Fecundity is a metric of the reproductive capacity of a fish stock, measured by the number of eggs being produced by the stock. It is a key measure of whether or not a stock is able to sustain itself and potentially increase its numbers.

Overfishing occurs when fishing mortality is too high, and too many fish are being removed from a stock. Overfishing levels are determined by fisheries managers like the ASMFC. Atlantic menhaden is not experiencing overfishing.

Fishing Mortality measures the rate at which fish are removed from the stock by the fishery. Excessive levels of fishing mortality lead to overfishing.

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Atlantic menhaden is not overfished.

Spawning occurs when menhaden reproduce, which can occur as early as age 1. The measure of the spawning success of the stock is known as Recruitment.
Another important measurement, fecundity, has reached a near-record high, and is well above the threshold level set by the ASMFC. Fecundity is one of the best measurements that fisheries managers have in determining whether or not a species is being managed sustainably. According to the assessment, the menhaden stock is producing more than enough eggs to successfully maintain the coastwide population.

Additionally, the menhaden fishery takes several steps to avoid interfering with menhaden spawning, such as ending the fishing season before peak spawning migration begins to protect spawning-aged menhaden.

The assessment also contained very positive measurements for several key indicators of a healthy stock. One such metric, fishing mortality, hit an all time low in 2013, with fishing effort in a sustainable range and well below levels that would trigger overfishing.

The Atlantic menhaden fishery today includes at least 12 active vessels and one processing plant located in Reedville, Virginia—a decrease from 150 vessels and 23 plants coastwide when fishing mortality peaked in 1956.