

**HUNTING AND FISHING ADVISORY EDUCATION COUNCIL
REPORT**

March 17, 2015

**WOODY CREWS
CHAIRMAN**

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

The following constitute minutes of the Council Meeting
and are not a verbatim transcript of the proceedings.

Tapes of the meetings are kept at the
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
2000 Quail Drive

Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808.

For more information, call (225) 765-2623.

AGENDA
HUNTING AND FISHING ADVISORY EDUCATION COUNCIL
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA
March 17, 2015

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes of Oct. 21, 2014
3. Welcome and Opening Comments from Chairman
4. Enforcement Division Report
5. Office of Wildlife: Overview of WMA Master Plan
6. Office of Fisheries: Red Snapper Management
7. Office of Management and Finance Annual Report
8. Pre-Session Legislative Update
9. Set Next Meeting Date
10. Receive Public Comments
11. Adjournment

HUNTING AND FISHING ADVISORY EDUCATION COUNCIL
March 17, 2015

Wendy Brogdon called the Roll

Those present at roll call included:

Woody Crews – Chairman

Nelson Roth

Mike Rainwater

Alexander Perret

Ryan Schafer

Mike Windham

Stephen Pellessier

Jeff DeBlieux

Bo Boehringer

Council members not present

Ben Weber

Lyle Johnson

David Rousseau

Donald Reed

Warren Singer

A quorum was noted as present.

The following constitutes a brief report of what was heard:

The **minutes of the October 29, 2013** meeting, **March 11, 2014** meeting and **June 24, 2014** meeting were approved. A motion was made by Council member Pellessier and a second was made by Council member Schaffer.

There were no objections heard

The next agenda item to be heard, **Welcome and Opening Comments**

Chairman Crews wanted to ensure that each organization understands his roles and responsibilities as a member of the HFAC and to bring back all information to their respective committees and constituents

The next agenda item to be heard, **To Hear Enforcement Division Report** presented by Lt Col Martin

There were Three (3) boating accidents reported, Zero (0) injuries and One (1) Fatality (heart condition).

There were 691 total cases for the month of February with 311 Written Warnings issued and 36 Public Assistance.

Three (3) News releases were discussed:

Three Louisiana Men Charged with Night Hunting Violations

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Enforcement Division agents cited three Louisiana men for alleged hunting violations in St. Helena Parish on Feb. 12. Agents cited Walter Prine, 20, of Denham Springs, Aaron Morris, 20, of Denham Springs, and Stefan Reynolds, 25, of Gonzales, for harvesting deer during a closed season, during illegal hours, from a moving vehicle, from a public road, possession of illegally taken deer and failing to follow deer tagging requirements.

After an investigation, agents learned that the three men were in the Kentwood area of St. Helena Parish between 12 a.m. and 4 a.m. on **Feb. 1**. During which time they shot and killed five deer from various roadways. The deer were then transported to a residence in Ascension Parish. Agents found that no effort was made to clean or butcher the deer.

Agents seized a 12-gauge shotgun in this case. Agents had to dispose of the deer since they were not fit for human consumption. Harvesting a deer during a closed season and taking a deer during illegal hours each brings a \$900 to \$950 fine and up to 120 days in jail. Possession of an illegally taken deer carries a \$400 to \$950 fine and up to 120 days in jail. Hunting deer from a moving vehicle and failing to follow deer tagging requirements each brings a \$250 to \$500 fine and up to 90 days in jail. Hunting from a public road carries a \$100 to \$350 fine and up to 60 days in jail. The men could also face civil restitution in excess of \$8,000 for the illegally taken deer.

Galliano Man Cited for Black Drum Fishing Violations

A Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division agent cited a Galliano man for alleged fishing violations on Jan. 31 on the Pointe-aux-Chenes Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

Senior Agent Michael Marques cited Rufino Gonzalez-Ibarra, 34, for taking and possessing over the legal limit of black drum, possessing undersized black drum and possessing undersized red drum.

While on patrol, Senior Agent Marques found Gonzalez-Ibarra in possession of 26 black drum and one red drum, all of which were under the minimum size of 16 inches. The legal limit for black drum is five per person per day making Gonzalez-Ibarra four times over the legal limit.

Possessing over the legal limit of black drum and possessing undersized black drum and red drum each brings a \$100 to \$350 fine and up to 60 days in jail for each offense.

Two Men Arrested for Oyster Violations and Drug Charges in St. Bernard Parish

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division agents arrested two Chalmette men for alleged oyster harvesting and drug violations on Feb. 25 in St. Bernard Parish.

Agents arrested Oliver Rudesill Jr, 33, and Tracy Gallardo Jr., 23, for several oyster, boating safety and drug violations after a boating safety inspection.

After observing a large skiff come into the Reggio Marina with improper running lights, LDWF agents performed a boating safety inspection. During the inspection, agents found 28 sacks of oysters and learned that Rudesill Jr. is on probation until May of 2016 because of prior oyster harvesting violations. Agents also learned that Rudesill Jr. did not have a working Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) that was part of his probation. Rudesill Jr. also did not fill out an oyster harvesters log sheet for that day's harvest. Additionally, the vessel did not have a valid commercial vessel license, was not equipped with a tarp as per Department of Health and Hospitals regulations and did not have a proper identification number visible from the air. Agents also found the sacks of oysters were not properly tagged. Rudesill Jr. also did not have the proper amount of personal flotation devices, a vessel registration, a working fire extinguisher or navigation lights.

During the interview process, agents found Gallardo in possession of oxycodone, suboxone and drug paraphernalia.

Agents seized and returned the 28 sacks of oysters to the water. Both subjects were booked into the St. Bernard Parish Jail with the assistance of St. Bernard Sheriff's Office Narcotics Agents.

Violating the VMS guidelines carries a fine of \$400 to \$950 and up to 120 days in jail.

Possession of untagged oysters and taking commercial fish without a vessel license each carries a \$250 to \$500 fine and up to 90 days in jail. Violating sanitation code for not having a tarp and logbook violation each carries a \$25 fine and 10 days in jail.

No vessel registration, failing to display proper numbers on a vessel, failing to comply with PFD requirements, no fire extinguisher and improper running lights each brings a \$50 fine and up to 15 days in jail. Possession of oxycodone and suboxone each carries up to a \$5,000 fine and five years in jail. Possession of drug paraphernalia carries up to a \$500 fine and six months in jail.

The next agenda item to be heard, **Office of Wildlife: Overview of WMA Master Plan** presented by Tommy Tuma

Mr. Tuma began by stating that both residents and visitors to Louisiana are attracted to its wild places, abundant hunting and fishing opportunities and the biodiversity of the state. The challenge is to provide access to these special landscapes at an adequate scale that facilitates public enjoyment without degrading natural resources for future generations. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) manage a network of more than 1.6 million acres of public lands. The purpose of this Master Plan is to guide LDWF's landscape level management of this network of lands and to highlight opportunities for enhancing the network in the future.

Goals for the Master Plan are to:

- Sustain a range of facilities and uses for the public to enjoy LDWF lands
- Provide a green infrastructure vision for LDWF to implement and manage landscape scale conservation
- Identify focused restoration efforts to maximize positive impact for ecosystems and leverage partner resources
- Provide a comprehensive vision for landscape scale adaptive management for both LDWF lands and other partners
- Provide the public, LDWF personnel, and key stakeholders with a useful reference document on important information and policies
- Promote adaptive management through research and monitoring

Many compelling reasons exist for LDWF to craft a big picture plan for its network of lands. Planning helps an organization become more responsive, nimble and proactive in its interactions with the public and conservation partners as well as in meeting management and funding challenges. In a 2010 national survey, the Land Trust Alliance (the Alliance) found that conservation organizations that had conservation plans protected twice as much land as organization without plans. A compelling vision for the future can inspire the public to take action. Conservation plans make an organization more efficient, able to manage change and balance competing needs.

The Master Plan represents a landscape scale vision for the future of LDWF. As part of the Master Plan a green infrastructure network was developed to connect the state's wildlife management areas (WMAs) and refuge systems through a series of wildlife corridors.

The Master Plan links site level management plans for individual WMAs and organizational priorities reflected in the LDWF strategic plan. Like a site plan, the Master Plan assesses the current resource management issues facing LDWF, examines the on-going efforts of LDWF and its partners, and examines gaps in the LDWF portfolio of

lands. Spatially, the Master Plan focuses on a proposed green infrastructure network designed to highlight future opportunities for conservation and corridors to connect LDWF lands together. The Master Plan provides guidance on a land acquisition process for LDWF as well as how to strategically use other tools and programs to implement LDWF's statewide vision.

Based on an analysis of a wide range of state and regional plans, surveys and meetings with LDWF staff, the following goals have emerged for the Master Plan. Many of these goals were produced by other government planning efforts as noted. However, these goals present an opportunity for collaboration.

Sustain a range of facilities and uses for the public to enjoy LDWF lands

- Maintain an annual average of 800,000 users of the WMA and Refuge system (LDWF strategic plan)
- Incorporate American Wetland Birding Trail list of WMAs into evaluation of funding priorities for WMA infrastructure improvements such as parking facilities, nature trails, boardwalks and observation platforms

Provide a green infrastructure vision for LDWF to implement and manage landscape scale conservation

- Expand LDWF holdings by 5,000 acres per year (Vision 2020 + other plans)
- Accelerate acquisition of wetlands and grassland from private landowners in the prairie region
- Identify Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and partner with appropriate organizations to implement conservation strategies
- Continue efforts to support the conservation of remaining migratory bird habitat
- Investigate potential land acquisitions for habitat for rare, threatened and endangered species
- Continue to work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and other partners to implement the recovery plan for all threatened and endangered species
- Work with landowners and other partners to initiate or continue the implementation of Partners In Flight (PIF) bird conservation plans, conservation plans developed for amphibians and reptiles, and federally endangered and threatened species recovery plans
- Work with organizations such as Ducks Unlimited (DU), National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), The Conservation Fund (the Fund), and USFWS to assure quality habitat distribution across the landscape

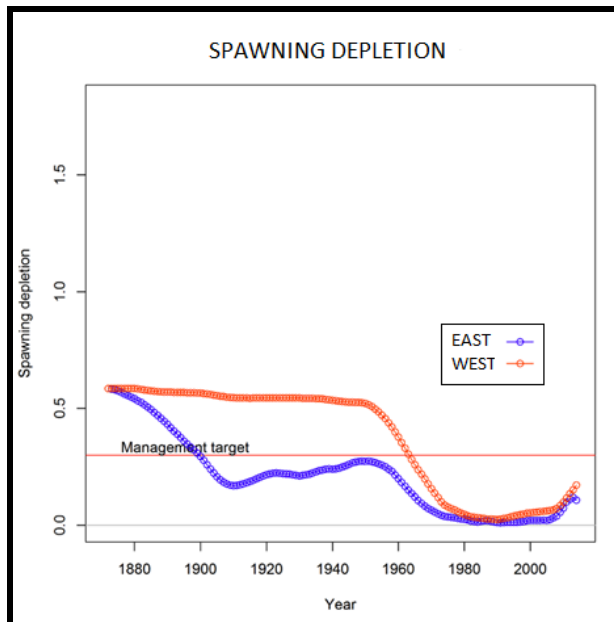
Provide the public, LDWF personnel, and key stake- holders with useful reference documents on important information and policies

- Provide accurate acreage for LDWF owned and managed lands
- Provide a template to guide site management plans
- Provide summary/outline of land acquisition process and project selection criteria as reference for agency staff, partners, and the public
- Identify focused restoration efforts to maximize impact for ecosystems and leveraging partner resources
- Promote increased acreage and natural management of longleaf pine
- Restore wetlands and Chenier ridges
- Rebuild barrier islands and ridges. (Master Plan of Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority)
- Sustain a diversity of coastal habitats including cypress swamps, marshes, ridges, and barrier islands (Master Plan of Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority)
- Restore bottomland hardwood forest restoration as per Forest Breeding Bird Decision Support Model
- Pursue tactical acquisition of available coastal prairie

Mr. Tuma stated that site specific management plans will be developed in the next three years and plans will be updated every five years.

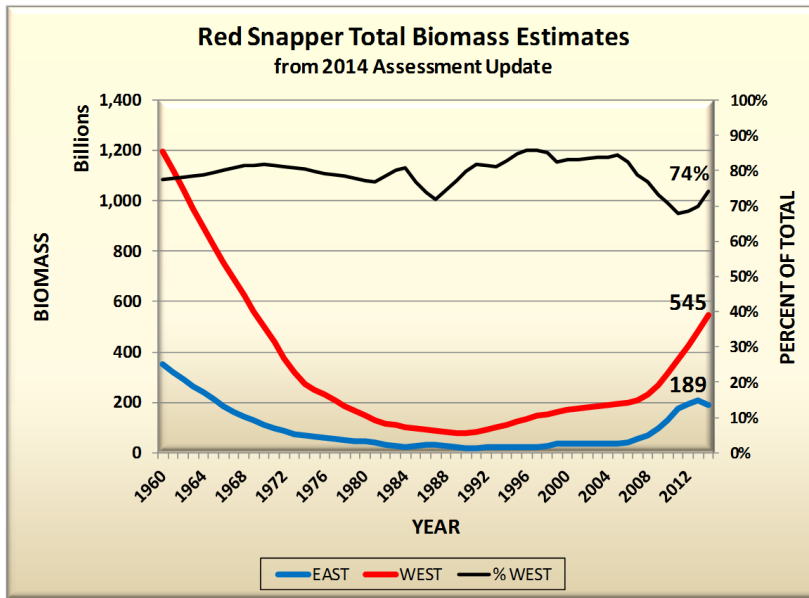
The next agenda item to be heard, **Office of Fisheries: Red Snapper Management** presented by Joey Shepard

According to the 2014 NMFS Stock Assessment Update, the Red Snapper status is not overfished, not overfishing and have stock re-building

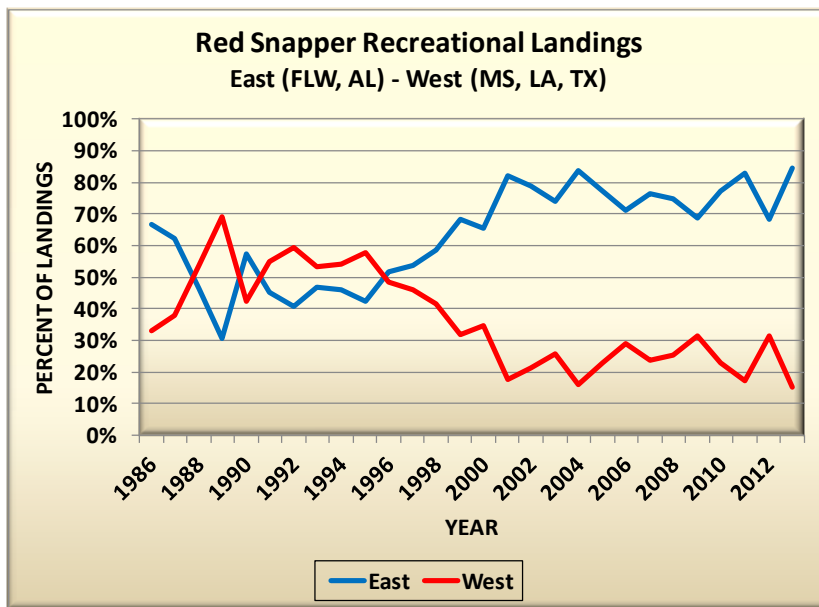


The Gulf is split between East and West in reference to Stock Assessments. West is the water west of the Mississippi River and East is the waters east of the Mississippi River.

The eastern Gulf is leveling off and the western Gulf is increasing in biomass.



The western Gulf has 25 percent of the lands and 75 percent of the population

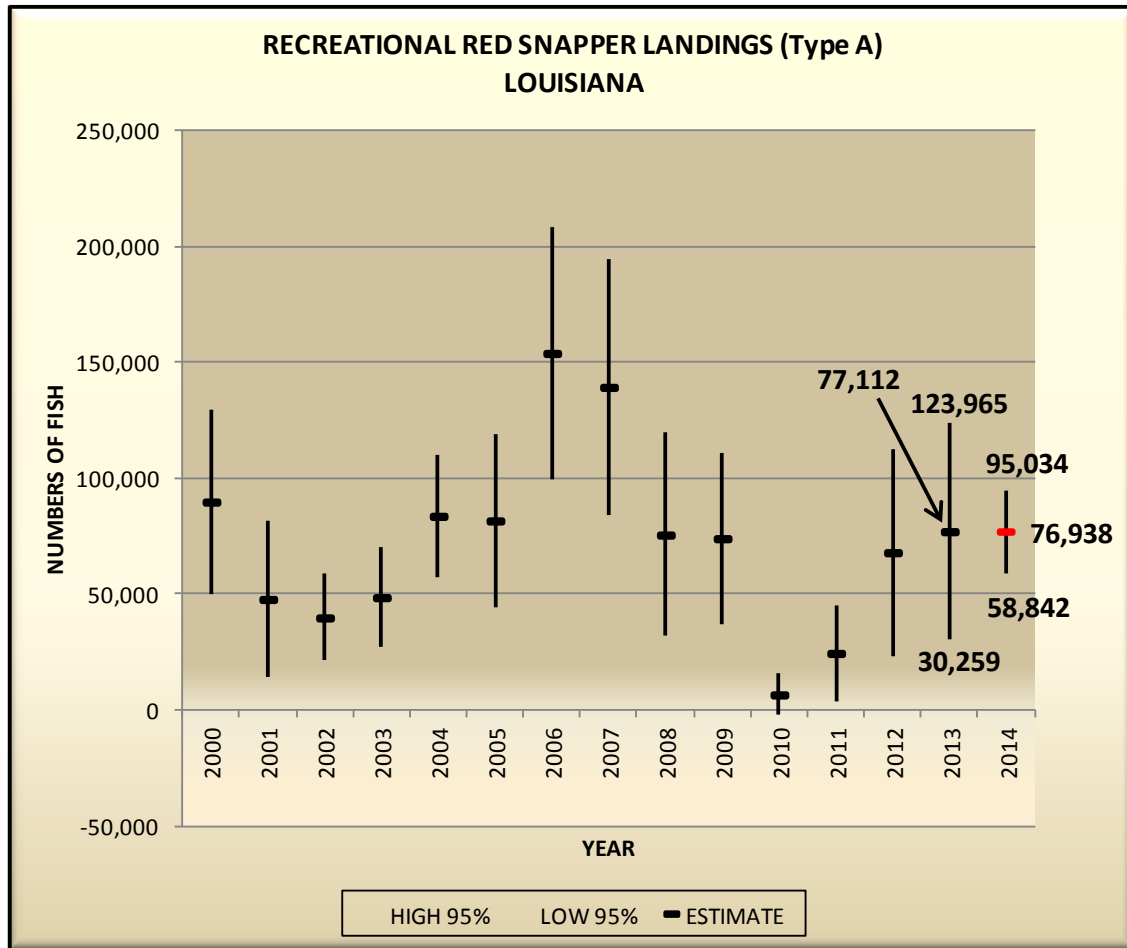


Harvest was reduced in the early 2000's
Recreational Season Structure

RED SNAPPER EEZ SEASONS		
Year	Season Dates	# Days
1996	January 1-December 31	365
1997	January 1-November 27	330
1998	January 1-September 30	272
1999	January 1-August 29	240
2000	April 21-October 31	194
2001	April 21-October 31	194
2002	April 21-October 31	194
2003	April 21-October 31	194
2004	April 21-October 31	194
2005	April 21-October 31	194
2006	April 21-October 31	194
2007	April 21-October 31	194
2008	June 1-August 4	65
2009	June 1-August 14	75
2010	June 1-July 23; Oct 1-Nov 21 (Fri, Sat, Sun)	77
2011	June 1-July 18	48
2012	June 1-July 15	45
2013	June 1 - June 29	28
2014	June 1 - June 10	9
2015	????	????

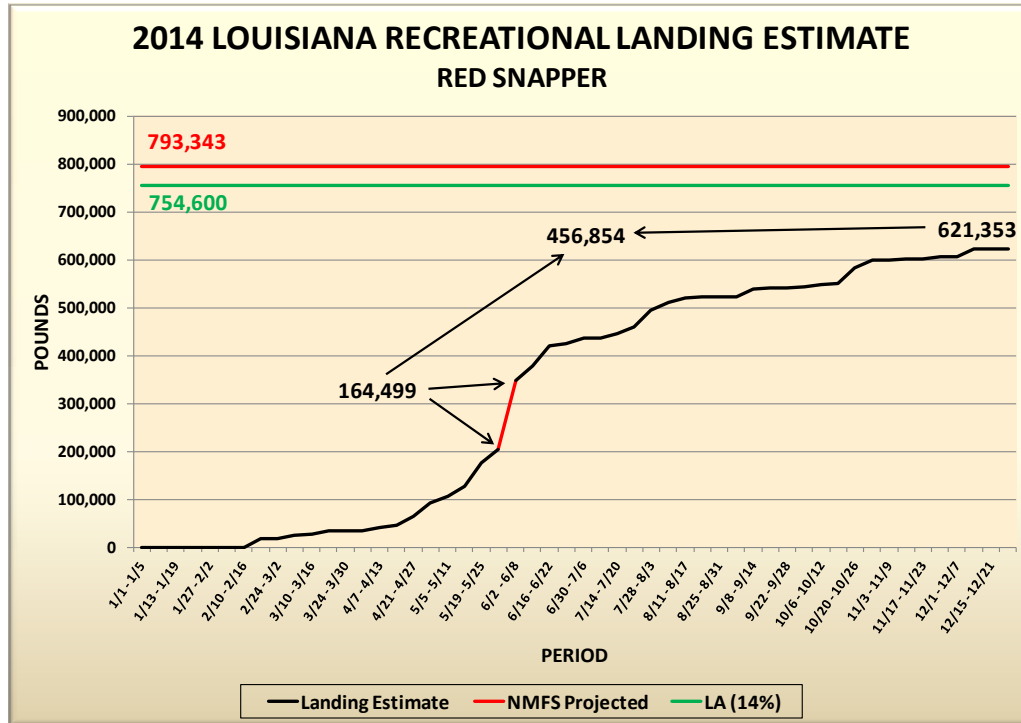
The differences between LACreel and EMRIT is Accuracy vs Precision
 LaCreel Surveys are precise and based on precision (groupings, estimates are very near each other)
 EMRIT Surveys are based on averages

Louisiana Red Snapper Landings
 2000-2013 MRIP & 2014 LA Creel Estimates



The difference between EEZ and State season is 456,854

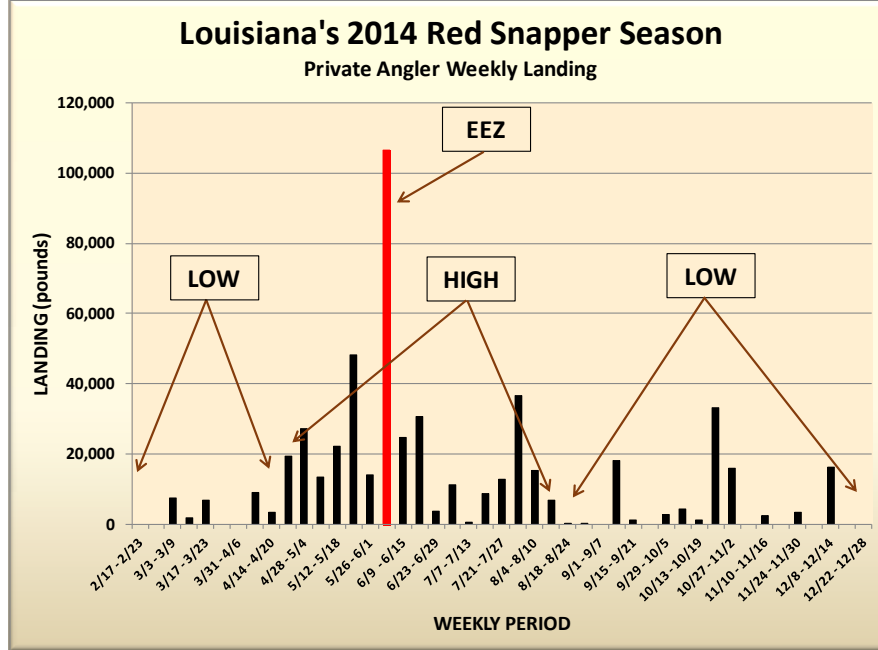
Louisiana Red Snapper Landings 2014 LA Creel Estimates



2015 Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Season

- RECREATIONAL ALLOWABLE CATCH LIMIT (ACL)
 - 2014 = 5.39 Million Pounds
 - Proposed 2015 = 7.01 Million Pounds
- RECREATIONAL ALLOWABLE CATCH TARGET (ACT)
 - Proposed 2015 = 5.606 Million Pounds
- SECTOR SEPARATION (PENDING)
 - Private Angler (57.7 %)
 - Proposed = 3.235 Million Pounds
 - For-Hire/Charter (42.3 %)
 - Proposed = 2.371 Million Pounds

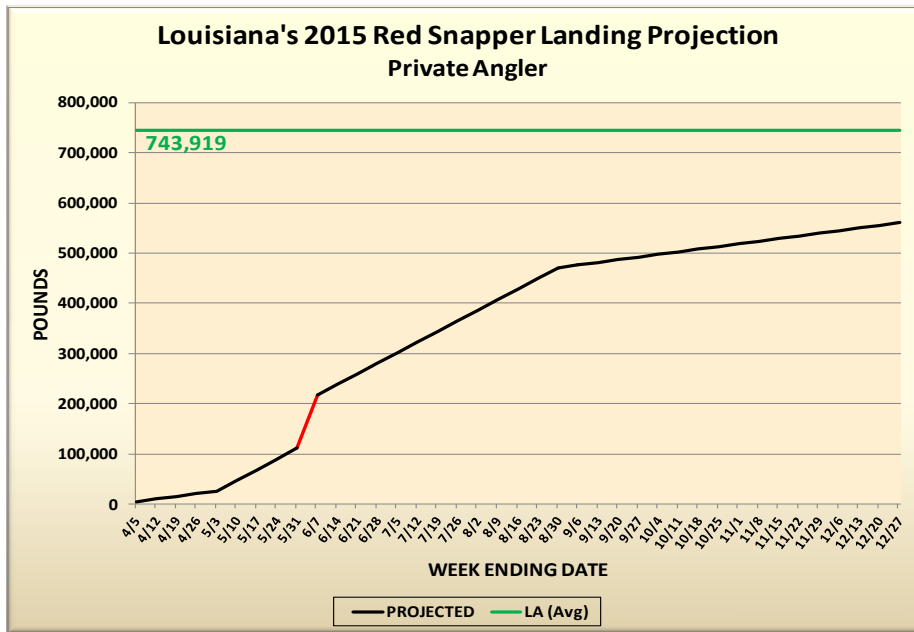
Louisiana's 2015 Red Snapper Season Projections, Private Angler



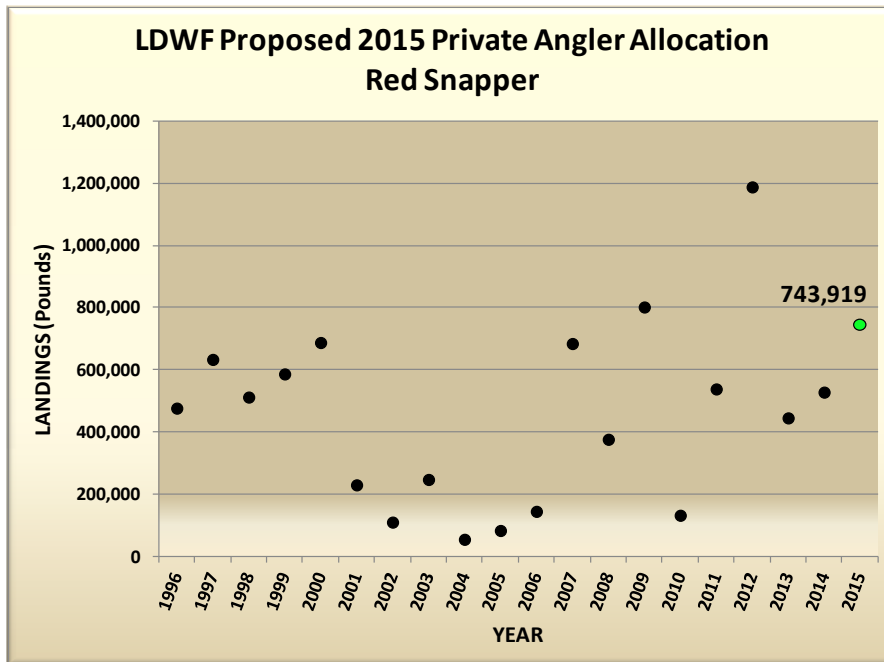
Projection Assumptions

- State season opens around Palm Sunday
- Average weekly catch rates in Louisiana state waters are similar to 2014
- EEZ season catch is similar to 2014

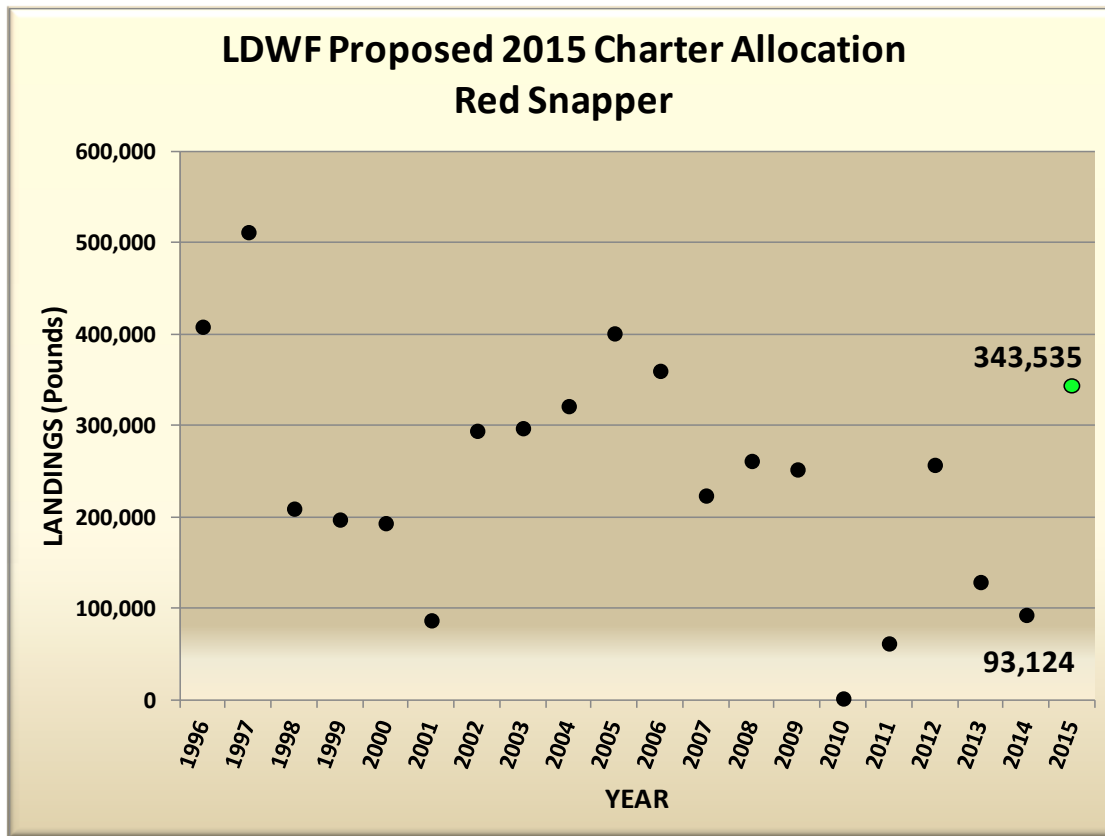
KEEP IN MIND: LA Creel provides weekly landing estimates and the Department will be monitoring landings throughout the season and will keep the Commission updated on 2015 landings



Louisiana's 2015 Red Snapper Season Projections
Private Angler



Louisiana's 2015 Red Snapper Season Projections
For-Hire (Charter)



Current Louisiana Regulations (Title 76:VII §335)

- SEASON:
 - Saturday before Palm Sunday through September 30
 - Weekends only – Friday through Sunday
- BAG:
 - 2 fish per person per day
 - 16" TL minimum size limit
- SECRETARIAL AUTHORITY
 - The secretary may also modify those portions of this rule pertaining to red snapper recreational daily harvest limits and red snapper recreational seasons if NOAA-NMFS institutes sub-regional management for the species or if he deems it necessary, following notification of the chairperson of the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission.

The next agenda item to be heard, **Office of Management and Finance Annual Report** presented by Bryan McClinton

The Conservation Fund serves as the General Fund of the Department

Wildlife – Duck Stamp, Wildlife Turkey Stamp, Wildlife Natural Heritage and Trust Fund

Fisheries – Artificial Reef Fund, Saltwater Fish Research and Conservation Fund

The Conservation Fund makes up 70% of the Departments Statutory Dedicated Funding

License and Mineral Revenue
Mineral Revenue

Department Makeup:

There are zero (\$0.00) state general dollar funds used by the department

Interagency Transfers = 14,439,950

Fees and Self-Generated Revenues = 10,001,843

Statutory Dedications = 113,101,027

Federal Funds = 77,496,782

Total Financing = 215,039,602

The next agenda item to be heard, **Pre Legislative Update** presented by Cole Garrett

The 2015 Legislative Session convenes at 12:00pm noon on April 13th.

This is a Fiscal year Session

Each Legislature is allowed five (5) bills

The Session Ends June 11th at 6:00pm

April 3rd is the filing deadline for bills

There was no other business discussed

The Council set the **Next Meeting Date** for June 23, 2015

There were no **Public Comments** heard