Developing Scientific Consensus on the State of the Chesapeake Bay's Wild Commercial Oyster Fishery

Part of our charge as the Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team is to encourage sustainable management of the Chesapeake's oyster resource. Inherent in this charge is the need to understand the scientific consensus regarding the sustainability of the Bay's wild oyster fishery as currently managed, and consider the outcomes of increasing or reducing fishing pressure. Recently-published scientific analysis (Wilberg reference here) indicates there is a need to look closely at the state of wild oyster stocks in concert with current management regimes.

The oyster is part of a complex ecosystem, and many aspects of the oyster's life history and function remain in question. Members of the Executive Committee agree that the sustainability of the oyster is too important to leave to chance, and that sound foundations exist for making the appropriate management decisions. These foundations include long-term commercial data, research and monitoring information dating back many years with numerous activities getting underway in 2011, and a clear example of blue crab management in Chesapeake Bay which has developed consensus among the jurisdictions and a successful adaptive management style. As such, the Executive Committee seeks to convene a 'team' of scientists to advise on a number of complex technical issues and to develop scientific consensus statement/s describing (but not limited to):

1) The sustainability of the Chesapeake's wild oyster stock, and

2) What amount of increase or reduction in fishing mortality, if any, is needed to allow the Chesapeake's oyster population to:
    a. Remain at current levels, and
    b. Increase.

Team membership will be scientists with experience in oyster research, management, and monitoring, and / or stock assessment. A mixture of CBSAC, the Oyster Metrics Team and the stock assessment team (currently being supported by NCBO) should be considered and identified to be team members.

Once these scientific consensus statements have been developed on the status of the wild stock, recommendations that will assist in the management process should be developed.

Potential Team Members:

In Bay:
Roger Mann
Ken Paynter
Mike Wilberg

Jim Wesson

Howard Townsend
Derek Orner
Chris Dungan
Ryan Carnegie
Melissa Southworth
Mitch Tarnowski
Mark Luckenbach
John Hoenig
Rom Lipcius
Steve Allen

Lynn Fegley/ Mike Naylor

Kim Reese

Mark Homer

Outsiders:???
Eric Powell
Charles Peterson
Hunter Lenihan