

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

ASMFC Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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Atlantic Menhaden Draft Amendment 3 Public Information Document Released for Public Comment

Arlington, VA – The Commission's Atlantic Menhaden Management Board releases for public comment the Public Information Document (PID) for Draft Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden. As the first step in the amendment process, the document seeks input from stakeholders and those interested in Atlantic menhaden about changes observed in the fishery/resource and potential management measures.

Draft Amendment 3 was initiated following Board review and acceptance of the 2015 Stock Assessment and Peer Review report, which found the menhaden resource in good condition -- not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. Population fecundity, a measure of reproductive capacity, was estimated to be roughly double the threshold value (86.8 trillion eggs). Additionally, total fishing mortality was estimated to be 0.22, below both the fishing mortality threshold (1.26) and target (0.38).

"The healthy condition of the resource combined with our expanding knowledge of ecosystem-based fisheries management has provided us a unique opportunity to reevaluate how this important fishery and resource can best be managed," stated Robert Ballou, Atlantic Menhaden Board Chair.

The PID outlines a number of issues in the fishery and solicits feedback on how the resource should be managed. Specifically, the PID presents a suite of tools to manage the menhaden resource using ecological reference points and provides options to allocate the resource among the states, regions, and user groups. In addition to the specific issues identified in the PID, commenters are welcome to provide input on all aspects of the fishery and resource, including recommendations for future management.

Stakeholders are encouraged to provide input on the PID either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. The PID can be obtained at http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/AtlMenhadenAmend3PID PublicComment.pdf or via the Commission's website, www.asmfc.org, under PublicComment.pdf or via the Commission's website, www.asmfc.org, under PublicInput. Public comment will be accepted until 5 PM (EST) on January 4, 2017 and should be forwarded to Megan Ware, Fishery Management Plan

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and

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the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating

<u>comments@asmfc.org</u> (Subject line: Menhaden PID). If your organization is planning to release an action alert related to the Amendment 3 PID, please contact Megan Ware at 703.842.0740 prior to its release.

It is anticipated the majority of states will be conducting public hearings over the next couple months. A subsequent press release will provide the details of those hearings. The Management Board will meet at the Commission's 2017 Winter Meeting to review and consider public comment and provide direction to staff for items to be included in the Draft Amendment 3.

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