

At the request of the executive committee from the June GIT meeting, we are beginning to develop some consistent messaging for the sport fishing guidebooks and regulatory pamphlets that will soon be printed by each jurisdiction for the 2014 fishing season. We have drafted the following list of items to include in the write up and draft guidebook and would appreciate a few minutes of your time to review and recommend suggestions for the language. The message is centered around mitigating the spread and increasing public awareness of both invasive species of catfish as well as other invasive species. Please include any additions and or requests.

Information to consider

- Brief description of behavior and distribution of invasive catfish
- Information on classification as an invasive species
- Restocking is illegal, specific fines, link to policy, any and all associated penalties
- Public message (mitigate spread heightened level of awareness)
- Encourage fisherman to target BCF
- Jurisdictional catfish bag limit and minimum/maximum size requirements, this will differ based on each jurisdiction but should be made clear in handbooks, regulation sheets, and jurisdictional websites.

Draft Message

Blue and flathead catfish have been classified as invasive species in all jurisdictions and tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. Research has shown these species of catfish are indiscriminant predators consuming a wide range of prey items and pose the threat for severe ecological harm to many Chesapeake bay species. In accordance with state policy (respectively, MD.00000.0000, VA.0000.0000, PR.0000.0000, DE 0000.0000, PA 0000.0000) it is illegal to transport living species including blue and flathead catfish into any other body of water, anyone in violation of this can be fined up to XXXX (\$1,000 MD example). Blue and flathead catfish have been targeted commercially and recreationally as both a sportfish and tablefare in the tributaries of Maryland, Virginia, the Potomac River, the District of Columbia, Delaware and Pennsylvania. Fishermen are encouraged to target and keep blue and flathead catfish in accordance with state regulations and consumption advisories in all Chesapeake Bay tributaries. (we could insert the min-max sizes and bag limits for the respective jurisdiction here)

To report illegal transport or unauthorized introductions of invasive species please contact the Natural Resources Police, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries at (PHONE #.....)