



**PRESS CONTACT**

**Robert Vanasse**  
**Menhaden Fisheries Coalition**  
**(202) 333-2628**  
**bob@savingseafood.org**

**Menhaden Fisheries Coalition Responds to Pew Video: Menhaden Fisheries Are Sustainable, Responsibly Managed**

January 29, 2015 (Menhaden Fisheries Coalition) – In a [new partially-animated video](#) from the Pew Charitable Trusts cartoonist Jim Toomey—whose daily comic strip, Sherman’s Lagoon, is syndicated in more than 250 newspapers in the United States, expresses concerns about “forage fish” such as menhaden, herring, and sardines and warns of what could happen “if we continue to fish these little guys at an unsustainable rate.” Mr. Toomey states that “without adequate catch limits, industrial fishing boats can scoop up as many forage fish as they want,” but notes that there is hope because “fishery managers can set catch limits to sustain populations.”

The Menhaden Fisheries Coalition reiterates what the most recent and comprehensive science says on menhaden: in the United States, the species is sustainably harvested and responsibly managed.

In early 2015, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) released its latest [Atlantic menhaden stock assessment](#). The results were [overwhelmingly positive](#): it found menhaden are not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring. The assessment also found that fishing mortality had hit an all-time low, and that indicators of a healthy stock, such as fecundity, were high. The Commission determined that the stock was in such good shape that, in May 2015, it [actually raised](#) the coastwide quota for Atlantic menhaden by 10 percent.

A similar story holds for the other main menhaden species, Gulf menhaden. The [last assessment](#), conducted by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) in

2013, also found that Gulf menhaden were not overfished, nor were they experiencing overfishing. According [to the GSMFC](#), “the Gulf menhaden fishery is probably the most closely monitored and managed fishery in the Gulf of Mexico.”

The ASMFC and GSMFC are not the only organizations to certify that menhaden are being harvested sustainably. In a report issued last July, the non-profit Sustainable Fisheries Partnership released [a comprehensive evaluation](#) of forage fish fisheries worldwide. The report ranked the Atlantic and Gulf menhaden fisheries among the highest of the fisheries it evaluated. Both were ranked as “reasonably managed fisheries with stocks in good condition.” The report considers both stocks to be healthy, with responsible catch levels.

Similarly, the independent certification group [Friend of the Sea](#) has also certified the Atlantic and Gulf menhaden fisheries as sustainable. The organization particularly highlighted the “near zero percent” level of discards, and the “insignificant” levels of bycatch in both fisheries.

The best available evidence confirms that menhaden fisheries are sustainable, and that the species are not under threat for overfishing.

**About the Menhaden Fisheries Coalition:**

*The Menhaden Fisheries Coalition is a collective of menhaden fishermen, related businesses, and supporting industries. Comprised of over 30 businesses along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, the Menhaden Fisheries Coalition conducts media and public outreach on behalf of the menhaden industry to ensure that members of the public, media, and government are informed of important issues, events, and facts about the fishery.*