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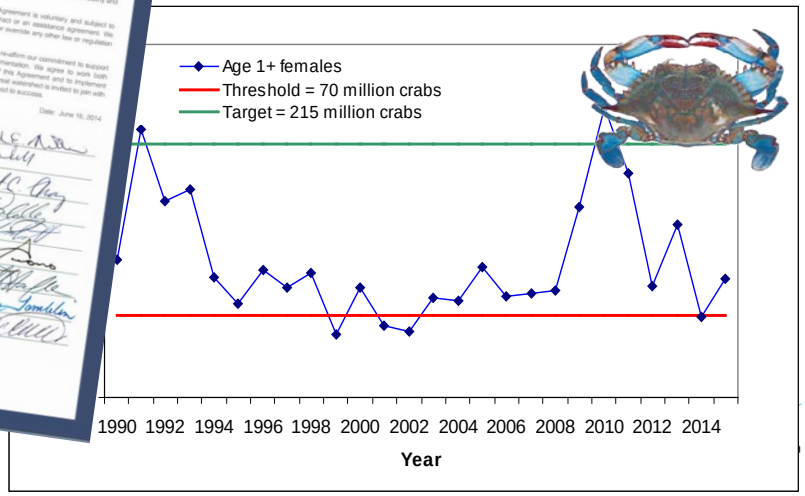
Welcome to the June 2015 full Fisheries GIT Meeting!

Recent activity



The next two days…

Day 1

- Management Strategies supporting the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement
- Place Orientation #1 – Lynnhaven River Oyster Restoration
- Science Presentations
  - Striped Bass telemetry
  - Striped Bass health (CBP funded)
  - Forage indicators (CBP funded)
  - Climate change impacts on key species
- GIT Member Updates!

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The next two days…

Day 2

- Place Orientation #2 – Tour the CBF Brock Center
- Blue Crabs
  - CBSAC 2015 Advisory Report Preview
  - Maryland Electronic Reporting Update
  - Benchmark Stock Assessment Planning
- Science Presentation
  - Fish/Benthic Productivity in Nearshore Habitats and Shorelines

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Watershed Agreement Management Strategies & Work plans

Fisheries GIT Meeting – June 1, 2015

New Watershed Agreement

- Chesapeake Bay Program Executive Council signed the new Agreement on June 16, 2014

- Signatories:
  - *Delaware*
  - *District of Columbia*
  - *Maryland*
  - *New York*
  - *Pennsylvania*
  - *Virginia*
  - *West Virginia*
  - *Chesapeake Bay Commission*
  - *EPA (for federal government)*

Fisheries Outcomes

Sustainable Fisheries 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.

- Blue Crab Abundance and Management Outcomes
- Oyster Outcome
- Forage Fish Outcome
- Fish Habitat Outcome

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Strategy Development

CURRENT STATUS: Under final review by the CBP Management Board (includes states, federal agencies, etc.)

Sept-Dec 2014: Assemble strategy teams

Dec 2014: In-person discussions at full GIT meeting

Jan-Mar 2015: Develop drafts

Mar-May 2015: Public input period and review

June 2015: Final strategies

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Strategy Summaries

- WHAT are the major actions outlined in the strategy?
- WHO provided public comment and WHAT did they say?
- HOW were the strategies revised to address these comments?
  - Drafting teams and GIT staff composed responses to individual comments.

Who drafted the strategies?
- Drafting teams comprised of states, federal agencies, scientists, non-profits, etc. Most of them are GIT/workgroup members.
- Utilized existing reports and information where possible.

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Blue Crab Abundance & Management

WHAT are the major actions in the strategy?	Planning and Implementing Benchmark Stock Assessment - The next assessment will address specific needs of the jurisdictions including guidance for both male and female crabs, analyses specific to fishery sectors, an evaluation of available fishery independent survey data, and an analysis of the impacts of ecosystem factors. Evaluation of an Allocation-based management framework - Jurisdictions with stakeholder input will evaluate the application of an allocation-based framework and the steps that would be needed to develop a Total Allowable Catch and a jurisdictional allocation. - Evaluation will inform the management jurisdictions as to whether an allocation framework will improve management of the resource.

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Blue Crab Abundance & Management

WHO provided public comments and WHAT did they say?	- Individual citizens suggested that the harvest of female blue crabs should be further restricted. - Maryland blue crab/fishing industry groups requested that the strategy more explicitly state the role and jurisdictional rights of the strategy partners.
HOW were the comments addressed?	- Clarified the management authority of the three blue crab management jurisdictions and their leadership in the evaluation process. - Recognized the importance of stakeholder input throughout the evaluation process. - Emphasized the importance of accurate, available data for the evaluation process and for management of the fishery in general.

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Oyster Restoration

WHAT are the major actions in the strategy?	General approach to tributary-scale oyster restoration: - Tributary selection process. - Data collection of the current and past state of the river's oyster population, water quality, etc. - Set acreage targets and develop a plan. - Implementation and monitoring. State agencies, federal agencies, and local restoration partners will continue to work collaboratively on the planning, permitting and implementation process. Partners will also consider the future protection of restored oyster reefs in order to protect the restoration investment and allow the oyster population and habitat to increase in restored areas.

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Oyster Restoration

WHO provided public comments and WHAT did they say?	- Individual citizens suggested limiting harvest of wild oysters. - Individual citizens promoting aquaculture. - Maryland oyster and fishing industry groups requested that oyster, seafood and fishing industries be recognized as important participants who should be involved in the restoration planning process. Also requested that the strategy more explicitly state the role and jurisdictional rights of the strategy partners.
HOW were the comments addressed?	- Identified oyster harvesters, recreational anglers and the aquaculture industry along with other stakeholders (boaters, conservation organizations, local citizens, etc.) as key participants. - Restoration partners will increase communication and engage with these groups during the restoration process. - Clarified that any management decisions regarding the oyster fishery or sanctuaries are in the authority of the jurisdictions.

Forage Fish

WHAT are the major actions in the strategy?

1. Define forage species and what comprises the forage base.
2. Determine the status of the forage base including a definition of "balanced" state.
    - Important forage species and species groups have been defined; a suite of potentially useful metrics and indicators to assess forage has been identified; research gaps identified.
3. Inform management decisions to better address sustainability of the forage base.
    - Establish management objectives for forage species.
    - Develop indicators based on forage management objectives and priority factors affecting forage base.
4. Maximize the efficiency of monitoring programs and build on existing efforts
    - Map areas and habitats important for the production and maintenance of forage.
    - Consider options to improve phytoplankton and zooplankton monitoring Baywide.

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Forage Fish

WHO provided public comments and WHAT did they say?	Few comments received. Comments from individual citizens on the importance of considering the whole ecosystem and accounting for predator demand.
HOW were the comments addressed?	- Emphasized the importance of stakeholder outreach and engagement in discussions of predator-prey relationships and ecosystem considerations. - Clarified the importance of using the best available data to inform indicator development. - Agreed on an initial list of key forage species listed in the strategy based on stakeholder input and results from the STAC workshop.

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Fish Habitat

WHAT are the major actions in the strategy?	1. Identify and prioritize threats to fish habitat at the jurisdictional and Baywide scale and propose actions to manage the threats. 2. Compile and identify available data on habitats, habitat vulnerabilities and fish utilization at different life stages to develop a set of criteria for identifying areas of high-value fish habitat. 3. Map and target high-value fish habitat for improved conservation and restoration. Partners will work with the science and management community to develop spatial tools for priority habitats and species to inform management decisions. 4. Communicate importance of fish habitat to the general public and local community leaders by engaging in a conversation about the tradeoffs associated with competing uses of land and waters. 5. Evaluate ways to enhance fish habitat protection by reviewing examples from other regions (e.g., the Puget Sound Partnership) and actively engaging with the Atlantic Coast Fish Habitat Partnership.

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Fish Habitat

WHO provided public comments and WHAT did they say?	Few comments received. Comments from individual citizens emphasized the importance of coordinating efforts with fish barrier removal projects and asking questions about the impacts of pollution behind Conowingo.
HOW were the comments addressed?	- Ensure fish passage is identified as a collaboration opportunity. - Reached out to partners to pass along Conowingo information. - To ensure coordination and efficiency, the team will inventory existing efforts by jurisdictions and other partners.

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Work Plans

- 2-year work plans will support each management strategies and outline the near-term actions and partners responsible.

- *Draft plans due in October.*

- **GIT Discussion Question:**

  How should we go about this process between now and October? Would having an in-person meeting for one or more outcomes be helpful?

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EPA CBP Funding for GITs

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Support GIT priorities and needs related to management strategy development

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2015 EPA CBP Funding for GITs

Funded Fisheries GIT Projects for 2015

Analysis of blue crab survey data and reproductive output to assess causes of population variability	Drs. Thomas Miller and Michael Wilberg (UMCES)
Forage indicators and nutritional profiles for Chesapeake Bay fishes	Drs. Andre Buchheister and Ed Houde (UMCES-CBL)
Striped bass health indicator development	Rebecca Scott, Data Analyst, EcoAnalytics LLC

2015 Fisheries GIT Total = ~$170K

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Future EPA CBP Funding

- Awards of about $700-$900K per year for the next 5 years among all CBP GITs and workgroups. Funding will be administered by a third party.

- **GIT Discussion Question:**

  Initial ideas for priority Fisheries GIT projects/research to put forward for potential EPA CBP funding in 2015-16?*

**Keep in mind that there are 6 CBP GITs and other workgroups, so assume 2-3 fisheries projects per year.*

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