

Tidal Catfish

Ongoing Activities of:

Chesapeake Bay Program Sustainable Fisheries
Goal Implementation Team

Bob Greenlee - District Biologist

May 3, 2011

Fisheries Goal Implementation Team

- Composed of the state fisheries managers from around the Bay and chaired by the director of the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office
- First meeting of full GIT in June 2010
 - EXCOMM meets monthly
 - Full GIT meets twice a year

GIT Meeting Minutes – June 2010

Background

- Focused on facilitating fisheries management that encourages sustainable Chesapeake Bay fish populations, **supports viable recreational and commercial fisheries**, and promotes natural ecosystem function
- Provides the forum to discuss fishery management issues that cross state and other jurisdictional boundaries
- Also working to **better connect science to management decisions** and create a framework/mechanism for implementing ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries management

GIT Meeting Minutes – June 2010

GIT must focus on issues that are **ACTIONABLE** and can affect change

- One of three action items identified during the June 2010 meeting:
 - Blue Catfish is an emerging issue which deserves attention
 - **There still remain several scientific gaps** related to their habitat use, impacts on bay ecology, and population dynamics
 - The Fisheries GIT could demonstrate coordinated, inter-jurisdictional fisheries management with this species by **identifying research needs to inform policy recommendations and management actions**

December 2010 GIT Meeting

- GIT heard from a panel of blue catfish scientists who indicated:
 - Extremely high, and increasing, abundance in tributaries
 - Large adults represent a new apex trophic level in these food webs
 - Substantial gaps exist in scientific knowledge related to impacts, and/or potential impacts related to the species
 - Commercial harvest approaching 2 million pounds annually
 - Market saturated with no impact on the population
 - Low mortality rates in small, market-sized fish
 - Increasing density; and population size and age structures

December 2010 GIT Meeting

- GIT Executive Committee determined “blue catfish constitute an invasive species that demands further management consideration”

December 2010 GIT Meeting

- ❑ GIT “brainstormed” management alternatives
 - e.g. **eradication**
 - Did not reach a consensus on any specific near term management action
- ❑ **Based on science advice from presenters, eradication of this species was deemed not viable**
- ❑ Established a blue catfish workgroup to determine best policy options to be considered at the next full GIT meeting in June 2011
 - **A step forward in coordinating the development of an agreement/policy between the Bay states on blue catfish**

GIT December 2010

Outcomes / Action Items:

■ Blue Catfish Workgroup

- Group will further investigate this species and develop management options for GIT consideration at June 2011 meeting

■ Executive Committee:

- Develop clear tasks/guidance for Blue catfish workgroup
- Contact agencies to determine what the FDA/state regulations are for consumption
- Ensure inclusion of all stakeholders in developing policy and develop communication products on the issue
- Establish awareness and linkages at ASMFC
- Contact Mid-Atlantic Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species

GIT EXCOMM March 2011 Meeting

Catfish Workgroup Proposal

NOTE: Members of the Workgroup were not aware of this “Workgroup Proposal”

Discussion with Greg Garman on team’s next steps:

- **Kill-on-capture** will be difficult to implement/enforce and will not significantly reduce populations
- **Full eradication** is not physically or monetarily feasible

GIT EXCOMM March 2011 Meeting

Catfish Workgroup Proposal

Discussion with Greg Garman on team's next steps:

- The team could scope out potential “control” approaches:
 - Public awareness campaign to educate and inform public
 - "Control" and "Surveillance" Pilot Project: (should include)
 - **Develop a control pilot project for select (MD and VA) tributaries**
 - Create baseline GIS model of all potential blue catfish habitats across the bay
 - Design a targeted monitoring/surveillance and rapid response system to control spread

Blue/Flathead “Invasive Catfish Field of Action”

Document Date - April 2011

Vision (the outcome GIT wants to achieve):

- Invasive catfish species (blue and flathead) fully eradicated from Chesapeake Bay

Or

- Chesapeake Bay tributaries free of negative effects caused by invasive catfish

GIT “Invasive Catfish Field of Action”

Mission (to achieve the vision):

- Develop and implement bay wide policies and management strategies to **reduce invasive catfish populations, mitigate their spread, and control their negative effects on native species**

GIT “Invasive Catfish Field of Action”

Values (what the GIT cares about and/or believes in):

- A productive and balanced bay ecosystem
- Invasive species are detrimental to the bay
- **Policy guided/driven by science-based considerations**
- **A knowledgeable and aware public**
- Policy coordination and collaboration among jurisdictions yields best management outcomes

GIT “Invasive Catfish Field of Action”

Objectives (GIT measurable outcomes):

- Establish a functional workgroup to provide scientific, technical and policy advice to the GIT on invasive catfish
- Initiate a public awareness campaign on the invasive catfish issue
- Produce a scientific evaluation on whether blue/flathead catfish are invasive
- Develop a set of options/approaches for controlling populations and mitigating effects of invasive catfish
- Draft and institute an agreed upon policy/action plan based on preferred approach(es)
- Consider possible performance metrics: decreased invasive catfish populations and increased shad, herring, other affected species abundance

GIT “Invasive Catfish Field of Action”

Activities

- Use the currently available scientific information on blue and flathead catfish to determine if they are “invasive” by definition.
 - Team: Mary Fabrizio-lead, Greg Garman, Bob Greenlee, Mary Groves

GIT “Invasive Catfish Field of Action”

Activities

- Develop a Matrix of Management Options & Implications
 - Team: Greg Garman-lead, Bruce Vogt, Derek Orner, Joe Grist, Adam Davis, and Nancy Butowski

GIT “Invasive Catfish Field of Action”

Activities

- Develop a proposal for a **Pilot Control and Surveillance Program**
 - Team: Greg Garman-lead, Derek Orner, Nancy Butowski, Joe Grist, Adam Davis

GIT “Invasive Catfish Field of Action”

Activities

- Establish a Public Awareness Campaign including outreach and education materials and **stakeholder engagement plan**
 - Team: Bryan King-lead, Adam Davis, Derek Orner, Bruce Vogt

GIT “Invasive Catfish Field of Action”

Activities

- Draft an ASFMC resolution
 - Team: Bob Beal-lead, Derek Orner, GIT ExComm
- Drafts of all activities are to be prepared by May 16th
- Finalized by June 1st

Draft ASFMC Resolution

Excerpts

- Invasive species are negatively impacting native species managed by ASMFC through predation and displacement
- Blue and flathead catfish are non-native invasive species
- Spread and over-abundance of non-native catfish are causing **trophic cascades** throughout their range, resulting in severely unbalanced ecosystems;
- Predatory impacts of blue catfish are likely having a **negative impact on species managed by ASMFC, including shad, river herring, striped bass, American eel, etc.**

Draft ASFMC Resolution

Excerpts

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

Draft ASFMC Resolution

Excerpts

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved,

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

You Are Stakeholders in the Process

- Recreational Fishery is an Economic Engine
 - James River Blue Catfish Fishery produced ~ \$2.5 million for the local economy during March – November 2002
 - The typical catfish angler spends \$84 per trip
 - Many James River anglers are not “typical”
- Quality of Life Impacts

Fisheries Goal Implementation Team

Web Link to GIT:

http://www.chesapeakebay.net/team_fisheries_info.aspx?menuitem=51029

Fisheries Goal Implementation Team

- Next meeting of the full GIT meeting will be June 7th – 8th
 - Stratford Hall
- GIT Contacts
 - Chair:

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Summary

- The Fisheries Goal Team's function is not a regulatory body and is not intended to usurp or impinge on any existing federal or state authority. Instead, it will work closely with existing fisheries management bodies to support inter-jurisdictional fisheries management in the Bay

Summary

- The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) coordinates management of fisheries for species that migrate into and through Atlantic Coastal state waters, out to 3-miles offshore, under the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act

Summary

- States have individual jurisdiction over fish stocks that reside solely in their state waters, including Chesapeake Bay

Acknowledgements

- information provided in this presentation was pulled verbatim from the Chesapeake Bay Program web site
 - Including meeting minutes from the Fisheries Goal Implementation Team