STAC REVIEW OF INVASIVE CATFISH TASK FORCE REPORT

Fisheries GIT Meeting
December 3, 2014
Bruce Vogt, NOAA

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

TIMELINE IN REVIEW

- January 2012: Task Force Established
- 2012-13: Research for and drafting of Report
- February 2014: Task Force produces draft report/recs
- March-April 2014: Task Force requests STAC Review
- November 2014: STAC Releases Review

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

STAC COMMENTS

Charge to STAC:

Provide comments on the technical feasibility, reasonableness, likelihood of success, and potential unintended effects of the Task Force's recommendations…

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

STAC COMMENTS

2 lead STAC Reviewers

+

5 External Reviewers

→

Due to a high level of uncertainty, development of a comprehensive management plan should be considered to promote accountability, evaluation of control techniques, and prioritize resources.

Information gaps include: population size, movement, and distribution; minimum removal rates needed, gear effectiveness; and contaminant levels.

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

RECOMMENDATION #1

Design and implement targeted fishery-independent removals of invasive catfish in places of significant ecological value.

STAC Comments

Further evaluate:

1) Gear effectiveness and impacts on invasive and native catfish populations
2) Methodology for prioritizing removal sites
3) Long-term resource availability
4) Strategies to evaluate success

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Incentivize and accelerate efforts to develop a large-scale commercial fishery with coordination across jurisdictions.

STAC Comments

Need to consider possible long-term limitations:

1) Contaminant burdens for consumption
2) Impacts of preserving the large, fecund fish for trophy fishery
3) Population responses to fishing pressure
4) Reverse incentivization to maintain populations to support fishery
5) Negative impacts on native species

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Incentivize increased harvests of invasive catfishes by small boat operations and explore the use of electrofishing for commercial harvest purposes.

STAC Comments

Further evaluate:

1) Gear effectiveness and impacts on non-target species
2) Fish contaminant issues
3) Sustainable fishery possible?

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

RECOMMENDATION #4

Establish monitoring programs dedicated to identifying and tracking invasive catfish distributions and population status. Develop early detection and response programs to monitor ecologically significant areas.

STAC Comments

New monitoring efforts could be compromised by lack of funding. Leverage existing monitoring efforts.

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

RECOMMENDATION #5

Consideration of the effectiveness of existing barriers to invasive catfish spread and an assessment of the benefits of barrier removal weighed against the risk of invasive catfish expansion.

STAC Comments

Success is contingent on agreement by groups with conflicting goals, a risk-benefit assessment, and efficacy of barriers preventing invasive catfish spread.

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

RECOMMENDATION #6

Cross-jurisdictional review of current fishing policies and regulations to evaluate their effectiveness in preventing persistence and further expansion of invasive catfish populations.

STAC Comments

This review is important and necessary. The purpose of this review should be clarified and should bring all stakeholders to the table.

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

RECOMMENDATION #7

Make information on invasive catfishes more accessible, consistent, and clearer to anglers and the general public.

STAC Comments

An adaptive approach to outreach is needed and outreach should be linked to ongoing research.

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

ADDITIONAL STAC RECOMMENDATIONS

- Preventative measures
- List of research needs with clear plan to address them
- Restoration action to rebuild native populations following control methods

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

NEXT STEPS

December 2-3rd, 2014: Present plans to full GIT

January 2015: Final response letter sent to STAC from Nick DiPasquale as CBP Director. Acknowledge and thank STAC for review and describe next steps.

February 2015: Small groups will work to modify specific parts/recommendations from the report.

March 2015: Full Task Force review and finalize report modifications and send to Fisheries GIT.

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.