

Atlantic Menhaden Public Information Document Available for Public Comment

Arlington, VA – The Public Information Document (PID) for Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden is now available for public comment and review on the Commission's website at

http://www.asmfc.org/speciesDocuments/menhaden/fmps/Amend2PID_DraftForPublicComment.pdf. As the first step in the development of Amendment 2, the PID presents the current status of the fishery and resource, and solicits public input on which major issues and alternatives should be included for consideration and analysis in Draft Amendment 2.

The PID's primary focus is to initiate discussion on the timing and implementation of achieving the new fishing mortality threshold ($F = 1.32$) and target ($F = 0.62$) reference points recently adopted through Addendum V. Since fishing mortality in 2008 (the latest year in the assessment) is estimated at 2.28, overfishing is occurring, however, the stock is not overfished. The goal of the new reference points is to increase abundance, spawning stock biomass, and menhaden availability as a forage species. The PID also seeks public input on a more timely and comprehensive catch reporting system, and scopes potential options to be used in managing Atlantic menhaden commercial bait and reduction fisheries as well as recreational fishery.

Alongside the development of Amendment 2, the peer-reviewed stock assessment will be updated with data through 2011 to provide a more recent estimate of fishing mortality. Results of the assessment update will be used to estimate the harvest reductions needed to achieve the new threshold and target fishing mortality rates. Therefore, preliminary harvest reductions are provided in the PID but will likely change based on the results of the stock assessment update.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the PID either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Public comment must be received no later than 5:00 PM (EST) on April 20, 2012 and should be forwarded to Michael Waine, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or mwaine@asmfc.org (Subject line: Menhaden PID). A subsequent press release will announce the state's public hearing schedule. For more information, please contact Michael Waine at 703.842.0740