



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC Releases Atlantic Menhaden Socioeconomic Report

Arlington, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission releases the report, “Socioeconomic Analysis of the Atlantic Menhaden Commercial Bait and Reduction Fishery,” which characterizes coastwide commercial menhaden fisheries, including bait and reduction sectors and the fishing communities they support. The report’s findings will be used to inform the Commission’s Atlantic Menhaden Management Board as it considers potential management changes to menhaden commercial bait and reduction fisheries through Draft Amendment 3. Additionally, information from the report will be incorporated into the socioeconomic section of Draft Amendment 3, which is scheduled to be released for public comment in August.



Photo © John Surrick, Chesapeake Bay Foundation

In March 2016, the Commission awarded a grant to the research team of Dr. John Whitehead of Appalachian State University and Dr. Jane Harrison from North Carolina Sea Grant to conduct a socioeconomic study of Atlantic menhaden commercial fisheries. Over the past year, the team has collected and analyzed data to describe the coastwide commercial fisheries. The team interviewed stakeholders and conducted industry surveys to characterize participation in the menhaden fishery, vessel and gear characteristics, as well as identify substitute products, subsidies, and other sources of employment. Interview and survey data also provided information on recent market changes, state-quota impacts, and fishing communities. In addition, a public opinion internet survey was conducted, involving over 2,000 respondents from Maine, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida. A secondary data analysis was conducted using Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program data on pounds landed, ex-vessel

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

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revenues, and trips. An economic impact analysis was also performed to evaluate the effects of varying levels of quota on both the bait and reduction sectors.

Some of the report's primary findings include:

- Interviews and surveys of commercial fishermen and other industry members found many agreed demand for menhaden bait, oil, and meal had increased in recent years.
- The public survey used hypothetical quota variations, with associated changes in fisheries revenue, jobs, and ecosystem services. Survey results indicated a willingness to trade-off some amounts of fisheries revenue in exchange for improvements in ecosystem services; however, willingness was influenced by the respondents' attitudes and characteristics (i.e. perceptions about the importance of menhaden as bait for recreational/commercial fishing, as a contributor to their state's economy, as a source of food for predators, etc.)
- Analysis of historic landings data found prices for menhaden were negatively related to landings levels, but the relationship was small and insignificant in some instances. This suggests quota reductions might reduce commercial fishery revenues, as decreases in landings are not fully compensated by higher prices.
- Analysis of the economic impacts of quota changes indicated increases and decreases in total allowable catch corresponded to income and employment increases and decreases, and these effects were concentrated in New Jersey and Virginia.

The full report can be found on the Commission's website at

http://www.asmfc.org/files/Atlantic%20Menhaden/ASMFC_MenhadenSocioeconomicReport_June2017.pdf. For more information, please contact Shanna Madsen, Fisheries Science Coordinator, at smadsen@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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