

**LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

**June 1, 2006**

**TERRY D. DENMON  
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, LOUISIANA**  
**JUNE 1, 2006**

	Page
1. Roll Call	1
2. Approval of Minutes of April 26, 2006 & May 4, 2006	1
3. Commission Special Announcements/Personal Privilege	1
4. Introduction of A. Kell McInnis, III, Executive Director, Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation	1
5. To consider a Resolution for the No License Required Fishing Weekend and further providing with respect thereto	2
6. To consider a Resolution in support of the Governor's position regarding Freeport McMoran Open Loop LNG Facility and further providing with respect thereto	3
7. To consider Rule Ratification relative to Spotted Seatrout Management Measures and further providing with respect thereto	6
8. To receive and hear Enforcement & Aviation Reports/ May	12
9. To consider Waterfowl Zones and Splits and further providing with respect thereto	12
10. To receive and hear Dove information pertaining to 2006 season	14
11. Set October 2006 Meeting Date	15
12. Receive Public Comments	15
13. Adjournment	15

MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF  
LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

Thursday, June 1, 2006

Chairman Terry Denmon presiding.

Earl King  
Frederic Miller  
Patrick Morrow  
Henry Mouton  
Wayne Sagrera  
Robert Samanie, III

Secretary Dwight Landreneau was also present.

Chairman Denmon called for a motion for approval of the **April 26, 2006 and May 4, 2006 Commission Minutes**. A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Samanie and seconded by Commissioner Miller. The motion passed with no opposition.

Under **Commission Special Announcements/Personal Privilege** for this month, Commissioner King stated that Commissioner Samanie and Col. Winton Vidrine came with a 12 noon opening instead of 6 AM for the spring shrimp season. This new format has worked well for the enforcement agents and he then commended both individuals for bringing it forward. Commissioner Sagrera reinforced Commissioner King's comments by stating he received several calls on the noon shrimp opening. From the people he has spoken to, everything worked out great since they were able to catch "all of the shrimp". Chairman Denmon asked if the season had ever opened at noon before and he was told no, that was the first time.

**Introduction of A. Kell McInnis, III, Executive Director, Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation** began with Secretary Dwight Landreneau stating that he was really excited to make this announcement. The Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation has been a working arm of the Department supporting projects that were not necessarily in the budget as well as work closely with the Information Section. Mr. John Campbell, who was attending the meeting, worked as an ex-officio director of the Foundation. Recently financial support has allowed for the hiring of an Executive Director. One of the major functions of the Executive Director would be to find money to support the Foundation and projects of the Department. In searching to fill this position, 25 to 30 applications were received followed by a very extensive interview process. A cooperative endeavor

agreement between the Foundation and Department was reached where the Department would provide an office space for the Executive Director. Secretary Landreneau then introduced the new Executive Director for the Foundation, Mr. Kell McInnis. Mr. McInnis stated he has spent time working with the Commission and Department some years ago and it has been a life long dream to be involved with the outdoors. He added that he cannot think of a better job than to assist the Department on behalf of the Foundation. Mr. McInnis stated it was a pleasure to be back with the Department and he looked forward to working with the Commission in better serving the Department. With the Foundation being a charitable organization, he noted that the funds committed would be available by designation and/or general purposes. Being able to be on site would allow the opportunity to work directly with the employees on a day to day basis. Chairman Denmon welcomed Mr. McInnis on behalf of the Commission and offered their assistance if needed.

**To consider a Resolution for the No License Required Fishing Weekend and further providing with respect thereto** was handled by Mr. John Sturgis. The Resolution declared 2 no license required fishing days in the state of Louisiana which would encourage residents and non-residents to enjoy the sport of fishing. Mr. Sturgis then read the Therefore Be It Resolved portion of the Resolution. Commissioner Morrow made a motion to adopt the Resolution and it was seconded by Commissioner Sagera. The motion passed with no opposition.

(The full text of the Resolution is made a part of the record.)

## **RESOLUTION**

### **LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**WHEREAS,** sportfishing provides recreation for more than sixty million Americans of all ages, giving families a healthy, shared outdoor activity, and

**WHEREAS,** sportfishing, through the payment of millions of dollars annually for licenses, taxes and fees, has provided the funding for federal and state programs that contributes significantly to the preservation and protection of our natural environment, and

**WHEREAS,** the estimated 970,000 plus sportfishermen in Louisiana spend in excess of \$703 million annually, and

**WHEREAS,** Act 301 of the 1987 Louisiana Legislature authorizes the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to declare no more than two no license required recreational fishing days each year, and

**WHEREAS,** no license required recreational fishing days during National Fishing Week would provide an excellent opportunity to introduce additional individuals to the wholesome outdoor activity of fishing.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** that we the undersigned members of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission do hereby officially declare the week of June 05 - 11, 2006 as

**FISHING WEEK**

in the state of Louisiana, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that June 10 & 11, 2006 are hereby declared No License Required Recreational Fishing Days, during which residents and non-residents may exercise the privileges of a licensed recreational fisherman without purchase of any otherwise necessary recreational fishing license.

Date: June 01, 2006

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Terry D. Denmon  
Chairman

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Earl P. King, Jr.  
Vice-Chairman

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Patrick C. Morrow

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Henry M. Mouton

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Bobby Samanie, III

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Frederic L. Miller

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Wayne J. Sagrera

**To consider a Resolution in support of the Governor’s position regarding Freeport McMoran Open Loop LNG Facility and further providing with respect thereto** began with Commissioner Miller stating he asked the Department to prepare a Resolution for the Commission’s consideration. He added that he was not sure of how closely his fellow Commissioners followed this situation and he wanted the public to understand what went into the Governor’s action on wanting to protect the State’s marine resources with respect to the proposed liquified natural gas (LNG) projects. Commissioner Miller began to read the Resolution and noted there was a LNG plant on the Calcasieu River and another one or two onshore and it uses the closed loop technology which utilizes LNG to run machinery which vaporizes the LNG. The difference in the open loop was that the open loop proposes to use seawater to circulate within the plant and vaporize the gas. Chairman Denmon

interrupted Commissioner Miller noting he was familiar with the project and then asked that the Therefore Be It Resolved portion of the Resolution be read. Commissioner King thanked Commissioner Miller for bringing the Resolution forward. Chairman Denmon agreed and thanked him also. Commissioner Sagrera stated, last year when he was Chairman he was interviewed about this subject and told them he felt it was a good project but did not support it unless the science was proven. He felt everyone was in favor of utilizing the resources of the state, but there was an obligation to protect the species. Commissioner Morrow felt the stand by Governor Blanco sent a message that Louisiana does care about its ecosystem and would take every step necessary to protect it. Commissioner Miller made a motion to adopt the Resolution and it was seconded by Commissioner King. The motion passed with no opposition. Before moving on, Commissioner Miller expressed appreciation to the staff for their work in preparing information the Governor based her decision upon and for the extreme amount of heat taken over an extended period of time before the decision was made.

(The full text of the Resolution is made a part of the record.)

## RESOLUTION

### IN SUPPORT OF PROTECTING NATURAL RESOURCES OF LOUISIANA AND THE NORTHERN GULF OF MEXICO

June 1, 2006

WHEREAS, Freeport McMoran's Main Pass Energy Hub Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) deepwater port license application proposed the use of open rack vaporization technology (ORV) off the coast of Louisiana, and

WHEREAS, lack of data has been LDWF's main concern throughout the licensing deliberations for all of the proposed deepwater port LNG terminals, as the primary impact of ORV terminals would be mortality to the early life stages of marine organisms, whose occurrence and density are highly variable in both time and space, while the only long-term data available to evaluate the impact of these systems does not provide seasonal, site-specific, or depth-stratified data, and is not adequate as an environmental baseline or assessment tool, and

WHEREAS, in a letter of May 17, 2005 to Mr. John Jamian, Acting Maritime Administrator, Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco formulated guidelines for future development of open rack vaporization LNG facilities off the coast of Louisiana, and

WHEREAS, that letter stated: "As a state supportive of LNG development, we have tried to work within the current licensing system to allow offshore LNG

development but also protect our fishery resources. Despite our best efforts to work with your agency and LNG developers, based on the inadequacy of current data, we are unable to reach an acceptable comfort level with the potential risks presented by the cumulative impacts of multiple offshore LNG facilities that use the open rack vaporizer system. Considering these ongoing concerns, I [Governor Blanco] will oppose the licensing of offshore LNG terminals that will use the open rack vaporizer system. Until studies demonstrate that the operation of the ORV will not have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding ecosystem, I [Governor Blanco] will only support offshore LNG terminals using a closed loop system having negligible impacts to marine life." and

WHEREAS, alternative technologies are available for re-gasification of LNG without the potential impacts on fish and invertebrate populations, and

WHEREAS, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Mississippi Bureau of Marine Resources, the Governor of Alabama, and the Alabama Bureau of Marine Resources have expressed concerns regarding the use of any ORV system in the Gulf of Mexico, and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in a number of letters to Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco recommended that any project that would use ORV not be approved until sufficient data have been collected and assessed so that we can clearly understand the impacts of these types of facilities on Louisiana fisheries, and

WHEREAS, Governor Blanco vetoed the Main Pass Energy Hub LNG application on May 5, 2006, saying, "As stewards of the public trust, this office and our state agencies and executive departments have both a constitutional and a statutory duty to preserve and protect Louisiana's coastal and offshore marine environment, ecosystem, and fisheries for the benefit of our current and future citizens. The approval of the pending license application, without sufficient persuasive data in support, would be inconsistent with this public trust doctrine."

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby states its support of sound science and its opposition to the use of open rack vaporization technology in LNG terminals in Gulf of Mexico waters adjacent to the State of Louisiana until sufficient data have been collected and evaluated so that we can clearly understand the impacts of these types of facilities on Louisiana's fisheries.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries



Commission commends Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco's decision to support sound science and to preserve and protect Louisiana's coastal fisheries by disapproval of open rack LNG facilities at this time.

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Terry D. Denmon, Chairman  
Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

**To consider Rule Ratification relative to Spotted Seatrout Management Measures and further providing with respect thereto** was also handled by Commissioner Miller. He stated that after the passage of time for the Notice of Intent and the Legislative Oversight Committees, the proposed rule was now ready for final approval. Chairman Denmon asked for comments from the Commission and reminded everyone that the Department was asked to supply information on the proposal. Hearing no comments at the moment, the Department came with their presentation. Mrs. Karen Foote relayed that Mr. Harry Blanchet would review public comments received, review some of the information presented at the January meeting and then provide the effects of the proposal from a conservation perspective. Mr. Blanchet began noting public comments were heard at the January, April and May Commission Meetings. From the January meeting, 5 individuals and 1 representing an organization spoke in favor of the proposal and an additional 5 were in favor but did not speak; the May meeting had 13 in favor of the proposal that did not speak and 3 individuals and 2 others representing organizations that spoke in favor. Those not in favor of the proposal consisted of 2 individuals from the January meeting; from the April meeting, 2 persons representing organizations requested further study, 1 person representing an organization voiced opposition, and another person filled out a comment card noting opposition; and 1 person was opposed to the proposal but did not speak at the May meeting. Written comments received in favor of the proposed rule were from five local Representatives and Senators, 8 individuals, a petition with 29 signatures, 392 postcards with 7 asking for more stringent regulations, 3 e-mails, a letter from the Executive Director of the Southwest Louisiana Convention and Visitors Bureau and a resolution from the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury. Written comments opposed to the proposal came from 7 individuals, 1 resolution from a non-governmental organization, 1 letter from East Ascension Sportsmen's League, a resolution from the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, HCR 42 of the 2006 First Extraordinary Legislative Session, 15 postcards and 32 e-mails. Also received were 3 phone calls opposed to the proposed regulation.

Then Mr. Blanchet talked about management background and noted the spotted seatrout recreational fishery regulation has a minimum size limit of 12 inches and a 25 fish creel limit with 2 fish that may exceed 25 inches total length in an area described including Calcasieu and Sabine Lakes. Commercial harvest is limited to permitted fishermen using a commercial rod and reel with a 14 inch minimum size limit. Commercial harvest statewide has ranged from 19,000 to 109,000 pounds with Calcasieu Lake's harvest being minimal. Fishery independent information on abundance and distribution has been collected across the state including Calcasieu Lake since 1986. The fish caught, including spotted seatrout, using various gears were identified, weighed, measured, and sex information collected.

Indicators show that stocks throughout Louisiana and in Calcasieu Lake are at healthy levels. Based on this knowledge, Mr. Blanchet stated they did not expect the rule to increase recruitment of young spotted seatrout to the fishery, but it would redistribute the catch among harvesters. Samples from recent years showed an increase in the overall abundance for all size classes taken in experimental gill nets. Mr. Blanchet talked about the challenge in obtaining information from all fishermen including charter guides on the status of spotted seatrout fishery in Calcasieu Lake. From data that was collected, it can be summarized that the proposed rule was projected to reduce the average catch per angler by about 11 ½ percent. This reduction did not mean there would be an increased number of fish in the water with natural mortality and release mortality occurring. Spotted seatrout stocks go through a high degree of natural variation due to differences in recruitment, survival of year class fish from natural happenings such as cold fronts, freezes, etc. These differences may be different throughout the State as well as from year to year. Mr. Blanchet added that the proposal was expected to have little effect on the overall status of the spotted seatrout. He concluded noting that if changes in the regulations were needed to have conservation effects, those changes would have to be much greater than that proposed. Mrs. Foote commented that the Department feels the proposed regulation was not biologically necessary and would have little effect on redistributing catch.

Following the presentation, Commissioner Miller commented that the proposal would not help anything, but it would do no harm to the resource. Mrs. Foote agreed. Commissioner Samanie asked what was the stock assessment in Cameron and Calcasieu as compared to the rest of the state. Mr. Blanchet stated they do stock assessments statewide, not by basin. Commissioner King asked if the area impacted was south of Lake Charles and included the estuaries out to the 3 mile limit. Mr. Blanchet answered yes. Commissioner King then asked if there was an idea on how many square miles this involved. Mr. Blanchet stated it was Big Lake, Sabine Lake, adjacent marshes and the territorial sea offshore. Commissioner King asked what would be the eastern point for the proposed regulation. Mr. Blanchet stated that was a described line that follows highways to the eastern side of Calcasieu Lake down to the Mermentau River, the western bank of the Mermentau River to the shoreline and then southward to the edge of the territorial sea. Commissioner Morrow asked if the hurricanes has had an impact on the spotted seatrout. Mr. Blanchet remarked there was no significant mortality, but there was redistribution of the fishery and a reduction in people being able to go fish. He noted he has not compared what was seen this year with prior years, and added that staff were seeing what they would expect. One problem to consider was higher salinities in the estuaries along with a lack of rain. Commissioner Morrow asked if there has been an influx of crabs and shrimp into the estuary. Mr. Blanchet stated it could affect the growth rate, but it had not been narrowed down. Chairman Denmon then opened the meeting for public comments.

Mr. Jeff Poe, owner of Big Lake Guide Service, stated he has been a fishing guide on Calcasieu Lake for the past 25 years. He added that this has been the best fishing year with catches being more than they have ever caught. Even on windy days, Mr. Poe stated they were able to catch fish and did not have to cancel trips. He added that if the change would not improve the fishery, then there was no need to do it. Mr. Poe felt the proposal

may hurt his business since some fishermen may go “right up the road” and be able to catch more fish. A point to consider was that when salinities level are low, spotted seatrout leave and may not come back which was what occurred last year. Also, Mr. Poe noted there was seismographic working going on last year during their prime fishing months of April, May and June. He added there were no crab traps from Commissary Point north catching crabs and trot line fishermen were not catching any fish due to the seismic work. Again, Mr. Poe stated this has been the best fishing year he has ever seen and they were catching fish in places they normally would not until later in the year. He concluded stating he was against the proposed regulation especially with there not being a biological need for it. Commissioner Morrow asked Mr. Poe how many guide service boats are on the lake on any given day. Mr. Poe stated it was between 20 and 30 boats but there were not as many as before Hurricane Rita. Then Commissioner Morrow asked how many times a day they go out and Mr. Poe responded stating once a day.

Mr. William Newlin, a former netter, stated he was against the change since he sees more trout now than when he netted fish. He knew that in 1997 there was always biological data to point to low production, but did not hear anything about that from the Department. Mr. Newlin stated he was told there could not be a zone law, but felt this regulation created a zone law in Big Lake. He also did not feel the Department had enough agents to enforce this regulation. Mr. Newlin commented that there was a need to have all of the data in hand before placing a creel limit reduction.

Mrs. Mary Poe, owner of Big Lake Guide Service, stated she was against the proposal to change the creel limit. With Hurricane Rita, there has been plenty of devastation in Cameron Parish. She thought that tourism was about the only thing left in the parish and those tourists were coming to go fishing. With no biological data, Mrs. Poe did not think they should be turning people away or pushing them to other parts of the state. She ended by thanking the Commission since this was such a big issue, but noted Big Lake did not need a creel reduction.

Mr. Nelson Roth, President of Coastal Conservation Association of Louisiana, reiterated their support to reduce the trout creel in southwest Louisiana to 15 fish. From a survey of their membership conducted last year, 2 important statistics were learned. First, 76 percent of CCA members from all parts of Louisiana were in favor of reducing the creel in Calcasieu Lake. The other statistic was that 85 percent of those who regularly fished Calcasieu Lake were in favor of the reduction. He added the proposed creel reduction was a proactive step that could only help the resource. On behalf of the CCA Louisiana membership, Mr. Roth officially endorsed this particular effort.

Mr. Erik Rue, owner of Calcasieu Charter Service, expressed he was in favor of the proposal. He stated it was different that people were fighting to get less and this was not something seen a whole lot when it came to wildlife. With the concern for the direction the lake was going the last few years, Mr. Rue thought this was a good move in the right direction and supported it.

Chairman Denmon then noted Mr. Jack Lawton, Mr. Gus Schram, Mr. Jeff Angers, Mr. Shane Himel, Mr. Stephen Stroderd, Mr. Brandon Guillory, Mr. Steve Shaddock and Mr. Lock Paret did not wish to speak but were in favor of the proposed.

Mr. Will Drost, a recreational fisherman, agreed with everything Mr. Jeff Poe said. But he felt this was not just about the fish you catch today or tomorrow, but about the years ahead. He knew that people came from all over to fish the area and it was the fish that were suffering. One thing, according to Mr. Drost, that Mr. Poe did not mention was that there use to be as many as 20 groups of birds on fish on the lake, but now you may see one group which could attract as many as 20 boats. Mr. Drost felt this was a proactive positive approach and asked the Commission to vote for it so a quality fishery could continue over there.

Mr. Robert Watts agreed with all of the comments made about how great the fishing on Big Lake was and that it was as good as it has ever been. He stated he was against the proposal because it would not stop at Big Lake. He also agreed with Mr. Poe that the people would go east to fish, and this regulation may eventually push east and end up being statewide. From surveys he has seen, Mr. Watts stated that 67 percent of 1700 votes from one poll were against the proposal. From the Louisiana Sportsman poll, almost 57 percent were against the proposed regulation. Comparing the 300,000 saltwater licenses sold in 2005 with the 30,000 CCA membership represented only 10 percent of the saltwater fishermen in favor. The silent majority not being heard were afraid that this type regulation may spread to other parts of the state. Mr. Watts concluded stating there was no biological data to support the change and added that a fishery cannot be managed based on people's feelings.

Mr. Troy Stine stated his family has had a camp on and fished in Big Lake for the past 30 years. He was more worried about this being a future issue than he was this being a guide issue or an east and west issue. Mr. Stine then talked about the growth in the area and the fishing pressure on the lake. He agreed there may not be enough data, but felt it would help the common guy that wants to take his children fishing and have hope for the future. He asked that the Commission consider the limit.

Chairman Denmon then stated that Mr. Chas Drost, Ms. Winifred Shaddock, Mr. William Shaddock, Mr. Kirk Stansel and Ms. Cammie Shaddock were in favor of the proposal but did not wish to speak. He then asked the pleasure of the Commission. Commissioner King began stating he respected everyone's opinion and his commitment on the Commission was to represent the resources and all of the people. The proponents of the trout reduction did not bring biological data to the table and their comments were highly subjective and self-serving. From the comments received, Commissioner King stated about half were for the regulation and the other half were against it. He gathered then that there were thousands of speckled trout fishermen that were happy with the regulation in place. Commissioner King thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. Commissioner Morrow stated he has received a lot of comments both pro and con. He agreed with Mr. Watts in that you cannot manage based on people's emotions. Commissioner Morrow knew this to

be a social issue versus a biological issue. But the Commission was mandated under Title 56 to make decisions based on biological and technical data and this was one reason why Commissioner Morrow stated he would vote against the proposal. Commissioner Samanie agreed with the mandate of Title 56 and read that the Commission “shall promulgate rules and regulations subject to provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act to set seasons, times, places, size limits, quotas, daily take and possession limits, based upon biological and technical data for all wildlife and fish”.

Hearing no further comment, Commissioner Miller made a motion to adopt the rule as contained in the Notice of Intent and it was seconded by Commissioner Mouton. Commissioner Miller called for the question. Following a roll call vote, the motion passed with opposition from Commissioners King, Samanie and Morrow. Chairman Denmon thanked everyone for all of their input and knew that this was a controversial issue.

(The full text of the Rule is made a part of the record.)

#### RULE

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission does hereby amend a Rule, LAC 76:VII.341, modifying the recreational daily take and possession limit in a defined area within Cameron and Calcasieu Parishes. Authority for adoption of this Rule is included in R.S. 56:6(25)(a), R.S. 56:325.1(A), and R.S. 56:326.3.

### Title 76

#### WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

#### Part VII. Fish and Other Aquatic Life

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

#### §341. Spotted Seatrout Management Measures

\* \* \* \*

C. Recreational Regulations. Within those areas of the state, including coastal territorial waters, south of Interstate 10 from its junction at the Texas-Louisiana boundary eastward to its junction with Louisiana Highway 171, south to Highway 14, and then south to Holmwood, and then south on Highway 27 through Gibbstown south to Louisiana Highway 82 at Creole and south on Highway 82 to Oak Grove, and then due south to the

western shore of the Mermentau River, following this shoreline south to the junction with the Gulf of Mexico, and then due south to the limit of the state territorial sea, under the authority of the provisions of R.S. 56:325.1(A), the daily take and possession limit shall be 15 fish, regardless of where taken, with no more than two (2) spotted seatrout exceeding twenty-five inches (25") total length. Those spotted seatrout exceeding 25 inches in length shall be considered as part of the daily recreational take and possession limit.

**AUTHORITY NOTE:** Promulgated in accordance with Act Number 157 of the 1991 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, R.S.56:6(25)(a); R.S. 56:306.5, R.S. 56:306.6, 56:325.1(A) and (B); R.S. 56:325.3; R.S. 56:326.3; Act 1316 of the 1995 Regular Legislative Session; and Act 1164 of the 2003 Regular Legislative Session.

**HISTORICAL NOTE:** Promulgated by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR 18:199 (February 1992), amended LR 22:238 (March 1996), LR 24:360 (February 1998), LR 26:2333 (October 2000), LR 30:1509 (July 2004), LR 30:2498 (November 2004), repromulgated LR 32:125 (January 2006), LR 32: (June 2006).

Terry D. Denmon  
Chairman

**To receive and hear Enforcement & Aviation Reports/May** was handled by Lt. Col. Keith LaCaze. A total of 1,508 cases and 366 warnings were issued and agents helped with 45 public assists. May was primarily a boating and recreational fishing month. He then called the Commission's attention to page 16 of the report where Region 7 agents wrote 515 cases with 291 being boating violations and 25 DWI's. There were 16 boating accidents reported in May with 8 injuries and 3 fatalities. He then noted there were no fatalities during the Memorial Day weekend. The 3 fatalities occurred in Terrebonne and Concordia Parishes. The Aviation Report showed three planes flew a total of 46.7 hours. Lt. Col. LaCaze then discussed News Releases on citing 7 fishermen on Rockefeller Refuge, rescuing 3 commercial fishermen from the White Lake area; and citing 4 individuals for taking 2 deer, 5 frogs and possessing stolen goods in Iberville Parish. Chairman Denmon commended the Department for their television appearance before the Memorial Day weekend explaining their activities on DWI. Commissioner Mouton asked for a monthly comparison on the boating accidents and injuries. He also noted amazement at the fact there were individuals hunting squirrels in Region 1 during May. Commissioner Samanie commented it was unbelievable there were 83 cases on Pointe-aux-Chenes WMA for cast net violations.

**To consider Waterfowl Zones and Splits and further providing with respect thereto** began with Mr. Robert Helm stating this was a report on the public activities since the last meeting. A News Release on the zones and splits was issued after the last meeting which included a survey being conducted on the Department's website. Through the efforts of the Press Secretary and Public Information Section, the release was picked up by more newspapers throughout Louisiana than usual. Mr. Helm added he also did television and radio interviews and as a result there has been good participation in the survey. Of the 360

individuals that answered the survey, 35 percent favored option 1 which was the current system; 7 percent favored option 2 of 3 zones; and 58 percent favored Option 3 of statewide season with 3 splits. Comments from the individuals that favored option 1 stated they were able to hunt both zones, it provided more days to hunt and they were familiar with the system. Comments from individuals that favored option 3 included reduction and perceived harvest pressure and more time for the ducks to rest and allowing for 3 openings. The phone calls and letters received were equally split between option 1 and 3. The survey would continue for another month and Mr. Helm noted he would report back at the July meeting with a summary. Chairman Denmon asked if there was any insight on what the Feds may do on the season framework and bag limits for the future. Mr. Helm stated he had no idea of what the season structure would be like after this year. The season length was based on wetland conditions in May and the number of breeding mallards. For this year, those grounds looked good and Mr. Helm was confident Louisiana would have a 60 day option. Into the future, he felt the options of 60 day, 45 day or 30 day seasons would remain. Chairman Denmon then asked if action would occur at the July meeting and Mr. Helm answered yes, a decision would be needed. Commissioner Miller asked Mr. Helm if the Adaptive Harvest Management regime would not change and the guidelines would limit the options to 60 day season with 6 birds or 45 day season with 4 birds or 30 day and 3 birds. Mr. Helm noted Commissioner Miller was correct. He added that the Louisiana Waterfowl Study Committee met in May and this was one of the issues they were interested in considering. Another meeting would be held later in June so additional information could be gathered and presented at the July meeting. Chairman Denmon again asked if the parameters used in setting the season would be changed in the future and Mr. Helm responded no. But a National survey was conducted last year wondering if hunters were more satisfied with less days and this did not prove to be true. Hunters liked being able to hunt more days and having the 6 bird bag limit. Mr. Helm felt the 60 day season, 6 bird bag limit did not appear to have a negative effect on populations and this was what Adaptive Harvest Management was about. Commissioner Mouton noted he talked with hunters about the goose season in northeast Louisiana and they would like to see it open in late October. This would create more hunting opportunity plus it would help keep the geese from eating the duck food. Chairman Denmon also talked with hunters and those persons were interested in opening the goose season on October 21 or October 28. There would be plenty of geese in the area where winter wheat was grown and this would protect the crop and provide additional hunting opportunity. The Chairman also asked for that suggestion to be considered when the proposal was brought forth. Commissioner Miller noted there were results on scaup listed in the handout and asked what were the Feds considering. Mr. Helm stated scaup and pintail were 2 species that have not responded to better wetland conditions in the breeding areas and the Feds have special concern on those 2. Last year, the scaup limit was reduced from 3 to 2 which was a compromise with the Federal Government. So he wanted to know from hunters what they preferred on scaup, a full season with a bag limit of 1 or a season within a season with a bag limit of 2. Over 80 percent favored the full season with a one bird bag. Commissioner Miller commented he has learned that some hunters have difficulty in knowing what seasons are opened and which are closed.

Mr. Mike Olinde began the agenda item, **To receive and hear Dove information pertaining to 2006 season** stating this would be just to update the Commission on the various meetings held over the last year. Relative to dove, three topics were brought up, species composition, season lengths and bags and zoning. In terms of the process, in late June, the Service Regulations Committee of the Fish & Wildlife Service meets and lets the states know their options. At the July Commission Meeting, the preferences for dove seasons would be discussed. By mid-July, this information would be sent to the Fish & Wildlife Service and it would be published in August and this would allow for a hunting season. The Commission and other southern states expressed interest in white-winged doves and over the last 3 decades, distribution spread from just in southwest Texas to all along the Gulf Coast. Mr. Olinde felt there may be white-winged doves included in the mourning dove bag limit. The daily bag and season lengths have not changed since there has been no decline, but there were stable or increasing numbers. Relative to zoning, Mr. Olinde felt they were halfway there with the Dove Management Unit passing a Resolution. In 2005, a Dove Focus Group Meeting was held in June, there was no consensus from the four southern participants on the 3 day split versus the 9 day split. Mr. Olinde intended to hold another Dove Focus Group Meeting centering just on the south zone with the possibility of discussing a re-alignment of the zones. Following the meeting, random surveys would be sent to southern dove hunters during September and October and at the same time, a survey would be posted on the Department's website. Perhaps at the December Commission Meeting, staff could provide information on what the people have noted they wanted. Mr. Olinde then explained that the process for doves begins in the fall with a National Dove Task Force Meeting and ending in June with a second Service Regulations Committee Meeting. Chairman Denmon asked if the Department could influence the Feds to change the dove season opening to the Saturday preceding the Labor Day Holiday. Mr. Olinde stated the Migratory Bird Treaty Act does not allow for hunting of migratory species until September 1. This Treaty involves not just the United States, but Canada and Mexico as well. He noted that he would not push to change things that may end up changing other things during the process. From hunters Commissioner Mouton has talked with, most would like to see the first split open on Labor Day weekend statewide, then continue in north Louisiana for another week, but save that week for later in the season for south Louisiana. Chairman Denmon commented that north Louisiana hunters spend quite a bit of money preparing fields so they can dove hunt for 9 days. That amount of money was just too much for them to hunt only 3 days. Mr. Olinde stated when you try to describe a zone for dove season, the line could go from Interstate 10 to Lafayette, go down to Highway 90 and under Highway 90 which would better accommodate that tier of hunters. Chairman Denmon then asked for public comments.

Mr. Randy Boudreaux stated when you hunt doves in September, you will find young birds in the nest. He understood north Louisiana hunters wanting their season, but did not think it should be a week. A compromise would be to have the 2 weekends in September and leave the remaining days to hunt the next split and have it go to the end of November. The closing dates of November 16 or 17 which occurred over the last several years were at the peak of the season. When the season reopens in December, most of the birds were gone. He was not asking that the Labor Day weekend change, but wanted to have as many days



for November as possible. Chairman Denmon stated that the compromise of having the weekends in September open would take one of the splits which would only leave one split left for the remaining season. He asked Mr. Boudreaux if that would be acceptable to him. Mr. Boudreaux stated if that is what it would take, he would be okay with it. He added that 90 percent of those who own a gun would dove hunt on opening weekend, and then 80 percent of those people would put their guns up and not hunt again. Chairman Denmon stated, based on comments he has received, Mr. Boudreaux was wrong since those people were in the hunting mode and it was a pretty active period. Again, Mr. Boudreaux asked for a few more days to dove hunt in November to get the maximum hunting opportunities.

Mr. Dwight Hollier, Hollier Farms, stated he served on the Dove Focus Committee and found that it was a south versus north issue. He suggested having a north/south zone to solve the problem. In the south, Mr. Hollier agreed with having the 3 day, Labor Day weekend, but apply the remaining days in November when the youth were out of school for Thanksgiving Holidays.

The Commissioners agreed to hold the **October 2006 Meeting** on Wednesday, October 4, 2006, beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the Baton Rouge Headquarters.

Next item was to receive **Public Comments**. Mr. Carl Gremillion asked where would the oil loop be located. Mr. John Roussel stated it would be located approximately 16 miles outside of the Chandeleur/Breton Islands.

There being no further business, Commissioner Samanie made a motion to **Adjourn** the meeting and it was seconded by Commissioner King.

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Dwight Landreneau  
Secretary

DL:scf