

Invasive Catfish Task Force

The Fisheries GIT Executive Committee has agreed to establish an *Invasive Catfish Task Force*. This task force will be comprised of members of the *Invasive Catfish Workgroup* and additional members with expertise as necessary. The charge of this task force will be to coordinate activities and recommend actions to implement the five *Invasive Catfish Policy* (signed and adopted by the Fisheries GIT Executive committee on January 23rd, 2011) objectives (listed below) with an emphasis on exploring potential management measures and proposing actions to mitigate negative impacts of invasive catfish. The Fisheries GIT, lead by the Executive Committee, will then consider the proper course of action to achieve baywide agreement and management of invasive catfish under the authorities of the jurisdictions represented on the GIT.

Responsibilities and Role of the Invasive Catfish Task Force:

The *Invasive Catfish Task Force* will be responsible for coordinating the best available science and developing precautionary management approaches aimed at mitigating the spread and minimizing the impacts of invasive catfish species on the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem in accordance with the *Invasive Catfish Policy*. The *Invasive Catfish Task Force* is also responsible for routinely communicating progress and recommendations to the Fisheries GIT.

The role of the *Invasive Catfish Task Force* will be to incorporate all available information on blue and flathead catfish to develop an agreed upon management strategy for handling these invasive species across all jurisdictions. These recommendations should incorporate the five *Invasive Catfish Policy* objectives outlined below.

- Include blue catfish and flathead catfish in public awareness campaigns targeting invasive species, including efforts to prevent further introductions;
- Improve scientific understanding of blue catfish and flathead catfish biology and population dynamics;
- Develop models that will aid in better understanding the potential impacts of non-native species on the fish community;
- Develop, evaluate, and implement a set of management measures (e.g. increased harvest and/or nutrient reduction) aimed at controlling populations and mitigating adverse effects of blue and flathead catfish while recognizing that these two catfish species currently support fisheries with economic and recreational value;
- Identify high-risk/high-value opportunities for containment and/or mitigation; assessing risk of expansion and ecological resource valuation by developing an integrated online decision support tool.

By May 21st, 2012, the Fisheries GIT Executive Committee requests the *Invasive Catfish Task Force*, complete with new members, to have met once and developed a draft work plan to be presented to the Full Fisheries GIT membership at their meeting June 11-12th.

Task Force Membership Nominations:

- Geoffrey Smith (PFBC) – Susquehanna River Biologist
- Matt Fisher (DE - DNREC) – Fisheries Biologist, Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife
- Nancy Butowski (MD DNR) – Program Manager, Chesapeake Bay Program
- Mary Groves (MD DNR) – Southern Regional Manager, Inland Fisheries
- Steve Vilnit (MD DNR) – Seafood Marketing Specialist
- Danny Ryan (DC DOE) – Fisheries Management, DC Division of Fish and Wildlife
- Ellen Cosby (PRFC) – Assistant Executive Secretary
- Mary Fabrizio (VIMS) – Associate Professor of Marine Science
- Robert Hale (VIMS) – Professor of Marine Science
- Greg Garman (VCU) – Associate Professor and Director, Center for Environmental Studies
- Bob Greenlee (VDGIF) – Fisheries Biologist
- Joe Grist (VMRC) – Plans and Statistics Department
- Mike Hutt (VA Marine Products Board) – Executive Director
- Andrew Turner (NCBO/CRC) – Fisheries