

**LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

**November 2, 2006**

**TERRY D. DENMON  
CHAIRMAN**

**BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA**

The following constitute minutes of the Commission Meeting  
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Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
2000 Quail Drive

Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808

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**AGENDA  
LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA  
NOVEMBER 2, 2006**

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF  
LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

Thursday, November 2, 2006

Chairman Terry Denmon presiding.

Earl King  
Patrick Morrow  
Henry Mouton  
Robert Samanie, III

Acting Secretary Janice Lansing was also present.

Commissioners Frederic Miller and Wayne Sagraera were absent from the meeting.

Chairman Denmon called for a motion for approval of the **October 5, 2006 Commission Minutes**. A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Mouton and seconded by Commissioner King. The motion passed with no opposition.

Under **Commission Special Announcements/Personal Privilege** for this month, Chairman Denmon stated Acting Secretary Lansing wanted to make an introduction. Acting Secretary Lansing stated she was proud and pleased to announce Bryant Hammett as the new Secretary for the Department. Mr. Hammett's arrival time will be around the first of December and until then Acting Secretary Lansing would continue in her current role. Mr. Hammett stated he would be taking over as Secretary on December 4 and was very excited about it. He then thanked Acting Secretary Lansing and former Secretary Landreneau for the time they have done. Mr. Hammett stated he was at another job at the moment and would transition out of that job over the next several weeks. He concluded stating he looked forward to working with the Department and Commission and the people of the State to further the cause of the Department. Chairman Denmon welcomed Mr. Hammett on behalf of the Commission. He added that he has known Mr. Hammett for many years and felt he would do a wonderful job.

Next, Chairman Denmon asked Mr. Don Puckett to review the Hunting Regulations Protocol that the Commission has been working through this year. Mr. Puckett stated this was the first year for the Hunting Protocol. A few refinements were made as a result of this year's experience and the new language would be incorporated into a draft which would be sent to the Commissioners for their review. The draft would be put on the December agenda for formal adoption. Mr. Puckett noted there would be no changes from what

actually occurred this year, which included staff making a presentation in January, adoption of Notices of Intent in February, consideration of amendments in March and April, final adoption of the rules in May and then the oversight process.

Chairman Denmon then asked Mr. Fred Whitrock for an update on the Maurepas Swamp lawsuit. Mr. Whitrock stated the 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals came to a decision on the St. John the Baptist Parish versus Wildlife and Fisheries case which pertained to 5 hunting camps located on Reserve Canal in the middle of Maurepas Swamp WMA. He then gave a brief background on what lead to the lawsuit. A preliminary injunction was issued prohibiting the Department from removing the camps. In May 2005, a trial court hearing was held and in September, the District Court Judge for St. John the Baptist Parish ruled that the Parish needed the camps to remain in order to keep the Reserve Canal open and the Parish could lease the camps to third parties as long as the canal was maintained. The Department did not agree with that interpretation of the law and appealed to the 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals. On October 17, the Appeals Court overturned the District Court Judge's decision and Mr. Whitrock read a paragraph from that judgement. Once the delays for filing Ritz to the Supreme Court occur, the Department would be able to move forward and remove the camps as originally planned. If a rehearing is made to the Supreme Court, Mr. Whitrock noted the Supreme Court does not have to hear the case and if that occurs, the delay may only be for 2 months.

**To receive and hear Award Presented to Department by Canadian Government at Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Meeting** began with Mr. Kell McInnis, Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation stating he attended the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Conference. While attending the meeting, Mr. McInnis was asked to stand in for the Department to receive an award from Canada's Deputy Minister of the Environment Cynthia Wright. A short video from the Minister was shown at this time. Following the video, Mr. McInnis noted that Louisiana has been involved in the North American Waterfowl Plan for over 20 years and the award was a Canada Goose mount. He then presented the award to Acting Secretary Lansing. Acting Secretary Lansing thanked Mr. McInnis for receiving the award on the Department's behalf and noted that just a few dollars Louisiana contributes to the partnership goes a long way. She added that the program looked to be a success in protecting and securing habitat necessary for a long future of resource for the hunters.

Ms. Marianne Burke began the next item, **To receive and hear an Update on the Department's Website** stating the new website was launched on April 6, 2006. She contributed the success of the website to Mrs. Jennifer Hannie and staff members working to keep things updated and on top of trends. Ms. Burke mentioned a handout in the packet gave statistical numbers from the website for the past 6 months. As of October 31, 1,102,624 visits were made to the website since the launch and the most popular page in October was the WMA list. Ms. Burke stated Mrs. Hannie would show some of the new things and programs on the website. Mrs. Hannie began noting few significant changes have been made since the launch which seemed to indicate staff did well with the design

and organization. One section she went to dealt with surveys which allows the public to answer questions on a specific topic. Next shown was the banner used to promote Discover Louisiana Hunting weekend. Mrs. Hannie showed how the public could obtain a copy of the Deer Tag Harvest Card and it allowed hunters the opportunity to enter their data from the season. Another important aspect of the website was giving the public an opportunity to ask specific questions which was under the "Contact Us" section. Mrs. Hannie states she receives about 100 questions each week which either she answers or directs it to the proper staff person to answer. Then Mrs. Hannie showed the separate website for Discover Louisiana Hunting weekend. Following the presentation, Chairman Denmon congratulated and thanked the staff for the much improved website.

**To receive and hear Enforcement & Aviation Reports/October** was handled by Col. Winton Vidrine. A total of 1,177 citations, 208 written warnings were issued during October and agents helped in 44 instances of public assists. He then noted there were several night hunting cases, several closed season duck hunting cases and over the limit cases, and cases on WMAs where the public did not fill out the WMA permits. Agents were still making littering cases on lakes, roads, WMAs and the back woods. The Aviation Report showed the Department's three planes flew a total of 53.3 hours for the month. Then Col. Vidrine noted there were 8 boating accident reports for the month with 8 injuries and 1 fatality. Totals for the year were 103 accidents reported, 72 injuries and 19 fatalities. Col. Vidrine discussed receiving calls from Homeland Security to assist in rescuing about 45 persons in Moss Bluff, 5 from East Feliciana Parish and 20 from Washington Parish. The News Release cases dealt with oysters and a hunter taking 44 teal duck in one day. Chairman Denmon asked what part of the state were the cases of hunting ducks prior to the season. Col. Vidrine stated they were scattered throughout the state and added the hunters were mostly taking wood ducks.

Then Col. Winton Vidrine introduced Ms. Leigh Harris, Executive Director, who would talk on the next agenda item, **To receive and announce Keep Louisiana Beautiful award to State's Litter Enforcement Officer of the Year**. Ms. Harris stated that on behalf of Keep Louisiana Beautiful Board of Directors and Advisory Board the Department and Enforcement Agents were their best partners in terms of littering. She stated their program was about changing attitudes and through education and enforcement this would be the only way to be successful. Ms. Harris then presented the Keep Louisiana Beautiful Litter Enforcement Officer of the Year award to Agent Toby Miller.

**To receive and consider Notice of Intent to Amend Flotation Devices for boats and further providing with respect thereto** was handled by Lt. Col. Brian Spillman. The Notice of Intent would amend the use of personal flotation devices on recreational boats. The last substantive change to the regulations on PFD's was in 1985, so the Department was 20 years behind on updating the regulations. One of the main reasons for the change was the approval by the Coast Guard of a Type V PFD that was not included in the regulations. Also, some of the language and definitions were being updated. All of the changes track closely with what the Coast Guard has recommended to all of the states and

these regulations would put Louisiana in line with the other states. Chairman Denmon asked how would the Department publish this regulation. Lt. Col. Spillman stated a News Release would be sent out when the proposal was finalized. Commissioner Samanie made a motion to adopt the Notice of Intent and it was seconded by Commissioner Morrow. 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  
Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission do hereby advertise their intent to amend and reenact provisions relating to personal flotation devices on recreational boats.

### Title 76

## WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

### Part XI. BOATING

#### Chapter 1. Flotation Devices, Fire Extinguishers, Flame Arrestors and Ventilation

##### §103. Flotation Devices

A. In accordance with R.S. 34:851.24(F)1, the provisions of this act shall apply on all waters within the jurisdiction of this state.

B. Definitions  
“Operate” - to navigate or otherwise control the movement of a vessel, including controlling the vessel’s propulsion system.

“Operator” - any person who navigates or is otherwise in control or in charge of the movement of a vessel, including the vessel’s propulsion system.

“Owner” - a person, other than the lienholder, having the property in or registration to the vessel.

“Personal flotation device” or “PFD” - a device approved by the United States Coast Guard under 46 CFR Part 160, which is labeled with such approval and with the appropriate size for the person intended and which is in serviceable condition.

“Readily accessible” - easily located and retrieved without searching, delay, hindrance or being in a locked area.

“Serviceable condition” - a condition as defined by the United States Coast Guard under 33 CFR Part 175.23.

“trick water-skier” - a trick water-skier is a person whose equipment and activities have all of the following characteristics:

a. Type of Skis: For standard double trick skis, a length of no more than 46 inches and width of at least 8 inches, with no keels on the bottom; for single trick boards, a length of no more than 56 inches and width of at least 22 inches, with no keel on bottom; and

b. Tow rope no longer than 50 feet.

“Vessel” - watercraft and airboats of every description, other than seaplane(s), located on the water and, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on the water.

“Watersports” - activities that involve being towed by, or riding in the wake of, a vessel and include but are not limited to water skiing, wake boarding, wake surfing, and tubing.

### C. Personal Flotation Device Requirements

1. Every operator of a vessel shall ensure that the vessel is carrying at least one readily accessible Type I, II, or III wearable personal flotation device for each person on board. In addition, vessels 16 feet or over in length shall carry at least one Type IV throwable personal flotation device.

2. A United States Coast Guard approved Type V PFD may be used in lieu of a Type I, II, or III PFD required by this Part provided:

a. The approval label on the Type V PFD indicates that the device is approved by the United States Coast Guard:

i. For the activity for which the vessel is being used; or

ii. As a substitute for a PFD of the Type required by this act on the vessel in use; and

b. The PFD is used in accordance with any requirements of its approval label; and

c. The PFD is used in accordance with requirements in its owner's manual, if its approval label makes reference to such manual.

3. Persons engaged in watersports shall wear a Type I, II, III or V PFD. No vessel operator shall tow a watersports participant who is not wearing such a device. No person shall use an inflatable PFD to meet the requirements of this section. Exceptions to the requirements of this subsection are allowed under the following conditions:

a. A skier engaged in barefoot water-skiing who wears a barefoot wetsuit designed specifically for such activity;

b. A skier engaged in trick water-skiing whose movements would be restricted or impeded by the bulk of a PFD.

c. The operator of a vessel towing a trick water-skier or barefoot water-skier shall make a PFD readily available aboard the tow vessel for each such skier who elects not to wear such a device while skiing.

~~A. In accordance with R.S. 34:851.24F(1), the following definitions shall apply to the classification of personal flotation devices (P.F.D.):~~

~~P.F.D. Type I - a U.S. Coast Guard approved flotation device of the wearable design capable of turning most unconscious persons from a face down position without effort from its wearer. This device must provide a minimum buoyancy of 22 pounds in the adult size and a minimum of 11 pounds in the child size.~~

~~P.F.D. Type II - a U.S. Coast Guard approved wearable device designed to turn its wearers to a vertical or slightly backward position in the water. Its adult size shall provide a minimum buoyancy of 15 ½ pounds, the medium child size shall provide a minimum of 11 pounds, and the infant and small child size shall provide a minimum buoyancy of 7 pounds.~~

~~P.F.D. Type III - a U.S. Coast Guard approved wearable device designed so the wearers can place themselves in a vertical or slightly backward position. Its adult size shall provide a minimum buoyancy of 15 ½ pounds, its medium child size shall provide a minimum of 11 pounds and the infant and small child size shall provide a minimum buoyancy of 7 pounds.~~

~~P.F.D. Type IV - a U.S. Coast Guard approved device designed to be thrown to a person in the water and grasped, not worn. It shall provide a minimum of 15 ½ pounds of buoyancy.~~

~~B. Regulations prescribed by the commission as to the type and number of personal flotation devices required on recreational boats while a watercraft is in use on the waters of this state are as follows:~~

~~1. Class A Watercraft (less than 16 feet in length). Shall carry at least one, type I, II, or III personal flotation device for each person on board. The P.F.D. must bear the U.S. Coast Guard approval number and must be of the appropriate sizes and serviceable.~~

~~2. Class I Watercraft (16 feet to less than 26 feet in length). Shall carry at least one serviceable, type I, II, or III personal flotation device for each person on board and one serviceable type IV device. The P.F.D.s must bear the U.S. Coast Guard approval number and must be of the appropriate sizes.~~

~~3. Class II Watercraft (26 feet to less than 40 feet in length). Shall carry at least one serviceable, type I, II, or III personal flotation device for each person on board and one serviceable type IV device. The P.F.D.s must bear the U.S. Coast Guard approval number and must be of the appropriate sizes.~~

~~4. Class III Watercraft (40 feet and over). Shall carry at least one serviceable, type I, II, or III for each person on board and one serviceable type IV device. The P.F.D.s must bear the U.S. Coast Guard approval number and must be of the appropriate size.~~

~~C. Every motorboat carrying passengers for hire upon the waters of this state must be equipped with serviceable U.S. Coast Guard approved type I or II personal flotation devices. The number of P.F.D.s shall be equal to the number of persons being carried and of the appropriate size.~~

~~D. For the purpose of this part serviceable personal flotation devices shall mean capable of being properly worn with all straps, snaps, flotation bags, approval labels and limitation notices intact and in working condition.~~

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 34:851.24

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR 11:705 (July 1985), amended LR 26:1493 (July 2000), LR 33: .

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.

Interested persons may submit written comments on the proposed Rule to Col. Winton Vidrine, Administrator, Enforcement Division, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000 no later than January 4, 2007.

In accordance with Act #1183 of 1999, 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).

Terry D. Denmon  
Chairman

**To receive and announce the Duck Stamp Competition Winners** began with Mr. Robert Helm stating the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Duck Stamp Competition was held. The winning design would be used on the 2007 Louisiana duck stamp. The program began in 1988 when the Legislature authorized the stamp program to generate revenues for wetland projects within the state. Since then, over \$9 million has been generated with most of the funds being used to acquire lands that have been added to the WMA system. Other funds were used for annual needs such as flooding impoundments, repairing levees and other management practices. A Retrievers Saves Game series began in 2005 and this year's species was the chocolate lab with a live waterfowl to be included in the painting. There was a slight increase in the number of entries for this year's competition with 10 compared to 8 from last year. The Department selects the judges for the contest and they were Mr. Headley Adelman, Mr. Jerry Bower, Mr. Joe Herring, Mr. Dick Russell and Mr. Jason Thomasee. The first place winner was entered by Mr. Tony Bernard from Lafayette, second place winner was Mr. Jeff Klinefelter from Indiana and third place winner was Ms. Joanne Graham from California.

Next item for Mr. Robert Helm was **To receive and announce Wood Duck Banders Award**. Mr. Helm announced this was the meeting to recognize the outstanding region for their efforts towards banding wood ducks. The banding of wood ducks was a very important monitoring tool due to the secretive nature of these birds. Banding goals were established for all states within the Mississippi and Atlantic Flyways annually and was a very important project in the eastern United States. A slide was shown on the history of banding efforts. Banding began in the early 1990's and did well for almost 10 years and then came a drought cycle. One thing used to encourage participation in the banding program was the awarding of the Wood Duck Banding trophy. Two methods are used to band wood ducks and they included banding nesting hens in boxes and trapping birds from July through September using rocket nets. Total bandings for this year was a record high of over 2,100. Also, there was a record high in the use of bait traps. Four of the 7 regions banded over 200 wood ducks. Mr. Helm felt the award has created some healthy competition among the regions. Region 7 was the winner of the trophy for the second consecutive year with a total of 627 banded wood ducks. Mr. Helm mentioned that Region 6 made a valiant effort towards the end with a total of 530 banded. He recognized Mr. Tony Vidrine from Region 6 and then introduced Mr. Randy Myers and Mr. Mike Perot from Region 7. Mr. Helm also mentioned that the Fur and Refuge Division had a record year in banding almost 4,000 mottled ducks and over 2,000 mourning doves.

**To receive and consider St. Bernard Parish Deer and Rabbit Hunting Closure Request and further providing with respect thereto** was the first item for this meeting for Mr. Dave Moreland. The St. Bernard Council passed a Resolution on October 3 that requested the Department to ban all 2006 St. Bernard Parish hunting seasons for deer, rabbit and squirrel except for on state property. Prior to the Resolution passing, Mr. Moreland stated he spoke to Councilman Ricky Miller and they discussed what the staff was doing. Also, Region 7 staff met with Council Members prior to their meeting, but the Parish went through with the request. Mr. Moreland explained that following Hurricane Katrina staff made numerous surveys in St. Bernard Parish and were continuing to monitor wildlife populations. The staff made the recommendation for a bucks only deer hunting in this area. One of the prime reasons for maintaining hunting seasons was to encourage recreational opportunities to those residents and landowners that have returned to St. Bernard Parish. Allowing the hunting of squirrel and deer also allows hunters the opportunity to take feral hogs which has become an issue in St. Bernard Parish. Mr. Moreland stated staff did not recommend making any changes to the hunting schedule for this upcoming year in St. Bernard Parish. Chairman Denmon asked if the biology dictated the season should be closed. Mr. Moreland answered no, and added that surveys showed the habitat was recovering and deer activities and browsing were documented. He added that allowing hunting would not impact the wildlife populations. Commissioner Morrow asked if Plaquemines Parish was open to rabbit and squirrel hunting and Mr. Moreland answered yes.

**To receive and hear Presentation on Duck Telemetry Projects** began with Mr. Robert Helm introducing Mr. Mike Brasher, an employee of the Gulf Coast Joint Venture which is a subdivision of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Mr. Brasher works out of Lafayette and was the team leader in forming 2 teams to pilot research projects that began in the fall. Mr. Brasher began his slide presentation thanking the Commission for the opportunity to talk on two waterfowl research projects that were on-going in Louisiana and Texas. The Gulf Coast Joint Venture is a regionally based partnership of federal, state and private entities that all want to deliver habitat conservation for bird species. Mr. Brasher stated that the Department was a very important partner in this effort. A map of the areas the Venture covers showed they extend into Mississippi and Alabama as well as Texas and Louisiana. The first project was entitled "Seasonal Survival, Movements and Habitat Use of Mottled Ducks" and would cover areas in Texas and Louisiana. Mottled ducks are the signature breeding waterfowl species along the Texas and Louisiana coast, however they do range from Alabama to Mexico. Concern does exist among waterfowl managers on the current population trends. A graph showed a fairly discernible downward trend in Texas while Louisiana's trend showed a slight increase. Managers were also concerned with the continuing threat of coastal habitat and the lack of general knowledge to guide conservation efforts. In April 2006, waterfowl biologists met and formulated the project and identified several objectives such as estimating survival rates of female mottled ducks during different periods of the annual cycle, looking at habitat use during the annual cycles, and how environmental conditions affect the breeding of mottled ducks. The research would be implemented in 2 phases. First there will be a pilot study to determine what will be needed to conduct a full scale study at the level to fully answer their questions. The second phase

would be the full scale study conducted by 2 PhD students. The pilot study was initiated in August 2006 with radio marking of 20 adult hens in Texas and 17 in Louisiana. Primary objectives for the pilot study was to test capture methods and find out what it would take to pull off the full scale study. When Phase 2 begins, Mr. Brasher explained they would capture birds from the extreme southern Texas to the mouth of the Mississippi River. Those birds would be monitored year round which would give a solid picture of everything the birds do all throughout the year. Phase 2 of this project would begin in July or August 2007 and it was anticipated the capturing and marking of 100 female mottled ducks in each state during their molting stage. Monitoring information would be collected through aerial and ground telemetry techniques. This study would target those specific periods of the mottled ducks annual cycle that may have lower than desired survival, better understand the importance of different habitat types, the importance of rice prairie versus coastal habitat, and provide additional recommendations to enhance breeding success.

Mr. Brasher then stated the next research project would deal with the gadwall and would be a winter-only study. Reasons for studying gadwall was that over 75 percent of the continental population may winter along the Texas-Louisiana coast and very little information was known about their habitat use, movements and survival while in this area. To illustrate the importance of gadwall, Mr. Brasher took estimated harvest data from 1999-2004 and ranked them by state. In Alabama, gadwall ranked third behind mallards and wood ducks. In Mississippi, gadwall ranked second ahead of wood ducks but trailed mallards. In Texas, gadwall ranked first ahead of mallards and blue-winged teal. For Louisiana, gadwall ranked first ahead of all other species. Research objectives for this study were very similar to the mottled duck study but would be limited only to winter and included looking at survival, habitat use, movement and how environmental habitat conditions or disturbances may influence any of those factors. Also, this study would be implemented in 2 phases, first with a pilot study and then a full scale study. The full scale study, if implemented, would be conducted by a Master's student from LSU. The pilot study was on-going but no birds have been marked yet since there was not a great number in the state. The plan was to radio mark 13 female gadwalls in Louisiana and 12 in Texas. Another challenge would be capturing the birds by whatever method may work since they do not go to bait as other birds do. The birds from the gadwall study would be monitored until May 2007 which would include some of their northern migration. If the full scale study proves to be feasible, the study area would be smaller than the mottled duck study. Between 40 and 60 gadwalls would be radio marked per state and would begin during the winter months of 2007 and continue for 2 years. This study would allow researchers to refine the habitat objectives that are currently recommended to managers in terms of what needs to be done for waterfowl.

Chairman Denmon asked Mr. Helm about the telemetry study on mallards. Mr. Helm stated a presentation would be provided at the December Commission Meeting. LSU has 2 Master's students, one in northeast Louisiana and the other around southwest Louisiana and each marked about 80 mallard hens and tracked them for the past 2 winters. The students were currently wrapping up their thesis projects and those should be available during the early part of 2007.

Moving to the next item, **To receive and hear Turkey & Spring Squirrel Season Public Comments**, Mr. Dave Moreland stated 3 squirrel comments were received. One comment was for the proposal, 1 was against and the last was for the proposal but wanted a limit of 8. With regards to turkey, a chart on temperature comparisons among actual and proposed season dates was included in the packets. Mr. Moreland added that a one week adjustment to the turkey season would not overcome the impacts of large scale climatic patterns. Also, in the packets was the 2006 poult production surveys with the State's western portion having the highest of 3 poults per hen. Chairman Denmon then asked for public comments.

Representative Thomas McVea reminded the Members he came before the Commission several months back and was still looking for relief. His position had not changed and the fact was they historically opened the turkey season the third weekend of March. The proposal resulted in a 1 week loss in the season. The biologists were saying there has been an overharvest of gobblers, but Representative McVea stated that in the Feliciana's there has been a substantial increase in poults and young flocks of turkeys. He felt one issue was public lands versus private lands and noted he was speaking for the land owners in his area. He knew they were very restrictive on the harvest of turkeys and this should allow for the shift by one week or allowing 5 weeks for the season instead of 4 weeks. Representative McVea stated the last 2 weeks of this year's season was horrible but the first 2 were great. He added that he disagreed with the biologists on this issue. He noted he was at the meeting as an avid turkey hunter and not as a State Representative. Again, he asked for consideration of his request. Chairman Denmon asked if the issue of moving the season one week earlier would push the youth hunt prior to the turkey activity. Mr. Moreland stated yes, the youth hunt was proposed for the weekend prior to the regular season. Chairman Denmon asked if the youth weekend stayed as proposed and then open the regular season on the Monday following, would that be okay. Representative McVea stated that would at least be a start, since it would allow potentially for one week of cooler weather versus one week of fighting mosquitos. Chairman Denmon stated the Commission was for creating hunting opportunities but certainly did not want to trump the youth. Representative McVea agreed with the Chairman but asked that the staff look into what the season is in Mississippi. Chairman Denmon asked Mr. Moreland to check into the Mississippi turkey season dates. He then asked Representative McVea to come back to the December meeting and hear the information.

**To receive and hear Office of Wildlife Activities Report** began with Mr. Dave Moreland introducing Mr. Robert Helm who would give an update on Avian Influenza. Mr. Helm stated the highly pathogenic Avian Influenza was of concern and has posed a major threat to domestic poultry in Asia and Africa and more recently in Europe. This form of Bird Flu has been responsible for the death of 90 people in third world countries where those individuals had direct and prolong contact with domesticated poultry in unsanitary conditions. There also were increasing concerns that this Avian Influenza may affect wild migratory birds and was raising fears that it might spread to new areas, in particular North

America. Due to these concerns, a Wild Bird Surveillance program has been initiated across North America which includes domestic and wild migratory birds. USDA was the lead agency in this effort and the Department has entered into a contract to collect samples from wild birds during this fall and winter. Up to \$100,000 would be provided to the Department from USDA for our sampling efforts. The plans were to sample 2 species of shorebirds and 3 waterfowl. These species were selected since they may have had contact with birds from the West Coast. The goal was to collect 200 samples from each of the species for a total sample of 1,000 birds. USDA would also collect samples in Louisiana and they would be processed by the LSU Vet School. Mr. Helm stated it was anticipated most of the waterfowl samples would be taken from hunter killed birds from hunts conducted on Sherburne WMA and White Lake WCA. Over 300 samples have been collected so far in Louisiana and as many as 70,000 samples would be collected nationwide. All of the samples processed thus far have had negative results for this strain of Avian Flu. Comments from hunters have been all over the board such as those that would not continue to hunt waterfowl due to their concerns. A News Release has been issued as well as a flyer that would be posted on all WMAs and other key points throughout the State. Public information was a very important component of what was being done in the state.

The Commissioners agreed to hold the **March 2007 Meeting** on Thursday, March 1, 2007, beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the Baton Rouge Headquarters.

Next item was to receive **Public Comments** and none were heard.

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

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Janice A. Lansing  
Acting Secretary

scf