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Regional SFC Reports

Southeastern Fishes Council

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Regional SFC Reports

After some discussion it was determined that we would try to obtain tax exempt status if it could be done at little or no cost, otherwise we would file for a new TIN only.

New Business

PROCEEDINGS Committee: Bo reported that the committee plans to send out a questionnaire to the membership. A suggestion was made that we attempt to switch to recycled paper for the PROCEEDINGS in keeping with our conservation outlook. There was some discussion regarding this comment. Chairman Snelson suggested this be included in the questionnaire and pointed out that there were too few members present to make any major changes.

Passing of Gerald E. Gunning: Dr. Gunning recently passed away. He had been an active and respected colleague and will be missed by all.

Regional Reports:

Oral Regional Reports were given by the following members and will be forwarded to the Editor for inclusion in the PROCEEDINGS.

Fritz Rhode	–	Northeast
Noel Burkhead	–	Southeast (sent report)
David Etnier	–	North-Central (given by Peggy Shute)
Hank Bart	--	South-Central
Bob Cashner	–	Southwest (no report)
Henry Robinson	–	Northwest (no report)

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made. The motion passed and the meeting ended at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Werner Wieland

Secretary/Treasurer

REGIONAL SFC REPORTS

REGION I – Northeast

Three state books are in various stages of completion. *The Fishes of Delaware* by Maynard Raasch, a retired chemist from Dupont, should be out by the end of June. It will consist of popular accounts with 100 color photographs and many references. Total length will be 170 pages and the cost will be \$12. Bob Jenkins' *The Fishes of Virginia* will probably be out early in 1992. It will consist of 2400 pages and 750 illustrations. They're hoping to keep the cost down to around \$50. And last but not least, Ed Menhinick's *The Freshwater Fishes of North Carolina* is being printed and will

be out in June. Cost will be \$37.50 and the book will be distributed by the Wildlife Resources Commission.

The Proceedings of the Virginia Endangered Symposium was published in April. It contains a synthesis of Bob and Noel Birkhead's work for the past 10 years. Bob is relinquishing his role as contact person for Virginia endangered fishes to Paul Angierman now at VPI. Paul has been conducting some surveys in warm-water streams. Bob is concerned that *Erimystax cahni* is not being found at sites from which it was known from during the last decade.

In North Carolina, the Scientific Council's report on the conservation status of NC freshwater fishes was submitted to the Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) to be considered at their next meeting. Ed Menhinick is editor of the final report.

The WRC is currently stocking *Esox masquinongy* into the New River drainage. Alvin Braswell has been in touch with their biologists to discuss the folly of doing this. Another WRC introduction, *Micropterus punctulatus*, poses some problems. It has been expanding its range in the Cape Fear River and could possibly reach Buckhorn Dam, putting in the same waters as *Notropis mekistocholas*.

Field work this year includes status surveys on *Etheostoma acuticeps* and *E. colis* by me, a survey this fall on the lower Pee Dee for *Moxostoma* by NC Division of Environmental Management, Alvin Braswell and me, and continued work on *Acipenser brevirostrum* and other anadromous fishes in the Cape Fear River by Mary Moser and Steve Ross.

Brimleyana is back in business and they guarantee two issues this year and in subsequent years. They need quality manuscripts to meet this goal.

The South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department is updating their endangered, threatened and special concern fishes list. This was sent out to interested ichthyologists for their comments. A final list will be sent to their Commission next year. The Department has a little money for surveys on nongame fishes. John Cely is the contact person.

F. Rhode

REGION II – Southeast

Summary of research and conservation activities for freshwater fishes from coastal drainages between the Edisto and Appalachian rivers.

Gary Meffe and Dean Fletcher (Savannah River Ecology Lab).

- Work continues on life history evolution in *Gambusia* (GM).
- A life history study on *Aphredoderus* has been initiated (GM, others).
- Work continues on the reproductive life history of *Notropis cummingsae* (DF).

Rick Eager (USFWS, Charleston).

- Reported ca. 5900 and 7300 hatchery reared *Acipenser brevirostrum* were tagged in the Savannah River in 1989 and 1990 – there have been no returns.

- However, two of three radio and sonic tagged wild *A. brevirostrum* were recaptured in the Savannah.
- Mike Bentzien (USFWS, Jacksonville).
- *Acipenser oxyrhynchus desotoi* is swimming ever so slowly through the federal listing process for threatened status. The Gulf sturgeon should be officially listed by end 1991 or early 1992.
- Noel Burkhead, Jim Clugston, Ann Foster, Dawn Jennings, and Jim Williams (USFWS, Gainesville).
- A ms describing the hybrid *Notemigonus crysoleucas* X *Scardinius erythrophthalmus* is completed (NB now understands all of Etner's complaints about JW).
 - The third year of radio tracking of Gulf sturgeon is about to commence; last year's efforts project were very productive (AF, JC).
 - A ms on the past and present distributional interactions of *Etheostoma okaloosae* and *E. edwini* is in preparation (NB and JW).
 - A checklist of exotic fishes is an appendix in the forthcoming 1991 list of common and scientific names (DJ, JW, and the renowned Walt Courtenay).
 - A ms on the distribution and dispersal of *Sarotherodon melanotheron*, the blackchin tilapia, in the Indian River system is nearly completed (DJ, JW).
- Carter Gilber, George Burgess, and Steve Walsh (University of Florida).
- The fishes of Florida book is making steady progress (CG and Jim Williams).
 - A note is being prepared on the spawning behavior of *Percina nigrofasciata* (SW with Noel Burkhead).
- Buck Snelson (University of Central Florida).
- Studies are underway on *Elassoma*, including a phylogenetic analysis of *Elassoma* (nearly complete), and a life history study of *E. okefenokee*.
- Walt Courtenay (Florida Atlantic University).
- Walt continues to write about the exotic fishes problem – the heartbreak of *Cichlasoma*, and so forth.
- Bill Loftus (Everglades N.P.).
- Continuing studies on the effects of drought on fish communities. So far, three years of data have been collected at long-term sampling sites.
 - Spin-off studies include how fishes use dry season refugia, and the interesting possibility that cavernous aquifers may act as subterranean refugia.
 - *Belonesox belizanus* is benefiting from the drought.

N. Burkhead

REGION IV – South-central

Field offices of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Vicksburg, MS, Daphne, AL, and Panama City, FL, have provided information on a number of projects which are either planned or already underway on streams in the South-Central Region and which will

no doubt have accumulating adverse impacts on native fish and molluscan faunas. Special thanks to Danny Dunn of the Daphne office for supplying many of the details on projects in Alabama.

Lake Pontchartrain Basin: A number of rivers tributary to Lake Pontchartrain (principally the Amite and Tangipahoa Rivers) are experiencing serious head-cutting in their northern reaches with progressive channel widening and shallowing in their lower reaches. A similar problem in Bayou Pierre is causing species such as the bayou darter to move upstream with its shifting habitat.

Tombigbee River Basin: There are plans to modify 59 miles of the Buttahatchie River (channel straightening and desnagging). Camp Creek, a headwater tributary to the Buttahatchie River is receiving an estimated 27,000 tons of sediment annually from an abandoned kaolin clay mine. The Soil Conservation Service in Alabama has requested funds to stabilize the situation. There are plans to channelize and desnag Luxapallila Creek on the Mississippi side (the Alabama side has already been channelized). Channel modification has been authorized for an 84-mile section of the Sipsey River. The Sipsey River is also experiencing localized fish and mussel kills due to the illegal chemical dumping. There are reports of trucks dropping hoses over bridges and releasing chemicals into the river in full view of wading fishermen. The Alabama DOC is investigating and local opposition to the dumping and proposed channel modification is mounting. The SFC should consider lending its support to any Sipsey River conservation groups that emerge.

Black Warrior Basin: The City of Birmingham is planning to build a 3000 acre water supply reservoir on the Locust Fork River near the Blount/Jefferson County line. Local citizens groups are organizing to oppose the project as well, and this provides yet another opportunity for the SFC to lend support. In Mulberry Fork, wastes originating from catfish farms, chicken houses, and leaky septic tanks are killing mussels in droves. A joint Alabama Department of Environmental Management/Soil Conservation Service report lists animal wastes as the number one nonpoint pollution source in Alabama streams.

Cahaba River Basin: It is a wonder anything survives in the Cahaba. The basin is presently receiving discharge from 1 coal-bed methane operation, 10 municipal waste facilities, 35 surface-mining operations, and approximately 67 other facilities. There are plans to build small scale impoundments on relatively pristine tribs in the headwaters for flow augmentation. As it now stands, sewage lagoons around Birmingham provide the primary source of flow in the river at certain times of the year.

Coosa/Tallapoosa River Basins: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Alabama Power Company have reached an agreement that establishes a minimum flow standard of up to 1200 cfs for the tail waters of the Tallapoosa River below Thurlow Dam (previous standard was 80 cfs). Similar negotiations are underway for the tail waters of the Coosa River (the natural channel) below Jordan Dam. The endangered gastropod *Tulotoma magnifica* has recently been rediscovered in the tail section of the Coosa and would be affected by the minimum flow standards.

Four companies are proposing to build mills on the Tennessee River near Nickajack Port to "chip" hardwoods cut from a 75-mile radius of northeast Alabama, northwest Georgia and southcentral Tennessee, including the headwaters of the Coosa River and a substantial portion of the middle Tennessee River and its tributaries.

ies. The Corps of Engineers and Tennessee Valley Authority are overseeing permitting of barge terminals at the mills. Much of the land is privately owned, and there is concern that the companies involved will simply clearcut the tracts without attention to best management practices. A number of environmental groups are calling for a careful study of the impacts and the SFC should join the chorus.

Bud Freeman reports that plans to impound the Tallapoosa River north of Tallapoosa, GA to create the West Georgia Regional Reservoir are on hold pending completion of an EIS. In fact, all other regional reservoir plans for the Coosa, Tallapoosa and Chattahoochee Rivers are being delayed until the Corps has had the chance to study the long range consequences for states involved. This inaction on regional water projects will not affect a number of smaller-scale projects that are being proposed by local interests in the region.

The Cobb Co./Marietta Water Authority has purchased land and is pursuing development of a water supply reservoir on Sharp Mountain Creek, a direct trib to the Etowah, to create a water supply reservoir. There are also plans to situate the nation's largest landfill on the Etowah River in the general vicinity of Sharp Mountain Creek. These recent projects join a growing list of developments on the Etowah and a number of its tributaries that could have disastrous consequences for species such as *Percina antesella* (Bud has discovered populations of the latter at 4 sites on the Etowah River and one sit on Sharp Mountain Creek) and the undescribed Cherokee darter. A landfill is also being proposed for Mill Creek, a direct trib to the Conasauga River in Bradley Co. TN. Finally, a private land owner has apparently constructed a make-shift stream channel to the Cartecay River and is diverting water from a trib through the channel, causing a tremendous sedimentation problem for goldline darters.

Choctawatchee River Basin: The Corps of Engineers and the Alabama Soil Conservation Service have been given the green light to conduct a basinwide study in the Choctawatchee/Pea river system to identify needs in the basin. The primary driving force for this action is to examine the feasibility of impounding the Pea River at Arifton to form a 5,000 to 12,00 acre lake for flood control, water supply, recreation, and water conservation. Past Corps studies estimated a benefit/cost ratio below unity, however indications are that the weight of local support is in favor of this project due to changing basin physiography and recent severe flooding downstream.

Apalachicola Basin: The Corps of Engineers is looking favorably on a USFWS proposal to build a hatchery for Gulf sturgeon below Jim Woodruff Dam on the Apalachicola River.

Other tidbits: A status of federally threatened has now been officially proposed for the blue shiner. A status review on Alabama molluscs is due out soon (in agency review right now). It proposes 11 new endangered mussels, 9 new extinctions, and over 100 snails for the candidate species list (many believed extinct). In all, 80 Alabama mussels are either extinct or critically endangered.

H. Bart

NEWS NOTES

Wildbranch Workshop in Outdoor, Natural History and Environmental Writing is for people with either personal or professional interests. The workshop is a week of classes, lectures, discussion groups and readings in the craft and techniques of fine writing. The fifth-annual workshop will be offered June 21-27, 1992 at Sterling College, a small college in northern Vermont known for its hands-on approach to the study of natural resources.

This year's faculty will include outdoor writers Steve Bodio and Joe Vance; natural history writer Gale Lawrence; Ian and Margo Baldwin, publishers of Chelsea Green Press; Les Line, former editor of *Audubon*; environmental journalist Karl Grossman and journalists Richard and Joyce Wolkomir.

For additional information, contact, David W. Brown in care of Wilbranch, Sterling College, Craftsbury Common, VT 05827 or call 1-800-648-3591.

Available November 1991 from The McDonald & Woodward Publishing Company, P.O. Box 10308, Blacksburg, VA 24062-0308, (703) 951-9465: VIRGINIA'S ENDANGERED SPECIES *Produced in cooperation with Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Museum of Natural History, Karen Terwilliger, coordinator.*

Regarded by many as the best of statewide books treating threatened and endangered species, **Virginia's Endangered Species** is an attractive and up-to-date reference book on the rare and vulnerable plants and animals of Virginia. For each species covered the following information is provided: a description of the taxon; a written summary and a map of its distribution in Virginia and North America; an overview of its natural history; a synopsis of its legal and recommended statuses; a discussion of threats to its continued survival in Virginia; and recommendations for its conservation. Color plates illustrate most described taxa. Information is current through summer 1991.

The volume will be of value to scientists, educators, librarians, environmentalists, planners, attorneys, and all others who are involved with or concerned about the conservation of rare plants and animals. Its relevance is not limited to Virginia, but extends to throughout the middle Atlantic and middle Appalachian regions.

Only 2500 copies have been printed for general distribution.

viii + 672 pages, 229 color plates, 331 b/w figures, 44 tables, 8.5 x 11. Cloth (0-939923-16-5) price, \$59.95. Paper (0-939923-17-3) price, \$32.95

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