



## Next Steps for the Blue Crab Project

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) has been working with your watermen leaders to come up with a fair way to bring together a group of watermen to consider the future of crabbing in Maryland. The members will reflect the demographics of the crabbing community in terms of region, license, gear and level of experience. The group will look into the use of catch shares for the blue crab fishery. This representative group of watermen will work together to review current blue crab management and look for solutions that work better for the industry as a whole.

Each commercial crabber will have the opportunity to select people to represent their region over the next few months and sit on a 15 person team. They will hear from other commercial fishermen from around the country who have experiences, both positive and negative, with catch share fisheries. The group will think about many different options for improving management of Maryland's commercial crabs. The idea is to find answers that

stabilize market prices, shape regulations that add flexibility for businesses, and increase profitability for crabbers.

A range of issues will be discussed in monthly meetings. The discussion will focus on current challenges with an eye towards the crabbing industry's future. The group will update the larger community of crabbers and ask for feedback in their local communities.

It is important for everyone to get involved in forming this group, as well as sharing their thoughts and ideas throughout the process. Stay tuned for an opportunity to hear more on the development of this team. Please feel free to call us with any questions or ideas you may have. ☞

**We Wish You  
All Safe and  
Happy  
Holidays!**

## Welcome to Chesapeake Solutions

Welcome to the third issue of Chesapeake Solutions, EDF's bi-monthly newsletter about our work in the Chesapeake Bay. This newsletter is designed to help keep you informed and up to date on all of the developments regarding our work in the region, including the Blue Crab Fishery Management project.

We look forward to continued collaboration with all of the watermen with whom we've worked to date, along with those we've yet to meet, as we explore the future possibilities for alternative fisheries management in the Chesapeake Bay. Please don't hesitate to contact us, Matt Mullin or Kate Culzoni, at any time.

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## Resources

[www.edf.org](http://www.edf.org)

[www.edf.org/catchsharesnet](http://www.edf.org/catchsharesnet)

[www.edf.org/catchsharedesigncenter](http://www.edf.org/catchsharedesigncenter)

[www.marylandwatermen.com](http://www.marylandwatermen.com)

[www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/)

[www.calvertwatermen.org/](http://www.calvertwatermen.org/)

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## Dynamic New Resource Available for Maryland Watermen

Increasingly, fishery managers and fishermen are looking to catch shares as a locally-designed solution to failed fisheries management (about 275 programs already exist worldwide in fisheries large and small). In considering new options for management of the blue crab fishery, catch share management is one possibility.

Now, Maryland watermen have a dynamic new resource – the online **Catch Share Design Center** ([edf.org/catchsharedesigncenter](http://edf.org/catchsharedesigncenter)) – that aims to help improve understanding of catch share programs around the world. The Center offers several tools and resources:

- The **Catch Share Design Manual**, which is the first-ever comprehensive overview and roadmap through the catch share design process. The Design Manual draws on hundreds of fisheries in over 30 countries and expertise from over 60 fishery experts from around the world.

- The **global database of catch share fisheries** allows users to explore and understand the design elements and characteristics for 275 catch share programs worldwide. The database is dynamic, being updated regularly, including with information from viewers or other experts.
- The **directory of resources** serves as a forum for catch share experts and businesses to connect with fishery managers and fishermen engaged in catch share design and implementation.
- **Go Fish, No Fish** is a game-oriented teaching tool that illustrates the differences in conventional fishery management and catch shares.

We encourage you to visit the online Catch Share Design Center and let us know if you have any questions or would like to request a printed copy of the Design Manual. 

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## Fishermen from Pacific Trawl Fishery Work to Ensure Smooth Management Transition

Starting next year on January 1, 2011, the West Coast groundfish trawl fishery will begin operating under a new catch share management program. After a federal buyback in 2003, there are roughly 175 permits left in the fishery and about 120 active boats. The fishery value has fluctuated over the past several years from about \$60 million to \$80 million including both whiting and traditional groundfish. After a seven year process, fishermen have led the way with a major shift in how West Coast trawlers – and other fishery stakeholders – will conduct their business.

Modeled after catch share programs in British Columbia, the new management system is meant to bring more flexibility and accountability to the trawl fishery by assigning fishermen individual catch quotas. Compared to trip limit management, which trawlers have been using since 1994, this new management plan is expected to clean up trawling practices by significantly reducing bycatch among other things and give fishermen more control of their trade.

Nearly a decade ago, West Coast trawling industry leaders realized they needed a better approach to fishing, so they formed committees under the guidance of the Pacific Fishery Management Council to find a better management plan. Those fishermen ultimately settled on catch shares as the best approach to remedy problems in the fishery. However, participants had concerns throughout the process, especially due to

exceptionally low allocations of some rebuilding species (due to MSA rebuilding timeline requirements) and the cost of observer coverage on the fleet.

As projected allocations for overfished species continue to decrease (based in part on a lawsuit claiming rebuilding timelines were too generous), fishermen began to rethink the reality of the catch share system. Instead of throwing up their hands, the fleet came together and held a workshop on catch shares, which was co-sponsored by all of the major trade organizations in the fishery. The idea was to ensure that the transition to the new management system could be made as smoothly as possible by all fishermen. Over half the Pacific trawl fleet was in attendance to discuss issues ranging from regulatory rules, opportunities to minimize costs, how to avoid constraining stocks, and business planning to help increase revenue.

Similar to the Pacific, Maryland watermen have an opportunity lead a design process that can improve crabbing businesses in the Bay. Examples like this one demonstrate that great things can be accomplished when watermen come together to find solutions for the future of their fishery.

Links to videos from the workshop can be found at: <http://fnonlinenews.blogspot.com/2010/11/west-coast-trawlers-prepare-for.html> 