



Our Work with Maryland Watermen Continues

Some members of EDF's Chesapeake team have had the opportunity to go out crabbing this past month to continue to learn from Maryland watermen. This time spent with individual watermen was incredibly important to us to continue learning and listening about the fishery, the waterman business, and waterman life. Throughout, we heard a common message, articulated best by a crabber one morning at sunrise: "You know, crabbing isn't just a livelihood for us; it's a way of life."

As the waterman and his crew fished his pots, he continued to talk about the routine of a waterman and a blue crabber on the Chesapeake. He explained how the basic need to be on the water – working every day – has and would remain core to his life. His words reiterated why we, at EDF, think it is crucial to have industry participation lead this blue crab project and make sure future management improves the health of the fishery and the health of the industry.

This fall, EDF will begin working with a team of watermen in designing what that future management could look like. This process will start with convening a representative group of commercial watermen from around the state that will drive the design of a proposed management structure for the blue crab fishery.

“Crabbing isn't just a livelihood for us; it's a way of life.”

Members of the industry-led design team will meet regularly over the course of the next year to discuss and think about different management elements that can improve the fishery from a business and resource standpoint. This next step is an exciting milestone for this project and we look forward to being a part of this process. As always, please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. 

Welcome to Chesapeake Solutions

Welcome to the second 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.

EDF Contact Information

Matt Mullin
Chesapeake Bay Director
(617) 756-7266
mmullin@edf.org

Kate Culzoni
Blue Crab Project Manager
(919) 986-2662
kculzoni@edf.org

Resources

www.edf.org

www.edf.org/catchsharesnet

www.marylandwatermen.com

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

www.calvertwatermen.org/

Blue Crab Economic Survey Results In

Over the past few months, many watermen have received a request to complete an anonymous economic survey that will help provide valuable information back to the industry on management impacts for the blue crab fishery. All those pesky notifications and never ending pleas to complete the survey have come to an end and the results are in.

Over 625 watermen returned their survey, a 31 percent response rate. Not only did we receive important information from respondents, but we also had the opportunity to talk to many watermen over the phone, via email and in person. We received numerous comments that provided helpful suggestions, further explanation from answers, and raised concerns and issues with the survey.

We thank you once again for taking the time to complete the survey. Use this web link (http://www.edf.org/documents/11340_md-watermen-survey.pdf) to see the summarized results of the survey, question by question. As always, please feel free to email or call us with comments and feedback on the results. 

Key Survey Takeaways

- 40% of respondents (all with recorded landings at some point since 2004) reported they were not actively crabbing in 2009;
- The vast majority (87%) of respondents were over the age of 40;
- A high diversity reported in gear usage, location, market, crab type, level of activity and business operations;
- Although the majority of crabbers also target other species besides crabs, the majority of revenue is generated from blue crab fishery.

Round Two of Community Sessions Includes Money Talk

EDF staff will conduct a second set of community meetings throughout the fall to continue its work with the commercial fishing industry in the Chesapeake. These meetings serve to give watermen the opportunity to play an active roll in the industry-led process to design an alternative way to manage the Chesapeake blue crab fishery.

During the meetings, we will gather feedback and industry knowledge that hasn't yet been captured in the analysis to date, and present the developing economic picture of the blue crab fishery based on information received from industry and managers.

"I have had the opportunity to talk with hundreds of watermen about our economic project, including the survey, and they have provided me with an immense amount of information. The industry knows best so I look forward to sharing it with the communities to hear their thoughts, concerns and ideas with what we have captured so far," says Kate Culzoni, blue crab project manager.

Over the next few months, look for our team to come out to your community and meet with watermen groups. Please let us know if you are interested in helping organize a meeting in your area. A notification of dates and times will be sent out beforehand. 



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.