



**ALABAMA DIVISION OF WILDLIFE AND FRESHWATER FISHERIES**  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
RIVER AND STREAM FISHERIES PROGRAM

**GULF & SOUTH ATLANTIC REGIONAL PANEL ON  
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES FALL 2014 MEETING**

**Alabama Freshwater Invasive Species Update**

Houston, TX  
September 18, 2014

**Zebra Mussels** – Zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) densities remain low in the Tennessee River below Wilson Dam as only 6 Zebra Mussels were collected in 120 quadrats (0.25m<sup>2</sup>) over a six mile reach of the river this past summer.

**Bighead Carp** – The first report of bighead carp (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*) occurring in the Pea/Choctawhatchee River drainage was received this summer as a 40lb specimen was found dead in a private pond adjacent to the river. Bighead carp were never stocked in the pond and it is believed the fish may have entered the pond during flood conditions.

Large (>1000 mm TL) bighead carp continued to be caught by commercial paddlefish harvesters on the Alabama River during the 2014 season. In addition, paddlefish sampling by ADWFF biologists on the Tombigbee River continued to yield large specimens of bighead carp.

**Tilapia** – Multiple reports of tilapia (*Oreochromis* spp. ) catches have been received in the last 2 years from the Tombigbee River.

**Oscars** – Several oscars (*Astronotus ocellatus*) were caught in Parker Lake, on oxbow of the Tombigbee River, by recreational anglers.

**Island Apple Snails** - Control and eradication efforts continue for Island Applesnails (*Pomacea insularum*) found in Langan Park and Three Mile Creek in Mobile. We have expanded the previous treatment area (~14 linear miles of Langan Municipal Lake and lower Three Mile Creek) to include the “natural oxbow portion and most of Spring Creek, approximately an additional 2.2 miles. Two 2013 NATRIX treatments were relatively unsuccessful. Among the 27 trap sites in Langan Park and Three mile Creek, pre-treatment and post-treatment densities ranged from 1.28 to 3.28 snails per trap day in 2013, respectively. The 2014 treatment rate increased from 0.3 to 0.5 ppm based on some 72-hour fate tests done (and funded) by SePRO. The 2014 pre-treatment and post-treatment densities ranged from 0.48 to 0.06 snails per trap day.

**Plecostomus** - A *Pterygoplichthys pardalis x disjunctivus* was caught in a turtle trap in May from the Dog River, Mobile County.

**Blueback Herring** – Blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*) a prohibited species in Alabama have recently been collected from Lake Martin, which is approximately 30 miles NE of Montgomery. As with the illegal introduction in Lewis-Smith Reservoir, we believe striped bass anglers introduced this species into Lake Martin.

**Hydrilla** - We have received a report of Hydrilla potentially occurring in Yates Reservoir, Tallapoosa River drainage, but we're still trying to confirm this report.

**Aquatic Invasive Species Issues on the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers and Related Aquatic Vegetation Management Efforts by Alabama Power Company (APC)**

**Report provided by Mr. Josh Yerby of APC**

**Coosa River**

**Water Hyacinth** - Water hyacinth was found in 13 locations on Neely-Henry Reservoir in 2013. The plants were showing frost damage when located so the decision was made to wait until 2014 and reassess. To date, all sites have been resurveyed and only one location still had Hyacinths. This site was successfully treated with herbicides (< .10 acre).

69 acres of Water hyacinth/Water lettuce were treated on Lay, Mitchell, and Jordan reservoirs combined in 2013 which is consistent with recent years. No treatments have been performed targeting Hyacinth/Lettuce in 2014 but are scheduled to begin within the next two weeks.

**Spinyleaf Naiad** - 7 acres have been treated so far on Neely-Henry Reservoir in 2014.

**Eurasian Water milfoil** (EWM) - 3 acres of EWM were treated on Lay Lake in 2013; 27 surface acres of EWM have been treated in 2014. So far it has not been identified by APC biologists anywhere else on the Coosa or Tallapoosa rivers.

**Hydrilla** - 3 surface acres were treated on Lay Lake and 11.25 surface acres were treated on Lake Jordan in 2013 to control hydrilla. (actual vegetation coverage was significantly less). No hydrilla has been identified on the Coosa River in 2014.

**Lyngbya** - Treatments have been ongoing on Lakes Lay, Mitchell, and Jordan since 2006. We are seeing success in some of our treatment areas and we were able to decrease treatment acreages for the 2014 season. We anticipate the same for the 2015 season. However, Lyngbya is still a major concern on these reservoirs and APC is constantly working on more effective ways to control this algae.

**Tallapoosa River**

**Variable Leaf Milfoil** (VLM) - Even though it's a native species, VLM poses a threat to recreation and hydropower generation on the Tallapoosa River. Approximately 60 acres were identified on Yates Lake in Fall 2013. 26 acres were treated in late August 2014 with little success. VLM reached problematic levels in Thurlow reservoir during 2013. The reservoir was drawdown 10 feet below normal full pool elevation in February 2014 to expose the vegetation to freezing temperatures (a similar drawdown was performed in 2010). Recent surveys show little

to no growth. Sterile grass carp were also stocked in the reservoir in 2010 to help control VLM. Recent electrofishing surveys (presence/absence) indicated grass carp are still present.

**Hydrilla** - In 2010, hydrilla was identified in multiple locations along a 15 mile stretch of the unregulated portions of the Tallapoosa River in Cleburne County. Since the vegetation has the potential to impact R.L. Harris Reservoir and eventually Lakes Martin, Yates, and Thurlow, APC performed herbicide treatments in October 2010. The treatments were minimally successful, possibly due to high water flows and increased turbidity. Viable plants as well as tubers and turions were discovered in follow-up surveys from 2010-2013 however, more recent surveys in 2014 showed no hydrilla. It's likely that winter/spring rains scoured much of the existing vegetation and it has yet to re-establish itself. APC continues to educate paddlers and lake users on the threats posed by hydrilla as well as how to identify it.