

**Crab Task Force Meeting
Tuesday, December 4, 2018, 1:00pm
2045 Lakeshore Dr., Rm 216
New Orleans, LA 70122**

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Roll Call/ Introduction of Guests

Voting Members Present:

Eric Blanchard
Trudy Luke
Laquita Meek
Britney Breaux
Warren Delacroix
Pete Gerica
George Jackson

Voting Members Absent:

Chalin Delaune
Dannon Lacoste
Rodney Parfait
Sheb Callahan

Non-Voting Members Present:

Jack Isaacs
Peyton Cagle
Major Edward Skena

Non-Voting Members Absent:

Melissa Daigle
Julie Lively

III. Motion to approve the November 13, 2018 meeting minutes Trudy Luke, 2nd by Eric Blanchard. Motion carries.

Motion to approve the December 4, 2018 meeting agenda by George Jackson, 2nd by Warren Delacroix. Motion carries

IV. Financial Report:

Fund balance: \$220,438
Budget balance: \$48,085

Motion to accept the financial report by Warren Delacroix, 2nd by George Jackson. Motion carries.

V. New Business

A. Discussed increasing crab violation penalties

The task force discussed writing letters to, as well as planning to schedule meetings with, their respective district attorney's offices regarding crab violations

The violations under consideration for change:

- Crab trap and crab theft
- Harvest of immature female crabs
- Female crabs in the berry stage

Crab and crab trap theft: the board discussed making changes to crab and crab trap theft violations

1. Crab and crab trap theft would remain a class four violation
2. Add into R.S. 56:332 additional penalties for first, second, third and subsequent offenses for crab and crab trap violations, mirroring the oyster violation changes in 56:424E(1), which reads:

“(a) In addition to all other penalties provided in this Section, for the first violation of this Subsection the oyster harvester’s license under which the violation occurred shall be revoked by the department and no new such license shall be issued for one year from the date of conviction. In addition the violator shall be sentenced to perform no less than forty hours of community service. If available the hours shall be served in a litter abatement community service program. During the period in which the violator is prohibited from possession of an oyster harvester license for a first offense, the violator may be present on a vessel harvesting or processing oysters only if that vessel is equipped with and is actively using a vessel monitoring system as prescribed in R.S. 56:424.1.

(b) For a second violation of this Subsection, the violator’s oyster harvester license shall be revoked, and no new license shall be issued for three years from the date of conviction. In addition, the violator shall be sentenced to perform no less than ninety hours of community service. If available, the hours shall be served in a litter abatement community service program. During the period in which the violator is prohibited from possession of an oyster harvester license for a second violation, the violator shall not be present on a vessel harvesting or processing oysters.

(c) For a third or subsequent violation of this Subsection, the violator’s oyster harvester license shall be revoked, and no new such license shall be issued for ten years from the date of the third or subsequent conviction. In addition the violator shall be sentenced to perform no less than one hundred twenty hours of community service. If available, the hours shall be served in a litter abatement community service program. During the period in which the violator is prohibited from possession of an oyster harvester license for a third or subsequent violation, the violator shall not be present on a vessel harvesting or processing oysters.”

Immature Female Harvest/ Berry stage crab harvest violations:

The task force discussed making changes to violations pertaining to the harvest of immature females and crabs in the berry stage; these violations would remain a class four violation, but would now include the following penalties:

The task force considered mirroring the oyster violation changes, found in R.S. 56:431, which reads:

“(2)(a) In addition to all other penalties provided in this Section, upon conviction for the first violation of section A of this Section, the oyster harvester’s license under which the violation occurred shall be revoked by the department and no new such license shall be issued for one year from the date of the conviction. In addition the violator shall be sentenced to perform no less than forty hours of community service. If available the hours shall be served in a litter abatement community service program. During the period in which the violator is prohibited from possession of an oyster harvester license for a first offense, the violator may be present on a vessel harvesting or processing oysters only if that vessel is equipped with and is actively using a vessel monitoring system as prescribed in R.S. 56:424.1.

(b) Upon conviction for the second violation of Subsection A of this Section, the violator’s oyster harvester license shall be revoked, and no new license shall be issued for three years from the date of conviction. In addition, the violator shall be sentenced to perform no less than ninety hours of community service. If available, the hours shall be served in a litter abatement community service program. During the period in which the violator is prohibited from possession of an oyster harvester license for a second violation, the violator shall not be present on a vessel harvesting or processing oysters.

(c) Upon conviction for the third or subsequent violation of Subsection A of this Section, the violator’s oyster harvester license shall be revoked, and no new such license shall be issued for ten years from the date of the third or subsequent conviction. In addition the violator shall be sentenced to perform no less than one hundred twenty hours of community service. If available, the hours shall be served in a litter abatement community service program. During the period in which the violator is prohibited from possession of an oyster harvester license for a third or subsequent violation, the violator shall not be present on a vessel harvesting or processing oysters.”

Eric Blanchard expressed concern for revoking a fishermen’s license for a year for a first offense, stating that a fisherman can easily unknowingly be a small percentage over in sponge or immature female crabs

Eric Blanchard exited meeting at 1:32PM, quorum no longer met. Task Force proceeded information only

Eric Blanchard reentered meeting at 1:54pm, quorum met and meeting continued

Warren Delacroix motioned to accept the task force's recommendations: 1. to send letters to each of the District Attorney's offices regarding crab violation convictions, 2. to support making changes to the crab and crab trap theft violations, the changes would mirror the oyster violations in R.S. 56:424E(1), and 3. to support making the following violation changes regarding the harvest of immature females and crabs in the berry stage: these would remain a class four violation, but would add the in the following stipulations- for a first offense the violator would be required to perform forty hours of community service, and for a period of one year from the date of conviction the violator must equip an active vessel monitoring system on any vessel harvesting or processing crab that he or she is present on. For a second offense, the violator's commercial crab trap gear license would be revoked for one year, he/she would be required to serve at least forty hours of community service, and during the period in which the violator is prohibited from possession of a commercial crab trap gear license, the violator may be present on a vessel harvesting or processing crabs only if that vessel is equipped with a vessel monitoring system. For a third violation, the violator's license would be revoked for three years, he/she would be required to serve at least ninety hours of community service, and during the period in which the violator is prohibited from possession of a commercial crab trap gear license, the violator may be present on a vessel harvesting or processing crabs only if that vessel is equipped with a vessel monitoring system. For the fourth or subsequent offense, the violator's license would be revoked for ten years, he/she would be required to serve as least one hundred twenty hours of community service, and during the period in which the violator is prohibited from possession of a commercial crab trap gear license, the violator shall not be present on any vessel that is harvesting or processing crab, 2nd by George Jackson. Motion carries.

B. Board discussed changing crab trap escape ring placement violations

Britney Breaux motioned to change the current crab trap escape ring regulations to state: "each trap must have at least three escape rings; two of which should be located in the upper chamber of the trap, no more than one mesh from the corner and flush with the baffle, and at least one escape ring in the bottom chamber, no more than one mesh from the corner and no more than one mesh from the floor, 2nd by George Jackson. Motion carries.

C. The board discussed crab grading on the boat

The board decided not to take action on this matter with the intention that the changes to the crabbing penalties would address the issue

D. The board discussed changing the restriction on crabbing before sunrise from ½ hour to 1 hour before sunrise

Eric Blanchard motioned to add this as an item for discussion at the next meeting, 2nd by Britney Breaux. Motion carries.

VI. Public Comment: no public comment

VII. Next meeting set for Tuesday, February 5, 2019 1:00pm New Orleans, CERM building.

VIII. Motion to adjourn by George Jackson, 2nd by Warren Delacroix. Motion carries.