



New Jersey Audubon
Government Relations

172 W State Street • Trenton, New Jersey 08608 • (609) 392-1182

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Leader
H-107 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Democratic Whip
148 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, Representative McCarthy and Representative Hoyer,

New Jersey Audubon strongly urges you to oppose any legislation, including H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023, that would undermine the conservation provisions of the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson Stevens Act).

New Jersey Audubon is a privately supported nonprofit, statewide membership organization with over 18,000 members. Founded in 1897 and one of the oldest Audubon societies, NJA is independent from National Audubon Society and has a mission of connecting people with nature and stewarding the nature of today for the people of tomorrow. NJA is committed to the preservation of natural habitats and the protection of birds, mammals, and other animals and plants, especially threatened and endangered species.

Shorebirds rely on healthy, abundant fish populations and any legislation that would weaken management should not move forward in this Congress. H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023 would increase the risk of overfishing and threaten the progress we've made on rebuilding vulnerable fish populations, particularly the Atlantic Menhaden, by extending the timelines for plans to rebuild vulnerable fish populations, delaying when fishermen would benefit from a fully healthy stock. Additionally, they would exempt fish populations from the use of science-based annual catch limits designed to prevent overfishing.

Osprey, listed as threatened in New Jersey (breeding population), depends heavily on this small, energy-rich fish that plays an important role in the marine food web. A 2009 study investigating diet composition in the Chesapeake Bay found that menhaden represented less than 24 percent of the diet of ospreys in Mobjack Bay, compared to more than 70 percent in the 1980s due to the menhaden population decline. The population decrease of energy-rich Atlantic Menhaden has also resulted in reduced survival to fledging.

Menhaden's role as sustenance for New Jersey's birds contributes significant economic and ecological value to the Atlantic coast. According to *Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis: Addendum to the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation* (amended July 2009), birdwatchers generated a total of \$82 billion with an additional \$11 billion in local, state and federal tax dollars that year. Birdwatching, along with other business activities dependent on the availability of menhaden, expands economic opportunities for coastal communities throughout New Jersey. H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023 would undermine years of strong science-based management that is helping stabilize fishing businesses and coastal communities.



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The Magnuson-Stevens Act is helping to end fishing at unsustainable rates and put forage fish on the road to recovery. The signs of success for more and bigger fish dispersed throughout a broader range are evidence that strong fisheries management can work.

New Jersey Audubon urges you to oppose H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023, and any other legislation that would undermine the conservation requirements that have been critical to the success of the Magnuson Stevens Act. You can contact Kelly Mooij, Vice President of Government Relations for New Jersey Audubon, at 609-400-3842 or kelly.mooij@njaudubon.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

Kelly Mooij
Vice President, Government Relations
New Jersey Audubon