



Members Present

Dr. Marta Gomez-Chiarri, University of Rhode Island
Dr. Chris Hannafin, DMV, State Veterinarian
Mr. Najih Lazar, DEM Fish & Wildlife
Dr. Dale Leavitt, Roger Williams University
Mr. David Alves, Chair, CRMC Aquaculture & Fisheries Coordinator

Others Present

Mr. Alan Libby, DEM Fish & Wildlife

Call to order. Mr. Alves called the meeting to order at 2:06 pm.

Mr. Alves opened the meeting with a brief statement stating that the CRMC BioSecurity Board meeting is open to the public, but it is not a public hearing. Therefore discussion is open to the members of the board and to others at the chair's discretion. The CRMC BioSecurity Board is an advisory board to the Council concerning matters of aquatic diseases, genetically modified organisms, importation of non-indigenous species and other management issues necessary to protecting cultured and wild aquatic species.

Mr. Alves thanked the board members for attending. Since members attend from various localities all over the state there will be an effort to rotate the meetings between members work locations in the future.

Approval of February meeting minutes: Marta moved to approve, Chris Hannafin seconded. Unanimous approval.

New Business:

Black Salty discussion:

Mr. Alves reminded the Board that the BioSecurity Board's authority only encompasses disease management and exotic introductions. The first question to be considered; are the black salty's genetically altered- modified? Dr. Hannafin stated that all ornamental fish are derived from something, just as there are multiple breeds of dogs; to his thinking a true genetically modified organism (GMO) is something along the line of a glo-fish, not the black salty. The black salty was identified as a specific strain of goldfish (*Crassarius aureus*). All in attendance agreed.

The next issue to be considered is disease. The black salty's do have a disease pathology report and path lab report from a reputable pathologist. It was also noted that the Anderson Farm is currently importing golden shiners into RI. The pathology report provided by the applicant shows no relevant viruses present and the record has been established for four consecutive years.

Dr. Leavitt asked if there are relevant bacteria that we should be looking at?

Dr. Gomez-Chiarri stated that there are none based on OIE guidelines. Also, APHIS has no current list and RI defers to the OIE guidelines.

Mr. Alves raised a question about the number of goldfish tested in the pathology report, 10 of 150 total cyprinids. According to the e-mail from Dr. Goodwin at University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, the number of goldfish tested represents the percentage of the total number of cyprinid fish in the facility. The facility has been tested twice yearly for the past four years and no viral disease has been detected. Currently there is not an APHIS methodology for fish certification nationally.

Mr. Alves noted that in RI there is no current control for bait importation. This is a serious oversight that should be corrected.

Mr. Alves recommended that DEM expanded health certification for all bait fish importation. Dr. Hannafin noted that there were previously no controls for importation of ornamental fishes. These are considered non-native domestic animals having a long association with selected breeding by humans, thus there is a different prospective on transport (there is not permit needed). A wholesale dealer of these fish requires a companion animal import permit that designates where these fish come from and how many are allowed to be imported to allow for back checking of source. If a disease problem arises the Division of Agriculture can embargo or prohibit importation.

Mr. Lazar asked about the difference between a private pet importation (which seems to be uncontrollable) and a dealer request to import non-native non-domestic exotic.

Mr. Alves stated that the black salty's seem to be the same species as goldfish selected for silver color, according to the articles submitted with the application. The salinity tolerance of the black salty is not different from regular goldfish.

A discussion followed of the proper classification of these animals. It was decided that this is a DEM issue that the BioSecurity Board would not address.

The BioSecurity Board strongly recommends that DEM implement health certification for all baitfish importation. Dr. Hannafin also recommended that permitting for baitfish importation be removed from boater registration

Dr. Leavitt made a motion that the BioSecurity Board recommends to the Director that DEM establish a committee to develop a baitfish health inspection and importation process.

Dr. Gomez-Chiarri seconded the motion, it was unanimously passed

Dr. Gomez-Chiarri asked if the health certificate supplied by the applicant dated December 2005 was appropriate? The committee discussed this and decided that in order to be safe the following conditions would need to be met:

1. need 2006 certificate but otherwise 4 year history with no problems
2. if agree all cyprinids then have tested enough- otherwise need more fish tested.

Dr. Hannafin noted that Arkansas is only state with a certification program. Other states will need a pathology certificate from approved path lab using OIE list within 30 days of shipment testing a minimum of 30 fish.

They Board discussed the test sequence and the need to consider seasonality, thus the need to go to 2 times per year testing. If a farm or state has no history of testing then they will need to test within 30 days of shipping fish into RI.

Mr. Alves reminded the Board that today's discussion should focus on Anderson Farm's application in front of us. That an expanded discussion would be suitable for the previously recommended baitfish health inspection and importation process committee.

Mr. Alves recommended that before we allow importation of black salty's that we request to see the complete four year health records from Anderson Farm.

A motion was made by Dr. Gomez-Chiarri: We are satisfied with the health certification associated with this application, pending inspection of all reports for the past four years and using OIE protocols. Mr. Lazar seconded the motion.

Discussion followed on how can we require health standards on one species if we are not regulating importation of other species from same farm?

Mr. Lazar related questions from Fish & Wildlife about secondary bacterial problems associated with stress in these fish? The Board decided that we can not make regulations based on stress induced disease from common bacterial problems.

The motion was than voted on and carried unanimously.

Mr. Alves related to the Board that the applicant had no problem with limiting the use of the black salty to saltwater. The Board decided that this was a question for DEM Enforcement and the Board could not address it.

The next question considered; is the black salty indigenous or not? According to the USGS article included in the applicant's packet, goldfish are found in every state of the Union. Mr. Alves informed the board that an employee of DEM F&W had informed him previously that goldfish were in most RI watersheds. Mr. Libby informed the board that this was false. The Board then asked Mr. Libby if DEM Fish & Wildlife freshwater fish survey had found the fish in RI waters. Mr. Libby responded that Fish & Wildlife had only found goldfish on Aquidneck Island in Barker Brook with the wild coloration. Dr. Leavitt then informed Mr. Libby that goldfish will retain their gold color for multiple generations in the wild. The Board than asked if he had found goldfish in other watersheds? Mr. Libby responded that the fish had been found in

a total of three watersheds in the state. Mr. Libby stated that in two of the sites the fish still retained their gold color. A discussion than ensued about the differences in the RIGL Chapter 14 definitions of domestic, native and wild fishes verses the scientific uses of indigenous, native and invasive fishes.

The Board asked the DEM representatives if they were aware of a survey of current bait dealer practices. The DEM representatives stated that they were not aware of any survey.

The Board decided that we know that the black salty's are not native, and that they are not indigenous throughout the state, but more information is needed. Mr. Libby did not inform the board of the number of times he had sampled or the locations that were sampled. The board found it impossible to make an informed decision given the lack of data available. The Board requested that Fish and Wildlife provide a summary report of fresh water surveys by pond to its members in order to further examine the indigenous question.

A motion was made by Dr. Gomez-Chiarri stating that the BioSecurity Board is:

- 1. Satisfied with disease certification based on 4 years pathology survey**
- 2. Satisfied that it is not a GMO**
- 3. Not capable of deciding whether there is an indigenous population of goldfish in state (not enough data)**
- 4. Recommend to limit the use of species to saltwater.**

The Board recognizes the risk for possible fish migration into fresh water if released in brackish waters and requested input on the issue from the Division of Enforcement.

This motion was predicated on the authority of the BioSecurity Board and based on the above statements.

Dr. Hannafin seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

Old Business – none

Dr. Leavitt moved to adjourn, Mr. Lazar seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to adjourn. The Board adjourned at 3:30 pm.