

# Fisheries GIT Guide to Management Strategies

*August 2014 Draft*



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## Background

The Chesapeake Bay Program's (CBP) Executive Council signed the new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement on June 16, 2014. The Executive Council represents the jurisdictions of MD, VA, DC, DE, PA, NY, WV; federal agencies represented by EPA; and the Chesapeake Bay Commission (CBC). The new Agreement contains 10 goals and associated outcomes that articulate the partnership's restoration and protection goals through the year 2025. The Sustainable Fisheries GIT (Fisheries GIT) Executive Committee, Fisheries GIT members, and other stakeholders worked together to achieve consensus on the fisheries goal and five outcomes.

Management strategies will outline the plan for achieving each outcome including the necessary participants, actions, resources, and monitoring efforts. CBP's Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) and their associated workgroups are the primary practitioners and managers for each goal area and will therefore be the primary authors of these strategies. The target completion date for management strategies is June 2015.

The Fisheries GIT, in conjunction with the Habitat GIT where necessary, will develop a management strategy for each of the five fisheries outcomes. The completed strategies will be beneficial to the Fisheries GIT as comprehensive plans that document and track the activity of all involved stakeholders for each outcome. These strategies will serve as a guide for future priorities and be accessible and informative to the public and interested stakeholders.

## Purpose of this Guide

This document will keep Fisheries GIT members and Executive Committee updated on management strategy development throughout the process. This guide will provide information on who is developing each of the five fisheries strategies, what resources they are using to inform the strategy, and their timeline for completion. Fisheries GIT staff will update this document monthly to include new information such as draft strategy content, major questions or issues, and progress updates.

## **List of Acronyms**

CAC – Citizens’ Advisory Committee  
CBP – Chesapeake Bay Program  
CBC – Chesapeake Bay Commission  
CBF – Chesapeake Bay Foundation  
CBSAC – Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee  
DDOE – District (of Columbia) Department of the Environment  
DNREC – Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control  
EDF – Environmental Defense Fund  
LGAC – Local Government Advisory Committee  
MD DNR – Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
PFBC – Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission  
PRFC – Potomac River Fisheries Commission  
SERC – Smithsonian Environmental Research Center  
STAC – Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee  
STAR – Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting  
VDGIF – Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries  
VMRC – Virginia Marine Resources Commission

## Sustainable Fisheries Goal and Outcomes

### Goal

Protect, restore and enhance finfish, shellfish and other living resources, their habitats and ecological relationships to sustain all fisheries and provide for a balanced ecosystem in the watershed and Bay.

### Outcomes

**Blue Crab Abundance Outcome:** Maintain a sustainable blue crab population based on the current 2012 target of 215 million adult females. Refine population targets through 2025 based on best available science.

**Blue Crab Management Outcome:** Manage for a stable and productive crab fishery including working with the industry, recreational crabbers and other stakeholders to improve commercial and recreational harvest accountability. By 2018, evaluate the establishment of a Bay-wide, allocation-based management framework with annual levels set by the jurisdictions for the purpose of accounting for and adjusting harvest by each jurisdiction.

**Oyster Outcome:** Continually increase finfish and shellfish habitat and water quality benefits from restored oyster populations. Restore native oyster habitat and populations in 10 tributaries by 2025 and ensure their protection.

**Forage Fish Outcome:** Continually improve the Partnership's capacity to understand the role of forage fish populations in the Chesapeake Bay. By 2016, develop a strategy for assessing the forage fish base available as food for predatory species in the Chesapeake Bay.

**Fish Habitat Outcome:** Continually improve effectiveness of fish habitat conservation and restoration efforts by identifying and characterizing critical spawning, nursery and forage areas within the Bay and tributaries for important fish and shellfish, and use existing and new tools to integrate information and conduct assessments to inform restoration and conservation efforts.

## Timeline

August-September 2014: Identify stakeholders and individuals to participate in the management strategy development process.

September 2014-March 2015: Individual outcome teams meet to develop content

December 2014: Full Fisheries GIT Meeting – Time allotted for work session and/or discussion of strategies.

December 11, 2014: Progress check-in with CBP Management Board.

March 3, 2015: Draft strategies released for public comment.

April 2015: Review public comments and finalize strategies.

May 2015: Final strategies presented to CBP Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee.

June 2015: Final strategies presented to CBP's Executive Council.

## CBP Management Strategy Outline

(8/7/14 Draft in review by Management Board)

### Key Elements of Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Management Strategies

1. **Executive Summary.** Two to four page public-friendly summary that describes the content of the Management Strategy and highlights key strategies and benefits.
2. **Outcomes and Baselines.** State the goal and outcome (or outcomes) from the Watershed Agreement that the management strategy is addressing. Add any necessary explanatory information that would make the statement sufficiently explicit, or well enough defined, that anyone reading it would have no doubt about what the aspiration is. Identify the baseline associated with the outcome, how that baseline was derived and the current condition. (This should build upon the outcome justification documents that were issued with the Final Agreement).
3. **Jurisdictions and agencies participating in the strategy.** Identify participating signatories and other stakeholders, including local governments and nonprofit organizations which will be participating in implementation of the strategy. Include a brief description of their role and level of participation. EPA will identify the lead federal agency for each outcome.
  - a. **Local engagement.** Include a statement about whether there is a general or specific role for local governments, watershed associations, nonprofits, the private sector or others in achieving the outcome. When relevant, include a brief description of the role and level of participation of each entity.
4. **Factors influencing ability to meet goal.** Identify the key natural and human systems that could affect the ability to attain the desired outcome. Once identified, all factors should be rated for both their importance in affecting goal attainment and their ability to be managed. Consider adaptation to changing environmental and economic conditions, impact of land use changes, regulatory obstacles, lack of local champion or community support, etc. Identify management actions that other goal teams or partners could take to mitigate or otherwise influence those factors (e.g. state or federal policy decisions that could counter or hinder progress toward the outcomes).
5. **Current efforts and gaps.** Identify efforts that are already being taken by jurisdictions, agencies and organizations to determine if the ongoing management effort is sufficient to achieve the goal, or whether enhancement is necessary. Then, identify the gaps that the partnership should fill to meet the outcome. Identify possible interactions with other management strategies/outcomes and any possible efficiencies that might be achievable to avoid duplication, close gaps, and maximize forward efforts. Include financial resources and financial gaps.

- a. **Actions, tools or technical support needed to empower local government and others.** Identify specific actions, tools or technical support needed at the local level.
6. **Management Approach.** Outline the general approach needed to fill existing gaps and identify the partnership's role in that approach. These are the actions that the program will undertake to address the factors affecting goal and outcome attainment. The approach should include how the stakeholders will be kept informed and involved.
  - a. **Local Engagement.** If relevant, describe what steps will be taken to facilitate greater local participation, including underserved and underrepresented communities as a way to include more diverse participation, in achieving the outcome, including what actions, tools or technical support will be provided to empower local governments and others to do their part.
7. **Monitoring Progress.** Describe how progress toward the outcome will be monitored and any resources needed to develop and/or implement the monitoring program. Include actions taken as well as the results of those activities. Evaluate for basic accountability:
  - a. Verify we are doing what the Agreement specified.
  - b. Verify the outcome is what was expected and desired.
8. **Assessing Progress.** Describe the approach for how, and how often, the progress will be assessed. Include actions taken as well as the results of the monitoring. Biennial updates should include a discussion on whether adequate progress is being made and the strategy or actions that will be taken if progress is not sufficient. Evaluation factors to consider: a) Completion of planned actions as scheduled; and b) Outcome(s) progress sufficiency and timeliness.
9. **Adaptively Manage.** Describe how the assessment of progress will lead to changes in actions, when the outcome itself needs to be changed and under what conditions. Biennial reevaluations should identify if such changes will be needed for the next biennial cycle. Stakeholder input will be incorporated into the development and reevaluation of each of the strategies.
10. **Biennial Workplan.** Included a biennial workplan as part of the management strategy. The workplan will identify commitments, actions and resources that each jurisdiction, federal agency and partner will take to help achieve each of the outcomes they are supporting as well as biennial targets and outputs that are related to meeting the outcomes. Update annually, if needed, based on changes in resource availability and any significant programmatic adjustments.

## Participants and Resources

This section will identify stakeholders that may be involved in developing the management strategies for each outcome. Participation is characterized into three different levels:

- Leads – Primary content developers and lead discussions and meetings; 3-4 people
- Reviewers – Provide input on content development and review drafts
- Outreach – Track meetings/discussion and review final drafts

This section will also identify opportunities for collaboration within CBP, especially with other GITs, and existing resources/reports that will help inform the strategy content.

The Fisheries GIT Coordinator and CRC Staffer will provide coordination and drafting support for all outcomes and strategies.

*The list of participants is still evolving and will be revised as needed.*

## Blue Crab Abundance

<b>Leads</b>	Subset of CBSAC
<b>Reviewers</b>	CBC, CBF, SERC, MD, VA, PRFC, Industry
<b>Outreach</b>	Full GIT, LGAC, CAC, STAC
<b>CBP Collaboration</b>	Habitat GIT

Existing Resources:

- Annual Blue Crab Advisory Reports
- 2011 Stock Assessment
- Future Stock Assessment Terms of Reference
- Maryland Blue Crab Management Plan
- MD Sea Grant Single Species Brief

## Blue Crab Management

<b>Leads</b>	MD DNR, VMRC, PRFC
<b>Reviewers</b>	CBSAC, CBC, CBF, SERC, Industry, EDF, MD and VA Sea Grant
<b>Outreach</b>	Full GIT, LGAC, CAC, STAC
<b>CBP Collaboration</b>	

Existing Resources:

- Annual Blue Crab Advisory Reports
- 2011 Stock Assessment
- Future Stock Assessment Terms of Reference

- Allocation White Paper
- Maryland Blue Crab Management Plan
- Industry Priorities

## Oysters

<b>Leads</b>	MD and VA Oyster Interagency Teams, Relevant academics/researchers
<b>Reviewers</b>	UMD, VIMS, CBC, CBF, SERC, TNC, NFWF, ORES Team
<b>Outreach</b>	Full GIT, LGAC, CAC, STAC, STAR
<b>CBP Collaboration</b>	Habitat, WQ, Watersheds, and Stewardship GITs

### Existing Resources:

- Tributary Plans
- Oyster Metrics
- Population Assessment (VIMS)
- USACE Master Plan
- Executive Order Strategy/Progress Reports
- Maryland Oyster Plan
- Maryland Sanctuary Plan

## Forage

<b>Leads</b>	Forage Workshop Steering Committee
<b>Reviewers</b>	STAR, MD, VA, PRFC
<b>Outreach</b>	Full GIT, LGAC, CAC, STAC
<b>CBP Collaboration</b>	Habitat and Watersheds GITs

### Existing Resources:

- Workshop Final Report (recommendations, literature and data review)
- MD Sea Grant Single Species Briefs

## Fish Habitat

<b>Leads</b>	Fish Habitat Action Team under Fisheries/Habitat GITs
<b>Reviewers</b>	MD DNR Fisheries Habitat Workgroup, VDGIF, VMRC, PA FBC, DNREC, DDOE, PRFC, WV DNR, NY DEC, CBF, TNC, ACFHP, ASMFC, NOAA (Emily Greene), DOI, ICPRB
<b>Outreach</b>	Full GIT, LGAC, CAC, STAC
<b>CBP Collaboration</b>	Habitat and Watersheds GITs; Toxics and Climate Change Teams

Existing Resources:

- TNC/NOAA Habitat Prioritization Tool
- Maryland GreenPrint
- Virginia Coastal GEMS
- USFWS LCCs (representative species)
- ACFHP Species Matrices