

# Blue crab research funds slashed

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The federal government cut a \$4 million fund to increase blue crabs in Chesapeake Bay, sending Baltimore researchers scrambling to continue the program.

Crab harvests fell from 48 million pounds in 1991 to 28 million pounds last year, the Baltimore Sun said. The program raises crabs in a hatchery then traces migration in the bay.

The project, run by the Center of Marine Biotechnology at the Inner Harbor in Baltimore, has received \$15 million in federal funding since 2002, but its allocation dropped to zero for 2008.

"We were all surprised that such a program that delivered so much on the investment was cut," the center's director, Yonathan Zohar, told the Sun. "There is no other way to conduct this type of program other than to get this type of federal funding. ... And for the blue crab, it was so well-deserved because we wanted to do something before it was too late."

The center has funding to continue work until the end of 2008 and will seek alternative solutions, Zohar said.

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