

Minutes From Black Bass Advisory Subcommittee (BBAS) Meeting January 11, 2017
Prepared by Roger Trageser, Secretary and Vice-Chair

Meeting Location: Tawes Office Building, 580 Taylor Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21401
Called to order at 6:03 PM

Minority Reports

Dennis Fleming opened discussion with regards to future minority reports.

Member Steve Weimer offered recommendations on how future reports could be compiled, reviewed and if necessary presented to the Sport Fish Advisory Committee (SFAC).

Mike Luisi with the DNR provided some insight as to how other work groups present opposing opinions to both the SFAC and the Tidal Fish Advisory Commission noting that there may be some significant difference in a work group outline versus a subcommittee.

Steve Weimar will work on a revised proposal that will be provided to committee members via email sent from Roger Trageser with any comments from members to follow.

The subcommittee appointed Roger Trageser as the new Vice Chairman to replace resigning member Kenny Penrod.

Current Status of Fisheries

Joe Love provided a report on survey results from Potomac River and upper Chesapeake Bay bass fisheries. In short catch in the upper Chesapeake Bay is below target for third straight year and remains below target for Potomac River. Reproduction in both systems appears to be improving.

Commercial Haul Seines

Captain William Rice provided the subcommittee with detailed information on haul seining methods. Haul seiners are typically targeting catfish and carp and any by-catch must be released immediately.

Captain George Martin, in addition BBAS members Keith Barker and Steve Chaconas, noted that haul seining activity has been observed in water as shallow as 5' or less. This method of harvesting in the spring in such shallow areas can remove emerging grass and disturb if not destroy bass beds and fry.

Captain Rice believes that shallow water haul seining is not a standard method. His personal use is typically not in water less than 10 feet. He noted that haul seining cannot be done in water deeper than 15 feet and that 6 - 8 feet is ideal. Rice also noted that pulling the seine into shore requires seining over shallower water (3-5 ') because it cannot be pulled up effectively in deep water.

Currently the Department has very little regulatory control on this activity leaving most, if any, oversight to the local county jurisdictions. Several laws regulate haul seine activity and these were passed by the State of Maryland's General Assembly. Currently the public may work with a delegate to propose a bill for the General Assembly to add further regulation of haul seining.

A chart of blue catfish catch from Potomac River Fisheries Commission's waters, by method and pounds, was provided to the subcommittee members. The argument made by Bill Kilinski was that commercial haul seining removes blue catfish. The BBAS noted that blue catfish removal is a plus, but the poundage registered for haul seining was little by comparison to other methods.

The subcommittee would like to see some control on this activity be initiated with an emphasis on the reduction or elimination completely between March 15 and June 15.

Habitat Concerns (upcoming agenda items)

Nick Kuttner queried about land use issues when it came to habitat concerns. He specifically asked when the department got involved with land use issues, what kind of water quality testing is done, and how does the public weigh-in on the conversations. Roger Trageser commented that land use issues are jurisdictional by counties and very few, if any, have committees that review land use and its impact specifically on fish and wildlife.

Dave Blazer will work on the next meeting agenda.

Adjourned at 8:19 PM