



Menhaden

These small, silvery schooling fish are one of the most important marine species you'll never eat – at least not directly. Though they are high in Omega-3 EPA and DHA, the abundance of small bones in their bodies make them difficult to consume. Despite their unpalatable nature, the U.S. hauls in over half a million metric tons of menhaden each year for use in meal, oil-based products and as bait for other seafood. The menhaden industry is actually two different fisheries combined – the Gulf and Atlantic species.



Gulf Menhaden

Brevoortia patronus also known as Pogy

LIFE SPAN:
2-6 years

SIZE:
8-12 inches

DIET:
Plankton

FECUNDITY:
22,000-122,000 eggs/female

IDENTIFYING FEATURE:
Black spot on shoulder behind the gill cover, followed by row of smaller spots

SPAWNING:
October – April with the peak from December – March

LANDINGS:
490,700 metric tons (average)

FISHING GEAR USED:
Purse Seine

HARVEST SEASON:
April – November*
*fishery managed by individual states

Atlantic Menhaden

Brevoortia tyrannus also known as Bunker

LIFE SPAN:
10-12 years

SIZE:
Up to 15 inches

DIET:
Plankton

FECUNDITY:
8,000-326,000 eggs/female

IDENTIFYING FEATURE:
Black spot on shoulder behind the gill cover

SPAWNING:
March – May
September – October

LANDINGS:
187,000 metric tons (2015)

FISHING GEAR USED:
Purse Seine

HARVEST SEASON:
May – December*
*fishery managed by Atlantic States Marine Fishery Commission



Two pogy boats with purse seines surround and a "mother boat" in the distance.

Menhaden have the highest level of Omega-3 fatty acids of any U.S. landed fish.

Omega-3 fatty acid from menhaden



This publication is a cooperative effort of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries and Louisiana Sea Grant College at LSU through the Louisiana Fisheries Forward program, which aims to advance Louisiana's seafood industry. This is one of many fact sheets available free of charge at our website www.lafisheriesforward.org.

