



## **Cownose Rays in the Chesapeake Bay: What do we know?**

Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015  
National Aquarium, Baltimore, MD

**Workshop Goal:** *Characterize what is known about the life history and population dynamics of cownose rays in the Chesapeake Bay as well as fishing effort and ecosystem interactions. Identify a mechanism to determine the stock status of Atlantic cownose rays (*Rhinoptera bonasus*) in the Chesapeake Bay to inform future fishery management.*

*This is a scientific workshop bringing together scientific experts to discuss the latest research and the broader context of what we know about cownose rays in the Chesapeake Bay. Written public comments can be submitted for inclusion in the final workshop report. Public comments may take place at the workshop if time permits. There are no policy decisions being made at this workshop.*

**8:30am**                      **Light Breakfast** (provided for workshop participants and organizers)

**9:00am**                      **Welcome – Laura Bankey (National Aquarium), Peyton Robertson (NOAA, Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team Chair)**

- Introductions
- Workshop Context (Peyton Robertson)
- Review workshop agenda and objectives

**9:30-11:00am**           **Life History: Age, Growth, Reproduction and Diet**

- Overview - Bob Fisher (VIMS Marine Advisory Services)
  - Historical concern of shellfish predation and prey preference – Dean Grubbs (FSU)
  - Diet Study: New Genetic Technique – Lyndell Bade (formerly ECU)
- Discussion
  - Predation on oysters, soft and razor clams
  - Vital Rates/Demographics: Fecundity, age of maturity, longevity

**11:00-12:20pm**        **Population Dynamics**

- Background on Population Change Over Time – Dean Grubbs (FSU)
- Tagging and Acoustic Telemetry Research – Matt Ogburn (SERC) and Bob Fisher (VIMS Marine Advisory Services)
- Genetic Diversity – Jan McDowell (VIMS)
- Discussion

- Population connectivity
  - How are individuals using habitat in the Bay?
  - Are there specific places individuals are coming back to?
- Question of population size

**12:20-1:00pm Lunch (provided for workshop participants and organizers)**

**1:00-1:30pm Fishing Effort and Industry Summary**

- Overview of fishing effort and marketing in Virginia – Bob Fisher (VIMS Marine Advisory Services)

**1:30pm Discussion: Where do we go from here?**

- What science questions are most important for management? How can we answer those questions?
- What datasets/indices currently exist?
- Potential management considerations?

**3:30pm Public Comment (time permitting)**

**3:50-4:00pm Wrap-Up and Recommendations**

**Post-workshop:**

A workshop report will document the proceedings and serve as the most recent collective scientific input on cownose rays in the Chesapeake Bay. Include a literature and data review.

**Scientific experts:**

- Dean Grubbs, Florida State University (formerly VIMS)
- Bob Fisher, VIMS Marine Advisory Services
- Tobey Curtis, NOAA
- Jan McDowell, VIMS Fisheries Genetics Lab
- Lyndell Bade, formerly East Carolina University
- Drew Ferrier, Hood College
- Matt Ogburn, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center
- Tom Ihde, ERT/NOAA
- Howard Townsend, NOAA

**Sustainable Fisheries Goal Team Executive Committee**

- Lynn Fegley, MD DNR (Fishery Manager)
- Rob O'Reilly, VMRC (Fishery Manager)
- Marty Gary, PRFC (Fishery Manager)
- Bob Beal, ASMFC
- Peyton Robertson, NOAA
- Bruce Vogt, NOAA

**Thank you!**

- ✓ Workshop participants
- ✓ Chesapeake Bay Program's Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team
- ✓ National Aquarium and Laura Bankey
- ✓ NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office
- ✓ Sonja Fordham