

The Blue Crab Design Team is requesting that the Watershed-Crab Strategies document be written in a way that explicitly states the role and the jurisdictional rights, both today and in the future, of all partners participating in its writing and implementation.

The Maryland Blue Crab Design Team is a group of fishery leaders creating workable solutions to achieve sustainability in the blue crab industry. We envision sustainability, while keeping intact, our strong and long standing traditions within Maryland's seafood industry.

The Design Team has spearheaded, and collaborated with other organizations to make Maryland's Seafood Industry a leader in blue crab sustainability. Many watermen are currently using, and plan to fully implement electronic harvest reporting and verification, making Maryland an industry leader in watermen accountability. Electronic harvest reporting allows instantaneous catch data that is accessible to the DNR and the Resource Police. This not only makes our crab catch transparent, but also interlocks a check-and-balance system within it. Maryland, along with other Chesapeake Bay states, currently use the Bay-wide allocation framework outlined in this document. We gain blue crab population data from the Bay-Wide Winter Dredge Survey to set catch limits. This is a science-backed strategy that limits the possibility of overfishing and gives assurances to survival of the species.

Our Maryland commercial crab industry is on the path to declaring our part in sustainability of the blue crab is complete. We know the Bay Watershed's Strategies standards on clean water quality will bring us even closer to this goal.

Throughout this sustainability process, The Design Team has been very adamant about commercial and recreational fishermen, as well as all Marylanders, keeping ownership of Our Bay and Our Fishery. Having this ownership makes restoration and sustainability more personal and rewarding for us who live around it. Because of this, The Blue Crab Design Team is requesting that this Strategies document be written in a way that explicitly states the role and jurisdictional rights of all partners participating in its writing and implementation. We have worked very hard to be at this threshold of sustainability and we want to know that our local traditions stay intact throughout its completion. We also want all Marylanders to feel a pride about what THEY have done to restore it.

It has not been easy to move the crab industry forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century while ensuring its historical traditions keep root. But we have moved forward, not because we were forced to, but because our watermen want a better industry for themselves and their future generations. Our Maryland blue crab industry looks forward to being a successful model for other resource management teams to follow.

The Maryland Crab Design Team