

Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission Meeting Minutes

October 01, 2015

The following constitute minutes of the
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission Meeting
and are not a verbatim transcript of the proceedings.

Audio files of the meetings are kept at the
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
2000 Quail Drive
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808.

For more information, call (225) 765-2806

AGENDA

- I. Call to order
- II. Roll call
- III. Approval of minutes from last meeting
- IV. Commission Special Announcements / Personal Privilege
- V. To hear Enforcement Reports September 2015 Lt Col Martin
- VI. To recognize the Archery in Louisiana Schools (ALAS) Award Winning National Tournament Participants Robert Stroede
- VII. To hear a presentation on the 2015 Red Snapper Season data Joey Shepard
- VIII. To Consider a Declaration of Emergency to Amend the season dates for the Falconry Seasons for Ducks, Rails and Gallinules Larry Reynolds
- IX. To hear a summary of the public meetings comments and recommended options for Waterfowl Hunting Zones and Splits Larry Reynolds
- X. To consider dedicating and expending ten (10) percent of the licensing fees dedicated for the development and preservation of breeding grounds for migratory waterfowl pursuant to La. R.S.56:104 (A)(1)(b).
- XI. Set February 2016 Meeting Date
- XII. Receive Public Comments
- XIII. Adjournment

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Commission was called to order at 9:30AM on October 1, 2015 in Baton Rouge, LA by Chairman, Pat Manuel.

II. Roll Call

Wendy Brogdon conducted a roll call. The following persons were present:

Pat Manuel

Dan Davis

Billy Broussard

Ronnie Graham

Chad Courville

Bart Yakupzack

Secretary Barham

III. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 3, 2015 meeting were prepared by Wendy Brogdon and distributed.

Chairman Manuel called for approval

A motion was made by Commissioner Broussard and seconded by Commissioner Davis. Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the motion passed.

The minutes were unanimously approved

IV. Commission Special Announcements / Personal Privilege

Commissioner Broussard requested that Agenda Item “X. *To consider dedicating and expending ten (10) percent of the licensing fees dedicated for the development and preservation of breeding grounds for migratory waterfowl pursuant to La. R.S.56:104 (A)(1)(b).*” be moved up on the agenda following item XI.

Chairman Manuel approved the request. A motion was made by Commissioner Broussard and Seconded by Commissioner Graham with unanimous approval; Fred Whitrock informed the Commission that a Motion and vote were not needed for this move.

V. Enforcement Reports: September 2015
Lt. Col Sammy Martin, LDWF Enforcement

Enforcement Case Report:

Written Citations: 410
Written Warnings: 302
Public Assistance: 29

Monthly Boating Crash / Incident Report:	<u>Month</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Boating Incidents:	10	92
Number of Injuries:	5	53
Number of Fatalities:	1	13

News Releases:

LDWF Agent Rescues Eight People from Gulf of Mexico

A Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division agent rescued eight people from the Gulf of Mexico on Sept. 6 in Vermilion Parish.

Sgt. Nicholas Guillory received a call from dispatch around 1 p.m. on Sept. 6 of a vessel that recently launched at Rollover Landing near Pecan Island taking on water. He made contact with the vessel occupants who said they travelled south in Rollover Bayou and were in the Gulf of Mexico when a storm kicked up producing high seas and lots of wind. Sgt. Guillory was able to get to the location where Rollover Bayou met the Gulf of Mexico in the pouring rain when he spotted one individual in the mud up to his waist. He was able to pull him from the mud and get him in his boat.

Sgt. Guillory then noticed two other individuals in a vessel that was taking on water and managed to get those two in his boat. He also towed their boat safely back to the inside part of the canal and out of the rough seas of the Gulf of Mexico.

Knowing that the three individuals he brought safely to the inside waters were not the original people that needed help, Sgt. Guillory went back into the Gulf of Mexico. He traveled about a mile west and found two more vessels in trouble. One of the vessels was completely beached and the other was completely under water.

Sgt. Guillory was able to grab two of the individuals from the sunken vessel and put them in his vessel. The three people from the beached vessel were on the beach.

Sgt. Guillory then hooked his vessel up to the beached vessel and was able to pull the vessel back into the water. The vessel started up and he put two of the people on land in that vessel. Sgt. Guillory then towed the sunken vessel to a position to get enough water out so that it could float enough to be towed to inside waters. The last person on shore got in Sgt. Guillory's vessel.

In total Sgt. Guillory was able to rescue eight people and recover three vessels safely and get them back to the boat launch in Rollover Bayou.

Three Men Cited for Tuna Violations in Plaquemines Parish

On Sept. 9, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) agents cited three men for alleged commercial tuna violations in Plaquemines Parish.

While on a Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) patrol in conjunction with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service, LDWF agents made contact with James A. Gerakines, 41, and Charles Updegraff, 52, both of Chalmette, and Perry Menesses, 58, of St. Bernard. The men were on the commercial fishing vessel "Jasmine" in the area of Tiger Pass located in Venice.

During a federal fish inspection the men were found to be in possession of numerous skipjack and yellowfin tuna. After a lengthy investigation agents determined that Gerakines intended to sell the tuna upon return to Venice.

When the investigation was completed agents determined no federal commercial highly migratory species (HMS) permit was on board or issued for the vessel in question or captain and of the eight yellowfin tuna on board six were under the minimum size limit of 27 inches. All three men were charged with failing to comply with taking or possessing tuna without the required commercial HMS permit and taking or possessing under sized yellowfin tuna. Each of the two charges carries up to a \$350 fine and 60 days in jail.

Additionally the men face civil restitution charges for the illegally taken tuna totaling \$1,290.20. Agents seized a total of 285 pounds of tuna and donated it to a local homeless shelter.

Six Men Charged for Taking Polluted Oysters

A Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Enforcement Division agent cited six men for alleged oyster violations in Terrebonne and LaFourche parishes.

On Sept. 18, LDWF Sgt. Bryan Marie cited Dustin M. Buquet, 18, Richardo Najera-Morales, 25, and Cline J. Ledet, 29, all from Chauvin, for taking oysters from an unapproved polluted area in Bay Antoine in Terrebonne Parish.

On Sept. 22, the agent cited Dillon J. Verdin, 23, from Cutoff, Alexei B. Vargas, 21, and Holden D. Verdin, 21, both from Houma, for taking oysters from an unapproved polluted area in Bayou Faleau in LaFourche Parish. Both areas are closed by Department of Health and Hospitals due to pollution. Both vessels were found with 15 sacks of oysters on board. Sgt. Marie seized the vessels, oyster dredges and returned 30 sacks of oysters to the water.

Taking oysters from a polluted area brings a \$900 to \$950 fine and up to 120 days in jail.

VI. To recognize the Archery in Louisiana Schools (ALAS) Award Winning National Tournament Participants

Robert Stroede, LDWF Shooting Sports Coordinator and State Coordinator for the Archery in Louisiana Schools Program

Archery in Louisiana Schools Program (ALAS) is a member of the National archery in the schools program which teaches international target archery to students in grades 4-12. The National Archery in Schools Program or NASP began in Kentucky in late 2001 and has since spread to 47 states, 8 Canadian Provinces, South Africa, New Zealand, Mongolia, UK, British Virgin Islands and Australia. Since its inception 13 years ago the NASP program has positively affected the lives of over 13 million students and is in over 12,000 schools in the United States.

More than 100 of those schools are in Louisiana and more are being added. Louisiana was recently awarded for having the greatest rate of growth over the past year. Much of this is due in part to Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) providing 20 schools per year with equipment grants to help reduce the cost of the initial equipment purchase to get started.

Each month LDWF holds teacher trainings across the state to certify individuals as NASP Basic Archery Instructors (BAI). The BAIs take the program back to their school and administer the curriculum to their students. This training is provided at no cost to educators. All schools in the state are eligible to the ALAS program including Public, private, parochial and Home School Organizations.

Schools that place first at the state tournament as a team or shoot a qualifying team score are eligible to participate in the National Tournament in Louisville, Kentucky. Individuals who qualify in the top ten at state are also eligible to compete at Nationals.

This year's National Archery in Schools Program (NASP) World Tournament proved to be the largest ever held with nearly 5,000 student archers competing from five countries including the U.S., Canada, United Kingdom, South Africa, and Namibia. Of those 5,000 students, 64 came from Louisiana and proudly represented not only their school but the entire state of Louisiana.

Benton Middle School, of Benton, La., was crowned as World Champions in the Middle School Division. Benton Middle School also finished 3rd in the 2015 NASP National Tournament held in May in Kentucky. Benton Elementary, who placed 4th at nationals this year and were last year's World Champions, brought home their second World Championship becoming Louisiana's first ever back-to-back World Champions.

Along with the world titles achieved by these teams, three individuals from Louisiana brought home World Championship titles as well. Anna Robins of Benton Middle School finished 4th in the World in the middle school girls division.

To recognize the Archery in Louisiana Schools (ALAS) Award Winning National Tournament Participants continued

Nathan Delill of Buckeye High School finished 3rd in the World in the middle school boys division.

Emma Bunch of Benton Elementary became Louisiana’s first-ever individual World Champion Archer placing 1st in the elementary school girls division.

In addition to being recognized at the LDWF commission meeting, these students received team and individual awards from the department recognizing their achievements. The Archery in Louisiana Schools Program is a member of the National Archery in the Schools Program, which teaches international target archery to students in grades 4-12. All students who attend school where the ALAS/NASP curriculum is taught become eligible to compete in State, National and World tournaments. For more information regarding ALAS and how you can get a program started at your school contact the ALAS State Coordinator – Robert Stroede at rstroede@wlf.la.gov or (318)484-2276.



Students and coaches from NASP World Champion Archery teams -Benton Middle and Benton Elementary schools and archer Nathan Delill from Buckeye High School on Lower Right

VII. To consider dedicating and expending ten (10) percent of the licensing fees dedicated for the development and preservation of breeding grounds for migratory waterfowl pursuant to La. R.S.56:104 (A)(1)(b).

Larry Reynolds, LDWF Waterfowl Study Leader

Chairman Manuel

“Have we received the Attorney General’s opinion?”

Fred Whitrock

“I contacted the Attorney General’s Office this morning and the opinion is not ready as of today.”

Chairman Manuel

“So that leaves us where we were. Has anybody changed their mind?”

❖ MOTION by Commissioner Broussard

Commissioner Broussard

“Mr. Chairman, I move that we table this agenda item until this Commission has a different makeup which would be the next meeting.”

Commissioner Graham

Seconded the motion made by Commissioner Broussard to table the agenda item

Chairman Manuel called for Public Comments

Richard Lipsey, Baton Rouge

A member of Oak Grove Hunting Club for over fifty years and serve as the President of Oak Grove Hunting Club

“I’m here for two reasons today – One, I know now that you are going to table this motion; but I would like to speak out in favor of Ducks Unlimited. I’ve been a member of Ducks Unlimited practically all of my life and a Sponsor of Ducks Unlimited. I know the work they do. I know how much progress has been made in Louisiana and only because of Ducks Unlimited. I know the power of Ducks Unlimited. I know the projects they’ve done and I know we are able to shoot ducks in Louisiana because of the projects that Ducks Unlimited have done. Since you are not going to vote today, I will not go into a lot of detail. I will tell you we have a very large club, we support Louisiana, we spend lots of money in Louisiana as do all the clubs – but most especially I want you to know that we are most supportive of Ducks Unlimited. My second point being is that I would like all of you to recognize that on the weekend of November 13th and 14th is the weekend when LSU will have LSU Salutes. Part of the LSU Salutes football game weekend is honoring our veterans. We pick out just a very few veterans that have graduated from Louisiana State University and I want you to know this year, one of the honorees that will be inducted into the Hall of Honor for his service in the military of the United States of America is your own Robert Barham. He has served in Vietnam, received many medals.

To consider dedicating and expending ten (10) percent of the licensing fees dedicated for the development and preservation of breeding grounds for migratory waterfowl pursuant to La. R.S.56:104 (A)(1)(b). Continued..

Richard Lipsey comments continued

He served as a medic and his resume is incredible. I think today you should recognize the Secretary Robert Barham for his service to our country.

Chairman Manuel

There are three more comment cards on this item that do not wish to speak Tom DuFour, Bryan Leach and Brandon Broussard – their position is we should split the monies fifty/fifty between Ducks Unlimited and Delta Waterfowl

“I think we will have a seventh Commissioner appointed by next meeting therefore we won’t need the Attorney General’s opinion. Is that right Mr. Secretary?”

Secretary Barham

“I think that is right Mr. Chairman”

There were no other comments heard

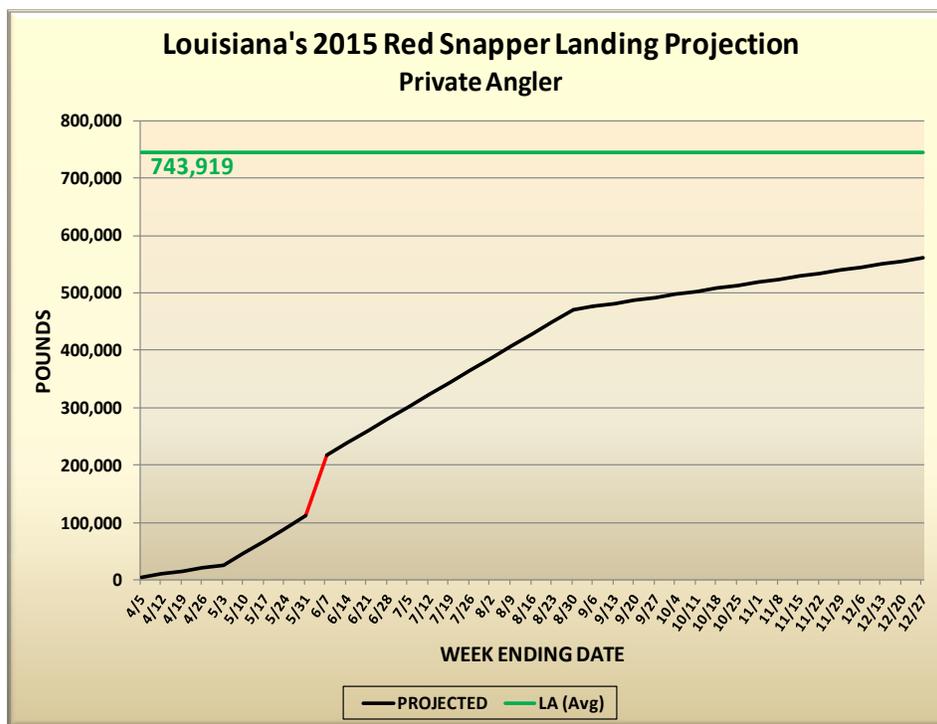
Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the Motion passed with no opposition

VIII. To hear a presentation on the 2015 Red Snapper Season data

Joey Shepard, LDWF Fisheries Division

LA Creel precisely monitors recreational landings in near real-time, allows fishery managers to make decisions on a regional level throughout the state and enables LDWF to set flexible seasons that allow anglers to take full advantage of available fishery resources. This program has been critical in establishing a recreational red snapper season in state waters to extend Louisiana's season beyond the federal season.

LA Creel is a replacement for the federal recreational fishing survey MRIP. Private recreational anglers have been blamed for previous overharvests, which were actually due to mismanaged federal seasons set using unreliable data from MRIP.

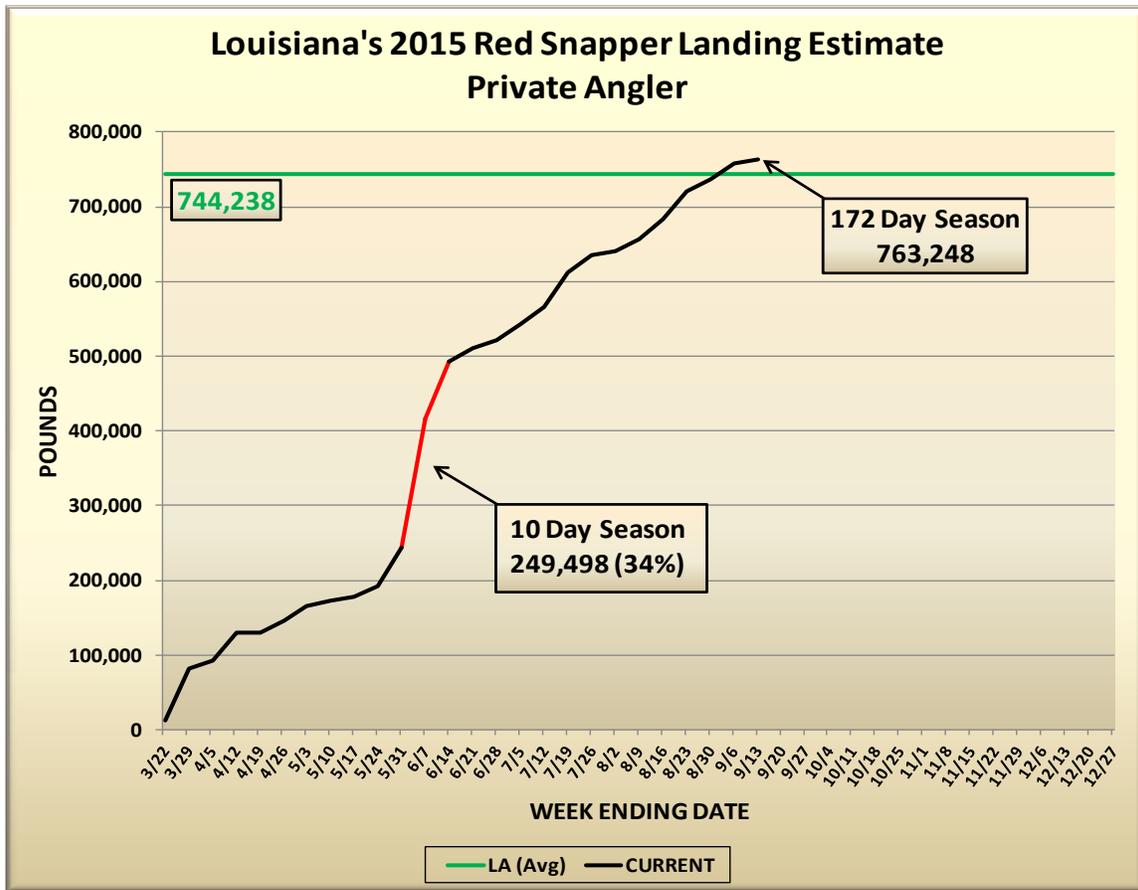


It was LDWF projection back in March what the private angler sector would harvest in 2015. Typically, this is the way the National Marine Fisheries Service estimates what the number of days the EEZ Season is going to be. The previous year's data is used to try and predict what will be caught the next year. I will be showing you why this doesn't work and why there is a lot of overage (or underage)

With the LA Creel Survey, we are able to count fish on a weekly basis and follow the fishery and determine exactly what is being harvested. We are able to give the Commission an update so you can close the season when need be. We are able to manage on a real time basis rather than trying to estimate what was harvested last year and say that's what we will harvest this year.

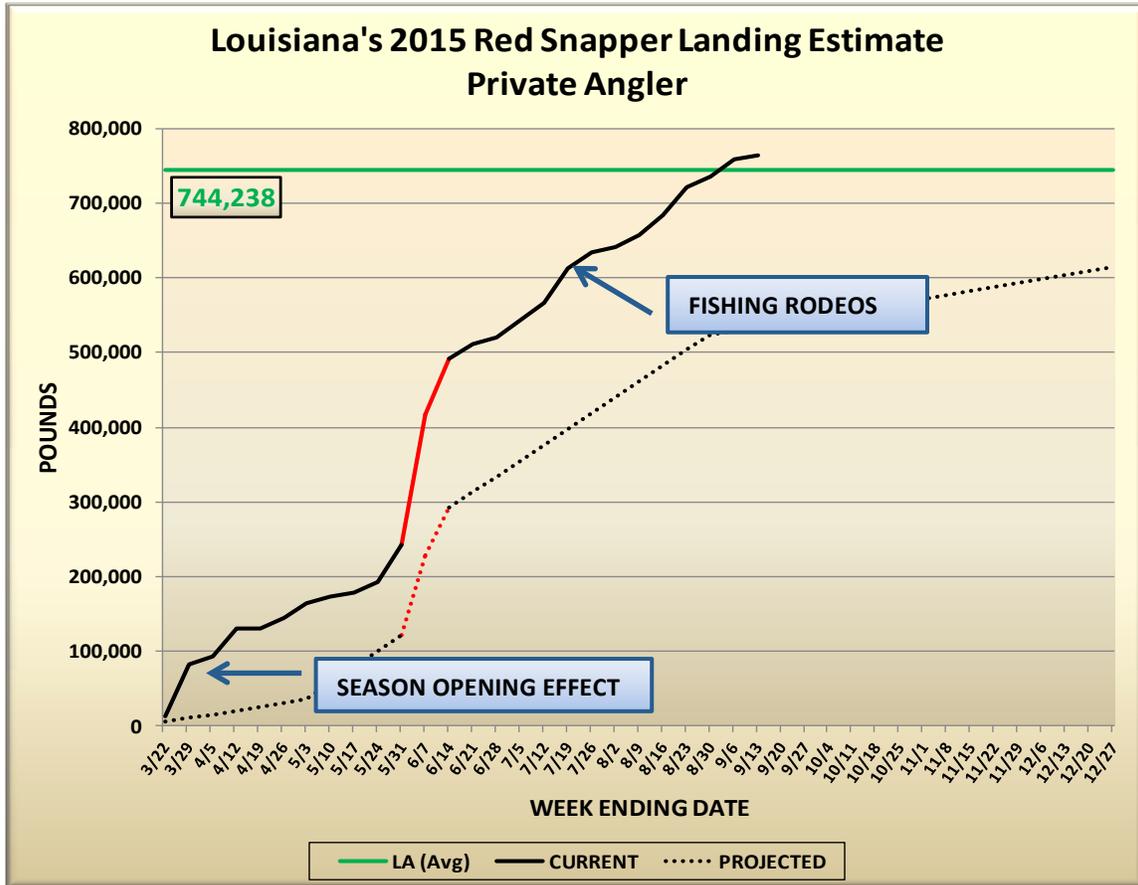
To hear a presentation on the 2015 Red Snapper Season data continued

This year we had a 172 day state season – 763,348 pounds were landed by private anglers. This was very close to LDWF target of 744,000 pounds
During the 10 day federal season 249,000 pounds were harvested
“If we would have only had a federal season, only 34% of what Louisiana private anglers typically harvest in a year, that’s all that would have been harvested. They did a terrible job of setting the number of days for the federal season at least for Louisiana anglers. If we put both of them together, you will see – if we would have gone by the projection we would have over harvested. But because of the LA Creel Survey and being able to monitor the fishery through time, we were able to shut the fishery down and control it. One thing we proved to National Marine Fishery Service and the Gulf Council is that we are able to count fish on a real time basis and we are able to manage the fishery and shut it down if need be.”



To hear a presentation on the 2015 Red Snapper Season data continued

There was a season opening effect – The first week of the season, ten percent of the harvest for private anglers came from the first week of the season.
There was jump in the July time frame during Fishing Rodeos along the coast.



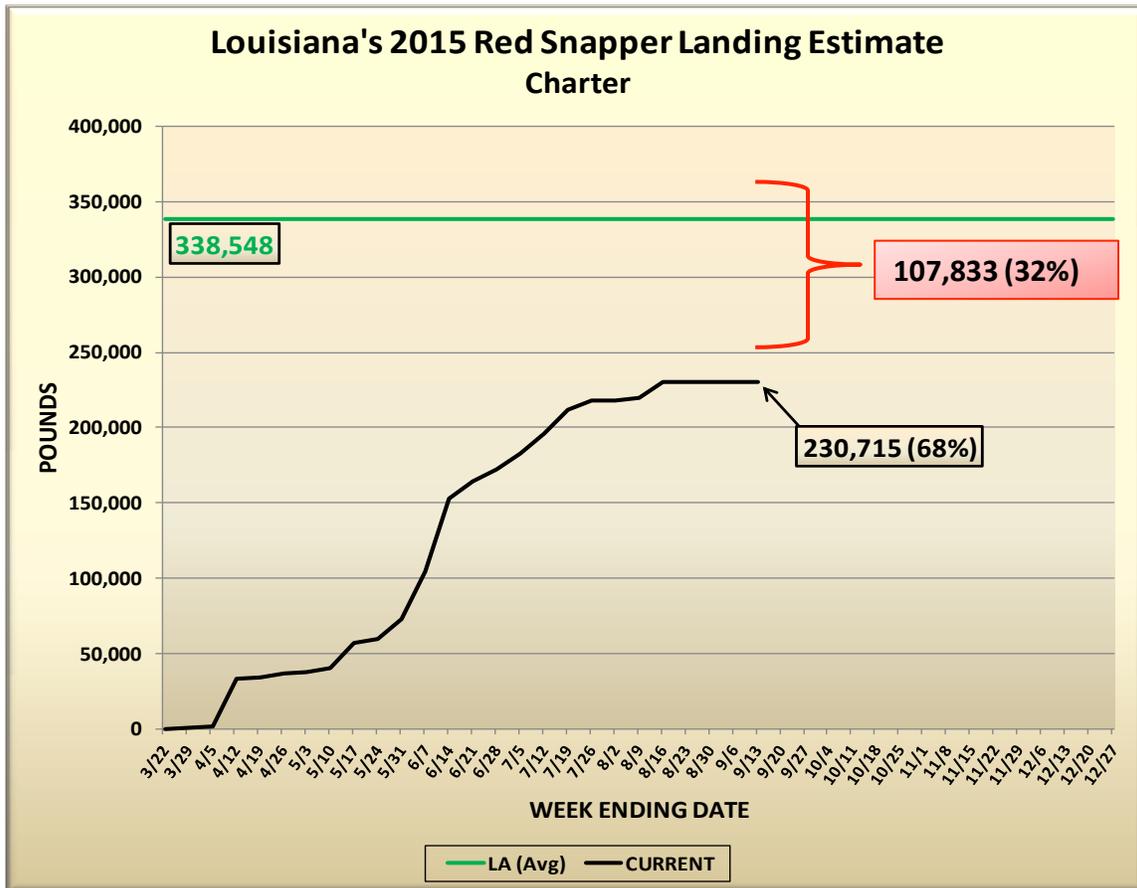
To hear a presentation on the 2015 Red Snapper Season data continued

On the Charter side – typical landings are about 338,000 pounds

Actual landed – 230,000 pounds; about 68% of the average historic harvest

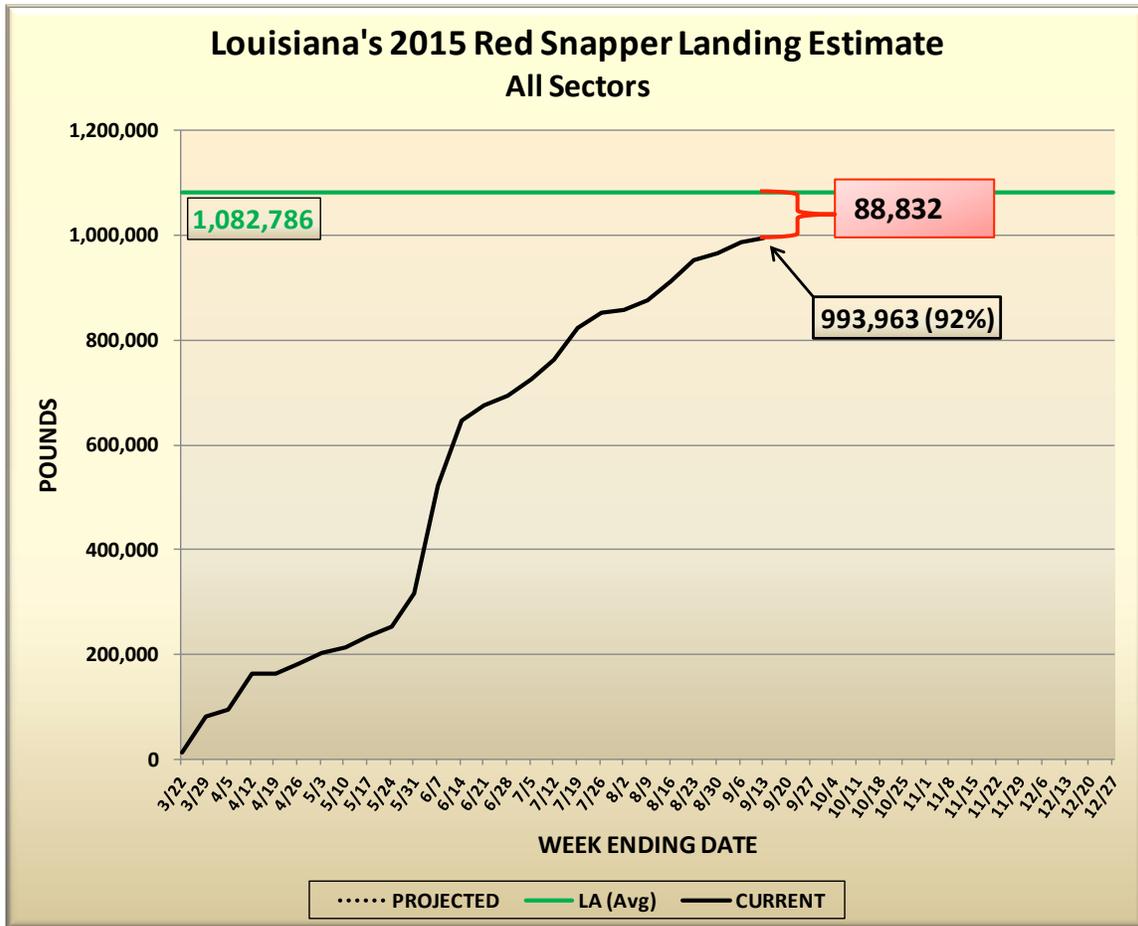
Reason – Charters cannot participate in the state season; there is a federal permit that does not allow them to fish in state waters when federal waters are closed. They have to abide by the more stringent regulations

107,000 pounds short of the historically harvested average – roughly 32%



To hear a presentation on the 2015 Red Snapper Season data continued

Overall Season – Typically harvest about 1,000,000 pounds
Around 994,000 pounds (92 %) landed
We did not exceed what we typically harvest
89,000 pounds of fish still on the table



To hear a presentation on the 2015 Red Snapper Season data continued

Louisiana’s 2015 Red Snapper Season Estimates for Private Angler

	<u>Federal EEZ Season</u>	<u>LA State Water Season</u>
Season Opened	June 01, 2015	March 20, 2015
Season Closed	June 11, 2015	September 08, 2015
Days Open	10	172
Landing Estimate	249,498	513,750
Fraction of Landing	33%	67%

Louisiana’s 2015 Red Snapper Season Estimates For-Hire

	<u>Federal EEZ Season</u>
Season Opened	June 01, 2015
Season Closed	July 15, 2015
Days Open	44
Landing Estimate	230,715
Fraction of Historic	68%

Louisiana’s 2015 Red Snapper Season Estimates Combined

	<u>Federal EEZ Season</u>
Landing Estimate	480,213
Fraction of Historic	44%

If the state would have only had a federal season in 2015 we would have left 56% of the fish on the table that our anglers would have not had the opportunity to fish

Chairman Manuel called for Questions

Commissioner Broussard

“In regards to the LA Creel Survey versus MRIP – have any other states adopted similar programs like LA Creel?”

Joey Shepard

“Other states are looking at other approaches – but everyone, not only in the Gulf is looking at Louisiana right now for the LA Creel approach. The MRIP people have a set of statistical contractors that have come to Louisiana and reviewed our program and we have a preliminary report. Everything looks really good, it was a glowing report. We think everyone is waiting for our survey to be certified as the best available.”

Commissioner Broussard

“Would that be for Federal adaptation or for each state to adopt a similar program?”

Joey Shepard

“We are shooting to get LA Creel certified by the feds. Once certified, any other states that want to conduct a survey like Louisiana will have a free hand to do so and use federal money. That is the whole purpose”

Commissioner Broussard

“Where are we in regards to the Feds using our data? Are they still relying on MRIP for Louisiana or are they taking into consideration LA Creel?”

Joey Shepard

“This year we are bench marking LA Creel Survey with MRIP Survey. We are conducting both side by side so that we can adjust and use historic data. They can’t use Louisiana data until we benchmark with the historic data. Once that is done, they will be using Louisiana’s data.”

Commissioner Broussard

“Once the program receives accreditation, will the Feds then have a legal obligation – Is it going to certify LA Creel as the superior of the two sciences?”

Joey Shepard

“If you look now, they use Louisiana’s data and they are required right now to use the best available”

Commissioner Broussard

“Is this going to vindicate it as the best available?”

Joey Shepard

“I don’t think there is any doubt about it. It’s going to happen”

Randy Pausina

LDWF, Assistant Secretary Fisheries Division

“The handshake that we got was once validated; it will replace MRIP in Louisiana. LA Creel will replace MRIP in Louisiana as the official recreational data collecting tool and NOAA will pay us to continue”

Commissioner Broussard

“Pay us to continue to do it – but what about in regards to setting seasons?”

Randy Pausina

“That is Regional Management “

To hear a presentation on the 2015 Red Snapper Season data continued

Commissioner Broussard

“Was there considered an overage Gulf wide on the ACL for the recreational sector?”

Joey Shepard

“It will be 2016, March or April; I don’t think we will really know until we get into 2016 because even the MRIP data, we only have through June. They have a long way to go before they get a year’s worth of data to be able to say if there’s an overage or not.”

Commissioner Davis

“Have we received any federal funding for LA Creel?”

Joey Shepard

“No, not until we get MRIP certified would we be eligible for funding to move it forward. It’s not all about the funding and it never has been. Their survey was just not very good which is why we went forward with LA Creel. We have the funding to do the survey and we’re gonna do it right regardless.”

There were no other questions or comments heard

IX. To Consider a Declaration of Emergency to Amend the season dates for the Falconry Seasons for Ducks, Rails and Gallinules

Larry Reynolds, LDWF Waterfowl Study Leader

The season dates for the 2015-2016 Falconry Season is to be amended because the season dates for the Coastal Zone were moved a week earlier and we did not account for the Youth Hunting Season associated with that date change being moved outside of the season dates for Railes, Gallinules and ducks such that there were two extra days beyond the deferral limit and for Falconry Season.

The dates we set for Falconry were November 2nd in the first Notice of Intent because the Youth Waterfowl Hunt days are considered vulnerability days for Falconry – they count in the number of days so we set a Falconry Season of 109 days which is two days longer than the feds allow. The only mechanism to change that is to amend the Declaration of Emergency that was published in August.

❖ MOTION by Commissioner Broussard

Commissioner Broussard

Motion made by Commissioner Broussard to approve the Declaration of Emergency

Commissioner Courville

Seconded the motion made by Commissioner Broussard

Chairman Manuel called for Questions / Comments

Chairman Manuel

“Have the dates been published in the pamphlets?”

Larry Reynolds

“No, they have not, in fact the correct – the dates that you are amending the Declaration of Emergency to have already been published in the pamphlets.”

Chairman Manuel

“What would have happened if we had voted against it?”

Larry Reynolds

“I recognized this when I submitted the Declaration of Emergency dates to the US Fish and Wildlife Service. I changed them and because the Declaration of Emergency had been published in August I had to come back in front of you for approval.”

No other questions or comments were heard

Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the Motion passed with no opposition

(The full Declaration is made part of the record)

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

In accordance with the emergency provisions of R.S. 49:953 of the Administrative Procedure Act, and under the authority of R.S. 56:115, the Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby adopts the following emergency rule.

The hunting season for ducks, coots and geese during the 2015-2016 hunting season shall be as follows:

DUCKS AND COOTS: 60 days

Coastal Zone:	November 7 – Dec. 6 December 19 – January 17
West Zone:	November 14 – December 6 December 19 - January 24
East Zone: (Including Catahoula Lake)	November 21 – December 6 December 19 - January 31

Youth Waterfowl Weekend – October 31 and November 1 in the Coastal Zone, Nov. 7 and Jan. 30 in the West Zone, November 14 and Feb. 6 in East Zone.

Daily Bag Limits: The daily bag limit on ducks is 6 and may include no more than 4 mallards (no more than 2 of which may be females), 2 canvasback, 1 mottled duck, 1 black duck, 3 wood ducks, 3 scaup, 2 redheads, and 2 pintails.

Daily bag limit on coots is 15.

Mergansers - The daily bag limit for mergansers is 5, only 2 of which may be hooded mergansers. Merganser limits are in addition to the daily bag limit for ducks.

Possession Limit - The possession limit on ducks, coots and mergansers is three times the daily bag limit.

GEESE:

LIGHT GEESE (SNOW, BLUE and ROSS') and WHITE-FRONTED GEESE

Coastal Zone: November 7 – December 6
(81 days) December 19 – February 7
West Zone: November 7 – December 6
(81 days) December 19 – February 7
East Zone: November 7 – December 6
(81 days) December 19 – February 7
Daily bag limit on light geese (snow, blue and Ross'): 20
Possession limit on light geese (snow, blue and Ross'): None
Daily Limit on white-fronted geese: 2
Possession Limit on white-fronted geese: 6

CANADA GEESE: CLOSED IN THE AREA DESCRIBED BELOW

Coastal Zone: November 7 – December 6
(74 days) December 19 - January 31
West Zone: November 14 – December 6
(67 days) December 19 – January 31
East Zone: November 7 – December 6
(74 days) December 19 – January 31
Daily Limit on Canada geese: 1 per day
Possession limit on Canada geese: 3

The Canada goose Season will be open statewide except for a portion of southwest Louisiana. The closed area is described as follows: Beginning at the Texas State Line, proceeding east along Hwy. 82 to the Calcasieu Ship Channel, then north along the Calcasieu Ship Channel to its junction with the Intracoastal Canal, then east along the Intracoastal Canal to its juncture with LA Hwy. 82, then south along LA Hwy. 82 to its juncture with Parish Road 3147, then south and east along Parish Road 3147 to Freshwater Bayou Canal, then south to the Gulf of Mexico, then west along the shoreline of the Gulf of Mexico to the Texas State Line, then north to the point of beginning at LA Hwy. 82. Open waters of Lake Arthur and the Mermentau River, from the Hwy 14 bridge southward, will also be closed to Canada goose hunting.

CONSERVATION ORDER FOR LIGHT GEESE (SNOW, BLUE AND ROSS'S):

Coastal Zone: December 7 – December 18
February 8 – March 6
West Zone: December 7 - December 18
February 8 - March 6
East Zone: December 7 – December 18
February 8 – March 6

Only snow, blue and Ross's geese may be taken under the terms of the Conservation Order, which allows the use of electronic calls and unplugged shotguns and eliminates the daily bag and possession limits. During the Conservation Order, shooting hours begins one-half hour before sunrise and extends until one-half hour after sunset.

RAILS: November 7 – December 30
KING AND CLAPPER: Daily bag limit 15 in the aggregate, Possession 45.
SORA AND VIRGINIA: Daily bag 25 in the aggregate and possession 75.

GALLINULES: November 7 – December 30
Daily bag limit 15, Possession limit 45

SNIPE:
Coastal Zone: November 2 – December 6
December 19 – February 28
West Zone: November 2 - December 6
December 19 - February 28
East Zone: November 2 – December 6
December 19 – February 28
Daily bag limit 8, Possession limit 24
Shooting Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset, except at the Spanish Lake Recreation Area in Iberia Parish where shooting hours, including the Conservation Order, end at 2 p.m.

EXTENDED FALCONRY SEASONS FOR RAILS AND GALLINULES:
STATEWIDE: November 4 – January 31
(16 days of the total season lengths for rails, gallinules and extended falconry seasons were used during the September teal season.)

EXTENDED FALCONRY SEASONS FOR DUCKS:
COASTAL ZONE: November 4 – January 31
WEST ZONE: November 4 – January 31
EAST ZONE: November 4 – January 31

A Declaration of Emergency is necessary because the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service establishes the framework for all migratory species. In order for Louisiana to provide hunting opportunities to the 200,000 sportsmen, selection of season dates, bag limits and shooting hours must be established and presented to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service immediately.

The aforementioned season dates, bag limits and shooting hours will become effective November 1, 2015 and extend through one-half hour after sunset on March 1, 2016

X. To hear a summary of the public meetings comments and recommended options for Waterfowl Hunting Zones and Splits

Larry Reynolds, LDWF Waterfowl Study Leader

There were six (6) Public Meetings held to hear comments - This is the year LDWF is allowed to change Zones and Splits

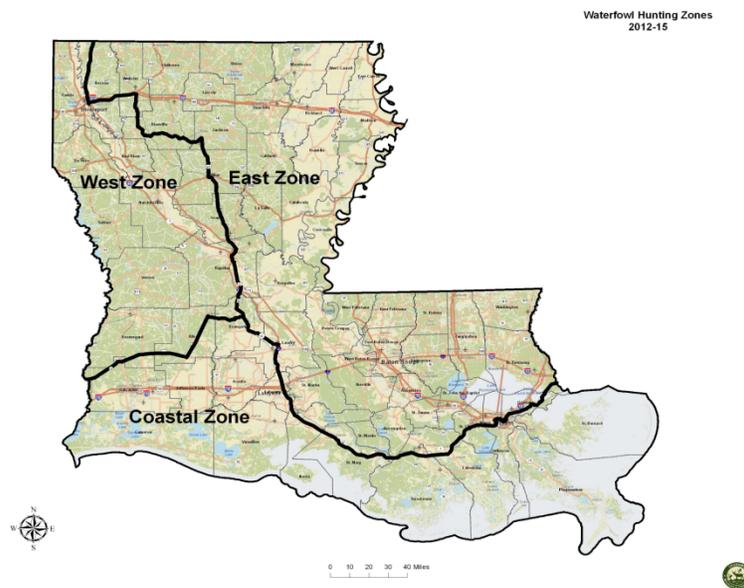
This corresponded with the year we are transitioning to a new process for setting waterfowl hunting regulations

Meetings were held in: Bossier City, West Monroe, Alexandria, Jefferson, Lake Charles, and Lafayette

The technical section of the Mississippi Flyway met a week and a half ago and the Council met yesterday to talk about the framework for the 2016 Waterfowl Hunting season

Because of the transition to the new process for setting Waterfowl hunting regulations, we have to have a decision for Zones and Splits in December (in the past it was set in May). In the past, it's gone through the Notice of Intent process and so we are attempting to provide opportunities for public input and comments similar to the Notice of Intent process. This is the primary reason for the public meetings.

Since 1975, Louisiana has used zones to allow us to set separate season dates in different parts of the state. 1975-2011, we used 2 zones (East and West), but in 2012, after nearly 18 months of considerations and 2 hunter-preference surveys, we took advantage of expanded zones and splits options offered by the USFWS, and implemented a 3-zone structure with the black boundaries shown on the map below:



Zones and Splits

Can only be changed every 5 years and the 2016 season is the next scheduled opportunity

Corresponds to the new waterfowl season setting timing whereby the federal framework will be proposed in December and thus a decision on zones/splits is required by December 1, 2015 if we want to implement those changes for the 2016 season

US Fish and Wildlife Service is going to allow two years to allow us to make this change. We can make a decision by December 1st and implement changes in zone boundaries for the 2016 season for five years or we can wait for another year – make a decision by December 1, 2016 and implement those changes for 2017 season. This was discussed back in April of this year and this Commission decided on a decision of December 1st, 2015.

The next year for changes after that will be 2021

Whatever decision is made prior to December 1st – will be held to for five years

Impetus for Proposed Changes

1. Discontent over traditional season dates
2. Requests from hunters and their political representatives
3. Requests from and consultation with the rice industry for over a year
4. Recent changes from traditional dates in the last 2 seasons

Proposed Time Line of Actions

1. Proposals generated from requests, public comment, hunter feedback, survey results, etc., to be presented at public meetings in September
2. Commission agreement to consider a set of options through October
3. Recommendation and final decision in November

Larry Reynolds

“This was discussed with you via email”

Larry Reynolds

“First option that I’m suggesting that was talked about at the public meetings was no change. We went through a pretty intensive process in 2011 and 2012 where we collected far more information than we did in 2015 because we knew we had a complicated decision coming up – where to create the third zone
We went through a formalized process over a three and half year period
Going to three zones allows us flexibility if the regulations become restricted and in our evaluations, we learned that the hunter is generally satisfied with the boundaries. The boundaries aren’t meaningful to most hunters – they only hunt in one zone. The hunting season date is what is most meaningful to the hunter”

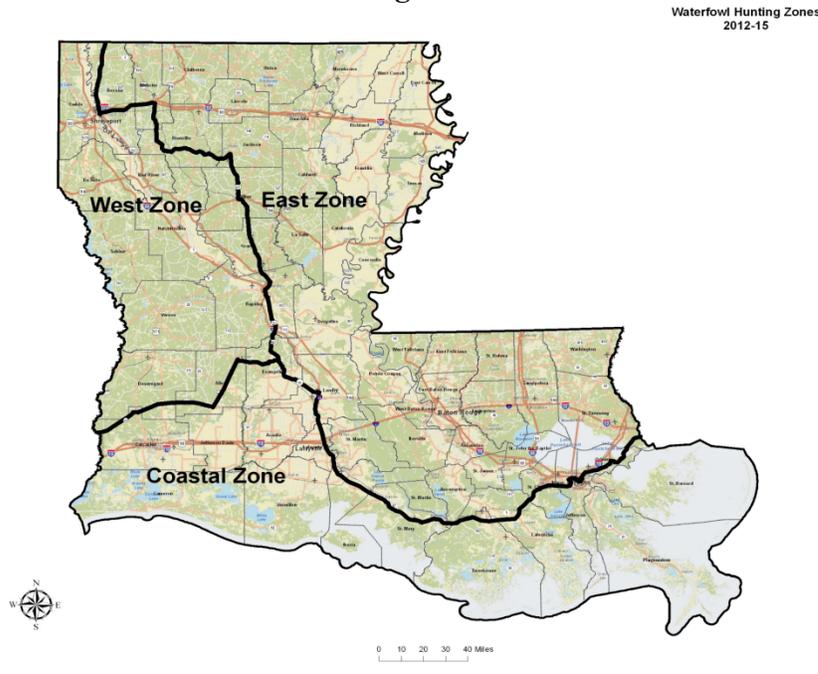
Pros

- Established with an informal process
- Flexibility with restricted regulations
- Hunters generally satisfied with boundaries

Cons

- Doesn’t address some current concerns
- Dissatisfaction with season dates

Louisiana Waterfowl Hunting Zones introduced in 2012

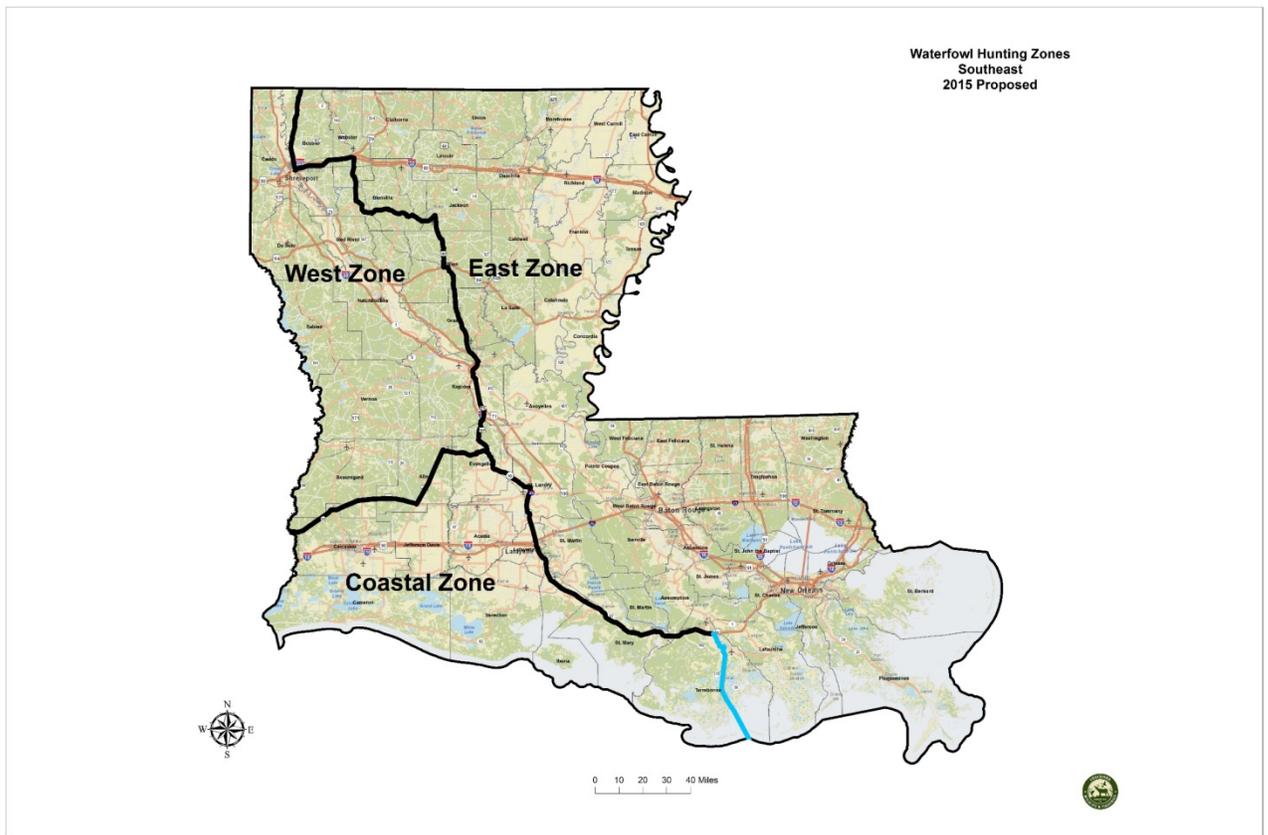


Larry Reynolds

The second option is to return to the historical East Zone boundary of the Houma Navigational Canal (the blue line on the graph below)

This would change the eastern edge of the coastal zone boundary back to the old east zone boundary that we had from 1975 to 2001. It runs through Terrebonne Parish, the Houma Navigational Canal out to the Gulf of Mexico. What this would do is move southeast Louisiana coastal areas into the east zone.

This was proposed because public opinion last year, the majority that led to later coastal zone seasons and outrage over this year's earlier season was largely from southeast Louisiana



Historical East Zone Boundary

Pros

- Boundary from 1975-2001
- Addresses recent public comment
- Later diving duck migration

Cons

- Inconsistent with major habitat types
- Similar late season harvest trends

Harvest Data
Chronology of Harvest 2001-2010 Seasons

OLD WEST ZONE

<u>WEEK</u>	<u>SOUTHWEST</u>	<u>SOUTHEAST</u>	<u>NORTHWEST</u>
1	21.8	22.5	18.5
2	15.0	11.7	19.4
3	14.5 (51.3)	16.7 (50.9)	17.9 (55.8)
4			
5			
6	11.9	13.7	13.8
7	9.4	9.7	8.4
8	8.6	8.6	7.4
9	7.1	6.7	6.7
10	10.7 (48.7)	10.6 (49.1)	7.8 (44.2)

This is 10 years of harvest data from a time period when the old West Zone had consistent season dates divided into three regions

Five Parishes in Southwest Louisiana, Five Parishes in Southeast Louisiana (Plaquemines, Lafourche, St. Bernard, Terrebonne, Jefferson)

This is the proportional seasonal harvest that occurs in each week of the season (Note the jump in week 3 harvest for the Southeast region)

The third option is expanding the East Zone by moving large acreage of rice growing land out of the Coastal Zone

Expanded East Zone in Southwest



Larry Reynolds

Representatives of the rice industry talked with me about changing the coastal zone boundary to Hwy 14 and moving the rice growing habitat into the east zone where they can be expected to have later season dates giving more time to get the second crop rice out

Pros

- More habitat consistency
- Addresses recent public comment
- Supported by rice farmers

Cons

- Bird use spans habitat types
- Affects traditional goose hunting regulations
- Little support in 2015 Hunter Survey

Hunters were asked to identify which of the following zone system you would prefer

<u>Category</u>	<u>Coastal Zone</u>	<u>East Zone</u>	<u>West Zone</u>	<u>Consolidated</u>
A. East-West-Coastal Zones (current format)	34%	31%	27%	32%
B. East-West-Coastal Zone (expanded East Zone)	7%	10%	8%	8%
C. 2 Zones: North-Coastal Zones	23%	30%	39%	26%
No Preference	36%	29%	26%	34%
Sample Size	3,959	2,163	492	7,020

The last option is a simplification of the Northwest Louisiana zone boundary (to straighten out the zigzag in north Louisiana). This option has been requested by a large number of hunters and State Representatives

It is also a slight modification of the proposed boundary that was approved by the Commission in 2012 before a few hunters in the Corney Lake bottoms got it reversed.



Boundary Simplification

Pros

- More consistent with habitat types
- Addresses recent hunter requests
- Modification of 2012 proposal initially approved by Commission

Cons

- Later season preference (?)

Larry Reynolds

Bossier City Public Meeting 09/14/2015

22 Attendees

Dominant Theme

Season is too late

Coastal zone dates this year are perfect

Anger over results of hunter opinion survey

Comments on Zones

1 person supported proposed zone change – This was the only comment on zones

Other Comments

Same dates in West and Coastal (2)

58 day season with 5 day split from 1st Saturday in November to second Sunday in January (3)

Not represented on the Commission, not present at meeting

Emails (Post Meeting) that support later seasons in West Zone (2)

West Monroe Public Meeting 09/15/2015

21 Attendees

Dominant Theme

Management on the Northeast Wildlife Management Areas (WMA)

Commission not representing public

Comments on Zones

Rice industry should not be influencing hunting regulations

Other Comments

3 weeks in East Zone first split, good early-season hunting (2)

More days in December, less in January

Youth hunt before first split, not divided in East Zone

Speckle belly season should be 74/3 like most hunters wanted

LDWF should lease duck fields like they do for doves

Comments on zones were almost non-existent

Alexandria Public Meeting 09/17/2015 - 15 Attendees

Dominant Theme

Catahoula Lake operations and management

Comments on Zones

Keep Catahoula Lake in the East Zone (2)

Other Comments

5 day split is too short (2)

West Zone is better later, supports later seasons for West Zone (2)

Does not like split youth hunt

Problems with invasive aquatics

Wants more opportunity to hunt National Wildlife Refuge's

Jefferson Public Meeting 09/23/2015 - 9 Attendees

Dominant Theme

Coastal Zone season dates are too early this year

Need new zone option

Participants were actively involved in considering zone boundary options related to their desires for season dates

Comments on Zones

Neither East nor Coastal Zone dates this year are right (5)

Liked last year's season dates (3)

Would choose East Zone if early dates continue in Coastal Zone

Need own zone in Southeast (see maps) (4)

No agriculture fields east of there, so proposed boundary line should be moved to Morgan City (2)

Leave the zones as they are (2)

Via e-mail: Against expansion of East Zone in Southwest or Southeast Louisiana out of concern those hunters will change existing season dates

Other Comments:

Commission serving own agenda, some won't respond to contacts (2)

Commission meetings are difficult to attend

Too many duck hunters lead to lower success need 30/3

Want to see WMA early vs late opening date bag-check data.

Early season dates ruined youth hunt this year

Jefferson Parish 09/23/15 continued..

Other Comments:

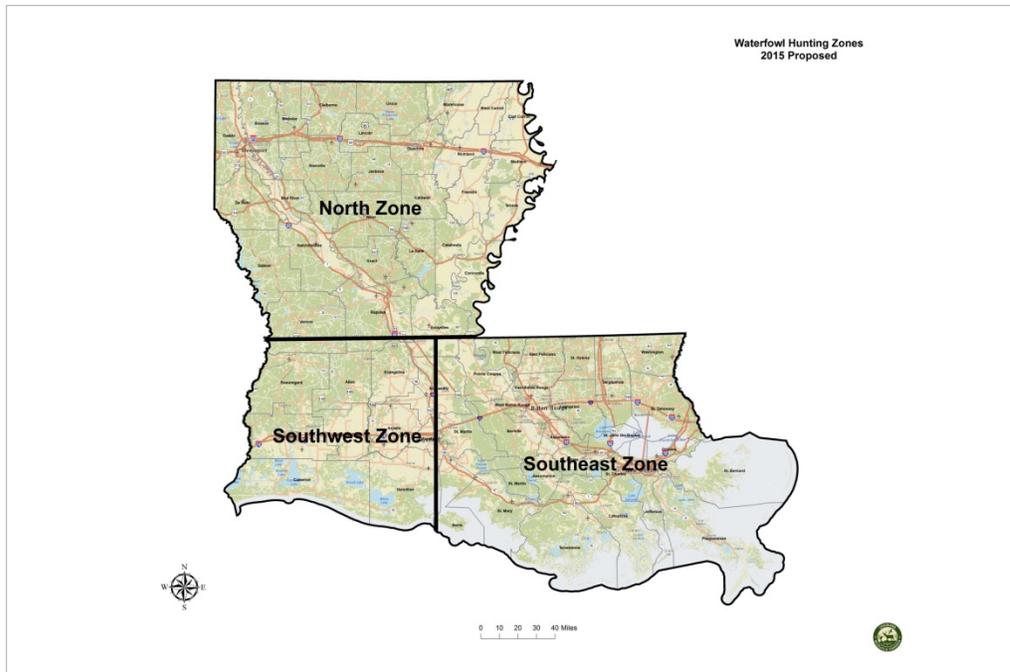
Species composition and hunting experience is better in late season

Low water compromises late-season hunting

Split needs to include a weekend

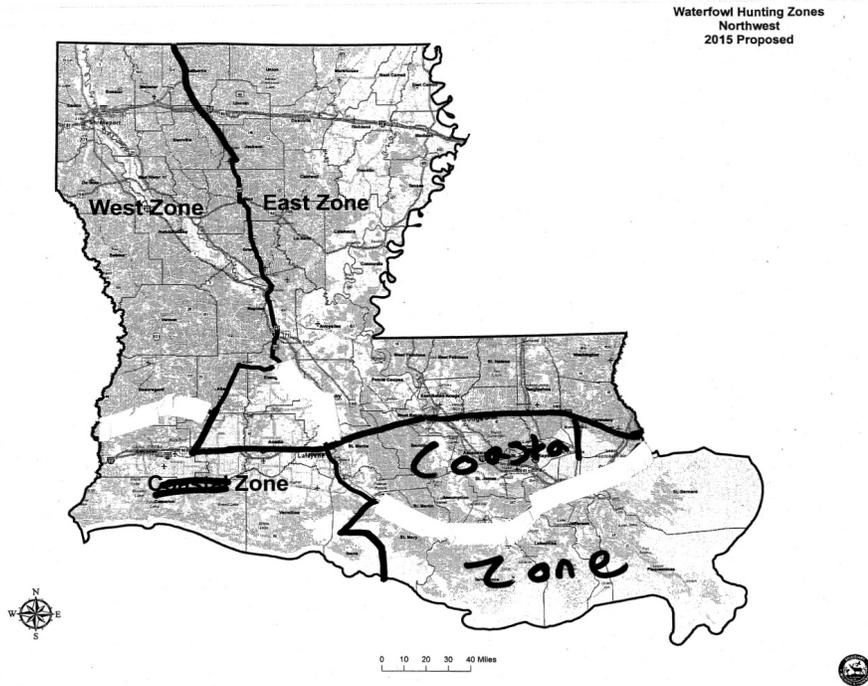
Hunter-survey data should be included in season-setting criteria

This map is mostly conceptual showing the desire of a couple guys for a different arrangement. There are issues with this configuration because of the separation of forested wetlands of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley in south Louisiana



Larry Reynolds

The below map was put together by some of the attendees at the Jefferson Parish meeting



Lafayette Public Meeting 09/22/2015

20 Attendees

Dominant Theme

Later season dates by removing rice fields from the Coastal Zone

Comments on Zones

Because of timing of second crop rice harvest and delays in blind preparation, rice should be moved out of Coastal Zone (4)

Via e-mail: If goal is to get all the rice out of the Coastal Zone, Gulf Intercostal Waterway (GIWW) is a better boundary than Hwy 14

After meeting: prefers GIWW to Hwy 14

Other Comments

Like the earlier season dates in the Coastal Zone (2)

Concern over negative effects of sugarcane & crawfish to waterfowl hunting

Larry Reynolds

“Although the meeting in Lafayette was earlier than the Jefferson meeting, I wanted to talk about the Lafayette and Lake Charles meetings together because the dominant theme was so similar. Steve Linscombe of the LSU Ag Center Rice Research Station explained the situation with second-crop rice and the time constraints rice growers are under to harvest their second crop, which is increasingly important to them economically, causing those problems getting fields prepared for hunting. Only 4 people commented at the meeting, but I got a phone call the next day from an attendee.”

Lake Charles Public Meeting 09/24/2015

9 Attendees

Dominant Theme

Later seasons in rice fields by removing them from the Coastal Zone

Comments on Zones

Not enough time to get second crop harvested, blinds ready (3)

Hwy 14 is better than current, but Gulf Intercostal Waterway GIWW is better (3)

More rice acreage south of Hwy 14 than marsh acreage north of GIWW

Via e-mail: Favors Hwy 14 boundary

Keep Northwest Calcasieu in Coastal Zone for earlier seasons (2) (1 via email)

Other Comments

Support the limit of two specks (3)

Goose season needs to be concurrent with duck season

Prefer to hunt during the split rather than late January

Want later season dates in coastal marsh (3) (2 via e-mail)

Prefers two splits rather than zones

Larry Reynolds

“A member of the Rice Promotion Board was far more aggressive pushing the GIWW compared to Hwy 14 proposed boundary and provided additional information about the acreage between Hwy 14 and the GIWW.”

Larry Reynolds

No decisions are being made today – there is a month to decide

“These are the options we recommend for consideration. We don’t consider the historical East Zone boundary to be well supported at this point, or at least it wasn’t a good option even for those at the Jefferson meeting that were unhappy with the earlier season dates this year.”

Recommended Options to Consider

1. Northwest Boundary simplification
2. Expansion of East Zone – Hwy 14
3. Expansion of East Zone – GIWW
4. Additional Modifications

Commissioner Broussard

“Should we make a motion or put something out there to insight public comment or participation if they see a map published?”

Larry Reynolds

“I was going to make better maps of the following”

Hwy 12 Boundary

GIWW Boundary

Hwy 14 Boundary (slightly modified to keep northwest Calcasieu Parish in the coastal zone)

Commissioner Broussard

“What I’m asking is do we make a motion now on the lines, then have the hunters be able to make a meeting to make public comments. If we do it another way....”

Larry Reynolds

“It’s not enough to anger people. I see what you’re saying.”

Commissioner Broussard

“We will anger them but we won’t have time for them to give comment if we do it next meeting”

Chairman Manuel

“We can have a Special Meeting prior to December 1st”

Commissioner Broussard

“We can make a Motion now– we can change it if we see public outcry or we have overwhelming public sentiment one way. With that said, my Motion is to be that we accept the Houma Navigational Canal back to the traditional line, which I think was the original map you put up. Instead of the GIWW, go up to Hwy 14 and Hwy 14 across and your recommendation. This is my motion”

Larry Reynolds

“The Motion is that we change....”

Fred Whitrock

“Point of order Mr. Chairman. This is not an action item as it is. You will need to amend the agenda.”

Commissioner Broussard

“Mr. Chairman, I move that we amend the agenda...”

Commissioner Yakupzack

“What is the point of the motion? Are you actually going to motion that this be the zone change?”

Commissioner Broussard

“Yes, with the understanding that this is flexible if we make the motion... If we do it at the next meeting, I don’t know that we have flexibility to change it afterwards. When you make a motion it gets published. Anybody that doesn’t want it can change it at the next meeting.”

Chairman Manuel

“Billy, we did the last time. We changed it after we voted”

Commissioner Broussard

“Don’t we have to get permission? Isn’t it an arduous process to change something after its submitted?”

Larry Reynolds

“Yes, it’s impossible once it is submitted to the Feds”

Commissioner Broussard

“When does this have to be submitted?”

Larry Reynolds

“By December 1st”

Commissioner Broussard

“The next meeting is November”

Chairman Manuel

“We could have it in November, or if that causes a problem we could have a special meeting simply for that.”

Commissioner Broussard

“What I’m proposing is flexible. We vote on it, we take public comments at the next meeting. If public comments steers us away or gives us different direction – it’s going to be a yawn between now and then. If we have something solid, we’re going to get the feedback we need. We can give as many people as we can what they want, but we can’t give everyone what they want.”

Chairman Manuel

“I got a call from an elected representative representing Evangeline Parish. He said that he had over one hundred phone calls after we voted on the season dates – they want out of the coastal zone but they don’t want to go to the east zone. They want to go to the west zone. The most controversy on this thing is on season dates not necessarily on the zones. That’s where the rice industry came involved and it was the dates more than the zones.”

Commissioner Broussard

“I realize that but the reason the dates are set where they are is there are different areas and the zones must be incorrect if we have that much disparity between the two zones. By the dates being incorrect, it would have been on the seventh last year had we not changed it.”

Chairman Manuel

“But it didn’t cause as much controversy last year as it has this year.”

Commissioner Broussard

“Well it did, just a different half.”

Commissioner Courville

“Mr. Reynolds, do we have the option to have four (4) zones?”

Larry Reynolds

“Only if we have straight seasons with no splits”

Commissioner Courville

“And you don’t anticipate in the next five (5) years we’ll have four (4) zone split option?”

Larry Reynolds

“I don’t anticipate having any changes in zones and spits option in the foreseeable future.”

Commissioner Davis

“In regards to Billy’s motion, I would like to move that line instead of dissecting Terrebonne Parish, move it to the Atchafalaya River.”

Commissioner Broussard

“That’s fine with me.”

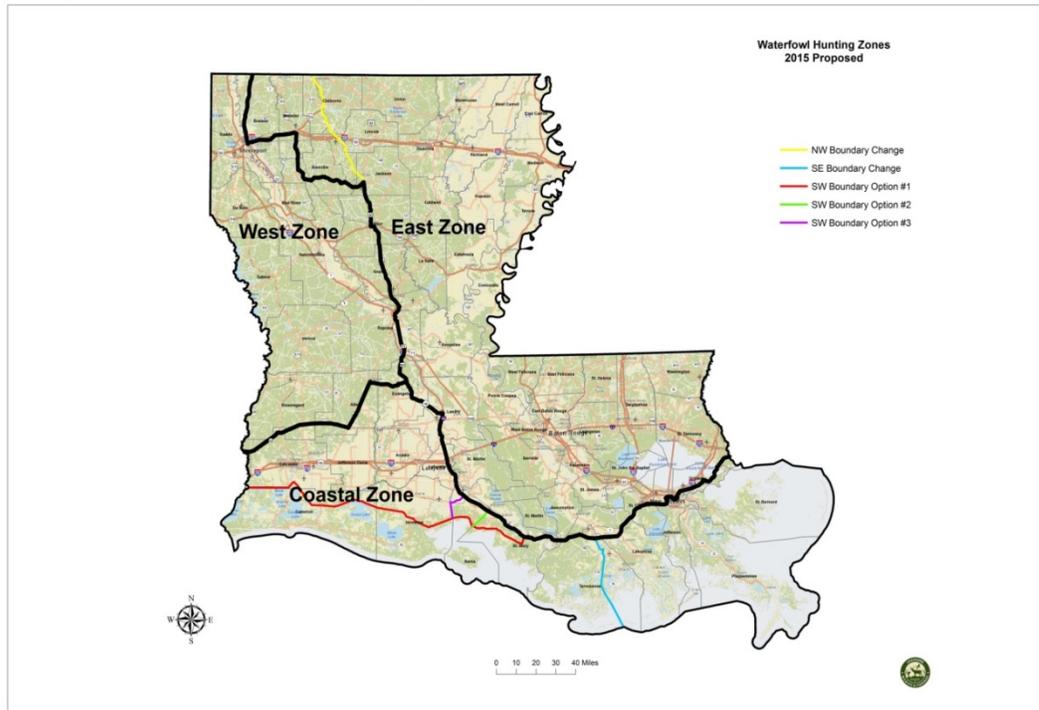
Commissioner Graham

“I’m gonna have a problem moving that line period. I like it like it is I think. Based on the past years – that’s marsh down there. That’s hardwood timber and rice fields and everything else above Catahoula Lake north. I don’t hunt down there and I don’t know how those people think down there, but I have had a lot of comment that they want an earlier season. We don’t need an earlier season at any point in time north in zone two (2), period. I hear yall, but this is my feelings.”

Expanded East Zone option using Hwy 14 as the boundary



Using the GIWW as the boundary



Using Hwy 14 with a modification in Lake Charles to keep NW Calcasieu in the Coastal Zone as 2 people requested



Larry Reynolds

Moving Forward

- Put these options on the LDWF website for public comment
- Consider additional modifications to boundary in southwest Louisiana
- Recommendations and final decision at November meeting

Commissioner Broussard

“Point of Order – Let’s go ahead and make the Motion to move the Agenda to include this as an action item. Is that appropriate wording?”

Chairman Manuel

“We have a comment before”

Commissioner Yakupzack

“Mr. Reynolds, with regard to the Federal Framework change where the feds allowed the option to change the zones this year or year; they gave us the two years. This Commission took action in April to select that we move forward this year. Have we made a designation with the Federal Government such that if we did not take actions on the zones this year that we could still take the action on the zones next year?”

Larry Reynolds

“Yes. The only restriction is that if we take action this year, we can’t take different action next year. If we take no action this year, we can make changes next year.”

Chairman Manuel

“So, if we took no action we would keep the same zones we have and we’d have over a year of public comments. That may be the best option.”

Commissioner Broussard

“Do we need more public comment? I think we could squeeze it all in, in the next two months. They’ll come out. We have a set season that was distasteful for a lot of people so participation I think would be at an all-time high. We set the seasons accordingly next year and we just going to go through the same motions.”

Commissioner Graham

“It’s gonna be distasteful for some people, I don’t care when you set it.”

Chairman Manuel

“I know this, I think we’re all in agreement, Larry you even agree with us on this. Most of the comments based on all six meetings were on season dates and they were reflected in wanting to change the zones, this that and the other to get away from whatever dates they were unhappy with whether its early or late.”

Larry Reynolds

“If you’re a part of the coastal zone you know that if you’re in southeast Louisiana and the zones were – the season dates were set in a way you’re not happy with this is a way. The only other way is to charge the Commission meeting with overwhelming numbers of people and threaten some kind of other action. This is a way that they can become part of the east zone because the east zone has later season dates. It is all about season dates. It won’t change this year season dates. This year’s dates are set.”

Chairman Manuel

“I think some of the general public are missing that point.”

Larry Reynolds

“This is for next year and into the future.”

Commissioner Broussard

“If we don’t act until next year we can’t change the season dates until the following year.”

Larry Reynolds

“That’s correct”

Commissioner Broussard

“So, we will be setting the season dates just like we did this year – We will disenfranchise someone.”

Chairman Manuel

“We will be disenfranchised no matter what.”

Commissioner Broussard

“I think we can group in the majority of the nay-sayers this year and we will have a whole new crop of guys that will come out of the woodwork. We can work towards something to appease the disgruntled folks for next year.”

Commissioner Courville

“Larry, in the absence of us making a motion, what do you intend to put on the department website?”

Larry Reynolds

“What I intended to put on the department website was the Highway 14 and the GIWW Boundaries as options for....”

Commissioner Courville

“But you don’t have that for us to see today though?”

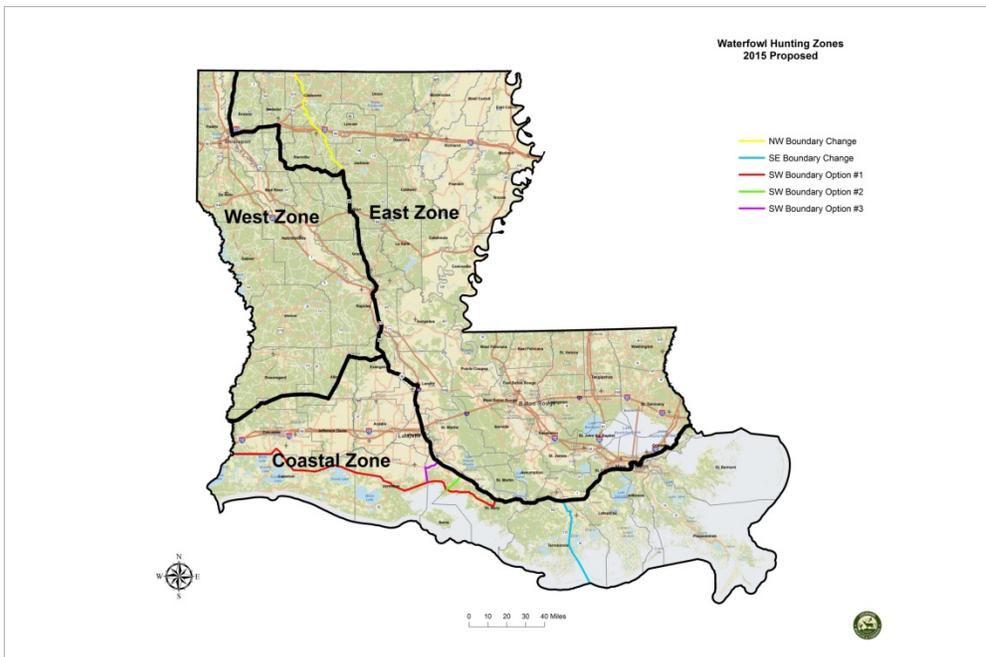
Larry Reynolds

“It’s right there...”

Expanded East Zone option using Hwy 14 as the boundary



Using the GIWW as the boundary



Commissioner Courville

“This is what you intend to put on the website?”

Larry Reynolds

“Well, I’m going to improve it and eliminate the black lines and you can see here where I’m not quite sure where I’m gonna do the cut off yet. I’m going to improve this map where it shows the options. All I was going to do was say; these are the options being considered by the Commission for your public comment. What Commissioner Broussard’s motion does is make that a far more firm thing and say; The Commission has voted to adopt these zone boundary changes. You better comment because the only time we have to change them again is November. So you’re not tied to these zone boundary changes that you approve today – but as Commissioner Broussard said, it puts something out there in the public that’s rock solid that says this is what’s going to be approved, you better comment on it.”

Commissioner Broussard

“They know what they getting. Any other way is still wishy-washy.”

Commissioner Graham

“Based on what I’ve heard here, what he has up there right now with the exception of that north thing up there where you go up – What I’m hearing Billy say; He prefers that option with the exception of that line over there which I don’t like at this point. But going along with what Billy said, it makes sense to me to come up with one map, not to say we gonna do like he says – and then if we get so much comments that it’s off the wall between now and next time, we can put it off till next year. We can do that at the next meeting. We’ll have enough information to do what Billy wants to do.”

Commissioner Broussard

“I don’t know if we can put it off – we can’t put it off till next year. We can change it at the next meeting.”

Commissioner Graham

“I thought you said we could decide not to do it this year.”

Commissioner Courville

“Billy, I agree both with you and Ronnie. I’ll ask maybe that if there’s an alternate way for us to as opposed to “adopt it” – but perhaps be less aggressive in that we suggest, recommend, propose whatever term you want to use that we have Larry put forward one single map as opposed....I think you are saying this is what we want. I’m asking you to consider revising your motion to say we collectively ask Larry to provide one map that is out there for consideration. Perhaps it’s semantics, but.... I think this will do it.”

Commissioner Graham

“Point of Order Mr. Chairman; we are not making motions. What I’m hearing, we are discussing we haven’t changed the agenda right? So what we are doing is discussing what we think. I hear what you saying. I think one thing makes a lot of sense. You can get a lot of comments that way.”

Commissioner Broussard

“This is going to get a lot of comments.”

Commissioner Yakupzack

“I agree with Ronnie and Chad and some extent Bill – as opposed to putting out four or five maps for another thirty days, I do agree it would be much more productive to put out one map. Then you are going to hear only from the people that disagree with that map.”

Commissioner Broussard

“What you are going to hear is each separate line, no units.”

Commissioner Yakupzack

“That’s better than hearing from two sides on one line.”

Commissioner Broussard

“I would rather us decide on a map. Fred, how can we do this that it’s the Commission’s recommendation without it being an actual motion?”

Fred Whitrock

“If it is the department’s recommendation and the department’s decision to go ahead and place one map or two maps or four maps out on the website, they will be bringing to next month’s Commission meeting for consideration – then he can use all the discussions that you said to make that decision and there is no action required by the Commission.”

Commissioner Broussard

“Then we have nothing different from what Larry had in the first place.”

Larry Reynolds

“What you’ve done is you have taken, in other words – this is similar to proposing hunting season dates in July for a month of public comment in August. You didn’t have to make a motion and approve anything to put those proposed dates out. What Ive heard the Commission tell me is we don’t want separate maps out there. We want one map with the zone boundary change in Northwest Louisiana with the Zone boundary change in the Coastal Zone on Highway 14 and the Zone boundary change in southeast Louisiana down the Houma Nav Canal.”

Chairman Manuel

“There are a couple of us against that because I’m positive that Allen Parish needs to be out of the coastal or the east zone. It needs to be in the west zone. Part of Evangeline needs to be in the west zone according to those State Representatives that called me. You got a call from the State Representative and you changed that and I would ask you to change that and help respect and do something in Evangeline and split them up.”

Commissioner Broussard

“Do they realize the west zone trends early?”

Chairman Manuel

“Yes, I’m telling you what the guy told me. Fifteen minutes later I got an email from his next door neighbor telling me he was happy with everything. He said he had over one hundred phone calls that they wanted out of the coastal zone and put in the west zone. I made sure I got that clear. I agreed with him that it needs to be out of the coastal zone. Some people did call me personally, but he was representing over one hundred hunters is what he told me. I know Allen Parish needs to be out of the east or coastal zone.”

Commissioner Broussard

“That leaves only the west.”

Chairman Manuel

“That’s right, but that’s what they’re asking for.”

Commissioner Broussard

“Allen and Evangeline want to be out of the coastal?”

Chairman Manuel

“Yes, no question. Allen can be in the west zone.”

Commissioner Broussard

“The issue is going to come right back at them if the west zone starts having earlier seasons and then they’ve not fixed their problem.”

Chairman Manuel

“We’re not gonna make everyone happy. Your concern is coastal zone. I understand that Billy, because that’s where yall hunt.”

Commissioner Broussard

“My concern is when we move these folks put them where they gonna be happiest and the west zone; I’m still seeing more people in the west zone are the more influential – more vocal. The west zone is still trending earlier and they may end up in a zone locked in for five years that’s going to give them.....”

Chairman Manuel

“Well then they can call us then and talk to us about season dates. It will be one issue. It won’t be issues over zones really because of season dates.”

Larry Reynolds

“What’s really interesting about this discussion is; Allen and Evangeline Parishes, nothing changed for them. Nothing changed. They went from the west zone to the coastal zone. The season dates stayed exactly the same, so all of this furor over what? Have they been mad since 1975 because nothing has changed?”

Commissioner Courville

“Larry, Mr. Reynolds.. sorry – When for the November meeting will we have proposed 2016-2017 hunting season dates at the same time – We won’t do that till December?”

Larry Reynolds

“Correct.”

Commissioner Courville

“Perhaps that would have shed some light in the zone boundary discussion as you’re suggesting. Does anything prevent us from doing that a month early; besides you guys got a lot of stuff to do. Adding that a month early might be unfair, it would be difficult.”

Larry Reynolds

“Mr. Chairman, I can propose a zone boundary change that puts Allen and Evangeline Parish in the west zone. At least that portion of Evangeline Parish that is west of the current boundary.”

Chairman Manuel

“Is that Highway 13?”

Larry Reynolds

“It’s 167.”

Chairman Manuel

“13 runs from the intersection of 14 at Kaplan runs up north through Crowley, Eunice all the way to Highway 49, Interstate 49.”

Larry Reynolds

“We can work with something. We can work with something that would tie in to what we are trying to accomplish with the Highway 14. We can leave that coastal zone boundary and we can adjust the west zone boundary. I think we can do that.”

Commissioner Courville

“Mr. Reynolds, would you consider doing that along that rice, pine tree interface which if you could try and find a road in there somewhere in there?”

Larry Reynolds

“I’m going to look for roads that will put what is now in the coastal zone of Evangeline and Allen Parish into the west zone. This will be one map that includes the Houma Nav boundary for southeast Louisiana, Atchafalaya River, the boundary in northwest Louisiana and a change to the coastal zone boundary that puts Evangeline and Allen Parishes that are currently in the coastal zone in the west zone.”

Commissioner Yakupzack

“While you have your pencil out, add to that one the change reflected on your last map that takes care of the proponents of that northwest Calcasieu change which is basically existing coastal boundary until you get to 171 and then tie into 171 and 14 there. If I read your map correctly it’s exactly as you drew it on your last slide.”

Larry Reynolds

“I am going to work with Scott Armand tomorrow to put together a map that I’m going to send to each of you and you’ll give me a thumb up or a thumb down and we will put out a press release. We will put that map on the website that says, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission proposes this zone boundary for public comment.”

Fred Whitrock

“Point of Order Larry; it will read that the Department will present this recommendation to the Commission at the November meeting.”

Larry Reynolds

“However you want to say it, I just want to make sure we are all on the same page for our intent.”

Commissioner Broussard

“This is a question for Dan or probably both of yall. The boundary of the Atchafalaya puts the Wax Lake outlet in what?”

Larry Reynolds

“It puts it in the coastal zone and I will put the boundary – In other words, Commissioner Davis has proposed the Atchafalaya River, but we’ll make some modification of that so our Wildlife Management Area is not split into two zones.”

Commissioner Davis

“Correct, that’s exactly what I proposed.”

Larry Reynolds

“We have some WMA’s that are split into zones but not with as much waterfowl hunting as this area.”

Commissioner Broussard

“That would be very problematic for Enforcement.”

Commissioner Graham

“Larry, on this blue line putting the southeast part into the east zone; based on your information and the emails you got back and everything – a few years ago they wanted to do earlier seasons, but now what’s going on with them?”

Larry Reynolds

“The problem is when we listen to small groups of people, we get in trouble. This is why we have transitioned into large scale hunter opinion surveys so we can get as unbiased information from as many hunters as we can. When we look at that information, we see the majority of the hunters in that part of the state prefer later seasons when given specific.....”

Commissioner Graham

“I’m ok with that and I don’t have a problem with them being there as long as that’s what they really want.”

Larry Reynolds

“Ten percent can sound like an overwhelming majority. No matter what we do here there is going to be fall out, grief, woe and misery. Let’s just deal with it. It’s never going to go away and what we are doing is attempting to address – you are attempting to address a hundred phone calls communicated to you from an elective representative. I am trying to address what I consider to be consistent public comment over the last two years. Last year we heard from southeast Louisiana and we set the season later because we had a proposed structured public comment period that came in overwhelming. This year when we made the decision to open November 8th, the majority of the outrage came from southeast Louisiana. Again, for all I know that is a very small minority of hunters but that is what we got, that is the groups that have played with us at this point and so that’s what we are attempting to address. We are giving them another month. We are giving everybody a month to say, this is what the department will propose at the November Commission meeting, tell us what you think.”

Commissioner Courville

“Mr. Reynolds, in the past have we set zone boundaries; I know we like to do it on roads because roads are pretty obvious – In the past, can you recall, have we ever used Parish boundaries?”

Larry Reynolds

“No, because you can’t see them on the ground.”

Commissioner Courville

“I should know if I belong where I’m hunting whether I’m in a particular parish or not.”

Larry Reynolds

“Col. Martin, what would say if I proposed a zone boundary on a parish line? Obviously if that parish line was a road or a water body, canal...”

Commissioner Courville

“I’m looking at the line between St. Mary and Terrebonne Parish because you are going to be forced almost if you make that choice and keep the Atchafalaya Delta in the coast, west, whatever it is called.”

Larry Reynolds

“I believe I’m going to be forced to use waterways. I’m not sure which one.”

Commissioner Courville

“I was just curious if we have ever used a parish boundary.”

Larry Reynolds

“It would be easy but it is a challenge to enforce.”

Commissioner Manuel

“Would that be difficult – would it be a problem for enforcement?”

Lt Colonel Sammy Martin

“Yes, without a road way or a walk way.”

Commissioner Broussard

“Some parishes have trouble distinguishing where their parish lines are. This almost seems like we setting a trap....”

Larry Reynolds

“I consult with the law enforcement division before making these proposals.”

Chairman Manuel

We have a motion.....

Commissioner Broussard

“I think we don’t even need a recommendation. I think we’ve made it clear where we want to go. It’s not an action item, we don’t need to amend the agenda and we don’t need to take action on it.”

Chairman Manuel called for public comments

There were none heard

XI. Set February 2016 Meeting Date

A discussion took place and the proposed meeting date was February 4, 2016

Commissioner Courville

Asked the Commission to consider having a future meeting in Alexandria

“We talked about having one there. It’s just a thought at one point we ought to consider going up there, but we don’t have to do it in February”

Chairman Manuel

“Would you like to make a motion to do that?”

Commissioner Courville

“No, we can wait. It’s awful close to be out of pocket from December to February so let’s wait.”

❖ MOTION by Commissioner Broussard

Commissioner Graham

Second to the motion made by Commissioner Broussard to accept the date of February 4, 2016

Chairman Manuel called for a Vote and the Motion passed with no opposition

XII. Receive Public Comment

Ronnie Coco

Commended Robert Stroede for his work on National Hunting and Fishing Day In Avoyelles Parish and the Simmsport area there are not enough Hunting Rules and Regulations pamphlets available to the public at the places that sell license. Need to have more pamphlets.

LDWF Undersecretary Bryan McClinton stated he would look into the matter and meet with Mr. Coco after the meeting to discuss further

There were no other comments heard

XIII. Adjournment

❖ MOTION by Commissioner Broussard

Commissioner Davis

Second to the motion made by Commissioner Broussard to adjourn the meeting

Chairman Manuel adjourned the meeting