

GULF OF MEXICO REGIONAL PANEL ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES MINUTES

Thursday, April 1, 2004

Mobile, Alabama

CALL TO ORDER

Ron Lukens called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. The meeting began with introductions of the Panel members and guests. The following were in attendance:

Members

Phil Bass, Mississippi DEQ, Jackson, MS
Paul Carangelo, Port of Corpus Christi Authority, Corpus Christi, TX
Pat Carter, U.S. FWS, Atlanta, GA
Walter R. Courtenay, U.S. Geological Survey, Gainesville, FL
Dale Diaz, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Pam Fuller, U.S. Geological Survey, Gainesville, FL
Bryon Griffith, U.S. EPA Gulf of Mexico Program, Stennis Space Center, MS
Scott Hardin, FFWCC, Tallahassee, FL
Leslie Hartman, AL Marine Resources Division, Dauphin Island, AL
Chuck Jacoby, University of Florida/Florida Sea Grant, Gainesville, FL
Herb Kumpf, Member at Large, Panama City, FL
Jim Long, National Park Service, Atlanta, GA
Ronald R. Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Mark McElroy, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Roberto Mendoza, Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo Leon, Mexico
John E. Meyers, U.S. Coast Guard, New Orleans, LA
Harriet Perry, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Bob Pitman, U.S. FWS, Albuquerque, NM
Dennis Riecke, MDWFP, Jackson, MS
Don Schmitz, FDEP, Tallahassee, FL
Judy Shearer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg, MS
John Teem, FL Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Tallahassee, FL
Bruce A. Thompson, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA
David Yeager, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, Mobile, AL

Others

Dana Blume, Port of Houston Authority, Houston, TX
Nicole Cass, Port of Houston Authority, Houston, TX
Joe Jernigan, AL Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, Daphne, AL
Alysia R. Kravitz, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
Martin O'Connell, Pont. Inst., University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA
Steve Rider, AL Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, Montgomery, AL
Gwen White, DJ Case & Associates, Indianapolis, IN

Staff

Nancy Marcellus, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

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PUBLIC COMMENT

Martin O'Connell, University of New Orleans, informed the Panel that he has been working with Mark Peterson and Todd Slack regarding invasive fish. He mentioned that they are finding increasingly that invasive freshwater cichlids, the Rio Grande cichlid specifically, are able to move into estuarine habitats. He also mentioned that there are reports from Florida that the freshwater Mayan cichlid is moving into estuarine habitats as well. He indicated that he, Peterson, and Slack are working on a white paper discussing this issue and they would like some input from the Regional Panel and others regarding the possibility for a regional approach to examine this habitat shift.

REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Lukens suggested that an item be added under Work Group Reports for a Conference Ad Hoc Work Group Report from Herb Kumpf. Roberto Mendoza requested time on the agenda to provide an update on the Mexico program. **A motion was made by Walt Courtney to adopt the agenda with the additions noted. Bruce Thompson seconded the motion and the agenda was adopted.**

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

John Meyers made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 20-21, 2003 meeting. Pam Fuller seconded the motion, and without objection the minutes were approved.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Mexican Government Membership - At the last meeting the Panel discussed an issue associated with additional membership. One of those was a recommendation from the Panel to invite a representative of the Mexican government to join the Gulf of Mexico Regional Panel. Roberto Mendoza has spoken with Dr. Porfirio Alvarez, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, General Division of Planning and Evaluation, and Dr. Alvarez has indicated that he is interested in joining the Panel. The Panel would then need to make a recommendation to the ANS Task Force and they would issue the invitation directly.

A motion was made by Herb Kumpf and seconded by Walt Courtenay, to forward a recommendation to the ANS Task Force to invite a representative of the Mexican government, and accept Roberto's recommendation for Dr. Porfirio Alvarez, to become a member of the GOM Regional Panel. The motion passed without objection.

The Panel then discussed a recommendation from the October 2003 meeting to invite the states of Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina to join the Regional Panel and then become the Gulf and South Atlantic Regional Panel. The reason behind this is because those are the only three states in the continental United States that are not attached to a Regional Panel. Lukens sent out a request to those three states asking if they were interested in such a venture. Georgia wrote back saying that

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they are interested and provided a contact person. North Carolina had not responded, and South Carolina said that they are not interested.

Lukens indicated that he would be addressing the status of them joining at the Task Force meeting in May. He would then find out if they want to go ahead with having Georgia join without North and South Carolina, or would they rather wait and see if they can get them to join as a block. Lukens asked the preference of the group.

The Panel then discussed the issue, with comments ranging from maintaining the Panel membership as is to a desire to leave the invitation open. The final decision was the following motion:

Bryon Griffith made a motion to request that the proposal to the ANS Task Force to ask the states of Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina to join the GOM Regional Panel be withdrawn. The motion was seconded by Paul Carangelo. Eighteen members voted in favor of the motion and 5 members opposed. The motion passed.

Don Schmitz asked if the motion precluded the Panel from inviting them in the future if they express an interest. There was general agreement that the three states should decide if they would like to join, and the Panel could raise the issue again if any of them do so.

ANSTF Update - The Fall 2003 meeting of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force was held on November 4-5 in Arlington, Virginia. In addition to the usual topics such as ballast water, regional panel reports, and reports from its various committees and working groups, the meeting also included a review of federal agency activities for FY2004, an update on the status of Injurious Wildlife activities, and another from the North American Brown Tree Snake Control Team. The meeting was a productive one in which three state Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plans - Hawaii, Indiana, and Wisconsin - were approved. The Task Force also approved two control/management plans: Chinese Mitten Crab and European Green Crab. Finally, the Task Force also approved the establishment of a Mid-Atlantic Regional Panel. On the day after the Task Force meeting, the Executive Secretary and FWS staff met with the Regional Panel Heads to discuss standard operating procedures and other business.

The Spring Task Force meeting is scheduled for May 26-27, 2004 in Columbia, Missouri. The first day of the meeting will focus on Task Force business; the second day will include regional presentations and a field trip. Topics to be covered during the ANS Task Force meeting include: an update of Regional Panel activities, status reports from several ANSTF committees and working groups, including the Prevention and Outreach Committees and the New Zealand mudsnail and *Caulerpa* working groups; presentations by the Mississippi River Basin Panel; and update on ballast water management activities; and update on the activities of the National Invasive Species Council; and other topics. One of the most important topics of the meeting will be a discussion on making the ANSTF Strategic Plan operational.

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The USFWS vacancy announcement for the Chief of the Branch of Invasive Species closed on March 12, 2004. The USFWS currently plans to advertise a second vacancy announcement for the Executive Secretary of the ANS Task Force after the Branch Chief position is filled.

The following are actions and notes from the meeting of the Regional ANS Panel heads which took place on November 6, 2003.

Actions/Tasks:

- Need to update ANSTF membership list (list on web page, e-mail lists, etc.) - take off Norm Stucky's name and add Jay Rendall
- Panels need to start being more creative about alternatives to travel - teleconferencing, for example. Need some criteria on when/who the Regional Panels can reimburse for travel
- Great Lakes Panel to send their language they use when they submit something created by the Panel but submitted by the Great Lakes Commission.
- Executive Secretary to hold Regional Panel Head Meetings once a year along with the Task Force Meetings
- To improve coordination and communication, each Federal Task Force member should consider getting on the listservers of all the Regional Panels. The Executive Secretary will send out an e-mail to all Task Force members and Regional Panel heads with information on how to get on their listservers or e-mail groups
- Regional Panels should coordinate on some sort of larger list and/or database of outreach materials
- Regional Panels are asked to keep membership lists on their web pages and to keep it as up-to-date as possible
- Annual reports and priorities - how can the Task Force be more responsive to the Panels? We need to develop a template for Annual Priorities from the Regions and language on why the Task Force needs this info.

Important Points/New Policies:

- Next Task Force Meeting - keep Regional Panel presentations to 15 minutes and 5 minutes for questions
- States need to decide who will represent them on Panels, but we need to make sure that they understand that they do not have to participate - we need to encourage participation, but make clear that it is not mandatory - it is an opportunity, not an obligation
- Regional Panel Meetings - all meetings need to be advertised 15 days in advance and to do this properly, staff needs 6 weeks advance notice. Meeting facilities need to have handicapped access.
- Meetings - we need to be better about handouts - the administrative entity of the Regional Panel can keep track of the handouts just as long as we can get them if we need them.

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- What is the definition of Quorum?
 - Ron Lukens sent this by e-mail after the meeting: Consensus is reaching a decision wherein most of the group agrees. Commonly, if anyone is unsure, the following question can be asked: Can you live with it? If the answer is no, then there is not consensus and a vote is needed.
- When sitting on the Task Force, it is important that the Panel Heads act/speak more for their geographic region than the Panel itself; however, they do represent the Panel when they give their Regional Panel presentations
- Order for speaking during meetings: federal members, then ex-officio members, then audience if there is time - if not, they have to wait until the public comment period
- Should all Regional Panel Heads be on the Task Force?
- New members of Panels - must be brought to the Executive Secretary of the Task Force and letters of invitation go out from the co-chairs
- Do we need a listserver for the Regional Panel heads? Or all Regional Panel members? Or perhaps just an e-mail group?
- Coordination - how to better coordinate between Regional Panels and Committees
 - Committee chairs should be instructed to include Regional Panel Heads in e-mails
 - Must be careful of the “inside the beltway” phenomenon
 - Every Panel should have someone on the ANSTF committees
- Need to look at ANS website - what needs to be updated, content, etc.

NISC/ISAC Update - Lukens attended the ISAC meeting held February 2004 in Honolulu, Hawaii. This was the final meeting for the current membership. New members are currently being selected. The next ISAC meeting will be held in October 2004, likely in Washington, DC.

At the Honolulu meeting a letter was drafted from ISAC to NISC regarding “cross-cut initiatives.” By identifying a subset of important invasive species issues as “cross-cut initiatives,” NISC is automatically drawing attention to these issues individually and as a portfolio of issues. Furthermore, NISC’s intention to keep this list largely unchanged for several years (in order to track performance of these multi-agency programs) makes the selection of topics and the justification of them very important. The issues on the list will become symbols of the federal government’s efforts. IASC made three recommendations about this list:

1. An introduction and re-packaging of the list of cross-cut initiatives would make it a more effective vehicle for communicating overall NISC priorities.
2. NISC should promote strongly the use of cost-avoidance to evaluate the performance of prevention initiatives.
3. Because screening for intentional introductions is such a central and urgent component of prevention, NISC should make sure that all the agencies (including EPA) that had committed in the National Management Plan to participate in developing new screening protocols commit much more attention to this.

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Invasive Species of the Month Public Information and Education Project - Section I of “Meeting the Invasive Species Challenge,” the National Invasive Species Management Plan, Education and Public Awareness, recognizes that all sectors of American society have a stake in preventing the introduction of new invasive species, as well as controlling and reducing the negative impacts of existing invaders. The Plan stresses the need for a wide variety of education, outreach, and training programs to raise awareness of the causes and consequences of the introduction of invasive species in order to help motivate people to take positive action.

It is unrealistic to expect that the public will recognize and understand all of the hundreds of invasive species currently established in the U.S. It is important to avoid media (and viewer/reader) overload with a deluge of information on too many invasive species, while at the same time providing an ongoing information/education stream on certain high-profile invasive species. One ideal method for doing so is by the implementation of an “Invasive Species of the Month” project in which twelve high-priority invasive species (or potential invasive species) are targeted for a media campaign. The outreach campaign would consist of press releases to appropriate mass media outlets and a highly visible, top page-placed Invasive Species of the Month on the federal invasive species website, *invasivespecies.gov*.

A visually appealing Invasive Species of the Month component will be added to the top page of the *invasivespecies.gov* website. By necessity, this will most likely be a picture of the species along with an Invasive Species of the Month header and an interesting sentence or two along with a link to a full profile of the species. Invasive Species of the Month designation would be the responsibility of the National Invasive Species Council staff, in coordination with the Department Liaisons and the invasive species staff of the various federal departments and agencies. A potential starting point could be the list of high impact “candidate species” which was submitted to NISC from ISAC in 2003 for consideration as the targets for federal economic impact studies. The actual writing of species profile for press releases and the website would be the responsibility of invasive species staff of the involved federal departments and agencies. Assistance from outside invasive species “experts” could also be utilized at this stage of the project.

Legislative Update - Lukens distributed a handout from The Nature Conservancy on Invasive Species Bills of 2003. This is a quick overview of bills before Congress that deal with invasive species.

Jonathan Champion also reported to Lukens on legislative status for the year in regard to NAISA:

- House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
 - Engaged, especially with ballast water
 - Wants to pass a bill this Congress, maybe not NAISA
- House Resources Committee
 - Not very engaged
 - Concern over private property rights - being compared to Endangered Species Act
 - Actions underway to address this issue

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- Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
 - engaged and wants to move a bill this Congress
 - may be something other than NAISA (scope is an issue)
- Rumored that hearings and possibly mark-ups would take place in March, 2004.

Web site Statistics (Since 3rd week of December through mid-March)

- 42,097 successful page hits
- 14,638 distinct hosts served
- 594 mean successful page hits per day

Lukens brought up a subject for possible Regional Panel action - development of a logo for the Panel. The Panel agreed to begin the process and after discussing possibilities such as a contest or competition, Schmitz volunteered to have his graphics department come up with 5 different logos to hand out at next meeting for review. Judy Shearer indicated that she would do the same.

DISCUSSION OF FACILITATED SESSION

The Gulf of Mexico Regional Panel has identified a need to develop a strategic plan to address issues and problems relative to aquatic invasive species in the Gulf region. As a first step, the Gulf Panel convened on Wednesday, March 31, 2004, to engage in dialogue, brainstorming activities, and strategic planning exercises to provide high-level inputs to the eventual strategic plan. The goal of the strategic plan is to provide a blueprint for aquatic invasive species activities to be conducted or recommended by the Gulf Panel during the next three to five years. To accelerate the strategic planning process, the Gulf Panel engaged ICF Consulting to facilitate a strategic planning workshop. The workshop design mirrored a traditional gap analysis format assessing the Gulf Panel “as is” state, the Gulf Panel “to be” state, and lastly, some high-level strategies recommended by the Panel to close the gaps.

After completing the “as is” and the “to be” exercises, the Panel then developed high-level ideas and strategies to close gaps. The focus of the exercise was not to develop “perfect” strategies the first time but rather to identify high-level areas and ideas that can serve as a foundation for developing more explicit strategies later on. To complete the exercise the Panel was divided into five groups. Each group worked to compile ideas and strategies as time permitted. The groups then presented their ideas and strategies to the larger group. The key questions asked were:

The workshop results were presented along with recommended next steps required to develop a strategic plan. These recommendations included:

- Completing the “strategies to close gaps” exercise
- Determining the strategic plan audience(s) or stakeholders (public-facing document or internal-facing document or both?)

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- Ensuring the strategic plan is written with intended audience in mind (may or may not warrant different writing style)
- Determining the structure, format, and length of the aquatic invasive species strategic plan, reviewing other aquatic invasive species strategic plans for ideas
- Identifying the strategic plan development timeline (when do you want the plan complete?)
- Forming the strategic plan development core team (4-5 members) to drive the general direction for developing the plan
- Core team leveraging the appropriate Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to help develop aspects of the plan consistent with SME expertise at appropriate times
- Defining key strategic plan terms (generic strategic plan terms and aquatic invasive species terms) once structure, format, length have been determined
- Determining the desired distinction between “strategic plan” and “implementation plan” (same document or different document?)
- Determining the level of detail of the implementation plan (will the document be public-facing? Will there be a more specific “back-office” implementation plan for internal use?)

A copy of the entire workshop results are available at the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission office.

AQUACULTURE ACTIVITIES IN MEXICO

Roberto Mendoza provided the Panel with a presentation regarding aquaculture activities in Mexico. He discussed the use of various cichlid species and the occurrence of suckermouth catfishes, which are now abundant in various locations. He indicated that while there is concern regarding the environmental impact of cichlids, in many cases, the use of cichlids (tilapia in particular) represents an important economic benefit to areas of Mexico. He expressed concern that cichlid species could become spread even wider throughout Mexico.

WORK GROUP REPORTS

Information Management Work Group - Lukens reported that the Work Group launched the revised website since last meeting. He continues to get 1-2 e-mails a month from the general public that compliment the site. It is going to be used as a centerpiece, and every one is going to be asked to provide information on a routine basis. The Panel will continue to use the Information Management Work Group as the core group for that function.

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Along with the website comes the database inherited from the GCRL. Comparatively speaking, it is a very small database. The Commission office does not have an effective way to feed that database. It requires a person dedicated to it on a full time basis to examine literature, to follow up on reports received over the Internet, and to be able to react to situations in a timely manner, including all of the verification and identification tasks needed to be completed if a report is made by a private citizen. Resources to do that are not available in the GSMFC office at this point. If the Panel would agree, Lukens would like to ask the Information Management Work Group to explore this issue and examine the benefits and drawbacks of the GSMFC maintaining the database or transferring the database to the USGS database and providing a link on the Regional Panel site so that people can report directly to the USGS staff and that database. Larry Simpson, Executive Director of the Commission, wanted to see more thought given to this issue to determine the best recommendation. Lukens asked that this issue be referred to the Information Management Work Group. The Work Group will present findings to entire Panel. The Panel agreed to allow the Information Management Work Group to proceed with that activity.

Education and Outreach Work Group - Chuck Jacoby reported that the Work Group has started, but has not completed, an inventory of recent education products that are available. The plan is to use that information to identify gaps and move forward. The Work Group has been tasked with development of a draft brochure about the Panel. There was also discussion about some time in the future having a newsletter as one way to disseminate information. That is on the back burner at this point. Since the last meeting they have reviewed the web site and provided input.

Their main activity has been to develop a protocol for science fairs for the international science and engineering fair competitions that go on worldwide. The main reason for this project was that invasive species sometimes show up in these projects and there was concern that it might be a mechanism by which they are spread. There is a long version that went to the ANS Task Force, which essentially was approved, but there was a request that the Panel create a short version of the protocol for students. A copy of that document was provided to the Panel.

John Teem pointed out some errors regarding *Calerpa taxiflora*. The statement that "...*Calerpa taxifolia* evolved tolerance for colder temperatures while growing in aquaria in Europe", is not supported by scientific evidence. This type of document should not include things that are not scientifically demonstrated as facts. It may seem like a minor point, but as a Panel it must be very accurate in terms of information to present to other people.

Teem also questioned the need for the sentence beginning the last paragraph "Why Not Ban Use of All Nonindigenous Species?" It does not relate to the rest of that paragraph but it is a question that doesn't make sense to suggest to students that it is a reasonable thing to get rid of all non-indigenous species or to ban them. Because they are talking about nonindigenous species and invasive species, the distinction should be made between those species which are invasive and those which are simply nonindigenous.

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Lukens added that the use of the word “ban” is in science fairs, not the global banning of all nonindigenous species.

Scott Hardin added that there is some language in the hydrilla paragraph that needs to be clarified. He will offer some language on that subject.

Lukens explained that all of the language has been accepted by the Task Force. Nothing has taken place yet because of two things: 1) they were waiting on the student version to go along with it, and 2) one of the Task Force members believes that there were a number of references in the package that were outdated, and he is having someone look over those. It will not change any of the text, just the references in the document. It is hoped to have the student version as a companion to send with it so they have both versions.

It was suggested that Scott Hardin, John Teem, and Don Schmitz address these specific issues with the Education and Outreach Work Group either by conference call or e-mail. All Panel members will vote on the final version.

Early Detection/Rapid Response Work Group - Lukens reported that \$20,000 was received from Sea Grant, through NOAA, for the Panel to develop a Gulf wide rapid response plan. Due to other commitments, this activity was not started until December 2003. Chris Dionigi, staff person for the National Invasive Species Council, joined the Work Group for the first meeting. He was one of the writers and overall coordinator to produce the document “General Guidelines for the Establishment and Evaluation of Invasive Species Early Detection and Rapid Response Systems”. The group used that document and determined how it applied to the Work Group project. Assignments were made at that meeting.

The assignments for each of the state representatives was to take a look at all state laws and identify who within the state agencies has legislative or executive office responsibility for some aspect of invasive species. This is going to be important in terms of putting together a core group of people to be called in the event of a need for a rapid response. The group is also including a section on taxonomic experts.

Lukens has received information from 3 of the 5 states. Plans are to evaluate the current situation from a staff perspective and establish a date for a follow up Rapid Response Work Group meeting. It is expected that this project will be completed by the end of 2004.

Research and Development Work Group - Harriet Perry reported that they are in the process of gathering invasive research that has been done in each of the states. They ask that each state supply species of concern for their state. Don Schmitz indicated that he would like to be added to the Work Group. They asked that a taxonomic work group be assigned to the Research and Development Work Group to develop a taxonomic experts database.

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Ad Hoc Work Group for Symposium - Herb Kumpf reported that the Work Group met several times to discuss the possibility of holding a conference to provide a summary of research happening in Gulf of Mexico areas, status and trends, and policy issues. In November of 2005 there will be a "State of the Gulf" symposium in Corpus Christi, Texas, sponsored by the Hart Association. Plans are to find out more information on that. Kumpf asked for volunteers for the Work Group.

IAFWA OUTREACH AND LAW ENFORCEMENT PROJECT

Gwen White of D.J. Case and Associates provided a project overview of the IAFWA Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Communication Strategies Project Update and Workshop Invitation - March 2004. The Fisheries and Water Policy Committee of the IAFWA was awarded a 2003 Multi-state Conservation Grant for a 3-year project to help address ANS issues. This project is unique in that it involves the cooperation of multiple partners including the IAFWA, the four Regional Associations, four Pilot State Fish and Wildlife Agencies and their respective in-state partners, and the Fish and Wildlife Service. The focus of this project is to help states increase their capacity to address Aquatic Nuisance Species issues within their state through the development of comprehensive communications strategies and collectively help the Regional Associations and the IAFWA develop a stronger voice and greater capabilities when addressing regional and national ANS efforts. To carry out the project, a contract has been awarded to Southwick Associates, Inc. on behalf of D.J. Case and Associates, S.R. Enterprises, Silvertip Productions, all of whom will work closely with the IAFWA and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Objective I: Pilot State Communication Programs. IAFWA is working with a pilot state from each of the four Regional Associations to implement a comprehensive communications plan to increase awareness of ANS threats and potential damages, to promote prevention steps that could be taken by recreational users, to assess results and make recommendations available to other state agencies.

Progress to date:

1. The Advisory Panel selected one pilot state from each Regional Association: Missouri, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Arizona. Several states are considering using the process to reinvigorate interagency ANS teams and initiate *State ANS Management Plans*.
2. The IAFWA Project Team provided guidance for each state in how they wanted to engage in this project with respect to staying in-house or involving external partners.
3. The IAFWA Project Team conducted 40 interviews and met with all four states locally to define the scope and focus of the ANS issue in their respective states, to identify associated target audiences, and to begin developing the communications strategies.

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Teams from each pilot state have selected priority issues and target audiences, including:

- recreational boaters, anglers, and duck hunters
- bait dealers
- hobbyists and suppliers of aquarium pets and backyard ponds
- policy makers
- seafood businesses and consumers
- urban residents who are not outdoor enthusiasts
- water suppliers and users via canals and irrigation districts.

Next steps:

1. Each state is in the process of developing or finalizing their strategies and any associated partnerships and materials.
2. All actions will be evaluated using a combination of survey and tracking techniques.
3. Many of the pilot states have realized the value of the USFWS *Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!* campaign, and are choosing to incorporate it into their communications strategies. As part of the partnership, the Service will be expanding the website to include state-specific information and supporting messages.
4. A project webpage will be developed to provide information on the pilot state efforts for review by other state fish and wildlife agencies in the region.

Objective II: Regional Coordination Workshops. Four regional workshops will be held to increase coordination between state fish and wildlife agencies, state and federal law enforcement, regional entities, and federal agencies responsible for regulating ANS. This task serves all states, focusing on regulatory and law enforcement aspects of ANS management, and other potential issues. To support and maintain workshop activities and subsequent work, an electronic list serve will be developed to allow agencies and organizations to regularly discuss regional ANS issues.

Progress to date:

1. Confirmed conference dates for 2004 regional meetings.
 - Northeastern Fish & Wildlife Conference, April 28, 2004, Ocean City, MD
 - Western Fish & Wildlife Conference, July 24, 2004, Sun Valley, ID
 - **Southeastern Fish & Wildlife Conference, October 30, 2004, Hilton Head, SC**
 - Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference, December 12, 2004, Indianapolis, IN.
2. IAFWA sent introductory letters to all state directors and fisheries chiefs in January, asking them to invite ANS coordinators, law enforcement, other agencies and NGOs from their state that have an interest in ANS.

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3. The contractor team continues to work with states ahead of each regional meeting to invite participation and set a preliminary agenda for the workshop.

Next steps:

1. Continue email and telephone contact with directors, fisheries chiefs, and others they identify in anticipation of each region's workshop.
2. Conduct workshops in the regions and develop and implement action plans.

The IAFWA Advisory Panel oversees this project to ensure that all activities are in the best interest of the states, have the greatest potential to be replicated later in other states, and will enhance ANS activities at the regional and national levels. Members represent each of the four IAFWA regions. The implementation team combines the necessary skills to provide effective support to the advisory panel, pilot states, and regional workshops.

White extended an invitation to the Panel to consider involvement in the October 30 workshop and identify issues for the southeast region. Lukens added that issues that this project is addressing are relevant to Regional Panel issues and an exciting opportunity for a job to get done that will feed into the Panel. Kumpf was pleased that the workshop would address internet trade. No action was taken, but plans are to work with the regional panels to avoid duplication of effort.

HACCP PRESENTATION

Bob Pitman, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator for FWS Southeast Region, gave a presentation entitled "Managing Pathways."

Resource management work could provide pathways to unintentionally spread species, which may be invasive, to unique and critical habitats for already endangered species. Next to habitat loss, invasive species are resource management's biggest challenge. Executive Order 13112, 1998, directs federal agencies to prevent spreading invasive species in their work but few management tools exist to implement this Directive. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) planning could provide the management tool needed. HACCP has been modified from the food industry for natural resource work. Without planning, hitchhiking species of plants, animals and other biologics may contaminate natural resource pathways. HACCP's five linked forms identify risks of hitchhiking species and focuses preventative actions on specific problem areas in the pathway. Best management practices (BMP) are recorded. Risks are identified for easy review. Funding needs and management decisions based on HACCP plans ensure priorities are addressed strategically and in a consistent manner.

The Fish & Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center and partners developed a two day training course to teach HACCP planning procedures for managers, biologists and technicians. Attendees learn to manage natural resource pathways using HACCP planning principles.

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Responsible natural resource management means just that! Learn the planning process that will help you identify risks and focus attention on critical control points where non-target species and other biologists (hitchhikers) can be removed from your pathway. Lack of planning could spread invasive species.

HACCP information and support is web-based at www.HACCP-NRM.org. Forms, a searchable database of completed HACCP plans, supporting documents and future training announcements are available. Sharing HACCP plans and BMPs helps manage all pathways. The website is linked on the Regional Panel website

BACKGROUND AND STATUS OF FISH RISK ASSESSMENTS

Walt Courtenay gave a presentation entitled “The Lacey Act - Injurious Wildlife Provisions.”

What is an injurious wildlife species? Those species, including offspring and eggs, that are injurious to:

- Health and welfare of human beings
- Interest of forestry, agriculture, and horticulture
- Welfare and survival of the wildlife or wildlife resources of the U.S.

What is the process for listing species?

- Evaluation can be initiated with or without a petition
- If warranted, publish a *Federal Register* notice requesting biological and economic information
- Evaluate scientific data using established criteria
- If data support listing, publish a proposed rule to list and request public input
- Publish a final rule to list or a notice explaining why the species will not be listed.

Who implements the Injurious Wildlife Provisions?

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - promulgates regulations for listings
 - Division of Law Enforcement
 - enforces regulations
 - Division of International Affairs
 - issues permits
 - Division of Environmental Quality
 - evaluates species of injurious listings
 - provides recommendations on listings

What is prohibited if a species is listed?

- Importation
- Interstate shipment.

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What are the exceptions? Permits may be issued for the following purposes:

- Zoological
- Educational
- Medical
- Scientific

(Federal Agencies, without a permit, for their own use)

How can permits be obtained? Division of Management Authority

- Federal Fish and Wildlife License/Permit Application Form 3-200-42
- On the web: <http://forms.fws.gov/3-200-42.pdf>
- 1-800-358-2104

What groups of animals may be listed under the Injurious Wildlife Provision?

- Live wild mammals
- Live wild birds or eggs
- Live or dead fish (including mollusks and crustaceans) or eggs
- Live amphibians or eggs, and
- Live reptiles or eggs
- Plants and insects are not covered

What is currently listed:

Mammals

- Flying fox or fruit bat genus
- 7 Mongoose genera
- European rabbit genus
- Indian wild dog, red dog or dhole genus
- Multimammal rat or mouse genus
- Raccoon dog
- Brushtail possum - July 2002

Birds

- Pink starling or rosy pastor
- Species of dioch
- Java sparrow
- Red whiskered bul-bul

Reptiles

- Brown tree snake

Amphibians

- None

Fish, Mollusks, Crustaceans

- Walking catfish family
- Mitten crabs
- Zebra mussels

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- Live or dead whole fish, live fertilized eggs, or gametes of salmonids unless they have a health certificate
- Snakehead family Channidae - October 2002

The Listing Process

- A full biological synopsis is required
- That document must contain most or all known biological data about that species or group of species
- Much or all of that information must be published in the *Federal Register* for a given time of public response
- The biological synopsis must contain, based on the best data available, a risk assessment should a species (or group of species) be introduced that can withstand challenges and outside specialist peer reviews of this information.

Status of Fish Risk Assessments

- Entire snakehead family listed in 2002
- Biological synopsis and risk assessment document on bigheaded carps in advanced stage of preparation
- Black carp document in completion stage
- Swamp eel document should be completed by May-June 2004.

What's next?

- Review of 80+ foreign fish species (most temperate), using the Species Analyst Model, is in progress and should be completed by late summer/early fall 2004
- From that review, some 20+ species that have records of introductions beyond their native ranges or are in culture elsewhere may be considered for listing.

If all goes as is currently projected, many fishes not listed as injurious wildlife may be added within the next two years. The objective is to become PROACTIVE rather than REACTIVE.

Mark McElroy asked that Courtenay's presentation be added to the Panel's website.

MOBILE BAY RAPID ASSESSMENT PROJECT

David Yeager and Harriet Perry gave an overview of the Mobile Bay Rapid Assessment Project. The Panel was shown the video that was created entitled "The Search for Alien Invaders." The rapid assessments provide a baseline on what is there and the status of invasive species. They encouraged this type of project in other areas of the Gulf.

Kumpf asked that copies of the video be provided to the Information and Outreach Group.

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Perry reported that the Mississippi rapid assessment project will take place the last week in August and going into first week of September. The Gulf Coast Research Laboratory will host the Mississippi event.

NEXT MEETING

Don Schmitz mentioned that he would like to see field trips incorporated into the meetings. Lukens added that when a time and location is established, the Panel member from that area could suggest potential field trip ideas.

Schmitz indicated that the Keys have the only living reef system in the Gulf states and he does not think they know the risks of invasive species. He suggested holding the next meeting in the Keys somewhere between Key Largo and Key West. He could probably arrange a tour of a national refuge.

Dennis Riecke suggested meeting in Mississippi or Texas.

A motion was made to hold the next meeting in mid to late September 2004 in Mississippi. The March 2005 meeting could be held in Corpus Christi or another location in Texas, and then the Keys in September 2005. The motion was seconded by Leslie Hartman and with no objection the motion passed.

OTHER BUSINESS

Herb Kumpf inquired about the timetable for submitting the next Regional Panel grant. Lukens indicated that the proposal would be submitted in September.

There was discussion during the facilitated session to combine the Pathways & Prevention Work Group with the Vessel Mediated Transport Work Group. A motion was made by Herb Kumpf and seconded by Walt Courtenay to combine those two work groups. There was no objection and the motion passed.

Pat Carter provided a summary of carp activities. The FWS sponsored a black carp survey and the project was conducted by Dr. Hal Schramm from Mississippi State University. The purpose of the study was to identify methods of sampling/capturing black carp *Mylopharyngodon piceus* and survey for the presence of black carp in rivers in close proximity to Mississippi aquaculture facilities permitted to stock black carp. They electrofished 0.25-0.75 acre aquaculture ponds containing known densities of adult triploid black carp. They collected black carp with 60 Hz AC output. The number of black carp captured per unit of effort increased with density. No black carp were collected with 15 or 120 Hz pulsed DC. Three rivers in close proximity to permitted aquaculture facilities (Big Sunflower, Yazoo, Bogue Phalia) were surveyed with AC electrofishing during October-November. No black carp were observed. These and additional sites will be sampled in spring and summer 2004 to further investigate the possibility of the presence of black carp in waters

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close to the aquaculture facilities that use them. Next steps are to assess the abundance of black carp in public waters within 30 km of permitted sites where black carp have been stocked in Arkansas. Additionally, plans are to survey public waters in proximity to facilities holding black carp in Louisiana.

Carter also noted that the Asian Carp Work Group is being established to develop an Asian Carp Management Plan. Efforts are continuing to populate that group (state, federal, local, NGOs, academia, and industry). The first meeting will be held on May 24th in Columbia, Missouri, the day before the Mississippi River Basin Panel meeting and the National Task Force meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lukens again provided the opportunity for public comment. No comments were received.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.