



SEABIRDS AND THE MAGNUSON-STEVENS FISHERY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT

Arctic Tern

SCIENCE-BASED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT WORKS TO KEEP FISHERIES HEALTHY FOR MARINE WILDLIFE AND COMMUNITIES

The **Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act** (MSA) is the primary law that governs management of ocean fish in U.S. federal waters. Enacted in 1976, the MSA has been crucial in **improving the health of fish populations and ocean ecosystems**. Key objectives of the MSA are to prevent overfishing, rebuild overfished stocks, ensure healthy fisheries, increase long-term economic and social benefits, and guarantee safe and sustainable supplies of seafood.

The MSA has served as the nation's road map to sustainably managed fisheries. Through the MSA, the National Marine Fisheries Service has **ended chronic overfishing, rebuilt over 40 fish stocks, and put fisheries on a solid sustainable footing**. Despite these successes, *there is still more work to be done*.

THE NEXT MAGNUSON-STEVENS ACT REAUTHORIZATION:

The MSA was signed into law with strong bipartisan support. Republicans and Democrats **worked together** on reauthorizations in 1996 and 2006 that further strengthened the law. While reauthorizing the MSA, **Congress should further strengthen, not weaken, this law** in order to protect U.S. fisheries for the communities and wildlife that depend on healthy fish stocks. Important policy changes needed in the next MSA reauthorization include:

- **Empowering regional fishery management councils** to adopt a more comprehensive approach to protecting fish

- **Conserving forage fish** (sardines, anchovies, etc.) and invertebrates (krill, shrimp, and squid) which are the primary food sources for seabirds, marine mammals, and larger fish such as cod and tuna

- **Minimizing bycatch**, which is the incidental catching and discarding of non-target fish, birds, and other marine wildlife

- **Protecting fish habitat** from destructive fishing practices and some other other damaging human activities to ensure that fish have safe places to reproduce, feed, grow, and take shelter

- **Proceeding with caution** before

allowing new fisheries in order to ensure sustainability from the start

- **Creating fishery management plans** that use the best available scientific information to give regional managers a clear understanding of the trade-offs presented by different management options and to promote more informed decision-making

SEABIRDS IN NEW ENGLAND DEPEND ON THE MAGNUSON-STEVENS ACT TO GENERATE SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

As a top predator in the ocean food web, seabirds are valuable indicators of marine health, and **almost half of all seabird species are known or suspected to be experiencing population declines**. Declines in many seabirds are linked to reduced prey populations, such as forage fish (sardines, anchovies, etc.) and invertebrates (krill, shrimp, and squid). The MSA designates and guides eight regional **fishery management councils** to manage fish that are important prey for seabirds, including Atlantic Cod, Atlantic Herring, Atlantic Pollock, and White Hake. Additionally, management councils in the Mid-Atlantic and Pacific have a **provision to protect forage fish for which directed fisheries do not exist yet**. This prevents the expansion of directed commercial fisheries on these species to allow for their important role in the marine food web. The **New England Fishery Management Council** should either follow their lead, or go a step further and start managing many important forage species such as Butterfish and Sandlance.

Birds that rely on managed fish:

Atlantic Herring: Arctic Tern, **Atlantic Puffin**, Black Guillemot, Bonaparte's Gull, Common Tern, Cory's Shearwater, Glaucous Gull, Herring Gull, Least Tern, Magnificent Frigatebird, Manx Shearwater, Northern Fulmar, Northern Gannet, Osprey, **Razorbill**, Red-necked Grebe, Roseate Tern

Atlantic Pollock: Arctic Tern, Black Guillemot, Bonaparte's Gull, Common Murre, Common Tern, Great Cormorant, Herring Gull, Northern Fulmar, Osprey, **Razorbill**, Roseate Tern

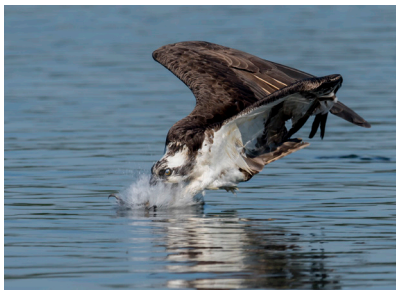
White Hake: Arctic Tern, **Atlantic Puffin**, Common Tern, Least Tern, **Razorbill**, Roseate Tern

Birds that rely on unmanaged Fish:

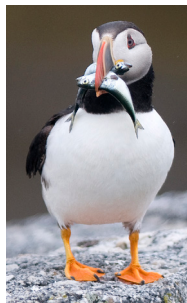
Butterfish: Arctic Tern, **Atlantic Puffin**, Black Guillemot, Common Tern, Manx Shearwater, **Razorbill**

Sandlance: Arctic Tern, **Atlantic Puffin**, Common Tern, Cory's Shearwater, Least Tern, Manx Shearwater, Northern Gannet, **Razorbill**

Key: **red** denotes a globally listed species



Osprey can be seen diving for schools of Atlantic Pollock and Atlantic Menhaden in the northern Atlantic Ocean.



Atlantic Herring is one of Atlantic Puffin's major food items. Puffin chick survival is closely linked to the availability of Atlantic Herring.



In Maine, Common Terns prefer White Hake and feed this small, schooling fish to its chicks.

HEALTHY FISHERIES MEAN A HEALTHY ECONOMY

As Americans who care about the future of our natural resources, we need to ensure that fishing goes hand in hand with **healthy oceans**, which provide more economic opportunities and prey for birds and other wildlife. If we strengthen the MSA today, we can **continue the U.S.' legacy of sustainable fishing** and will see many benefits to coastal communities and the nation.

Keeping forage fisheries healthy ensures that important **game fish** like Atlantic Cod, Black Sea Bass and Summer Flounder, are bigger in size and more abundant in New England, as these larger fish rely on smaller fish and invertebrates as their main source of prey. Recreational fishing is an economic driver – in 2015, **1 million** anglers took **5 million** fishing trips in New England spending **\$1.7 billion** on trips and durable goods. Additionally, wildlife viewers from across the country come to New England to witness wildlife that rely on healthy populations of forage fish and invertebrates, including birds and marine mammals such as whales, dolphins, and seals. Because of the abundance of unique and exciting wildlife, **4.7 million** wildlife watchers generate **\$3.4 billion** in sales per year in New England.

Many chefs, restaurant owners, and seafood dealers need a reliable source of healthy, U.S. caught fish. The MSA ensures they can continue to provide high quality food to locals and tourists that **drive the seafood industry** in New England, which supports over **139,000 jobs** and provides **\$12 billion** in annual sales.

Strengthening the MSA will ensure there are enough fish in the sea, now and in the future, while protecting the birds and other wildlife that depend on them.

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