

Invasive Catfish Workgroup: MD Policy Updates Fall 2025

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October 16, 2025

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SB186 signed into law



“Establishing the Invasive Blue Catfish Pilot Program in the Department of Natural Resources to curb the spread of the invasive blue catfish in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries...”

1. For-Hire/Commercial Blue Catfish Pilot Program
2. Mid- and Lower-Bay Blue Catfish Trotline Pilot Program
3. Commercial Electrofishing Chase Boat Pilot Program

For-Hire/Commercial Blue Catfish Pilot Program

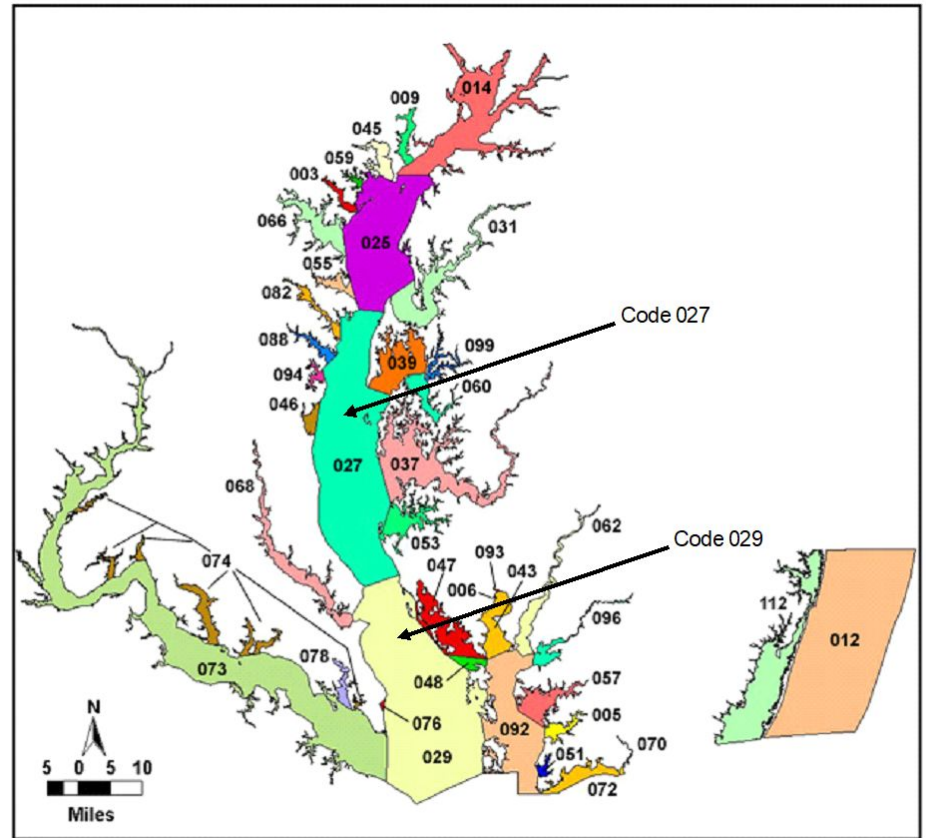


- Allows permitted charter captains to offer for sale excess blue catfish caught during charters
- Developed with Invasive Catfish Advisory Committee
- Began accepting applications in spring 2025
- As of October 2025, NO HARVESTS/SALES reported

Mid- and Lower-Bay Blue Catfish Trotline Pilot Program



- Allows permitted harvesters to use finfish trotlines in mainstem Chesapeake Bay south of Chesapeake Bay Bridge
- Accepted applications in Spring 2025
 - 8 permittees
- No harvests reported



Commercial Electrofishing Chase Boat Pilot Program



- Allows permitted harvester crews to act as chase boats during departmental electrofishing operations
- Harvesters were paid \$1500 per day of work and were allowed to commercially sell invasive catfish
- 8 permittees; 4 rivers
 - 6800 lbs removed
 - first year of monitoring surveys

