



EDF Works With Maryland Watermen to Find Solutions for the Blue Crab Fishery

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) is a non-profit organization committed to finding ways that work to tackle the most serious environmental concerns. EDF's Oceans team is committed to helping fishermen rebuild, recover and renew their fisheries and communities by using innovative market-based approaches to fishery management. These innovative solutions give watermen a stake in the management of their fisheries while increasing profits for fishing businesses and creating incentives to conserve the natural resource.

In 2009, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources contracted EDF to help facilitate an industry-led process to explore possible alternative ways to manage the Chesapeake blue crab fishery. Our approach and full intention is to assist Chesapeake watermen in this process. Over the past nine months, we have organized watermen trips to British Columbia and the Gulf of Mexico, and facilitated ten listening sessions hosted by local industry leaders

throughout Maryland. These sessions offered watermen an opportunity to discuss current challenges in the blue crab fishery, learn from and ask questions of fishermen from other States who have led changes in their fishery management structures, and begin to think about ways to improve management here in Maryland.

Our immediate next steps are to continue to meet and listen to watermen around the state, traveling to communities as needed and requested. As mentioned, we intend this process to be inclusive and transparent, and we are eager to hear from you. We will also conduct the economic analysis, as discussed in this newsletter, starting with a survey mailed to each active blue crab license holder. And finally, we will continue to work with the industry to implement a process that supports you, the watermen community, in designing improvements to blue crab management that result in increased economic returns for you and a healthy, sustainable resource. 

Introducing Chesapeake Solutions

Welcome to the first 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

www.edf.org/catchsharesnet

www.marylandwatermen.com

www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/

www.calvertwatermen.org/

Community Listening Sessions Provide EDF with Watermen Insight

Over the past nine months, EDF facilitated ten successful community listening sessions in various locations across the Bay region. Attendance has been strong with nearly 400 watermen participating in the sessions, representing a cross-section of the industry. Each session has provided Maryland watermen the opportunity to learn from and ask questions of visiting fishermen from Alaska, New England and the Gulf of Mexico who work under various forms of alternative management systems. These visiting fishermen shared critical information with Maryland watermen, offering further insight to the current challenges and opportunities Chesapeake watermen face.

EDF worked with Maryland watermen leaders who graciously volunteered to serve as hosts and help guide each session. During each session, discussions mostly focused on how alternative management can be designed to meet particular fishermen goals such as avoiding consolidation of shares and ensuring opportunities for new entrants. Often repeated concerns included the need to: (1) build a more trusting relationship with DNR Fisheries Service; (2) consider the complexities of the blue crab fishery and market; (3) increase coordination throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay; (4) encourage access, fairness and equality; (5) address issues like water pollution and



Maryland Watermen hear from a panel of fishermen from the Gulf of Mexico, Alaska, New England and other regions who fish under alternative management systems.

recreational fishing; and (6) develop a management system that has flexibility and predictability for blue crab businesses and watermen communities in Maryland. The dialogue was always very helpful for EDF staff and the session evaluations and follow-up discussions all indicated that the majority of attending watermen felt the sessions were educational and worthwhile.

Moving forward, EDF is eager to continue to collaborate with watermen to help educate and consider if and how such alternative management structures might be of value for Chesapeake fisheries. We are eager to discuss this project with any interested watermen whenever and wherever is most convenient. 🌊

Economic Survey Provides Critical Information and Raises Questions

In the past month, many watermen have received a blue crab economic survey in the mail from EDF. This survey is a tool to gather relevant information on blue crab businesses in Maryland so EDF can determine precisely how management changes impact the economic value of the blue crab fishery.

Blue Crab Project Manager, Kate Culzoni, has had the opportunity to talk with many watermen in the past few weeks about the survey and issues with blue crab management. Here are a few commonly asked questions on the survey.

Why are you asking for personal information?

The economic health of the blue crab fishery is largely unknown. DNR and other organizations do not collect information that can measure the investment, infrastructure and profitability in the fishery. Watermen need the best information to understand how management affects the economic health of their industry. This survey can help watermen come up with lasting solutions for the industry and the fishery.

Is the survey confidential?

Yes. EDF purposely left off any identifier, barcode or unique ID that would link watermen's responses back to their names because of the sensitive information requested. All information gathered through the surveys will be completely anonymous, ensuring complete confidentiality.

How can people see the results of the survey?

Individual responses will be summarized together and made into a presentation that can be sent to those interested and/or presented to watermen groups in your community.

We have received over 250 surveys and the more we receive the more complete the information will be, so please send yours in today if you have not already done so. Thank you. 🌊