



MARKING TIME

NEW MENHADEN STOCK ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTS, YET AGAIN, THE NEED FOR ECOSYSTEM GOALS

By Ken Hinman, *President*

We have all been here before.
- David Crosby, **Déjà Vu**

The just-published 2015 Atlantic menhaden stock assessment says the species is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.ⁱ Okay, we've heard that before. But what does it mean, really?

Well, some in the menhaden industryⁱⁱ would have you believe it means there are plenty of fish out there; that there's no need for catch limits now, including those put in place two years ago, and never has been. But anyone who believes that just doesn't get it. Never has, probably never will.

The concern of anglers and environmentalists about the status of menhaden has always been about its vital role as a prey species for predators up and down the east coast. So it's important to understand that this latest evaluation of the menhaden stock addresses only its ability to sustain harvest and avoid depletionⁱⁱⁱ, not its capacity to provide adequate forage for other species in the ecosystem. In this way it's no different than every other assessment performed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission since 1999, when an expert review panel recommended future assessments use a reference point "responsive to menhaden as a forage species...which maximizes population abundance."^{iv} Unfortunately, that change in the way we judge the status of Atlantic menhaden is still on the ASMFC's "to-do" list 15 years later.

Good News, Bad News

There is some good news in the new status report, which suggests that reduced fishing pressure is having positive effects on growth in the menhaden population. The assessment reveals an increase among fish in the oldest age

classes, with more large adults than in previous estimates, an increase that coincides with lower fishing mortality rates over the past decade. We would expect this trend to continue with the conservation measures implemented in 2013.^v

But the assessment also confirms that abundance of menhaden – that is, total numbers of fish - remains near historic lows. It is overall abundance that is most relevant to menhaden’s ecological role, not adult biomass, since many predators, striped bass and osprey for instance, depend on large numbers of small, juvenile menhaden. Because of poor recruitment, especially in Chesapeake Bay nursery grounds, the total numbers of menhaden actually declined since the last benchmark assessment in 2010.

Stay the Course and Set Ecosystem Goals Now

The bottom line is this: Without ecosystem goals, the new menhaden single-species stock assessment leaves key questions unanswered and the industry arguing against conservation measures already on the books, measures adopted to increase menhaden abundance and availability as forage.^{vi}

In our view, the 2015 assessment argues not for changing course, but for moving ahead more quickly with development of ecological reference points for Atlantic menhaden.

Here’s what the ASMFC Menhaden Management Board should do:

1. Keep the existing catch limits in place.

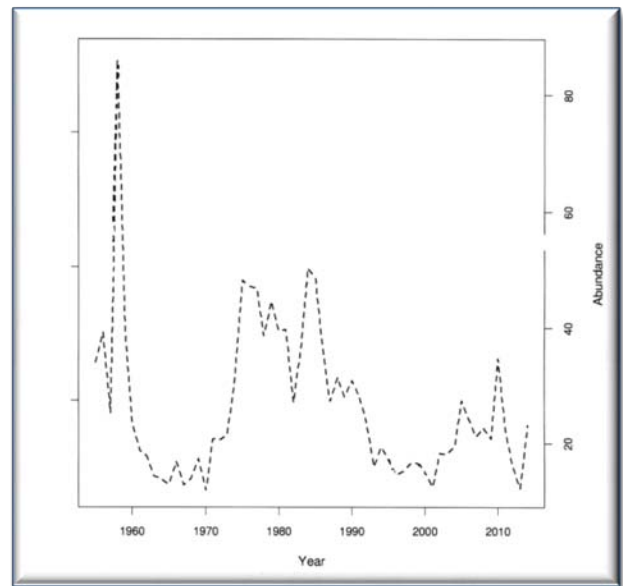
It would be folly to reverse course at the first sign of improvement, especially given lingering concerns about low abundance and recruitment. On the contrary, now is the time to hold the line and focus our full attention on long-term ecosystem goals. Making this even more imperative is the commission’s recent action to rebuild striped bass, whose health and numbers are strongly linked to availability of its preferred prey, menhaden.^{vii}

2. Begin an addendum to institute interim ERPs.

The 2015 assessment review panel agreed with previous panels that “development of Ecological Reference Points should be a priority for

ABUNDANCE OVER TIME FOR ATLANTIC MENHADEN FROM 1959 - 2013.

Source: SEDAR 40. 2015. Figure 7.2.3.4.



Atlantic menhaden management” and agreed with the Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee that the Menhaden Management Board needs to provide more explicit ecosystem goals and objectives in order to determine which ERPs should be adopted. The approaches for developing ERPs identified by the TC range from using highly complex and data-intensive multi-species models and empirical analyses to the use of *ad hoc* reference points based on well-known trophic principles as recommended by recent forage fish studies.^{viii}

The TC advises that these “forage services” reference points (i.e., $F=0.75M$, $F=M$, $B_{75\%}$ and $B_{40\%}$) “could be adopted at any time using the most recent peer reviewed Atlantic menhaden model”^{ix} (emphasis added). The 2015 peer review panel, while favoring a multispecies approach to modeling the dynamics among menhaden and its predators, suggests this work could be done “in parallel to simpler approaches that may provide interim solutions until the multi-species model is ready.”^x (emphasis added)

A Simpler, Interim Approach to Protecting the Ecological Role of Menhaden

As the peer review panel’s report states, a broader ecosystems approach to conserving Atlantic menhaden demands recognition of the trade-offs associated with managing menhaden to serve directed fisheries vs. maintaining adequate forage to serve ecosystem needs (as well as the needs of other fisheries that target predator species). Indeed, considering both sides of the equation is paramount in making sound policy decisions. But the fact is, these trade-offs are already occurring under our current regime, and until the ASMFC adopts ecosystem goals for menhaden and begins using them to inform and guide its management decisions, we are ignoring one side of the equation - that is, the impact on predators, on other fisheries and on the ecosystem.

Even if it were possible to create an accurate mathematical model of a complex marine ecosystem for fishery management purposes, and that is highly questionable,^{xi} the demands on fishery managers, let alone their scientific advisors tasked with creating and feeding such a model (no pun intended), would be unbearable. It would require making innumerable decisions throughout the system about desirable targets and thresholds for interconnected species, monitoring them simultaneously, assessing cause-and-effect, and taking multiple complementary actions through numerous individual fishery management plans governed by separate management bodies. It is a black hole from which we would likely never emerge.

The sensible thing to do is take interim action now to adopt ecological reference points based on sound trophic principles, such as those suggested in Section 2.4.1 of Appendix E of the 2015 stock assessment report. If a more empirical method should become viable sometime in the future, make the change then. But continuing to mark time with menhaden is not an option.

Endnotes

ⁱ SEDAR. 2015. SEDAR 40 – Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Report. SEDAR, North Charleston SC. January 2015.

ⁱⁱ <http://www.rrecord.com/-news/2015/1-22-15/bus2.asp>

ⁱⁱⁱ SEDAR. 2015. p. 7.

^{iv} ASMFC 1999. Stock Assessment Report No. 99-01 (Supplement) of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. *Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Report for Peer Review*. February 1999. p. X.

^v <http://wildoceans.org/menhaden-numbers-are-in-and-the-news-is-good/>

^{vi} ASMFC 2012/2013. ASMFC Approves Atlantic Menhaden Amendment 2. *Fisheries Focus*. Vol. 22, Issue 8. December 2012/January 2013.

^{vii} See *Wild Oceans* statement to the ASMFC Striped Bass Management Board, Mystic, CT. October 29, 2014.

^{viii} The examples of “forage services” reference points offered by the TC were first recommended to the TC and Menhaden Management Board by *Wild Oceans* in June 2009, in a paper entitled *Ecological Reference Points for Atlantic Menhaden*, and were based on a review of the literature at that time. Since then, a number of forage fish studies have affirmed a consensus around these recommendations, including Smith, Anthony D.M., et al. 2011. *Impacts of Fishing Low-Trophic Level Species on Marine Ecosystems*. *Science*. 1209395. 21 July 2011; and Pikitch, E., Boersma, P.D., Boyd, I.L., Conover, D.O., Cury, P., Essington, T., Heppell, S.S., Houde, E.D., Mangel, M., Pauly, D., Plagányi, É., Sainsbury, K., and Steneck, R.S. 2012. *Little Fish, Big Impact: Managing a Crucial Link in Ocean Food Webs*. Lenfest Ocean Program. Washington, DC. 108 pp.

^{ix} SEDAR. 2015. Appendix E. p. 30.

^x SEDAR 2015. SECTION III: Review Workshop Report. p. 23.

^{xi} Pilkey 2007. *Useless Arithmetic: Why Environmental Scientists Can’t Predict the Future*. Orrin H. Pilkey and Linda Pilkey-Jarvis. 256 pages, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007.



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0740 • 703.842.0741 (fax) • www.asmfc.org

MEMORANDUM

January 27, 2015

To: Atlantic Menhaden Management Board
From: Tina Berger, Director of Communications
RE: Advisory Panel Nominations

Please find attached two nominations to the Atlantic Menhaden Advisory Panel – David Sikorski, a recreational representative and angler from Maryland and John W. Dean, a commercial pound netter from Maryland. Please review these nominations for action at the next Board meeting.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (703) 842-0749 or tberger@asmfc.org.

Enc.

cc: Mike Waine

M15-11

ALANTIC MENHADEN ADVISORY PANEL

Bolded names await approval by the Atlantic Menhaden Management Board
Bolded and italicized name denotes Advisory Panel Chair

January 27, 2015

Maine

Brian Tarbox (comm bait)
620 Walnut Hill Road
North Yarmouth, ME 04097
Phone: 207.829.5567

btarbox@me.rr.com

btarbox@smtc.net

Appt. Confirmed 7/17/01
Appt. Reconfirmed 11/30/05
Appt Reconfirmed 5/10

Jennifer S. Bichrest (processor/dealer)

21 Sandy Acres Drive
Topsham, ME 04086
Phone (day): 207.389.9155
Phone (cell): (207) 841.1454

jenniebplb@yahoo.com

Appt. Confirmed 10/21/08

Duncan Barnes (rec)
113 Hill Island Road
Arrowsic, ME 04530
Phone: 207.443.8746
bardunc@gmail.com
Appt Confirmed 11/8/10

New Hampshire

Donald L. Swanson (rec)
84 Franklin Street
Derry, NH 03038-1914
Phone: 603.434.4593

salty4fly2@comcast.net

Appt Confirmed 8/3/10

Massachusetts

2 Vacancies (comm bait and for hire)

Rhode Island

Donald A. Smith (rec)
40 Web Avenue, #215
North Kingstown, RI 02852
Phone (day): 401.351.0600
Phone (eve): 401.295.4205
FAX: 401.351.6755

dasmith4444@aol.com

Appt. Confirmed 7/17/01
Appt. Reconfirmed 2/9/06
Appt Reconfirmed 5/10

Louis Lachance (comm/purse seine)

71 Clancy Street
Swansea, MA 02777
Phone: 508.678.4210
Appt Confirmed 12/17/03
Appt. Reconfirmed 2/9/06
Appt Reconfirmed 5/10

Connecticut

Vacancy (rec)

New York

Melissa Dearborn (processor)
Regal Marine Products, Inc.
198 West 9th Street
Huntington Station, NY 11746
Phone (day): 631.385.8284
Phone (eve): 631.385.7753
FAX: 631.271.5294

regalmar@optonline.net

Appt. Confirmed 7/17/01
Appt. Reconfirmed 1/23/06
Appt Reconfirmed 5/10

New Jersey

Edward Cherry (rec)
9 Eagleswood Drive
Waretown, NJ 08758-2689
Phone: 609.971.3145

edwardwc@verizon.net

Appt Confirmed 12/17/03
Appt. Confirmed 12/07

Chair, Jeff Kaelin (comm. trawl and purse seine)
Lund's Fisheries, Inc. (4/14)
PO Box 830
997 Ocean Drive
Cape May, NJ 08204-0830
Phone: 207.266.0440

ALANTIC MENHADEN ADVISORY PANEL

Bolded names await approval by the Atlantic Menhaden Management Board
Bolded and italicized name denotes Advisory Panel Chair

January 27, 2015

jkaelin@lundsfish.com

Appt. Confirmed 9/19/09

Delaware

William R. Wilson (rec)

18483 Cedar Drive

Lewes, DE 19958

Phone (day): 302.644.3454

Phone (eve): 302.344.5853

FAX:(302.644.3454

birdcarver@aol.com

Appt Confirmed 12/17/03

Appt. Confirmed 12/07

Maryland

David Sikorski (rec)

4637 Willowgrove Drive

Ellicot City, MD 21042

Phone: 443.621.9186

davidsikorski@mac.com

John W. Dean (comm/pound net)

49925 Hays Beach Road

Scotland, MD 20687

Phone: 301.904.8078

Selbysuzi1121@aol.com

Virginia

Ron Lukens (processor/dealer)

27716 NW 182nd Avenue

High Springs, FL 32643

Phone (day): 386.454.7192

Phone (cell): 228.369.4248

lukensrr@yahoo.com

Appt. Confirmed 2/5/09

Jimmy Kellum (commercial purse seine)

144 Kellum Drive

Weems, VA 22576

Phone (day): 804.761.0673

Phone (eve): 804.438.5618

FAX: 804.438.5306

Kellum.maritime@gmail.com

Appt Confirmed 11/3/09

North Carolina

2 Vacancies – conservation & commercial

South Carolina

Thomas F. Ogle (rec)

50 Long Point Drive

Lady's Island, SC 29907

Phone: 843.521.4672

togle46@embarqmail.com

Appt. Confirmed 2/19/02

Appt. Reconfirmed 2/06

Appt. Reconfirmed 5/10

Georgia

Ken Hinman (conservation)

National Coalition for Marine Conservation

4 Royal Street SE

Leesburg, VA 20175

Phone: 703.777.0037

Fax: 703.777.1107

hinmank@mindspring.com

Appt. Confirmed 2/19/02

Appt. Confirmed 2/06

Appt Reconfirmed 5/10

Florida

Charles W. Hamaker (rec)

5648 Floral Avenue

Jacksonville, FL 32211

Phone (day): 904.630.3025

Phone (eve): 904.725.3775

FAX: 904.630.3007

charlesh@cou.net

Appt. Confirmed 7/17/01

Appt. Reconfirmed 1/2/06

Appt Reconfirmed 4/22/10

PRFC

Richard H. Daiger (comm/rec gillnet)

173 Oyster House Road

Montross, VA 22520

Phone: 804.472.2184

Appt. Confirmed 7/17/01

Appt. Reconfirmed 1/2/06

Appt Reconfirmed 5/10



ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

Advisory Panel Nomination Form

This form is designed to help nominate Advisors to the Commission's Species Advisory Panels. The information on the returned form will be provided to the Commission's relevant species management board or section. Please answer the questions in the categories (All Nominees, Commercial Fisherman, Charter/Headboat Captain, Recreational Fisherman, Dealer/Processor, or Other Interested Parties) that pertain to the nominee's experience. If the nominee fits into more than one category, answer the questions for all categories that fit the situation. **Also, please fill in the sections which pertain to All Nominees (pages 1 and 2). In addition, nominee signatures are required to verify the provided information (page 4), and Commissioner signatures are requested to verify Commissioner consensus (page 4). Please print and use a black pen.**

Form submitted by: Thomas J. O'Connell State: MD
(your name)

Name of Nominee: DAVID SIKORSKI

Address: 4637 WILLOWGROVE DRIVE

City, State, Zip: ELLCOTT CITY, MD 21042

Please provide the appropriate numbers where the nominee can be reached:

Phone (day): 443-621-9186 Phone (evening): _____

FAX: _____ Email: DAVID.SIKORSKI@MAC.COM

FOR ALL NOMINEES:

1. Please list, in order of preference, the Advisory Panel for which you are nominating the above person.

- 1. MENHADEN
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

2. Has the nominee been found in violation of criminal or civil federal fishery law or regulation or convicted of any felony or crime over the last three years?

yes _____ no

3. Is the nominee a member of any fishermen's organizations or clubs?

yes no _____

If "yes," please list them below by name.

COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSOC. MARYLAND

4. What kinds (species) of fish and/or shellfish has the nominee fished for during the past year?

STRIPED BASS

FLAUNDER, SPANISH MACK

YE TUNA, BF TUNA

BLUEFISH, SPECK TROUT, RED DRUM

WH. MARLIN, BL MARLIN

HICK/AM SHAD ETC

5. What kinds (species) of fish and/or shellfish has the nominee fished for in the past?

~~THE~~ MOST RECREATIONALLY CAUGHT SPECIES IN

ATLANTIC / MID ATLANTIC

FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN:

1. How many years has the nominee been the commercial fishing business? _____ years
2. Is the nominee employed only in commercial fishing? yes _____ no _____
3. What is the predominant gear type used by the nominee? _____
4. What is the predominant geographic area fished by the nominee (i.e., inshore, offshore)? _____

FOR CHARTER/HEADBOAT CAPTAINS:

1. How long has the nominee been employed in the charter/headboat business? _____ years
2. Is the nominee employed only in the charter/headboat industry? yes _____ no _____
If "no," please list other type(s) of business(es) and/occupation(s): _____

3. How many years has the nominee lived in the home port community? _____ years
If less than five years, please indicate the nominee's previous home port community.

FOR RECREATIONAL FISHERMEN:

1. How long has the nominee engaged in recreational fishing? 20+ years
2. Is the nominee working, or has the nominee ever worked in any area related to the fishing industry? yes _____ no

If "yes," please explain.

FOR SEAFOOD PROCESSORS & DEALERS:

1. How long has the nominee been employed in the business of seafood processing/dealing? _____ years
2. Is the nominee employed only in the business of seafood processing/dealing?
yes _____ no _____ If "no," please list other type(s) of business(es) and/or occupation(s):

3. How many years has the nominee lived in the home port community? _____ years
If less than five years, please indicate the nominee's previous home port community.

FOR OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES:

1. How long has the nominee been interested in fishing and/or fisheries management? _____ years
2. Is the nominee employed in the fishing business or the field of fisheries management?
yes _____ no _____
If "no," please list other type(s) of business(es) and/or occupation(s):

FOR ALL NOMINEES:

In the space provided below, please provide the Commission with any additional information which you feel would assist us in making choosing new Advisors. You may use as many pages as needed.

I AM THE CURRENT VICE-CHAIR OF THE MD SPORT FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION, A MEMBER OF THE ASMFC SB AP, AN ACTIVE REC FISHERMAN W/ A WIDE BASE OF KNOWLEDGE ON MANY REC AND COM FISHERIES.

Nominee Signature:  _____

Date: 1/17/14

Name: DAVID SIKORSKI
(please print)

COMMISSIONERS SIGN-OFF (not required for non-traditional stakeholders)



State Director

State Legislator

Governor's Appointee



ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

Advisory Panel Nomination Form

This form is designed to help nominate Advisors to the Commission's Species Advisory Panels. The information on the returned form will be provided to the Commission's relevant species management board or section. Please answer the questions in the categories (All Nominees, Commercial Fisherman, Charter/Headboat Captain, Recreational Fisherman, Dealer/Processor, or Other Interested Parties) that pertain to the nominee's experience. If the nominee fits into more than one category, answer the questions for all categories that fit the situation. Also, please fill in the sections which pertain to All Nominees (pages 1 and 2). In addition, nominee signatures are required to verify the provided information (page 4), and Commissioner signatures are requested to verify Commissioner consensus (page 4). Please print and use a black pen.

Form submitted by: Lynn Fealey State: Maryland
(your name)

Name of Nominee: John W. Dean

Address: 49925 Hays Beach Road

City, State, Zip: Scotland, MD 20687

Please provide the appropriate numbers where the nominee can be reached:

Phone (day): 301-904-8078

Phone (evening): 301-904-8078

FAX: _____

Email: selbysuzi1121@aol.com

FOR ALL NOMINEES:

1. Please list, in order of preference, the Advisory Panel for which you are nominating the above person.

- 1. menhaden
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

2. Has the nominee been found in violation of criminal or civil federal fishery law or regulation or convicted of any felony or crime over the last three years?

yes _____ no X

3. Is the nominee a member of any fishermen's organizations or clubs?

yes X no _____

If "yes," please list them below by name.

Maryland Watermens Association

Blue Ribbon Oyster Com. For PRFC

Pres.- Watermens Asso of St Marys Co.

Crab Advisory Design Team

ASMFC- Flounder, Striped and Seabass Advisory Com.

4. What kinds (species) of fish and/or shellfish has the nominee fished for during the past year?

menhaden, shad

Crabs, oysters

rockfish, bluefish, croakers

spot, flounder, butterfish, gizzard shad,

5. What kinds (species) of fish and/or shellfish has the nominee fished for in the past?

menhaden, shad, herring

crabs, oysters

rockfish, bluefish, croakers, spot

flounder, butterfish, gizzard shad

FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN:

1. How many years has the nominee been the commercial fishing business? 40 years

2. Is the nominee employed only in commercial fishing? yes _____ no X

3. What is the predominant gear type used by the nominee? pound and gill net, crab pots, oyster rigs

4. What is the predominant geographic area fished by the nominee (i.e., inshore, offshore)? Inshore- Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River

FOR CHARTER/HEADBOAT CAPTAINS:

1. How long has the nominee been employed in the charter/headboat business? _____ years

2. Is the nominee employed only in the charter/headboat industry? yes _____ no _____

If "no," please list other type(s) of business(es) and/occupation(s): _____

3. How many years has the nominee lived in the home port community? _____ years

If less than five years, please indicate the nominee's previous home port community.

FOR RECREATIONAL FISHERMEN:

- 1. How long has the nominee engaged in recreational fishing? _____ years
- 2. Is the nominee working, or has the nominee ever worked in any area related to the fishing industry? yes _____ no _____

If "yes," please explain.

FOR SEAFOOD PROCESSORS & DEALERS:

- 1. How long has the nominee been employed in the business of seafood processing/dealing? _____ years
- 2. Is the nominee employed only in the business of seafood processing/dealing?
yes _____ no If "no," please list other type(s) of business(es) and/or occupation(s):

Part time Marine Construction business

- 3. How many years has the nominee lived in the home port community? 59 years

If less than five years, please indicate the nominee's previous home port community.

FOR OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES:

- 1. How long has the nominee been interested in fishing and/or fisheries management? 40 years
- 2. Is the nominee employed in the fishing business or the field of fisheries management?
yes no _____

If "no," please list other type(s) of business(es) and/or occupation(s):

FOR ALL NOMINEES:

In the space provided below, please provide the Commission with any additional information which you feel would assist us in making choosing new Advisors. You may use as many pages as needed.

The menhaden fishery is the main source of income for my business. The menhaden that is harvested in my nets are frozen and provide bait for the commercial crabbers in the area as well as surrounding counties. Fresh menhaden is provided for the charter fishing businesses in the area and other areas in the state to provide bait for their livelihoods. The importance of the menhaden fishery is vital to many men and/or women's fishing businesses through the state of Maryland.

Nominee Signature: John William Dean

Date: 1-24-15

Name: John William Dean
(please print)

COMMISSIONERS SIGN-OFF (not required for non-traditional stakeholders)

[Signature]
State Director

VACANT
State Legislator

[Signature]
Governor's Appointee