

Blue Crab Outcome

Outcome:

Maintain sustainable blue crab interim rebuilding target of 200 million adults (1+ years old) in 2011 and develop a new population target for 2012 through 2025.

Current Condition:

- 2007-2008: 131 million; 2008-2009: 223 million; 2009-2010: 315 million
- The Blue Crab Advisory Report from 2009-2010 indicated that the abundance of adult blue crabs increased to 315 million.

Methodology:

In 2008, the Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee (CBSAC) recommended an interim abundance target (200 million age 1+ adults). The target level of 200 million was intended as an initial rebuilding goal (seen as something achievable in the short term).

The EO outcome was based on the current interim rebuilding target recommended by CBSAC and adopted by the states. There was some discussion with the states (VA, MD and PRFC) about developing a new blue crab abundance target for inclusion in the EO Strategy. The decision was that any discussion and revision to the interim blue crab abundance target should be informed by the updated benchmark stock assessment slated for completion in spring 2011. The thinking was that coming up with a new blue crab target at the time of the EO strategy development would be putting policy ahead of science and that we should wait until a more informed discussion could occur before making any changes.

The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office (NCBO), Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee (CBSAC) and the Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (Fisheries GIT) will coordinate to reevaluate and establish a new abundance target if deemed necessary. The following draft timeline will be used for this reevaluation:

- January 2011- Submission of DRAFT 2010 Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab Stock Assessment to NCBO
- January 2011- Distribution of DRAFT Stock Assessment to state constituents and Center for Independent Experts (CIE) reviewers –not for public distribution
- March 29-31, 2011- CIE Peer Review Workshop (Annapolis, MD)
- April 2011- Summary of Stock Assessment and Peer Review Workshop presented to Fisheries GIT Executive Committee
- May-June 2011- Winter Dredge Survey Preliminary Results presented and available to CBSAC
- June 2011- CBSAC to meet and prepare 2011 Advisory Report with targets/thresholds/Mgmt recommendations
- June 2011- Full Fisheries GIT meeting to adopt revised (if necessary) abundance targets and thresholds

- July 2011- Final Stock Assessment (with CIE peer review comments addressed)
published