



September 2016

Our Vision

The Fisheries GIT provides a forum to discuss fishery management issues that cross state and jurisdictional boundaries, connects science to management decisions and creates a framework for implementing ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries management.

Accomplishments

Blue Crabs



The Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee (CBSAC) released the [2016 Blue Crab Advisory Report](#) in June, which summarizes the Bay-wide winter dredge survey results, jurisdiction harvest data, and CBSAC's management and research recommendations.

CBSAC met in early September to discuss potential impacts of an increased minimum size limit for male hard crabs. This was proposed to the Fisheries GIT by member [Billy Rice](#) and supported by the Potomac River Fisheries Commission. CBSAC will provide a summary of their discussion to the Fisheries GIT Executive Committee.

Fish Habitat

TetraTech completed a fish habitat requirement, stressor, and threat [matrix](#) for egg and larval life-stages of lesser-studied species in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. In addition, the team developed a literature review of the Potomac sculpin to complement the [literature reviews](#) and [matrix](#) they produced last year. The Fish Habitat Team hopes to combine this information with existing similar information for well-studied species.

The Fish Habitat Action Team had their first quarterly meeting to discuss current progress on 2016-17 workplan action items, future approaches to prioritizing work, and available resources.



Oysters

NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office policy intern, Luke Argleben designed an Oyster Dashboard which illustrates the tributaries selected for restoration under the [Oyster Outcome](#) and their individual restoration status. Luke's work included the development of an acreage indicator that tracks-in-water implementation progress toward restoration targets established in the tributary plans. This dashboard and acreage indicator is intended to communicate the status of oyster restoration to the general public through the Chesapeake Bay Program website.

Maryland's Oyster Advisory Commission recommended the resumption of reef construction in the Tred Avon tributary of the Choptank River. Restoration was temporarily halted to await the results of a comprehensive analysis of oyster management in Maryland.

Forage



The Fisheries GIT submitted a [public comment](#) letter to the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council expressing general support of their action to protect unmanaged forage species. A summary of the Council's action on unmanaged forage and their approval of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management [Guidance Document](#) can be found in their [August 2016 Meeting Summary](#).

The University of MD Center for Environmental Science is currently investigating environmental drivers of forage variability with funding from the FY15 GIT funding process. This builds on the FY14 GIT-funded [forage indicators project](#).

The Forage Action Team had their first quarterly meeting in June to propose approaches to selecting and prioritizing species for future efforts, and to review progress on the forage workplan.





Executive Committee

Executive Committee Monthly Meetings

Bay Scientists and policy administrators discuss various topics at monthly meetings of the Fisheries GIT Executive Committee.

- Amy Uhrin, Chief Scientist for [NOAA's Marine Debris Program](#) presented on the development of a spatial model designed to predict the distribution of derelict crab pots in the Chesapeake Bay. The study includes estimates of bycatch mortality and economic impacts. A final report is expected in early October.
- Jurisdictional managers are discussing feedback received from GIT members ([comments found here](#)) on two issues: a Bay-wide minimum size limit of 5.25 inches for male hard crabs, and how/if to move forward with the evaluation of the allocation-based management framework under the [2014 Watershed Agreement](#).



Next Meeting

[December 2016 – Full GIT Meeting](#)

December 6th – 7th

Annapolis, MD

SAVE THE DATE!

Find Meetings, presentations and other information at the [Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team website](#)



Chesapeake Bay Program Updates

Latest Round of GIT Funding (FY16)

- The EPA/Chesapeake Bay Program made funding available for the GITs for a third year to support key projects to advance progress on outcomes under the 2014 Chesapeake Watershed Agreement. The Fisheries GIT reached out to the full membership for proposals that were then prioritized by the Executive Committee. The Fisheries GIT was awarded funding for an oyster shell/habitat loss study, evaluation of ecosystem factors affecting blue crab study, and a pilot study on benthic and forage sampling nearshore by local watershed groups. The Chesapeake Bay Trust will issue an RFP this Fall.



Improving Collaboration with the Habitat GIT

- The Habitat GIT Co-Chairs met with Peyton Robertson, Fisheries Chair to discuss shared priorities between the GITs and potential collaborative efforts to advance Habitat and Fisheries outcomes.

Forage Presentation to the CBP Management Board

- Tom Ihde (NOAA/ERT) and Bruce Vogt (NOAA) of the Forage Action Team presented the recent progress toward the forage outcome to the CBP Management Board. The [presentation](#) detailed the coordinated effort and progression from the 2014 STAC Forage workshop to the FY14 GIT-funded project on [forage indicators](#) and the FY15 GIT-funded project on environmental drivers of forage populations (in progress).



June 2016 Full Fisheries GIT Meeting. Photo by: William Stuart (VCU)