



Louisiana Natural Resources News

Newsletter of the Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists
November, 2008



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The Wildlife Society Issue

Mike Carloss, LAPB President

In April, LAPB received a letter from The Wildlife Society (TWS) regarding the name change and merger of LAPB with The LA Chapter of TWS. Below, you will find the TWS letter as well as LAPB's response letter. We are currently in communication with TWS over this issue and will keep you posted. This issue was discussed in great length at the LAPB Fall business meeting but for those of you not in attendance feel free to comment.



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

5410 Grosvenor Lane • Bethesda, MD 20814-2144

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E-mail: tws@wildlife.org

April 28, 2008

Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists
attn: Jimmy Anthony, LAPB President
P.O. Box 98000
Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000

Dear Executive Committee Members of LAPB:

After discussion with some of you over the past few months, we discovered that LAPB merged with and replaced the Louisiana Chapter of TWS several years ago. Upon further investigation, we noticed that many changes to LAPB's bylaws significantly depart from TWS bylaws to the extent they cannot be approved. We would like to work with you to modify these bylaws so that they can be approved by TWS and your organization may continue to benefit from being a TWS Chapter and maintain your tax-exempt status through TWS. Below are our recommendations:

1. Constitution Article I. Name. Please change the name from LAPB to the Louisiana Chapter of The Wildlife Society.
2. Constitution Article II. Membership. Please change membership description from "professional biologist granted by the Executive Committee" to Voting, Other, Charter, and Honorary Member. For a full description of these membership categories, please see enclosed TWS model chapter bylaws Article IV. Membership
3. Bylaws Article I. Section I. Please change the indefinite term for officers to a maximum of two terms.
4. Bylaws Article I. Section 2. Please specify that the Nomination and Elections Committee shall nominate two names for Secretary, Treasurer, and Newsletter Editor.
5. Bylaws Article I. Section 5. Please require the Newsletter Editor to also be a member of TWS since he/she is an elected member of the Executive Board.
6. Bylaws Article IV. Meetings. Please add a section regarding quorum. For a full description of meeting quorums, please see TWS model bylaws Article VI. Section 1. Clause C - Quorum.
7. Please combine Constitution and Bylaws to be uniform with all other TWS Chapters. Please see enclosed TWS model chapter bylaws for recommended structure.

TWS values Louisiana wildlife professionals and sincerely hopes that you and your colleagues will continue to be an integral part of our organization. TWS has made many positive changes in the past two years (see www.wildlife.org), designed to increase benefits for individual members, Chapters, and Sections. Please note, however, that to continue as a TWS Chapter, LAPB must be in line with TWS' accepted organizational structure. You should also be aware that Executive Committee officers in your organization must be members of TWS. Should LAPB's Executive Committee or members chose to not accept the above changes and officer membership requirement, the organization can no longer be considered a TWS chapter for IRS reporting purposes. LAPB would then be required to find alternative means for incorporation and tax-exempt status.

Excellence in Wildlife Stewardship Through Science and Education

Should you have any questions or comments, please contact Shannon Pederson, TWS Subunit and Certification Coordinator, at Shannon@wildlife.org or 301-897-9770 X 303. We hope to receive your response by June 30, 2008.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Hutchins", is written over a thin horizontal line that extends across the page.

Michael Hutchins, Ph.D.
Executive Director/CEO

cc: W. Daniel Svedarsky, Ph.D., TWS President
Darren A. Miller, Ph.D., President, Southeastern Section of TWS
Shannon Pederson, TWS Subunit and Certification Coordinator
Mike Carloss, LAPB President-Elect

Enclosure



Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists

September 17, 2008

The Wildlife Society
Attn: Michael Hutchins, Ph.D., Executive Director/CEO
5410 Grosvenor Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814-2144

Re: LAPB/LA TWS Name Change

Dear Dr. Hutchins:

In reference to your letter dated April 28, 2008 to the Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists (LAPB)/LA Chapter of the Wildlife Society (LA TWS), an in-depth discussion was held at the Fall Business meeting on August 14, 2008. After the discussion and membership vote, the Executive Committee rendered a decision. Although we are proud of our affiliation and close ties with TWS, it was decided we would like to continue to be known as the Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists/LA Chapter of the Wildlife Society.

The primary reason we changed our name from Louisiana Wildlife Biologists Association and merged with LA TWS several years ago was in an attempt to broaden membership by including other professionals from the biology and natural resources field, not be limited to wildlife biologists, and ultimately strengthen the overall group of professionals. Because of the vast expanse of Louisiana's wetlands and their tremendous importance to our cultural, economic, and ecological well-being, our natural resource issues are possibly more integrated with other disciplines than any other state. Thus, we see the diversity of our chapter as a necessity to meet the daunting natural resource challenges in our state. Some members have vocally expressed that they would not participate if our group's title reflected only that of The Wildlife Society. We believe that you will understand that both our goals and The Wildlife Society's goals are to maximize wildlife conservation efforts, and in our case, maximum inclusion is necessary to allow full integration of other disciplines. Thus, we sincerely hope that The Wildlife Society will understand our reluctance to follow the recommendations that would exclude some of our current membership.

I noticed in your letter, you requested that we consider several items in addition to this Chapter going exclusively by TWS's name. It appears all were recommendations

except for the retention of tax-exempt status through TWS. LAPB/LA TWS is prepared to seek tax exempt status if this will alleviate any concerns for you at the national level.

LAPB values its association with TWS and we hope we can continue our close affiliation. Together, we can make a difference in conservation of Louisiana's natural resources. Please consider allowing the name to remain so we can build unity among the wildlife, fisheries, and natural resources professionals in Louisiana. I am confident we can work out any details.

Sincerely,

Michael Carloss
LAPB/ LA TWS President

cc: Jimmy Anthony, LAPB Past-President
Dr. Kim Marie Tolson, LAPB President Elect
Shannon Pederson, TWS Subunit and Certification Coordinator

LAPB Fall 2008 Elections

Mike Carloss, LAPB President

The LAPB Executive Committee asked Dr. Kim Marie Tolson from the University of Louisiana at Monroe if she would consider accepting the President-elect position with LAPB. Dr. Tolson was a candidate in the President-elect 2006 election and has been very active with LAPB, especially with the Fall Symposiums. Dr. Tolson graciously accepted the position and we welcome her to the Executive Committee and look forward to continued work with her.

Cassidy Lejeune was elected Secretary during the LAPB Fall business meeting. Cassidy is a biologist supervisor with LDWF's Coastal and Nongame Resources Division - Coastal Operations. We welcome Cassidy to the LAPB Executive Committee. Cassidy will replace outgoing Secretary Mike Perot. Thanks to Mike for all of his hard work and dedication to LAPB as well as outgoing Past-President Larry Reynolds. Larry has been a tremendous asset to me during my President-elect tenure and is always a great help with the Fall Symposiums.

Kim Marie Tolson - New President Elect

I would like to open this article for the LAPB Newsletter with a not-so-formal introduction of myself to the membership. I hold a lifetime hunting and fishing license in the state of Louisiana. My passion is the outdoors and I embrace avenues that are used to sustain and preserve our natural resources—be it land, water, plant or animal. My professional experience has been in higher education. For the past twenty years I have been a member of the faculty in the Department of Biology at the University of Louisiana Monroe (formerly NLU) where my teaching responsibilities include wildlife management courses and vertebrate physiology. I currently serve as Professor of Biology and Graduate Coordinator for the College of Arts and Sciences; the latter of which entails my oversight of graduate programs and graduate students in seven departments. Coordinating that many graduate students with such a diversity of disciplines is often about as easy as herding cats.

However, I think that experience will serve me well as I transition into the Executive Committee of LAPB. The membership of LAPB is broad based and covers a wide variety of biology and natural resource disciplines. The diversity of the membership is the strength of our organization. It is reflected in everything from the quality and success of the Fall Symposia to the position we take on natural resource issues across the state. I encourage everyone to recruit your colleagues to become members and join with us as we continue to integrate disciplines to meet Louisiana's natural resources challenges. My personal goal is to increase participation by all Louisiana universities at the Fall Symposium. I challenge each of you to set one small goal that, if accomplished, will benefit LAPB.

I look forward to working with everyone in the coming years. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have suggestions for improving our organization. I am usually pretty good about checking my email on a regular basis—even if the fish are biting or the peak rut is on. I hope that everyone has had a productive 2008 and wish you all a prosperous 2009.

Kim Marie Tolson
Tolson@ulm.edu

LAPB Fall Symposium

Mike Carloss, LAPB President

The 2008 fall symposium was held on August 14th and 15th at the Estuarine Habitats and Coastal Fisheries Center in Lafayette. Nearly 100 scientists, managers, educators and students met to discuss some of the leading topics in the world of natural resource management, renew old friendships and professional acquaintances and make new ones. We heard 11 student presentations on recent research topics including white-tailed deer, waterbirds, salamanders, pileated woodpeckers, river shrimp, bats and many others. Chris Rice from ULM was awarded for the best student poster by John Pitre (upper right), and Kyle Patton



of ULL was awarded for the best student presentation by Larry Reynolds (lower left). Four professional presentations were given related to economic impacts and implications of natural resource management. For the Friday morning poster session we had 12 student posters as well as several professional posters on display. The social Thursday evening had over 40 participants



that enjoyed a wonderful steak dinner, great food and company which followed with award presentations.

LWF 2009 Convention

Mike Carloss, LAPB President

The 2009 LWF convention will be Feb. 28 – March 1 at the Hilton Garden Inn in West Monroe. The LAPB annual spring business meeting, held in conjunction with the convention, is currently planned to be on Friday afternoon. If you recall we changed the LAPB meeting to Friday instead of the traditional Saturday last year in hopes of encouraging better attendance, which did not happen. Therefore this may change and comments are welcome. A notice will be sent out as the meeting date approaches.

Nominations Sought For Top Conservation Awards:

The Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) is now accepting nominations for the 45th Governor's State Conservation Achievement Awards. The program recognizes those persons and organizations that make outstanding contributions to the natural resource welfare and environmental quality of the community, parish and state. There are eight award categories for which nominations can be made. They are: professional; volunteer; business; educator; youth; elected official; communications and organization.

Nominations are now open and will be accepted until February 3, 2009. The awards will be presented on February 28th at a special banquet held in conjunction with the 70th annual convention of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation at the Hilton Garden Inn in West Monroe. An awards program brochure with nomination form is available by contacting the LWF office (225/344-6762) or can be downloaded from the LWF's website.

Proposed Resolutions for Submittal to LWF

The Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) annually receives resolutions involving wildlife, fisheries, habitat management, wetland restoration, public use, and other natural resource management issues. Resolutions approved by the delegates at the LWF annual Spring Convention become part of LWF's political agenda. LAPB is a voting delegate and is represented at each resolution discussion by an executive committee member or an LAPB member assignee. Listed below are proposed resolutions that we would like the opinion of our members on, before submittal to the LWF. Additionally, Paul Whitehead and Vance Gordon outline two viewpoints for a resolution that was tabled at the 2008 LWF convention. If you have any comments or questions contact one of the following:

Paul Whitehead (pwhitehead@wlf.louisiana.gov)

Marty Floyd (Progne99@aol.com)

Mike Carloss (mcarloss@wlf.louisiana.gov)

SUBJECT: STUDY AND MONITORING OF BORROW AREAS IN COASTAL RESTORATION PROGRAMS

- 1 WHEREAS, an increasing number of restoration projects in coastal Louisiana involve creation of
2 marsh using material obtained from a “borrow” site, and
3 WHEREAS, during the “Wetland Value Assessment” process only the area where creation
4 occurs is examined, and
5 WHEREAS, the borrow site has not been examined during this process, yet there may be
6 significant impacts to this area associated with removal of material.
7 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists (LAPB)
8 calls upon the state of Louisiana through the Department of Natural Resources and the federal agencies
9 involved in coastal restoration include the study and monitoring of borrow sites during this process,
10 and
11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LAPB calls upon other interested groups and associations for
12 support by cosponsoring this resolution to be presented to the Louisiana Wildlife Federation at their
13 annual convention in 2009.

Resolution was passed by the Rapides Wildlife Association at the July 15, 2008 meeting.

SUBJECT: ORGANISM ACCESS VARIABLE REVISION IN COASTAL RESTORATION PROJECTS

1 WHEREAS, some projects in Louisiana coastal restoration with additional avenues of ingress and
2 egress have been given an additive reduction rather than increasing the rate of aquatic organism access,
3 and
4 WHEREAS, projects that have only a single-source entry/exit point are often given a higher rating
5 under the analyses protocol, and
6 WHEREAS, since the multiple openings are not shown to increase this variable in the final
7 ranking of “Average Annual Habitat Units”.
8 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists (LAPB)
9 calls upon the Environmental Work Group by way of its state and federal members, and academic
10 advisors to use either only the highest rate of multiple openings, or find an equitable way of increasing
11 ratings where multiple openings exist, and
12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LAPB calls upon other interested groups and associations for
13 support by cosponsoring this resolution to be presented to the Louisiana Wildlife Federation at their
14 annual convention in 2009.

Resolution was passed by the Rapides Wildlife Association at the July 15, 2008 meeting.

SUBJECT: URBAN FISHING

1 WHEREAS, participation in recreational fishing and recruitment of young people into the sport is
2 declining in Louisiana, and
3 WHEREAS, many people start out fishing as kids, in places that they can travel to and access on their
4 own, and
5 WHEREAS, many people in Louisiana do not own a boat and therefore must fish from the bank, and
6 WHEREAS, such fishing opportunities in urban areas are often lacking,
7 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists (LAPB)
8 urges the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to develop a formal Urban Fishing Program
9 to include identifying criteria for inclusion; listing and evaluation of sites such as city park lakes or
10 borrow pits in or near urban areas statewide; obtaining permission where necessary from willing
11 landowners and agencies such as DOTD, levee boards, etc.; developing and implementing
12 management plans to include liming, fertilizing, feeding and stocking easily managed species such as
13 channel catfish, hybrid bream, etc.; providing improvements such as lighting, fishing piers, trash
14 receptacles, etc.; and identifying partner agencies, organizations, or other potential funding sources.

Resolution was passed by the Rapides Wildlife Association at the July 15, 2008 meeting.

SUBJECT: PROTECTING WOODED CHENIERS, BARRIERS HEADLANDS AND RIDGES IN LOUISIANA'S COASTAL ZONE

1 WHEREAS, coastal Louisiana contains cheniers, barrier headlands and ridges that are or have been
2 covered in woody vegetation, and
3 WHEREAS, these wooded areas provide storm protection as evidenced by both Hurricanes Rita and
4 Katrina, and
5 WHEREAS, these cheniers, headlands and ridges provide nesting habitat for herons, egrets, spoonbills,
6 ibis and other wading bird species, and
7 WHEREAS, these habitats are also important as resting and refueling sites during trans-Gulf avian
8 migration, and
9 WHEREAS, during high water events these habitats provide refugia for wildlife and livestock, and
10 WHEREAS, these areas are subject to mining of sand and removal of woody vegetation that results
11 in the degradation of the quality of these areas to provide protection and habitat.
12 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists (LAPB)
13 calls upon the state
14 of Louisiana to encourage the protection and restoration, including plantings of herbaceous and/or
15 woody vegetation, as appropriate to the sites, of these areas and
16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LAPB calls upon the state of Louisiana to prohibit the mining
17 of sand from the cheniers.
18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LAPB and other interested groups and associations for support
19 by cosponsoring this resolution to be presented to the Louisiana Wildlife Federation at their annual
20 convention in 2009.

Resolution was passed by the Rapides Wildlife Association at the July 15, 2008 meeting.

Perspectives on Baiting Deer.

Paul Whitehead

At the 2008 Annual Convention of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF), the following resolution, championed by LWF District 6 At-Large Director Vance Gordon, was debated and tabled in committee. I am personally opposed to this resolution for practical reasons, but have no objection to it on principle. Vance wrote the resolution, and, of course, is for it. We have had some conversations discussing our opposing positions on this issue.



Recently, I received promotional materials from The Wildlife Society which mentioned that a Technical Review was available on baiting and feeding of wildlife. As most of you know, I am a fisheries biologist, and so have only a layman's understanding of the topic. However, the LAPB has many wildlife biologists who may have an in-depth, professional perspective, and may have even read the review. This is exactly the type of situation on which the LWF would like to receive input from our organization. Therefore, I would like to state my objections, along with Vance's reasons for support, and solicit input from the LAPB membership. My hope is that this will serve to stimulate interest and involvement, improve this resolution, and possibly create a forum for LAPB discussions on future LWF resolutions. Please contact myself or Vance with any comments or suggestions. - Paul

SUBJECT: USE OF BAIT TO ATTRACT DEER

WHEREAS, there are no restrictions against baiting or otherwise artificially feeding deer on private hunting lands in Louisiana, regardless of the purpose of such feeding, and

WHEREAS, the practice of hunting over bait and using feed to attract deer to a hunting area

presents a number of concerns with regard to sound deer management and hunting ethics; especially the concept and principles of fair chase and the public's perception of hunting, and

WHEREAS, baiting is not allowed for any other hunted species, and

WHEREAS, baiting and feeding of deer results in concentrating the animals as greater than

natural densities which increases direct and indirect contact among deer and other wildlife species, and

WHEREAS, increased direct and indirect contact among deer and other wildlife species

increases the likelihood of disease transmission and maintains endemic disease reservoirs, and

WHEREAS, baiting and feeding of deer can reduce home range size, increase fecundity and affect habitat carrying capacity, and
WHEREAS, baiting and feeding of deer can cause habitat damage in the vicinity of baiting and feeding sites which can result in significant impacts on populations of non-target wildlife species.
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) opposes the practice of hunting over or within 200 yards of bait during any open deer hunting season.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF supports regulations which would require the removal of any deer bait from within 200 yards of any hunting location at least 30 days prior to the opening of the deer hunting season.

Pro – Vance Gordon (flash270@bellsouth.net)



The following represents concerns and suggestions that I have about the current widespread practice of feeding and baiting of deer in Louisiana (not official LWF position). To begin with, let me, for the purpose of this discussion, define what I mean by feeding as opposed to baiting. Feeding is the supplementation of a wild deer's diet by the responsible application of beneficial nutritional supplements including minerals to promote deer

herd health, growth and antler development, to lure deer into range of trail or scouting cameras, and to prevent disease due to inadequacies in wild forage available in the deer herd habitat. In this context, I am not opposed to feeding with the exception of two concerns which I will discuss later.

Baiting is the use of nutritional supplements and minerals to lure deer into visual range for the purpose of killing them. I consider this to be unsportsmanlike and I submit that it is not hunting. In spite of the fact that the Boone and Crockett Club defers to state laws and regulations in its definition of fair chase, I feel strongly that this practice should in no way be considered to be fair chase. One can make all sorts of arguments by analogy as to why baiting is no different from all the other practices to increase the chances of seeing deer for the purpose of harvesting them. For instance: what about food plots? I submit that food plots represent a more or less permanent enhancement of deer habitat and almost without exception, present no problems to a deer's diet and health as does the widespread practice of feeding corn (which I will discuss later). What about the use of scents and lures, odor-free clothing, calling, and the myriad of other methods and devices designed to make deer hunting more successful?

Defeating or outsmarting the deer's primary defenses has been a part of hunting since time immemorial and without them, harvest goals for proper herd management would probably not be met. I submit that these practices are within the guidelines of fair chase. If baiting increases the total harvest, why shouldn't it be allowed? The answer to this question reveals what should be one of the most serious and significant concerns for the practice of baiting. Hunters nowadays should be very concerned about the public image of their sport. Our right to hunt is threatened on a daily basis by those opposed to hunting. Many attempts have been made (some successful) by anti-hunters to restrict or ban the practice of hunting. If one is not convinced of this, I suggest reading the newspapers, hunting periodicals, or contact the U. S. Sportsman's Alliance (ph. 614-888-4868, e-mail – info@ussportsmen.org), an excellent organization devoted to the defense of hunting. Ultimately, the acceptance of hunting rights will be significantly influenced by public opinion. I submit that the presentation of the practice of baiting, as defined here, will result in widespread opposition to the practice of baiting by the non-hunting public. If in doubt here, try telling your non-hunting friends and neighbors that you kill deer by luring them into sight using bait and see their reactions. Those who care nothing about public opinion are foolish and represent the biggest threat to hunting rights. Anyway, these arguments are almost based on practices that those making the argument do not want changed, and therefore are poor attempts to rationalize practices which present many problems to public perception and deer herd health.

Since I first began hunting (over 35 years ago), I have witnessed an explosion in the practice of baiting and feeding – mostly with corn. Take a look and the quantity of corn being sold and the number of locations that sell it for this purpose. Corn presents many problems when used as a nutritional supplement, modifies deer behavior toward the nocturnal mode and presents the potential for dietary diseases and parasitic and bacterial diseases. Many much more suitable supplements and minerals are available. The use of corn and other supplements as well can lead to baiting and or feeding “wars” between neighboring properties by luring deer from one property to another by the use of these practices. I have personally seen this first hand on the properties I hunt on in Louisiana and Mississippi (even though all feeding during deer season is outlawed). I say this at the risk of opening up my position to the argument of: Why restrict the practice since it can't be enforced? I submit that this rationale could be used to abolish all game management regulations and I am sure very few are in favor of that.

What do I want? I would very much like to see the practice of baiting as defined here stopped. Feeding as defined here should continue. The public should be educated on the problems of using corn and encouraged to move to more effective nutritional and mineral supplements. The regulations should prohibit hunting within a certain distance (I would recommend 200 yards) or within line of sight of any feeding location or station. This year Mississippi has, crafted and adopted (what I consider to be) an excellent regulation on the practices of feeding and baiting. A copy is attached. I would like to see something very similar to this rule implemented in Louisiana. I will continue to

work toward getting the LWF to make a resolution supporting these views at our annual convention and meeting this spring.

In closing, I would leave you with one question. Why are deer the only animal for which feeding and baiting are allowed during hunting seasons in Louisiana?

Thanks for your consideration and attention –

Vance Gordon, flash270@bellsouth.net. Phone - (225) 933-2102

Con – Paul Whitehead (pwhitehead@wlf.louisiana.gov)

I have no problem with a resolution put out as the LWF position on this. I agree that hunting over bait is not hunting; I consider it harvesting. I also don't see anything wrong with that and feel that non-hunters won't see anything wrong with it if overpopulated deer herds are destroying their landscaping and posing a danger to vehicular traffic.

I don't want a way for hunters who are trying to follow the laws to inadvertently get in trouble. It is too easy to hunt in an area that you didn't bait and have no knowledge of baiting taking place. Earlier this year, for example, there was extensive crop damage from hurricanes Gustav and Ike. If a damaged field was left alone, there was no problem. However, if the farmer bush-hogged, disked, etc. the area, then it was considered baited for waterfowl hunters.

Too, evidence can be easily planted; why enable such abuse with another law? Disputes with neighbors could easily lead to losing the ability to legally hunt your own property. I don't live where I hunt, so I'm unable to keep a close watch over it. My hunting property has been owned by my family for half a century, and I'm still considered an outsider by locals. Someone could scatter a sack of corn over my place without my knowledge in a few minutes, ruining my season and possibly leading to my arrest.

Another issue is recruitment of new hunters. If an opportunity can be created for them to harvest a deer by baiting, then I'm all for it. I feel that most mature hunters naturally get away from this practice in the same way that a hunter takes up archery hunting - for the challenge. Along these same lines, I feel that the complexity of game laws is a detriment to recruitment. We need fewer laws, not more.

As far as the aflatoxin issue goes, I'd like to see some evidence that this causes a problem. If there was definitive evidence of negative impacts to deer or turkey populations, there wouldn't be any controversy. The price of corn may naturally curtail baiting. Then again, it may not. Hunters like me spend thousands of dollars every year and the price of corn is a very small part of that. Given that expenditures on corn may be reduced, an outright ban on the practice will completely stop sales of corn, feeders, and associated equipment such as batteries and solar chargers. This would result in lost income for retailers and lost sales tax revenues.

Paul Whitehead, pwhitehead@wlf.louisiana.gov Phone - (318) 664-0955

Whitetailed Deer Management Workshop Upcoming

John Pitre, USDA and LAPB Treasurer

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Acadiana Resource and Development Council, and Southern University are hosting a White-tailed Deer Management Workshop for private landowners in Carencro, LA on December 11, 2008. An accompanying PDF is attached to this e-mail with detailed information on the meeting. Please contact John Pitre (LAPB Treasurer) at 318 473-7809 with any questions.



LDWF TRANSPLANTS ENDANGERED PLANT

Adam Einck, LDWF

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Natural Heritage Program (NHP) headed a project on Oct. 23 aimed at replacing federally endangered quillwort plants moved during bridge improvements from an area along Abita Creek. The Nature Conservancy (TNC), The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mercer Arboretum and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) partnered with LDWF to transplant over 150 quillworts.

In 2001, LDWF removed 70 quillworts from an Abita Creek bridge in anticipation of Louisiana DOTD bridge projects. LDWF then sent the quillworts to Mercer Arboretum in Houston until the bridge project was finished. "We moved the quillworts because bridge construction and possible



Photo provided by Patricia Faulkner

subsequent siltation threatened the plants in the immediate vicinity of the bridge," said Patricia Faulkner, LDWF NHP ecologist. "However, the bridge project was

delayed several years and in that time the original 70 plants grew to over 600 individual quillworts."

The quillworts were replanted along the portion of Abita Creek located north of Hwy. 435 on the TNC Abita Creek Preserve and on an adjacent piece of private property registered with the Louisiana Natural Areas Registry Program. The only other states where quillworts exist are Alabama and Mississippi. In Louisiana, they are only found in Washington and St. Tammany parishes in the eastern part of the state. They are usually found in wetlands in shaded areas and prefer small blackwater streams on sand, gravel or mud bars and stream banks. Quillworts are evident from winter through spring and are dormant during dry late summer and fall months, but can remain evident during these months if rainfall continues. "The department, along with TNC, will monitor the transplants, and if successful, we hope to have another planting with the remaining quillworts," said Faulkner. "We could not have done this without the generous cooperation from all of our partners. We look forward to another successful quillwort transplant in the future as we try to save this native Louisiana plant."

For more information, contact Patricia Faulkner at 225-765-2975 or pfaulkner@wlf.louisiana.gov.

2008 Hurricane Impacts to LDWF's Resources

Mike Carlross and Cassidy Lejeune, LAPB Board

In less than 15 days, Louisiana's entire coast and some inland areas were substantially impacted due to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. The storms damaged vulnerable coastal wetlands that serve as important habitat for the State's wildlife and fisheries resources. Gustav and Ike were unwelcomed guests to LDWF coastal properties following only three years of recovery after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.



On Monday September 1, 2008 Hurricane Gustav made landfall along the Louisiana coast near Cocodrie as a strong Category 2 hurricane. At 9:00 a.m. wind speed at Grand Isle was 115 mph, the highest eyewall speed, and it

maintained Category 2 status for more than four hours before dropping to a Category 1, indicating the eyewall had traveled over four hours along the coast. Gustav became a tropical depression the following day and continued moving northwest through Louisiana, before slowing down significantly as it moved through Arkansas on September 3. The majority of LDWF's coastal WMAs and refuges, as well as more northern WMAs experienced impacts from Gustav in the form of flooding and/or high winds, although most were minor. The majority of damage was found on the barrier islands with erosion and scouring, especially



Pointe aux Chenes WMA two days after Ike's landfall

on Wine Island (Isles Dernieres Barrier Islands Refuge) which was very near landfall. of Gustav. Wildlife losses were minimal, however significant fish kills occurred throughout many areas of the state. As anticipated, areas in the southeast, closer to hurricane landfall, experienced more damage than those areas to the west of landfall impact.

On Saturday September 13, 2008 Hurricane Ike made landfall along the Texas coast near Galveston as a Category 2 hurricane with winds of 110mph. Although only a Category 2 hurricane, Ike exhibited an unusually large wind field which caused a projected storm surge of a Category 4 height. The 2:00 a.m. NHC advisory cited tropical storm winds extending 275 miles and hurricane force winds 120 miles from the center. The storm surge ahead of Ike blew onshore onto the entire coast of Louisiana causing flooding well ahead of Ike's Texas landfall. All of LDWF's coastal WMAs and refuges experienced some impacts from Ike, primarily from flooding, tidal scouring and high salinity inundation for extended periods of time. Rockefeller Refuge was the hardest hit of LDWF's facilities, but other areas such as Marsh Island Refuge and Pointe aux Chenes WMA were damaged as well. Significant damage to habitat occurred especially along the barrier islands and the throughout coastal marshes primarily with coastal erosion and damage to submerged and emergent aquatic vegetation. Wildlife losses were probably minimal, however significant fish kills occurred throughout much of the coast. As anticipated, areas in the southwest, closer to hurricane landfall experienced more damage than those areas in the eastern portion of the state. However, flooding and salinity burn to vegetation was widespread throughout the south central and southeastern coastal marshes.

Detailed hurricane reports from LDWF can be found at the web address below.
<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/hurricane/>

Final Report for Hurricane Ike – 2008; Impacts to Aquatic resources in SW Louisiana.

Bobby Reed, Eric Shanks, and Joe West; LDWF

Hurricane Ike came ashore in the dawn hours of September 13, 2008 with the primary eyewall landing in Galveston, TX. Because of the immense size of the storm winds in the neighborhood of 70 miles per hour and extremely high tidal surge, impacted the southwest Louisiana area aquatic communities. District 5 staff first cleaned and repaired the LDWF office so a work base could be established. The building had power only two days after the storm, and water quality and fish kill monitoring started on Tuesday September 16th, 2008 only three days after the storm. Sampling sites were already established per Hurricane Rita sampling in 2005 (see maps below) and three teams of Inland Fish Division personnel dispersed to begin the work ahead of them. Water quality samples were taken on Sept. 16, 17, 23, 24, and 29th or until acceptable oxygen levels returned and there was no longer a likely hood of fish kills. While oxygen values dropped as the aquatic systems were reducing due to the increased organic loads, fish kills were noted in only two areas. These were the Sabine River marshes below interstate 10 near the Old US Hwy 90 bridge crossing and the lower Westfork of the Calcasieu River. Most stations had the presence of piping fish on September 16th, but none were seen piping during subsequent samples. Both the Calcasieu and the Mermentau rivers were experiencing heavy runoff due to the passage of Hurricane Gustave only two weeks prior to the arrival of Ike.

The kill noted at the Sabine marshes was considered extremely light/minor and localized, while the kill noted on the lower WestFork of the Calcasieu was considered light to low in numbers over about a five mile stretch from the Hwy 378 bridge crossing to the confluence of the mainstem Calcasieu near the Saltwater barrier and Miller Ave boat ramp. In both instances dissolved oxygen values were below 0.70 ppm at the time of investigation. About half the species and numbers noted were estuarine and marine in origin, including blue crabs and penaeid shrimps. By September 23-24th, oxygen values at most stations had improved to levels above which fish kills usually occur in area waters. While not yet back up to EPA and state DEQ standards (excel spreadsheet) they had certainly improved since the 16th of September. Since rainfall runoff is all but complete and cooler temperatures arriving daily, it is not likely that fish kills associated with the passage of Ike will occur anymore this fall.

Final Report on Hurricane Gustav Fish Kill in the Mermentau River Drainage, Sept. 1, 2008.

Bobby Reed, Eric Shanks, & Joe West; LDWF

On Tuesday September 9th, the district 5 crew (Reed, Shanks, & West) investigated a report of a fish kill on the lower Mermentau River from Lake Arthur down to Grand Lake.



Dissolved Oxygen value's ranged from 0.11 mg/l at the Hwy 14 Bridge to 1.45 mg/l at Grand Lake in Cameron Parish (see attached map). We considered the kill to be **light** with only about 5 or 6 fish per 10 meters of shoreline. Based on state of decomposition I would estimate the fish kill occurred on September 7/8 with most of the deaths occurring upstream probably in the Plaquemine Brule/Des Cannes

bayous which received the most runoff from Gustav. Species included mullet, common carp, white crappie, bluegill, gizzard shad, threadfin shad, LMB, FW drum, warmouth, grass carp, SM buffalo, and blue catfish. We saw gizzard shad piping in two locations, but no other species. A follow-up on water quality in this system took place after the passage of Hurricane Ike the following week. Water quality values can be viewed in the "Ike Report". Instead of the typical "muddy water" with a heavy suspended load, the system was already in a "reducing state" based on pH drop and the presence of the clear, but tannin stained water. By September 29th, 2008 most oxygen values had improved to above the 0.50 ppm with fish no longer piping or swimming erratically. Previous experience in this system (Hurricanes, Lily and Rita) has taught us that kills are most likely to occur when dissolved oxygen values drop below 0.25 ppm for an extended period of time. Even then we have observed fish dead, dying, piping, and yet others feeding on the unfortunate.

Post-Hurricane Rita Evaluation of Migratory and Resident Bird Populations in the Mouton Cove Area: 2004 vs. 2007.

Jay V. Huner and Michael J. Musumeche

From September 2002 through April 2005, we surveyed the birds in the working wetlands, pastures, and riparian forests in the Mouton Cove area of Vermilion Parish, Louisiana several times a month. The study area was more or less circular and had a diameter of about five miles. A typical survey covered 30 miles and involved five to seven hours of effort, generally beginning around dawn. We generated a seasonal bird checklist including 248 bird species, approximately half of Louisiana's bird fauna. Of these, 72 species either nested or were probable nesters at or near the study area. The study area includes two numbered sites on the coastal birding trail developed by the State of Louisiana - "America's Wetland Birding Trail".

In early October 2005, Hurricane Rita generated a storm surge that inundated the study area south and in some places north of Louisiana Highway 82 with full strength sea water. Significant damage was done to natural vegetation and crops.

Our limited visits to the area following Hurricane Rita showed that the bird fauna was dramatically reduced in terms of numbers of species and numbers of individuals per species compared to our baseline data. So, in 2006, we submitted a proposal to the Coypu Foundation for a one year follow up survey of the study area. The Coypu Foundation Board of Directors agreed to fund the study, administered through the Louisiana Wildlife Federation.

Habitat Changes

There was a lack of surface freshwater to fill fields for crawfish production and flush salt from areas impacted by the surge that reached LA 82. The area experienced a severe drought in the fall and winter of 2005-06 and salt water lingered for a long time in the normally freshwater canals used for irrigation. While most rice crops had been harvested prior to Hurricane Rita, at least 20% of the parish's fields were not used for crawfish production.

Many of the Impoundments – rice, rice/crawfish, or rice - that were dry during the fall-winter-spring of 2005-06 or that had been flooded by Hurricane Rita's salt water surge were flooded in the fall of 2006. However, there was a dramatic decrease in rice acreage from the 2005 season to the 2006 season; 76,000 versus 33,500 acres. Farmers flooded the fields to leach accumulated salt from the substrate and/or to produce crops of crawfish. Crawfish production was generally poor for the 2006-07 season, even though there was a 20-30% increase in acreage; 10,000 acres versus 13,000 acres.

By 2007, there was an increase in rice acreage to about 48,500 acres but still basically half the pre-Hurricane Rita acreage. Crawfish acreage increased to 14,000 acres. This, in effect, created a significant amount of prairie-type habitat with a major reduction in wetland-type habitat. With regard to "forest-type"

habitat, it was apparent to us that shrub and forest habitat was recovering from storm damage.

Survey Results

Beginning in early January 2007 and continuing to the end of December 2007, we conducted monthly field surveys (72 total) of the area surveyed before Hurricane Rita. We found good numbers and diversity with 231 species in 2007 as compared to 225 species in 2004. We found 8 bird species new to our cumulative list for the area bringing the total to 258 species. This compares very favorably to the entire state's bird list of over 450 bird species.

We recorded 335,321 birds in 2004 and 535,945 birds in 2007 with averages per survey being 6,210 in 2004 and 7,444 in 2007, an increase of 1.60. Our survey effort was increased by a factor of 1.33 in 2007, 72 surveys versus 54 surveys. Our 2007 seasonal checklist represents an accumulated body of data from all surveys prior to Hurricane Rita and following the storm. We were able to make this compilation because, for the most part, the relative abundance of species was similar in 2007 despite changes, discussed below, with some species and species groups. There were 28 birds found prior to the storm that were not found during 2007 but 8 that were new in 2007. These represent birds that were out of their normal ranges or out of their normal habitats, something to be expected in any survey area. However, the corps of birds remained the same.

As of 2004, we had classified 22 species as Abundant, 55 species as Common, and 64 species as Uncommon in at least one of the recognized bird seasons of Spring (March-May), Summer (June-July), Fall (August-October), and Winter (November-February). Abundant birds are widespread and easily found in proper habitat in "large" numbers. Common birds are widespread and easily found in proper habitat but generally not in "large" numbers. Uncommon birds are widespread and present, but in "low" numbers in proper habitat.

In general, Abundant bird species accounted for most of the birds recorded in 2004 (86.3 %) and 2007 (74.2 %). However, Abundant birds that accounted for 86.3 % of all birds recorded in 2004 only accounted for 74.2% of the birds recorded in 2007. This meant that the numbers of birds considered to be Common or Uncommon increased to account for the 12 % difference.

Bird Conservation Concerns

Various agencies monitor the conservation status of bird populations to determine if action is needed to address negative changes. We found 51 of the 231 birds recorded in 2007 to be rated by some agency as being of moderate to high conservation concern and an additional 4 from the overall list. Of those 55 species, 40 were waterbirds, 28 were found to be Abundant, Common, or Uncommon in the appropriate season. Four "passerine" species were also included in these categories including Loggerhead Shrike and Eastern Meadowlark; common birds that, according to the National Audubon Society are showing alarming declines in numbers. The conservation status of shorebirds has been an especially worrisome problem for conservation agencies. We recorded 29 species in 2007 and 31 for all surveys. Twenty-one of these species

are listed as being of moderate to high concern. This stresses the importance of the study area itself and the greater landscape of working wetlands and riparian forests in the region.

Conclusions

Hurricane Rita impacted the bird fauna of the Mouton Cove area of Vermilion Parish, Louisiana. But, these impacts were positive, neutral, and negative based on changes in habitat. The fauna is rich and diverse and responded to habitat changes as the agricultural community recovers from damage done by Hurricane Rita to fields and pastures. Crawfish acreage is important to predaceous waterbirds because it provides a rich food resource of small vertebrates and macro- and micro- invertebrates. This component of the agricultural landscape recovered. The ricefield component of the agricultural landscape is showing a movement toward pre-Rita production levels but rice has shown an overall reduction in acreage region wide over the past decade because of unfavorable economic considerations. We feel that it is important to encourage rice production in our study area and that an increase would be beneficial to all waterbird species.

Note that the study area was also impacted by a storm surge from Hurricane Ike in September 2008 but wind damage was limited compared to Hurricane Rita. The bird fauna of the area will be impacted as was the case with Hurricane Rita but probably not to the same extent and can be expected to recover quickly.

Our data are especially useful for managers who are identifying Important Bird Areas in North America. The seasonal checklists that we prepared from our surveys are, of course, very useful to recreational birders and provide professional ornithologists to guides of abundance. Now, the birding community has a multi-year checklist that stands the "test of time," as a consequence of the generosity of the Coypu Foundation.

A complete copy of the report submitted to the Coypu Foundation at the completion of this study is available via e-mail from Jay V. Huner – piku@classicnet.net.

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