

**LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

**May 6, 2010**

**STEPHEN J. OATS  
CHAIRMAN**

**BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA**

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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 6, 2010**

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF

LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

Thursday, May 6, 2010

Chairman Stephen J. Oats presiding.

Earl King, Jr.  
Patrick Morrow  
Stephen Sagrera  
Ann Taylor  
Mike Voisin

Secretary Robert Barham was also present.

Commissioner Ronny Graham was absent from the meeting.

Chairman Oats called for a motion for approval of the **April 1, 2010 Commission Minutes**. A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Sagrera and seconded by Commissioner Morrow. The motion passed with no opposition.

Before moving on with the agenda, Chairman Oats asked Secretary Barham to provide an update on the BP oil spill. He began stating the last 16 days were extremely unusual in Louisiana. The Deepwater site, Mississippi Canyon 252, has been leaking 5000 barrels of oil per day. The oil seen on the surface was not all that was out in the waters, there was suspended oil throughout the entire water column. The oil will move with the complex currents off the coast of Louisiana. Secretary Barham felt there was a need to "think outside the box" with this event. Not only was the shrimp season opened, but in an abundance of caution, a portion of Breton Sound and waters to the territorial limits were closed so tainted products would not get into the food chain. The latest NOAA projection was that medium or heavy oil would pass the mouth of the Mississippi River on Southwest Pass. Staff will be constantly monitoring the oil to see where it goes. A containment device was on its way to the site and would be lowered on the leak and if it works, there would be 80 to 85 percent reduction in the flow of oil. The ultimate solution was a new well being drilled, but that would take another 88 days before the stop of the oil flow. Secretary Barham felt this would be an event they would be

assessing for the remainder of his time with the Department. He assured the Commission they were working as hard as possible in dealing with the spill. Chairman Oats, on behalf of the Commission, expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary and Department. Commissioner Morrow knew that after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, a grant program became available for commercial fishermen to assist during those hard times. He asked if there would be any such program available for the commercial fishermen to assist them during these tough times. Secretary Barham stated they were working with the Departments of Economic Development and Labor to get an application for such a program. British Petroleum was responsible for the event and would have to compensate, not only for the damages, but the disruption of business and the ripple effect. This would not only apply to commercial fishermen, but processors, marinas and all of the connected industries. Commissioner Morrow added that if BP funds the grants, he urged the commercial fishermen and everyone else entitled to a grant not to give up any other rights against BP or any other responsible parties. He then noted that the Commission did not want a responsible party put up grant money and be relieved of future liability. Commissioner Voisin also expressed appreciation to the Secretary and Department for their hard work in this effort. He then asked about the shrimp closure that would occur that day. Secretary Barham noted this tragedy began with 11 people losing their lives. He added all divisions were out there trying to assess and help with the impacts to the wildlife. Chairman Oats asked if the best place to get information was from the Department's website and the Secretary answered yes. Commissioner Taylor asked with the hydrocarbons in the food chain, was the Department considering closing the recreational fishing. Secretary Barham stated he wanted that to stay open as long as possible, and he was working with the Departments of Health and Hospitals and Environmental Quality to assess all available options. Commissioner Voisin agreed with Commissioner Morrow in that everyone needs to be cautious in that every person's rights are covered. He also commended the Secretary for the actions taken to protect the long term commercial and recreational communities and in not allowing any tainted products get into the market so that when this event was over there would be a market to sell the product to. Secretary Barham assured the Commission he would carefully consider any decisions he has to make.

Under **Commission Special Announcements/Personal Privilege** for this month, Commissioner Voisin read from the 2009-2010 oyster season on public grounds resolution since they were considering

adding an item to the agenda to discuss reopening some oyster areas. The Resolution gives the Secretary authority to close and may open areas if resource was located. The oyster community has challenges with closures in Areas 2 - 7 and Area 1 still having a viable product. On the western side of the state, Sabine and Calcasieu can be reopened. Commissioner Voisin did not think the Commission nor Department should blanket and widely open any area. He however did want to consider what can be done to maintain a market for the oyster harvesters. The best oyster openings are at this time of year with the southeast winds. The seasons that occur from September 1 through April 30 are closed due to pollution reasons as required by the Department of Health and Hospitals. Commissioner Voisin added there was no need to add any items to the agenda.

**To receive and consider Declaration of Emergency and Notice of Intent on Fisheries Closure due to Oil Spill** was handled by Mrs. Karen Foote. The Declaration of Emergency would continue the recreational and commercial fishing closure instituted by the Secretary on April 30. The closure would continue until further notice. Commissioner Voisin made a motion to accept the Declaration of Emergency, seconded by Commissioner Sagrera and passed with no opposition.

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

#### DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

In accordance with the emergency provisions of R.S. 49:953.B and R.S.49:967.D of the Administrative Procedure Act, and under the authority of R.S. 56:6.1, the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby closes all recreational and commercial fishing, effective May 6, 2010, in the following area:

All coastal waters east of the Mississippi River and south and east of a line running along the southern shoreline of Bayou Bienvenue to the shoreline of Lake Borgne; thence northeasterly along the southern and eastern shoreline of Lake Borgne to Malheureaux Point at latitude 30 degrees 04 minutes 45 seconds north and longitude 89 degrees 28 minutes 59 seconds west;

thence northeasterly to a point at latitude 30 degrees 05 minutes 23 seconds north and longitude 89 degrees 28 minutes 23 seconds west; thence northeasterly to a point on the most western point of Half Moon Island at latitude 30 degrees 07 minutes 50 seconds north and longitude 89 degrees 26 minutes 49 seconds west; thence northwesterly to a point at latitude 30 degrees 09 minutes 15 seconds north and longitude 89 degrees 28 minutes 34 seconds west; thence northeasterly to a point on the Louisiana - Mississippi State Boundary at latitude 30 degrees 09 minutes 50 seconds north and longitude 89 degrees 28 minutes 20 seconds west.

Effective with the closure, no person shall take or possess or attempt to take any species of fish from waters within the closed area. The possession, sale, barter, trade, or exchange of any fish or other aquatic life from the closed area during the closure is prohibited.

The Commission hereby grants authority to the Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to broaden or to reopen the area closed to fishing if biological and technical data indicates the need to do so.

The Deep Horizon drilling rig accident has resulted in a significant release of hydrocarbon pollutants into the waters offshore of southeast Louisiana and these pollutants have the potential to impact fish and other aquatic life in portions of Louisiana's coastal waters. Efforts have been made and are continuing to minimize the potential threats to fish and other aquatic life.

This action is taken in coordination with Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, to avoid the possibility that commercially harvested and recreationally caught fish and other aquatic life used for consumption are tainted with hydrocarbons. Governor Jindal in a declaration of emergency issued on April 29, 2010 stated in part that "a declaration that a state of emergency exists is appropriate due to the predicted impact of oil along the Louisiana coast leaking from the Deepwater Horizon which threatens the state's natural resources, including land, water, fish, wildlife, fowl and other birds, and likewise threatens the livelihoods of Louisiana's citizens living along the coast which increases the economic impact of this incident".

Stephen J. Oats  
Chairman



Mr. Marty Bourgeois began his presentation, **To receive and consider Declaration of Emergency on Setting the Opening Dates of the 2010 Spring Inshore Shrimp Season and Re-Opening Portions of State Outside Waters to Shrimping** with a slide on the annual Louisiana shrimp landings from 1976 through 2009. Last year, landings totaled about 110 million pounds with a dockside value of \$113 million. Then shown were slides on brown shrimp versus white shrimp landings beginning in 1976 (over the last 5 years, the brown shrimp have been below the long term mean, but the white shrimp have been considerably higher than the long term mean); monthly shrimp landings versus the long term mean with May and June being the peak landings months; shrimp gear license sales; shrimp life cycle diagram; map of 3 shrimp management zones; Mississippi River discharge versus shrimp landings; southeast Louisiana rainfall; the Mississippi River discharge showed it was above the long term mean, but the river stages have fallen considerably; south Barataria Bay water temperatures; north Barataria Bay salinity versus the long term mean (considerably below the long term mean); brown shrimp catch per effort in 6 foot trawl samples versus mean sizes (in general, brown shrimp growth this year has been well below previous years); Louisiana brown and white shrimp landings by basin; and the projections when 50 percent of the brown shrimp population are at 100 count per pound or larger (Zone 1, 59 percent would be available on May 31; on May 31 in Zone 2, 60 percent would be at the criteria level; Zone 3, 53 percent would be available on May 31); and the May tidal ranges for Barataria Pass. Commissioner Sagrera asked what was the Department's recommendation for Zone 2. Mr. Bourgeois stated staff suggested splitting Zone 2 at the mouth of Bayou Grand Caillou and open from that bayou to the western shore of Vermilion Bay on Monday, May 10 at 6 AM. The remainder of Zone 2 east of Bayou Grand Caillou should open on Monday, May 24 at 6 AM; however a statute mandates that the Commission shall open Zone 2 on or before the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in May, May 17. Commissioner Morrow asked if the Commission was constrained by law to open on May 17 and then the Secretary could declare an emergency and close a portion until May 24. Mr. Bourgeois noted that was one option. Commissioner Morrow stated that the Commission has to follow the statute and then it would be up to the Secretary to take whatever action necessary. Chairman Oats asked if the recommendation was to open the eastern portion of Zone 2 on May 24 if there was no constraint and he was told yes. Mr. Bourgeois added that fishermen in the western Terrebonne area were doing extremely well with the overwintering white shrimp. The western Terrebonne, Atchafalaya and Vermilion Bay areas were white

shrimp fishing grounds, the brown shrimp was not much of a targeted resource since they seldom grow to marketable sizes. Commissioner Sagrera asked if the east side of Zone 2 could open earlier than May 17. Mr. Bourgeois answered yes. Chairman Oats asked, if the Commission was motivated to give shrimpers opportunity in the light of the oil spill, Zone 2 could be opened on May 10 with the Secretary having authority to close as needed. Mr. Bourgeois responded that the Resolution would give the Secretary authority to close or reopen as needed. Commissioner Voisin made a motion to open all of Zone 2 on May 10 and give the Secretary authority to close or reopen if necessary. Commissioner Morrow seconded the motion and it passed with no opposition. Chairman Oats then asked Mr. Bourgeois for his recommendations on the other zones. Zone 3's actual cross over date was May 31 and that would be the recommended date. For Zone 1, with the special fisheries closure, the Resolution would give the Secretary authority to open when the precautionary closure was suspended. If there was no threat of an oil spill, the recommended date would be May 31. Commissioner Voisin asked if there were any shrimp in Lake Borgne or Pontchartrain and he was told there was no shrimp. The Commissioner then asked if there was a date for Zone 1 in the Resolution would it create a challenge or concern. Mr. Bourgeois suggested, to avoid confusion, stay with Secretary's authority when the closure was lifted. Commissioner Voisin asked if the closure was lifted on May 17 and already have a May 31 date, would it put undue pressure then to reopen the waters prior to the time when the shrimp would be ready. Mr. Bourgeois noted it was the Commission's prerogative. Chairman Oats asked if the Resolution addressed that issue and he was told it did not address that. Commissioner Voisin did not want to create confusion, and added he did not see anything wrong with leaving Zones 1 and 3 as noted in the Resolution. Commissioner Sagrera asked, if there was an imminent threat to Zone 3, could the Secretary open that season earlier to allow for harvest. Mr. Bourgeois read from the Resolution on the Secretary's authority. Commissioner Sagrera stated the Resolution allows for the Secretary to close, but not to open. He added that he would like to see the Secretary have the authority to open the season to allow shrimpers the opportunity to fish. Mr. Don Puckett suggested adding one sentence, "The Secretary was further granted the authority to open any area previously closed." Commissioner Sagrera made a motion to amend the Resolution to include the sentence from Mr. Puckett. Commissioner Voisin seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition. Chairman Oats then asked for a motion on the Resolution as a whole. Commissioner Morrow made a motion to adopt the

Resolution as amended and it was seconded by Commissioner Voisin. Mr. Bourgeois reminded the Commission the opening would be at 6 AM.

Mr. Kirk Burleigh, Police Jury President from Cameron Parish, asked that Zone 3 open with Zone 2. The white count was great, but the brown shrimp in the lake were small. They suggested opening the Main Ship Channel and keep the lake closed. If both zones were opened at the same time, the boats could be distributed equally. Commissioner Morrow asked if the Department's Resolution would give the Secretary authority to open the shrimp season as requested by the Police Jury if the biology dictates. Chairman Oats felt that was the understanding of the Resolution.

Mr. Danny Babin, shrimp processor, stated the Department was thinking out of the box which was good. Opening seasons and then closing them works. He added that oil did not discriminate between recreational and commercial fishermen. Mr. Babin felt that the shrimpers would not get into the shrimp if they were too small. He was in favor of opening Zones 2 and 3 together. If the shrimp season did not open, most of the boats may go to work with the oil spill and not work the shrimp which would hurt the industry. Mr. Babin felt the Department has done a good job thinking out of the box and suggested continuing to do that. Commissioner Voisin asked Mr. Babin if he supported opening Zone 2 on May 10 and he was told yes. This time was not normal conditions, so the fishermen need to get to work so they can pay their bills. He did not see any difference between opening Zones 2 and 3 at the same time. Commissioner Voisin asked Mr. Babin if he was okay with the Resolution as amended. Mr. Babin stated he was okay.

Ms. Tracy Kuhns stated she supports what the Department was recommending with the openings. She then thanked the Department for the job with the emergency. Ms. Kuhn noted that the coast was changing and has heard talk about splitting Zone 2. She wondered if the Department was discussing changing the shrimp zones due to the changes in the Basin. Commissioner Morrow stated nothing was written in stone with the Department and they rely on the biologists to know what was best for the resource and fishermen. He agreed that they should be vigilant on what was needed.

Mr. Jimmy Dyson, Sr., a commercial fisherman, felt Zone 3 should open with Zone 2. He stated there were more white shrimp in Cameron than what the biologists were saying. Mr. Dyson

suggested opening if not all of Zone 3 then at least the Channel so the smaller boats can get the white shrimp. He knew the brown shrimp were small, but in his area, the brown shrimp stayed in the marsh until June or July. Mr. Bourgeois stated, in response to Mr. Dyson's comments, the shrimp season has been extended in the Calcasieu ship channel using buoys as reference points.

Mr. Puckett read the amendment to the Declaration of Emergency. Hearing no further comments, the motion passed with no opposition.

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

RESOLUTION  
2010 Spring Shrimp Season Opening  
adopted by the  
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission  
May 6, 2010

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 at sizes of 100 count per pound or larger, and

WHEREAS, current biological data project that 50% of the 2010 brown shrimp population in inside waters will meet the minimum 100 count per pound management criteria in Shrimp Management Zone 1 by May 29, 2010, and in Shrimp Management Zone 2 by May 23, 2010, and in Shrimp Management Zone 3 by May 31, 2010, and

WHEREAS, provisions in LA R.S. 56:497(A)2 require that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission shall fix the open seasons for all or part of state waters, with the exception of the spring brown shrimp season in that portion of Louisiana's inshore waters from the eastern shore of South Pass of the Mississippi River westward to the western shore of Vermilion Bay and Southwest Pass at Marsh Island. The spring brown shrimp season in this area shall be opened by the Commission no later than the third Monday in May after considering the Department's projection as to when 50% of the brown shrimp crop will be one hundred per pound or greater, and

WHEREAS, unseasonably late winter conditions have delayed brown shrimp recruitment into inshore waters and have affected brown shrimp growth rates. Analysis of the most recent biological data project that less than 50% of the brown shrimp crop in waters extending from the eastern shore of South Pass of the Mississippi River westward to the western shore of Vermilion Bay and Southwest Pass at Marsh Island will be at sizes of one hundred per pound or greater by May 17, 2010, the third Monday in May, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby opens the spring shrimp season in Shrimp Management Zone 2 from the eastern shoreline of South Pass of the Mississippi River to Southwest Pass at Marsh Island at 6:00 am May 10, 2010.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby authorizes the Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to open the spring shrimp season in both inside and outside state waters within Shrimp Management Zone 1 when the current LDWF precautionary fisheries closure within these waters is suspended.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby authorizes the Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to delay the opening of, or close, the 2010 spring inshore shrimp season if biological and technical data indicate the presence of significant numbers of small, unmarketable size brown shrimp and 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. The Secretary is further granted the authority to open any area, or re-open any previously closed area, of inside waters based upon biological and technical data.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, a Declaration of Emergency setting the 2010 Spring Shrimp Season in Louisiana state waters is attached to and made part of this resolution.

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Stephen J. Oats, 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 2010 Spring Shrimp Season in Louisiana state waters to open as follows:

Shrimp Management Zone 2 from the eastern shore of South Pass of the Mississippi River to Southwest Pass at Marsh Island to open at 6:00 a.m., May 10, 2010, and

Shrimp Management Zone 3 from the western shore of Vermilion Bay and Southwest Pass at Marsh Island to the Louisiana/Texas state line to open at 6:00 a.m., May 31, 2010.

The Commission also hereby grants authority to the Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to open the spring shrimp season in both inside and outside state waters within Shrimp Management Zone 1 when the current LDWF precautionary fisheries closure within these waters is suspended; and to delay the opening of, or close, the 2010 spring inshore shrimp season if biological and technical data indicate the presence of significant numbers of small, unmarketable size brown shrimp; and 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. The Secretary is further granted the authority to open any area, or re-open any previously closed area, of inside waters based upon biological and technical data.

Stephen J. Oats  
Chairman

**To receive and hear Enforcement & Aviation Reports/April** began with Lt. Col. Keith LaCaze stating the month of April had a total of 1,979 citations and 795 written warnings issued and agents helped with 44 public assists. Enforcement's activity

was on the end to the turkey season, boating, and recreational and commercial fishing. There were 12 boating accidents reported during April with 4 injuries and 2 fatalities. The fatality in Jefferson Parish was being checked to see if it possibly was a heart attack instead of a boating accident. The other fatality occurred in St. Landry Parish. The Department's three planes flew a total 102 hours for the month. News Releases discussed included: sentencing a Rapides Parish man for night hunting for deer; rescue of a lady from Cypremort Point State Park; and 3 men cited for stealing oysters in Terrebonne Parish. Enforcement's response to the oil spill began on April 29 with a flight out to the site. Also, about 50 officers were working out of the Venice Marina and Breton Sound Marina supporting boom placement. Other duties by the officers were enforcing closures in areas, running a flight from Baton Rouge in the morning and then one in the afternoon from Lakefront Airport. The Command Vehicle was moved to Breton Sound Marina in order to supervise enforcement activities. Lt. Col. LaCaze added that they were working closely with the Wildlife Division, Coastal and Nongame Resources Division as well as the Office of Fisheries.

**To receive and consider 2010 Louisiana Safe Boating Week Proclamation** was handled by Sgt. Rachel Zechenelly. The importance of the proclamation was to bring awareness during National Safe Boating Week. Louisiana has a large recreational boating population and were always looking to make it a safe activity. Many states were involved in this program as are boating organizations. Sgt. Zechenelly felt awareness was one of the key components to making the waterways safer. She then asked the Commission to adopt the Proclamation declaring May 22-28 as Safe Boating Week in the State of Louisiana. Hearing no comments, Commissioner Voisin made a motion to adopt the Proclamation, seconded by Commissioner Morrow and approved unanimously.

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

#### PROCLAMATION

Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission  
May 6, 2010

Whereas, the United States has over 13 million boats, and 322,000 of those boats are on Louisiana waters; and

Whereas, the vast majority of boating incidents are caused by human error or poor judgment and not by the boat, equipment, or environmental factors; and

Whereas, 74% of our states fatalities on the water are due to drowning; and

Whereas, a significant number of boaters who lose their lives by drowning each year would be alive today had they worn their life jackets; and

Whereas, while boats are a marvelous source of recreation, unknowledgeable boat operators are a risk to other boaters when they do not know or obey the Navigation Rules of the Road, drink alcohol, or take drugs while operating a boat or choose not to wear a life jacket; and

Whereas, boating knowledge and skills are important in reducing human error and improving judgment, if people are aware of the risk they are more likely to take the precautionary measures to protect themselves, their friends, family, and others; which is why we must spread the message of boating safety education in our state, now

Therefore be it resolved, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission do hereby proclaim May 22-28, 2010 as Safe Boating Week in the State of Louisiana.

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Stephen J. Oats, Chairman  
Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission

Lt. Col. Jeff Mayne began the next item, **To receive and hear Boating Safety and Waterway Enforcement Report**, stating that the recreational boating in Louisiana generates about \$1.3 billion economic impact to the state and over \$80 million in state and local taxes each year. In 2009, there were 25 recreational boating accidents in which 32 fatalities occurred. The most common cause in the fatalities was due to the contribution of alcohol followed by drowning - 17 of the 32 drowned. The next slides showed the distribution of fatalities by parish, reportable boat crashes from 1999-2009 and boating fatalities from 1999-2009. Louisiana is ranked #4 in the nation on boating fatalities, but Louisiana is ranked #1 in boating fatalities for those states with over 100,000 registered boats. Enforcement conducted about 100,000 hours of patrol activity which resulted in 1,400 violations for no PFD on the boat, 305 for no PFD for



those under the minimum age, 39 for not wearing a PFD while on a personal watercraft and 5 for not abiding by the tiller operated vessel regulation. An increase in citations for DWI's on the water occurred in 2008-2009 which correlated to the increase in boating patrol. Lt. Col. Mayne discussed the results of a survey sent to 2,000 recreational boaters with a 65 percent response rate. Most respondents claimed to carry enough PFD's for all persons on board; 46 percent claimed they wore their PFD's all of the time while 10 percent never wore them; and reasons for wearing PFD's. During the last legislative session, the minimum age to wear a PFD was increased from 12 and under to 16 and under and from the survey, over 70 percent agreed with the new regulation of 16 and under. States with over 20 years of boating education activities had a fatality rate of more than 3 per 100,000 boats; and for states with less than 10 years, the fatality rate was almost 7 per 100,000 boats. Also during the last legislative session, required boater education was moved from those born after January 1, 1988 to after January 1, 1984. Since 2003, a total of 32,900 have received boater education training. Commissioner Sagrera commended the Enforcement Division for stepping up their efforts on DWI's. Lt. Col. Mayne added they received a grant through the Highway Safety Commission to help State Police with DWI check points. Commissioner Voisin asked what were the penalties for DWI on the water and he was told they were the same as on the highway. Then Commissioner Voisin asked how much education did the public understand from a recreational perspective. Lt. Col. Mayne felt that it was improving and overtime would become more widespread. He added that during boating education week, there will be a mass media campaign to promote safe waterways.

Going on to the next item, Mr. John Sturgis presented the item **To receive and consider Free Fishing Weekend Resolution.** This event was an annual effort hosted by the Department whose goal was to recruit new people into the sport of fishing. The Resolution set fishing week in Louisiana which coincided with National Fishing Week. Also, the Resolution set June 12 and 13, 2010 as the days when resident and non-residents can fish in Louisiana waters without the required recreational licenses. Mr. Sturgis then read the Therefore Be It Resolved portion of the Resolution. Commissioner Voisin made a motion to adopt the Resolution and seconded by Commissioner Morrow. Commissioner Voisin asked if the Commission had the authority to set the free fishing days and Mr. Puckett stated it was statutory. 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 7 - 13, 2010 as

**FISHING WEEK**

in the state of Louisiana, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that June 12 & 13, 2010 are hereby declared

Free 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 6, 2010

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Stephen J. Oats, Chairman

Stephen Sagrera, Vice-Chairman

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Patrick C. Morrow

Mike Voisin

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Ronny Graham

Earl P. King, Jr.

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Ann L. Taylor

**To consider 2010-2012 Hunting Seasons and General and WMA Rules and Regulations: Consideration of Conditionally Adopted Amendments to Notices of Intent and Consideration of Amended Notices of Intent**

began with Chairman Oats reminding the Commission they amended the original Notices of Intent and this was the meeting to formally adopt the conditionally adopted amendments. Mr. Kenny Ribbeck began stating a summary of comments received was included in their packets as well as a summary of amendments to the original Notices of Intent. The amendments included non-toxic shot required to hunt small game and dove on Point Farm in Pointe-aux-Chenes WMA; establish a hog-dog season on Sabine WMA; provide for additional crawfishing opportunity on Yakey Tract in Red River WMA; allow for the live transport of feral hogs taken from WMAs by permit only; allow blood tracking dogs on WMAs; approved the hunting seasons except for deer on Kisatchie National Forest; and then approved the deer seasons on Kisatchie National Forest.

Mr. Ribbeck then asked if Mr. Mike Balboni with Kisatchie National Forest could provide a comment. Mr. Balboni stated they intend to come to a decision on deer dog hunting on Kisatchie in the near future. But in order to recognize and respect the Commission's decision on hunting seasons, Mr. Balboni noted they acknowledged the decision to have a deer dog season similar to last year on Kisatchie for this upcoming season. He added they will work with the Department in implementing the permit system. Any decisions made will not affect this upcoming season, it would affect future years. Chairman Oats asked Mr. Balboni if they support the Commission's recommendation for this year and he was told yes.

Going on, Mr. Ribbeck stated the last amendment would allow certain personal watercrafts on a portion of Pearl River WMA

from April 1 until Monday of Labor Day weekend. Hearing no discussion, a motion by Commissioner King was made to accept the amendments in globo. Commissioner Morrow seconded the motion and it passed with no opposition. Then Mr. Ribbeck asked for a motion to accept the Notices of Intent as amended. A motion was made by Commissioner King, seconded by Commissioner Voisin and unanimously approved.

The agenda item, **To receive and hear Presentation on Feral Swine** was presented by Dr. Jim LaCour, State Wildlife Veterinarian with the Department. He noted feral swine was an invasive species composed of escaped domestic pigs brought into the country for sport hunting. The pigs can weigh between 100 and 400 pounds in adulthood and are capable of having 2 litters of pigs each which averages about 8 piglets per year. To control the population, there was a need to harvest 75 to 80 percent of the swine just to keep that number static. Once a piglet reaches adulthood, there are no natural enemies other than man. The pigs are quite hardy omnivores which eat everything. Agricultural experts have estimated crop damage at \$1,500 per year per pig. The population of pigs in Louisiana is around 200,000. Dr. LaCour explained that it was difficult to get a solid population estimate due to their nocturnal nature and habitual staying in dense habitats. The Department's control methods are hunting, shooting, trapping, dog hunting or a combination. There are no biological control agents available now. Diseases from feral swine can affect hunters, biologists, commercial swine producers and other wildlife. The two main diseases for swine were Swine Brucellosis and Pseudorabies which were discussed by Dr. LaCour. Surveillance for the zoonotic diseases in the pigs was being conducted in Louisiana. Currently there are 125 samples with Swine Brucellosis occurring in 4 percent and Pseudorabies in 1 percent. Public meetings have been held to educate those that handle swine feral, such as hunters, to wear rubber gloves and not to eat and drink while processing the pigs. The diseases are killed through proper cooking and are not contagious through the meat once cooked. Other diseases presented were Hog Cholera, Tularemia, Trichinosis, Foot and Mouth Disease, Vesicular Stomatitis, Swine Vesicular Disease and Vesicular Exanthema of Swine. Feral swine are throughout the southeast with Texas estimating their population at 3 million. Arkansas' regulations only allow them to be transported to a slaughter facility or feral swine holding facility, transport is by permit only and they allow for night shooting. Louisiana does not allow the release of feral swine into the wild and they may be sold at public sale barns. Also in Louisiana currently, free ranging domestic swine are

prohibited but there are several exception areas. However House Bill 606 in this Legislative Session will repeal those exceptions and would prohibit swine from running free in the woods statewide. House Bill 569 also in this session will allow for night shooting of feral swine statewide. Mississippi's feral swine may be moved intrastate with a permit, but cannot be released. Also, they can be sold for slaughter at an auction barn and can be shot at night. Texas's regulations allow feral swine to be moved only to slaughter, holding or shooting facilities; can be held in escape proof trailers for 7 days; and allows for night shooting.

**To discuss Largemouth Bass Management in Lake Cataouatche** began with Mr. Mike Wood stating this agenda item was a product of HCR 75 by Representative Billiot. After holding several conversations with the representative and several anglers from the area, the agreement was to continue biological effort on the bass population. Lake Cataouatche was one of the lakes where staff was collecting statewide mortality information. This data will help with existing regulations and any possible proposed regulations on a more confident basis. Also angler opinion information on how they want the bass to be managed would be collected. Commissioner Morrow asked Mr. Wood if he wanted the Commission to implement a slot limit and he was told no. He added that Representative Billiot put the bill in out of concern, this was just to advise the Commission of their efforts.

Mr. William Cass noted there were concerns in the Lake Cataouatche area which stemmed from the Davis Pond project and the introduction of Florida strained bass into the area. In the past few years, a very unique fish was noticed in the lake. The main concern was the resource of trophy status may be depleted without proper management. Mr. Cass applauded Mr. Wood and the Department for looking into their concern and continuing to study the lake so a management program can be implemented.

Commissioner Voisin stated the Resolution was a urge and request; he then asked Mr. Wood instead of may come back that he would come back and let the Commission know if there will or will not be a management recommendation. Mr. Wood assured Commissioner Voisin he would come back but only when they were confident in what they will recommend. Chairman Oats asked if Representative Billiot was satisfied with the attention the issue was receiving and he was told yes.

The Commissioners agreed to hold the **September 2010 Meeting** on

Thursday, September 2, 2010, beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the Baton Rouge Headquarters.

Next agenda item was to receive **Public Comments**. Mr. Robert Campo, an oyster fisherman, stated Lake Borgne was the only place oysters were being harvested from private leases due to the oil spill. He asked the Commission to reopen the state wild reefs just in Lake Borgne. His leases were in Area 3 and all of the commercial fishermen from his area were trying to help with the oil spill by deploying boom. But Mr. Campo noted there was a 40-45 day rotation list with the boom. Opening the wild reefs would allow the fishermen the opportunity to go back to work during the rotation. Commissioner Voisin stated he attended meetings and found that the commercial fishermen were putting out boom six times faster than the commercial operators. He added that they were all dealing with challenging times right now. Mr. Campo stated the fishermen know the waterways best. He felt that all of the fishermen wanted to save their "way of life". Again, he asked that Lake Borgne be opened as soon as possible since the oysters were needed in the market and they were safe. If oil does show up in his area, a closure could occur within an hour. Also, Mr. Campo felt there was a need to increase the number of agents on the Oyster Strike Force since there are only 2 that covers from Mississippi to Texas.

There being no further business, Chairman Oats **Adjourned** the meeting.

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Robert J. Barham  
Secretary

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