

Chesapeake Bay Program Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team

March 2016 Update



Our Vision

The Fisheries GIT provides a forum to discuss fishery management issues that cross state and jurisdictional boundaries. Connects science to management decisions and creates a framework for implementing ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries management.

Accomplishments



Blue Crabs

- The Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee (CBSAC) met in Dec. 2015 to further discuss survey data [analysis](#) and reproductive output. Glenn Davis (MDDNR) was approved as the new CBSAC Chair.
- Scientists and fishery managers are finalizing the assessment plans after clarifying the terms of reference. Funding is TBD.
- After the Winter Dredge Survey results are released this spring, CBSAC will meet to draft the 2016 Blue Crab Advisory Report.



Oyster Restoration

- [Preliminary monitoring data](#) show that all reefs seeded in Harris Creek in 2012 meet the Oyster Metrics threshold for oyster density, and half of those reefs meet the target for oyster density. A full report is expected in late Spring.
- Restoration progress [updates](#) on the selected tributaries are posted from the December meeting.
- The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office hosted an [Oyster Summit](#) to discuss shared goals and challenges among oyster stakeholders from multiple sectors.



Invasive Catfish

- A study was completed which tested the effectiveness of experimental collection gear electrofishing harvest efficiency of invasive blue catfish in Virginia. The average catch-per-unit-effort was 26.8lbs per minute. The methods tested were effective and resulted in no unintended bycatch, however it did not increase harvest efficiency as expected.



Forage Fish

- The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) will fund a project through the Chesapeake Bay to investigate potential environmental drivers that influence forage population and predator consumption patterns. This project will build off [previous work](#) on forage trends and indicator development by researchers at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science-Chesapeake Biological Lab.



Fish Habitat

- The Fish Habitat Action Team received funding from the CBP to expand a previous project with TetraTech. The project will synthesize information on fish habitat threats and stressors to early life-stages for lesser studied species.

CBP Updates



Watershed Agreement: Final Workplans

- Fisheries GIT workgroups and action teams developed 2-year [workplans](#) for the four fishery outcomes in the 2014 Watershed Agreement. The final workplans will be posted in late April 2016.

Forage Presentation in April

- On the [April 14th CBP Management Board](#), Tom Ihde (ERT/NOAA) and Bruce Vogt (NOAA) will discuss the forage management strategy and the recent forage indicator work.

Executive Committee

Executive Committee Monthly Meetings

At *monthly* Fisheries GIT Executive Committee meetings Bay scientists and policy administrators discuss various topics:

- A [study](#) was performed to develop a fish health indicator for Striped Bass. Findings from the study suggest that the force-of-infection increases with age and that apparent prevalence is correlated with water quality variables including total suspended solids, nitrates, and phosphates.
- The [OysterFutures](#) research project was developed in an effort to integrate oyster stakeholder objectives with natural system models. This project seeks to promote sustainable natural resource policy by using a stakeholder-centered and science-based approach to make recommendations to managers regarding oysters in the Choptank River. The first [OysterFutures meeting](#) was held in late February.

Project Updates



Cownose Rays

After a successful [workshop](#) on Cownose Rays in October, the Fisheries GIT and the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office compiled the research, scientific recommendations and workshop discussions into a comprehensive [workshop report](#).

June 2016 - Full GIT Meeting

*First Week of June
Virginia Location TBD
SAVE THE DATE!*

Find meetings, presentations and other information [here](#)