” The public is wide awake and shaking the fishery establishment from its slumber. As a result, we are making historic changes in the way we fish and conserve fish, the *Wild Oceans* mission.

Those who resist change do so as much out of fear of the known as of the unknown, a last desperate attempt to hold on to the past. Nevertheless, they must be contended with and overcome. And they will be.

– 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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HONORING A LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENTS
FOR FISH CONSERVATION

Wild oceans chair tim choate joins fishing hall of fame



Tim Choate of Coral Gables, Florida, an ardent angler since the mid-1950s, is being honored for a lifetime of contributions to the sport of offshore fishing and marine conservation. At a ceremony on September 13th, he will be inducted into the prestigious International Game Fish Association Hall of Fame.

The IGFA Hall of Fame recognizes extraordinary achievements in recreational fishing around the world by anglers, captains, scientists, conservationists, writers, or fishing industry leaders. Each Hall of Fame member is honored with a plaque at the IGFA

Fishing Hall of Fame in Dania Beach, Florida.

Tim Choate has been a member of the board of directors of *Wild Oceans*, the United States' oldest saltwater fish conservation group, since the 1980s and has served as Chairman of the Board since 2010. In its announcement, the IGFA also points out that Tim co-founded The Billfish Foundation and pioneered the use of circle hooks the world over to enhance the survival rates of released billfish, long before their successful catch rates were proven. Choate has also helped to highlight the importance of studies

by national governments and conservation groups to show the social and economic value of fish for recreation over commercial use.

Wild Oceans is extremely proud of Tim, and proud that as part of the 2016 class of Hall of Fame inductees, he will become the fifth *Wild Oceans* director, past and present, to be so honored, joining former directors Hal Lyman, John Rybovich, Rip Cunningham, Stephen Sloan and Karl Wickstrom.

Get more information at the IGFA web site, www.igfa.org. ■

Hinman to give keynote speech at international billfish symposium

Wild Oceans president Ken Hinman will give the Keynote Address at the 6th International Billfish Symposium to be held in Dania Beach, Florida September 15-17. His talk will kick off the gathering of fishermen, scientists and policy makers on the morning of the 15th to be followed by 2 ½ days of sessions on management, stock assessment, migrations, habitat, biology and fisheries. The symposium is sponsored by IGFA, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Offield Center for Billfish Studies, and the Guy Harvey Foundation among others.

Ken was invited to set the stage for the symposium because of his expertise and decades of devotion to billfish science and conservation. He has served in numerous advisory positions at the national and international levels and written dozens of articles on marlin and swordfish conservation. Notably, he organized the 2nd International Billfish Symposium in Kona, Hawaii in 1988, a 5-day gathering that produced two published volumes and for which he was awarded The Billfish Foundation's Conservation Award that year.

For more information check out the Billfish Symposium web site, www.bfsymposium.org. ■

Next year's model

by Ken Hinman, President

As I write this, the ASMFC is working on Amendment 3 to its coast-wide Atlantic Menhaden Management Plan, which will include ecosystem-based reference points to protect menhaden's vital role as forage. The commission will seek public input at the end of the year and then draft the amendment next year for implementation in 2018. East coast anglers and conservationists have been waiting 15 years for this change in the way menhaden are managed, and we've never been closer.

The big fly in the ointment, however, is that the scientists advising the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) reject more generalist, best practices approaches to conserving forage fish, such as the ecological reference points recommended by the Lenfest Forage Fish Task Force, or The Berkeley Criterion as described in the *Wild Oceans* report, [Resource Sharing](#). Instead, they favor spending the next three years developing complex food web models specific to menhaden with the hope of someday using these to determine how much menhaden to leave in the water for the ecosystem.

But based on what we know about the complexity of marine ecosystems and the limitations of models, is that a reasonable expectation?

The biggest mistake any fishery scientists – and here we're talking about an *ad hoc* subgroup of the Menhaden Technical Committee known as the Biological Ecosystem Reference Point Workgroup, or BERP – can make is to approach ecosystem models as merely more complicated versions of the single-species models they are familiar with. They are not. Systems theory recognizes a critical difference between systems that are “complicated” and those that are “complex”.

Yes, it is possible to mathematically

model complicated systems, given proper design, sufficient data and a reasonable understanding of the relationships among the constituent parts. But marine ecosystems are not complicated systems, they are *complex*, and “complex systems, like ecosystems, are not fully knowable, have an infinite number of variables affecting them, and cannot be understood with sufficient precision to assess causality with any certainty or to predict the outcome of interventions reliably.”¹

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"A model's just an imitation of the real thing."

— Mae West

In other words, it is highly unlikely that a complex, organic ecosystem, or even a subset of that system, such as a food web made up of numerous competing predators and their associated prey, can be modeled *for management purposes*; that is, in the mechanistic way we traditionally use single-species models. Ecosystems are not machines.

Keep in mind that our current stock assessment models, which only attempt to sustain a single predator – humans – are complicated and difficult enough. Even the conventional single-species model used to assess Atlantic menhaden and make projections as to sustainable catches is fraught with uncertainty.

That should be obvious when one considers the degree to which the results can differ from one assessment to the next, merely through changes in assumptions, new interpretations and adjustments in data. The 2010 menhaden benchmark stock assessment, which went through a rigorous independent peer review process and, on the advice of menhaden scientists, was formally accepted by the ASMFC's Menhaden Management Board for management use, indicated the spawning biomass was well below the threshold, indicating a se-

verely overfished stock. The 2015 benchmark assessment, which also was peer reviewed and accepted for management use, showed the spawning biomass to be well above the target level, indicating a healthy stock.

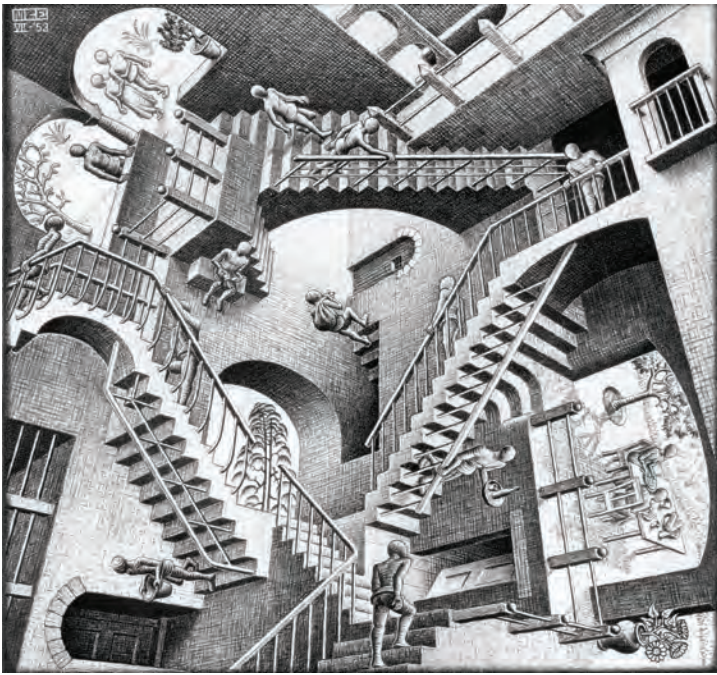
The point here is not to argue whether one assessment is a more accurate portrayal of the status of the menhaden population than the other, but rather to demonstrate that even single-species models are so complicated as to be easily manipulated, and I don't mean that in the pejorative sense. The word modelers prefer is “calibrated,” but it amounts to the same thing.

The Perfect Model?

The many uncertainties inherent in single-species models are amplified exponentially in multispecies models, where cause and effect become far less knowable and much less predictable.

To be sure, multispecies models have advantages over their single-species counterparts in informing decisions at the ecosystem level, but in each case they are offset by the disadvantages. For instance, they allow complex systems to be simplified to the point where we can comprehend them, but if they are oversimplified – which they must be to have any utility as a management tool – realism and accuracy are lost. They allow predictions to be made about future events at an ecosystem scale, but those predictions cannot be considered reliable for making fishery management decisions. They allow for comparison of different management scenarios involving various inter-related species, but different models have different outcomes and complex models can be interpreted differently by different scientists.

On this last point, it's clear that using multispecies or ecosystems models appeals to fishery scientists advising management bodies because they are familiar and comfortable with using models



Is this how we get there? (*Relativity* by M.C. Escher)

for applying single-species reference points to single-species assessments. However, for most of these scientists, ecosystem models are a brand new endeavor, an experiment.

The ASMFC's menhaden scientists are, of course, well aware of this. The BERP has made it clear that, even when they've completed work on developing ecosystem models for menhaden several years down the road, they cannot recommend ecological reference points (abundance targets and fishing limits) until managers provide "a more explicit statement of ecological/ecosystem goals and objectives for menhaden management and the performance of the proposed ERPs and the models used to generate them can be formally evaluated through multi-model comparisons, simulation testing, and the completion of single (and possibly multispecies) management strategy evaluations."ⁱⁱ

So let's add several more years to the timeline, which takes us to about 2022. That's a long time away, and in the end, as we've been saying all along, it will come down to members of the Menhaden Management Board making an allocation decision between fisheries and the ecosystem.

When I think about the enormity of the task these scientists are taking on, I'm

reminded of Al Goodman's idea for developing the perfect computer. "You just feed in your problems, and they never come out again." For those on the Board and in the fishing industry who don't want to ever manage menhaden for its forage value, that's the perfect model.

us away from popular misconceptions toward ideas and actions that benefit humanity.ⁱⁱⁱ It's not anti-science, it's enhancing scientific inquiry with traditional sources of wisdom, i.e., basic ecological principles, practical knowledge and common sense. That's what I attempted to do in developing The Berkeley Criterion^{iv} and what is at the root of the Lenfest and similar approaches, which were all developed by fishery ecologists, i.e., scientists, using available scientific studies.

The crux of the BERP's criticism of these general services approaches (in short-hand, leaving 75% of the un-fished forage population in the water and fishing at half the rate of predation mortality) is that "these reference points assume that you are accounting for ecosystem services in a general way, but they do not address specific services. As such, these methods represent more a 'rule of thumb' than an actual accounting of removals."

As if rules of thumb, or broad management guidelines, are not common in fisheries science or management. We want to account for ecosystem services "in a general way"; that's what an ecosystem-based approach is all about, the big picture, not just providing "specific services". Moreover, "an actual

accounting of removals" is something we've never been able to do, even for use in single-species stock assessments, i.e., determine an accurate estimate of natural mortality. And even if we could, it would not assure us that this level of removals is what we're aiming for. Ecologists emphasize the importance of maintaining enough prey to meet the needs of predators, which is vastly different from what they may be consuming now. For many top predators, the amount of food they need to consume is less than the amount they need to have in the environment in order to forage effectively, for some by several orders of magnitude.^v

'A Rule of Thumb'

So, yes, I'm a skeptic. But skepticism is not a position; it's a process, one where critical thinking leads

It was the Menhaden Management Board's intent in initiating Amendment 3 that these approaches, which are ready for implementation by 2018, be included in the Public Information Document that will go out for comment later this year.

Given that the 75% solution is clearly a legitimate approach to developing ERPs for menhaden, with broad support within the scientific community at-large, the ASMFC must seriously consider it as an option in Amendment 3. Those on the Board and among its advisors who wish to ignore this approach and keep kicking the solution into the long grass where we may never find it, can do so. But if they choose to remain unresponsive to either the ASMFC's broad east coast constituency of anglers and conservationists or to the health of the ecosystem, they can't claim to be hiding behind the science. ■

(Endnotes)

ⁱ Pollard, Dave. Systems Thinking and Complexity 101. June 14, 2014.

ⁱⁱ SEDAR. 2015. SEDAR 40 – Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Report. SEDAR, North Charleston SC. Appendix E, p. 30.

ⁱⁱⁱ Dunning, Brian. What is Skepticism? Skeptoid.com.

^{iv} Hinman, K. 2015. Resource Sharing: The Berkeley Criterion. Wild Oceans. <http://wildoceans.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/RESOURCE-SHARING-Updated-4-19-16.pdf>

^v Furness, Robert W. Reference point approaches for precautionary management of fishing to avoid impacts on top predators. University of Glasgow. 2003. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265012253>



A win for mid-atlantic ocean predators

On August 8th in Virginia Beach, Rick Robins, chairman of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, opened the meeting heralding the Council’s efforts over the last five years to lay out a pathway for moving toward ecosystem-based fishery management – a pathway that positioned the Council to undertake historic action to protect the region’s unmanaged forage species. Later that day, the Council completed its Unmanaged Forage Omnibus Amendment, which once approved and implemented by the National Marine Fisheries Service, will safeguard more than 50 forage species from becoming targets of new or expanded fisheries in Mid-Atlantic federal waters (3-200 miles from the coastline) until there is sufficient information to consider ecosystem impacts and ensure sustainability.

“Through its leadership, the Mid-Atlantic Council has demonstrated that advancing ecosystem-based approaches is a tangible goal, one that we believe is essential to the future of fishing,” wrote *Wild Oceans* Executive Director Pam Lyons Gromen in comments to the Council. More than 21,000 members of the public weighed in during the comment period to support the amendment.

A wide range of the region’s predators will benefit from the Council’s actions, including many fish predators important to anglers. In a letter submitted by Dr. John Graves, Chair of the Department of Fisheries Science at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) and Chair of the U.S. Advisory Committee to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), Dr. Graves wrote of his 25 years of experience sampling the diets of billfish and large tunas caught in Mid-Atlantic fishing tournaments. He found that small mackerels – frigate, bullet and chub mackerel – were dominant prey for these prized highly migratory

species. All three mackerels are included in the Council’s omnibus amendment.

Every taxa in the Council’s list (see table below) with the exception of chub mackerel will be protected from large-scale fishing through a restrictive incidental possession limit of 1700 pounds for all species combined.

Unmanaged Forage Taxa
Anchovies (family Engraulidae)
Argentines (family Argentiniidae)
Greeneyes (family Chlorophthalmidae)
Halfbeaks (family Hemiramphidae)
Herrings, sardines (family Clupeidae)
Lanternfish (family Myctophidae)
Pearlsides (family Sternoptychidae)
Sand lances (family Ammodytidae)
Silversides (family Atherinopsidae)
Cusk eels (order Ophidiiformes)
Chub mackerel (<i>Scomber colias</i>)
Bullet mackerel/bullet tuna (<i>Auxis rochei</i>)
Frigate mackerel/frigate tuna (<i>Auxis thazard</i>)
Atlantic saury (<i>Scomberesox saurus</i>)
Pelagic molluscs, except sharp-tail shortfin squid (<i>Illex oxygonius</i>)
Copepods, Krill, Amphipods & other species < 1 inch as adults

Chub mackerel is a stand out. As the amendment developed, the Council learned that a chub mackerel fishery had recently developed without its knowledge. The fishery, consisting of a handful of large bottom trawlers that also target shortfin squid, exceeded 5 million pounds of chub landings in 2013, nearly all of which were taken in summer months when recreational tournaments are at their peak. This concentrated fishing could jeopardize highly migratory species and the fisheries that depend on them. Dr. Graves writes,

“It should be noted that the forage species not only provide the energetic basis that ultimately limits the ‘carrying capacity’ of the higher trophic levels, but in sufficient numbers (and density), the forage species attract and hold those highly migratory species, making them available to our commercial and recreational fisheries.”

Over the next three years, the Council will collect information to evaluate adding chub mackerel to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish Fishery Management Plan, which would require specification of optimum yield defined as “the amount of fish that will provide the greatest overall benefit to the Nation, particularly with respect to food production and recreational opportunities and taking into account the protection of marine ecosystems.” In the interim, the Council voted to hold chub mackerel landings at the 3-year average of 2.86 million pounds with an incidental allowance of 40,000 pounds per trip once the landings limit is reached.

Later in the week, before Chairman Robins, who served three consecutive council terms, turned over the gavel to incoming Chair Mike Luisi of Maryland, the Council approved an Ecosystem Approaches to Management Guidance Document, outlining policies for forage fish, habitat, climate change and fishery interactions – policies intended to guide future council initiatives and advance ecosystem considerations, consistent with the Council’s vision of “healthy and productive marine ecosystems supporting thriving, sustainable marine fisheries that provide the greatest overall benefit to stakeholders.”

“The move to ecosystem-based management is often described as taking incremental steps. *Wild Oceans* congratulates the Mid-Atlantic Council for giving those steps solid footing and direction,” said Lyons Gromen. ■

A generation's chance to tip the scales for bluefin

by Theresa Labriola,
West Coast Fisheries Project Director

More than a century ago at the Conference of Natural Resources, Teddy Roosevelt spoke about the immediate need to examine our nation's consumption and exhaustion of natural resources. He said "It is time for us now as a nation to exercise the same reasonable foresight in dealing with our great natural resources that would be shown by any prudent man in conserving and widely using the property which contains the assurance of well-being for himself and his children." And although he was well known for his passionate preservation of our terrestrial resources, his ethic extends to our marine resources and our national and international management of Pacific bluefin tuna. He highlighted that this responsibility belongs to the current generation, not only to the next century or the next generation.

Pacific bluefin tuna are at a tipping point, and *Wild Oceans* is fighting for far-reaching international action to protect the species. The most recent stock assessment conducted by a team of international scientists at the International Scientific Community for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) estimates that less than 3% or about 17,000 tons of the historic spawning biomass remains. That means, before fishing began, the north Pacific Ocean contained more than 650,000 tons of spawning bluefin.

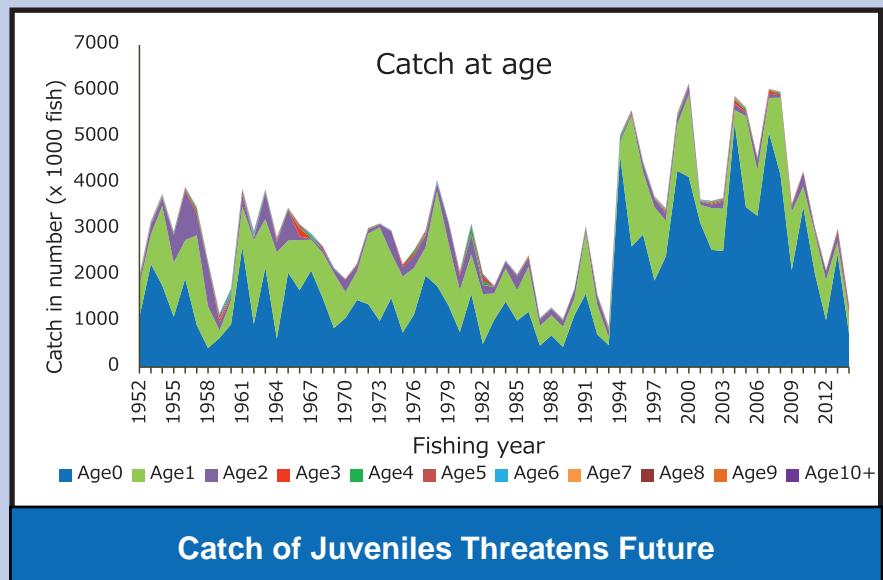
The stagnant state of spawning bluefin at 17,000 tons isn't the only alarming statistic. In the early 1990s, the catch of the smallest bluefin tuna increased significantly to about 4 million fish per year before declining along with overall catch. (see graph) Catching a high number of smaller, juvenile fish, before they reproduce, can have a greater impact on the future of the stock. In short, the smallest bluefin are the future of the fishery.

Throughout their life history, Pacific bluefin are susceptible to fishing pressure in both the eastern and western Pacific. The smallest offspring, age-0 fish,

are caught by commercial fisheries in Japan. Those that evade capture then migrate northeast or cross the Pacific and spend 3 to 5 years feeding and growing. During this time they are pursued by commercial and recreational fishermen. Those fish that reach maturity spawn in the Sea of Japan in the north Pacific Ocean in April. This is the only known spawning ground. Spawning tuna group together in large concentrations making them highly vulnerable to commercial fishing.

Management of transpacific bluefin, however, is not cohesive, but is divided between the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), which manages bluefin in the western Pacific, and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), which oversees juvenile bluefin in the eastern Pacific. Similarly, the ISC and IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee research and integrate scientific data to provide conservation advice to the WCPFC and IATTC respectively.

With spawning stock biomass hovering at historic lows, the WCPFC and IATTC recently took steps to reduce harvest. In the U.S the recreational trip limit was reduced from 10 fish to 2, and Mexico scaled back its commercial catch. The WCPFC recommended a reduction of fishing effort on fish smaller than 30 kg.



But, bluefin requires more protective measures. We are advocating for management that quickly rebuilds a stronger, larger spawning stock. Managers must follow scientific advice in order to set catch limits that are more biologically conservative. Then, the international community must agree on time and area closures to reduce harvest of bluefin on spawning grounds in the western Pacific and ease the fishing pressure on age-0 and juveniles in the eastern and western Pacific.


The recreational fishery for Pacific bluefin weighs in at less than 5% of the global catch. This small haul might not stack up to the commercial catch, but *Wild Oceans* is raising the voice of our generation's conservation-minded recreational fishermen who have an expanding concern for the health of the ocean and the impact of fishing. To kick off our campaign, we attended a host of national and international meetings (see our travel log on p. 8) and will attend the Northern Committee meeting of the WCPFC and the first joint meeting between WCPFC and IATTC. We'll pursue comprehensive ocean-wide conservation measures for Pacific bluefin tuna. In this fight, the weight of a small non-profit, representing a vital recreational fishery pursuing protections for juveniles, can help tip the scales for bluefin. ■


WE ARE THERE TO FIGHT FOR THE FISH


Wild oceans staff travel log





Sapporo, Japan

 The Pacific Fishery Management Council met in **Vancouver, Washington** April 9-14 in part to set harvest levels for sardine. West Coast Fisheries Project Director Theresa Labriola urged the Council to extend the current closure of the directed commercial sardine fishery in light of sardine's static stock status. The Council took this action while allowing for incidental catch as well as allocating catch for live bait operations. She also participated in the Habitat Committee's discussion of ecosystem indicators.

 *Wild Oceans* Executive Director Pam Lyons Gromen traveled to **Montauk, New York** to attend the April 11-13 meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Federal Management of river herring (alewives and blueback herring) and shad (American and hickory shad) was back on the agenda in response to a court order that found the Council had failed to consider environmental impacts when it voted not to proceed with adding these forage species to a federal fishery management plan in 2013. *Wild Oceans* has been a strong advocate of complementary federal management of river herring and shad, believing that the current patchwork of actions created by the Atlantic State Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), and the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils leaves too many holes to add up to successful recovery.


 This year, NOAA Fisheries evaluated their ecosystem science programs that inform the management, protection, and restoration of resilient and productive ecosystems. Theresa attended the Southwest Fisheries Science Center Review in **La Jolla** on April 18-20. She commented generally about the Center's leadership role investing in ecosystem science and the Integrated Ecosystem Assessment work necessary for implementing ecosystem based fisheries management and specifically encouraged the Center to prioritize current research and data to assemble a forage abundance estimate and forage status indicator that can be used to set a target fishing level that minimizes the impact of fishing on the health of the California Current Ecosystem.

 The Southwest Fishery Science Center hosted a Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Stock Assessment Workshop in **La Jolla, California** May 2-5 to develop methods for conducting stock assessment of short-lived CPS on the U.S. West Coast, with an emphasis on the central subpopulation of northern anchovy. Theresa participated in the meeting discussions and will review and comment on the Workshop Report that the Southwest Fishery Science Center will present to the Council in September.


 The **San Diego** Rod and Reel Club held their monthly meeting on May 5th and invited *Wild Oceans* to


speak about our role in protecting fishing for the future in the Pacific. Theresa attended and presented *Wild Oceans'* history of accomplishments, and our continued work to protect important southern California recreational species such as Pacific bluefin tuna.


 Theresa attended a series of science and management meetings of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) held in **La Jolla, California**, including: the Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting held May 9-15, the General Advisory Committee (GAC) to the U.S. Section to IATTC on May 27, the Scientific Advisory Committee to the GAC on May 26 and the 70th IATTC Meeting from June 27-July 1. The IATTC is responsible for the conservation and management of tuna and other marine resources in the eastern Pacific Ocean. She expressed support for stronger ocean-wide conservation measures to restore Pacific bluefin tuna stocks (see *A Generation's Chance to Tip the Scales for Bluefin*, p. 7). IATTC postponed any decisions on bluefin conservation measures until they resume their meeting in October 2016.

 Pam took part in an Atlantic herring workshop hosted by the New England Fishery Management Council in **Portland, Maine** on May 16-17. The workshop was held to support development of Amendment 8 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan, which will establish a long-term control


rule for setting herring catch limits within an ecosystem context, protecting herring's role as major forage species for predatory fish, birds and mammals. Workshop participants developed control rule objectives and performance metrics that are being used to develop a range of alternatives for the amendment.

 The Mid-Atlantic Council convened in **Newark, Delaware** June 13-16, where Pam spoke in support of a Council policy to address fishing impacts on habitat. This policy complements the series of policy documents approved by the Council in February that outline positions on non-fishing human impacts to habitat, including wind energy, offshore oil, marine transport, liquefied natural gas and coastal development.


 Theresa attended the Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in **Tacoma, Washington** from June 21-25. She participated in the Highly Migratory Species Management Team meeting as well as the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel meetings where they discussed authorization of deep-set buoy gear (DSBG), a cleaner, alternative method to catching swordfish off California. With Donald Krebs, a commercial swordfish fisherman, and Tara Brock from the Pew Charitable Trusts, Theresa presented joint public comments in support of authorizing DSBG. Despite overwhelming support from the commercial, recreational and environmental communities, the Council flip-flopped on its commitment to "rapidly authorize deep set buoy gear." She also asked the Council to submit a letter to the Northern Committee of the WCPFC in support of stronger protections for Pacific bluefin, and the Council agreed.

 Theresa was invited to speak at the monthly meeting of the **Los Angeles** Rod and Reel Club on June 27th. About 45 members of the Club attended the dinner meeting, listened to Theresa's presentation about *Wild Oceans*, our recent success to preserve unmanaged forage fish in the Pacific and how fishermen can get involved to


protect the future of fishing.


 On July 6 & 7, the Mid-Atlantic Council's Ecosystem and Ocean Planning (EOP) Advisory Panel and EOP Committee held consecutive meetings in **Baltimore, Maryland** to develop recommendations for the full Council to consider when selecting final alternatives to include in the Unmanaged Forage Omnibus Amendment. As an EOP advisor, Pam attended the meetings and spoke to the importance of including prey fish important to highly migratory predators like marlin, sharks and large tunas, and also to the need to manage the emerging chub mackerel fishery.


 Theresa attended the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) which met in **Sapporo, Japan** from July 13-18. Delegates from the Canada, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Republic of Korea and the United States reviewed stock status and drafted conservation advice for albacore, Pacific Bluefin tuna, blue marlin, striped marlin, swordfish, blue shark and short-fin mako shark. Their reports will be presented to the Western and Central Pacific Fishery Commission. She spoke with delegates specifically about *Wild Oceans'* concern about the historically low Pacific bluefin tuna stock as well as the continued overfishing of striped marlin.

 Open houses on the draft Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan were held throughout July, and Pam participated in the open house events in **Berlin, Maryland** and **Lewes, Delaware**. *Wild Oceans* has partnered with a coalition of like-minded ocean recreation and conservation groups in asking that the plan be strengthened by incorporating: 1) A short, definitive deadline — ideally by the end of 2016 — for identifying areas critical for the long-term health of the region's marine life; 2) agency commitments to conserve these ecologically important areas and identified areas of high biodiversity where more than 50 percent of the region's fish, birds, corals, and marine mammals can be found over the course

of a year; and, 3) agency commitments to identify a set of objectives and indicators for ocean health to regularly evaluate whether the plan is achieving the goal of a healthy ocean and to inform decisions.

 Theresa met with colleagues in **Monterey, California** on July 19 & 20 to discuss priorities and strategies for working together to advance our Pacific priorities, including ecosystem-based fisheries management, forage fish protections and the transition to cleaner gear in the highly migratory species fishery.

 The ASMFC Menhaden Management Board met in **Alexandria, Virginia** August 3rd to set the menhaden catch for the 2017 fishing season and review a draft Public Information Document on Amendment 3, whose purpose is to more fairly allocate menhaden among the fisheries and states and, most importantly, between the fisheries and the ecosystem with new ecological targets and limits. *Wild Oceans* president Ken Hinman, a member of the Menhaden Advisory Panel, attended the meeting and testified in favor of freezing the catch at current levels until Amendment 3 is completed in 2018. *Wild Oceans* took the lead on submitting a sign-on letter for fishing and conservation groups arguing that any increase in menhaden catch now would be premature and risk-prone since we don't know the impact on striped bass and other predators. At the end of the day, repeated motions to increase the catch up to 20% were defeated. However, no quota was set for next year and the issue will be revisited at the ASMFC's next meeting in October.

 Pam was in **Virginia Beach, Virginia** August 8-10 where the Mid-Atlantic Council made strides toward ecosystem-based management by approving an Ecosystem Approaches to Management Guidance Document and selecting final alternatives to include in an omnibus amendment to protect the region's unmanaged forage fish (see *A Win for Mid-Atlantic Ocean Predators*, p. 6). ■



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