

**Regional Panel Activities and Recommendations for the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force Meeting, Bozeman, Montana, May 19-21, 2009**

**Gulf and South Atlantic Regional Panel**

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**High-Priority and/or Emerging Regional Issues:**

- Zebra Mussel found in Texas Reservoir
  - On April 3, the local Texas Parks and Wildlife Department District Supervisor, Bruce Hysmith received a call from Brent Taylor, security for Ross Perot Lake Texoma property, informing him that he had recovered a live zebra mussel from a communications line beneath their boathouse. The boathouse was located on the south shore between Denison Dam and Eisenhower State Park. Mr. Hysmith instructed him to place the mussel in a container and freeze it. On Tuesday, April 7 Mr. Hysmith's assistant Mr. John Moczygemba retrieved the mussel and also inspected the communications cable and other visible boathouse structure for additional specimens, finding none. Mr. Hysmith informed local marinas to be on the lookout for these mussels. He also informed the USACOE local office, US Fish and Wildlife Service at Tishomingo, OK, and local game wardens.
- Lion Fish are Continuing to Spread
  - The number of lion fish sightings along the east coast has skyrocketed over the last decade. Along with expanding its range, recent research is showing that lion fish are reaching densities four times higher than in their native range and are preying heavily on native reef fish. With no predators to slow them down it seems that it is only a matter of time before lion fish invade the rest of the GSARP states.
- Giant Salvinia in Texas and Louisiana
  - ~600 acres on Lake Conroe
  - 600 - 700 acres on Lake Caddo
  - ~4,200 acres on Toledo Bend Reservoir
  - Using a combination of chemical and biological controls
  - Texas will be testing a new herbicide (Galeon)
  - During the early stages of the McDonald's Big Bass Splash Tournament, scheduled on Sam Rayburn Reservoir, April 17-19, there were numerous reports of giant salvinia on boat trailers coming in for the tournament. Surveys conducted at the reservoir on April 16 indicated giant salvinia was widespread and present at all boat ramps. Previous to this event giant salvinia was confined to a single creek arm and boomed off to prevent its spread. Evidence of plants on boat trailers in parking lots suggested the plant's origin. Law enforcement personnel were alerted to the situation

since it is illegal to transport prohibited aquatic plant species on boat trailers in Texas.

- North America Brown Tree Snake Control Team (NABTSCT)
  - New military base on Guam poses new threat of BTS introduction to the continental US
- Alternative Funding Sources
  - The GSARP is exploring other funding possibilities to secure funds for ANS demonstration projects in our region.

## **Key ANS activities from October 2008 to May 2009:**

### **Panel**

- The Rat Lung Worm Study Was Completed
  - Abstract: The nonindigenous apple snail *Pomacea insularum* is rapidly spreading through the Southeastern United States. This mollusk can be a host to the rat lungworm parasite (*Angiostrongylus cantonensis*), which can cause the potentially serious disease eosinophilic meningitis in humans that consume infected mollusks. A DNA-based detection assay was used to test nonindigenous apple snails for the rat lungworm parasite in Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi and Florida. Only apple snails obtained from a canal in New Orleans, LA, tested positive for the parasite. The results provide the first evidence that *Angiostrongylus cantonensis* is present in nonindigenous apple snails in the Southeast United States. However, the study also suggests that the rat lungworm parasite is not widespread within the apple snail populations of the region.
- Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers Brochures
  - The GSARP funded a project that was headed up by Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks to develop “Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers” brochures. These brochures highlight some of the most problematic aquatic invasive species in the GSARP states and outline ways in which environmental user groups (boaters, anglers, hunters, etc) can help stop the spread of them. This project resulted in approximately 10,500 brochures being printed for each of our eight member states with their specific states agency’s logo and contact information on the back.
- Safety and Emergency Protocols for Research Institutions
  - At the GSARP’s fall 2008 meeting an ad hoc workgroup was established to develop a document outlining emergency protocols for research institutions that are working with alien or invasive aquatic species. Currently the workgroup is in the process of reviewing their draft document “Safety and Emergency Protocols for Research Institutions in the Gulf and South Atlantic States to Prevent the Release of Alien and Invasive Aquatic Species”.
- Rapid Response Plan
  - The GSARP formed an ad hoc workgroup to rework our current rough draft Rapid Response Plan into a universal final plan, which can be used

as a guide in any of our member states to address a variety of emerging AIS issues.

- Information Management Work Group
  - The Information Management Work Group and the Program Coordinator are continuing to develop a new/updated GSARP website.
- GSARP Fall 2009 Meeting
  - At our spring 2009 meeting the Panel decided to hold our fall 2009 meeting in North Carolina sometime during the first two weeks of November.

### **State/Interstate**

- State Aquatic Nuisance Species Plans:
  - Florida and Louisiana have completed plans and are actively implementing them.
  - Alabama and Georgia have finished plans that are up for approval by the Task Force at this meeting.
  - South Carolina has sent the final draft of their plan out for approval.
  - Mississippi and Texas will soon submit final drafts of their plans to the ANSTF.
  - North Carolina has started discussions about getting a plan together.
- The Rat Lung Worm Study
  - Has proven to be a very successful cooperative effort between State Agencies, Federal Agencies, Universities and Stakeholders. State Agencies included the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and the respective DNR (Department of Natural Resources) agencies for Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. Federal agencies included the USFWS and the CDC. Further assistance was provided by the University of Florida, the University of New Orleans, and the Miami Metro Zoo.
- Texas and Louisiana are Cooperatively Working to Fight the Salvinia Infestations in Their States.

### **Panel Recommendations to the ANS Task Force:**

- The GSARP has no recommendations for the Task Force at this time.