FISH HABITAT

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES GIT

CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED AGREEMENT OUTCOME LANGUAGE

PROPOSED DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

Achieve and maintain suitable shallow water fish habitat in tidal and non-tidal areas for key species through focused water quality, conservation and restoration improvements informed by a synthesis of fisheries science and habitat assessments.

EXISTING 2014 OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

Continually improve effectiveness of fish habitat conservation and restoration efforts by identifying and characterizing critical spawning, nursery and forage areas within the Bay and tributaries for important fish and shellfish, and use existing and new tools to integrate information and conduct assessments to inform restoration and conservation efforts.

PROPOSED TARGET (SMART, Directional, etc.). (Suggested time horizon of 2040 for achievement of draft output.)	**New Target / Update of Existing Target**	**Date estimate for target being developed**
Measure (or score) shallow water fish habitat conditions in the 92 tidal segments by 2026 to prioritize areas for water quality improvements, conservation and habitat restoration. Continually assess changes in fish habitat conditions through 2040. [under construction]	new target	2025
Develop status and trends of structured fish habitat including oyster reefs, SAV, tidal wetlands, and shoreline condition within the 92 bay segments by 20xx. [under construction]	new target	2025
Annually evaluate and communicate indicators of forage status and trends that provide information to inform management on the availability of food for key predator species as environmental conditions change. [under construction]	updated of existing target	2025
Annually (or Continually) track, analyze and communicate	new target	2025

the movement and habitat use of striped bass and other species to inform restoration and fishery management decisions.[under construction]		
Use the Nontidal Fish Habitat Assessment as output for fish habitat condition. This can be measured as a % improvement from xxxx baseline. [under construction]		
Acid Mine Drainage (share output with Brook Trout) [under construction]		
Mussel abundance or occupancy. [under construction]		

*Detailed activities will be included in an updated work plan

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Rationale and context for proposed draft outcome language:

- Current efforts to improve water quality and restore nearshore and aquatic habitats in the Chesapeake Bay are aimed at improving conditions for fish, however, we don't currently assess and track the condition of fish habitat well. The CESR report suggested that more emphasis on improving conditions in shallow water could enhance outcomes for living resources. The first step to addressing the CESR recommendation is to improve our ability to assess fish habitat conditions and utilize this assessment to prioritize areas for water quality and living resource improvements. This science based assessment and prioritization approach linked to the TMDL segments supports tiered implementation of the TMDL and could facilitate cross GIT efforts.
- Forage species are the base of the food web for species such as Striped bass and other predators. Assessing their status provides information on a factor that can influence the health of fisheries and their management.
- As conditions change in the Chesapeake Bay and along the coast, fish move and respond differently. New technology allows us to tag fish and track where, when and how they move relative to these changes and to restoration efforts. Significant investment has been made and continues in maintaining this tracking infrastructure and expanding tagging studies. Analysis of this data can be better communicated to inform Bay programs and fishery management and engage the public.

Topics/challenges for Management Board guidance (Optional):

Methodology for data collection and tracking of each Target (Optional):

Links to documentation that provide Target justification/context and/or rationale (Optional):

Feb 13 MB 2 pager Fish-Habitat_Outcome-Assessment_MB.pdf

Feb 13 MB 2 pager Forage_Outcome-Assessment_MB.pdf