

Emilie Franke¹, Andrew Turner²

¹Chesapeake Research Consortium-Chesapeake Bay Program, Annapolis, MD; ²Versar Inc., NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office, Annapolis, MD

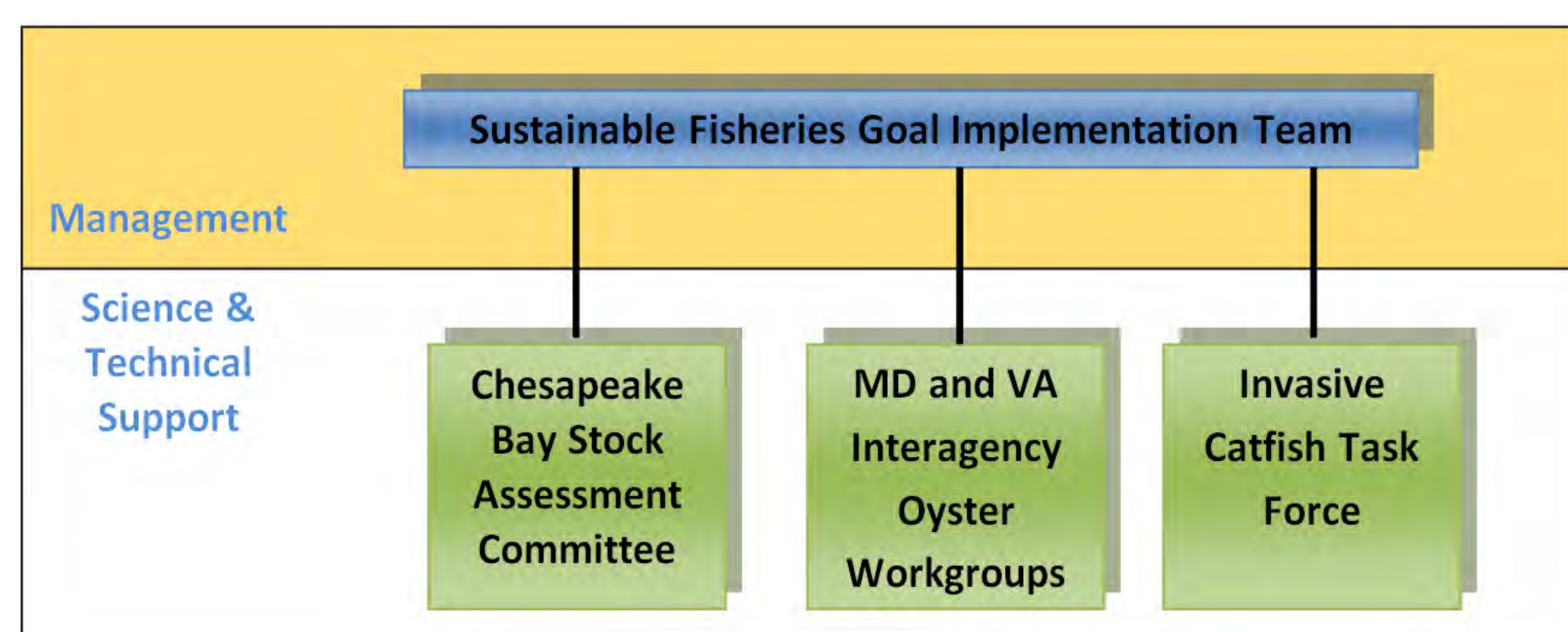
Chesapeake Bay Program

The Chesapeake Bay was the first estuary in the nation targeted by Congress for restoration and protection. The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) is a regional partnership that brings together leaders and experts from a broad range of federal, state, local, and nonprofit organizations to achieve a shared vision of a healthy Bay. 2014 marks the signing of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement that outlines specific goals and outcomes that will guide the CBP through 2025.



Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team

The Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (Fisheries GIT) facilitates fisheries management that supports sustainable Chesapeake Bay fish populations, maintains viable recreational and commercial fisheries, and promotes natural ecosystem function. The team is a diverse set of jurisdictional managers, scientists, and stakeholders who participate in management discussions based on scientific recommendations from issue-specific, need-based workgroups.



Science-Supported Management

The Chesapeake Bay provides critical habitat and serves as a spawning and nursery ground for fish and shellfish species that support major commercial and recreational fisheries both in the Bay and along the Atlantic coast. The Fisheries GIT meets regularly to discuss results of the latest research on Bay species and related ecosystem interactions. The Fisheries GIT considers the Baywide implications of this research and how it can inform fisheries management decisions that effectively restore, maintain, and protect fish and shellfish species and associated fisheries.

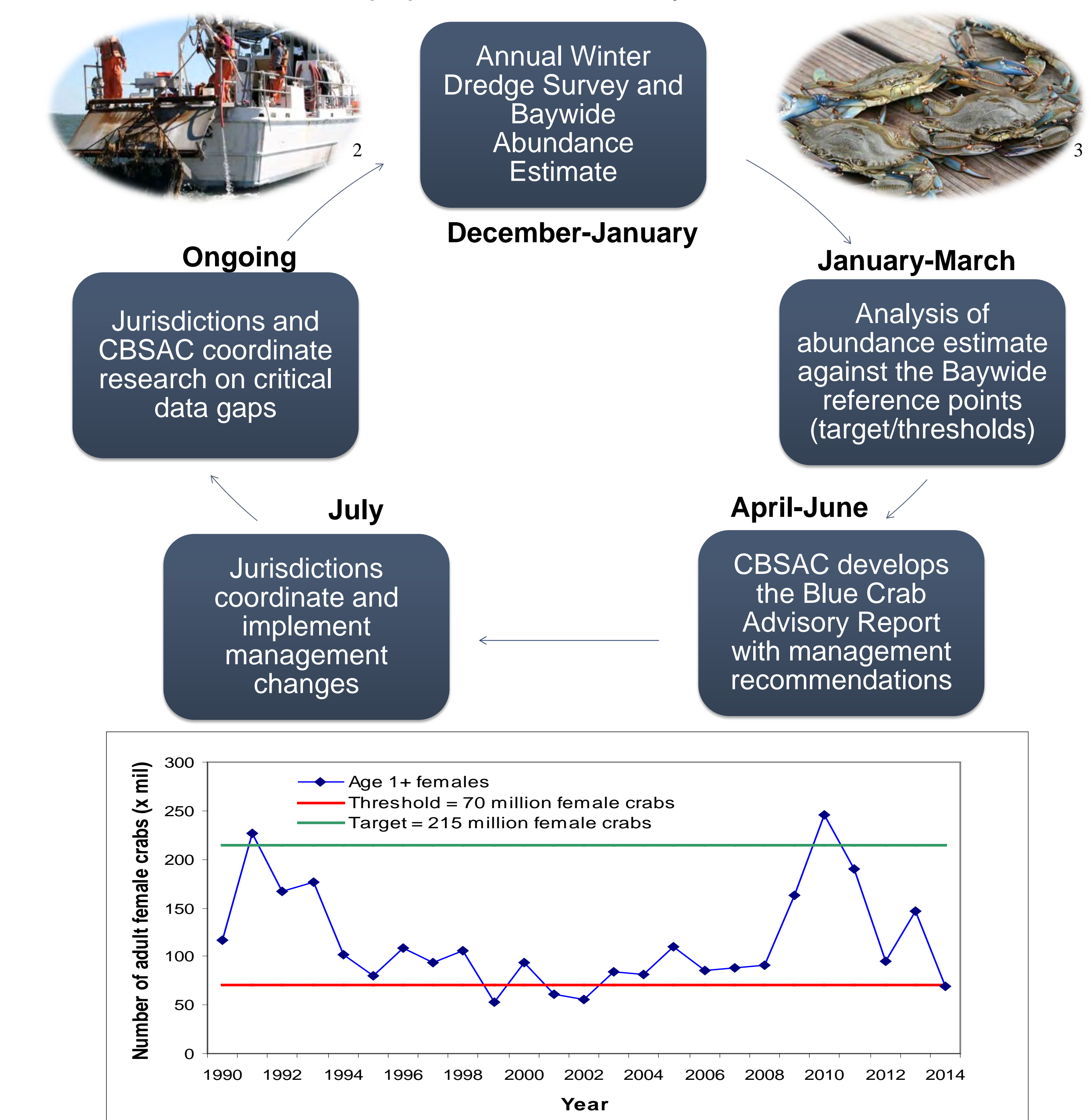


Fishery Management Jurisdictions in the Chesapeake Bay and Tributaries

1. District Department of the Environment
2. Maryland Department of Natural Resources
3. Potomac River Fisheries Commission
4. Virginia Marine Resources Commission
5. Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
6. Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Blue Crab: Interjurisdictional Management Example

Blue crabs in the Chesapeake Bay are managed by three jurisdictions: Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission. The Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee (CBSAC) coordinates annual data analysis and provides management recommendations for the blue crab stock. As a result of this coordination, all three jurisdictions have been operating under Baywide female-specific reference points since 2012. Aligning their management approaches both bolsters the blue crab fishery and promotes a sustainable blue crab population in the Bay.



Benefits of Coordinated Blue Crab Management

- Ensures the best available science is used with similar, repeatable data collection and analysis methods applied across all jurisdictions.
- Promotes collaborative research efforts and combined resources to address critical management-driven questions.
- Allows consideration of population dynamics, distribution and movement, and estimates of various sources of mortality.
- Fosters the consideration of ecosystem factors such as habitat loss, predation, and water quality and associated impacts on blue crabs.

Contact Information and Image Credits
Emilie Franke, emilie.franke@noaa.gov; Andrew Turner, andrew.turner@noaa.gov

All images are courtesy of the Chesapeake Bay Program unless otherwise noted. The Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee annual reports are published by the Chesapeake Bay Program.

¹Photo credit: Blair M. Seltz/Chesapeake Bay Foundation Staff

²Photo credit: David Malmquist, Virginia Institute of Marine Science

³Photo credit: Tonya Lane Rucker/Flickr