

# **Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee**

## **Meeting Minutes**

July 23, 2018 from 3:00pm-5:00pm

---

### ***Participants***

Glenn Davis	Rob O' Reilly	Dave Blazer	Marty Gary
Sean Corson	Bruce Vogt	Jason Rolfe	Danielle Zaveta
Bob Beal	Genine McClair	Pat Geer	Lynn Fegley
Kirk Havens	Donna Bilkovic	Rom Lipcius	Amy Uhrin
Chris Jeffrey	Ward Slacum	Sara Coleman	Morgan Corey

### **Decisional**

\*agenda order rearranged to streamline discussion for marine debris participants

### **➤ Ecological and Economic Effects of Derelict Fishing Gear in the Chesapeake Bay**

#### **Description:**

- Bruce introduced the purpose of discussing the derelict fishing gear report
  - CBSAC reviewed the report to provide guidance on how to interpret results and raised concerns about methods. This meeting was an opportunity to bring everyone together for a briefing on key findings and management recommendations, allowing CBSAC to ask questions of the report authors, with the intention that Ex Comm members have the information they need to make future decisions about derelict fishing gear in the Chesapeake.

#### **Presentation:**

- Kirk, Ward, Chris and Donna gave an overview presentation of the report results while addressing comments raised by CBSAC
  - Goal: create a comprehensive study of areas with high derelict fishing gear concentration to understand the impacts of derelict crab traps
  - Data sources: ~70 watermen were supplied with side scan sonar equipment and digital cameras to record traps removed from water and species caught with GPS data for georeferenced crab pot locations
  - Bycatch: black sea bass and croaker were top bycatch finfish species
  - Mortality estimate: 25 legal sized crabs/pot/year
  - Authors erred on the side of caution using conservative estimates. Ground-truthing was used confirm side scan sonar data.
  - GWR model: geographically weighted regression model expresses spatially how many crab pots are in a given location
  - Estimated 12-20% loss rate reported by watermen
  - ~3 million (2.2-3.8 mil) legal-sized crabs killed each year by derelict crab pots
    - 4% of 2014 blue crab harvest
  - Gear efficiency: after comparing harvest per pot in areas with and without removal, derelict crab pots reduce gear efficiency
    - Did not use mortality data for harvest model (economic data used pounds, not numbers)

- Crabs were caught in pots throughout the winter, going against assumption that crabs remain buried/stationary during cold months (winter dredge survey) – should alternative sampling methods be considered?
- Overall conclusion was that derelict crab pots are removing 2.2 million to 3.8 million legal sized crabs from the population annually

#### Discussion:

- CBSAC Comments
  - Glenn thanked authors for clearing up some concerns, but a number of comments CBSAC pointed out were not clear in the report
    - 145,000 functional pots vs. all pots
    - Derelict pots more efficient than actively fished pots?
    - Removal of pots increased harvest by 1 crab/pot haul? Conversion factor – when we estimate harvest in MD, number of pot hauls is estimated (8 million/year)
    - Model included effort? Differences in what is being reported
  - Recognizing the amount of effort that went into the study, we know that we don't want derelict pots out there, but we are unsure about the magnitude of effect from removing pots. If we use 3.3 million crabs estimate, does not really affect the exploitation fraction.
- Fishery Managers Comments
  - Consider targeted roundup efforts at hot spot areas with high density of pots, and education for boaters to avoid pots
  - Rob: Good to be having this conversation, but the big question is what are we going to do moving forward? Concern that large-scale removal programs would be expensive and may want to focus on smaller programs (ex. Biodegradable panels may be a cost-effective solution)
  - Marty: PRFC not included but would like to have more discussion about this topic
  - Dave: is there enough concern to warrant a management response?
  - Regardless of the scope of the problem, derelict pots are creating a drag on the fishery. We can continue to explore this issue among fishery managers.
- **Action: Morgan and Sara will share the report and associated materials on CBP website**

#### ➤ Revisit blue crab male reference points

- Discussion postponed until next Ex Comm meeting

#### ➤ Update on GIT funding proposals

- Morgan updated Ex Comm members on the projects selected for GIT funding with joint support of both Fish/Habitat GITs
- Proposal 1: "Support for development of a database of Chesapeake Bay habitat, stressor, condition, and biological data"
  - Critical next step towards a regional Fish Habitat Assessment in the Chesapeake Bay – proposal funds will hire one contractor for one year to work with USGS/NOAA to inventory, assess, and build a comprehensive database with habitat, stressors, and biological data
    - Database will inform development of a framework for selecting geographic areas for pilot habitat assessment

- There is interest in a regional fish habitat assessment, but concern from GIT leadership about developing another data tool and not having it used
  - Need to plan ahead for what tool will be used for, who will use it, and how to structure models, with realistic expectations about the long-term effort and cost to conduct a regional assessment
  - Proposal 2: “Oysters and Seagrass: an ecosystem approach to green infrastructure”
    - Shoreline resiliency demonstration project with outcome of design, siting, partner development and workplan ready to hand over to local planners identifying a viable project location on lower York River to implement restoration project at vulnerable shoreline (specific location not yet selected)
      - Multi-layered concept using repurposed derelict fishing gear crab pots to stabilize shoreline and focusing on oysters and seagrass ecosystem services of these nearshore habitats
- **Ex Comm Updates**
- Marty had several inquiries about predation of striped bass by dolphins in Chesapeake Bay
  - Dave had interest in investigating the impact of cormorants on fish species, and requests for education about circle hooks in striped bass fishery
- **Envisioning next steps for FishGIT**
- Sean reminded Ex Comm members that we would like to keep in mind what the Fish GIT is doing well and ways that we can improve
    - There has been a shift from focusing on big 5 species (blue crab, oysters, striped bass, menhaden, alosines) towards a more ecosystem-wide approach (fish habitat, forage species)
    - We have also worked on cross-jurisdictional issues with a baywide focus (blue catfish, cownose rays)
    - NCBO generated a fisheries ecosystem FMP
    - NOAA management interest in summer flounder/black sea bass
  - **Action:** Bruce and Sara will create a summary of FishGIT success stories to guide future discussion about the direction we would like to take

## **Informational**

- **Confirm upcoming Ex Comm meeting dates**
- Monday, August 20, 2018 (during AFS annual meeting)
  - Monday, September 17, 2018
    - Hold both dates on calendar for now