



*Maintain a sustainable blue crab population based on the current 2012 target of 215 million adult females. Refine population targets through 2025 based on best available science.*

### Why is this outcome important?

Blue crabs have important commercial, recreational, ecological and cultural value. Restoring populations of blue crabs would protect an iconic species of the region. They are the most valuable fished species in the Chesapeake Bay, both commercially and recreationally, and they play an integral role in benthic ecosystems as both prey and predators.

### Current Conditions:

- 2011: 191 million female blue crabs (1+ years old)
- 2012: 95 million female blue crabs (1+ years old)
- 2013: 147 million female blue crabs (1+ years old)

### How was the outcome derived?

#### Who came up with it?

Every year from December through March, researchers from Maryland and Virginia conduct the [winter dredge survey](#) of blue crabs. This survey provides fisheries managers with an estimate of the number of blue crabs in the Bay, including comprehensive estimates of the numbers of males, females and juveniles.

From the survey information, the [Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee \(CBSAC\)](#), which includes academic institutions, jurisdictional managers, scientists and federal partners, produces the annual Blue Crab Advisory Report. This document provides blue crab fisheries managers with a comprehensive break-down of the status of the stock, and issues scientific recommendations to managers based on this data.

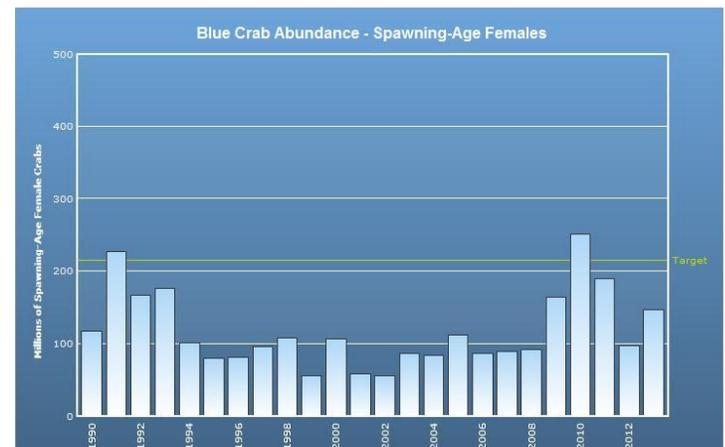
### What was the basis or baseline?

Following the 2011 benchmark blue crab stock assessment, which recommended using a female-specific abundance target and threshold, CBSAC developed the new target of 215 million spawning-aged (1+ years old) females—the number experts estimate is needed to rebuild the crab population—and also set the threshold, or minimum number, at 70 million spawning-aged female crabs. Fisheries managers have been pursuing these goals since Maryland, Virginia and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission adopted this new target and threshold in 2012.

### For More:

<http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/fish-facts/blue-crab>

[http://www.chesapeakebay.net/indicators/indicator/blue\\_crab\\_abundance\\_adults](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/indicators/indicator/blue_crab_abundance_adults)



See how blue crabs are doing at [chesapeakebay.net](http://chesapeakebay.net).