

INVASIVE CATFISH OF THE CHESAPEAKE

“They are here to Stay”





Margined Madtom



Yellow Bullhead



Brown Bullhead



White Catfish



Tadpole Madtom

Native Catfish

Nonnative
Naturalized
Catfish



Channel Catfish



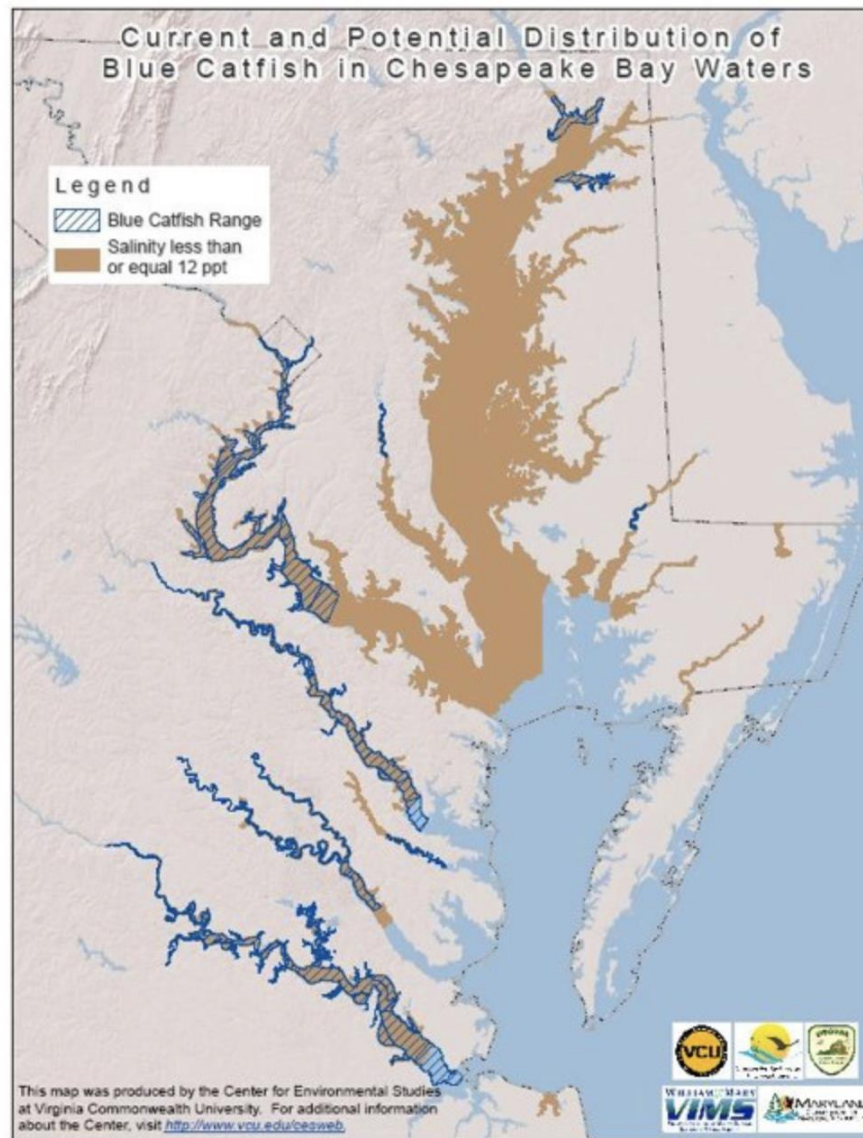
Nonnative Invasive Catfish

Blue & Flathead Catfish Synopsis

What Do We Know?

- They are long lived (20 Years of age>)
- They attain a large size (can exceed 100 pounds)
- They have few predators
- Blue Catfish are opportunistic predators feeding across the spectrum of the food web (mollusks to crabs and fish)
- Flathead Catfish prefer to feed on fish
- Blue Catfish have spread throughout the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries
- Flathead Catfish remain mostly within the upper reaches of several Bay tributaries

Potential Habitat in Chesapeake Bay



And.....

- Sport fishermen love to catch Blue and Flathead Catfish
- Catfish ~30" < are safe to eat
- Commercial fishermen have developed a year round fishery for Blue Catfish
- Commercial markets have steadily grown and stabilized in recent years
- Covid impacts have paradoxically favored wild catfish markets
- Through the Chesapeake Bay Program, an Invasive Catfish Work Group has been making excellent progress expanding knowledge and research



Invasive Catfish Workgroup



But.....

- The transfer of inspection authority from the FDA to USDA limits processing capability, and may potentially negatively impact markets
- There are numerous research gaps in our understanding of the ecological and economic impacts of the invasion of Blue & Flathead Catfish in Chesapeake Bay

Therefore.....

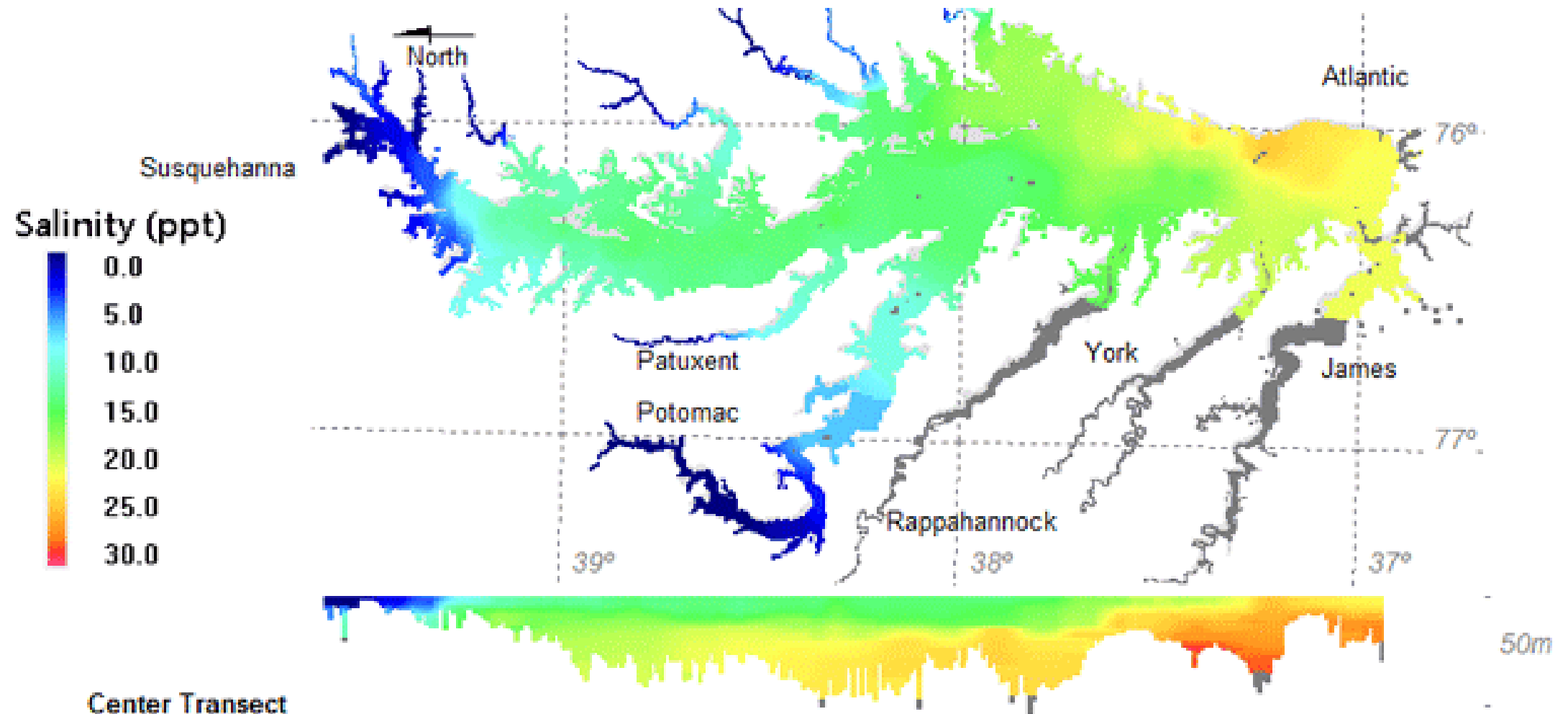
There is Uncertainty Regarding
Ecological & Economic Impacts

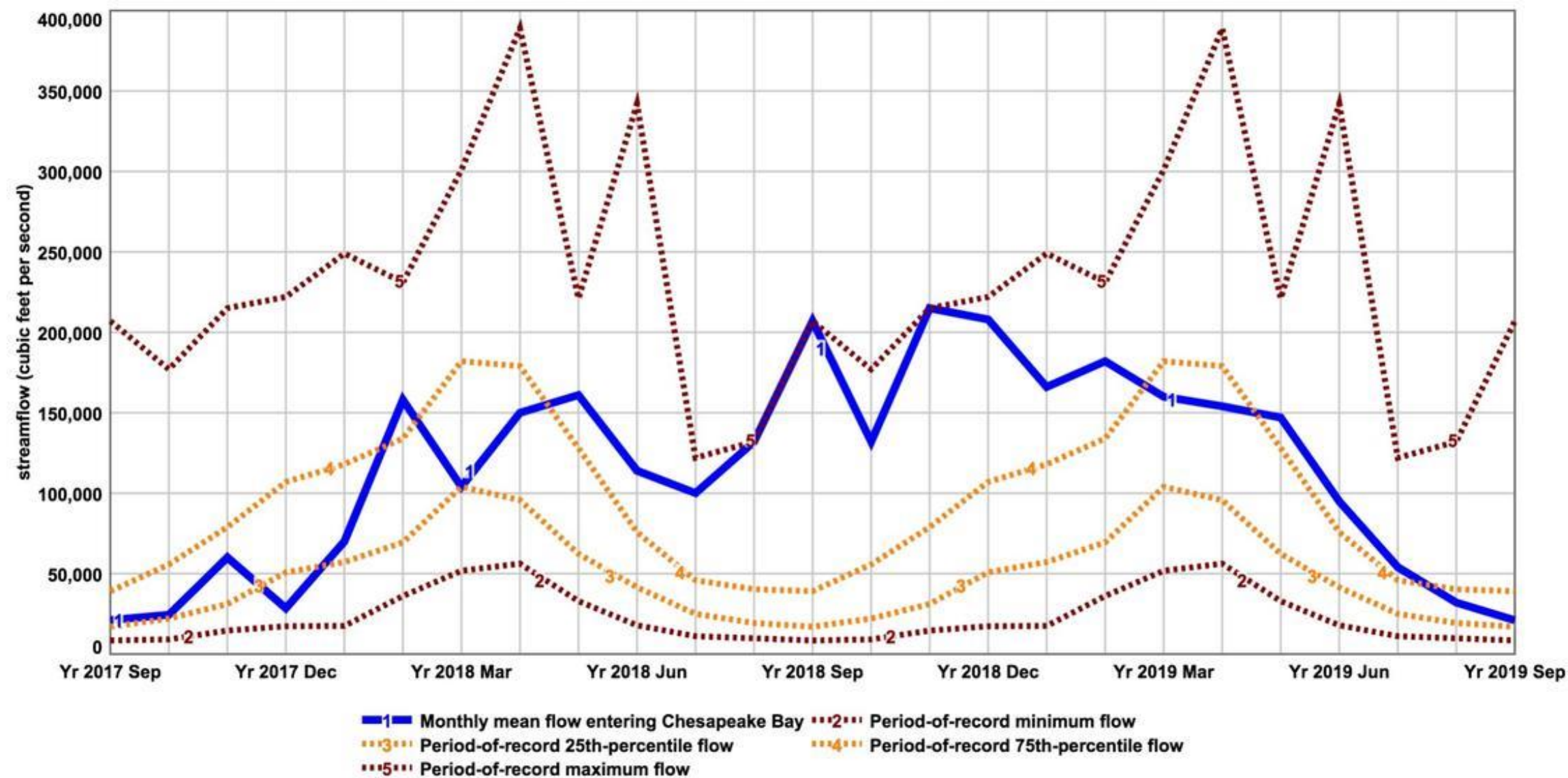


Questions & Discussion

Chesapeake Bay Salinity

September 2017 Cruise - Sep 11, 2017-Sep 27, 2017





Beyond being popular with anglers, channel catfish also support a \$450 million/year aquaculture industry in the US, with most catfish being raised in earthen ponds in Mississippi (mostly in the Mississippi Delta), Arkansas, Louisiana, and Alabama

Catfish is the leading aquaculture industry in the United States. Commercial catfish production generates over 27 percent of the value of aquaculture production in the United States. From the first commercial production in ponds in the 1960s, catfish production has grown to reach annual sales of roughly 319 million pounds in 2016. Mississippi leads the U.S. in production with 34,700 acres in July 2017.

Catfish growers in US grow mostly channel catfish and some hybrids sales of \$360 million [2018] —top 4 States (Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, and Texas) accounted for 95 percent of US sales.