

**Finfish Task Force Meeting
Friday, July 20, 2018, 10:00am
2000 Quail Dr., LA Room
Baton Rouge, LA 70898**

Meeting called to order at 10:00am

II. Roll call and introduction of guests

Voting Members Present:

Wayne Rollo
Daryl Simon
James Pelas
Acy Cooper, III
Daniel Edgar
Adam Guillory
Stuart Billeaud
Houston Hoover
Steve Rockwieler
Senator Robert Allain, II
Representative John Stefanski

Voting Members Absent:

George Huye
Benjamin Graham

Non-Voting Members Present:

Jason Adriance
Chad Hebert
Jack Isaacs
John Walther

Non-Voting Members Absent:

Justin Gremillion
Adam Eitmann

Motion to approve the May 17, 2018 meeting minutes by Steve Rockwieler, 2nd by Daniel Edgar. Motion carries.

Motion to approve the July 20, 2018 meeting agenda by Steve Rockwieler, 2nd by Daniel Edgar. Motion carries.

A. Black Drum Discussion:

Jason Adriance led discussion on potential changes to black drum recreational and commercial harvest, size, and bag limits

The board considered projections for a 12" size limit

Currently the regulations reflect a 16" black drum size limit; allowing for 1 over 27"

A new black drum stock assessment will be available in February 2020

The commercial and recreational industries expressed approval for the black drum size limit to remain as is with a 16" minimum

Bag Limits:

Current: Recreational Bag limit- 5; 16-27", with 1 fish over 27" allowed

Commercial Quota 3.25M Lbs. on 16-27" and 300K head for over 27"

Commercial: recommendation to keep current regulations

Recreational: recommendation to keep the 5/person bag limit and size limits the same

Jack Isaacs stated that one issue other industries have expressed concern with is drum predation of other species

B. Mullet Season Discussion

Daniel Edgar requested feedback from LDWF for the next meeting on the legality of keeping mullet for bait

Request for LDWF to look into a mullet season and to provide the task force with recommendations and opinion on considerations of other gear; some recommendations mentioned were to consider a 7-day a week season or adding nights and weekends to the current season

C. Discussion of Finfish Trawling

Acy Cooper, III, commercial representative, stated the he would support finfish trawling as it would provide options for commercial fisherman

Daniel Edgar, commercial representative, stated that he would support allowing those fishermen who are already in the finfish trawling industry to remain, but would not encourage expanding the fishery

Steve Rockwieler, recreational representative, stated that he would support allowing those already trawling in the industry to remain, but not to expand

D. Update on the status of red snapper

Legislation and a resolution passed during session to allow for funding and to conduct a red snapper biomass evaluation/ stock assessment in the state of Louisiana

Jason Froeba addressed the board with a red snapper update; internal discussions have begun in planning a red snapper biomass estimate off the coast of Louisiana. Prior to the passing of the recent legislation and resolution there was discussion of working with a federally funded Sea Grant group to produce a Gulf-wide red snapper estimate. After reviewing some of the procedures that would be used in a Gulf-wide estimate, it was evident that some of the methods would be more conducive to areas with clearer waters and more available habitat information. LDWF is working with the Sea Grant group to discuss working in more options that would benefit Louisiana's estimate. It is the hope to combine the work that is being done by Sea Grant and pair it LDWF's data to come up a LA estimate. LDWF is currently working with Sea Grant to define a tagging protocol so that the data can accurately match up. LDWF is also looking into habitat mapping to see if there is a way to accurately map additional habitat or re-assess information that is already out there. Additionally, LDWF is looking into depletion sampling, and research into other sampling methods that are available that do not require cameras. The Resolution that passed in this regard: 1.called for two million dollars of the Artificial Reef Fund to be allocated to a red snapper biomass estimate and also 2. asked CPRA to seek out Open Ocean funding. CPRA is now working on setting up meetings in Washington, D.C.

The red snapper recreational landings through July 8, 2018 are currently around 407,000LBS; have hit 54% of the recreational quota, the season is currently weekends only

John Stefanski entered at 11:25am

The board requested another update from LDWF on red snapper at the next meeting

E. Discussion of shad seine gear regulations

Daniel Edgar led discussion on shad seine gear regulations, would like to seine for bait and keep by-catch, plans to work with LDWF and some of the recreational groups to discuss further and come back to the board, CNR concern in WMAs and damaging aquatic vegetation

Proposal to add an agenda item for the next meeting to discuss seining for sheepshead and drum- biological and enforcement feedback- George Jackson (public)

VI. Public Comment:

Mrs. Olander addressed the task force with concern regarding a finfish trawling season; requested feedback on the current numbers of trot line license holders targeting drum fish and the current numbers from shrimp trawling, and the catch impacts on other species

Proposed Agenda Items:

1. discussion and update on the dead zone
2. strike nets-season proposal- James Pelas
3. proposal to add an agenda item for the next meeting to discuss seining for sheep head and drum- biological and enforcement feedback requested- George Jackson (public request)
4. black drum discussion- cont.
5. mullet season discussion- cont.
6. finfish trawling discussion-cont.

Next meeting date- TO BE DETERMINED

Motion to adjourn by Adam Guillory, 2nd by Wayne Rollo. Motion carries.