Chesapeake Bay Program Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team

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 discuss survey data analysis and estimates of reproductive output. Glenn Davis (MDDNR) was approved as the new CBSAC Chair.
- Scientists and fishery managers are finalizing stock 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 exceeded the Oyster Metrics threshold for oyster density, and half of those reefs exceeded 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 across multiple sectors of oyster stakeholders. The productive discussions were captured in a list of recommendations and next steps in the Summit report.

Invasive Catfish
- A report was published on a 2014 -2015 pilot study, which tested the effectiveness of experimental electrofishing gear and harvest efficiency for invasive blue catfish in Virginia. The average catch per-unit-effort was 26.8 lbs/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 Trust to investigate potential environmental drivers that influence forage population and predator consumption patterns. This project will build off previous work on forage trends and consumption profiles 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
- At the April 14th CBP Management Board meeting, 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 explored the development of a striped bass health indicator based on Maryland mycobacteriosis data. Findings 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 project was developed in an effort to integrate oyster stakeholder objectives with natural system models. This project seeks to promote sustainable natural resource policies 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 scientific 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
June 2nd – 3rd, 2016 (Tentative)
Richmond, VA
SAVE THE DATE!

Find meetings, presentations and other information here