

**GULF & SOUTH ATLANTIC REGIONAL PANEL
ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES
MINUTES
Tuesday, October 30 and Thursday, November 1, 2007
Miami, Florida**

Chairman David Yeager 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

Mike Brainard, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Paul Carangelo, Port of Corpus Christi Authority, Corpus Christi, TX
Earl Chilton, TPWD, Austin, TX
Steven de Kozlowski, SCDNR, Columbia, SC
Pam Fuller, U.S. Geological Survey, Gainesville, FL
Leslie Hartman, AL Marine Resources Division, Dauphin Island, AL
Tom Jackson, NOAA-Fisheries, Miami, FL
Chuck Jacoby, University of Florida/Florida Sea Grant, Gainesville, FL
Herb Kumpf, At-Large Member, Panama City, Florida
Ron Lukens, At-Large Member, High Springs, FL
Roberto Mendoza, Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo Leon, Mexico
James Morris, NOAA, Beaufort, NC
Doug Nemeth, US Navy, Jacksonville, FL
Martin O'Connell, UNO, New Orleans, LA
Marilyn Barrett O'Leary, At-Large Member, Baton Rouge, LA
Harriet Perry, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Bob Pitman, USFWS, Albuquerque, NM
David Rice, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dennis Riecke, MDWFP, Jackson, MS
Lance Robinson, TPWD, Dickinson, TX
Don Schmitz, FDEP, Tallahassee, FL
John Teem, FL Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Tallahassee, FL
Jay Troxel, USFWS, Atlanta, GA
David W. Yeager, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, Mobile, AL

Staff

Nancy K. Marcellus, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Others

Lad Akins, REEF, Key Largo, FL
Charles Ashton, COE, Jacksonville, FL
John Galvez, USFWS, Vero Beach, FL
Denise Gregoire, US Geological Survey, Gainesville, FL
Scott Newsham, ANS Task Force, Arlington, VA

**GULF & SOUTH ATLANTIC REGIONAL PANEL
ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES
MINUTES**

Page -2-

Pamela J. Schofield, US Geological Survey, Gainesville, FL
Paul Shafland, Boca Raton, FL

Public Comment

Yeager provided the opportunity for public comment. No public comments were received.

Review and Adoption of Agenda

With minor changes noted, Paul Carangelo made a motion to adopt the agenda. Harriet Perry seconded the motion and the agenda was adopted.

Review and Approval of Minutes 4/17-18/2007)

Ron Lukens made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 17-18, 2007 meeting held in Mobile, Alabama. Don Schmitz seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

Membership Considerations

The Panel's Standard Operating Procedures were reviewed. The procedures state that the Panel consists of individuals representing state and federal agencies, organizations, industries, associations, and private citizens with authorities to and/or interest in addressing non-native and/or invasive species issues. The Panel is established under the authority of the National Invasive Species Act of 1996. The Panel serves as an advisory body and reports to the National Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF). All seats on the Panel must be reviewed and approved by the ANSTF.

All members other than Standing Members will be selected and approved by the Panel. Non-standing members will be appointed for a period of two (2) years, at which time organizations holding non-standing member seats may be replaced. If no specific actions is taken, organizations holding non-standing member seats will continue to serve until asked to resign.

Any Standing or Non-standing Member may designate an alternate to serve on the Panel in the place of the named member. Alternates may be identified on a case-by-case basis by members who are unable to attend a specific meeting, after which time the alternate designation expires.

Chairman Yeager recognized Ron Lukens as a voting At-Large Member. Lukens was added to the Panel as a result of an email ballot election.

Two persons, John A. Goolsby and Terry H. Conger, were considered for the vacant Department of Agriculture seat.

**GULF & SOUTH ATLANTIC REGIONAL PANEL
ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES
MINUTES**

Page -3-

John Goolsby is a Research Entomologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) and the Acting Research Leader for the Beneficial Insects Research Unit in Weslaco, Texas. He was formerly the director of the USDA/CSIRO Australian Biological Control Laboratory in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia (1998-2004). His research in Australia focused on biological control of weeds of Australian and Asian origin, specifically foreign exploration in this region for biological control agents the Old World climbing fern, *Lygodium microphyllum*, an invasive weed in the Florida Everglades. Prior to his overseas assignment, John was an entomologist and National Co-Project Leader of the Silverleaf Whitefly Biological Control Program with USDA-APHIS, Mission Biological Control Center in Mission, Texas (1993-1998). Dr. Goolsby's graduate research was done in entomology at Texas A&M University. His current work in Texas focuses on biological control of the pests, glassywinged sharpshooter, *Homalodisca coagulata*; cotton mirid, *Creontiades* sp.; and on the Eurasian weed, giant reed, *Arundo donax*, which is invasive in the riparian habitats in the Southwestern US and northern Mexico.

Terry H. Conger is Louisiana's Area Epidemiology Officer with the USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services (VS), stationed in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He earned his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) from Colorado State University in 1972, his Master of Science (MS) in Microbiology and Immunology from Michigan State University in 1978, and his Ph.D. in Aquaculture and Finned-Fish Diseases from Brigham Young University in 2000. In his current position, Dr. Conger serves as the Designated Tuberculosis Epidemiologist, Designated Brucellosis Epidemiologist, and Area Aquaculture Coordinator. He has been in this position since January 2005. Dr. Conger has founded his career primarily with the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Programs. Dr. Conger is also serving in an advisory capacity (as the Secretary) on the Voluntary Johne's Disease Control Program Advisory Committee. Prior to moving to Louisiana, Dr. Conger served as the Tuberculosis Herd Accreditation VMO in Michigan (June 2004 to January 2005), State Epidemiologist with the Texas Animal Health Commission (1998-2003), State Epidemiologist with the Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission (1985-1992), Station Epidemiologist with Arkansas' Veterinary Services (1979-1985), and Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO) in Michigan and Colorado (1972-79). Before and between his regulatory veterinary medicine endeavors, Dr. Conger has worked in a companion animal veterinary practice in southeast Pennsylvania and in central Utah.

Election of the Department of Agriculture seat was determined by written ballot. John A. Goolsby received the majority vote and was named the Department of Agriculture representative.

The next consideration was for the vacant tribal representative. Lisa Berrios, an environmental liaison officer with the United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc., was mentioned as a tribal representative. **Ron Lukens made a motion to offer the tribal representative to Lisa Berrios. Leslie Hartman seconded the motion and the motion passed.**

Marilyn Barrett O'Leary, a former Sea Grant representative on the Panel, was also being considered for an At-Large Member position. Herb Kumpf spoke on Marilyn's behalf regarding her experience with the Panel. David Yeager also added comments about Marilyn's assistance with the state plans.

**GULF & SOUTH ATLANTIC REGIONAL PANEL
ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES
MINUTES**

Page -4-

Steve de Kozlowski made a motion to elect Marilyn as a voting At-Large Member of the Panel. Leslie Hartman seconded the motion and Marilyn was unanimously elected.

Susan McCarthy from the FDA Gulf Coast Seafood Laboratory in Dauphin Island, Alabama, was presented as the new representative from FDA. **Ron Lukens made a motion that the Panel accept the recommendation of Susan McCarthy as the FDA representative. Leslie Hartman seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

There was additional discussion expressing an interest in having North Carolina represented on the Panel. Steve de Kozlowski indicated that they had been invited to the recent meeting held in South Carolina. James Morris added that the Asian tiger shrimp issue may make them more receptive to participating on the Panel. He will make some contacts when he gets back. Marilyn O'Leary added that their state plan is being developed independently.

Update on Revision of "Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers Brochure"

Dennis Riecke submitted a proposal to the Panel for funding to modify a brochure that was developed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and was reprinted with agency specific contact information and agency logos by the Mississippi River Basin Panel ANS. The proposal specified that the brochure would be modified to include the agency specific contact information and agency logos for Mexico and member states of the Gulf and South Atlantic Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species. The proposal specified that 80,000 brochures would be printed assuming a cost of 6 cents per copy. The proposal was funded via a Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission subaward for \$4,800.00. The subaward states that "Distribution costs will be borne by the individual agencies and participants." The project is to be completed before December 31, 2007.

Dennis contacted the Minnesota DNR and they granted permission for us to modify their brochure. An authorization form to do so will be sent to Dennis. Dennis secured assistance for making the modifications from the MDWFP printing staff. The Minnesota DNR will send a disc containing the Endesign version CS2 file. Roberto Mendoza offered to translate the text into Spanish for use in Mexico. Minnesota DNR staff stated that the cost per copy may be higher than 6 cents, which would reduce the number each state and Mexico receives.

All Panel members need to secure permission from their employers to submit contact information (name, address, and phone number) and agency logos for inclusion on the brochure.

Panel members need to decide if they want to replace some or all of the brochure pictures to show plants and animals more likely to be encountered in the Panel's geographic range. If so, they will also need to secure permission to use those photos and they need to be supplied in a format compatible with the Endesign file.

GULF & SOUTH ATLANTIC REGIONAL PANEL ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES MINUTES

Page -5-

Panel members need to agree to provide funding for shipping their brochures to one location and handle distribution within their geographic area.

Earl Chilton volunteered to help locate photos for the brochure. Harriet Perry also indicated that they had photos from the brochures they had produced.

David Yeager urged the Panel members to make the completion of the brochure revision a priority.

Health Risks Associated with Channeled Apple Snails (Update)

John Teem provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Health Risks Associated with Channeled Apple Snails.

Marine Ornamentals as Aquatic Invasives in Florida

Lad Akins from Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) in Key Largo, Florida gave a presentation on marine ornamentals as aquatic invasives in Florida.

Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) is a grassroots, non-profit organization founded in 1990. Volunteer divers and snorkelers are becoming actively involved in saving the marine environment gathering information in the form of fish population surveys. These data are used by the research community to protect and preserve the marine ecosystem of our own backyards and beyond.

REEF is building a program on exotic species and have formed a working group to scope out future planning for ornamental early detection and rapid response. David Yeager mentioned the possibility of adding an education and outreach component.

Visit www.reef.org/exotic to report an exotic species sighting.

The Panel discussed establishing a working group within the Panel to address marine ornamentals and the investigate possible sources of funding. **Ron Lukens made a motion to establish a subworking group of the Early Detection and Rapid Response Work Group targeted at next step rapid response capability for marine ornamental fish. That group would identify processes and available funding. The motion was seconded by Harriet Perry. The motion passed.** James Morris volunteered to chair that subworking group.

Aquatic Invasives in Louisiana (White Spot, Salvinia, etc.)

Since Harry Blanchet was unable to attend the meeting, Marty O'Connell gave his update on aquatic invasives in Louisiana.

**GULF & SOUTH ATLANTIC REGIONAL PANEL
ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES
MINUTES**

Page -6-

Aquatic Invasives in Texas (Caddo Lake, Giant Salvinia, Hull Fouling, etc.)

Earl Chilton and Lance Robinson updated the Panel on aquatic invasive activities in Texas.

Mississippi ANS Update

Distributed 10,000 bighead and silver carp WATCH cards provided by the Mississippi River Basin Panel ANS.

Reprinted 81,000 Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker! Card for inclusion when boat registration cards are mailed to boat owners.

Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker! message place in annual Mississippi Outdoor Digest of Hunting, Fishing, and Boating Regulations - 375,000 copies printed.

Coordinated future funding for continuing the development of a State Management Plan for ANS. Reviewed a draft of the plan. Submitted comments on the plan.

Plan development has been stalled since September 2006 because an MDWFP research coordinator has not submitted a State Wildlife Grant Application for funding. A new employee is assuming this position.

Recommended that the Mississippi Department of Agriculture & Commerce deny the issuance of aquaculture permits for the culture of Red Claw Crawfish until a risk assessment and thorough literature review are submitted by the applicants.

Aquatic Invasives in Mexico, An Update

Roberto Mendoza gave a PowerPoint presentation on aquatic invasives in Mexico. Mendoza mentioned that they have developed a web page for invasive species which will officially be available by the end of this year.

Asian Swamp Eel Removal in South Florida

John Galvez from South Florida Fisheries Resource Office in Vero Beach, Florida, gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Asian Swamp Eel Control Project on the C-111 & C-113 Canals".

Background

- Four populations of the Asian swamp eel (*Monopterus* sp.) in the southeastern United States: Atlanta (early 1990's) north Miami and Tampa (1997), and Homestead (December 1999).

**GULF & SOUTH ATLANTIC REGIONAL PANEL
ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES
MINUTES**

Page -7-

- Unknown source of the introductions - probably aquarium trade or release of eels imported for food.
- In 2001, the Asian Swamp Eel Management Review Team (USFWS, USGS-FCSC, NPS, SFWMD and FWC) determined that electrofishing appeared to be the best tool to reduce the numbers and slow the spread into the Everglades.
- First evaluation conducted between June and December of 2001. A total of 1,425 swamp eels were removed from the C-111 and C-113 canals near Homestead.

Summary

- 905 Asian swamp eels and 82 peacock eels were removed from the C-111 & C-113 canals between July-December 2006.
- 738 Asian swamp eels and 82 peacock eels were observed but not captured. The average capture efficiency was 54%.
- 23 American eels were counted (6 captured). This number is less than 1.3% of all swamp, peacock and American eels counted (captured + observed). American eels are considered a priority species by USFWS.
- Historically, American eels have not been found in large numbers in the area. Over 10 years of electrofishing data have shown that American eels made up < 1% of the numerical standing crop (Paul Shafland, Florida FWC, Pers. Comm. October 2007). Swamp eels may not have been competing with American eels though a stomach analysis study is being planned to determine prey species being targeted by eels.
- There is a need to find out if the swamp eels are spreading beyond the C-111 canal.

Funded by USFWS.

History/Overview of FWC Work on Exotic Freshwater Fishes

Paul Shafland from Boca Raton, Florida provided a PowerPoint presentation on FWC work on exotic freshwater fishes.

Update on the ANS Task Force

Scott Newsham reported that the ANS Task Force would be meeting in Washington, DC on November 6-8, 2007. Newsham added that he expects approval of the grass carp plan at that meeting. Climate change and invasives species is the topic of focus for this meeting.

**GULF & SOUTH ATLANTIC REGIONAL PANEL
ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES
MINUTES**

Page -8-

Newsham mentioned that he will be on semi-retired status effective January 2008. This will be the last GSARP meeting he will attend.

The Panel thanked Newsham for his support of the Panel and his consistent attendance at the Panel meetings.

Managing Fish Stocking Pathways - HACCP

Bob Pitman reported on managing fish stocking pathways to public waters. Fish stockings by management agencies are valuable contributions to our resources benefitting anglers, species recovery, and economics, but these introductions are not without risks. Agencies should consider the risks of unintentionally introducing aquatic invasive species through these actions and implement appropriate control strategies. “Hitchhikers” such as other fish, diseases, parasites, plants, snails, insects, and plankton could move through the stocking pathway to new locations. Once established, they could potentially impact native species and alter habitats. Risks unique to fish stocking pathways are easily managed using a planning model from industry known by its acronym, HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points).

A national/international HACCP planning support web site for natural resource work is maintained by the Service and its partners at www.HACCP-NRM.org. The web site provides free downloads of planning forms, guidance, and references, and a database of plans being used around the country allowing planners to share best management practices.

The value of HACCP is evident when sorting through complex pathways such as fish stocking to prevent introductions, but it can also help with seemingly simple pathways such as moving boats or equipment from lake to lake. The systematic process guides planners to evaluate risks and preventions, and answers questions in sequential fashion producing a practical plan of actions. Prevention actions can then be followed by anyone using the plan with checklist precision to ensure that important steps are not overlooked.

Work Group Updates

Research and Development Work Group - John Teem

Items discussed by the Research and Development Work Group included a manual for rapid response, EPA/Gulf of Mexico Program list of concerned species, and the taxonomic experts database - current problems and possible solutions.

Dennis Riecke suggested that the Panel be given a demonstration of the database at the next meeting.

**GULF & SOUTH ATLANTIC REGIONAL PANEL
ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES
MINUTES**

Page -9-

Education and Outreach Work Group - Chuck Jacoby

Guidance related to non-native species in science and engineering fairs can be found on the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF) website. Chuck Jacoby will introduce the document during a ShopTalk at the International Science and Engineering Fair in Albuquerque, New Mexico the week of May 13-19, 2007.

Marilyn O'Leary and Chuck Jacoby submitted a pre-proposal to the National Sea Grant College Program Aquatic Invasive Species Research and Outreach Program. The pre-proposal received positive reviews, and a full proposal was requested and submitted. The project focuses on schools and assesses the value of different outreach efforts in keeping with the Gulf and South Atlantic Regional Panel outreach priority. The federal budget situation has delayed decisions on grants.

Some funding from GSARP went to projects that included education and outreach, i.e., a workshop involving Texas agencies, the live seafood industry and the pet industry; revision of the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers brochure to suit states in GSARP; and South Carolina's brochure on green mussels.

Chuck Jacoby will consolidate information on inventories and databases of educational and outreach materials, including the database being developed for the Western Regional Panel.

Bob Pitman, Jay Troxel, and Herb Kumpf will explore the structure and function of major teacher organizations as preparation for linking with them. Linking may include holding a workshop in association with a suitable conference in the United States.

Marine and Ornamentals - James Morris

Morris reported that they discussed items to get this subworking group organized as well as a list of persons to be included. They will be concentrating on sources of funding for workshops to train rapid responders and available resources to provide early detection.

Burmese Python Eradication in the Florida Everglades

Skip Snow presented a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Disposable Pets, Unwanted Giants: Getting a Grip on Pythons in the Glades."

Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Leslie Hartman made a motion to nominate Earl Chilton for Chairman. Marilyn O'Leary seconded the motion. Earl Chilton was unanimously elected Chairman of the Panel.

Harriet Perry made a motion to nominate Ron Lukens as Vice-Chairman. Leslie Hartman seconded the motion. Ron Lukens was unanimously elected Vice-Chairman of the Panel.

**GULF & SOUTH ATLANTIC REGIONAL PANEL
ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES
MINUTES**

Page -10-

Next Meeting

San Antonio, Texas was selected as the location to hold the next Panel meeting. The target date for that meeting will be the week of April 7-11, 2008. Baton Rouge, Louisiana was selected as an alternate location.

Other Business

Panel members discussed different ways to memorialize former Panel member, Bruce Thompson. Suggestions included funding a graduate student or scholarship to do taxonomic research, planting a tree with a plaque in a prominent location in Baton Rouge, creating a display of invasive species and establishing a foundation in his name to support the display. Steve de Kozlowski suggested placing a memoriam on the "Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers" brochure that Dennis Riecke is coordinating. A memoriam could also be added to the Panel's website.

Marilyn O'Leary made a motion to memorialize Bruce Thompson on the "Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers" brochure and on the Panel's website. Leslie Hartman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

On October 31, 2007, Panel members participated in a field trip which was organized by Don Schmitz. Panel members visited the Miami International Airport to view USFWS inspections of imported animal species. Panel members then took a bus tour along the Tamiami Trail and Krome Avenue to see controlled wetland melaleuca trees and them being removed. Mr. Francois Laroche, SFWMD, presented information on the bus tour about the state's melaleuca tree removal program. After lunch Panel members traveled to Everglades National Park to see Brazilian pepper removal within the park. Mr. Jonathan Taylor, NPS, discussed these efforts at the removal site. Lastly, the Panel listened to Mr. Jeff Kline's (NPS) presentation entitled "Fish Introductions into Everglades Wetlands: An Unforeseen Consequence of Restoration?".

Public Comment

Yeager provided the opportunity for public comment. Pam Schofield mentioned that she would be interested in reporting on her tilapia research at the next Panel meeting. The Panel agreed to include that as an agenda item for the next meeting.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:50 am.