

Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee

Meeting Minutes

February 25, 2019 from 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Participants

Glenn Davis	Bob Beal	Nancy Butowski	Lynn Fegley
Bryan King	Sean Corson	Bruce Vogt	Sara Coleman
Morgan Corey	Marty Gary	Rob O'Reilly	Dave Blazer
Pat Geer			

Decisional

➤ **December meeting follow-up**

- Implications from decisions at December GIT meeting
 - **Invasive Catfish Task Force (ICTF)**
 - **Background:** Decision from December meeting to maintain ICTF in a communication and information-sharing capacity, and that there is no urgent need to develop a bay-wide management plan
 - **Discussion:**
 - Suggestion to recommend ICTF gather new research information and present in updated report once per year at June meeting
 - Not necessarily useful
 - Also suggestion that we evaluate monitoring data yearly and look for covariation or correlation between alosines (shad) and blue catfish abundance
 - Anything we can learn about species interactions would be helpful for fishery managers
 - Besides shad, concern about blue crab predation by catfish
 - Moving toward tracking quantitative measures to evaluate challenges faced by invasive/native species interactions
 - Interest in tracking catfish abundance among tributaries
 - Catfish are rapidly expanding throughout watershed, and have various, competing management objectives – there is a need for continued conversation through ICTF sharing research
 - Another issue is the lack of representation on ICTF team for recreational/commercial interests to speak toward balancing management objectives
 - Noticing bottleneck through USDA catfish processing despite increased landings, plenty of supply but costs are impeding the flow of seafood product
 - Consider adding USDA rep on ICTF
 - **Action: review draft ICTF objectives document and send comments to Fish GIT**

■ Blue Crab stock assessment update

- **Background:** Decision from December meeting to move forward without a benchmark stock assessment and to continue with CBSAC peer-reviewed stock assessment model update
- **Discussion:**
- Current status of stock assessment update is ready for internal review, and CBSAC review within next 3 weeks
- Going forward, we need better definition of how often to update stock assessment and procedure to follow next time
 - Are any analyses needed that would improve the model?
Can we further rank research priorities identified by CBSAC in advisory report?
- Blue crab has an incredible bay-wide effort in place with yearly winter dredge surveys, which are similar to a stock assessment
 - Stock assessment has the advantage of adding other sources of data and generating new reference points
 - However, update shows that reference points are stable
 - Not much is gained by having regular updates every 2 years, more could be gained by improving data inputs to the stock assessment model
 - Important to dedicate resources to improving state harvest reports to improve harvest quotient
- Realistic goal to add in another years data and re-run to the model each year, but the level of effort put into stock assessment update is not realistic every 2 years
 - Update is needed when new data are available
- Management triggers / decision rules have been brought up – is this still a priority? If yes, should CBSAC take on developing triggers? Or should it remain as a jurisdictional responsibility?
 - Agreed more of a jurisdictional effort
 - Blue Crab stock is in a much better place now than it was 10+ years ago when triggers were mentioned
 - We expect the stock to fluctuate but overall it is much healthier with the science we have today
 - Winter dredge survey results will continue to inform
- **Decision:** continue to update stock assessment model as new data are available

➤ **CBSAC winter meeting and winter dredge survey plans**

- Tentatively scheduled for March 7, Sara reviewed draft agenda

➤ **Adaptive management for Fisheries GIT**

- Chesapeake Bay Program's Strategic Review System (SRS) is a biennial review to evaluate progress towards achieving outcomes under the 2014 Agreement

- Fisheries GIT is coming up on SRS review for the 2nd time starting summer 2019
 - Fish Habitat outcome set to present at **August 15** Management Board
 - All other outcomes (blue crab, oysters, forage) set to present at **November 14** Management Board
- SRS is an opportunity to bring greater connection between research needs and Bay Program leadership jurisdictional partners
 - In the past Fish GIT has been successful in funding projects (e.g. forage fish science, funding for oyster restoration) to meet needs
 - SRS facilitates accessing resources through the Bay Program partnership
 - Important to understand what current fisheries research priorities area and to be able to link to our current GIT outcomes to access funding
- SRS Biennial Meeting on March 13-14 in Richmond, VA aims to evaluate SRS adaptive management process and provide feedback to improve
- Science needs prioritization for Bay Program:
 - Bruce reviewed list of science needs broken down by outcome
 - **Discussion:**
 - Climate related impacts to fisheries are important, especially related to short-term change in estuarine environments, ocean acidification, and sea level rise impacts to shellfish resources
 - Phytoplankton/zooplankton monitoring – unclear if this is an interesting science question about food web dynamics or has direct management application?
 - **Action: review Science Needs list for the following questions:**
 - Is the list comprehensive? Are the needs listed relevant for management? What level of detail is needed to understand the application of each?

➤ **NFWF Feedback on RFPs**

- As NFWF funding avenues become available in 2019, keep in mind ways to engage with NFWF partnership to optimize alignment and coordination of grants programs and to promote awareness of how NFWF grants can support us in achieving 2014 Agreement goals and outcomes
 - Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants program
 - Small Watershed Grants program
- Oyster restoration outcome named as a priority for Fish GIT, allowing partners to put in proposals for funding restoration projects (e.g. helped finish Lafayette)
- We have a good working relationship to NFWF
 - Meeting during development of business plan
 - Identifying key geographies of interest
 - Staff serving on review panels for project selection

➤ **Other Updates**

- GIT funding RFPs are currently in process of reviewing bids, with final decisions expected mid-March and contracts awarded in April
 - Remind that Fisheries GIT is supporting 3 projects: shoreline project design, fish habitat data inventory, and hypoxia vertical monitoring pilot
- Fish Habitat Action Team call discussed outstanding workplan actions
- Forage Action Team call discussed forage indicator development

➤ **Member Updates**

- Rob O'Reilly forwarded info about webinar "Sea Change: Impacts of Climate Change on Our Oceans and Coasts" scheduled for February 27 at 10am
- Dave Blazer announced DNR new secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio
- DNR [draft oyster management plan](#) open for comment until March 19!

Informational

➤ **Upcoming Ex Comm meetings**

- March 25
- April 22
- May 20