

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Tuesday, November 12, 2019
1:00 p.m. Educational/2:00 p.m. Business Session
1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211

EDUCATIONAL SESSION – 1:00 PM

PRESENT: Commission Chairman Scott Coopwood, Commissioners Robert Taylor, Billy Mounger, Clay Wagner, and Bill F. Cossar were present.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Michael Bolden, Jennifer Head, Curtis Thornhill, Col. Steve Adcock, Larry Pugh, Russ Walsh, Andre Hollis, Jason Thompson, and counsel, Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

2019 MDWFP Fishing License Survey

Larry Pugh, Chief of Staff, Fisheries Bureau, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the 2019 MDWFP Fishing License Survey. A total of 16,809 anglers were interviewed as they fished on 148 bodies of water between March 15 – September 17, 2019. Some of the highlights of survey were:

- First ever multiple-Bureau survey of MS fishing license holders.
- Resident anglers were asked what County they were from; Non-Resident Anglers what state they resided in.
- Some of the survey results:
 - 61% resident; 10% non-resident; 26% exempt from buying a license (which included--10% age-exempt (>65); 8% youth (<15); 8% exempt disabled); 1% Lifetime license; 2% no license
 - The majority of interviews were obtained from reservoirs (47%), with Arkabutla, Grenada, Sardis and Ross Barnett Reservoirs leading the way.
 - Non-resident anglers resided from 29 different states; top-5 non-resident states were border states with MS, plus Missouri
- Using license data provided by the Licensing/Boating Division, our survey data were similar to the number of anglers that purchased a license during the same time period (7%).
- Survey data provided lake-specific information not previously collected
- Plans are to resume the survey again in March 2020



Black Bear Program

Russ Walsh, Chief of Staff, Wildlife Bureau, presented a Black Bear PowerPoint presentation on behalf of Richard Rummel and Jamie Holt, black bear biologists, who were unable to attend.

The current radio collars for tracking bear movements are systematically being replaced with satellite technology collars which will last for 2-3 years. Biologists have been able to watch the movements of four bears and hope to have six more bears with collars soon. Slides were shown on how the bears are captured and collars placed on them. Data is received once a week from the satellite revealing the habitat movement of the bears. Each collar costs around \$2,000. Walsh estimated that there are 300 or more black bears in the state.

There being no further Educational Session items, the Commission recessed until 2:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SESSION – 2 PM

PRESENT: Commission Chairman Scott Coopwood, Commissioners Robert Taylor, Billy Mounger, Clay Wagner, and Bill F. Cossar were present.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Michael Bolden, Jennifer Head, Curtis Thornhill, Col. Steve Adcock, Larry Pugh, Russ Walsh, Andre Hollis, Jason Thompson, and counsel, Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

OPENING PRAYER

Deputy Executive Director Robert Cook opened the meeting with prayer.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the minutes of the October 16, 2019 Commission meeting were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Cossar, the agenda was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Warren Strain, Communication Director, announced that no one had come forward this month to present public comments.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, License/Boat Registration Division Director, presented the License Sales Report for the month of October, 2019. The total revenue for the end of October is down 9% from last year.

Highlights of his report are listed below:

- Resident license sales – down 10%
- Non-resident licenses – down 12%
- Other Licenses category – down 9.75%
- Lifetime Licenses – down 6.54%



WMA User Totals

- iOS WMA Users Total: 7,095
- Android WMA Users Total: 2,545
- Total WMA App Downloads: 9,640

October 2019 WMA Users

- iOS WMA Users: 4,365
- Android WMA Users: 1,672

Auto Renewals

- Since February 2019 a total of 30,348 customers have signed up for Auto Renewal
- 5,462 customers have signed up for Auto Renewal in the month of October

License Packages

- As of November 6, 2019, there has been a total of 3,015 license packages sold.

Discussion followed and a suggestion was made by Commissioner Mounger to add a link on the MDWFP website for the WMA app.

WILDLIFE

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update

Walsh presented a brochure, "CWD 2019/2020 Regulations and Best Management Practices". This brochure will help keep the public informed of the current status of CWD and how hunters can help monitor for CWD by actively reporting potential diseased or sick deer and by submitting deer for testing during the 2019-2020 hunting season.

During the 2019-2020 hunting season, the sample collection goal is 10,000 statewide.

- 36 freezer locations are available for hunters to submit heads
- MDWFP staff will continue to collect samples from road-killed deer and DMAP clubs.
- Hunters are required to submit antlerless deer on Mahannah and Phil Bryant WMAs.
- Since July 1, 2019, MDWFP has processed 366 samples.

CWD-Positive Detections – Since October 1, 2019, two additional CWD-positive deer were detected in Benton County, Mississippi.

Mississippi currently has tested 21 CWD-positive deer in the following counties:

Pontotoc	1	Issaquena	2
Panola	1	Marshall	7
Tallahatchie	1	Benton	9

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Discussion followed on whether to make the zones smaller or not. Commissioner Taylor reminded everyone that Pennsylvania maintains large zones for five years due to an explosion of CWD in their area after 3-4 years. CWD-infected deer, in average, do not display clinical symptoms of disease for 18 to 24 months.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement Update

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, presented a handout to the Commission which highlighted license violations for the month of October and officer work details, such as Hunter Education Classes, Eagle Lake detail, supplemental feeding violations, and MSSP outreach to the schools.

Mississippi Scholastic Shooting Program (MSSP) Update

Michelle Carter, Director of Outreach Programs, presented a handout to the Commission listing the potential schools in the North and Central Regions which have been recruited for the Mississippi Scholastic Shooting Program. The Fall qualifier at Turcotte Shooting Facility will host 476 students this coming weekend, November 14-16th. McIvor Shooting Facility will host a Fall Qualifier December 5-7th.

OTHER BUSINESS

Executive Order – Eagle Lake

Last month the Commission was undecided whether opening Eagle Lake was in the best interest of the public and a decision was postponed until MDWFP had made a final inspection on debris and water safety. The Commission unanimously voted to authorize the Executive Director to reopen recreational boating on Eagle Lake at such time as he deemed it appropriate.

A risk management crew was sent to Eagle Lake by MDWFP and found that the debris removal was sufficiently complete to make the waters satisfactory for recreational boating. Therefore, the Executive Director, on behalf of the Commission, re-opened the recreational boating and fishing activity November 1, 2019, on Eagle Lake.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted unanimously to ratify the action of the Executive Director to re-open recreational boating on Eagle Lake. A copy of the Executive Order has been appended to the minutes.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Date: Wednesday, December 11, 2019
Location: 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS
Time: 1:30 p.m. Educational Session; 2:30 p.m. Business Session

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Executive Director stated that there was no need for Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Chairman Coopwood gaveled the meeting into adjournment.



Scott Coopwood, CHAIRMAN

Dec. 11, 2019

Date



Robert Taylor, VICE CHAIRMAN

12/11/2019

Date

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

In Re: Re-opening of Recreational Boating activity due to end of high water emergency.

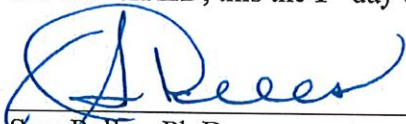
EXECUTIVE ORDER

PURSUANT to the authority set forth in MISSISSIPPI CODE ANNOTATED §59-21-111, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, with the approval of the Commission, has determined that the waters of the Mississippi River have receded to a level, that an exigent high water event no longer exists, and that debris removal at Eagle Lake is sufficiently complete to make the waters satisfactory for recreational boating. At current levels, recreational boating and fishing activity on Eagle Lake may be resumed by the general public. The previous Executive Order of February 2019, closing recreational boating activity upon the following waters, as it applies to Eagle Lake, is hereby withdrawn and rescinded.

The Mississippi River and its tributaries and each oxbow lake or other lake or waterway, the level of which is influenced and/or affected by the level of the Mississippi River or by backwater flooding due to the high waters of the Mississippi River; including, but not limited to, Eagle Lake.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, that the lakes and waterways referenced above are open to recreational boating activity, recreational and commercial fishing, to include Eagle Lake, effective immediately.

SO ORDERED, this the 1st day of November, 2019.



Sam Polles, Ph.D.
Executive Director