



November 16, 2012

Mr. Mike Waine
Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, ASMFC
1050 N. Highland St. Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Amendment II to Menhaden Management Plan

Dear Mr. Waine:

On behalf of the American Sportfishing Association, I commend the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and its Menhaden Management Board for issuing Draft Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden. Menhaden play a key role in the coastal marine food chain and serve as a primary food source for many economically and recreationally important sportfish, and it is critically important that the ASMFC takes action now to increase Atlantic menhaden stocks.

The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) is the nation's recreational fishing industry trade association, committed to representing the interests of the entire sportfishing community. We give the industry a unified voice when emerging laws and policies could significantly affect sportfishing business or sportfishing itself.

Despite being a critical component in the Atlantic ecosystem, menhaden abundance has been allowed to decline to the lowest level in recorded history. The ASMFC must take immediate action to end overfishing of menhaden and set in place management measures that account for the important ecological function that menhaden serve for Atlantic marine fisheries. Amendment II to the Menhaden Management Plan proposes several options ASA supports which will begin to increase menhaden abundance.

- Section 2.5, Option B: The ASMFC should adopt new Spawning Stock Biomass reference points based on the new Fishing Mortality reference points: an option supported by the ASMFC's Technical Committee.
- Section 2.6.2, combination of Option B and E: Fishing mortality must be reduced to end overfishing immediately through the implementation of a coastwide quota for the 2013 season, and measures should be put into place to manage to the fishing mortality target after the next benchmark assessment is completed.
- Section 4.2.1, Option B: It is critical that a mandatory catch reporting system be put into place.
- Section 4.2.1.2, Sub-Option B.4: ASA supports the ad hoc approach for reducing mortality and urges the ASMFC to select a multiplier that reduces fishing mortality by at least 25%.

I appreciate that the ASMFC and its Menhaden Management Board are beginning the process to restore this essential fisheries resource. On behalf of ASA, I urge you to act swiftly to implement these approaches to help restore menhaden to healthy abundance.

Sincerely,

Mike Leonard
Ocean Resource Policy Director

AMERICAN SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION

1001 N. Fairfax Street, Suite 501, Alexandria, VA 22314 • 703-519-9691 • Fax: 703-519-1872
Web: www.ASAFishing.org • Email: info@ASAFishing.org