

Blue Crab Industry Advisory Committee
3/5/14 meeting summary

At the 3/5/14 committee meeting we discussed that with last year's low abundance of crabs and this year's below average winter temperature increasing the likelihood of overwintering blue crab mortality there is the potential for the abundance of blue crabs estimated from the Bay Wide Winter Dredge Survey to decline to a level that additional reductions in mature females may be needed. All of us hope this is not the case, but the committee took on the task of making recommendations for how those reductions could happen. The committee drafted two mature female bushel limit options that resulted in an additional 10% reduction in mature female harvest from 2013. The committee used the bushel limit model that was originally developed for the committee to draft bushel limits for an overall crab abundance in the 400,000,000 million range. At that level of abundance the goal was for the bushel limits to equal 100% of the allowable harvest. Last year's decline in abundance resulted in the need for a 10% reduction in harvest and the committee used the same model to draft bushel limits that results in 90% of the what would have been allowed to be harvested in the higher abundance level. At this meeting the committee used the same bushel limit model to develop options for what could be termed a "worse case scenario" where blue crab abundance drops to the point an additional 10% reduction in the harvest of mature females from 2013 would be needed. To accomplish that the committee's goal was bushel limits that would result in a harvest that is 80% of the allowable harvest at the 400,000,000 blue crab abundance level. This is the reason all of the draft options below have a max total harvest of 80%.

Table 1 is the 2013 bushel limits

Table 2 is the bushel limit option for reduced harvest that includes an April 1 to April 15 closure for the harvest of mature females.

Table 3 is the bushel limit option for reduced harvest where harvest for both males and females begins April 1.

It didn't occur to me when we working on the bushel limits in Table 3 that the without the April 1-15 closure the 2014 season would have started with the 2013 bushel limits and revisions would not be made until we had the results of the Winter Dredge Survey. Therefore the April bushel limits should have been LCC2, CB3 5, CB6 10, & CB9 18 instead of starting with the reduced April limits from the option in Table 2. I apologize for that oversight and have included two additional examples in Tables 4 & 5 that have the status quo bushel limits in April. The bushel limits that are different from the committee's draft option in Table 3 are in red.

Please remember that you must get back to me by Friday 3/14 on whether you want to start the season with the April 1-15 closure for mature females or not. You can email, bkdavis@dnr.state.md.us or call 410-260-8267 with your vote. Please don't hesitate to call or email if you have questions or concerns.

Brenda

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Table 1 - 2013 Bushel limits

| | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov |
|------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| LCC | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| CB3 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 14 | 15 | 7 |
| CB6 | 10 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 21 | 22 | 18 |
| CB9 | 18 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 29 | 30 | 28 |
| % | 2.5% | 5.5% | 11.6% | 19.7% | 33.9% | 58.2% | 85.0% | 90.0% |

Table 2 - **Draft** 2014 “Worst case scenario” option 1 – April 1 to April 15 closure for mature females.

| | April 15-30 | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov |
|------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| LCC | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| CB3 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 6 |
| CB6 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 17 | 18 | 17 |
| CB9 | 12 | 10 | 9 | 12 | 12 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| % | 1.0% | 4.8% | 10.5% | 18.3% | 31.7% | 53.4% | 76.3% | 80.0% |

Table 3 - **Draft** 2014 “Worst case scenario” option 2 – no April closure

| | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov |
|------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| LCC | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| CB3 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 6 |
| CB6 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 17 | 18 | 17 |
| CB9 | 12 | 10 | 9 | 12 | 12 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| % | 2.0% | 4.8% | 10.5% | 18.3% | 31.7% | 52.7% | 75.4% | 80.0% |

Table 4 – **Example 1** of an alternative option for “worst case scenario” with no April closure starting the season with 2013 bushel limits (reduced bushel limits begin May 1).

| | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov |
|------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| LCC | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| CB3 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 6 |
| CB6 | 10 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 15 | 16 | 15 |
| CB9 | 18 | 9 | 9 | 12 | 12 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| % | 2.5% | 5.1% | 10.8% | 18.6% | 32.0% | 53.0% | 75.4% | 80.0% |

Table 5 – **Example 2** of an alternative option for “worst case scenario” with no April closure starting the season with 2013 bushel limits (reduced bushel limits begin May 1).

| | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov |
|------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| LCC | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| CB3 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 6 |
| CB6 | 10 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 15 | 16 | 15 |
| CB9 | 18 | 9 | 9 | 12 | 12 | 24 | 25 | 24 |
| % | 2.5% | 5.2% | 11.0% | 18.7% | 32.2% | 53.0% | 75.4% | 80.0% |

3/20/14

Committee input summary

18 of the 21 committee members attended the 3/5/14 meeting

12 members provided input on options for the start date for the mature female fishery

4 members chose an April 15th start date

8 members chose an April 1st start date