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## Frequently Asked Questions:

### Lenfest Forage Fish Task Force Report

#### What are forage fish?

Forage fish are small, schooling fish, such as sardines, herring, sand eels, and menhaden. They are a crucial link in ocean food webs because they eat tiny plants and animals, called plankton, and are preyed upon by animals such as penguins, whales, seals, puffins, and dolphins.

#### Why should we care about forage fish?

Forage fish are a valuable commodity and a vulnerable resource. For example, they are processed into fish meal, which is used as feed for farmed fish, poultry, and pigs and in pet foods. And many people take daily fish oil capsules made from forage fish to increase their intake of healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Globally, these species make up more than one-third of the world's marine fish catch. However, conventional fisheries management has largely overlooked the role that forage fish play in food webs, which could be causing serious consequences for marine ecosystems.

#### What do you mean by “conventional fisheries management”?

Conventional fisheries management is commonly based on maintaining “maximum sustainable yield,” which in theory is the maximum amount of fish you can remove and still have enough fish to maintain the population for next year's catch. Often, maximum sustainable yield is set at 40 percent of the fish stock's original size or weight. This management approach does not consider consequences beyond the individual fish species, such as how it might affect predators that depend on the species.

#### What is the Lenfest Forage Fish Task Force?

The Lenfest Ocean Program established the Forage Fish Task Force to provide guidance for better management of forage fish to account for their ecosystem roles. The Task

Force conducted the most comprehensive global analysis of forage fish management to date. This group of 13 preeminent scientists with expertise in a wide range of disciplines synthesized scientific research and other information about these small, schooling fish and conducted original simulation modeling to reach their conclusions. In its report, the Task Force provided policy recommendations aimed to sustain robust forage fish fisheries and populations of the species that depend upon them.

### **Aren't some forage fish fisheries already better managed than others?**

Yes, but the Task Force found that, in general, fisheries managers could do a better job of incorporating the needs of predators when deciding how many forage fish to take out of the oceans. In some cases, forage fish fisheries might need better management to maintain the fisheries themselves, which could be vulnerable to overfishing and possible collapse.

### **What do the recommendations mean for my local fisheries?**

The Lenfest Forage Fish Task Force report is a global assessment of forage fish fisheries and presents case studies that highlight features of these fisheries in different regions. However, the Task Force did not examine management of the fisheries in detail nor make recommendations about any specific region or fishery. Instead, the Task Force encourages fishery managers to use its recommendations to evaluate individual forage fish fisheries to see if any management improvements should be made.

**For additional questions or more information, please contact:  
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