



## Cownose Rays in the Chesapeake Bay: What do we know?

Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015  
National Aquarium, Baltimore, MD

**Workshop Goal:** *Characterize what is known about the life history and population dynamics of cownose rays in the Chesapeake Bay as well as fishing effort and ecosystem interactions. Identify a mechanism to determine the stock status of Atlantic cownose rays (*Rhinoptera bonasus*) in the Chesapeake Bay to inform future fishery management.*

*This is a scientific workshop bringing together experts to discuss the latest research and the broader context of what we know about cownose rays in the Chesapeake Bay. Time is allotted for brief public comment. Written public comments can be submitted for inclusion in the final workshop report. There are no policy decisions being made at this workshop.*

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>8:30am</b>        | <b>Light Breakfast</b> (provided for workshop participants and organizers)  |
| <b>9:00am</b>        | <b>Welcome from the National Aquarium and Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (Chair, Peyton Robertson-NOAA)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• Workshop Context</li> <li>• Review workshop agenda and objectives</li> </ul>  |
| <b>9:30-11:00am</b>  | <b>Life History: Age, Growth, Reproduction and Diet</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview - Bob Fisher (VIMS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Historical concern of shellfish predation and prey preference – Dean Grubbs (FSU)</li> <li>○ Diet Study: New Genetic Technique – Lyndell Bade (formerly ECU)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Predation on oysters, soft and razor clams</li> <li>○ Vital Rates/Demographics: Fecundity, age of maturity, longevity</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>11:00-12:20pm</b> | <b>Population Dynamics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background on Population Change Over Time – Dean Grubbs (FSU)</li> <li>• Tagging and Acoustic Telemetry Research – Matt Ogburn (SERC) and Bob Fisher (VIMS)</li> <li>• Genetic Diversity – Jan McDowell (VIMS)</li> <li>• Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Population connectivity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |

- How are individuals using habitat in the Bay?
- Are there specific places individuals return to?
- Question of population size

**12:20-1:00pm Lunch (provided for workshop participants and organizers)**

**1:00-1:30pm Fishing Effort Summary**

- Marketing and Current Fishing Activities – Bob Fisher (VIMS)
- Discussion
  - What data exist on catch of cownose rays?

**1:30pm Discussion: Where do we go from here?**

- What science questions are most important for management?  
How can we answer those questions?
- What datasets/indices currently exist?
- How can we determine the status of cownose rays in the Chesapeake Bay?
- Scientific considerations for management?

**3:30-3:50pm Public Comment**

**3:50-4:00pm Wrap-Up and Recommendations**

**Post-workshop:**

A workshop report will document the proceedings and serve as the most recent collective scientific input on cownose rays in the Chesapeake Bay. Include a literature and data review.

**Scientific experts:**

- Lyndell Bade, formerly East Carolina University
- Tobey Curtis, NOAA
- Drew Ferrier, Hood College
- Bob Fisher, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Marine Advisory Services
- Dean Grubbs, Florida State University
- Tom Ihde, ERT/NOAA
- Jan McDowell, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Department of Fisheries Science
- Matt Ogburn, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center
- Howard Townsend, NOAA

**Thank you!**

- ✓ Workshop participants
- ✓ Chesapeake Bay Program's Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team
- ✓ National Aquarium, especially Laura Bankey
- ✓ NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office
- ✓ Sonja Fordham

**Sustainable Fisheries Goal Team Executive Committee**

- Lynn Fegley, Maryland Department of Natural Resources (Fishery Manager)
- Marty Gary, Potomac River Fisheries Commission (Fishery Manager)
- Rob O'Reilly, Virginia Marine Resources Commission (Fishery Manager)
- Bryan King, District Department of the Environment (Fishery Manager)
- Bob Beal, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Peyton Robertson, NOAA
- Bruce Vogt, NOAA