

TOWN OF WELLFLEET

300 MAIN STREET WELLFLEET MASSACHUSETTS 02667
Tel (508) 349-0300 Fax (508) 349-0305
www.wellfleet-ma.gov

To: Menhaden Management Board Chair: Spud Woodward
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
105 N. Highland Street, Suite 220 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

July 19, 2020

Cc: ASMFC Representatives and staff
Daniel Hoort, Town Administrator, Wellfleet Selectboard

From: The Wellfleet Natural Resources Advisory Board

Re: Ecological management for Atlantic Menhaden

Dear Chairman Woodward,

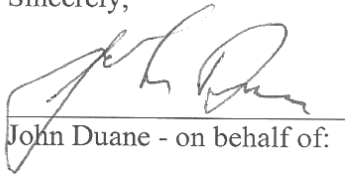
The Wellfleet Natural Resources Advisory Board (NRAB) would like to express our support and appreciation for the Menhaden Management Board's (Board's) work on Ecological management for Atlantic Menhaden. NRAB has been following the commissions process of developing an approach using ecological reference points (ERP's) to set menhaden catch limits for over 10 years now. We commend you, the ERP Work Group, Technical Committee, and Advisory Panel for developing modern, science-based menhaden-specific models that consider menhadens role as forage for predator species. Having considered the data, we urge you to adopt the ERP Work Group-recommended and peer-reviewed ERP target of 0.19 and threshold of 0.57, and use the (NWACS-MICE) model, also recommended by the peer review panel, for setting the TAC. This will help promote the rebuilding of many ASMFC managed fish stocks including Striped Bass, Bluefish, and Weakfish, as well as other fish, whales and bird species that frequent our area, and are an integral part of the socio-economic fabric of our community.

In Wellfleet, near an outer extent of menhadens range, we would benefit greatly from a further rebuilding and expansion of the stock to some semblance of former abundance and range. Having summered and fished here since the mid 60's, I can attest to the fact that when menhaden populations were more abundant, the health of two major predator species, Striped Bass and Bluefish was also robust.

Please move ahead at your August meeting, and approve a conservative ecosystem-based management approach using ERP's to fully provide for the needs of those predators dependent on menhaden. As stated in previous letters to the commission, we believe those predators needs should be the first priority when setting catch limits now, and into the future.

Thanks for considering our comments on what we hope will be a precedent setting, historic moment in East Coast fisheries management on August 4th.

Sincerely,



John Duane - on behalf of:

The Wellfleet Natural Resources Advisory Board
John Riehl Chair, John Duane, Tom Flynn
Laura Hewitt, Tom Slack