

Blue and Flathead Catfish in the Chesapeake Bay

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- Introduced in Virginia as a sportfish
- Expanded range throughout Chesapeake Bay Watershed
- Predators with broad diet
- Impacts on native fish and ecosystem?



What's been done?

- January 2012 – Adoption of Invasive Catfish Policy
- 2014 – Report with seven management recommendations
- 2017 – Science Symposium
- June 2019 – Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team called for workshop to inform management

**INVASIVE CATFISH
IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED**

FLATHEAD CATFISH
• Can grow as long as 4 feet
• Dark brown to tan
Projecting lower jaw
Slightly notched tail

BLUE CATFISH
• Size blue on the back
• Silvery/white on its underside
Eyes set in lower half of the head
Straight anal fin, 30-35 rays
Deeply forked tail

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

- DNR asks anglers to keep any blue and flathead catfish they catch.
- Catch and release of these fish is discouraged, as they are invasive top predators and pose a serious long-term threat to our native species.

IN MARYLAND, IT IS ILLEGAL TO TRANSPORT LIVE BLUE AND FLATHEAD CATFISH INTO ANOTHER BODY OF WATER. VIOLATORS CAN BE FINED UP TO \$1,000.

For more information on Maryland's blue and flathead catfish policy, please visit www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives/

To report illegal transport or unauthorized introductions of invasive species please contact the Natural Resources Police at 800-635-8124.

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Chesapeake Bay Program

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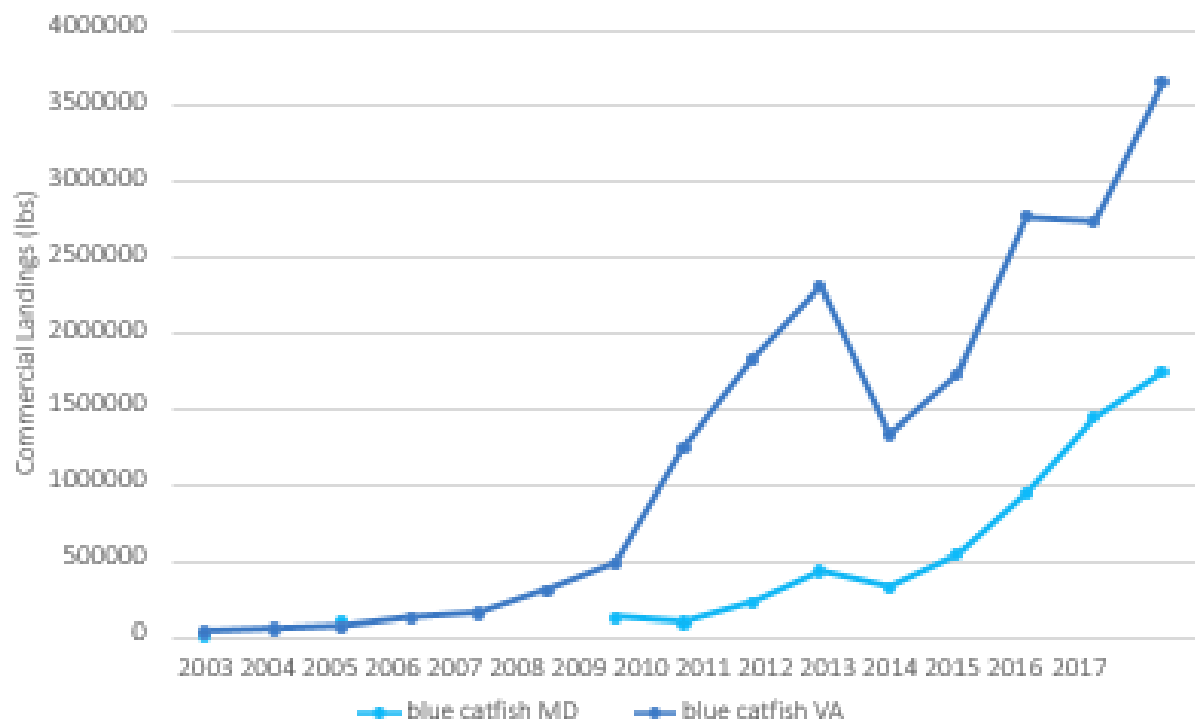
David K. Whitcomb



Smithsonian Environmental
Research Center



A Growing Fishery



US distributor plans to hike invasive catfish sales

By Christine Blank
October 4, 2018

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Congressional Seafood Company, which already sells invasive blue catfish to Whole Foods Market and other major buyers, is aiming to significantly grow sales of the fish in the state of Maryland.

Around four years ago, Jessup, Maryland-based Congressional began selling blue catfish, an invasive species in the Chesapeake Bay, the Potomac River, and other waterways. Blue catfish feeds on many native species, including bluegill, largemouth bass, and mussels.

"I started reading a lot about the explosion of blue catfish and had to try to sell it."

vice president Tim Sughrue, told SeafoodSource. "However, one of the hardest things about selling blue catfish is that it's a fish that has never been sold before."

Blue catfish has a great flavor and it tastes similar to snapper to rockfish, Sughrue said. It's sold for 65 percent on average, versus around 65 percent for mahi and 70 percent for turbot.

After contacting several restaurant and retailer chains, Congressional got its products on menus. Congressional Restaurant Group, based in Washington D.C., agreed to menu blue catfish. In 2015, Congressional got another break when Whole Foods Market's menu added blue catfish.

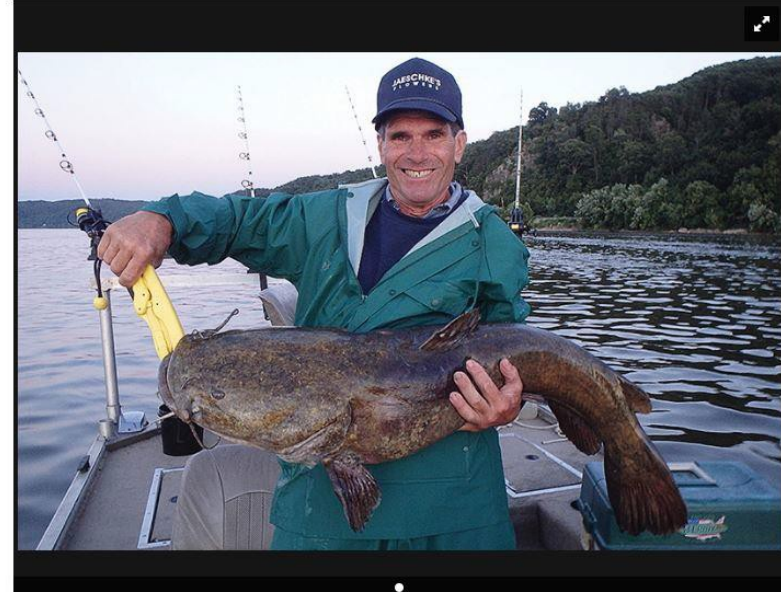
Flathead catfish, swimming under the radar for years, now raising concerns

PA biologists studying impact of large, invasive species on native fish populations

By Donna Morelli on November 26, 2017

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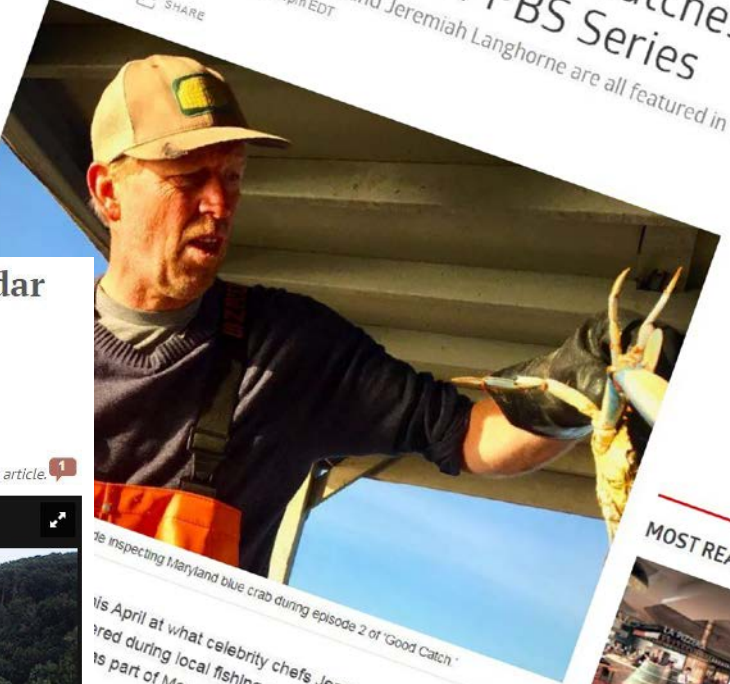


Charlie Wandrei of Adams, MA, vacations in Pennsylvania every year to fish for flathead catfish. Here, he shows off a 35-pounder. This controversial nonnative species is found in the lower Susquehanna River and Bay freshwater tributaries. (Rod Bates, Koinonia Guide Service)

3 Area Chefs Cook Fresh Catches from the Chesapeake in New PBS Series

Jennifer Carroll, Spike Gjerde, and Jeremiah Langhorne are all featured in 'Good Catch'
by Warren Rojas | Mar 19, 2018, 4:31pm EDT

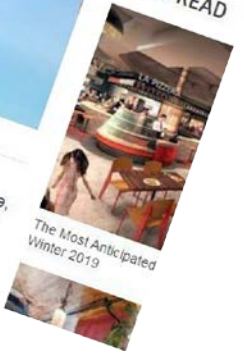
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inspecting Maryland blue crab during episode 2 of 'Good Catch'

is April at what celebrity chefs Jennifer Carroll, Spike Gjerde, and Jeremiah Langhorne are featured during local fishing expeditions when new series Good Catch premieres as part of Maryland Public Television's Chesapeake Bay

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