Atlantic Menhaden Stock Status, Research Planning

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Chesapeake Bay Commission, VA Delegation

Stratford Hall, VA

November 13, 2025

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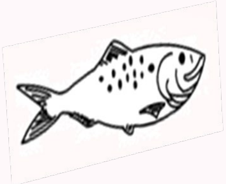
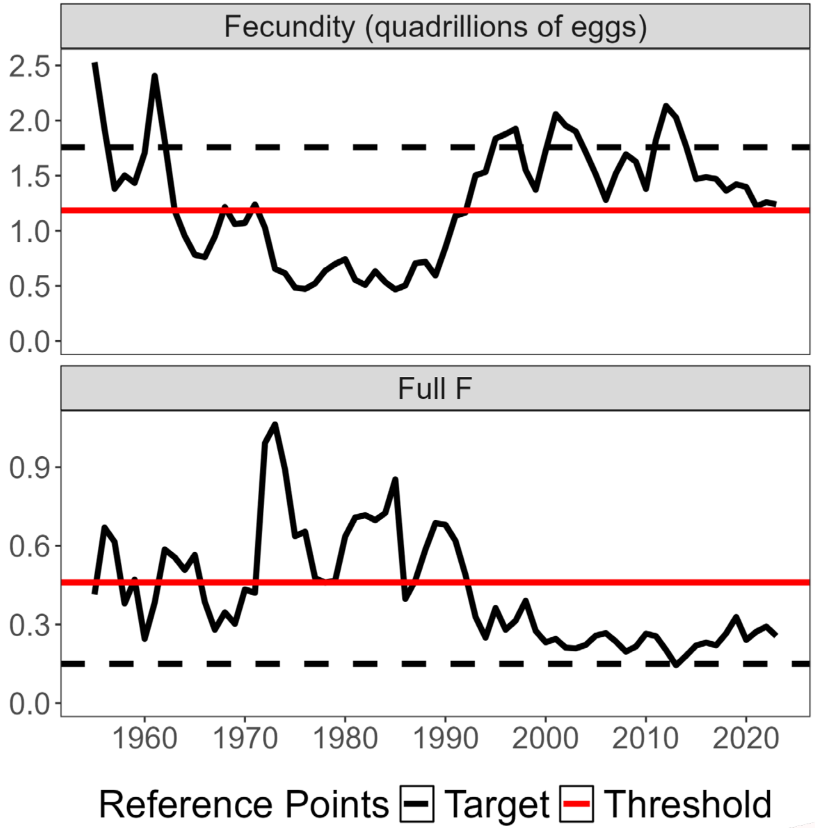


Coastwide Stock Status

Reference Point	ERP Value	2023 Value	Stock Status
$F_{THRESHOLD}$	0.46	0.26	Not Overfishing
F_{TARGET}	0.15		
$FEC_{THRESHOLD}$	1.18 quadrillion eggs	1.24 quadrillion eggs	Not Overfished
FEC_{TARGET}	1.76 quadrillion eggs		



ASMFC Management Actions

- Coastwide Total Allowable Catch (TAC)
  - Stock projections
  - Risk tolerance of overfishing
- October 2025
  - 2026 TAC: 186,840 mt (-20%)
  - Revisit TAC setting for 2027-2028 next year
  - Initiate Addendum – explore CB cap changes

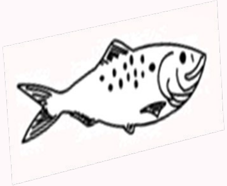
Period	TAC (mt)
2013-2014	170,800
2015-2016	187,880
2017	200,000
2018-2020	216,000
2021-2022	194,400
2023-2025	233,550

VA allocation: 75.21%
Purse seine reduction: 90.04%
Purse seine bait: 8.38%
Non-purse seine bait: 1.58%

Chesapeake Bay Focus

- 2022 Ocean Harvesters net spills
  - July 5: Silver Beach
  - July 25: Pickett Harbor, Kiptopeke State Park, Sunset Beach

- 2023 Senate Bill 1388 (Sen. L. Lewis)
  - Introduced Jan 11, VIMS shall study…
  - Substitute Feb 3, language modified
  - Amendment Feb 6, timeline modified
  - Amendment Feb 14, VIMS shall develop plans…



Virginia Senate Bill 1388

An Act to direct the Virginia Institute of Marine Science to develop plans for studying the ecology, fishery impacts, and economic importance of menhaden populations in the waters of the Commonwealth; report.

[S 1388]
Approved March 22, 2023

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. *§ 1. That the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) shall **develop plans for studying the ecology, fishery impacts, and economic importance of menhaden populations in the waters of the Commonwealth**. Such plans shall (i) include anticipated methodologies, timelines, and costs; (ii) identify relevant stakeholders for participation; and (iii) state whether VIMS is the most appropriate entity to perform the study. In developing the plans, VIMS shall collaborate with and receive input from the Menhaden Management Advisory Committee established in § 28.2-208.2 of the Code of Virginia and the Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and other relevant stakeholders.*

VIMS shall, no later than September 1, 2023, provide a report on its findings to the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources and the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources and the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources.

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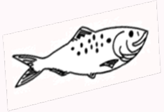
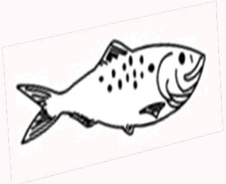


Stakeholder Workshop

- August 8-9, 2023 – held at William & Mary
- 20 attendees – broad stakeholder representation
- Consensus based recommendations
- Themes: Ecology, Fishery Impacts, Economic Importance
- Collegial and productive

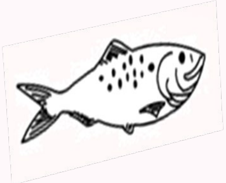


Ecology

1) Estimate seasonal abundance of Atlantic menhaden in Chesapeake Bay

2) Evaluate movement rates of Atlantic menhaden between the Atlantic coast and Chesapeake Bay

3) Assess impacts of predator demand and consumption of Atlantic menhaden



Fishery Impacts

1) Analyze spatiotemporal patterns in Atlantic menhaden commercial fishing effort in Chesapeake Bay

2) Assess the possibility of localized depletion of Atlantic menhaden in Chesapeake Bay

3) Quantify changes in Chesapeake Bay recreational fisheries

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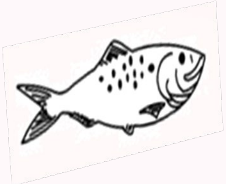
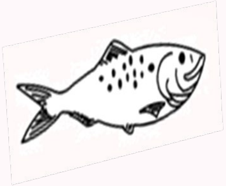


Economic Importance

1) Assess economic impacts of management decisions on Atlantic menhaden fisheries and related industries

2) Contemporary assessment of social and economic importance of Atlantic menhaden to Chesapeake Bay region

3) Quantify the bioeconomic impact of Atlantic fishery removals from the Chesapeake Bay to those from the Atlantic coast



Legislative Sessions

- 2024: HB 19 Atlantic menhaden (R. Lee Ware)
  - Continued to 2025 in Rules (voice vote)
- 2025: HB 2723 Atlantic menhaden (P.V. Milde)
  - Left in Rules


Atlantic Menhaden Research Planning

Prepared by
The Virginia Institute of Marine Science
William & Mary

Prepared for
J. Chapman Peterson
Chair, Senate Agriculture, Conservation, and Natural Resources
R. Lee Ware
Chair, House Agriculture, Chesapeake, and Natural Resources
Travis A. Voyles
Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources

Submitted on
October 1, 2023

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Science Center for Marine Fisheries SCeMFiS

NSF Industry/University Cooperative Research Center

- October 2025: funded development of a roadmap to scientifically derive Chesapeake Bay harvest cap
- Detailed planning study – complimentary to GA Report
- Conducted by University of Maryland, VIMS, and NOAA

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SCEMFIS Science Center for Marine Fisheries

U.S. National Science Foundation