Chesapeake Bay Program Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team

March, 2013 Update

Our Vision: The Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (Fisheries GIT) brings a wide group of managers and scientists together to improve management and maintain the sustainability of commercially and ecologically important Chesapeake Bay fisheries. The Fisheries GIT is working across jurisdictional boundaries and applying the best available science to support ecosystem-based decisions.

Winter 2012/Spring 2013 Accomplishments

The Fisheries GITs Executive Committee has continued to collaborate on science and policy issues to support sustainable Chesapeake Bay fisheries. Recent highlights include:

Blue Crabs

- In response to the recent shift to a female specific management framework to achieve a new population target of 215 million female crabs, CBSAC has been charged with developing reference points for the male component of the population. In October, 2012 CBSAC conducted a workshop to address the formal charge wherein male conservation points of reference were developed and presented to managers. The points of reference were adopted as recommended areas for management to avoid and, if entered, consider male crab conservation and closely monitor subsequent recruitment and population status. Over the course of the next year, CBSAC will continue to evaluate the empirically based recommendation and explore the need for a more formal set of male reference points.

Invasive Catfish

- The Invasive Catfish Task Force, including members from throughout the Bay watershed, will be meeting March 19 to develop an Action Plan with recommendations to reduce densities and limit range expansion of blue and flathead catfish within the Chesapeake Bay.

Oysters

- Several tributaries have been targeted for application of the Oyster Metrics and tributary wide restoration approaches. These tributaries are Harris Creek and the Little Choptank in Maryland and the Lynnhaven, Lafayette, and Elizabeth rivers in Virginia.
- The Harris Creek Oyster Restoration Blueprint has been completed and restoration efforts are underway.

American Shad

- The American Shad Indicator Action Team has been meeting monthly for the past five months to develop a new Baywide indicator for the Chesapeake Bay Program public reporting. This new indicator will hopefully incorporate more tributaries and better represent ongoing American shad restoration efforts.

Other Updates

- The Fisheries GIT submitted a proposal for a STAC funded workshop to develop communications and outreach strategies to improve conservation of critical habitat and fisheries through land use planning processes across the Bay. If accepted, we will be holding the workshop in the fall of 2013.
- The Fisheries GIT submitted a comment letter to the Charles County Board of County Commissioners in regards to the current comprehensive planning process. The proposed development has the potential to negatively affect fisheries resources and habitats within Mattawoman Creek and the Wicomico River, which are two tributaries the Fisheries GIT has identified as priority areas for protection and conservation efforts.

Executive Committee Meeting Science Presentations

At monthly Fisheries GIT Executive Committee meetings, attendees hear from Bay scientists and policy administrators on topics including:

- Forage Fish & Land Use
  - Thomas Jordan (SERC), Matthew Kornis (SERC), and Ed Houde (UMCES)
  - Higher species abundance and richness along natural shorelines rather than Rip-Rap or bulkheads.
- Passive Acoustic Telemetry Array
  - Greg Garman (VCU)
  - The Navy has deployed over 70 telemetry receivers to track tagged fish at the mouth of the Bay and throughout the York River for sturgeon tracking. These receivers will allow greater fish monitoring capabilities for managers and the GIT is discussing opportunities to use the array for striped bass and catfish monitoring.
- Toxic Contaminants in Chesapeake Bay
  - Scott Phillips (USGS) and Greg Allen (CBP)
  - Widespread and severe contaminants exist throughout the Bay watershed leading to degraded fish health from infections, parasites, feminization, reduced reproduction, and tumors. The GIT has been asked to assist in CBP goal setting for toxics in the Bay.

June 2013 - Full GIT Meeting

June 17th-18th

SAVE THE DATES!

Meetings, Presentations, and other Fisheries GIT information can be found at:

http://www.chesapeakebay.net/groups/group/sustainable_fisheries