

Regional Panel Recommendations and Activities for the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force Meeting, Arlington, Virginia, October 28-29, 2008

Gulf and South Atlantic Regional Panel

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High-Priority and/or Emerging Regional Issues:

- 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)
- *Arundo donax* in Texas
 - 70 – 100, 000 acres of *Arundo donax* in the Rio Grande Basin along the main rivers and tributaries not including infestations along creeks, ditches, canals.
 - Causing: water loss, decreased biodiversity, increased maintenance costs on right-of-ways, damage to bridges, stream bank erosion, impeded law enforcement activities on international border
 - Arundo wasp (*Tetramesa romano*) has been approved for use as a biological control
- Channeled Apple Snail
 - Have been reported in all states in the region. Native aquatic vegetation is often severely impacted in infested areas.
 - In at least one state (LA), the channeled apple snails are infected with the rat lung worm parasite, presenting a potential human health hazard.
- North America Brown Tree Snake Control Team (NABTSCT)
 - New military base on Guam poses new threat of BTS introduction to the continental US
- Viral Hemeragic Septacimia (VHS)
 - The states in the Gulf and South Atlantic Region are concerned with the arrival of VHS.

Key ANS activities from May 2008 to October 2008:

Panel

- Rat Lung Worm Study
 - Sixty Channeled Apple Snails from Verret Canal in New Orleans and sixty from Miami Metro Zoo have been sampled and processed by the CDC. None of the snails from the Miami Zoo were positive for the parasite, however, five of the snails from New Orleans were.
 - The negative findings from the Miami zoo were surprising because a primate at that location had died as a result of a rat lung worm infection. After further investigation another population of snails was located nearby in the Tamiami Canal that borders Everglades National Park. Sixty snails were collected from this population and are being sectioned in preparation for DNA analysis by the CDC.

- Due to the positive results from the samples taken from New Orleans; the study has been expanded to incorporate two new locations in neighboring states. A collection of snails was taken from Picayune, Mississippi and found to be negative after DNA analysis at the CDC. The researchers were surprised by these results because a horse infected by the rat lung worm had been reported in this location ten years earlier.
- A population in Houston, Texas was also sampled, sectioned and have been sent to the CDC for DNA analysis.
- Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers Brochures
 - The final draft is ready and will soon be sent to printers for bids.
- Information Management Work Group
 - Working on updating the content and usability of the GSARP website.
- GSARP Fall Meeting
 - Scheduled for December 9-10, 2008 in Savannah, Georgia.

State/Interstate

- State Aquatic Nuisance Species Plans:
 - Florida and Louisiana have completed plans and are actively implementing them.
 - 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.
 - Alabama and Georgia have finished making corrections to their plans based on public comments and are ready to send a revised draft to the ANSTF for preliminary review.
 - We hope to have completed plans in all states by the end of 2009.
- Louisiana Completed a Rapid Assessment with the Help of Volunteers From Other States in the Region.
 - No new invasive species were found
 - Found significant expansion of *Salvinia molesta*. Preliminary reviews suggest that it is spreading by way of the Intracoastal Waterway
 - Found *Corbicula fluminea* (Asian clam) in Lake Salvador
 - Found the Rio Grande Cichlid (*Cichlasoma cyanoguttatum*) in the Barataria Waterway
 - The Channeled Apple Snail has significantly increased in population and in range in Louisiana
- 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.
- Mexico has agreed to Give Monetary Assistance to Texas to Help Control Water Hyacinth in the Rio Grande.

Panel Recommendations to the ANS Task Force:

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