

**Mississippi's ANS Update
Gulf and South Atlantic Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species
October 2010 Meeting – St. Pete Beach, FL**

**By
Dennis Riecke
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks**

New Activities since May 2010

Sent letters to Corps of Engineers districts asking them to address their national policy for invasive species in all Public Notice project plan documents. Corps reaction has been mixed with some districts not responding and some stating that this policy need not be addressed at the Public Notice stage of the project review process.

Sent electronic file of North Carolina's version of "*Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers*" brochure to Rob Emens, NC Division of Water Resources.

Presentation on ANS issues to students at Camp Fish.

Panel EDRR Workgroup meeting in New Orleans in July to revise panel EDRR document.

Revision of MDWFP regulation (Public Notice 1405) to prohibit transport into the state, offer for sale or possession within the state, live forms snakeheads (all species in the Family *Channidae*) and swamp eels (All species in the Family *Synbranchidae*). Stocking of any nonnative fish except common carp, goldfish, triploid grass carp and rainbow trout would also be prohibited in private ponds except for legally permitted aquaculture facilities. Revision was triggered by discovery of tilapia in a private recreational fishing pond. Previously (since 1969) only live forms of piranhas and walking catfish could not be transported, offered for sale and possessed within Mississippi and there were not any restrictions on stocking nonnative species in recreational fishing ponds.

Ongoing Activities

The State Management Plan for Aquatic Invasive Species has undergone state review and public comments were received. It was sent to the National ANS Task Force in January 2010 for their review and extensive comments were received. The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) is the designated lead agency for plan development. The MDEQ was heavily involved in response to Deepwater Horizon oil spill event and this has prevented revision of the State Management Plan for Aquatic Invasive Species. The MDEQ plans to hire a contractor to revise the plan for final submission to National ANS Task Force in the spring of 2011.

Represented the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks on the Mississippi Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force. Last meeting was Nov. 2007.

Continued distributing “Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker” cards along with all boat registrations or renewals that are mailed out.

Continued printing The Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker logo and bullet list in the annual regulation guides --- *Mississippi Outdoor Digest* and *Guide to Mississippi Saltwater Fishing*.

Links to the Mississippi River Basin Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species and the Gulf and South Atlantic Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species, Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker and Habitattitude websites are on the department website.

The Mississippi Museum of Natural Science has a permanent exhibit on exotic species.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources has been monitoring and treating Giant Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) in the Pascagoula River system.

Future Activities

Implement the activities specified in the Mississippi State Management Plan for Aquatic Invasive Species.

Compose freshwater fishing bait regulations to specify what bait can be legally, sold, possessed, transported and used in Mississippi.

Adopt list of approved, restricted and prohibited species as specified in MS Code 49-7-80. Amend list of approved, restricted and prohibited species as specified in the public notice that regulates aquaculture activities in Mississippi.

Pursue licensing of retail bait outlets selling live freshwater fishing bait.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resource has secured Mississippi Coastal Impact Assistance Program funding authority to hire a Conservation Resource Biologist under a 4 year contract to form an Aquatic Nuisance Species Advisory Council and begin implementation of action items contained in the Mississippi State Management Plan for Aquatic Invasive Species.

Establish a EDRR monitoring program comprised of state and federal personnel who sample aquatic species in Mississippi public waterways on a routine basis.