



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

"... conserving our natural resources and your right to enjoy them."

affiliated with



Resolution No. 9C, 2012

SUBJECT: BOW FISHING SEASON

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (LWFC) is responsible for all hunting rules and regulations for the taking of native game species throughout the State of Louisiana and making changes to those rules and regulations as appropriate in considering many factors of influence, keeping the proper management of the resource in mind, and

WHEREAS, in recent years, the popular sport of nighttime bow fishing for coastal species of fishes such as Redfish, Black Drum, Sheepshead and others known to frequent shallow waters and ponds, has increased significantly across the State, not only recreationally, but commercially through guided hunting trips, and

WHEREAS, the means of transportation used by these archers to access their fishing grounds has boomed with new motorized technology through the development of numerous shallow draft vessels and propulsion systems, along with the traditional airboat designed to overcome any obstacles of nature in their way, leaving little or no safe havens of protection for fish or game on many unregulated properties, and

WHEREAS, additionally, that same era of technological achievement has seen AC powered illumination systems deployed on these vessels designed to "light-up the night" in projecting hundreds of thousands of watts of lighting ahead and around the boats as they ply the waters in search of their quarry, a far cry from the battery powered headlamps and flashlights of old, and

WHEREAS, these modern inventions understandably add to the enjoyment and convenience of the experience, but also increase the interest and frequency of the sport, where many productive areas are being visited nightly and repeatedly throughout the calendar year by fishers searching for targets, and

WHEREAS, the combination of engine noises, blinding lights, churning waters, and the unrestricted ease of traversing through this environment is described as "an alien invasion" and arguably a major disruption to the night for other non-targeted wildlife species for miles around the area, and

WHEREAS, considering this same habitat is frequented by many other species of animals, fishes and wildlife dependent upon its water, food and shelter, most have adapted a nocturnal survival instinct and are presumably not harmfully affected by infrequent or marginal nighttime disturbance; and in pursuit of many of these species is another category of sportsmen sharing the same terrain, during daylight hours, with their own concerns about proper management of the resources and assuring equal sporting opportunities, and

(more)

WHEREAS, most particularly affected are the millions of wintering waterfowl and other birds, vulnerable to nighttime disturbances, who will quickly evacuate in search of undisturbed rest areas to the dismay of many waterfowl hunters who have experienced an exodus of birds from their once-productive (many times expensive) hunting areas, and

WHEREAS, whatever the positive social or economic impacts the sport of nighttime bow fishing may bring to Louisiana year-round, serious consideration should be given to the larger impact and reputation that our world-class waterfowl hunting brings to the State during its limited winter tenure, and look for ways that avoid conflict between them, and

WHEREAS, equally important as the economic impact is the protection of wildlife and conservation of the environment during the critical months of winter when suitable habitat is at a premium, and altering migration or feeding patterns could have lasting effects on waterfowl populations.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation urges the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (LWFC) to consider and create season restrictions on nighttime bow fishing activities during winter waterfowl hunting seasons across the State.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in Convention Assembled, March 11, 2012 in Covington, Louisiana.

The Louisiana Wildlife Federation is a statewide conservation education and advocacy organization with more than 10,000 members and 26 affiliate groups. Established in 1940, it is affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation and represents a broad constituency of conservationists including hunters, fishers, campers, birders, boaters, and other outdoor enthusiasts.