



## Sustainable Fisheries Executive Committee Meeting **MINUTES**

Monday, February 14 · 11:00am – 1:00pm

---

### **Decision Items Highlighted in Yellow**

#### ➤ **Attendance**

- Sean Corson (NOAA)
- Mandy Bromilow (NOAA)
- Bruce Vogt (NOAA)
- Justin Shapiro (NOAA)
- Marty Gary (PRFC)
- Pat Geer (VMRC)
- Lynn Fegley (MDNR)
- Mike Bednarski (VDWR)
- Andrew Nielsen (Public)
- Chris Moore (CBF)

#### ➤ **Introduction (Sean Corson & Marty Gary: 5 min)**

#### ➤ **Fisheries GIT Membership Meeting Takeaways (Sean Corson: 10 min)**

- Providing an open floor to discuss takeaways or questions that arose from the recent virtual meeting.
- A summary document highlighting all presentations and discussions can be accessed [HERE](#)
- Discussion:
  - i. Bruce Vogt (NOAA): Mentions that information gathered during the monitoring needs discussion was incorporated into summaries that were recently submitted to the CBP's monitoring review team. Shallow water and plankton needs were incorporated as were ongoing needs surrounding oysters restoration and fish habitat assessments.

#### ➤ **Update on Two-Species Population Abundance Modeling (Bruce Vogt: 15 min)**

- After multiple months of contemplation surrounding the selection of a second species (to complement striped bass) for bay-wide abundance estimates, it is now time to revisit the proposed list, and move forward with a chosen species.
- Recommendation is for Summer flounder to be second species

- i. Federally managed, high recreational and commercial value
- ii. May be experiencing climate and habitat impacts in the bay and coast
- iii. Data is available in the Bay and on the coast
- iv. Does not require development of a new modeling framework

○ Discussion:

- i. Lynn Fegley (MDNR): It is important to add that Summer Flounder catch in the state is currently low. Compared to species like spot and croaker, much more is known about summer flounder, and there would be much more value in exploring some of these prey species key to the Chesapeake Bay. While Summer Flounder and their connection to climate could be an interesting research question, spot/croaker are much more critical to near-term management for the bay states.
- ii. Marty Gary (PRFC): Building off Lynn's point, what are we gleaning from this effort? Definitely sees Lynn's perspective, but also believes constituents would benefit/be interested in changing summer flounder distribution/abundance. Also agrees with Pat that if Summer Flounder moves forward, future efforts should focus on species like spot/croaker
- iii. Pat Geer (VMRC): Understands the conundrum of the modeling complications. Also agrees with Lynn about the comparative importance to spot/croaker to the Chesapeake Bay. He would support flounder for now, but emphasizes these other species should be highly considered the next time additional funding becomes available
- iv. Sean Corson (NCBO): Mentions that the different modeling approach for other species would not be impossible, but would require a review of the budget. Sean also mentions summer flounder modeling may complement ongoing habitat restoration projects and is an important species in the context of climate change/range shifts. We would like to get info from a species we know fits into the existing model to ensure this project delivers useful information.

○ Decisional Item: Executive Committee consensus on second species of choice to bring forward to the project's principal investigators.

- i. Decision: NCBO will reconvene with the project PIs to gather more information on the feasibility of modeling prey species like croaker/spot. The Fish GIT team will provide updates of budget estimates/feasibility to the Executive Committee at a follow up meeting and make a final decision at that time.

➤ **Review and Approve the Updated Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee Charter (Mandy Bromilow: 15 min)**

- *The CBSAC team amended their workgroup charter to address questions surrounding a standardized process for membership criteria/admission. The updated charter can be reviewed [HERE](#) prior to the meeting.*
- Discussion:
  - i. *Pat Geer: Mentions, that as chair, these changes were introduced to ensure a more democratic approach to membership admission*
- *Decisional Item: Approve proposed CBSAC Charter*
  - i. ***Decision: Unanimous approval of updated CBSAC charter language***
- **Sustainable Fisheries GIT Response to the Chesapeake Bay Commission's Request for a Blue Crab Science Workshop and Benchmark Stock Assessment (Bruce Vogt: 15 min)**
  - *In response to these two requests, the GIT leadership team met with CBSAC technical experts to discuss the utility/priority level of a workshop and benchmark stock assessment. There was consensus that a workshop to explore science needs and questions surrounding low blue crab recruitment would be beneficial. This workshop would also serve as a starting point to discuss the near-term need/utility of a benchmark assessment. The draft, in its current form, can be reviewed [HERE](#).*
  - Discussion:
    - i. *Lynn Fegley: Adds that additional focus on climate change impacts and impacts to stock/larval development will be key components to consider.*
    - ii. *Bruce Vogt: With this response, workshop planning would need to begin now. A small steering committee would be beneficial to begin this process. Bruce will reach out to managers/CBSAC members to start these conversations.*
  - *Decisional Item: Approve the response letter to be sent to the CBC*
    - i. ***Decision: Unanimous approval of response letter to be sent forward to the Chesapeake Bay Commission***
- **Update on Invasive Catfish Presentation to the Chesapeake Bay Commission (Marty Gary: 15 min)**
  - *Marty will review the recent catfish update provided to the CBC and discuss potential follow-up actions that emerged from supplementary discussion.*
  - Discussion:
    - i. *Marty Gary (PRFC): What do the jurisdictions have in place right now, as far as fisheries management plans?*
      - *Lynn Fegley: MD has its own FMP*
      - *Pat Geer: Maybe we can take a look at the MD FMP and use it to create a bay-wide FMP. This would be a possible approach and would get CBC support*

- *Mike Bednarski (VDWR): Believes a single, bay-wide FMP is not the right approach in this particular case.*
- ii. *Marty Gary: As a follow up, he asks what is VA's approach to large catfish in the system? What would happen if it was decided to take them out of the system?*
  - *Mike Bednarski: VA manages them as sportfish. Their position is that they recognize the economic importance for the recreational community, but do advocate for lowering overall catfish abundance.*
  - *The VA commercial sector doesn't take large catfish, and transport to other states is a gray area.*
- iii. *Marty Gary: Do we have a status assessment of the invasive catfish population? Are we working toward understanding the size of this issue bay-wide?*
  - *Bruce Vogt: There is no study currently looking baywide, but Corbin Hilling did complete estimates in the James River*
  - *Mandy Bromilow (NOAA): We should include Marjy because she chairs the tributary-specific management sub-group and is tuned to various status of FMPs.*
- iv. *Marty Gary: Will send a drafted email to the Executive Committee with points made during today's discussion prior to sending to the CBC. Additional information on ICW progress would be helpful to send to the CBC as well*
  - *Mandy Bromilow: Will provide Marty with an ICW summary and provide documentation on its strategy efforts*

➤ **Member Updates**

- *Sean Corson: Raises issue surrounding restoring shad hatcheries for the Mattaponi tribe in Virginia. Technical know-how from the tribe was lost over the previous generation and leaders are looking for new training. For NOAA to provide resources, it would have to be part of a larger restoration plan (for the tributary/geographic area).*
  - i. *Lynn Fegley: Will put Sean in contact with DNR hatcheries manager*
  - ii. *Mike Bednarski: Believes hatchery/stocking is not a good utilization of funds. Habitat restoration/fish passage is a better approach. Notes that shad can be transported rather easily, so hatcheries are not necessarily a limiting factor to popular restoration. Also notes potential negatives from artificial selection at hatcheries.*
  - iii. *Pat Geer: Agrees with Mike's point*

- iv. *Sean Corson: Is VDWR in touch with the tribes? Are there habitat restoration opportunities? Maybe the tribes would be interested in shifting to other objectives to help with shad restoration.*
- *VDWR is not currently in touch with the tribes on this subject.*