

Suggested language:

Blue and flathead catfish are invasive species that have spread rapidly around the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Invasive species can hurt the economy and environment. These catfish have few natural predators, eat a wide variety of native fish and shellfish, and may cause ecological harm.

To minimize the potential damage from invasive species, in all areas of the Chesapeake Bay, it is illegal to move live blue or flathead catfish from one body of water to another and is punishable by a fine of up to [[specific fine here jurisdictional info]]. To report violations, contact [[ENFORCEMENT AGENCY CONTACT INFO]].

Anglers are encouraged to “catch and keep” blue and flathead catfish in accordance with state regulations and consumption advisories. [[INSERT JURISDICTIONAL INFO RE SIZES, BAG LIMIT, AND CONSUMPTION]]

Status: Below is a quick summary paraphrasing the responses from jurisdictional reps on the taskforce on the above language.

Jurisdiction	Action on invasive catfish language	Comment
VDGIF (Bob Greenlee)	No--Will not include in fishing guide	VDGIF has no plans to include targeted messaging specific to Blue Catfish and Flathead Catfish. VDGIF is taking a broader approach towards invasive species. Their stance is that the spread of the two catfish species is one of many issues related to unauthorized introductions and that there is a need to educate the public about all invasive species. The goal is to change behavior on a broad scale, or at least make people aware that they could negatively impact resources they value. Also DGIF has indicated limited space available to include language in regs booklet.

PA Fish and Boat (Geoffrey Smith)	Yes	Commented about the word “invasive” – by using that word it is implied that either ecological or economic harm has been documented so may want to remove the word “may” or other ambiguous words.
Delaware (Mathew Fisher)	Yes	The Delaware Fishing guide has a page dedicated to invasive fish species (including blue and flathead catfish and how to ID them). It includes information regarding potential harm of invasives and touches on the ecology of the fish. DE believes the fishing guide language currently in use already captures the spirit of the proposed language. DE cannot encourage “catch and keep” because of consumption advisories throughout much of state. They are considering means by which to raise fines for illegal transport.
Maryland DNR (Nancy Butowski)	Yes	2013 Fishing guide included language and will also include in 2014 guide. MD encourages “catch and keep” per communication with Tom O.
VMRC (Joe Grist)	No	VMRC supports raising awareness and encouraging anglers to catch and keep blue and flathead catfish but these species are not within their jurisdiction.

DDOE (Danny Ryan)	no official response	
PRFC (Ellen Cosby)	Yes	PRFC includes language on blue catfish invasiveness in their one page fishing guide