**Louisiana Finfish Task Force**

**Wednesday, January 8, 2020, 10:00am**

**LDWF Headquarters**

**2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA**

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Roll Call and introduction of Guests**

**Voting Members Present:**

John Walther

Daryl Simon

James Pelas

**Voting Members Absent:**

Wayne Rollo

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Jason Adriance

Donald ? in for Edward Skena

Jack Isaacs

**Non-Voting Members Absent:**

Justin Gremillion

Motion by Daniel Edgar to adopt change to agenda, 2nd Adam Guillory. Motion carries.

**III.** Houston Hoovermotioned to approve the August 14, 2019 meeting minutes, 2nd by Daniel Edgar. Motion carries

**IV.** Stuart Billeaud motioned to approve the January 8, 2020 meeting agenda, 2nd by Daryl Simon. Motion carries.

**V.** New Business

**A.** The task force discussed adding a processor seat to the board

Daryl Simon led discussion stating that other boards have processors on their boards and he would like to have one represented on the board

Daniel Edgar stated that he thinks having a processor represented on the board would be very beneficial

Richard Fischer stated that he would suggest having a representative of the charter fishing industry on the board

Kindra Arnesen stated that she would suggest that a criterion for adding a processor to the board would be for a certain percentage of the income to come from finfish sales and

Discussed adding a processor seat, a charter boat representative, inland fisheries representative, and a non-voting member for Sea Grant

Kindra Arnesen requested that a commercial fisherman be added to the voting members on the board to even out the voting

Daniel Edgar motioned to add a processor seat, a charter boat Association representative of the charter fishing industry as voting members, and a non-voting member from Sea Grant, 2nd by Daryl Simon. Motion carries with two oppositions- Acy Cooper, III and James Pelas.

**B.** Acy Cooper, III led discussion on mullet season and harvest options

Daniel Edgar stated that in cases where Finfish fishermen are out at night fishing it shouldn’t be an enforcement issue due to the fact that

Daniel Edgar stated that he would rather add nights to the current season, also that he feels comfortable requesting nights but not nights and weekends

Adam Guillory stated that he would want to hear some feedback on the impacts the changes might have on the stock on the fishery

Kindra Arnesen stated that the effort for the fishery is nowhere near what is used to be, need to factor in the river stages and factors on landings, suggested if adding nights and leaving out weekends to stay off the water during daylight hours on Saturday and Sunday nights

Rusty Gaudet stated that we could broaden the harvest window to include pre-spawn fish, consider endorsing the opportunity for enhancing the mullet flesh market, if you are going to adjust the harvest times suggest then that they do a letter of endorsement to explore the enhancement of the flesh market; requesting a letter of endorsement from the FTF to complete a study on pre-spawn flesh mullet. The season would have to move up to capture fish that are in a pre-spawn state

Daniel motioned to request a study to allow Sea Grant to do research on developing mullet as possible food fish, 2nd by Adam Guillory. Motion carries.

Acy Cooper motioned to recommend changing legislation to expand the mullet season to allow night fishing during the current established season, 2nd by James Pelas. Motion does not carry. 4 to three vote.

**C.** Rob Bougeois provided the task force with a presentation on the impacts of Asian Carp in LA waterways and their possible spread to saltwater waterways

\*Get presentation from Rob

Daniel Edgar stated that he has a company from Alaska interested to set up in his factory to have a market for Asian carp creating fish meal

The federal policy is you can’t create markets for invasive species

Julie Lively led discussion on the commercial inland fishery and the issues they face

\*get Julie’s presentation

**E.** Mike Mcdonough provided a presentation on the removal of decommissioned oil rigs and how that affects the offshore fishery

\*get presentation and add here

**F.** The task force discussed the usage of strike nets in the commercial finfish industry

James Pelas stated that commercial fishermen need a strike-net season, strike net any commercial fish, would like to use the same means as fishermen north of the intercoastal; stated would like to do something similar to mullet permit, would like to limit it to guys who have been doing this for a while

Since the year 2000 the trout population has been in a rigid decline

Changes to the usage of strike nets would require a legislative change; 17 people currently have trout permits

60-70 active gill net license holders in the state of LA

Asking for an increase in the mesh size to target larger commercial species

Discussed possibly introducing an experimental gear to introduce the new equipment

Would like to put this on the agenda for the next meeting to continue discussion

G. Jason Adriance led discussion on the upcoming 2020 finfish stock assessments

4 assessments are being presented to the Commission at their February meeting. The four being presented are: drum, mullet, flounder and southern sheepshead In 2020 LDWF is gong to try and look at a red drum assessment; stated that he can also present the information to the FTF after the Feb Commission meeting

The information can be found online at:

VI. Public Comment

Julie Falgout provided the task force with the 2019 findings report from the LA Seafood Future

Tom Hymel announced that the Summit will have a 2500 fuel card and a few hundard dollars in shopping gift cards as door prizes

Kindra Arnesen stated that she hasn’t seen anything come out of the TF, thanked members for their service

Chrystal Olander Big D’s Seafood, asked who represented the finfish regarding the federal fisheries disaster

VII. Hear future agenda items

Acy Cooper- the alligator farmers in MS had an issue with CA banning them, same issue with sharks, meat had to be attached to fins to be transferred through the state

Daniel Edgar now that FDA is at all of the catfishing processing minimum size is on all of hoopsnets but mesh size will catch a smaller fish than that. Would like LDWF to answer few questions about the possibility of increasing the mesh size

Speckled trout stock assessment- Houston hoover would like to hear a presentation at the next meeting

VIII. Next meeting TBD

Adam Guillory motioned to adjourn, 2nd by Danile Edgar. Motion carries.