



Morone Technical Committee

Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society



MEETING MINUTES

February 2, 2023

Norfolk, VA

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am EST and a roll call of the Morone Technical Committee (MTC) members was conducted by Sean Lusk. It was determined that a quorum was met; the meeting was called to order.

Officers:

Chair – Sean Lusk
Secretary/Treasurer – John Taylor

State representatives and members participating:

Marcy Anderson (Kentucky), Sean Lusk (Arkansas), Dan Wilson (Virginia), Jason Betingier (South Carolina), Kelsey Roberts (North Carolina), Ted Alfermann (Tennessee), Jake Norman (Texas), Christian Shirley (Mississippi), Hunter Roop (Georgia), and Matt Mauck (Oklahoma).

Guests:

Andrew Yung, Jon Stein, Bradford Warland, Calvin Beech, Dane Balsman, Dani Guiot, Alex Cummins, Vic DiCenzo, Jason Olive, and Anthony Overton.

Welcome:

Sean Lusk introduced himself as well as Southern Division AFS President Jason Olive and Vice-President Anthony Overton and welcomed everyone to the MTC meeting.

Treasurers Report:

John Taylor was unable to attend the meeting so the Treasurers Report was given by proxy Sean Lusk. The MTC Edward Jones account is currently at \$10,071.81. It was discussed that the majority of these funds are derived from sales of the AFS publication *Biology and Management of Inland Striped Bass and Hybrid Striped Bass*. The purpose of these funds are intended for sponsoring research that contributes to the advancement of Moronid management in the Southeast.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

Bylaws

Sean Lusk motioned to split the secretary/treasurer position into discrete, separate positions. Amendments to the bylaws were discussed (see *Appendix A*). The committee voted on the amendments to the bylaws and the motion passed. Nominations for Secretary and Treasurer will be solicited after the meeting.

Chief's Survey (see Appendix B)

The Chiefs Survey was aimed at reconnecting state agencies with the SDAFS Technical Committees. The survey was broken down into three primary categories: Research, Professional Development, and Other. Results and ensuing discussion was used to direct the focus of the MTC over the coming year. The following highlights the MTC roundtable discussion of the survey.

- *Research*
 - Stocking densities and/or frequency needed to maintain fishery
 - What is considered a fishery? High catch, trophy, opportunity, etc.
 - Difficult to define stocking densities due to varying needs of fishery
 - Suggested to create a basic table to outline stocking rates, fishery goals, etc. to compare among different states
 - Dan Wilson had started a spreadsheet several years ago
 - Spreadsheet can be easily updated
 - Sampling techniques
 - Angler Diary to supplement Gill Net survey (AR recently implemented, VA long running)
 - GA and VA suggested targeting populations during spring spawning with electrofishing
 - collect more fish and adequately assess size structure and age/growth
 - Relative Abundance difficult to measure
 - Best practices for captive rearing and spawning Striped Bass and White Bass broodstock
 - Old publication still relevant?
 - GA production discussed with hatchery manager (Alex Cummins)
 - Production efficiency has improved
 - Broodstock primarily from Coosa River
 - Best production from any river in GA
 - Produce all fish from 8-10 females
 - Results around 2 million fingerlings (5-8 million fry)
 - Mostly following old publication with the following exceptions:

- Chapter 2 – While we still use standard hatching jars for white bass and hybrid spawning, we use much larger jars for striped bass egg incubation. The larger jar allows us to put up to 8 pounds of STB eggs into each, allowing for the manipulation of less valves than the 20-30 standard jars for a similar amount of eggs. The large jars are approximately 65” tall with a 18 ¾ diameter, the jars were originally designed for plankton culture. More details and pictures can be provided if desired.
 - Chapter 5 – We no longer use MS-222 for females before being spawned. We now use electro-anesthesia, which is instantaneous and doesn’t allow the fish to get stressed during the process.
 - Chapter 5 – We generally have two people directly involved with egg stripping instead of the three described in the manual. This allows for increased control of the fish and a decreased chance of getting water in our egg bowl. One person stands on a step holding the fish by the mouth, the second person holds the fishes dorsal side to their shoulder. This allows them to express the eggs straight into the bowl with nothing over the bowl but the fish’s vent.
- Ramp vs boat stocking success for Striped Bass and Hybrid Striped Bass
 - Potential to look at parentage genetic analysis to compare
 - GA looking at shocking around ramp prior to stocking to remove potential predators
 - Consideration to evaluate ramp vs boat stockings among states, when possible
 - VA-stocking densities/stocking site critical. Recruitment drops significantly above a stocking density threshold
 - Suggested keeping under 40k/stocking site
 - TX, SC, VA potentially available to collaborate on evaluation
- Stocking successes/movement of stocked fish
 - AR sees stable recruitment of stocked fish
 - GA has stable stocking rates and catch rates
 - TN targets stocking ~ 3” (250 fish/lb) for maximum stocking success
 - VA stocks at 1200 – 1500/lb
 - Discussed creating another spreadsheet to highlight hatchery related stocking “targets”
 - Discussed looking at stocking size correlated with year class strength

- Hybrid Striped Bass interaction with other sportfish species
 - AR study in final stages
 - NC starting a study to evaluate stocking HSB to restructure stunted crappie population
 - Discussed what lit. was available on HSB diets
 - Good opportunity for committee to compile available reports, manuscripts etc. comparing diet overlap between Morones and LMB/other sportfish
 - Add tab on website for Morone Lit
- Evaluation methods for prey species (e.g. hydroacoustics)
 - Hydroacoustic data – AR and SC
 - SC using hydroacoustics on Lake Murray for 3+ years
- Evaluation of conditions influencing growth and survival of stocked fish
 - VA conducted quick study to evaluate
 - all factors considered/evaluated proved to not be critical
 - NC State student evaluated STBS population dynamics in several reservoirs.
 - Evaluated habitat, water quality, prey, etc. influences on pop dynamics
 - Goal to develop model to predict optimal waterbodies (with ideal conditions, per the model) for morones
- Age and Growth of stocked fishes
 - Get data from each state for website
- Management of populations in river vs impoundments
 - NC conducts parentage tagging on several river populations
 - Determine percent contribution of stocked fish
 - GA- long-term data set monitoring Coosa River STBS
 - Wild population and source of broodstock
 - OK State looking at movement of STBS in river system
- Use of Hybrid Striped Bass in atypical fisheries (small impoundments and urban fisheries)
 - MS stocking small (~280 ac) impoundment annually with HSB
 - GA stocking small impoundments as well
 - TN stocked small (~80ac) impoundment
 - Prey base primarily Gizzard Shad
 - Impacted growth/condition and stockings discontinued
 - Discussed collecting/compiling data on how these populations are utilized
 - Possible topic/talk for future symposia/session

- *Professional Development*
 - Latest methods for sampling, aging, tagging, statistical analyses, data interpretation, population modeling
 - Several states age whole, crack if older fish
 - AR sections all otoliths, regardless of size
 - All sections are saved as photo
 - SC utilizes UV cure to speed up epoxy dry time
 - Otoliths can be sectioned within a few minutes of setting in mold
 - UV cure available on Amazon
- *Other*
 - Get state reports and minutes on website
 - Several topics of interest (e.g., state regs, stocking, creel data) to all be updated in spreadsheet
 - Consider hosting Morone symposium or session in near future (2024 or 2025)

Take-home from Survey

- Compile a spreadsheet with fishery specific characteristics (e.g. stocking rates, growth rates, regulations) from around the southeast.
- Add a research/data tab on website where contents of the aforementioned spreadsheet will be housed.
- How can committee recruit and retain more members and participation?
- Consider conducting mid-year virtual meeting.

State Reports

- The majority of the meeting was spent discussing the Chiefs Survey and left little time to discuss State Reports. State reports that were not discussed will be compiled and made available on the MTC website: <https://units.fisheries.org/morone/minutesandreports/state-reports/>. The following is a summary of the Tennessee and Georgia state reports that were discussed during the meeting.
- **Tennessee**
 - Research focused on genetic parentage analysis.
 - Evaluating conditions for survival/recruitment through genetics
 - Would be collecting long-term data set
 - Potential to direct management/future stocking procedures
 - Approximately 6k for initial parentage database panel (HSB and STB), then \$10/sample
 - Private company
 - Could collaborate with other states to split cost of initial \$6k
 - Contact Ted Alfermann w/ TN if interested
 - SC considering a similar evaluation

- Suggested family effects can be strong enough to mask abiotic factor effects
 - FL also interested in pursuing study
- **Georgia**
 - Lake Hartwell – recent STB die-off
 - Shifting towards HSB management
 - Currently stocking Sunshines and Palmettos
 - Going to compare performance of both strains

Adjourn:

After thanking all participants, the meeting concluded at 12:00 pm EST.

Appendix A

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Striped Bass Committee is to define and resolve problems and issues concerning management and culture of moronids (landlocked and anadromous) and their hybrids through an exchange of ideas and information among members of the Southern Division, AFS.

GOALS:

1. To convene annually or as necessary to discuss ongoing projects and problems associated with management and culture.
2. To facilitate the exchange of information related to moronid management and culture.
3. To organize and conduct multi-state projects and to address larger geographic problems or shared concerns pertaining to the management and culture of moronids.
4. To interact with other technical committees, the SDAFS Executive Committee, and the parent society on issues of policy, procedures, position statements, and resolutions that pertain to moronids.
5. Encourage committee members to report committee activities to their administrators and staff.

MEMBERSHIP:

1. Members serve at the request of the SDAFS President.
2. Each state fisheries resources agency within SDAFS is requested to provide recommendations for membership. Representation by more than one person per agency is left to the discretion of the Chairperson.
3. Membership is open to all SDAFS members and requires only appointment by the SDAFS President following consultation with the Committee Chairperson. The chairperson is responsible for soliciting possible candidates from additional fisheries agencies or other related parties.
4. Membership confers the right to vote.
5. Active participation by non-members of the committee has been beneficial and their involvement in Committee activities is encouraged.

QUORUM:

1. A quorum consists of a minimum of five members.
2. All decisions must have majority support.
3. Quorums can be met through the use of designees, proxy votes, and/or absentee ballots. Designees or proxies will be in writing.

OFFICERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Chairperson

- The Chair is elected by the membership and is appointed by the SDAFS President. The Chair will serve for 2 years.
- Chairperson may serve no more than two consecutive terms.
- Organizes meetings by working with Committee members, other technical committee chairpersons, and SDAFS President to determine meeting dates and locations.

- Develops meeting agendas and provides Committee members with meeting dates, locations, and agendas in advance of the meetings.
- Conducts meetings using Robert's Rules of Order as a guideline for doing business.
- Works with SDAFS President to set Committee membership each year.
- Reports Committee activities to SDAFS Executive Committee upon request from President.
- Provides new Committee items to the SDAFS Newsletter Editor upon request.
- Develops reports from meetings and sends to attendees for further dissemination to other staff and administrators.
- Chair-elect nominees will be appointed by the Committee and voted by the committee membership through email balloting. Balloting is to be completed and sent to membership by October 1 and the results completed by November 1. The results will be determined by a majority vote. The new chairperson will assume the position on April 1.

Secretary/~~Treasurer~~

- Serves a two year term and is appointed by the Chairperson. Can be re-appointed and serve consecutive terms.
- Produces minutes for each meeting and sends them to the Chairperson within sixty days and is posted on the committee website, if available. Minutes will be sent to the committee for approval before posting on the web site with a ten-day limit for voting approval. No response from committee members will be considered as a concurrence.
- ~~Provides Treasurers report to the Chairperson prior to committee meetings.~~
- Substitutes for the Chairperson in that person's absence.

Treasurer

- Serves a two year term and is appointed by the Chairperson. Can be re-appointed and serve consecutive terms.
- Keeps financial records and a checking account from which Committee-approved expenditures are disbursed.
- Provides Treasurers report during Committee meetings.

Appendix B

FISH CHIEFS SURVEY RESPONSES

Morone TC-

RESEARCH

- 1) Stocking densities and/or frequency needed to maintain fishery
- 2) Sampling techniques
- 3) Best practices for captive rearing and spawning Striped Bass and White Bass broodstock
- 4) Ramp vs boat stocking success for Striped Bass and Hybrid Striped Bass
- 5) Stocking success/movement of stocked fish
- 6) Hybrid Striped Bass interactions with other sportfish species
- 7) Evaluation methods for prey species (e.g. hydroacoustics)
- 8) Evaluation of conditions influencing of growth and survival of stocked fish
- 9) Age and growth of stocked fishes
- 10) Management of populations in rivers vs impoundments
- 11) Use of Hybrid Striped Bass in atypical fisheries (small impoundments, urban fisheries)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 1) Latest methods for sampling, aging, tagging, statistical analyses, data interpretation, population modeling

OTHER (e.g. symposia, white papers, data summaries, etc.)

- 1) State summaries with research results posted on the website like the catfish committee.
- 2) A summary of each state's regulations
- 3) A summary of stocking rates per waterbody across the region
- 4) A white paper summarizing research on Striped Bass competition with other sportfish species would be a very useful reference
- 5) Compilation of targeted effort/angler interest across the region
- 6) A Hybrid Striped Bass management symposium

Some Technical Committees always meet at the annual SDAFS conference, while others typically meet independently (e.g. Aquaculture, Trout). Does meeting in conjunction with the SDAFS conference or not affect your ability or willingness to send staff to these meetings?

- 1) Meeting independently with options for an online platform are preferred. Travel budgets are tight and this often prevents in-person committee attendance for many employees.
- 2) I think for higher level staff it is easier to attend in conjunction with the annual SDAFS conference; but for lower level staff, independent meetings may be easier to attend due to cost savings.
- 3) Given budget limitations, I cannot send everyone to the annual conference. If registration to the conference is necessary to participate in a committee meeting - our participation will be reduced. Meetings outside of the conference would likely increase participation because of the cost savings.
- 4) Generally does not impact participation in the committees, but meeting in conjunction with the conference can at times provide additional justification for sending staff to the

conference. However, that may work against the committee meeting attendance when the conference is located at a high price location.

Is there anything else not mentioned in this survey that SDAFS Technical Committees could provide that would increase their relevancy to you and/or your staff?

- 1) More communication between committees and agencies, provide brief report of annual committee projects and accomplishments
- 2) The American Eel Subcommittee model in the WWSC is a good one to follow for specific topics that fall under these committees
- 3) I think the committees need to keep in mind the policy implications of topics they consider working on as they determine their priorities.