

Invasive Catfish Symposium

November 6-7, 2017

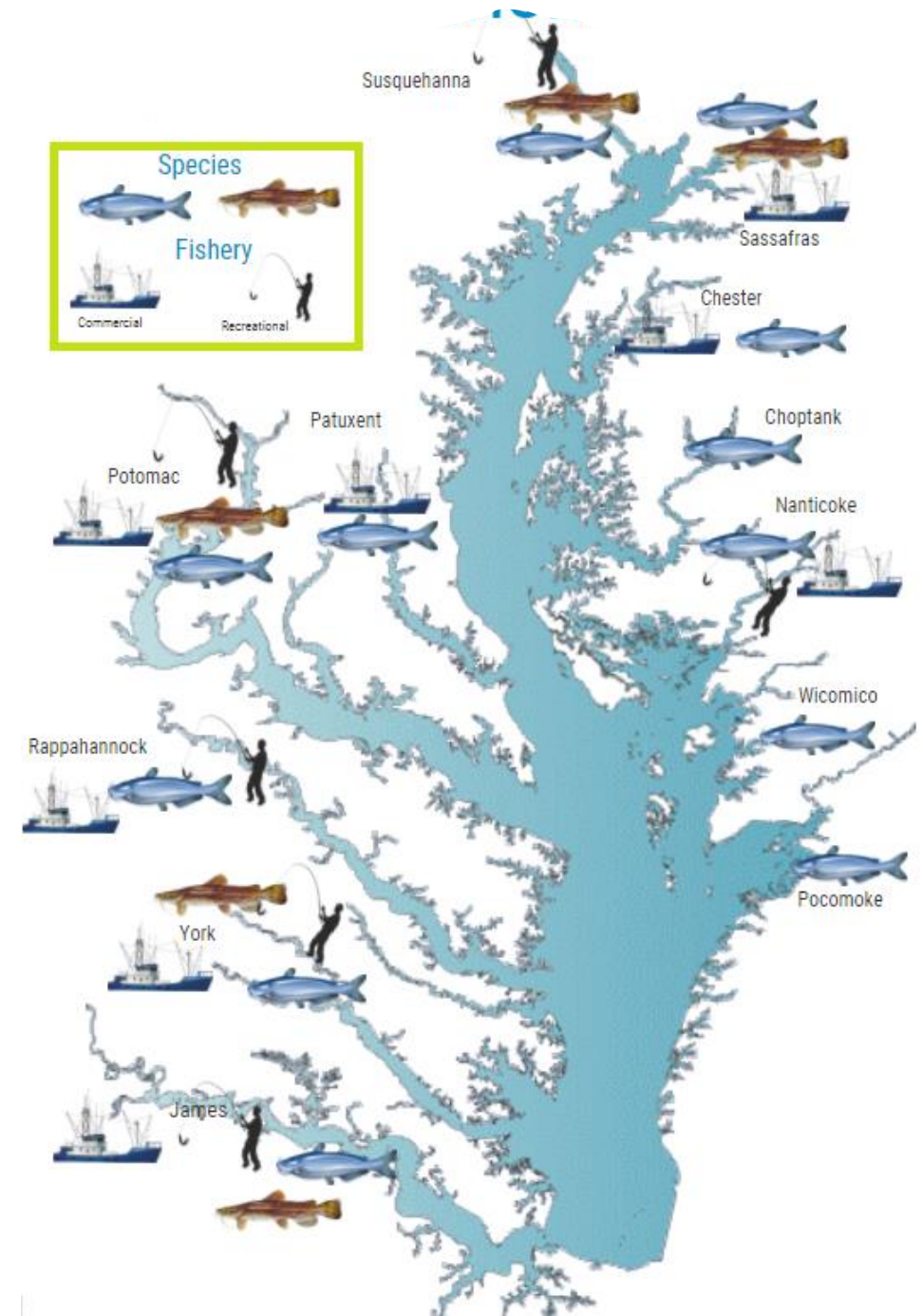
Bruce Vogt, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office
Invasive Catfish Task Force Chair



	Flathead catfish <i>Pylodictis olivaris</i>	Blue catfish <i>Ictalurus furcatus</i>
Introduced	1965-1970	1970s and 1980s
Large native range	✓	✓
Long life span	✓	✓
Environmental tolerance	✓	✓
Broad diet		✓
Fast growth	✓	
High fecundity		✓
Large body size	✓	✓

Invasive Catfish Task Force

- Established in 2012 by the Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (Fisheries GIT) of the Chesapeake Bay Program
- Tasked to recommend management strategies and actions that could be applied Bay-wide to respond to the spread of invasive Blue and Flathead catfish populations in the Chesapeake Bay
- Report produced in 2014 with specific recommendations



Task Force Objectives

1. To slow and reduce the spread of and invasive catfishes populations into currently uninhabited waters;
2. To minimize the ecological impacts of invasive catfishes on native species;
3. To promote a large-scale fishery to significantly reduce abundance of invasive catfishes populations and provide economic benefits to the region;
4. To increase outreach and education to improve public awareness that Blue and Flathead catfishes are not native and pose a risk to native species and to continue to lessen the probability of unauthorized introductions into other water bodies in the Bay watershed.

Invasive Catfish Task Force



Update on 2014 Recommendations

Recommendation 1 Pilot fishery-independent removals



Update

No fishery-independent
removal programs

Some funding of gear
efficiency - see
Recommendation 3

Recommendation 2

Develop large-scale fishery

Update

- Increase in processors
- Public/Private market development
- MD heavily marketing to chefs
- Rated "green" by Monterey Aquarium Seafood Watch Program
- Area of doubt  inspection rules

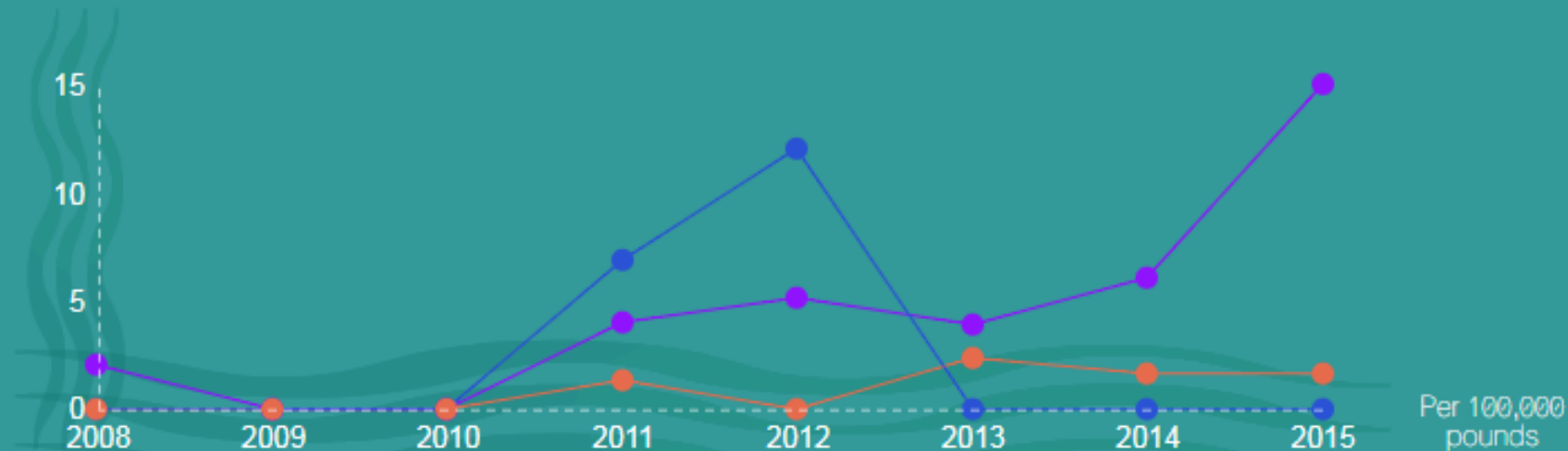
First rating for invasive species



Increase in price/lb

Invasive Catfish Landings

■ Virginia ■ Potomac ■ Maryland



Recommendation 3



Incentivize harvest + explore electrofishing/other gear



Funding still available via Fishery Resource Grant Program at VIMS

Only gear efficiency study conducted

Low-frequency electrofishing trial completed in Pamunkey + James Rivers

RESULTS

- ⚡ Method highly selective for catfish - no bycatch
- ⚡ All sizes caught
- ⚡ Issues - fishery conflicts, limits in water temperature and salinity, limit trophy catch

Recommendation 4

Establish monitoring programs and synthesize research for management use

VA DGIF monitors catfish with electrofishing every year

Maryland began monitoring of blue + flathead in the Patuxent River in 2016

Acoustic monitoring of Atlantic sturgeon in MD effectively monitors tagged blue catfish

WANTED

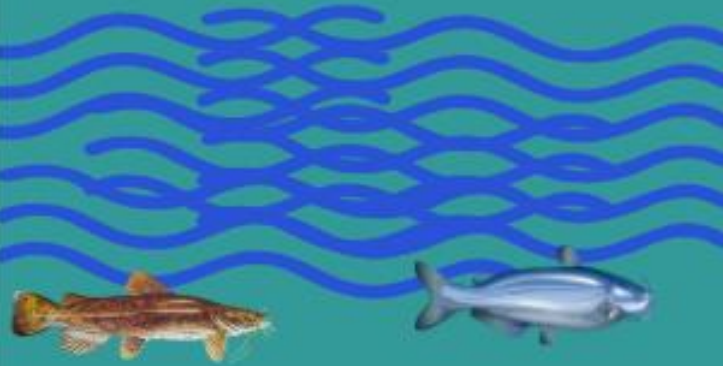
No large scale monitoring programs cross jurisdictions



Funding of research (i.e. VIMS, VA Tech, VCU, SERC) to determine population status, distribution, diet

Symposium for research updates + synthesis

Recommendation 5 - Coordination between Fish Passage and Invasive Catfish Workgroups



❏ No mention of catfish in Fish Passage Workgroup Meetings since the ICFT recommendations released

❏ Fish Passage workgroup keeps invasive species issues in mind when making dam removal recommendations



Recommendation 6

Cross-jurisdictional review of fishing policies + regulations

Maryland



MD DNR launched state-wide campaign in 2014 on blue and flatheads



HB 63

2016 MD legislation expanding gear types legal for harvesting catfish

2016 Developed an Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan

HB 318

2016 MD legislation expanding haul seine usage for weekend catfish harvest

2015 MC Fishing Challenge Contest for sports fishermen who "catch and keep" catfish

Virginia



Increased advertising by Virginia Seafood



VA DGIF

2017 Modified reg limiting harvest of blue cats over 32 in to 1/day - now only in some areas

PA FBC

Regulation change for use of additional gear types to target flatheads

HB 2240

2015 VA legislation making it illegal to introduce/stock/release catfish into VA waters

Pennsylvania

PA FBC

Developed strategic plan for management of flatheads 2013 -2017



Recommendation 7

Communicate and Coordinate Catfish Information Across Jurisdictions



Maryland

Maryland DNR has large web presence on invasive catfish

ID stations at piers



Virginia

Limited VA Public Information

Tidal Blue Catfish Report



Pennsylvania

Mgmt. plan discusses plan for education campaign for anglers on catching invasives



Recommended Next Steps



- ➔ Joint meeting/coordination between Invasive Catfish Task Force and Fish Passage Workgroup
- ➔ Coordination between jurisdictions



Marketing

Communication

Research

Enforcement

Targeted removals

Legislation + Policies

- ➔ Coordination between stakeholder groups
- ➔ Develop management plan for fishery - establish goals for the fishery

Next Steps?

- What do we hope to accomplish at this meeting?
- What will managers do with information shared?
- What data gaps need attention?