

From: David Sherfinski <DSherfinski@cbf.org>
Sent: Friday, March 6, 2026 2:28 PM
To: David Sherfinski <DSherfinski@cbf.org>
Subject: Menhaden Die-off Highlights Need For Additional Research Funding

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For Information Contact:
David Sherfinski
(202) 603-2932
Dsherfinski@cbf.org

Photo and video credit: Chesapeake Bay
Foundation: <https://cbf.box.com/s/c2qg48ye7spyjet0u9o03dtv38w1l9x6> [cbf.box.com]

Suggested captions: Dead menhaden found in Virginia Beach on March 6, 2026

MENHADEN DIE-OFF HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH FUNDING

A large number of dead menhaden washed up along the Chesapeake Bay shore in Virginia Beach this week – once again highlighting the need for Virginia lawmakers to approve funding this month to better understand the menhaden population in the Chesapeake Bay.

The cause of the most recent incident was not immediately known, but it underscores the need to better understand why they occur and what the long-term effects on the menhaden population in the Bay could be. It also once again raises the question on whether today's Chesapeake Bay can continue supporting a major industrial fishery.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation supports investing in much-needed research into the menhaden population in the Bay that could go a long way in helping explain these types of events and other population dynamics.

The Virginia House-passed version of the two-year budget that starts July 1 currently includes \$2 million for these efforts. Lawmakers are expected to approve a new budget before they're scheduled to adjourn on March 14.

Menhaden are foundational to a healthy Chesapeake Bay. They serve as highly nutritious food to some of the most iconic and important species in the Bay, including striped bass, osprey, red drum, and marine mammals.

Menhaden travel in large schools, so they are prone to mortality events like these even if natural factors, like a sudden temperature change, drop in tide, or predators, are possible causes.

Chesapeake Bay Foundation Forage Campaign Manager Will Poston issued the following statement:

"This incident, which is still unfolding, illustrates how important it is to get a better understanding of our Chesapeake Bay menhaden population. Unfortunately, this effort has been needlessly delayed by Omega Protein and their McGuireWoods lobbyists in Richmond.

Continuing the delay of this important research only raises more questions about the health of the Bay's menhaden population.

This is happening just as the General Assembly is considering funding research that would help us understand menhaden in the Bay, how natural kills happen, and whether the Bay can support a major industrial fishery.

We urge lawmakers to include that money in the coming two-year budget. We will continue to monitor this situation."

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