

GULF OF MEXICO OYSTERS, THE INDUSTRY, AND THE FUTURE



GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

October 13, 2016

JW Marriott New Orleans

New Orleans, LA

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Corpus Christi, Texas

GSMFC Special Session

Gulf of Mexico Oysters, the Industry, and the Future

JW Marriott New Orleans
Thursday, October 13, 2016
8:30 am – 12:00 noon

Agenda

1. 8:30 Welcome - *TBD*
2. 8:40 Shell Budgets as a Cultch Management Tool – *Dr. Tom Soniat and Eric Powell (LSU and GCRL)*
3. 9:05 Multi-Jurisdictional Water Concerns and Potential Opportunities – *G. Constant (USFWS)*
4. 9:20 Oysters and Ocean Acidification – *Ms. Iria Gimenez (OSU)*
5. 9:40 Bivalve Aquaculture – *Dr. Mike Rice (URI)*

10:00 Break

6. 10:15 State of Oyster Culture in the Gulf – Roundtable
 - a. LA – Patrick Banks
 - b. MS – Erik Broussard and Jason Rider
 - c. AL – Chris Blankenship
 - d. TX – Mark Lingo
 - e. FL – Dan Ellinor

Adjourn

Summary

We invited several experts yesterday to talk a bit about the status of oysters in the Gulf and rest of the US. We received presentation on oyster stock assessment techniques, ocean acidification and changing environments and got a history lesson in what has happened elsewhere while getting aquaculture into the existing management regimes.

Ms. Gimenez provided an overview on Ocean Acidification (OA) and the effects on oysters in the Pacific Northwest. She explained the practical reality of what the increase of dissolved CO² in the ocean has done to oysters in Oregon and Washington. They've already documented a decreased pH in the growing waters causing increased vulnerability across and within life-stages. In 2007, there were increased failures in Pacific Oyster larval production as a result of increased mortality, delayed development and reduced growth under increased CO² and delayed development and metamorphosis leading to an increase in predation vulnerability. Ms. Gimenez noted that there are similar trends in the Gulf of Mexico which can be tied to HABs and hypoxia and we need to be cautious to avoid reaching the "tipping point" where the oyster industry sees direct effects in production.

Dr. Michael Rice presented a brief history of oyster aquaculture in Rhode Island and summarized the legislative actions over the last two decades which have led to the greatest expansion period of oyster culture in Rhode Island. The major contributors were developing "One-stop" permitting with lead agency and Aquaculture Coordinator responsible for coordinating inter-agency review, the recognition of aquaculture as a form of agriculture under tax codes, the exemption of aquaculture livestock from Fish and Game laws, and simplified leasing and DEM water quality certification procedures. Since about 2000, the value of cultured oysters in RI have risen from about \$300k to almost \$7M annually.

State Overviews

In addition to the information presented from outside our region, each of the state agencies provided status updates to their current oyster fisheries at home and presented on the general fishery, the current public/private harvest, and identified what the issues are currently in each state related to the environment and the potential changes to come. The group talked broadly about the potential for aquaculture of oysters in each of the states and the major hurdles they are looking at.

While we had hoped for some additional discussion, a lot of information was presented and the group described a lot of the same issues that both the Pacific and the Atlantic have faced previously. In addition, the Gulf states all are examining how to move forward after the BP disaster.

Dr John Supan served as the facilitator for the session and SeaGrant will be developing a proceedings from the session. We hope to have a draft in a few months.

Presenters and Participants

Dr. John Supan
LSU

Patrick Banks
LDWF

Dr. Tom Soniat
LSU

Erik Broussard
MDMR

Dr. Eric Powell
GCRL

Jason Rider
MDMR

Mr. Glen Constant
USFWS

Chris Blankenship
ADCNR/MRD

Ms. Iria Gimenez
OSU

Mark Lingo
TPWD

Dr. Mike Rice
URI

Dan Ellinor
FWC

Attendees

James Ballard
GSMFC

Donna Bellais
GSMFC

Harry Blanchet
LDWF

Carolina Bourque
LDWF

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Rick Burris
MDMR

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