

MEETING MINUTES

February 03, 2017

Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society (SDAFS) in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Welcome:

Kirk Hansen introduced himself and welcomed the MICRA members and guests to the committee meeting in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The meeting was called to order at **8:03 am** and a roll call of the MICRA committee members was conducted by Kirk Hansen (Chair).

State representatives and visitors present were:

Kirk Hansen (Chair), Eric Ganus (Chair Elect; TN), Jeff Quinn (AR), Joe McMullen (MO), Steve Rider (AL), Sara Tripp (MO), Quinton Phelps (MO), Dennis Scarnecchia, (University of Idaho), Trish Yasge (MO), Gerald Mestl (NE) and Jason Schooley (OK)

***Please update the list of attendees because you or Jason had the sign-in list.**

State representatives and visitors via phone were:

Craig Jansen (IN) and Marie Maltese (USFWS)

Old Business

Approval of the Minutes from 2016

The 2016 meeting minutes will be emailed for review and approval.

New Business – 9:00

Neal Jackson reintroduced himself as the UMRCC Coordinator out of the Large Rivers Coordination Office in Marion, Illinois (618)-579-3129 (cell)

CITES update for 2015 (Marie Maltese)

One shipment of 1,000.96 lbs (captive)

Twenty one shipments for 12,156.29 lbs (wild caught)

Four shipments of flesh for 1,557 lbs

Shovelnose sturgeon shipments totaled 1,651.26 lbs (wild)

Sturgeon AquaFarms, Bascom, Florida has been granted an exemption under the 4(d) rule for Beluga Sturgeon

Note: Jeff Quinn asked how does aquaculture facilities obtain CITES approval.

MICRA Tagging Database

There was a comment on participation in the tagging database being very low from all MICRA states. Also, if there is data from tagging efforts please send those to Jason Schooley. What will the group need to do to improve future tagging and how/who will that data be sent to.

Action item: send MICRA states a reminder email about data they need to send to Jason and/or a new person to oversee the database.

- Jeff Quinn – spoke about having tag loss in pool 13 and for a need to switch tags because his fish had broken jaws from Monel tags; asked Steve Rider what he was using for tagging his paddlefish in Alabama.

Dennis Scarnecchia SK grant update – the proposal was sent and we should hear back from NOAA in late spring.

Question? Why was the lawsuit brought against TWRA?

The Tennessee Commercial Roe Fishermen's Association and Tennessee Commercial Fishermen's Association sued the Commission and the Agency in 2008 challenging the constitutionality of our proclamations and also challenged procedural and substantive issues including size, gear, locations, seasons, etc.

Paddlefish Management Basin Plan Update

Jeff Quinn asked when TN would be updated their section in the LMR basin plan?

Answer: We hadn't analyzed the data from the Mississippi River paddlefish sampling yet and that it might be December before that was possible.

Eric Ganus – is working on the framework for the TN/Cumberland River plan

Craig – spoke about looking at the last Ohio River plan and coming up with an outline

2016 Jawbones Samples (not finished) and future aging – Dennis Scarnecchia

- Jeff Quinn proposed paying MICRA for future age and growth and then MICRA pays for the age and growth analysis. Steve Rider also needs a mechanism to pay Dennis Scarnecchia (University of Idaho) for future age and growth.
- Neil Jackson will ask Greg Conover about a funding pass through option.
- TN (Eric Ganus) and MO (Joe McMullen) can pay University of Idaho for age and growth directly without a pass through. Currently, TN is just collecting jawbones from the Mississippi River.
- Craig (IN) is sending jawbones (175 Ohio River) to Dennis
- Follow-up discussion about where we are after 3 years of sampling
- The group discussed having Mike Wilberg conduct a webinar for 10 – 12 people for January. The topic would be the model that he has created for the analysis of the paddlefish data (using F30) that everyone was collecting.
- Talked about SWG funding (classification of paddlefish as species of concern or GCN) but do to a low ranking it's not fundable

- Can we just apply for invasive species funding from the region 4 office for funding age and growth of paddlefish
- In general the group talked about a Mississippi River Basin Commission and its importance to MICRA and overall to the total fishery

Shovelnose sturgeon Age And Growth

- Group discussion about the use of fin rays (MO is still using them); slower growth rates after 24 in
- Iowa is not see good growth on Upper MS
- NE show negative growth on Missouri River from shovelnose sturgeon
- MO not seeing a difference in growth rates after SOA for shovelnose sturgeon in MO or Miss River
- ARK sees less inverts from nets on White River; MO talking with commercial fishermen that are not seeing as many caddies flies on hoop nets (**dependent observation only**)
- 2011 and 2012 big year classes
- Shovelnose sturgeon from white river Arkansas has a high occurrence of private alleles and are different from LMR

MICRA tracking harvest of paddlefish

- States sending report to MICRA (AFWA request)(Jason Schooley will take care of report); discussion on states reporting harvest differently
- Marie Maltese will send letter to states for Harvest Reporting
- TN will be sending harvest report to MICRA and Deb Hahn
- Sara Tripp - spoke with Rob about IL reporting it harvest
- Group Discussion about under reporting in the commercial fishery – how do we make things better
- Try to compile last five years of paddlefish harvest (TN will update at LMRCC meeting)
- Discussion on access to databases of paddlefish harvest from MICRA States

State Updates

Kirk IA

- Tagging sturgeon on the Des Moines River (near Mississippi River) and starting to see recaptures

Craig IN

- Monitoring on Wabash River for shovelnose sturgeon is showing smaller females. Reducing the harvest season from November 1 to April 30 would reduce harvest by 25%

Dennis MS

- Update of harvest regulations are as follows: 37 inch length limit for inland water excluding the Mississippi River (bases off of bettoli et al), 35 in length limit on MS, Yazpp open during harvest season, legal gear for paddlefish is 6 inch multifilament or multitwist
- 5 harvesters 2017 and 1 processor

Jason OK

- Update of a big spawn in 2015 paddlefish (Grand Lake)
- Caviar 8600 lbs processed in 2016 (slight decline)
- Regulation change no snagging at night by LE on Grand Lake

Joe MO

- 340,000 fingerlings stocked in reservoirs TRISH
- Sarah on year 3 of a jaw banding paddlefish project (300 jawbanded paddlefish) - 30 fish harvested – 1 caught in Old Hickory
- Travis Moore beginning a lake sturgeon project

South Dakota

- Collection of paddlefish brook stock from Missouri river for stocking in lake sharp (approx. 100,000)
- Stocked paddlefish in Lake Francis case (approx. 10,000)(3rd year)

Gerald NE

- Lot of monitoring of sturgeon habitat declines (channel degradation)
- Some recruitment of sturgeon pallid and/or shovelnose

Wyatt LA

- Ongoing Gulf sturgeon pearl river tagging, 3yr juvenile recruitment survey of gulf sturgeon
- Working on 2 dam removals on pearl river

- No commercial harvest of Paddlefish (no regulations)
- Bowfin is the only commercially harvested species for caviar

Montana

- No commercial harvest only recreational harvest
- Slower growth rates in the paddlefish fishery (older aged fishery)
- Staggered harvest days through the week to extend season (2016 had 15 harvest days with 1,000 fish harvested)
- The Chamber of Commercial process 2,000 lbs of finish caviar
- Sampling of Pallid sturgeon yellow stone river
- Fort Peck Reservoir has a 500 fish harvest cap – they are shifting to a lottery draw

Jeff AR

- Lake sturgeon closed for harvest in 2017
- Pool 13 sampling showed good growth of paddlefish

Steve AL

- 5,565 lbs of caviar harvested during the 2016 commercial season (34 in MLL)
- 35 day season already at 55 degrees
- Possible commercial opening of the Tombigbee river to paddlefish harvest - surveying started in 2016
- 3 CITES permit this year and they are being held up
- Marie asked for email from Steve to see what's going on
- Another bill introduced to open up entire state to paddlefish harvest

Eric TN

- Meeting ran long and was unable to give update.