

**Invasive Catfish Workgroup  
Draft Objective Summary  
August 2019**

The Invasive Catfish Workgroup is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder team that is focused on mitigating the spread and ecological impacts of invasive catfish (i.e. blue, flathead) in Chesapeake Bay through coordination and development of strategic, science-based management actions. Members of the workgroup represent management jurisdictions throughout the watershed, commercial and recreational watermen, seafood processors and distributors, federal agencies, academic researchers, and independent conservation organizations. The primary objectives of the Invasive Catfish Workgroup are to: (1) coordinate, synthesize, and communicate scientific research on the ecological and economic impacts of invasive catfish in Chesapeake Bay; and (2) develop a science-based management strategy that balances expansion of sustainable commercial and recreational fisheries with Chesapeake Bay ecosystem health.

Objective 1: Coordinate, synthesize, and communicate scientific research on the ecological and economic impacts of invasive catfish in Chesapeake Bay

- Work with USGS to identify specific research needs that require additional funding and/or support (Andrea Ostreff)
  - May get similar support from USACE in the future (Matt Balazik)
- Conduct an analysis of the economic impact of the USDA Farm Bill regulation (Jorge Holzer?)
  - Would provide support for case against the Farm Bill when it comes up again
- Conduct analyses to quantify the impacts of invasive catfish on other important fishery species such as striped bass, river herrings, and blue crab (Dave Secor, Matt Ogburn?)
- Conduct a population assessment and develop fishery removal targets
- Conduct analyses to determine impacts of fishery removal by size class
- Conduct cost-benefit analysis of installing commercial processing houses in the Bay?
  - Need to have the market prior to implementation but could be worth a look

Objective 2: Develop a science-based management strategy that balances expansion of sustainable commercial and recreational fisheries with Chesapeake Bay ecosystem health

- Increase public communication and awareness to increase demand for catfish (CBF)
  - Develop marketing campaigns for Chesapeake Bay Blue Catfish (WNP)?
  - Develop outreach products addressing contaminant issues and consumption advisories
- Work with USDA and state representatives to address the Farm Bill issue
  - Exclude wild-caught catfish from this regulation?
- Develop a management strategy that involves commercial fisheries targeting smaller fish, while maintaining subpopulation of larger fish for the trophy fishery (VA)
  - Effort needs to be science-based; analyze effects of size class removal
- Investigate opportunities for export?
- Maintain open communication and coordination across jurisdictions given they will likely implement different management strategies
  - Advise states on FMP development