

LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

MINUTES

February 5, 2014

Pat Manuel  
CHAIRMAN

Dan Davis  
VICE CHAIRMAN

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

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

Tapes 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  
LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION  
BATON ROUGE, LA  
February 5, 2015 9:30 AM

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| 1. Roll Call  | 5    |
| 2. Approval of Minutes of January 8, 2015   | 5    |
| 3. Commission Special Announcements/Personal Privilege  | 5    |
| 4. To Hear Enforcement Reports January 2015   | 5    |
| 5. To hear the Stock Assessment reports for Striped Mullet, Black Drum, Southern Flounder, and Sheepshead   | 7    |
| 6. To consider final approval of the Notice of Intent for the Catch and Cook program  | 10   |
| 7. To consider amending the Notice of Intent for the Louisiana Fisheries Forward Program Crab Gear Requirements   | 14   |
| 8. To hear public comment updates on the 2016-2017 Hunting Seasons Notice of Intent   | 17   |
| 9. To Hear a Presentation of LDWF's Louisiana Black Bear Management Plan  | 18   |
| 10. Set June 2015 Meeting Date  | 27   |
| 11. Receive Public Comments   | 27   |
| 12. To consider holding an executive session, pursuant to R.S. 42:17(A)(10), to discuss the Louisiana Legislative Auditor confidential preliminary report on Louisiana Oyster Lease Practices." | 27   |
| 13. To consider a response to the Louisiana Legislative Auditor confidential preliminary report on Louisiana Oyster Lease Practices   | 28   |
| 14. Adjournment   | 28   |

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF  
LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

Thursday, February 5, 2015

Vice Chairman Pat Manuel presiding

Present:

Pat Manuel  
Ronny Graham  
Bart Yakupzack  
Ed Swindell  
Billy Broussard

NOT Present:

Dan Davis

Secretary Barham was present

Wendy Brogdon Called Roll

Chairman Manuel called for a motion for approval of the **January 8, 2015 Commission Minutes**. A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Broussard and seconded by Commissioner Swindell. Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.



For the agenda item, **Commission Special Announcements/Personal Privilege**, Chairman Manuel recognized Dr. Luke LaBorde and his class from the LSU Natural Resource Policy class to observe today's Commission meeting



Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **To Hear Enforcement Reports for January;** to be presented by Lt Col. Martin

There were Five (5) boating accidents reported, Six (6) injuries and Zero (0) Fatality. There were 1132 total cases for the month of January with 555 Written Warnings issued and 30 Public Assistance.

Three (3) News releases were discussed

***Joint Enforcement Agreement Patrol Leads To Recreational Fishing Violations In Plaquemines Parish***

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division agents cited a Belle Chasse man for alleged recreational fishing violations in Plaquemines Parish on Jan. 17.

Agents cited Mot Truong, 36, for taking red snapper during a closed season, taking over the limit of red snapper, taking undersized red snapper, taking undersized grey triggerfish and taking over the limit of grey triggerfish.

Agents came into contact with Truong while on a Joint Enforcement Agreement Patrol (JEA) seven miles offshore in state territorial waters tied to an oil rig in his vessel. Truong was observed fishing on the back deck of the vessel and was stopped and inspected.

When agents boarded the vessel, Truong was in possession of 50 red snapper and 29 grey triggerfish. Of the 50 red snapper, 28 were under the minimum size limit of 16 inches and he exceeded the daily bag limit of two fish by 48 if the season was open. He also exceeded his limit on grey triggerfish by nine and 16 were under the prescribed size limit of 14 inches.

Taking red snapper during a closed season carries a \$250 to \$500 fine and up to 90 days of jail. Taking over the limit of red snapper and grey triggerfish and taking undersized red snapper and grey triggerfish each brings a \$100 to \$350 fine and up to 60 days in jail. Truong also faces a civil restitution for the value of the illegally taken fish in the amount of \$1,468.58.

The red snapper season closed in state waters on Dec. 31, 2014.

Agents participating in the case were Sgt. Adam Young, Lt. Scot Keller and Agent Travis Bartlett.

***Port Sulphur Man Pleads Guilty To Oyster Fishing Violations***

A Port Sulphur pleaded guilty on Jan. 22 in Plaquemines Parish to commercial fishing violations.

Nelson C. Williams III, 39 pleaded guilty for taking commercial fish without a commercial license, taking commercial fish without a vessel license, taking oysters from unleased state water bottoms, violations of the states sanitation code and a third offense of taking oysters from an unapproved area.

Judge Kevin Conner with the 25th Judicial District sentenced Williams to pay a fine of \$2,799 including court costs and 210 days of jail suspended. He also sentenced Williams to 40 hours of community service in a parish litter abatement program, revoked his 2015 commercial oyster licenses and that he have a vessel monitoring system installed on any vessel he harvests oysters for period of one year.

The guilty plea stems from an incident that occurred on Feb. 8, 2014 when Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division agents found Williams harvesting oysters in an area closed to pollution near Port Sulphur. Upon further investigation Williams had no licenses for that year and also had not filled out his log book as required by law.

Jerry Lobrano with the District Attorney Charles Ballay's office prosecuted the case.

Agents involved in the case were Sgts. Adam Young and Villere Reggio.

### ***Two Louisiana Men Cited for Migratory Game Bird Violations***

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division agents cited two Louisiana men for alleged migratory game bird violations on Jan. 18 in Acadia Parish.

Agents cited Matthew Castile, 34, of Lafayette, and Jeremy Soileau, 32, of Ville Platte, for over the limit of ducks, wanton waste of migratory game birds and failing to comply with personal flotation device (PFD) regulations.

Agents observed Castile and Soileau hunting from a pirogue on Bayou Mallet and Agents saw Castile exit the pirogue from the Bayou just before Hwy. 98 with a large stringer full of ducks and hide them behind a tree. Castile and Soileau carried their pirogue up the bank to Castile's truck with another load of ducks.

Agents made contact with Castile and Soileau and were able to retrieve the hidden ducks. Agents found the men with a total of 46 ducks consisting of 26 teal, 11 wood ducks, eight mallards and one pintail. The men also didn't possess a PFD in the pirogue. The legal limit of ducks is six in aggregate per person per day making the men 34 ducks over the limit.

Taking or possessing over the limit of ducks and wanton waste each brings a \$400 to \$950 fine and up to 120 days in jail. Failing to comply with PFD regulations brings up to a \$50 fine and up to 15 days in jail. Agents involved in this case are Sgt. Keith Dellahoussaye, Senior Agent Donald Murray, Senior Agent Derek Logan and Senior Agent Jason Stagg.

Chairman Manuel asked if this was a first offense violation and Lt Martin stated he was not sure

There were no other comments or questions heard



Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **to hear the Stock Assessment reports for Striped Mullet, Black Drum, Southern Flounder and Sheepshead** to be presented by Harry Blanchet

Landings of black drum in Louisiana have remained above 4 million pounds per year in the most recent decade with the exception of 2006. The highest harvests on record (over 10 million pounds) occurred in 1987 and 1988. After commercial regulations were enacted during the 1980s, black drum landings substantially declined. In the most recent years, recreational landings comprise approximately one third of the total Louisiana black drum harvest.

A statistical catch-at-age model is used in this stock assessment update to describe the dynamics of the of the Louisiana black drum stock from 1985-2013. The assessment model projects abundance at age from estimates of abundance in the initial year of the time-series and recruitment estimates in subsequent years. The model is fit to the data with a maximum likelihood fitting criterion. Minimum data requirements are fishery catch-at-age and an index of abundance. Landings are taken from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Trip Ticket Program, National Marine Fisheries Service commercial statistical records, and the NMFS Marine Recreational Information Program. An index of abundance is developed from the LDWF marine trammel net survey. Age

composition of fishery catches are estimated with age-length-keys derived from samples directly of the fishery and a von Bertalanffy growth function.

The conservation threshold established by the Louisiana Legislature for black drum is a 30% spawning potential ratio. Based on results of this assessment, the Louisiana black drum stock is currently neither overfished or experiencing overfishing. The current spawning potential ratio estimate is 36%.

Summary of Changes from 2010 Assessment

In prior assessments (LDWF 1997-2007, 2008, Blanchet 2010), yield and spawner-per-recruit models were used to estimate the impact of fishing pressure on potential yield and spawning potential of black drum in LA waters using fishing mortality rates estimates from an earlier untuned virtual population analysis (LDWF 1990). In this assessment, a statistical catch at age model is used to estimate annual fishing mortality rates and population size from 1985-2013.

Landings of sheepshead in Louisiana have averaged 2.9 million pounds per year in the most recent decade. The highest harvests on record occurred from 1993-2004. After commercial gear restrictions were enacted in 1995, commercial landings substantially declined (40% average decrease from previous years). In the most recent years, recreational landings comprise approximately 60% of the total Louisiana sheepshead harvest

A statistical catch at age model is used in this assessment to describe the dynamics of sheepshead occurring in Louisiana waters from 1981-2013. The assessment model projects abundance at age from estimates of abundance in the initial year of the time-series and recruitment estimates in subsequent years. The model is fit to the data with a maximum likelihood fitting criterion. Minimum data requirements are fishery catch-at-age and an index of abundance. Landings are taken from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Trip Ticket Program, National Marine Fisheries Service commercial statistical records, and the NMFS Marine Recreational Information Program. An index of abundance is developed from the LDWF marine trammel net survey. Age composition of fishery catches are estimated with age-length-keys derived from samples directly of the fishery and von Bertalanffy growth functions.

The conservation threshold established by the Louisiana Legislature for sheepshead is a 30% spawning potential ratio. Based on results of this assessment, the Louisiana sheepshead stock is currently neither overfished or experiencing overfishing. The current spawning potential ratio estimate is 65%.

Summary of Changes from 2008 Assessment

In the prior assessment (Blanchet 2010), an untuned virtual population analysis and yield and spawner-per-recruit models were used to estimate the impact of fishing pressure on potential yield and spawning potential of sheepshead in LA waters. The status of the stock presented in the 2010 report was based on the last eight cohorts available for evaluation (2000-2008). In this assessment, a statistical catch at age model is used to estimate annual age-specific fishing mortality rates and population size from 1981-2013.

Landings of southern flounder in Louisiana have averaged around 0.6 million pounds per year in the most recent decade. The highest harvests on record (1.3-1.4 million pounds) occurred between 1991-1994. After commercial gear restrictions were enacted in 1995, landings substantially declined (an 84 % decrease from previous years). However, recreational landings in the most recent years have trended upward with the highest estimate of the time-series (1.1 million pounds) occurring in 2013.

A statistical catch at age model is used in this assessment to describe the dynamics of southern flounder occurring in Louisiana waters from 1981-2013. The assessment model forward calculates abundance at age from estimates of abundance in the initial year of the time-series and recruitment estimates in subsequent years. The model is fit to the data with a maximum likelihood fitting criterion. Minimum data requirements are fishery catch-at-age and an

index of abundance. Landings are taken from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Trip Ticket Program, National Marine Fisheries Service commercial statistical records, and the NMFS Marine Recreational Information Program. An index of abundance is developed from the LDWF marine trammel net survey. Age composition of fishery catches are estimated with age-length-keys derived from samples directly of the fishery and a von Bertalanffy growth function.

The conservation threshold established by the Louisiana Legislature for southern flounder is a 30% spawning potential ratio. Based on results of this assessment, the Louisiana southern flounder stock is currently neither overfished or experiencing overfishing. The current spawning potential ratio estimate is 50%.

Summary of Changes from 2010 Assessment

In the prior assessment (Blanchet 2010), an untuned virtual population analysis and yield and spawner-per-recruit models were used to estimate the impact of fishing pressure on potential yield and spawning potential of southern flounder in LA waters. Status of the stock presented in the 2010 report was based on the last four cohorts available for evaluation (1999-2002). In this assessment, a statistical catch at age model is used to estimate annual fishing mortality rates and population size from 1981-2013.

Commercial landings of striped mullet *Mugil cephalus* in Louisiana have significantly decreased in the last 20 years, with the highest harvest observed in 1995. The passages of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused substantial reduction in the directed effort of the commercial fleet when compared to previous years. Since 2007, annual harvest has remained below two-million pounds, with extremely low landings in 2009 and 2010. Since 2010, landings have increased, but remain at historically low levels. The marked decline in commercial landings since 2000 can be attributed to impacts from several hurricanes, increases in operating costs, and decreases in the demand and price of roe.

A statistical catch at age model is used in this assessment to describe the dynamics of the Louisiana striped mullet stock (1996-2013). This model uses a maximum likelihood fitting criterion to project population size from abundance estimates in the initial year and recruitment estimates in subsequent years. Fishing mortality is estimated as year and age-specific components. Landings are taken from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Trip Ticket Program and National Marine Fisheries Service commercial statistical records. An index of abundance is developed from the LDWF fishery-independent marine gillnet survey. Age composition of fishery and survey catches are estimated with age-length keys developed from samples directly from the fishery and a von Bertalanffy growth function.

The conservation threshold established by the Louisiana Legislature for striped mullet is a 30% spawning potential ratio. Based on results of this assessment, the Louisiana striped mullet stock is currently neither overfished or experiencing overfishing. The current spawning potential ratio estimate is 68%.

Summary of Changes from 2014 Assessment

Assessment model inputs have been updated through 2013. No changes have been made to the assessment model itself. A correction was made, however, in the fork length- total length conversions in this assessment.

Mr. Blanchet stated that none of the stocks are overfished or under fished

Commissioner Yakupzack asked why the southern flounder commercial take shifted from southeast Louisiana to southwest Louisiana. Mr. Adriance stated the shift could be due to a shift in infrastructure and past storms. Commissioner Manuel asked why are flounder allowed to be sold when it is a sport fish. Mr. Adriance responded that the Legislature allows this exemption.

David Cresson with CCA commented in regards to the flounder stock assessment that there is a scuttle buck in the Lake Charles area that shrimp boats are allowed larger mesh size for the purpose to catch flounder in shrimp nets – and perhaps this is why the flounder have moved west.

Harry Blanchet, Marine Fisheries stated that there is a state wide minimum mesh size with the exception of Vermilion Bay

Commissioner Yakupzack stated he is not questioning the method of take, the concern with the shift. – Recommend to watch the Calcasieu estuary very closely

2013 Harvest – Commercial – 89 thousand pounds (trip ticket data)

Recreational – 1.1 million pounds (recreational survey)

Mr. Blanchet stated part of the LaCreel surveys are to gather data in specific areas in recreational fisheries

Commissioner Yakupzack asked Mr. Blanchet for his opinion on the shift and Mr. Blanchet stated he would go back and research the data and provide him an answer.

Commissioner Broussard asked if LaCreel will cover flounder data and Mr. Blanchet stated that yes it would For the recreational data – there is 30 years of data in the old system; started in the new system this year and working on a solution to incorporate the old data with the new.

There were no other comments heard

Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **To Consider final approval of the Notice of Intent for the Catch and Cook program**, to be presented by Robert Bourgeois

The NOI was presented in December. DHH is drafting code in the DHH Sanitary Code to address public comments heard. The Code does not affect the NOI.

There were no comments or questions heard.

A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Broussard and seconded by Commissioner Graham. Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.

(The full text of the Notice of Intent is made a part of the record)

## **NOTICE OF INTENT**

### **Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Office of Fisheries**

#### **Establishment of the Louisiana Catch and Cook Program and Permit**

The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries hereby gives notice of its intent to establish the Louisiana Catch and Cook Program. The program will allow permitted retail food establishments to prepare certain recreational fish caught by properly licensed fisherman. Rules and regulations, penalties, terms, conditions, requirements and related matters are being proposed.

The secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is authorized to take any and all necessary steps on behalf of the Commission to promulgate and effectuate this Notice of Intent and the Final Rule, including but not limited to, the filing of the Fiscal and Economic Impact Statements, the filing of the Notice of Intent and final Rule and the preparation of reports and correspondence to other agencies of government.

#### **Title 76**

#### **WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES**

#### **PART VII. Fish and Other Aquatic Life**

#### **Chapter 3. Saltwater Sports and Commercial Fishing**

#### **§381. Louisiana Catch and Cook Program and Permit**

A. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is authorized to establish the Louisiana Catch and Cook Program and Permit pursuant to R.S. 56:317. Notwithstanding any provision of the State Sanitary Code or any other law or regulation to the contrary, it shall be lawful for a retail food

establishment to receive and prepare any freshwater or saltwater recreational fish as defined in R.S. 56:8.

B. Any retail food establishment as defined in LAC 51:XXIII.101 (A), is authorized to prepare any fish legally taken and possessed by a licensed recreational fisherman for consumption by that recreational fisherman or any person in his party. The retail food establishment must possess a Louisiana Catch and Cook Program permit issued by the department. Possession of a permit does not exempt the permittee from any other law or regulation.

C. Permittees will be required to abide by the following conditions that shall be enforced by the Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health:

1. The retail establishment shall complete, date, and have the recreational fisherman who brings the fish in for preparation sign an assumption of risk form. The completed, dated, and signed form shall be maintained at the establishment for a period of no less than ninety days. The establishment shall provide the completed forms to the state health officer upon request.

2. The retail food establishment shall receive only fish that have been cleaned, filleted, placed in clean, food-grade, single-service packaging, and properly refrigerated.

3. The retail food establishment shall inspect the fish for freshness and proper receiving temperature.

4. The fish shall be properly labeled with the date, time, and name of the recreational fisherman.

5. The retail food establishment shall store, prepare, and otherwise handle the fish separately from products being prepared for and served to the general public.

6. The retail food establishment shall store, prepare, and otherwise handle the fish in compliance with provisions of the state Sanitary Code (LAC Title 51, Part XXIII).

7. The retail food establishment shall prepare and serve the fish to the recreational fisherman or any person in his party within four hours of receipt of the fish.

8. Containers, preparation tables, cutting boards, utensils, and other food preparation equipment used to prepare and serve the fish shall be properly cleaned and sanitized in accordance with provisions of the state Sanitary Code (LAC Title 51, Part XXIII) prior to use preparing foods to serve to the general public.

9. The fish shall be served directly to the recreational fisherman or any person in his party immediately upon the completion of cooking and shall not be served to the general public.

D. Permits may be obtained at no cost, from the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries or any authorized method. The permit is valid for one calendar year, beginning on January 1 and expiring on December 31 of the same calendar year. The permit may be obtained at any time of the year until November 15 for the current license year. A permit obtained on or after November 15 of the current license year shall be valid for the remainder of the current license year and expires on December 31 of the immediately following license year. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries shall provide the names and locations of each participating retail food establishment to the Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health upon request.

E. Permits may be suspended or revoked by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for any violation of the rules and regulations of this program or on the written recommendation of the Department of Health and Hospitals.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 56:317.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR (October 2014).

### **Family Impact Statement**

In accordance with Act 1183 of 1999 regular session of the Louisiana Legislature, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby issues its Family Impact Statement in connection with the preceding Notice of Intent. This Notice of Intent will have no impact on the six criteria set out at R.S. 49:972(B).

#### **Poverty Impact Statement**

The proposed rulemaking will have no impact on poverty as described in R.S.49:973.

#### **Provider Impact Statement**

This Rule has no known impact on providers as described in HCR 170 of the 2014 Regular Legislative Session

#### **Public Comments**

Written comments may be addressed to Robert Bourgeois, Biologist DCL-B, Office of Fisheries, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000 or via e-mail at [rbourgeois@wlf.la.gov](mailto:rbourgeois@wlf.la.gov) no later than 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, December 3, 2014.

Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **to consider amending the Notice of Intent for the Fisheries Forward Program Crab Gear Requirements**, to be presented by Jason Froeba, Office of Fisheries

Mr. Froeba began stating the proposed changes intends to make language in the final rule consistent with that which was used in the Declaration of Emergency currently governing the program. Additionally, over the first four months of implementation, applicants and LDWF staff identified sections of the rule that would benefit from clarification. This change attempts to provide that clarification. A summary of the changes are:

- Utilization of the legal term “person” under the definition of Mentor and Sponsor
- Clarification that a photo identification is necessary for the application process
- Clarification on which trip tickets are valid to meet the mentor / sponsor eligibility criteria
  - Verifiable tickets that show harvest from Louisiana waters
- Reducing the need for a full SSN to the last 4 digits
- Clarification on when the apprenticeship and sponsorship components can begin
- Requiring copies of trip tickets to be sent at the completion of the apprenticeship process to speed up the approval and validation process

There were no other comments or questions heard.

A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Broussard and seconded by Commissioner Swindell. Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.

(The full text of the Notice of Intent is made a part of the record)

POTPOURRI  
Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Public Hearing—Substantive changes to Louisiana Fisheries Forward Program (LAC 76:VII.347)  
The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries published a Notice of Intent to establish the Louisiana Fisheries Forward Program in the July 20, 2014 edition of the *Louisiana Register* (LR Vol. 40, No. 07). After a thorough review of the proposed rules, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries proposed substantive changes in LAC 76:VII.347 G.2. A public hearing pursuant to R.S. 49:968(H)(2) was conducted October 22, 2014, at 10 a.m., and the changes were accepted. After further review, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries proposes the following substantive changes found in LAC 76:VII.347.B, C.2, E.1, F.1, F.2, F.3, G.1, G.3, H.1.a, and H.1.b. A public hearing pursuant to R.S. 49:968(H)(2) will be conducted March 25, 2015, at 10 a.m. at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70808.

**Title 76**  
**WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES**  
**Part VII. Fish and Other Aquatic Life**

**Chapter 3. Saltwater Sport and Commercial Fishery**

**§ 347. Louisiana Fisheries Forward Program**

- A. ...
- B. For the purposes of this Section, the following will be defined as:  
*applicant*—licensed commercial fishermen attempting to obtain a commercial crab trap gear license through the program;  
*mentor*—a person holding a valid commercial crab trap gear license who mentors an apprentice in completing the apprenticeship path;  
*sponsor*—a person holding a valid commercial crab trap gear license who sponsors an apprentice in completing sponsorship path.
- C. - C.1. ...
2. Before beginning a training path, an applicant must possess a valid Louisiana commercial fisherman's license and submit an application including copies of the applicant and mentor/sponsor's state issue identification to the department for approval. The license number will be used to track participation in the program.
- C.3. - D.1. ...
2. Any person choosing to participate as a mentor shall possess a valid commercial crab trap gear license and have documented a minimum of six trip tickets showing sales of crabs caught in Louisiana in any two of the previous four years.
3. Any person choosing to participate as a sponsor shall possess a valid commercial crab trap gear license and have documented a minimum of six trip tickets showing sales of crabs caught in Louisiana waters in any two of the previous four years.
- E. ...
1. Each applicant must successfully complete an NASBLA-approved boating safety class as required by R.S. 34:851.36.

E.2. - F. ...

1. To initiate the apprenticeship training path the applicant and applicant's mentor must complete and submit an application to the department. The application shall state the intent to participate in apprenticeship training and include the last four digits of the Social Security number, name and address, commercial fishing license number and photocopies of the state-issued photo identification of both the applicant and the applicant's mentor. Additionally, the mentor's valid commercial crab trap gear license number must be provided.

2. The applicant shall complete a minimum of 200 hours of apprenticeship training related to crab fishing under supervision of the applicant's designated mentor. Training hours shall be recorded daily on training log forms provided by the department. Copies of the training logs shall be submitted to the department on a quarterly basis. A minimum of 100 hours of training shall be performed and logged on days when the applicant's mentor has harvested and reported trip ticket sales of crabs. Any previous work or training experience in the crab fishery conducted prior to the date of approval of the apprenticeship by the department shall not count toward the applicant's total required hours.

3. Upon completion, the applicant and mentor must complete and submit a notarized affidavit signed by both the applicant and the mentor and include the original signed training log forms along with copies of the trip tickets evidencing harvesting hours. The affidavit shall be provided by the department and indicate the completion of the apprenticeship, affirm the accuracy of the associated log forms and corresponding trip tickets, and include the name, address, and commercial fishing license of both the applicant and the mentor.

G. ...

1. To initiate the sponsorship training path the applicant and applicant's sponsor must complete and submit an application to the department. The application shall state the intent to participate in sponsorship training and include the last four digits of the Social Security number, name and address, commercial fishing license number and photocopies of state issued photo identification of both the applicant and the applicant's sponsor. Additionally, the sponsor's valid commercial crab trap gear license number must be provided.

2. ...

3. Upon completion, the applicant and sponsor must complete and submit a notarized affidavit signed by both the applicant and the sponsor and include copies of the trip tickets used to evidence the required crab fishing trips. The affidavit shall be provided by the department and indicate the completion of the sponsorship, affirm the accuracy of the associated trip tickets, and include the name, address, and commercial fishing license of both the applicant and the sponsor.

H. - H.1. ...

a. Each hour of meeting attendance shall substitute for one hour of the apprenticeship requirement. Every 10 hours of meeting attendance shall substitute for one fishing trip of the sponsorship requirement.

b. A maximum 50 hours of meeting attendance may be substituted for the apprenticeship requirements, or a maximum 5 fishing trips may be substituted for the sponsorship requirements. Attendance at meetings or educational events shall be documented by a designated department employee or agent. The applicant shall sign in upon arrival, present a valid photo ID and provide their commercial license number. Upon departure, the applicant shall sign out.

2. - 2.b. ...

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 56:305.6.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Notice of Intent by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR 41:

**Public Hearing**

A public hearing will be held on March 25, 2015, at 10 a.m. at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70808.

Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **to hear public comment updates on the Notice of Intent for the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 General and WMA Hunting Seasons and Rules and Regulations**, to be presented by Steve Smith, Office of Wildlife  
Mr. Smith stated the comments received are as follows-

- Comments via email, mail, phone call, in person:
  - 13 email comments
  - 0 mail comments
  - 1 telephone comment
  - 0 in-person comment
- Total Comments Related to Proposed Changes
  - 7 opposed to motor restrictions on Biloxi WMA
  - 3 in favor of addition of pistols to primitive gear
  - 1 concerned with addition of pistols to primitive gear
  - 1 in favor of addition of bird dogs to Small Game Emphasis Areas
  - 1 opposed to additional either-sex firearms days on Sherburne WMA
  - 1 opposed to change in dates for beagles for rabbit and dogs for squirrel on Tensas NWR

A comment was heard from Mr. Larry Duplantis Jr. – Grant Parish - hunting mourning dove in Kisatchie  
Mr. Smith will meet with Mr. Duplantis after the meeting to address his specific questions with him

A comment was heard from Mr. Steve Coburn –Grant and Winn Parish forestry land has not included to hear from the private land owners. The land owners want a change to have the days not so scattered around. The land owners and public should be included in the decision making process.

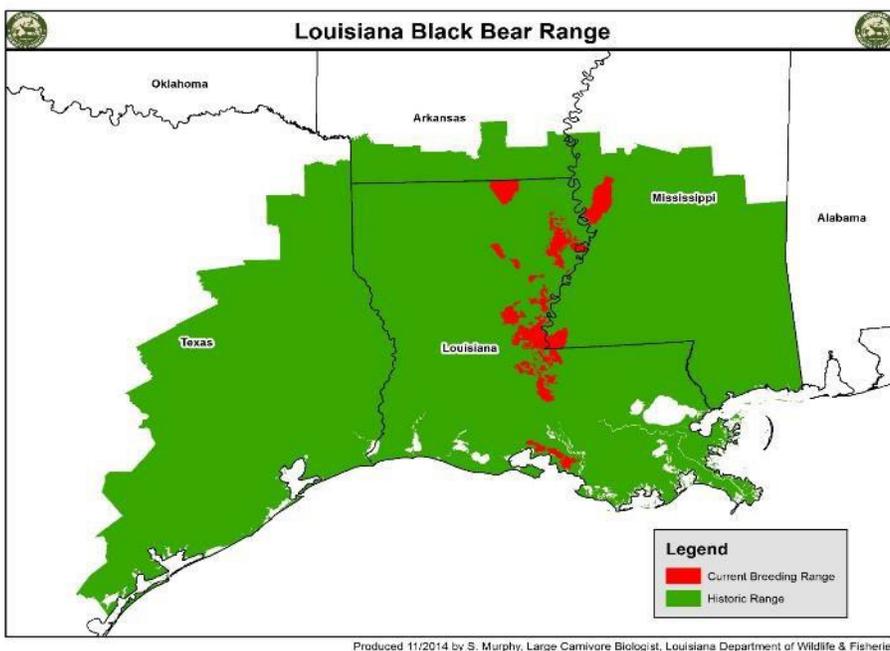
Commissioner Graham asked Mr. Smith if they could recommend – Mr. Smith stated following the meeting he will meet with Mr. Coburn and the USFWS personnel to discuss his concerns.

Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **to hear a presentation of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Louisiana Black Bear Management Plan** to be presented by Sean Murphy. Mr. Murphy began with the Management Objective for the Louisiana Black Bear which is to maintain a sustainable black bear population in suitable habitat for the benefit of the species and Louisianans.

**Post-Delisting Monitoring Plan (PDM)**

A plan to monitor continued threats to the Louisiana black bear in the event the United States Fish and Wildlife Service delists the subspecies.

If delisting occurs, all goals and strategies outlined in the PDM will be adopted and implemented by LDWF for 7 years post-delisting.



**Conservation Goal and Strategies**

**GOAL**

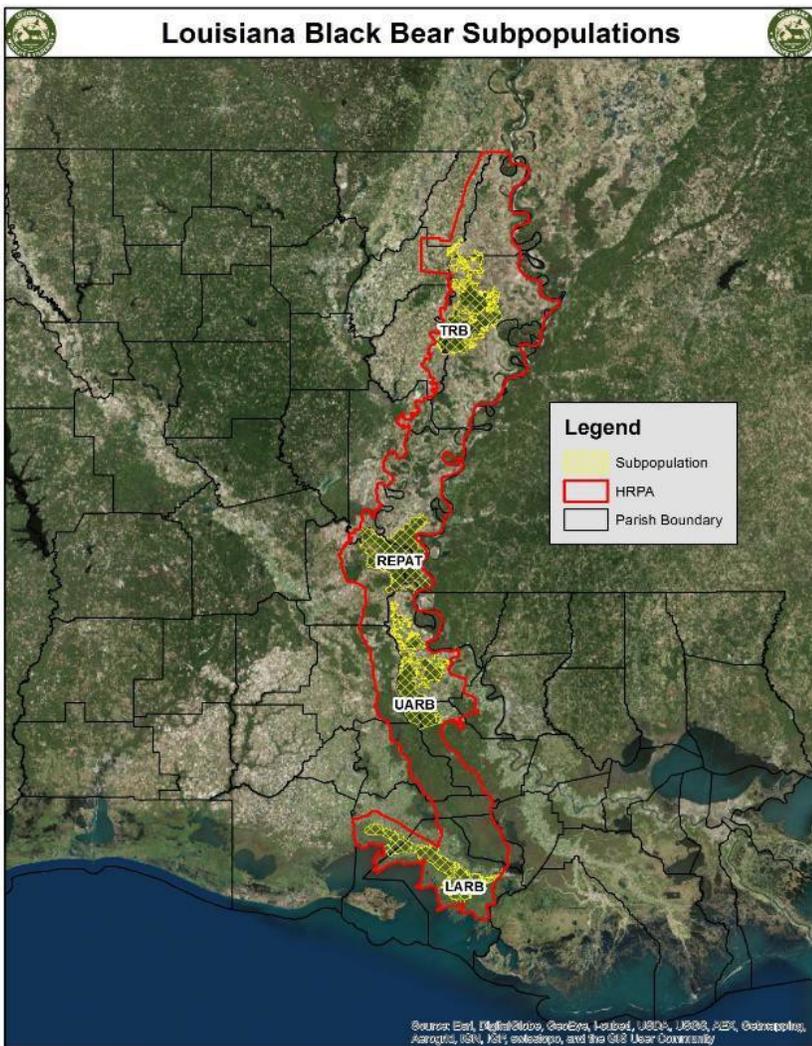
Maintain a sustainable black bear population in suitable habitat for the benefit of the species and Louisianans.

**STRATEGIES**

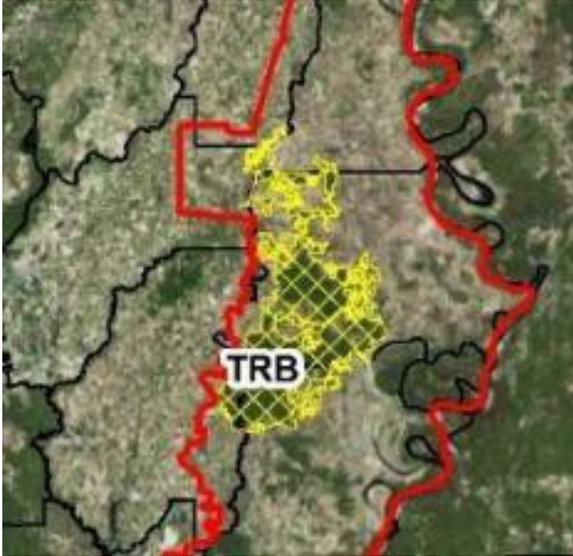
Population conservation – monitored to evaluate continued persistence and range expansion, as well as connectivity and gene flow

Habitat Conservation – Current management on protected habitat will continue and additional habitat will be identified to further enhance connectivity and range expansion

Population Status and Conservation  
Status of individual Subpopulations

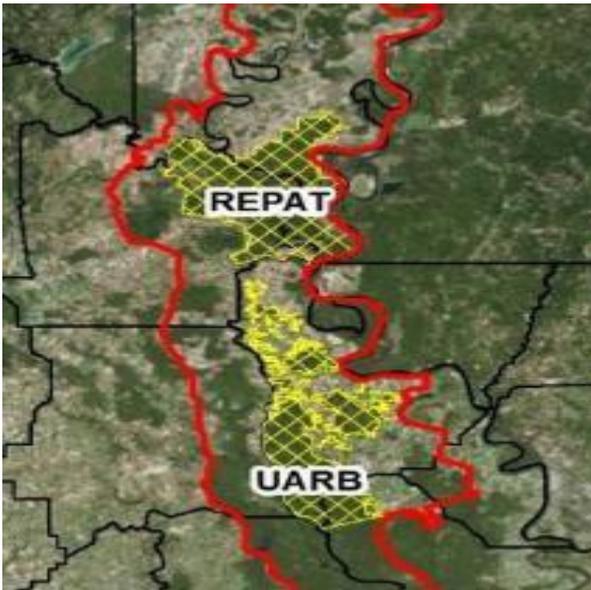


Tensas River Basin Subpopulation (TRB)  
Largest Subpopulation  
Adult Females = 133-165  
Annual adult female survival very high ( $S > .97$ )  
Probability of persistence  $>95.8\%$

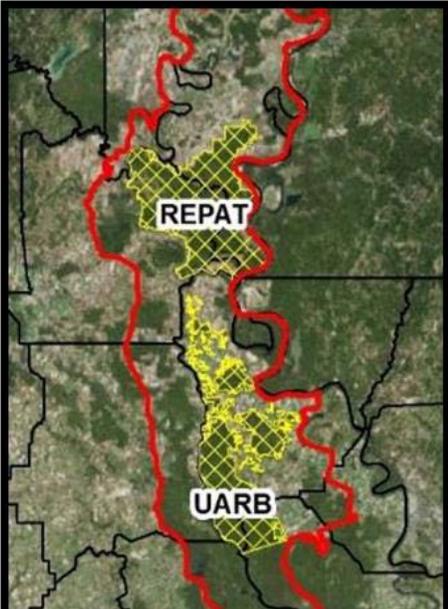


Repatriated Subpopulation (REPAT)  
48 females with 104 cubs relocated between 2001- 2009

No current population estimate  
Annual adult female survival at .93-.97  
Probability of persistence ranges from .295-.99  
Likely a result of sparse data



Upper Atchafalaya River Basin Subpopulation (UARB)  
Adult Females = 25-44  
Annual adult female survival at .93-.97  
Probability of persistence ranges from .849 - .999



Lower Atchafalaya River Basin Subpopulation (LARB)  
Adult Females = 68 - 84  
Annual adult female survival at .81 - .84  
Likely isolated from all other LA bear subpopulations



Population Conservation Actions

Table 3.1. Current and future LDWF research projects for Louisiana black bears during 2014–2019. Research projects include non-invasive hair snares to estimate demographic and genetic characteristics (A), live-trapping to deploy radio-collars for survival and cause-specific mortality estimation (B), and winter den checks to monitor reproductive vital rates (C).

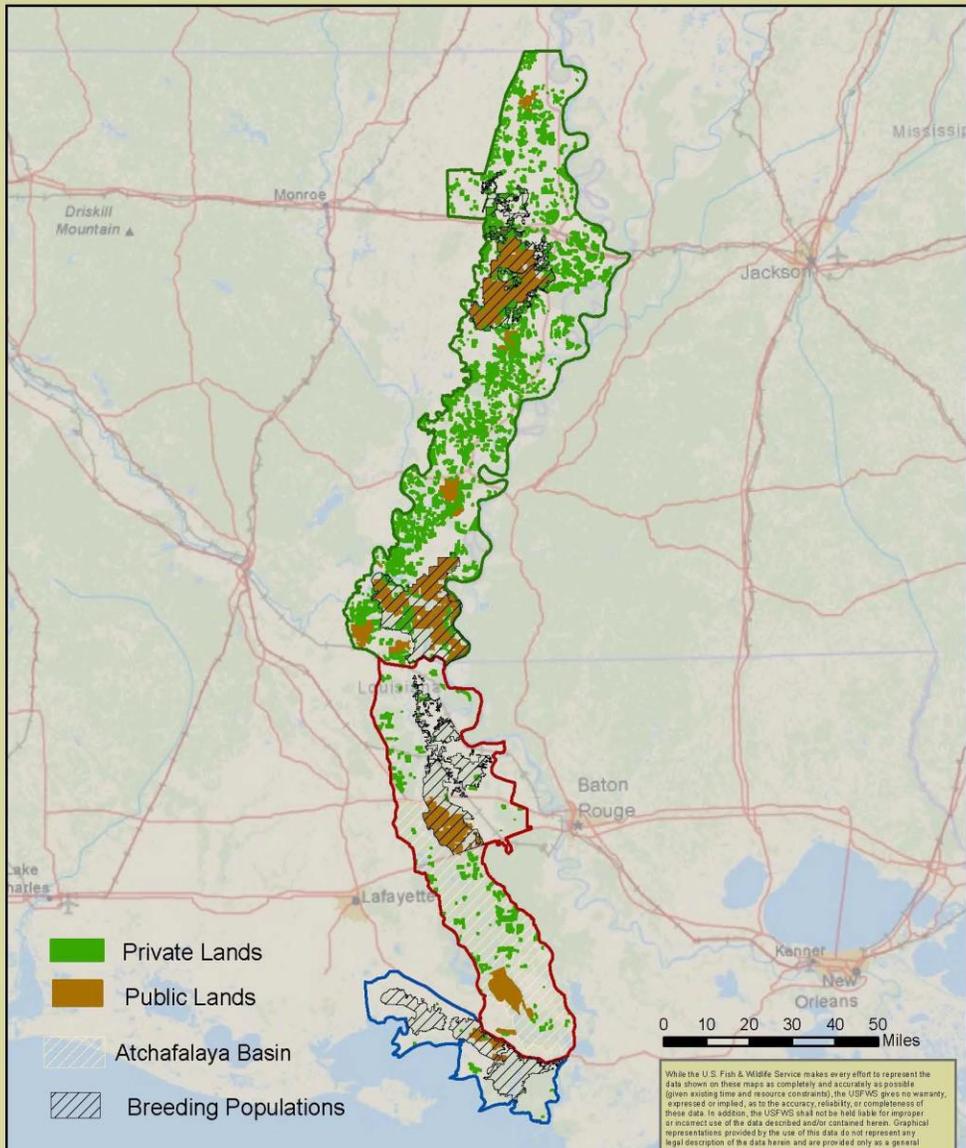
| Subpopulation | Annual Research Projects |      |      |      |      |      |
|---------------|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
|               | 2014                     | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| TRB           | ABC                      | ABC  | ABC  | ABC  | ABC  | ABC  |
| REPAT         | ABC                      | BC   | BC   | BC   | BC   | ABC  |
| UARB          | ABC                      | ABC  | ABC  | ABC  | ABC  | ABC  |
| LARB          | BC                       | BC   | BC   | BC   | BC   | BC   |

#### Habitat Status and Conservation

- The habitat conservation objective of LDWF:
- To increase habitat quality, quantity, and connectivity to support a Louisiana black bear metapopulation

Table 3.2. Permanently protected and conservation lands\* within the Louisiana black bear Habitat Restoration Planning Area (HRPA) in 1991 and 2014. Modified from U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service (2013). \**Conservation Lands* refers to both permanently protected and long-term, but not permanently protected lands (e.g., CRP lands).

| <b>Area</b>                   | <b>1991</b> | <b>2014</b> | <b>% of Total Area (2014)</b> |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Tensas River Basin            | 85,000 ac   | 564,476 ac  | 27.47                         |
| Upper Atchafalaya River Basin | 141,000 ac  | 257,486 ac  | 21.44                         |
| Lower Atchafalaya River Basin | 1,200 ac    | 12,053 ac   | 3.29                          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | 227,200 ac  | 834,015 ac  | 23.03                         |



## **MANAGEMENT**

- Public Support for Black Bear Conservation and Management
- Public attitude surveys
- Education and Outreach
- Hunters and Trappers
- Teachers and Educators
- Louisiana Urban Residents
- Louisiana Rural Residents
- General Interest

### Human-Bear Conflict

- No action
- Indirect action
- Technical Assistance
- Aversive conditioning
- Relocation
- Removal
- Large Carnivore Conflict Resolution Team
- Law Enforcement
- Communities

### Bear Management Areas

- Used to monitor range expansion, mortality, and conflict
- If federal protection lifted, will be used to determine areas available for harvest



## Harvest

If delisted, harvest may be implemented with approval from the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission.

BMAs considered for harvest based on multiple factors that influence viability

A harvest model would be constructed to determine sustainable yield while considering existing rates of non-hunting anthropogenic mortality.

## Laws and Regulations

The potential future removal from federal protections will not alter or negate state penalties for the illegal take of a Louisiana black bear.

## ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

Economic Impacts

Ecological Impacts

Social Impacts

Commissioner Swindell asked if the plan was “pre-mature” at this point  
 Mr. Murphy stated that no, it was not too early for the plan

Commissioner Graham asked if we were working with USFWS on D-Listing and Mr. Murphy said he was not sure of that process as that is a federal action.

There were no other comments or questions heard.

Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **to set the June 2015 Meeting Date**

A discussion took place and the meeting is set for June 4, 2015.

A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Broussard and seconded by Commissioner Graham. Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.

Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **To Hear Public Comments,**

Ryan Gosulin – Mechanical Engineer, St Martin Parish

Owns a camp at Sycamore Point. Would like to propose change to personal water craft rules and regulations on Vermilion Bay / Rockefeller Marsh Island. He stated that jet skis are prohibited. Based on his research, he finds that personal water sport crafts pose no danger

There were no other comments heard.

Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **to consider holding an executive session, pursuant to R.S. 42:17(A)(10), to discuss the Louisiana Legislative Auditor confidential preliminary report on Louisiana Oyster Lease Practices.”**

A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Graham and seconded by Commissioner Broussard. Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.

Sam Slavich – Oyster Task Force member, Oyster Dealers and Growers Taskforce - Mr. Slavich is asking to be made aware of the Auditor’s report on Oyster Lease Practices. This is a very sensitive topic to holders across the state.

Commissioner Manuel stated that the LLA informed him that the audit remain private as it is not yet been published.

Joe Macaluso, *The Advocate* – Asked why does the Executive Session have to convene to discuss a public document

Fred Whitrock, General Counsel – Stated that the Legislative Auditors report has not been released. The LLA gives the agency an opportunity to address the report before it is released.

No action can be taken in an Executive Session

Mitch Jurisich – Oyster Taskforce member - Very concerned about private meetings and audits that the Taskforce cannot see or attend. His thought is that a Taskforce member should be allowed to sit in on the meeting since it concerns oysters

Rob Campo – Agrees with both Mr. Jurisich and Mr. Slavich on the concerns of not being able to know what’s in the report

## **Commission convened into Executive Session**

### **Commission meeting reconvened**

Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **to consider a response to the Louisiana Legislative Auditor confidential preliminary report on Louisiana Oyster Lease Practices**

Commissioner Yakupzack made a motion to respond to the LLA indicating that the Commission has seen the report and any matters brought before the Commission would be considered at that time  
The motion was seconded by Commissioner Broussard

There being no further business, Chairman Manuel **Adjourned** the meeting

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Pat Manuel, Chairman