

## MENHADEN (from page 1)

“We agree that the current state allocation makes no sense,” said Hittinger, “but we are also concerned that with quota reallocation we could see more commercial harvest here.”

For these reasons RISAA is firm that we can only support reallocation if Interim ERPs are implemented at the same time to assure



Juvenile menhaden called “peanut bunker”

that the forage value of menhaden is protected coastwide.

### Coastwide Quota

The coastwide quota for menhaden harvest is currently set at 200,000 metric tons. This is 440,000,000 (440 million!) pounds and is the largest poundage quota for all fisheries in the US.

What is even worse is that one company from Texas, Omega Protein, takes nearly 85% of these fish or nearly 374 million pounds for their own profit, resulting in less bait fish for Rhode Island lobstermen, and less food for Rhode Island striped bass, bluefish, whales, ospreys, resulting in less income for all of the Rhode Island businesses that flourish based on our saltwater resources.

The quota was originally set at 187,880 metric tons in 2012 and Omega has pushed every year for increases of up to 40%. Each year it has been a battle and step-wise increases have resulted in the current quota of 200,000 MT. We think this is a good place to be and if any increase is allowed it should be very small.

Because of the increase in menhaden in our area, everyone knows that whale watching has been great this year. Striped bass have been feeding well and therefore are expected to have a good spawning year in the spring. There has been much small bait this year – sand eels, anchovies, squid, etc.

I am sure this local menhaden abundance is the result of the improved localized quota management by Rhode Island DEM Marine Fisheries Division for the past 10 years and because of the quotas put in place by ASMFC.

The bottom line is that more menhaden equals more fish in the water and equals more jobs for Rhode Islanders!

### MORE FISH = MORE JOBS

We all need to make our voices heard to be sure this trend is not reversed by out-of-state interests who want to take MILLIONS of pounds of menhaden to produce fish oil and animal feed. Please participate in this important process!

The Draft Amendment 3 is available to read at: [http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/AtlanticMenhadenDraftAmendment3\\_PublicComment.pdf](http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/AtlanticMenhadenDraftAmendment3_PublicComment.pdf) or on the Commission website, [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org), under Public Input.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Amendment either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment.

Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on October 20, 2017 and should be forwarded to:

Megan Ware, FMP Coordinator  
1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N,  
Arlington, VA 22201

By fax to 703.842.0741 or by email to [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Draft Amd. 3)

### LOCAL PUBLIC HEARINGS ARE BEING CONDUCTED BY ASMFC IN THE COASTAL STATES

Below are the dates, times and locations. Please try to attend. It is important that the ASFMC Menhaden Management Board sees that we care enough to show up.

#### RHODE ISLAND Division of Fish and Wildlife October 4, 2017; 6:00 PM

University of Rhode Island Bay Campus  
Corless Auditorium, South Ferry Road  
Narragansett, RI  
Contact: Robert Ballou at 401.222.4700 ext: 4420

#### MASSACHUSETTS Division of Marine Fisheries October 2, 2017: 6:00 PM

Thayer Public Library, Logan Auditorium  
798 Washington Street  
Braintree, MA  
Contact: Nichola Meserve at 617.626.1531

#### October 5, 2017: 6:00 PM

Bourne Community Center, Room 2  
239 Main Street  
Buzzards Bay, MA  
Contact: Nichola Meserve at 617.626.1531

#### CONNECTICUT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection September 11, 2017; 7 PM

CT DEEP Boating Education Center  
333 Ferry Road  
Old Lyme, CT  
Contact: Mark Alexander at 860.447.4322

**Prior to the hearings, the RISAA Board of Directors will announce it's preferred options for Amendment 3**, although all members are welcome to offer their own preferences.