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Why the Chesapeake Bay?

The environmental impact of what happens to the Bay is anything but isolated.

The Bay affects many millions of people every day. The Bay and its tributary rivers have 11,684 miles of shoreline – more than the entire U.S. west coast. Its watershed includes the entire District of Columbia and parts of six states – Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

The Bay is home to more than 2,700 species of plants and animals. Its fragile ecosystem is increasingly threatened, and one of the main contributors to this environmental emergency is the non-native blue catfish. According to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, these fish “have voracious appetites for native fish species.”

The Chesapeake Bay supports local businesses. The more catfish are fished, the more fishers can earn income on this catch. Also, because blue catfish eat Maryland blue crabs, getting the catfish out of the Bay helps crab harvesters continue catching crab for their livelihood.




Stay up to date

We'll send you emails about what we're up to (but not too many!)

"There are too few projects that are connecting environmentalism and the various segments of the disparate food system, and the Wide Net Project does just that."

— Barton Seaver, Chef, Author, and Sustainability Fellow in Residence for the New England Aquarium



The Blue Ocean Institute's Seafood Choices sustainability rating system recently awarded the highest rating, green, to Chesapeake Bay wild blue catfish.

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Yum yum yum! Come try #WildCatfish from the #ChesapeakeBay at @MOMsOrganicMarket Merrifield location! <http://t.co/1ueyfrVPI>, Mar 28

Why Wild Blue Catfish?

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202.642.6552

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Why wild blue catfish?



Why wild blue catfish:

The best way to manage the wild blue catfish population to help restore the Chesapeake Bay is by increasing the amount of the fish we eat. — The Maryland Department of Fisheries

Eating wild blue catfish helps restore the Bay. Blue catfish eat a varied diet that includes almost all other sea life in the Bay — crustaceans, worms, other fish, river herring, and Maryland blue crabs. In some tributaries they have eaten almost all other fish and plants available; buying wild blue catfish helps allows those fish and plants to regenerate, a natural way to restore the balance of the Bay.

It's a healthy protein. The hardest foods to get and sell at an affordable price are lean, healthy, animal proteins. Fish is much harder to acquire and safely store than food grown on plants.

It is inexpensive. Wild blue catfish costs less than any other locally sourced fish. This is because fishers can easily and efficiently catch them in large quantities, and such volume means lower costs.

It is delicious. Wild blue catfish has a mild, sweet flavor. Because it has taken over many tributaries and no longer is exclusively a bottom-dweller, the taste is clean and delicate. It is a great substitute for farm-raised tilapia imported from across the country or around the world, or any other white fish.

It is sustainably caught. The nets and traps used when fishing have almost no by-catch (the unwanted fish that die when caught during commercial fishing for a different species). In part because of this, in March of 2013, wild blue catfish from

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the Wide Net project

Sharing the Catch

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How it works

The more wild, blue catfish we deliver, the more successful we are at achieving both of the Wide Net Project's goals: providing food for those who need it most, and managing the wild blue catfish population to help restore the Chesapeake Bay.

The business model is straightforward.

The Wide Net Project's overhead is minimal. Processing, storage, and distribution are implemented by a reputable third party.

According to the Maryland Department of Fisheries, the 2012 catch of blue catfish was approximately 400,000 pounds, which had no obvious impact on restoring the Bay's biodiversity. The Wide Net Project's goal for its launch year is to help achieve the 500,000-pound catch mark

— both through its own customers and through other fisheries by broadly communicating about the issue of wild blue catfish overpopulation.

Thanks to our valued partners, our expenses are so low that no hospital, museum, university or other food service provider pays any more than they would if they had purchased the fish at wholesale directly from a distributor.

Some customers have the budget for standard wholesale-priced wild fish, and as a non-profit, we use the margin on these sales to augment the reduced price per pound that hunger-relief organizations pay. These fish, sold at a fraction of the wholesale market price, are also subsidized by grants and private donations to the project. This means that the Wide Net Project's simultaneous approach to hunger and the environment is a win-win, illustrating one of many ways that our food and environmental health are interdependent — and that we must take care of both.

How to get fish

Give us a call or send us an email, and we'll talk fish.

info@widenetproject.org

202.642.6552



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