

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

April 2011

Resolution on Non-Native Invasive Catfish

Whereas, the States along the Atlantic coast from Maine through Florida are extremely concerned about the increasing variety, abundance, range, and ecological impact of invasive species in estuaries, tributaries, and coastal waters; and

Whereas, the invasive species are negatively impacting native species managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission through predation and displacement; and

Whereas, blue and flathead catfish are non-native invasive species that have been introduced and spread to many watersheds along the Atlantic coast; and

Whereas, blue catfish are a large, long-lived fish species exhibiting an opportunistic, generalistic feeding strategy.

Whereas, the spread and over-abundance of non-native catfish are causing trophic cascades throughout their range, resulting in severely unbalanced ecosystems; and

Whereas, the predatory impacts of blue catfish are likely having a negative impact on species managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, including shad, river herring, striped bass, American eel, etc. Other prey species of concern include white and yellow perch, gizzard shad and freshwater mussels; and

Whereas, the population and range of blue and flathead catfish have become extremely problematic in significant portions of the Chesapeake Bay watershed; and

Whereas, the jurisdictions in the Chesapeake Bay region are developing a policy to control the population, geographic spread, and ecological impacts of invasive catfish.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved,

That the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission does not support the introduction of non-native invasive species;

That all practicable efforts should be made to reduce the population level and range of non-native invasive species;

That the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission supports the development and implementation of a strategy to minimize the population and ecological impacts of non-native invasive catfish species throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.