



## 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](#) published the [2017 Blue Crab Advisory Report](#) in June. This document provides management recommendations based on the estimates of the Chesapeake Bay blue crab population and harvest derived from state fishery data and the annual Winter Dredge survey.

The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science Chesapeake Biological Laboratory (UMCES-CBL) is evaluating impacts of ecosystem factors on population dynamics and life cycle of the blue crab. The study will conclude in 2018.

### Invasive Catfish



The [Invasive Catfish Task Force](#) is hosting a Symposium on November 6-7 at the Virginia Commonwealth University Rice Rivers Center to discuss the state of the science and status of the Chesapeake Bay invasive catfish fishery. The symposium will include research and discussions on population dynamics, movement and habitat use, diet, and harvest.

### Forage



The Fisheries GIT successfully competed for GIT funding to develop a threshold for shoreline impacts on forage species. The Request for Proposals (RFP) for this study is currently being developed, and will go online in October.

Four watershed organizations are conducting forage sampling as part of a pilot project which targets nearshore areas that are not addressed in large-scale surveys. Citizen scientists are recording water quality data and identifying species captured in fish traps. Based on the results of this pilot study, the Forage Action Team may pursue further citizen monitoring efforts.

### Fish Habitat



The Fish Habitat Action Team (FHAT) is working with a small team to develop materials for Watershed Implementation Plan leads. These materials will provide guidance and prioritization of water quality Best Management Practices that positively impact fish habitat.

The FHAT received Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) funding for a fish habitat workshop which will evaluate fish habitat stressors in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and mitigation techniques. Experts will convene in Spring 2018 to assess factors influencing habitat function and provide criteria to qualify factor significance.

### Oysters



Grant funding from the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund was awarded to the Elizabeth River Project and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to complete oyster restoration in the Lafayette River, one of the tributaries selected for restoration under the Oyster Restoration Outcome.

The Virginia Interagency Oyster Team has selected the Lower York and the Great Wicomico as the final two tributaries for restoration. These tributaries will join the Lafayette, Lynnhaven and Piankatank as the five tributaries targeted for oyster restoration in Virginia.

The Virginia Institute of Marine Science received funding from the Environmental Protection Agency to investigate shell dynamics in oyster restoration and fishery management, addressing a key challenge in oyster restoration – the availability and sustainability of shell as oyster substrate.



## Executive Committee

### Executive Committee Meetings

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

- The Executive Committee provided feedback on the Sustainable Fisheries GIT outcome evaluations and requests to the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) as the team prepared for the Strategy Review System (explained to the right).
- At the September meeting, Julie Crocker (National Marine Fisheries Service) detailed the [critical habitat designation for Atlantic Sturgeon](#). Her presentation explained the designation process, public feedback, and clarified the implications of newly designated critical habitat in the Potomac River, Rappahannock River, York River System including Pamunkey and Mattaponi Rivers, James River, and the Nanticoke River/Marshyhope Creek.

## Next Meeting

### [December Full Fisheries GIT Meeting](#)

**December 18 - 19, 2017**

**St. Mary's City, MD**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

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

## Chesapeake Bay Program Updates

### Newly Funded Fisheries GIT Projects

- The EPA/CBP 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 was awarded funding for the development of a cost-effective oyster monitoring strategy, and for the development of a shoreline threshold at which forage species are negatively impacted.

### What's Happening in the Chesapeake Bay Program?

- The CBP initiated their Strategy Review System, which is a biennial review of the 31 outcomes under the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. Workgroups and Action Teams will present an overview of workplan progress at a designated meeting within the 2-year period.
- The Fisheries GIT has evaluated the progress and challenges and presented their assessment to the Chesapeake Bay Program for all five of the Fisheries Outcomes: Blue Crab Abundance, Blue Crab Management, Fish Habitat, Forage and Oyster Restoration.
- Fisheries Outcome teams are following up these presentations with plans to look into financing options for major research including monitoring for restored oyster reefs, blue crab stock assessments, and forage monitoring in near-shore areas. The Fish Habitat and Forage Outcomes are pursuing stronger communication efforts to both engage local communities and to integrate forage and habitat considerations into water quality improvement projects.



Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program