



# WEST PALM BEACH FISHING CLUB

~ Established 1934 ~



October 2, 2017

Megan Ware, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1050 North Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N  
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Re: Menhaden Amendment 3

Dear Ms. Ware, Director Beal, Chairman Ballou, and members of the Menhaden Management Board,

On behalf of the over 1,300 members of the West Palm Beach Fishing Club (WPBFC), I am writing to let the ASMFC know that we support the adoption of ecological reference points in Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden. Specifically, the WPBFC supports Issue 2.6 "Option E: BERP Workgroup Continues to Develop Menhaden-Specific ERPs with Interim Use of 75% Target, 40% Threshold."

Atlantic menhaden play a vital role in the marine food web as an important forage fish. Popular species of fish like bluefish, king mackerel and tarpon depend heavily upon robust stocks of menhaden. The WPBFC has been a strong advocate of ecosystem based management. Maintaining healthy stocks of this forage fish is critical to a wide variety of fish and wildlife, and the many businesses they support.

Managing Atlantic menhaden through Option E prioritizes their role as forage fish, allowing the resource to continue to grow and increase in value to recreational fishing, commercial fishing, and wildlife and tourism businesses. The WPBFC believes that Option E represents the best available science and is most consistent with the Menhaden Management Board's long-standing commitment to ecological management. Option E sets a target of 75% unfished biomass and a threshold of 40% unfished biomass, providing flexibility to the Board to manage to the target over time, while also managing the resource conservatively, combining the best features of Options C and D. Option E also sets the stage for future success, allowing for management of this resource towards a target while limiting the potential of overfishing from an ecosystem perspective.

Please adopt ecological reference points in Amendment 3 by passing Issue 2.6, Option E, which is based on the best available science, provides for the needs of predators, and is a commonsense way to manage this valuable public resource to the benefit of every Atlantic state from Maine to Florida.

Sincerely,

Tom Twyford  
President

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