

Scientific, Technical Assessment & Reporting (STAR) Team's American Shad Indicator Action Team

Wednesday, August 29, 2012, 2:00pm -3:00 pm

Call in: DC Line #3: 866-299-3188, Conference Code 267-5715

CBPO On-site Location: Joe Macknis Memorial Conference Room (Fish Shack)

Event Webpage <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/18652/>

Participants

Nita Sylvester (Coordinator), US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Kate Taylor, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)
Bruce Vogt, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (GIT)
Carin Bisland, US EPA
Eric Brittle, VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF)
Karen Capossela, MD Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR)
Jim Cummins, Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB)
Mike Hendricks, PA Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC)
Ellen Cosby, Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC)
Beth Zinecker, US Geological Survey (USGS) and Chesapeake Stat
Nancy Butowski, MD DNR
Amanda Pruzinsky, Chesapeake Research Consortium (CRC)/Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO)

Action Items (refer to minutes for context)

ACTION: Nancy will search for the document and send to Chesapeake Bay Program Office so it can be scanned and turned into a pdf and posted to the workgroup's webpage.

ACTION: Beth will take this to the Habitat GIT and find out their plans for the location of new fish passage projects.

ACTION: Should discuss with someone from VMRC, or VIMS, or Alan Weaver (VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries). A similar study that was done in the Susquehanna was done in the James.

ACTION: Invite Alan Weaver, VA DGIF; Albert Spells, VA Coordinator USFWS; Mike Odom, USFWS; someone from VA Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) (*note: Eric has invited all of them, including Joe Grist from VMRC*)

ACTION: Work on Alan Weaver and Mike Odom possibly taking over

ACTION: Jim requested that members, principally but not exclusively MD and VA members, re-familiarize themselves and come prepared for the next mtg to summarize the status of any river system(s) which they may wish to include in the Bay indicator. Summaries are all that is being asked for, not the data. Of course any trends, graphics, short hand-outs, etc., which might be available or easily produced would likely enhance any summary and discussions. (*note: Provide to Nita by COB Oct 5th and she will post to our website*)

ACTION: Update the current indicator with 2011 and 2012 data

Draft Minutes

Welcome/Introductions – Nita Sylvester

- Nita – Purpose: Review membership and begin to discuss possibilities for replacing the current American Shad Indicator. This Action Team was formed based on recommendations from the Management Board (MB).

Background material can be found at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/18652/>

- Bruce Vogt – The MB asked the GITs to review all of the indicators. The Shad and River Herring indicators appear to need work. Because of the moratorium (except in the Potomac) Shad is not being looked at from a Fisheries perspective, but instead as a recovery effort. The Fisheries GIT's hope is that with the help of STAR and experts in the field, an integrated indicator can be devised. This indicator would ideally include recovery of Shad tying in fish passage, amount of habitat open, etc. It could be an integrated score card that relates whether or not the fish are returning, health of the fish, and health of the habitat.
 - Mike Hendricks – ASMFC Shad and River Herring Technical Committee have determined on a coast wide basis it appears that the coast wide population of American Shad as deceased over the last 10 years even though the juvenile abundance indices have not. This indicates that the issue may be offshore. This could be from harvest in offshore fisheries or predation, but it may not be tied to habitat in river systems.
 - Jim Cummins – This needs to be an additional aspect. Habitat and fish habitat are important, but it is not just a definitive indicator of the Chesapeake Bay; there are also outside forces that are affecting the American Shad recovery.
 - Mike Hendricks – There are also notable examples to the contrary. Although the coast wide trend is down, the Potomac is up and for at least the last three years Delaware has been increasingly good.
 - Jim Cummins – Although the Potomac as improved it seems like it may have hit a plateau due to outside Bay factors. The predation on the Potomac stocks is heavy and since most of the other rivers aren't doing well, out in the ocean the Potomac stock may make up a large percentage of the population that is being preyed upon. Until the other rivers are restored, the Potomac isn't going to rebound the way it should.
 - Ellen Cosby – It has been in an increasing trend. We hit our target in 2011. We continue to allow fish to be taken for brood stock.
 - Jim Cummins – It is increasing, but it is increasing at a slower rate than if there weren't outside forces. American Shad spend ¾ of their lives in the coastal areas, which influences their numbers as much as anything. We need to make the public aware of this.

Discuss Goals/Timeframe – All

Discussed the goal(s) for the Action Team and discuss a timeline for achieving goals

- Nita Sylvester
“Goals for the Action Team”
 - There are no time constraints on this group, so we are in a good position to set our timeframe. Keep in mind that this is a temporary Action Team (we want to end!). Nita suggested one year for our team to have a suggestion for STAR.
“Goals for our goal statement”

- When we start discussing the goal for shad we need to make sure that our goal is specific, measurable, obtainable, realistic, and time bound.
- Assign what factors that will influence our ability to obtain those goals
- Evaluate current management efforts are related to goal and where there are gaps
- Determine our management strategy
- Develop or continue a monitoring program
- Assess our performance

Discussion and Questions

- Bruce Vogt – Are there current clearly articulated goals for Shad and River Herring that we can build from? This could provide us with a starting point.
 - Nancy Butowski – Suggested: Fisheries Target Setting Task Force Report to the Living Resources Subcommittee on Proposed Stock Restoration Targets for Chesapeake Bay American Shad, April 1995. **ACTION:** Nancy will search for the document and send to Chesapeake Bay Program Office so it can be scanned and turned into a pdf and posted to the workgroup’s webpage.
- Jim Cummins – Referring to document “Development of a New CBP Shad Indicator” item 1-a-i Susquehanna River target of 2,000,000 shad passing York Haven Dam annually – This can’t be veered from because of other programmatic needs.
- Bruce Vogt – Is it possible to have a Bay Wide indicator?
 - Ellen Cosby – Potomac River Fisheries Commission wouldn’t want to have to duplicate what they are doing for ASMFC.
 - Nancy Butowski – ASMFC recommended that targets should be on a tributary basis.
 - Jim Cummins – In the Potomac River, ASMFC wants a multi-metric approach and system wide information.
- Bruce Vogt – The point of this group is to determine whether a Bay Wide Indicator is feasible for American Shad. We should also determine whether there is a different indicator that would be a better fit or if it can represent a few different species.
 - Jim Cummins – American Shad is an iconic Chesapeake fish, but there should be separate indicators for the other species in the Bay. We should also separate the ASMFC restoration target with this indicator, which is for communication with the public about how close we are to reaching goals in the Bay.
- Mike Hendricks –During the most recent evaluation of the Susquehanna River Shad Management Plan with MD, USFWS, PA, Susquehanna River Basin Commission, and NY. The group discussed the 2 million shad goal and reasoned with the partnership to include habitat in the goal because it is a major limiting factor.
- Nita Sylvester – Since the goal in the Susquehanna already integrates habitat. It could be integrated more as they continue to work with fish passage or dam removal projects upstream of the York. The

Habitat GIT will be monitoring presence or absence of several species including Shad above those projects. There is potential for new types of data in the future.

- Mike Hendricks – Yes, PA still has dam removal projects, but fewer funds.

ACTION: Beth will take this to the Habitat GIT and find out their plans for the location of new fish passage projects.

- Nita Sylvester – Other rivers: Is there a way to relate habitat to the current targets?
 - York River 17.4 Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE)?
Eric – That is a VIMS target and not used for management purposes. There is some freedom.
 - James River 500,000 shad passing Boshers Dam annually?
ACTION: Should discuss with someone from VMRC, or VIMS, or Alan Weaver (VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries). A similar study that was done in the Susquehanna was done in the James.
 - Potomac River 31.1 Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE)?
That is the ASMFC restoration target benchmark that has been approved by the Board and technical committee
Jim Cummings – In the Potomac, habitat is all open and the ASMFC target has been met, but for the public more metrics could be helpful. Multi-metric approach could help smooth out uncertainties.
 - Rappahannock Index? (which is not currently being tracked in the indicator now)
DGIF is currently doing some electro fishing surveys, but the data is few and far between
Juvenile surveys from VIMS
 - Patuxent and Choptank River data
Juvenile striped bass surveys, which includes shad data (since 1959 for the Choptank and 1983 for the Patuxent)
The Anadromous Species Restoration group at MDNR also has some juvenile and adult data for the Choptank and the Patuxent.
Fishery dependent survey for the Nanticoke River (since 1988)

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Fishery dependent survey for the Nanticoke River (since 1988)
- Mike Hendricks – For the PA Fish and Boat Commission management plan they have performance measures for the upstream and downstream fish passage at the hydroelectric dams. They have to meet certain triggers or improve in fish passage.

Discuss Membership – All

Action Team membership requirements

ACTION: Invite

Alan Weaver, VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
Albert Spells, VA Coordinator USFWS
Mike Odom, USFWS
Nita and Bruce will contact VMRC

Other

Mark T., DNR (*somebody* works under Mark and will be communicating with them)

A.C. Carpenter, Potomac River Fisheries Commission (*somebody* works under A.C. and will be communicating with them)

Brian W., VIMS (works under Eric Hilton who is onboard)

Comment [ap1]: Who?

Comment [ap2]: Who?

Selection of a chair (or co-chairs) for the Action Team

Jim Cummings and Eric Brittle “volunteered” to take over as temporary co-chairs

- **ACTION:** Work on Alan Weaver and Mike Odom possibly taking over

Discuss Future Meeting Logistics – All

- Ongoing email communication
- Conference calls every 6 weeks
- One large February meeting to determine an indicator
 - Develop draft deliverable by January/February – Evaluate in 2013 (keep both indicators for 2013) – 2014 as the goal for this indicator
- Update the current indicator through 2012
- Next meeting: One topic will be protocols for decision-making since we did not get to it during this meeting. Request webinar for next conference call.

Discussed group's general agreement that we explore the inclusion of additional Ches-Bay river systems along with the 4 large rivers currently used in the Bay American shad indicator. We recognized that several other river systems have ongoing shad restoration/evaluations, for example the Patapsco, Choptank, Nanticoke and Rappahannock rivers, and some have been the focus of restoration efforts since the c2007 indicator was developed, but we did not have sufficient time or information on hand to discuss and evaluate them.

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