

THE  
**PEW**  
ENVIRONMENT GROUP



Bald eagle



Osprey

# WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

## Protecting the marine food web

**F**rom whales to red snapper, important marine animals eat smaller fish and organisms to survive. Prey's role in the food web is critical to a healthy, robust ocean ecosystem. But people are not doing enough to ensure the abundance of prey species to feed valuable fish populations and marine life.

The need to protect this basic prey, which ranges from mullet and menhaden to sardines and anchovies, is growing more urgent in the Southeast. Populations of some of these small fish have plummeted, partly because billions have been scooped up by industrial fishing to serve as ingredients in fertilizer, pet food, and other products.

It's like a run on vegetables in the grocery store. Without this important food staple, diets are compromised, and it's a scramble to find suitable substitutes. That disruption can send an unhealthy ripple effect stretching across the ocean ecosystem.

Protecting the prey is fundamental to rebuilding depleted fish populations, conserving marine animals, and maintaining a balanced food web.



Bottlenose dolphin



Tiger shark



Humpback whale



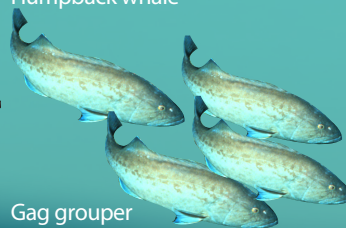
Small-tooth sawfish



Red snapper



Amberjack



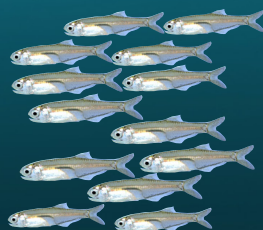
Gag grouper



Black sea bass

### FOOD SOURCE

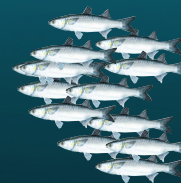
These prey species eat microscopic plants and animals and become protein-rich food for animals such as red snapper, whales, and dolphins.



Anchovy



Sardines



Mullet



Pinfish



Herring