

**LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

**May 1, 2008**

**PATRICK C. MORROW  
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**  
**MAY 1, 2008**

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF  
LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

Thursday, May 1, 2008

Chairman Patrick Morrow presiding.

Earl King, Jr.  
Frederic Miller  
Henry Mouton  
Stephen Oats  
Stephen Sagrera  
Robert Samanie, III

Secretary Robert Barham was also present.

Chairman Morrow called for a motion for approval of the **April 3, 2008 Commission Minutes**. A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Oats and seconded by Commissioner Samanie. The motion passed with no opposition.

Under **Commission Special Announcements/Personal Privilege** for this month, Chairman Morrow recognized former Commission Member Terry Denmon and noted the Commission owed a debt of gratitude for his tireless effort over the years.

**To receive and consider Declaration of Emergency on Setting the Opening Dates of the 2008 Spring Inshore Shrimp Season and Re-Opening Portions of State Outside Waters to Shrimping** was handled by Mr. Marty Bourgeois. He stated the Marine Fisheries Division prepared the presentation based on the latest biological and hydrological information. The slide presentation included annual Louisiana shrimp landings by year from 1976 through 2007 (last year landings were 70 million pounds with a dockside value of \$139 million); brown shrimp and white shrimp landings versus the long term mean (landings for the brown shrimp have declined over the last 3 years whereas the white shrimp landings have been outstanding for the last 5 years); monthly shrimp landings for 2007 plotted against the long term mean and previous years; annual Louisiana shrimp license sales (total at 14,000 which is the lowest since 1976); brown shrimp landings by count size for several years; shrimp life cycle diagram; a map of the 3 shrimp management zones; an infrared satellite image of the Louisiana coasts water temperature; and a satellite image of the State showing the river water discharge. Next, Mr. Bourgeois talked about southeast Louisiana rainfall and how it may impact brown shrimp growth and development. These included the 2007 and 2008 monthly southeast rainfall versus long term mean; 2007 and

2008 Mississippi River discharge versus long term mean; south Barataria Bay monthly water temperature and its deviations from 68°F; February through April 2008 south Barataria Bay monthly water temperature and its deviations from 68°F; north Barataria Bay monthly salinity and its deviations from 10 ppt versus long term mean; April acreage greater than 10 ppt (landings versus the value of the April acreage); April 2008 Barataria Pass tidal range (the actual tides were much higher than the predicted); and 2007 Louisiana brown shrimp landings by basin. Next Mr. Bourgeois presented slides on biological data and these included brown shrimp catch per effort in 6' trawl samples from Barataria Bay during April 2008 work weeks (2008 versus 2007 versus 3 highest landing years and 3 lowest landing years); brown shrimp mean size in 6' trawl samples from Barataria Bay during April 2008 work weeks (2008 versus 2007 versus 3 highest landing years and 3 lowest landing years); brown shrimp catch per effort in 6' trawl samples for week 18 by bay system; brown shrimp mean size in 6' trawl samples for week 18 by bay system; brown shrimp percent size frequency distribution in Zone II for week 18 when the season opened late compared against an early season opening and 2008; Shrimp Management Zone I 2008 projections based on 50 percent of the sample population being 100 count or larger (May 26 is the date the criteria will be met); for Zone II May 12 was the date 62 percent of the population were at sizes of 100 count; on June 2 in Zone III 58 percent of the population will be at sizes of 100 count; and looking at Statewide projections, May 12 was the first date to meet the criteria. Mr. Bourgeois advised that statutes mandates the opening of Zone II on or before the third Monday in May. The last slide was the predicted May 2008 tidal range in Barataria Bay.

Following the presentation, Chairman Morrow asked if the Department had a recommendation for each zone opening. Mr. Bourgeois recommended that Zones I and III open on June 2 and Zone II open on May 12. Chairman Morrow then asked if there was a recommendation on time. Mr. Bourgeois stated he has received calls from fishermen asking to go back to the 6 AM opening, but 12 noon was a favorable time for Enforcement. Chairman Morrow asked Col. Winton Vidrine for a time recommendation from an enforcement standpoint and was told they would like to stay with the 12 noon opening. The Chairman then asked the reason why. Col. Vidrine stated the different openings caused a lot of extra man hours and then there were safety reasons for having a noon opening. He asked to stay with the 12 noon opening. Commissioner Oats made a motion to adopt the Resolution opening Zones I and III on June 2 at 12 noon and Zone II on May 12 at 12 noon. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion.

Mr. Pete Gerica, Lake Pontchartrain Fisherman's Association, stated the bigger the shrimp, the better. He then asked for the latest possible date to open Zone I. Commissioner Miller asked if June 2 was too early or too late. Mr. Gerica stated that if the biologist thinks the count will be good at that time, then he would go with that date. Commissioner Miller then asked how long would it take for the Bonnet Carre to flush out once it was closed. Mr. Gerica stated it depended on the east winds and so far the water was staying in the middle of the lake and was blending. He hoped if it closed early enough, everything should be straight for the August shrimp season.

Hearing no further comment, the motion passed with no opposition.

(The full text of the Resolution and Declaration of Emergency are made a part of the record.)

RESOLUTION  
2008 Spring Shrimp Season Opening  
adopted by the  
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission  
May 1, 2008

WHEREAS, the traditional management criteria used by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in recommending the opening dates for the spring shrimp season in inside waters are based on the population of brown shrimp in each shrimp management zone reaching such a size that 50% or more of the brown shrimp are 100 count per pound or larger, and

WHEREAS, current biological data project that 50% of the 2008 brown shrimp population in inside waters will meet the minimum 100 count per pound management criteria in Shrimp Management Zone 1 by May 24, 2008, and in Management Zone 2 by May 8, 2008, and in Shrimp Management Zone 3 by May 30, 2008, and

WHEREAS, on December 8, 2007 the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries had closed to shrimping that portion of the State's Outside Waters south of the Inside/Outside Shrimp Line as described in R.S. 56:495, from the eastern shore of Freshwater Bayou Canal at 92 degrees 18 minutes 33 seconds west longitude to the Atchafalaya River Ship Channel at Eugene Island as delineated by the River Channel Buoy Line.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby opens the spring shrimp season in inside waters in Shrimp Management Zone 1 at 12 noon, June 2, 2008, and in Shrimp Management Zone 2 and that portion of the State's Outside Waters south of the Inside/Outside Shrimp Line as described in R.S. 56:495 from the Atchafalaya River Ship Channel at Eugene Island as delineated by the River Channel Buoy Line to the eastern shore of Freshwater Bayou at 12 noon May 12, 2008, and in Shrimp Management Zone 3 at 12 noon June 2, 2008.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby authorizes the Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to close any portion of Louisiana's inside waters to protect small white shrimp if biological and technical data indicate the need to do so, or enforcement problems develop.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, a Declaration of Emergency setting the 2008 Spring Shrimp Season in Louisiana state waters is attached to and made part of this resolution.

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Patrick C. Morrow, Chairman  
Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

## DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

In accordance with the emergency provisions of R.S. 49:953(B) and R.S. 49:967 of the Administrative Procedure Act which allows the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to use emergency procedures to set shrimp seasons and R.S. 56:497 which provides that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission shall fix no less than two open seasons each year for all or part of inside waters and shall have the authority to open or close outside waters, the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission does hereby set the 2008 Spring Shrimp Season in Louisiana state waters to open as follows:

Shrimp Management Zone 1, that portion of Louisiana's inside waters from the Mississippi/Louisiana State line to the eastern shore of South Pass of the Mississippi River, to open at 12 noon June 2, 2008, and

Shrimp Management Zone 2, that portion of Louisiana's inside waters from the eastern shore of South Pass of the Mississippi River to the western shore of Vermilion Bay and Southwest Pass at Marsh Island and that portion of the State's Outside Waters south of the Inside/Outside Shrimp Line as described in R.S. 56:495 from the Atchafalaya River Ship Channel at Eugene Island as delineated by the River Channel Buoy Line to the eastern shore of Freshwater Bayou at 92 degrees 18 minutes 33 seconds west longitude to open at 12 noon May 12, 2008.

Shrimp Management Zone 3, that portion of Louisiana's inside waters from the western shore of Vermilion Bay and Southwest Pass at Marsh Island westward to the Louisiana/Texas State Line, to open at 12 noon June 2, 2008.

The Commission also hereby grants authority to the Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to close any portion of the State's inside waters to protect small white shrimp if biological and technical data indicates the need to do so, or enforcement problems develop.

Patrick C. Morrow  
Chairman

**To receive and hear Update on POS Licensing System** was handled by Ms. Janis Landry. She stated that all of the Wal-Marts, Academy stores, and the smaller machines were up and running. Of the 443 locations, only 19 were not running. On the web POS, only 23 were not running yet. Ms. Landry stated this was a very good implementation and the tags print and tags can be validate. Also, there were no duplicate numbers. She then showed them an example license with turkey and deer tags attached. Commissioner King asked to see the license.

Ms. Marianne Burke handled the next item, **To receive and hear Presentation on Lapsed Angler Program**. At the end of the month, the Public Information Section and a representative from each division was kicking off a marketing campaign. Ms. Burke stated they have been working with the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) to implement a recruitment and retention campaign focusing on lapsed anglers. RBFF was a non-profit organization. This national program was tested in 3 states and those results ranged from 3 percent to 20 percent of lapsed anglers. Right now 34 states have joined in on the campaign. The reason for focusing on lapsed anglers was they have already had a license, they were familiar with the sport and possibly own the equipment. Direct mail was being used since it could target an audience, make it personable and it could be measured. In Louisiana, only 43 percent of anglers bought a license once in a 3 year test period. Nationally, only 15 percent of anglers renew their licenses annually. An average of 44 hours are spent on the TV, computer and video games by our children. The program would involve 2 post cards mail drops. RBFF would provide match funding for 3 years up to \$25,000 for printing, production and mailing and radio spots, help with a marketing program, train staff and contract with Southwick Associates to do the Department's data analysis. Ms. Burke explained Southwick Associates helps the public understand what the Department does for them. Southwick has analyzed the Department's data, condensed the records, told who the lapsed anglers were and prioritized who the Department needed to approach the first year. There are 177,000 lapsed anglers in Louisiana that need to be reached and these were broken into tiers. The first mail drop will be in May and would target all of tier 1, tier 2 and those in tier 3 and 4 that shows fishing was a prevalent activity in their lifestyles. There are 2 segments of people that showed up in Louisiana. The first was the southern satellites which consisted of 87 percent white, single family dwellings, they watch NASCAR, fish, own riding mowers and trucks. The other group was the Milk and Cookies group which represents the young, affluent married couples, they eat easy to prepare or fast foods, watch Discovery, ESPN, Lifetime channels, and they prefer trucks, SUVs and minivans. Ms. Burke then noted that on May 28, the first post cards would be dropped to about 75,000 anglers which are those most likely to respond. The radio spots would begin on June 2 statewide. Seven weeks later, another mailing would be dropped and another wave of radio spots would go out. Ms. Burke hoped that by the time the program enters the second year, there would be more sponsors on board which would allow billboards to go up across the state. She then showed the first ad that went out which was on the back of the Conservationist magazine and the postcard. Ms. Burke felt this year there may be some mistakes, they would be corrected and then see what more could be done in the following years. Commissioner King asked if there were 177,000 lapsed



anglers from the last few years and Ms. Burke answered yes. He then congratulated the Department for implementing the program and being proactive in recruiting lapsed anglers.

Ms. Burke noted even though this was a 3 year commitment with RBFF, the Department has committed to carry this forward from this point on. Commissioner King asked that the Commission be kept informed.

Moving on to the next item, **To receive and hear Enforcement & Aviation Reports/April**, Lt. Col. Keith LaCaze stated weather was beginning to warm up, the turkey season was closing, and more people were getting out on the water. The total numbers for April were 1,258 cases, 546 written warnings were issued and agents helped with 35 public assists. The Department's three planes flew a total of 90.2 hours for the month. There were 8 boating accidents reported, with 2 injuries and 7 fatalities during the month bringing the totals for the year to 36 accidents, 21 injuries and 16 fatalities. The fatalities occurred in Red River, St. Landry, Jefferson, Orleans and West Baton Rouge Parishes. News Releases discussed were on a turkey case in Union Parish, Richland Parish frog season closed case, St. Bernard Parish oyster health code violation, and a red snapper case in the Empire area. Lt. Col. LaCaze then reported on another red snapper case made earlier in the week. Agents discovered on a chartered vessel carrying 18 individuals from Georgia along with the captain and deck hand 27 ice chests which contained 909 red snapper, of which 287 were under the minimum size requirement. Also, a total of 106 charges for violations were issued which included angling without a non-resident license and saltwater fishing license, federal charges for undersized red snapper, over the limit and closed season. The weight of the 909 fish was 2,459 pounds and were sold for \$9,221.25. Commissioner Oats asked who was the charter captain and Lt. Col. LaCaze stated it was David Harrelson. Chairman Morrow felt it rather disturbing to have 7 fatalities in which all of them did not have a PFD or kill switch. Commissioner Samanie asked if the captain on the charter vessel was working for a larger organization. Lt. Col. LaCaze stated he was not sure but would provide a full report as soon as possible. Commissioner Mouton stated the charter boat was sold to the captain by Charlie Hardison & Sons to run independently. Commissioner King noted the citizens of Lower St. Martin and St. Mary Parishes appreciated the no wake declaration due to the high water. Lt. Col. LaCaze stated the enforcement was at the request of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security, Emergency Preparedness.

**To receive and hear Presentation from Delta Waterfowl and To receive and hear Presentation from Ducks Unlimited** began with Commissioner Oats stating the Commission agreed to hear from the 2 organizations. About 6 months ago, the Commission extended the contract for Delta Waterfowl so it would end at the same time as Ducks Unlimited. He felt the plan was to take input from both organizations, lay over this month and visit with staff and then to take action at the next meeting.

Mr. Rob Olson, Delta Waterfowl, began by thanking the Commission, Secretary Barham and staff for allowing him to talk about ducks. He then identified Mr. Joel Brice, Manager of the Prairie Management Program and Dr. Frank Rohwer, Scientific Director. After listening

to the shrimp presentation, Mr. Olson thought it was challenging for Louisiana hunters to understand ducks and why there are good years and bad years. With shrimp, there are a number of things, such as salinity, wind, tides, when to begin and when to close. He then noted shrimp as well as deer were local, but the duck challenge was not. His presentation began noting about 77.5 percent of mallard ducks come from the prairies, they are not hatched locally. The next thing to consider was there are real challenges facing hunters. Since the 1950's, there has been long term decline in wetlands and this has resulted in declining mallard breeding populations. He then showed an image of 160 acres of land in southwest Manitoba taken in 1995 and this was overlaid with the same shot from 2005 and it showed that the potholes have been drained, the grass was gone and there was no place for ducks to breed. Over prairie Canada, most of the potholes and ponds have been lost, it has been a long, slow decline. The challenge was to stop the long term decline in wetland loss or hunting as it is known would not be sustainable. Land that was once rolling hills and grasslands are now farmlands and the ducks are squeezing into the small strips of available land, into ditches or pastures to hide for nesting from predators. Today, the predator population has changed from grizzly bears and wolves to raccoons, red fox and skunks. Why were the 1990's good for duck hunting? By 1992, when Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) began, a huge explosion of duck breeding populations occurred on the U.S. side of the border. This resulted in ducks coming from the Dakota's during the 1990's. Mr. Olson then noted that CRP was going away now; CRP acres were being plowed and native prairie lands were being plowed in the United States and Canada as well. The starting pointing for what to do next was to tell hunters about these negative impacts and then try to figure out what things can be done together. New programs on the breeding grounds, which have a real opportunity to do some things in the environment. Mr. Olson then talked about the trappers and what their jobs involve and how it costs \$1.50 an acre. Nest success with this program sometimes doubled, as an example, Mr. Olson noted 6,000 extra ducks came from one trapped site. He felt this program was needed in waterfowl management at least on some scale. Today, with partnership from Louisiana and Arkansas, the number of trapped sites has grown to 14 and they are in North Dakota, South Dakota, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. He knew that this tool was sensitive, cause for debate and could not be done quickly. Louisiana's funding was the key to getting this tool going and would be the key to keep it moving. One goal for this year was to project the long term plans and how many states are needed. In Saskatchewan, ducks nest in clumps due to the placement of potholes and this creates an opportunity to target trapped sites. This tool would not change the fall flight for this year, but Mr. Olson felt it had the potential to make a real difference in the future. The next program was similar to CRP in the United States, and that program in Canada was called Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) and the gist was to protect and restore habitat in prairie Canada. With this being a new program, there were some oppositions and uncertainties. Funding from Tennessee, Mississippi and Ohio have helped to demonstrate this program on a small scale in Manitoba and Ontario. With this limited funding, the program has worked so far and progress has been made. In Canada, they have to have the support of the farm groups and as of now, there was support from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba farmers, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, both federal parties and some users. A program launch occurred in Prince Edward Island and this may create psychological momentum.

Mr. Olson commented they need funding for this program and any help would be big for duck hunters. The last program, Adopt-a-Pothole, was a leading program on easements. Maps can be produced to show where easements are and this could target where the ducks are. Three things proposed to the Commission for consideration to support Delta Waterfowl was the trapping program (66.7 percent), ALUS (16.7 percent) and Adopt-a-Pothole (16.6 percent). Again, Mr. Olson mentioned, the time was right to have the trapping program and ALUS in Canada. The Adopt-a-Pothole program would be a blue chip long term investment. He then thanked the Commission on behalf of Delta Waterfowl in considering the programs.

Chairman Morrow reminded the Commission members that the reports would be heard this month and then vote in June on the allocation. This month would allow the Commission to gather information. Commissioner Oats stated he wanted to ask questions of each group on his pre-disposed ideas. He then told Mr. Olson that common sense told him predator eradication would work, but he would need more information. His pre-conceived notion was that there was a need to do it on a sizeable basis. Commissioner Oats asked that Mr. Olson e-mail him the slides in the presentation. He also commented he would take the time to learn about ALUS and the Adopt-a-Pothole program. Commissioner Oats asked how much money was sent on an annual basis. Mr. Olson answered about \$120,000. Commissioner Oats then noted it very surprising that most of the ducks came from the Dakotas and not Canada and asked for that information also. Then from a Delta Waterfowl report on leveraging of dollars and that more was available with the changing landscapes, Commissioner Oats asked how much money was leveraged up to the effort and how much goes into the projects that were being supported. Mr. Olson stated the ALUS and Adopt-a-Pothole programs were new and would be matched, but the trapping program could not be matched. Commissioner Miller asked Mr. Olson, to obtain NAWCA match for the trapping program would it only require a change in administrative rules and he was told yes, it would be a change in rules. Then Commissioner Miller asked if Louisiana would have any impact on the change and Mr. Olson stated Louisiana, as a donor state, would be a huge help to them. Commissioner Miller then asked Dr. Frank Rohwer to address Commissioner Oats' questions on the scale and cost of trapping. Dr. Rohwer stated the scale question was a problem with everything done on the prairies. The traditional approach to keep predators away from nests was to put a lot of cover on the prairies. The way to accomplish this was with a Federal program such as an ALUS program in Canada or a farm policy. The alternative was to get rid of the predators and this was a more effective and cheaper way to do it. Dr. Rohwer knew that you could not measure in Louisiana the difference in duck production with 14 trapped sites, but if there were 200 trapped sites, there may be a significant impact. Commissioner Oats asked for information on costs and opportunities by leveraging the dollars in bringing the trapping program to 200 trapped sites. Mr. Olson felt the duck hunters needed hope and were looking for leadership and some out of the box thinking. He knew that there were no guarantees with any program. Commissioner King asked how are trappers compensated and how are the trapped numbers verified. Mr. Joel Brice stated the trappers are paid on contract, not on a bounty. The contract covers their traps, gas, repairs, lures and any other costs to operate their business and to have some take home money to make it a worthwhile endeavor. It was not necessarily how many they

catch, but how they catch them. Commissioner King then again asked how are the numbers verified. Mr. Brice stated they submit records. Commissioner King asked if there was a visual record and Mr. Brice answered no. Mr. Olson noted there was the possibility of bonus opportunity if the trappers were successful.

Before going on, Chairman Morrow stated comments cards were submitted on both groups and they would be taken after Ducks Unlimited gave its presentation.

Mr. Ross Melinchuk, Director of Public Policy, stated he was from Jackson, Mississippi which was 1 of 4 regional offices covering 15 states in the south and southeast. Since 1965, Louisiana has recognized the importance of supporting work in the breeding areas, which was long before the North American Waterfowl Management Plan was even thought of. He then noted he would be joined by Mr. Pat Kehoe, Manager of Conservation Programs for Prairie Canada and Mr. Jerry Holden, Director of Conservation Programs for 3 states, including Louisiana. Mr. Melinchuk noted Ducks Unlimited was a continental waterfowl conservation organization and looked after birds on both ends of the Flyway. He then recognized the Ducks Unlimited members from Louisiana attending the meeting. Two other gentlemen from Canada were then mentioned by Mr. Melinchuk. The first was from the Canadian Department of Agriculture and the other was from the Government of Saskatchewan that could address some of the questions already posed.

Mr. Pat Kehoe stated that since the 1800's, 60 to 80 percent of the wetlands and grasslands have been lost. The implications affect the ability of landscape to attract and hold breeding pairs, reduces food availability during breeding cycle and reduces brood rearing habitat which affects nest survival. Ducks Unlimited's vision for the Prairies was mosaic and natural and to restore and manage landscapes capable of perpetually sustaining populations of waterfowl and other wildlife. Goals were no loss of wetlands in the future, restore wetlands, no loss of native cover and increase perennial cover available for nesting waterfowl. Next, Mr. Kehoe stated that PHJV (Prairie Habitat Joint Venture) was their major partnership in prairie Canada under the North American Plan. PHJV works with over 300 partners and 17,000 landowners conserving habitat to support waterfowl production to 1970's levels. To date, 11 million acres have been impacted in the prairies. One thing to come from PHJV was research and develop a waterfowl productivity model that relates duck production to landscape conditions. This was done over an 11 year study that followed the nesting success of 3,000 radio-marked mallards. Landscape changes over time have shown loss of habitat except for the last 5 years, 6 million acres of perennial cover has been gained. With PHJV, about 350,000 hatched ducks have been added to the prairies of Canada. Wetland loss in prairie Canada was also a major concern for Ducks Unlimited. Mr. Kehoe noted they were working with several provinces to develop more aggressive wetland policies and to date there have been agricultural programs in each province. The Missouri Coteau, the heart of the prairies, is about 26,000 square miles of the best habitat stretching from Saskatchewan to South Dakota. Adding perennial cover to this area could really boost duck production in wet years. As far as band recoveries from Louisiana, about 40 percent of the banded ducks shot in Louisiana came from Saskatchewan. A duck density map of the Coteau was shown and Mr. Kehoe noted

greater than 30 pairs of breeding ducks (mallards, pintails, gadwall, blue-winged teal and shovelers) per square mile were supported on the Coteau. Over the last 5 years, he reported they exceeded the planned goals for Louisiana with 113 percent of their acre goals. Ducks Unlimited proposed to continue the partnership to conserve habitat on the Canadian prairies to support and sustain waterfowl production. The conservation strategy would employ a mix of direct programs, extension, winter wheat and public policy. Several pilots were going across Canada to protect existing habitat and restore habitat and waterfowl productivity through a set of objectives. Over the next 5 years, Ducks Unlimited proposed to add 70,000 acres of protected habitat on the Coteau, restore 250 acres of wetlands, restore an additional 70,000 acres of uplands for a total of 140,000 new acres at a cost of \$10 million. Waterfowl benefits upon completion of the first phase of the Coteau and the next will have an impact on 1.8 million acres since 2004 which supports approximately 100,000 ducks annually.

Mr. Jerry Holden stated that Ducks Unlimited's work in Louisiana was important to the annual life cycle needs of North American waterfowl. A map of areas worked in Louisiana was shown including private and public lands and conservation easements. Mr. Holden felt they have gotten more aggressive about conservation easements as the threats to habitats have escalated. These easements are important since they provide the match that allows Ducks Unlimited to bring federal dollars to Louisiana. In Louisiana, Ducks Unlimited has impacted 19,123 acres and this is important since this state includes 2 level 1 priority areas, the Delta and the Coast. After the hurricanes in 2005, Ducks Unlimited committed \$15 million to coastal restoration in Louisiana. Between June 2002 and June 2007, Ducks Unlimited has spent \$15,615,937 in cash in Louisiana on all of their conservation efforts. The figure of \$46 million including match funds was the total amount of financial impact on the work done in Louisiana. Work going on included surveying on Rockefeller Refuge, construction on Bayou Macon WMA, vegetation control project on Catahoula Lake, a grant would be submitted for a waterfowl project on Sherburne WMA, reforestation project on Ouachita Tract and a project on Pointe-aux-Chenes. Another Ducks Unlimited projected with the State was a MOU with the DU license plate. Mr. Holden stated his main reason for working with Ducks Unlimited was what the legacy would be. He then expressed appreciation for the Commission's obligation. Commissioner Miller stated that Mr. Holden was talking about apples and oranges, but they wanted to talk about money needed for the nesting grounds. He noted that if the nesting grounds were not fixed and duck production did not increase, then it would not matter how many project places there are noted on the map. Commissioner Miller felt the discussion was not to be on the wintering ground habitat, but on the nesting ground habitat. He then felt offended by the effort to bribe the Commission by the amount of dollars Ducks Unlimited brings to Louisiana. Mr. Holden acknowledged that was not what he meant to imply. Commissioner Oats expressed appreciation for what was done in Louisiana and on the wintering grounds. He knew that the focus has been on the breeding habitat. Also, he did not feel any bribery occurred in the comments made and remarked that it was an unfair characterization from what he has seen from either group. Commissioner Mouton asked if the breeding grounds were getting good water and rains. Mr. Melinchuk stated it was not universal, there were some dry areas and the parklands has pretty good water. Then Commissioner Mouton asked, over

the last 5 years, have there been areas with little or no rain. Mr. Kehoe stated the area was probably southwestern Saskatchewan and southern Alberta which was traditionally dry; but the eastern part of Alberta was in good shape; southern Manitoba was a little drier than normal.

Mr. Melinchuk asked the Chairman if he could tie up the presentation with a couple of points and was given the okay. To address Commissioner Miller's point on the breeding grounds, he stated that they have to look after the ducks on both ends of the flyway. Mr. Melinchuk mentioned they have been very fortunate and very grateful for the work the state supported to date and he hoped to continue the work. The work from a 5 year timeframe at a level of \$325,000 per year would amount to about \$1.6 million. Ducks Unlimited would match that money and that total would be eligible for match with the North American Wetlands Conservation Act which could possibly turn it into \$6 million for habitat conservation in Canada. Commissioner Mouton felt it was almost 100 percent match when the Department's money was combined with Ducks Unlimited's money. Commissioner King asked how many acres of private lands were being helped by Ducks Unlimited and if it was possible to have the information on who owns those lands. Mr. Melinchuk then stated that the average cost for a Louisiana duck hunter to contribute to the Ducks Unlimited projects was \$3 per year. Commissioner Mouton asked for a list of what parish the landowners were in and what number of dollars were spent for the past 3 years. Mr. Holden answered to Commissioners King and Mouton that was a fair question. He felt it would be a short list since most of the work has been on coastal restoration specifically targeted for the ducks. Commissioner Miller stated that Ducks Unlimited has been on the grounds in Canada since 1938 and this decline has continued despite their best efforts. He then asked for information specifically related to Louisiana Grants, such as where the money went, a complete accounting of all costs and expenses including general and administrative costs, a map of where the land was that the Department's money has gone to and how much has been permanently protected. Commissioner Miller, being a past State Chairman for Ducks Unlimited, stated he was appalled at how little permanent protection has been achieved over the last 60 years. Commissioner Mouton mentioned he went to the Pointe-aux-Chenes event and asked Mr Melinchuk to provide a sketch of what the project involved. Commissioner Oats also, as he did with Delta Waterfowl, asked for more material on Ducks Unlimited such as purchasing land and fees, servitudes, and the methods used to protect a geographic area. The Commissioner's perception was that not as much progress was being made as he wanted it to be; thus he asked for information on how much was being protected, the effectiveness and what it meant for duck populations. He noted he expected the numbers to be bigger. Chairman Morrow asked that both groups provide all Commissioners with the requested information. He then opened the meeting to public comments.

Mr. Duke Lowrie, Chairman of the Northwest Chapter of Delta Waterfowl, which is the largest chapter in North America, stated his chapter continues to grow. He felt it has grown due to the people acknowledging how beneficial Delta Waterfowl's programs were. Mr. Lowrie hoped their Chapter would be able to sponsor a predator management site to

complement the efforts of the Commission. He then thanked the Commission for asking the tough questions and looking at the issue.

Mr. Bob Carles, Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, stated the Watershed Authority was responsible for the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. He added that he has been involved with the North American for about 20 years and he also represents Saskatchewan on the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture. Mr. Carles noted he was there to speak on the Ducks Unlimited proposal and ask for support. Saskatchewan has approximately 25 million acres of prime habitat which includes 30 ducks per square mile and 6 million acres of Coteau. Ducks Unlimited has a vital role in Saskatchewan for conservation. About 85 to 90 percent of the lands are in private hands with the majority of the producers having ranching and cattle operations and their interest in grasses was the key to their approach. Part of their strategy has been to improve the bottom line for the producer and he should be involved for the long haul. From 2001-2003, the Province of Saskatchewan offered producers \$15 an acre to help convert crop land to grasslands which totaled about 1.4 million acres. Another 2 million acres was put back into grassland over the last 10 years from a partnership with Agriculture Canada, Ducks Unlimited, and the Watershed Authority. The focus now may center on the wetlands. Mr. Carles then mentioned that Ducks Unlimited worked with the Province of Saskatchewan, the Watershed Authority and other conservation organizations to pull together the Conservation Easement Legislation. This was also being used to conserve waterfowl habitat. Another policy in Saskatchewan was the Conservation Lands Policy where landowners and environmental partners worked in order to acquire important lands for wildlife and waterfowl. Another area that Ducks Unlimited has been involved was the Prairie Conservation Action Plan in order to secure the native prairie. As well as funding the Watershed Authority (about \$500,000), the Province of Saskatchewan also funds Ducks Unlimited up to \$500,000 annually for conservation easements. The Watershed Authority welcomes the partnership with Ducks Unlimited due to their providing technical support. Mr. Carles thanked the Commission for helping Ducks Unlimited which in turn helped them.

Mr. Dean Smith, Manager of Strategic Planning and Stewardship Coordination with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, stated he has been involved in resource management for 20 years. He stated his organization has been a founding member of the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture and he chairs the Policy Committee. Mr. Smith noted the partners were the key to delivering the environmental programs on the agricultural landscapes. He wanted to explain that what happens with agriculture was very important in terms of duck production. First he explained the background of Canadian Agriculture. The entire agricultural landscape within Canada was 167 million acres (which is the size of Texas), and 80 percent was located in the Canadian prairies. As noted by Mr. Carles, agricultural lands are privately held, so they needed to influence the individual farmer's decision. In early 2002, a common agricultural policy was agreed upon by the senior levels of government. Three initiatives have been centered upon and they included the Environmental Farm Planning Initiative, the National Farm Stewardship Initiative and Green Cover Canada. The programs focus were on soil, water, air and biodiversity. Over 30 percent of the farmers in Canada have participated in the Environmental Farm Planning Initiative and nationally, 32

percent of the agricultural landscape was covered by a farm plan. The federal government has committed \$179 million to the National Farm Stewardship Program, and for every dollar spent by the federal government, farmers and other stakeholders spend another \$2 or \$3. Statistics show that farmers with an environmental farm plan were more likely to adopt environmental practices around permanent wetlands. The last initiative, Green Cover Canada, was built on a number of other successful programs referred to as the Permanent Cover Programs. The intent of this initiative was to take and convert environmentally sensitive cultivated land into permanent forage cover. The Green Cover Program provided financial assistance for an additional 631,000 acres. Mr. Smith added that there is a policy within PHJV that an additional 2 million acres of grassland would be required in order to meet their habitat objectives. In reference to questions asked on the effectiveness of BMPs, he stated they entered into a project with Ducks Unlimited to determine the effects of the practices that the farmers were putting on the ground. The intent of future agricultural policies was to modify programs, develop new programs and explore new options around the concept of ecological goods and services. The policy research for the federal and provincial governments has also done a major benefit-cost study. The results show that programs based on an annual payment to producer was the most inefficient approach. Research strongly recommends future initiatives be based on market instruments such as conservation easements, water quality trading and conservation auctions. Mr. Smith stated he talked with colleagues from Environment Canada and their concept of ALUS, and they do not support it since they feel it provides a subsidy to farmers.

Mr. Allan Ensminger stated he was one of the men the Pointe-aux-Chenes area was named after which took about 30 years to implement. He added he served on the Gulf Coast Joint Venture Board of the North American Plan and was an original member to represent private landowners and those projects have been waterfowl and wetland oriented. Mr. Ensminger, having worked for the Department, had an opportunity to fly the Missouri Coteau and felt it was mind boggling the expanse of habitat in Canada and northern United States. He felt it was becoming more obvious that as the waterfowl habitat deteriorates along the coast, the number of birds that stops here has decreased. Hot spots such as Rockefeller Refuge, White Lake, Lacassine and Sabine as well as private lands plays a critical role in holding the winter duck population. Mr. Ensminger commented that he has enjoyed his association with Ducks Unlimited and looked forward to many more years.

Mr. Tom Dufour, a founding father of the Baton Rouge Chapter of Delta Waterfowl, began stating a boll weevil was a predator. He then gave the scenario that if a farmer did not manage predators on his acreage, then there would not be much production. Mr. Dufour felt if predators were not managed in the duck production company, there may not be any ducks to shoot. Commissioner Oats asked Mr. Dufour if he was involved in any of the Flyways and he was told no. He did state that he was involved in another area that Delta Waterfowl started on hen houses. Commissioner Oats noted he would like to hear from other groups on the different approaches to preserve the habitat versus getting rid of the predators.



Mr. Robert Walker, volunteer for Ducks Unlimited for 15 years, stated he was last year's State Chairman. He traveled throughout the United States, including Alaska, and into Canada on his own money looking at sites. Mr. Walker noted there were about 16,000 Ducks Unlimited members and over 1,000 volunteers in Louisiana. He added that his son was a charterboat captain and his name would never be mentioned as a violator.

Chairman Morrow thanked the two organizations for their presentations and the comments received. He then asked both groups to send all of the information requested to each Commissioner before they vote at the next meeting. Commissioner King asked how were the funds allocated to Ducks Unlimited and Delta Waterfowl generated and was there a known revenue projection for the next 5 years. Mrs. Janice Lansing stated the Commission was authorized to direct 10 percent from the sale of a particular hunting license which generates about \$300,000 per year. The allocation was 2/3 to Ducks Unlimited and 1/3 to Delta Waterfowl. As far as the 5 year projection, Mrs. Lansing mentioned she could not answer that. Commissioner King stated he asked since they were going into a 5 year contract. To that, Mrs. Lansing stated there is a clause in the contract that funding was subject to availability.

**To receive and consider Resolution on Free Fishing Days in Louisiana** was handled by Mr. John Sturgis. The Resolution would set the no license required recreational fishing days in Louisiana. On these days, residents and non-residents were allowed to fish without having to purchase the normal required recreational fishing licenses. Mr. Sturgis then read the Therefore Be It Resolved portion of the Resolution. Commissioner Miller made a motion to adopt the Resolution, it was seconded by Commissioner Oats and unanimously approved.

(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 2 - 8, 2008 as

FISHING WEEK

in the state of Louisiana, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that June 7 & 8, 2008 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: May 1, 2008

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Patrick C. Morrow  
Chairman

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Robert J. Samanie, III  
Vice-Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stephen J. Oats

\_\_\_\_\_  
Henry M. Mouton

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Stephen W. Sagraera

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Frederic L. Miller

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Earl P. King, Jr.

**To consider Conditionally Adopted Amendments to the 2008/10 Hunting Seasons and General and WMA Rules and Regulations and 2008/09 WMA Seasons** began with Mr. Kenny Ribbeck stating the 9 amendments voted on at earlier meetings were included in the Commissioners packets. Chairman Morrow stated he was asked if the Commission, at this meeting, could amend any proposed amendments. He reminded the public that the Commission passed a Resolution and adopted guidelines on amending the hunting regulations. Based on those guidelines, April was the last month new amendments to the Notices of Intent could be conditionally adopted. Thus the Chairman advised the public that

they could not further amend any proposed regulations. Commissioner Miller made a motion to adopt the 9 proposed amendments and it was seconded by Commissioner Oats. The motion passed with no opposition. Chairman Morrow then announced that Representative Frankie Howard, Representative Chris Roy, Jr., and Representative James Armes wanted to discuss the reduction in deer hunting days on Kisatchie. He explained to the Representatives before the meeting that the proposal could not be amended after the April Meeting. The Representatives wanted the record to reflect that they would have appeared before the Commission to voice their opposition to the reduction in dog hunting days on Kisatchie from 14 to 7 days. Then, Mr. Ribbeck asked the Commissioners to vote on the Notices of Intent for hunting seasons and general and WMA rules and regulations. Commissioner Miller made a motion to adopt both Notices of Intent with amendments in globo and it was seconded by Commissioner Mouton. This motion also passed with no opposition.

The Commissioners agreed to hold the **September 2008 Meeting** on Thursday, September 4, 2008, beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the Baton Rouge Headquarters.

Under **Public Comments**, Chairman Morrow recognized former Secretary Dwight Landreneau in attendance at the meeting.

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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Robert J. Barham  
Secretary

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