

Invasive Catfish Task Force Recent Activities

Background:

The charge of the Invasive Catfish Task Force is to coordinate activities and recommend actions to implement the five policy objectives outlined in the Invasive Catfish Policy Adoption Statement, signed and adopted by the Fisheries GIT Executive committee on January 24th, 2012. The work of the Task Force emphasizes exploring potential management measures and proposing actions to mitigate negative impacts of invasive catfish.

The Invasive Catfish Task Force has been working on their Final Report for the last year. The report aims to summarize the ecological impacts of invasive catfish on the Bay ecosystem, compile the current invasive catfish research, and recommend management actions to address these catfish across the Chesapeake Bay.

Updates:

- The Task Force's Final Report is finalized and currently undergoing peer review by the Chesapeake Bay Program's Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC).
- The Chesapeake Bay Program's Management Board has endorsed the report pending outcomes of STAC's review.
- The Fisheries GIT Executive Committee and additional state managers from Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, and Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife discussed the management recommendations from the Task Force report. The managers agreed to further explore these recommendations after the peer review process.
- MD DNR hosted an invasive catfish outreach event at Smallwood State Park on April 10th, 2014. This outreach event featured information on current catfish research, marketing efforts, and new signs posted by DNR that explain the ecological impacts of invasive catfish and ask watermen not to release them if caught. Attendees included watermen and Chesapeake Bay Program leadership. Two catfish tasting dishes were prepared by local chefs from local restaurants that feature catfish on their menu.
- A James River waterman and a VCU researcher have just begun a fishery resource grant-funded pilot project to commercially harvest blue catfish with low frequency electrofishing. The waterman will operate in the tidal James and hopes to land at least 5,000 pounds a day. VCU will be serving both as observer and will be generating data for a publication and to establish a baseline for future work.

INVASIVE CATFISH IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED

FLATHEAD CATFISH

- Can grow as long as 4 Feet
- Dark brown to tan



BLUE CATFISH

- Slate blue on the back
- Silvery/white on its underside



WE NEED YOUR HELP!

- DNR asks anglers to keep any blue and flathead catfish they catch.
- Catch and release of these fish is discouraged, as they are invasive top predators and pose a serious long-term threat to our native species.

**IN MARYLAND, IT IS ILLEGAL TO TRANSPORT LIVE BLUE AND
FLATHEAD CATFISH INTO ANOTHER BODY OF WATER.
VIOLATORS CAN BE FINED UP TO \$1,000.**

For more information on Maryland's blue and flathead catfish policy, please visit www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives/

**To report illegal transport or unauthorized introductions of invasive species
please contact the Natural Resources Police at 800-635-8124.**

