

**Mississippi's ANS Update**  
**Gulf and South Atlantic Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species**

**April 2011 Meeting – Charleston, SC**

**By**

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**New Activities since October 2010**

MDWFP regulation (Public Notice 1405) was revised 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, 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. We did not succeed in prohibiting the stocking of only certified triploid grass carp stockings in private ponds due to opposition from Mississippi fish producers and the fact that agency hatcheries do not get the “triploid” grass carp they produce tested and certified as triploids. The cost of certification and the decision not to buy certified triploid grass carp fry and grow them out caused the agency not to include certified triploid grass carp on the prohibited stocking list.

We responded to requests from 3 Mississippi fish farms on Lacey Act regulations regarding shipment of bighead carp. In March 2010 we learned that at least 750,000 bighead carp are being cultured in Mississippi commercial fish ponds.

We documented that at least 102,827 black carp were shipped to Mississippi from 2000-2007. Of this number the 52,556 fish shipped in 2000 were untested and of a "mixed ploidy" ranging from 30% to 90% triploid and 3,614 were diploids shipped in 2007.

The yellow plastic Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker posters obtained from the Atlanta, USFWS office were distributed to our boat ramp construction crew for posting on boat ramp access signs.

Worked to guide submission of an AFS resolution on the ecological separation of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basin Drainage to the AFS Governing Board. The resolution will be published in Fisheries and may be submitted to the AFS membership for a vote.

Submitted letter of support and comments to the US Army Corps of Engineers for the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study.

## Ongoing Activities

The *Mississippi 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 did to hire a contractor to revise the plan for final submission to National ANS Task Force in the fall of 2011. We updated the number of fishing licenses and boat registrations sold for inclusion in the revised final document.

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

Reprinted and 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.

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

Adopt list of approved, restricted and prohibited species under the authority specified in MS Code 49-7-80 and as specified in the *Mississippi State Management Plan for Aquatic Invasive Species* Amend list of approved, restricted and prohibited species as specified in the public notice that regulates aquaculture activities in Mississippi.

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.

Update and expand information for Mississippi contacts listed in the Expert Taxonomic Database.