



## SPEAKING UP...STANDING OUT

*"This year the testimonies from IPC and other religious groups were helpful in passing multiple bills, so I look forward to working with them to implement future actions."* — Delegate Dana Stein

Early in 2023, IPC hosted its annual Legislative Briefing with Interfaith Power and Light to discuss pivotal legislation for the upcoming legislative session.

IPC mobilized 480 advocates, amplifying their voices and influence. Later in the year, Executive Director Jodi Rose stood beside Governor Wes Moore as he signed three priority bills into law that will help advance environmental conservation and community well-being.

In addition, IPC partnered with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Chesapeake Bay Trust to channel funding and resources to congregations eager to plant trees and reforest their properties through our Trees for Sacred Places program in support of Maryland's 5 Million Trees legislation. Over the past 10 years, IPC congregations have planted more than 21,000 trees across the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Through this initiative, we hope that number keeps growing along with all of our trees!

Watch the 2023 Maryland Legislative Debrief  
<https://bit.ly/MDLegis>



Stay up-to-date with IPC's advocacy efforts!  
Scan the QR code or visit:  
[InterfaithChesapeake.org/Advocacy](https://InterfaithChesapeake.org/Advocacy)

Photo: Executive Director, Jodi Rose,  
with Maryland Governor Wes Moore



FWD: Menhaden

From: George Scocca [george@nyangler.com](mailto:george@nyangler.com)

To: Tom [foragematters@aol.com](mailto:foragematters@aol.com)

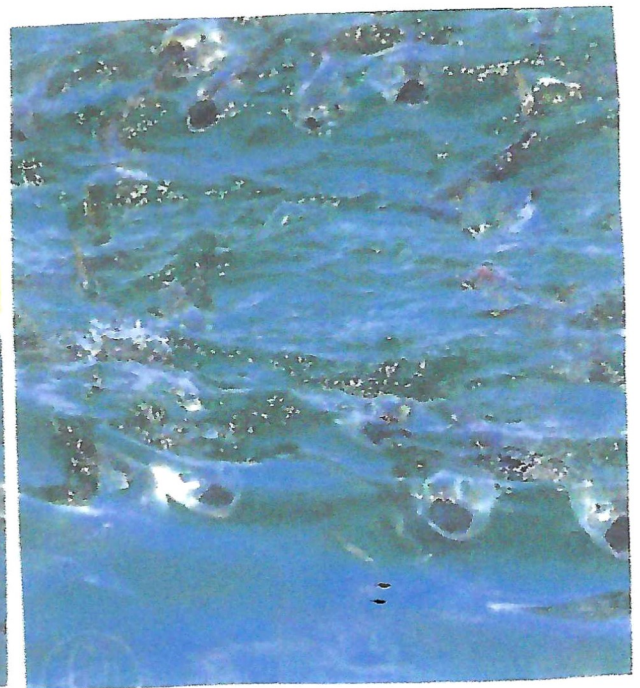
Date: Mon, March 8, 2021 7:15am

Hello Tom:

I am the person that spearheaded the bill that has kept reduction fishing out of NY waters. The changes here have been unbelievable. I can talk about it all day. My single greatest accomplishment in 35 years of fisheries management.

The availability of bunker throughout our season has seen an increase in both charter and party boats carrying anglers to get in on our great striped bass fishery. Bass stick with their food source and this has kept a healthy population of stripers in our waters. It's sparked a number of for hire boats to carry more anglers than ever before.

It has also had a profound effect on our bird population. We now have about 12 dozen nest pair eagles on long island and the osprey population is thriving. All due to the amount of forage for them to eat.




And lets not forget the importance of their filtering our waters.

Thank you.

George R. Scocca  
[nyangler.com](http://nyangler.com)

Check out my LinkedIn profile



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# Is New Jersey the New Striped Bass Mecca?

The author suggests that New Jersey has replaced Montauk as the East Coast's striper hotspot. Here's why.

By Nick Honachefsky | April 27, 2023





Striped bass like this one can be caught nearly year-round off New Jersey. *Nick Honachefsky*

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Montauk has long been known as “Mecca” for striped bass fishing, but I think that’s about to change. New York’s famed location is going to have to give up the title to its little brother, New Jersey.

Though I am a born and bred homer from the Garden State, I’ve fished and reported on the good days at Montauk, Chappaquiddick and the like. There has been a decided shift in the past 15 years, and now I believe the finest striped bass (<https://www.saltwatersportsman.com/striped-bass/>) fishing on the planet exists in the Garden State. Here’s why.

## Migration Hot Spot

Jersey is the pipeline for the migration (<https://www.saltwatersportsman.com/striped-bass-season/>). Like the Garden State Parkway, you have to use it to get to where you need to go. Consider it a virtual rest stop where stripers hang out and feed for months on both ends of the migration.







Forty pounders are caught nearly every day during the spring bass migration in Raritan Bay and its tributaries from late March through early June. Sure, many people's claim of a "40" are actually 30-ish pound fish. But, you can easily score one of these 30-pound-plus fish without trying on any day out.

Striped bass spawn up the Hudson and Raritan Rivers, and breeding fish enter the bay as they swing around Sandy Hook.

Boating anglers in Raritan Bay

(<https://www.saltwatersportsman.com/travel/striped-bass-fishing-in-new-york-harbor/>) can easily release 50 to 60 fish on a half day trip. Jigging, plugging, spooning, trolling—all methods produce.

Not only are the fish being caught by boaters in Raritan Bay, but surf anglers are getting in on the action. The area north of the central coast of Barnegat Inlet has been nothing short of biblical as stripers migrate south during the fall. Last fall was like none other along this stretch. Days of 50-plus releases per man were not uncommon, with fish ranging from schoolies of 24 inches up to 50 pounders.

## Abundant Bait



The shoreline along the Jersey coast can produce healthy stripers most of the year. *Nick Honachefsky*

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Jersey (<https://www.saltwatersportsman.com/story/sponsored-post/new-jersey-stripped-bass-fishing/>) politicians did one thing right: Getting the Omega 3 bunker boats out of state waters. That has allowed a vast biomass of menhaden to proliferate throughout

the year in Jersey waters. This draws behemoth bass into the bays, river systems and alongshore to fatten up on omnipresent adult bunker.

Walk in to the beach and black clouds of bait are present in the

<https://www.saltwatersportsman.com/howto/is-new-jersey-the-new-stripped-bass-mecca/>

4



Walk up to the beach and black clouds of surf are present in the surf and nearshore from spring through winter. During the fall, massive schools of smaller baits such as peanut bunker, bay anchovies and spearing push out of the backwaters and inundate the surf line. From October through December, sand eels choke the surf waters.

A catch and release striper surf tourney on a small stretch of the Jersey coast last October reported 53 bass from 40 to 52 inches (25 to 52 pounds) released in one day. And that chew lasted for days.

## No Commercial Fishing

Correction: Jersey

(<https://www.saltwatersportsman.com/story/howto/new-jersey-trophy-bass/>) politicians did two things right, outlawing commercial fishing for striped bass in state waters decades ago. Yes, striped bass are migratory. But with no netters scooping up hundreds of bass in a single set day in and day out, Jersey waters act like a protected oasis for bass. They don't have to avoid wide nets or rumbling boat engines which push them offshore or deter their innate ability to migrate unhindered along the coastline.

## Jetty Country

Jersey is certainly not known for structure, but the rock jetties at inlet mouths keeps bass holding tight to the beach. Though beach replenishment initiatives have buried many jetties, these



replenishment initiatives have buried many jetties, those remaining along the northern section of the Jersey coast act as magnets for bass and bait. Stripers pin and corral bunker schools against these structures, creating blitz conditions that last for three to four days at a time.

## Residential Striped Bass

In recent years, a massive amount of bass winter over in Jersey's backwaters. Where New York may be a little too cold, the slightly warmer waters of the Garden State are comfortable enough for them to stay put. These backwater locales are off limits to striper fishermen in NJ in January and February, but when opening day comes on March 1, you can guarantee anglers are thick into 20- to 34-inch class fish right from the get go.

Traditional schools of thought state the bulk of the migration heads northward to New England from June to August. But savvy Jersey bassers who haven't had their fill of the spring migratory madness will skirt inside the 3-mile line of the Exclusive Economic

Zone (EEZ), catching 40-pound fish through the heat of the summer months in 70 to 80 feet of water. We're talking nearly year-round striper fishing in NJ.

# Times Are Changing

Anglers fishing in 70 or 80 feet of water can catch stripers even in the heat of the summer. *Nick Honachefsky*

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Is this incredible bass fishing a one-off? Will it last two or three years then disappear? Shake the Magic 8-ball: All signs point to No. This caliber of striper fishing has been happening for 15 years straight now, maybe longer, with occasional lulls. But the past 4 to 5 years has been nothing short of legendary.

The script has been flipped. License plates from Rhode Island and New York now line the Jersey beaches in the fall. It may just be

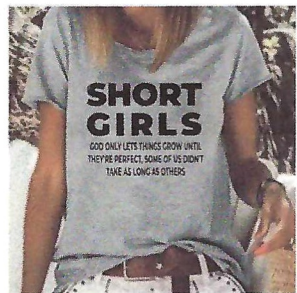
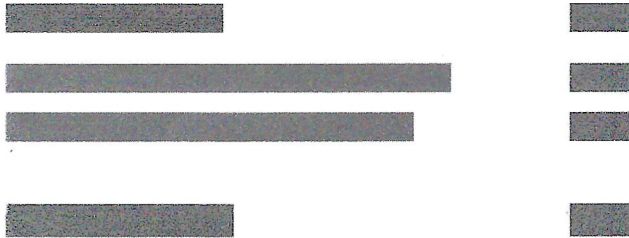


NEW YORK NOW ARE THE jersey beaches in the fall. It may just be time for Montauk to give up the title belt. You had a good run.

MORE

STRIPED BASS FISHING ([HTTPS://WWW.SALTWATERSPORTSMAN.COM/TAG/STRIPED-BASS-FISHING/](https://www.saltwatersportsman.com/tag/striped-bass-fishing/))

## Popular in the Community



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From Tom Lilly <foragematters@aol.com> v



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Fw: VMRC meeting summary your testimony!

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Summary of testimony:

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Christy Medice (9.49-11:39) Suggests that a 2.5 mile buffer from shore needed in bay due to depth of nets...said factory is staying a mile off Silver Beach and beaches have been clean.

Spam

Debbie Campbell (11:55-14.22) spoke as mother and grandmother with grandson Eric with her of the precious time together and importance of the lessons learned fishing by children but the kids lose interest as the fishing is so poor. Says the bay is dying- that the board has been "asked and asked" ( to change this)

Recently Deleted

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Dr Bryan Watts ( 37.59-44.5) Professor of Biology at William and Mary and founder of the Center for Conservation Biology involved in studying osprey status for decades. Spoke to importance of menhaden forage to not only ospreys but for other species such as eagles, gannets etc. Spoke to fact that 1,000s of osprey babies died of starvation in VA this season. That menhaden levels in the bay need to return to what was here in the 1980s to adequately support ospreys in the lower VA bay. Said the problem was widespread extending up into Maryland.

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Julie Kacmarcik (21.36-24.35) ....Conservation chair of Richmond Audubon Society. ...Advises Audubon has issued a national alert to its two million members in 610 Chapters of the osprey problems in VA, about the collateral damage caused by overharvesting . ...asked for a 50% reduction in bay harvests....spoke of menhaden as a resource owned by the public...said "cast votes not nets"

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Terry Cuthriell (24.5-28.10) Past president of Virginia Society of Ornithology, William and Mary graduate, spoke to her lifetime of observing ospreys and eagles in the lower James River. Ospreys starving in first week of life, spoke to osprey's value as a filter feeder cleaning water and keeping dead zones in check. Urged restoring bay osprey to the levels in the 1980s when the bay was healthy. Spoke to New Jersey now calling itself the striped bass fishing mecca because of the abundance of menhaden since NJ banned reduction fishing in state waters. ( Editor's comment See eg article Saltwater Sportsmen scan, also see similar results in NY - scan)

Andy Cortez (28.27-30.2 ) Furnished the Commission with an ethics document from VA Wildlife Resources Board

Captain Mike Ostrander.( 30.30-32.36) Describes a 23 year history of charter fishing on the upper James River and his transition to wildlife and birdwatching tours featuring the ospreys that are thriving there where they rely on shad and catfish not menhaden. Spoke to the decades of efforts by Virginia Anglers Club members at the MRC to reduce menhaden harvests. Spoke of his survey showing 149 of his fellow charter captains had gone out of business in the lower Chesapeake Bay due to poor fishing.. Asked for relief.

Lynn Evans Johnson.(32.58-34.41) Audubon Board member. Spoke of the devastation of our natural resources,.asked the Board to consider the choices, to act as a team going forward.

Lynn Jenkins...Referred to the details/factorr which had already been provided by previous presenters. Reassured the Commissioners that we are not naive as to the complexity of the issue, but wanted another "factor" to be considered-that members of the Commission need to listen to us not just with their "heads"...but with their hearts.

Jacque Montfrans..... Spoke of ospreys as "canary in coal mine" as to menhaden over harvesting ...that improvements in menhaden

would benefit all bay species,, that Commissioners were to be stewards of VA marine resources. ( editor's note the ASMFC refers to striped bass as the canary in the coal mine under their ERP definitions. 30 menhaden scientists say the same thing about the ERP status of ospreys. See page 12 Journal Article in Frontiers in Marine Science (scan) Both ospreys and striped bass are indicator species for menhaden overharvesting and both species are in chronic reproductive failure in Chesapeake bay right now. That should be enough in itself ( even without the other ecologic, social and economic consequences to millions of people) for the managers to take prompt decisive remedial action but they continue to ignore reality and their own science.

Tomoko Hamada (39:03-39.54)

Wildlife artist Spoke of her anguish about ospreys "watch all the time...can't catch fish ....there are no fish now...." and then "watch babies dying in front of my eyes, heart breaking"

the link to the testimony  
is <https://youtu.be/hf58Z9SLNlg> Or Google  
YouTube Virginia Marine Resources Commission

August 22, 2023

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June 14, 2022

Governor Glenn Youngkin  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 1475  
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Governor Youngkin,

As members of the recreational fishing and boating community, we ask that you move menhaden reduction fishing out of the Chesapeake Bay until science demonstrates that high volume reduction fishing for menhaden can be allowed without negatively affecting the broader Bay ecosystem.

America's anglers and boaters consistently play an integral role in the stewardship of our shared natural resources by directly funding conservation and habitat restoration efforts through licensing fees and excise taxes set up through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund on fishing equipment and boat fuel. In 2021 alone, \$399 million was apportioned to the states to fund fishery conservation programs.<sup>1</sup> This resulted in \$6.26 million in funds for conservation programs specifically in Virginia, funded solely by anglers and boaters.

Our recreational fishing coalition of national and Virginia-based groups is clearly dedicated to maintaining the health of the Chesapeake Bay, the region's economy, and the broader marine ecosystem in the Atlantic. A major source of our conservation ethic is the fact that saltwater recreational fishing is an economic powerhouse, especially for Virginia where fishing is enjoyed by 600,000 anglers annually, contributing \$465 million to the Commonwealth's economy and supporting 6,504 jobs.<sup>2</sup> The jobs created by these fisheries are the lifeblood of our coastal communities as more than 90 percent of the sportfishing and boating industry is made up of small businesses.

Atlantic menhaden play a vital role in maintaining the sportfishing economy and the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem by serving as the base of the food chain for many recreationally important species. Specifically, menhaden are critical to the diets of gamefish like striped bass, bluefish, weakfish, and more, that feed Americans and keep them coming to Virginia waters and spending money in our coastal communities. For example, the striped bass fishery is the largest marine recreational fishery in the U.S., driving \$166 million in recreational fishing activity in Virginia alone. However, the economic value of striped bass fishing to Virginia has declined by over 50 percent in the past decade.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Certificate of Apportionment For Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration, available at: [https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/SFR%20FY22%20Certificate%20of%20Final%20Apportionment%202022Feb3\\_508.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/SFR%20FY22%20Certificate%20of%20Final%20Apportionment%202022Feb3_508.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Fisheries Economics of the United States, 2021, available at: [https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2021-11/FEUS-2018-final-508\\_0.pdf](https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2021-11/FEUS-2018-final-508_0.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> The Economic Contributions of Recreational and Commercial Striped Bass Fishing, 2019, available at: <https://mcgrawconservation.org/wp-content/uploads/McGraw-Striped-Bass-Report-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Evaluating Ecosystem-Based Reference Points for Atlantic Menhaden, 2017, available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19425120.2017.1360420>

<sup>5</sup> ASMFC news release, 2019, available at: [http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/5dfbd30bpr40SecretarialSupport\\_Menhaden\\_VANoncompliance.pdf](http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/5dfbd30bpr40SecretarialSupport_Menhaden_VANoncompliance.pdf)

Part of the decline in the striped bass population is explained by fishing mortality being too high, and in 2014 and 2020 our coalition supported significant reductions on the striped bass fishery to address that decline. However, according to a scientific model, menhaden reduction fishing also contributes to a nearly 30 percent decline in striped bass numbers coast wide.<sup>4</sup> The scientific linkage between menhaden as prey and striped bass as a main predator is undeniable. Therefore, the industrial menhaden fishery in the Chesapeake plays a role in the ability of striped bass to rebuild to healthy population levels. By removing more than 100 million pounds of menhaden every year from the Chesapeake Bay, the most important striped bass nursery on the East Coast, reduction fishing in Virginia is undermining the sportfishing economy and small businesses throughout the Commonwealth.

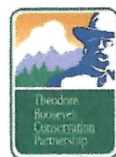
The detrimental impact of menhaden reduction fishing on the ecosystem is so pronounced that it is prohibited in every state along the East Coast except Virginia. However, each year, over 100 million pounds of menhaden are being removed from the Chesapeake Bay and "reduced" to fish meal and oil for pet food and salmon feed by a foreign-owned company—Cooke Inc. Locally known as Omega Protein, the corporation is exporting this keystone fish to other countries as a global commodity, despite repeated signs of the negative impact it is causing to the environment and other industries dependent on a healthy marine ecosystem. In fact, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) found Virginia out of compliance with the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic menhaden in 2019, after Omega Protein exceeded the Chesapeake Bay harvest cap by 33 million pounds.<sup>5</sup>

Over the past decade, recreational fishing and boating organizations, coastal businesses, and hundreds of thousands of individual anglers and conservationists have called on decisionmakers to leave enough menhaden in the water to feed the wildlife that support vibrant recreational fishing, boating and other industries that boost Virginia's coastal economy. Governor Youngkin, we urge you to use your authority to move menhaden reduction fishing out of the Bay until science demonstrates that menhaden fishing can be allowed without negatively affecting the broader Bay ecosystem. Importantly, you could put this stopgap in place and still allow Omega Protein to fish in Virginia's ocean waters.

Moving menhaden reduction fishing out of the Bay will help to protect the health of the ecosystem and help grow Virginia's outdoor recreational economy, which benefits all Virginians.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Whit Fosburgh**  
President & CEO



Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

**Glenn Hughes**  
President



American Sportfishing Association



**Frank Hugelmeyer**

President

National Marine Manufacturers Association



**Jim McDuffie**

President & CEO

Bonefish & Tarpon Trust



**Matt Gruhn**

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Marine Retailers Association of the Americas



**Greg Jacoski**

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Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation



**Patrick Murray**

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**Ellen Peel**

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The Billfish Foundation



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Virginia Division of the Izaak Walton League of America



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President

Virginia Saltwater Sportfishing Association



**Captain Mike Ostrander**

President

Virginia Anglers Club



**Chris Schneider**

President

Virginia Beach Angler's Club



**Joe Stephenson**

President

Great Bridge Fisherman's Association



**Henry Troutner**

Vice President

Norfolk Anglers Club



**Samuel A. Graham**

President

Central Virginia Sport Fishing Association



**Ed Pacheco**

President

Virginia Coastal Fly Anglers



**Dean Carroll**

President

Eastern Shore Anglers Club



**Steve Jones Jr.**

President

Tidewater Anglers Club



**Danny Forehand**

President

Peninsula Salt Water Sport Fisherman's Association





April 8, 2024

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**Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC)**  
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Ft. Monroe, VA 23651

**Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR)**  
580 Taylor Ave.  
Tawes State Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Commissioners and Secretary Kurtz,

The undersigned organizations respectfully urge you to review and support the Save Our Menhaden Coalition Resolution (enclosure (1)). The Coalition has resolved to end Atlantic menhaden reduction fishing in Virginia waters and to limit Omega Protein and Ocean Harvesters to federal waters 3 nautical miles off the Atlantic Coast just like all the other states on the Atlantic Coast.

The ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Management Board's goals and objectives are "to manage the Atlantic menhaden fishery in a manner which equitably allocates the resource's ecological and economic benefits between all user groups."

The Board has managed the allocation of Atlantic menhaden reduction fishery in the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean separately since 2006 as the marine environments are known to be different.

However, when the Board knowingly ignores this fact, and allocates over 75% of the total allowable catch for the entire Atlantic Coast to the State of Virginia, it violates its own goals and objectives as the historical harvest of a state is not an element of the stated goals and objectives of the Board.

In 2024, Omega Protein has been allocated over 158,000 metric tons of Atlantic menhaden by Virginia or over 2 / 3 of the total allowable catch of 233,550 metric tons for the entire Atlantic Coast. That's a total of 3 / 4 of a billion fish being removed from the Chesapeake Bay and its entrance.

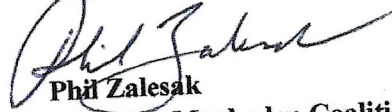
This creates the conditions for localized depletion based on the latest science, empirical data, and common sense. See enclosure (2).

In summary, the Coalition is requesting the immediate end to Atlantic menhaden reduction fishery in Virginia waters now.

**Save Our Menhaden Coalition**  
<https://www.saveourmenhaden.org/take-action.html>

If you have any questions, please contact me via email at [flypax@md.metrocast.net](mailto:flypax@md.metrocast.net).

Very Respectfully,



Phil Zalesak

Save Our Menhaden Coalition Member

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**Save Our Menhaden Coalition**  
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