

# ICW – Commercial Fishing, Processing and Marketing Small Group

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# Goal

## **Increase Commercial Harvest**

Increase commercial harvest landings, dockside value processing capacity, and grow additional domestic and international markets to reduce blue catfish biomass in the Bay and support local economies.



# Marketing Blue Catfish

## Product Development is Needed

**Opportunities** - Large quantities of wild caught blue catfish into school systems. Approved Child Nutrition Label with “seafood” cakes and “seafood” nuggets

**Challenges** -

- Product vs price point -How do we bridge the price points in school systems
- Working on additional items at the appropriate cost
- Low cost where schools are interested - filets etc. - price point is important



# Objective

## Blue Catfish - Safe to Eat

Get representation from Maryland Department of Environment in the ICW to ensure we all are beating from the same drum

**Next steps:** Still need clarity across MD and VA for safety, work can be done on marketing standpoint to paint a clearer picture.

## MDA/DNR/MDE Messaging on Blue Catfish Consumption:

Responsibly-sourced seafood from the Chesapeake Bay can be an important part of a balanced diet and provides many health benefits. For some areas and fish species, consumption advisories warn that a person may experience a one in 100,000 risk for a negative health outcome if monthly consumption recommendations are exceeded by one meal per month over a 30-year span.

Stores and restaurants sell responsibly sourced and cleaned seafood from healthy populations and healthy rivers. To further reduce risk, filets should be trimmed of red muscle (including the belly meat) and skin. Blue catfish from the Anacostia River should not be consumed or sold for consumption.

# Action Items

## Action Item #1

Deadline 2026

- Work with Science/Management small group to conduct studies showing the density of the Bay - **Are surveys being conducted/planned to determine biomass?**

## Action Item #2

Deadline 2026

Explore the utility of all gear types to increase annual harvest, especially in the winter when the fish are dormant, and July/August when harvest is difficult due to extreme temperatures

## Action Item #3

Deadline 2026

Identify and create larger volume opportunities for processors to move blue catfish - **Federal funding opportunities? USDA Solicitations?**

# How can ICW help advance goals & objectives?

- Non-profit for marketing dollars for wild caught blue catfish
- Supply chain
- Support for funding with studies on biomass
- Highlight international marketing efforts





→ Questions?

