

Crabs, Oysters & Striped Bass: Status and Management

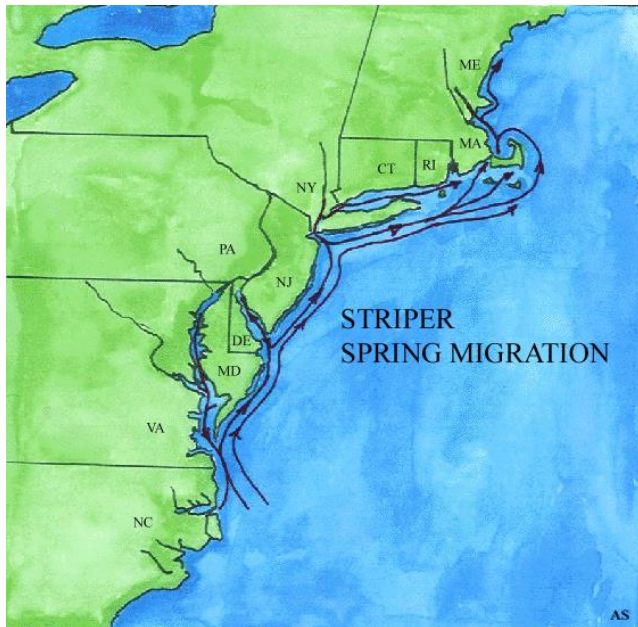
Bill Goldsborough & Chris Moore
Chesapeake Bay Commission
September 4, 2014



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Striped Bass: looming challenge for a shared fishery



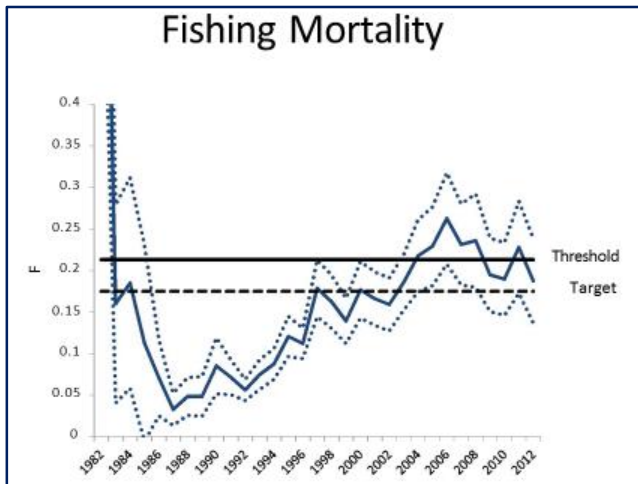
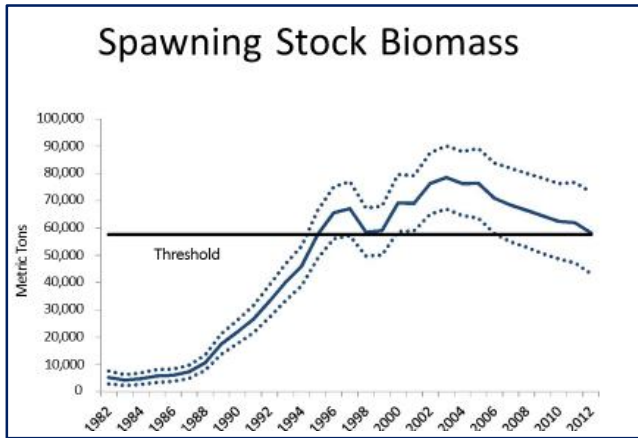
- Chesapeake stripers migrate through 12 states' waters and are 75% of the coastwide catch
- “range-wide” approach needed
- states collaborate on a coastwide management plan through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)
- key differences between the Bay and the coast
- elevated mortality in Chesapeake Bay → poor nutrition/water quality



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Striped Bass: the science & the management options



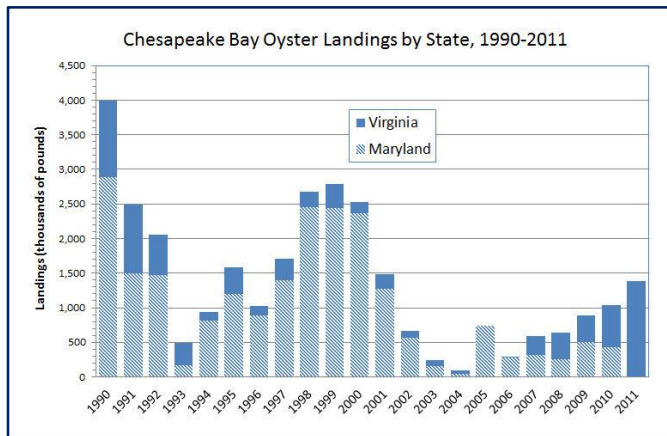
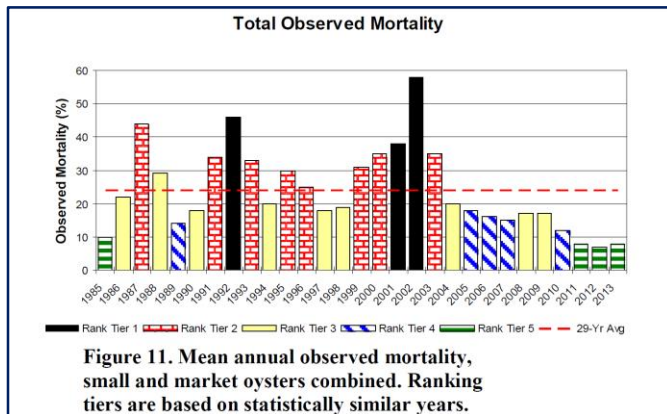
- latest assessment: not overfished, and overfishing not occurring
- however, the SSB has declined for 10 years to the threshold level and is projected to drop below it this year
- ASMFC plan to bring F to the target level includes 3 main options:
 - 25% cutback in 2015
 - 17% cutback for three years
 - 7% sequential cutback over three years
- no separate reference points for the Bay; other plan challenges
- public hearings this month



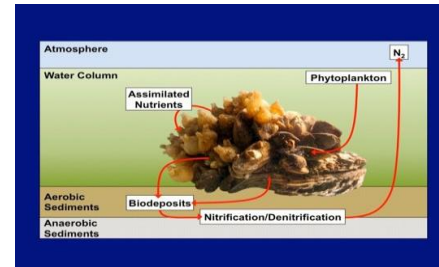
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A Positive Outlook for Oysters



- 10 years of good survival due to weather + ↑ disease resistance
- total landings have tripled the last three years, especially aquaculture
- Bay Agreement consensus on focused tributary restoration
- strong state & federal funding
- recent research documented substantial N-removal potential



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OYSTERS

Oysters Restoration Challenges



- poor water quality; algae blooms >> dead zone
- lack of shell/alternative substrates; reef relief
- uncertain funding future
- different restoration approaches
- poaching



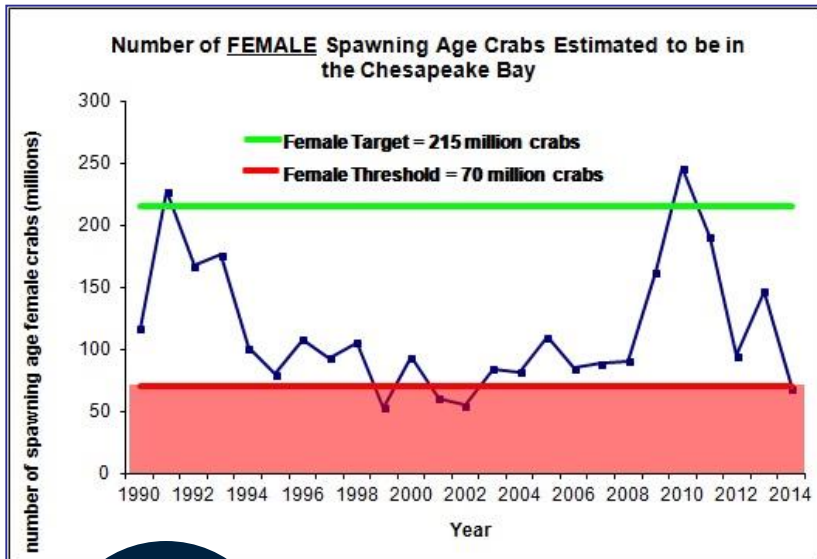
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Not Such a Positive Outlook for Crabs



- crab harvests lowest on record
- number of females down significantly from 2013
- number of juveniles up from 2013
- total number of crabs about the same at 2013



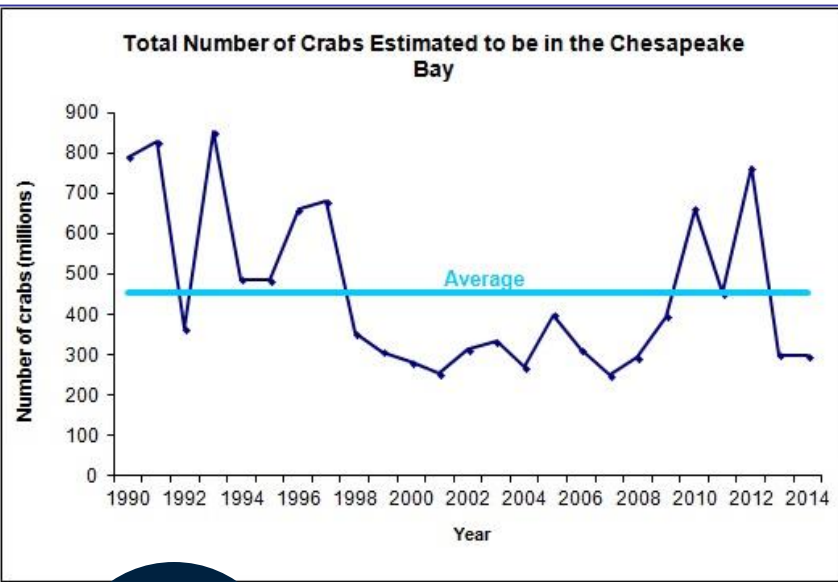
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BLUE CRABS

How to Improve the Outlook for Crabs



- 2014 Harvest Reductions
- revised harvest season
- better harvest reporting
- evaluation of current sanctuary strategy
- implementation of individual quotas
- management triggers
- Bay Agreement commitment to evaluate quotas



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BLUE CRABS

Questions?



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