** Chesapeake Bay Program Sustainable Fisheries**

**Goal Implementation Team**

**September 2014 Update**

**Meetings, Presentations, and other Fisheries GIT information can be found at:** [**http://www.chesapeakebay.net/groups/group/sustainable\_fisheries**](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/groups/group/sustainable_fisheries)

**Executive Committee Monthly Meetings**

*At monthly Fisheries GIT Executive Committee meetings Bay scientists and policy administrators discuss various topics including:*

* Soft Shell Crab Disease
  + Eric Schott (UMCES)
  + UMCES is doing research soft shell crab mortality from reovirus (RLV). Shedding tanks can be associated with environmental/biological stressors that augment the transmission and mortality rates of the virus.
* VA Sea Grant Electrofishing Pilot Project
  + Tom Murray (VIMS)
  + A Virginia Fishery Resources Grant is funded the electrofishing gear for a commercial waterman in the James to harvest blue catfish. The waterman and academic observers are tracking the performance of the gear type and noting any bycatch. A final report will be available in October.

**December 2014 - Full GIT Meeting**

***December 3rd-4th at the Horn Point Lab in***

***Cambridge, Maryland!***

***SAVE THE DATES!***

**New Watershed Agreement: Management Strategies**

* On June 16th, the new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement was signed by the seven watershed jurisdictions, the Chesapeake Bay Commission, and EPA representing the federal government. It includes five fisheries outcomes: blue crab abundance, blue crab management, oyster restoration, forage fish, and fish habitat.
* The Fisheries GIT is responsible for developing management strategies that explain how Bay Program partners will work to achieve these outcomes.
* Fisheries GIT members and stakeholders are needed to develop the management strategies to guide our work. Please contact GIT staff to get involved!

**Chesapeake Bay Program GIT Funding**

* Chesapeake Bay Program is providing EPA funding to support the GITs and their management strategies.
* Funding for the Fisheries GIT will support CBSAC research needs, development of a forage indicator, and development of a striped bass health indicator.

**Spring-Summer 2014 Accomplishments**

*The full Fisheries GIT, the Executive Committee, and the GIT’s workgroups have continued to collaborate on science and policy issues to support sustainable Chesapeake Bay fisheries. Recent highlights include:*

**Blue Crabs**

* CBSAC released their final 2014 Blue Crab Advisory Report in July. MD, VA, and PRFC have already implemented some of CBSAC’s recommendations including a ~10% harvest reduction and a switch to a July-July management cycle.
* CBSAC met in-person in September to discuss summer survey data, the gear selectivity study, and the future stock assessment.

**Invasive Catfish**

* + The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) is currently conducting a peer review of the Invasive Catfish Task Force’s final report. The review will be complete by Oct. 31st.
  + The Task Force’s seven management recommendations explained in their report fall into three major categories: 1) Reduce Populations, 2) Limit Spread, and 3) Public Outreach.
  + Based on STAC comments, the Task Force and jurisdictions will begin planning how to move forward.

**Oysters**

* Restoration activities continued in Harris Creek during summer 2014. Tributary plans are being finalized for the Little Choptank and Tred Avon.
* Virginia restoration partners are organized into three active tributary teams that are working to establish restoration goals and tributary plans for the Piankatank, Lafayette, and Lynnhaven.

**STAC Forage Workshop**

* The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) workshop titled “Assessing the Chesapeake Bay Forage Base: Existing Data and Research Priorities” will take place November 12-13th at the Chesapeake Biological Lab. Tom Ihde (Versar/NOAA) and Ed Houde (CBL) are co-chairing the workshop.
* The workshop participants will be a small group of forage and ecosystem indicator experts from the both within and outside the Chesapeake Bay region. The workshop steering committee is finalizing the agenda, presenters, and plans for the breakout sessions.

**Our Vision:** The Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (Fisheries GIT) brings a wide group of managers, scientists, and stakeholders together to improve management and maintain the sustainability of commercially and ecologically important Chesapeake Bay fisheries. The Fisheries GIT is working across jurisdictional boundaries and applying the best available science to support ecosystem-based decisions.