

Minutes of the 2005 NCD Ictalurid Technical Committee Business Meeting

The 2005 meeting was held in conjunction with the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in Grand Rapids, MI on December 12, 2005. The meeting was called to order by Lynn Schlueter. He then passed the Chair position to Greg Pitchford. Greg presented Lynn with a plaque in appreciation for his serving as Chair of the committee in 2004 and 2005.

There were 15 attendees including two representatives from the southern division's catfish management committee (Elise Irwin and Dave Buckmeier).

Matt Burlingame reported that there was \$11,434.84 in the NCD Ictalurid Technical Committee's account.

Agenda Items:

1. Cat-a-thon, a collaborative effort to develop standardized techniques for sampling channel, blue and flathead catfish in different habitats was discussed. Everyone recognized the magnitude of the project and difficulty of pulling off something similar to the "Shadathon" for three different species in different habitat types. David Buckmeier suggested an alternative approach. He suggested that an advisory committee be formed consisting of biologists working with catfish who also have statistical and project design skills.

This committee would:

1. Summarize the important sampling questions catfish researchers and managers have.
2. Volunteer to review project proposals to help develop sampling strategies that could not only achieve the researcher's objectives, but also address the highlighted sampling issues.

Everyone felt this was a more realistic option. Elise and Dave said they would work together on the project. Greg asked members to email him with a list of individuals from the North Central Division who should be on the committee. He asked for those nominations within 30 days. Jim Stephen asked that they also consider questions relating to age and growth, abundance, and size structure.

2. Jim Stephen said he appreciated the age & growth workshop held at Lake Rathbun, Iowa in 2003. It was a good, practical meeting. He wondered if it was time to do a refresher workshop. Dave Buckmeier informed the group that a DVD was available highlighting the training materials developed in Texas. It is available on the AFS Computer Users website. It can be a refresher course and a tutorial in itself. Everyone agreed a summer meeting would be good to not only review age and growth issues but to share information on various sampling gears (eg. electrofishing and hoopnetting). Mark Flammang agreed to host the meeting again at Lake Rathbun, Ia. Details will be fleshed out. Meeting will be in either late June or early July. Dave Buckmeier asked that if there was any room left to let him know, some people from the Southern Division may want to attend.

3. Greg reminded the group that the Ictalurids List Server- it is out there- use it- sign on instructions are on the NCD web page.

4. Greg asked for reports on catfish work going on around the Midwest.

Mark Porath reported that angler surveys are being completed on eastern Nebraska lakes- did a daytime one year and then night time next year for harvest- agencies should be aware daytime surveys are missing the majority of catfishing effort.

Greg Pitchford reported that Missouri looking at blue and flathead catfish populations on interior waters. Some public pressure to allow "hand fishing".

Jim Stephen reported that in Kansas, angler use surveys indicate that catfish have increased in popularity. Blue catfish in El Dorado Reservoir are eating zebra mussels which have recently become established in the lake.

Mark Porath reported that growth rates for catfish in various Nebraska waters are greatly influenced by habitat conditions.

Dennis Topp raised concerns about the increasing number of catfish tournaments in Minnesota. They are watching for conflicts with other anglers and importation of exotic species.

Greg Pitchford requested committee members look for opportunities to acquire otoliths and pectoral spines from known age catfish. If they come across these opportunities, please send structures to him. Dave Buckmeier reported a similar effort underway in the Southern Division.

5. Catfish 2010 Symposium

Money left over from the Catfish 2000 symposium has been saved to be used as seed money for another catfish symposium. There was discussion on cooperating with the Southern Division on another catfish symposium in 2010.

Dennis Topp made a motion to proceed with a catfish symposium in 2010. Mark Porath seconded the motion.

The motion passed on voice vote and now goes to the Southern Division to vote on at their meeting in February.

Issues discussed were location, time of year, and scope of the symposium.

Everyone agreed it would be good to hold the symposium somewhere in the South.

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The last meeting was a combination of professionals and anglers. It had the feel of both a professional meeting and a sports show. In-Fisherman was a valuable co-host. The international flavor brought by those working with South American and European catfish added a lot also.

It is hoped that we can attract those working with madtoms, aquaculture, and commercial fishing interests.

If the Southern Division approves, we will begin organizing "Catfish 2010" as an all inclusive meeting inviting all those interested in catfish to participate.

There was discussion of the end product. Everyone agreed that the proceedings were a valuable end product of Catfish 2000. Elise Irwin reminded the group that the symposium needs to be organized with the proceedings in mind.

The committee was reminded not to overlook the Southern Division's Non-game Aquatics and Reservoir committees or the Fisheries Management and Fish Culture Sections of AFS. Organizations such as the American Association of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists may also be interested.

Dave and Elise will look for a state in the Southern Division willing to host the event.

The committee was reminded that the Southern Division's Catfish Management Committee has a web page and are seeking catfish articles to include on it.

6. The next meeting of the NCD Ictalurid Technical Committee will be at the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in Omaha, NE December 3-6, 2006.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Greg Pitchford.