



29 March 2004

Bob Miles, Resources Director
International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
444 N. Capitol St., NW, Suite 544
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Introductions of Nonnative Species to North Carolina

Dear Mr. Miles:

Please find attached a resolution approved by the North Carolina Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (NCAFS) regarding the introduction of nonnative species. In our professional opinion, the introduction of nonnative aquatic species without thorough evaluation can result in degradation of aquatic ecosystems and their associated fisheries. The Environmental Concerns Committee of the NCAFS identified this issue to be a significant concern to the membership and developed the resolution. The resolution was presented to the NCAFS membership, voted on and approved at its annual meeting on 14 February 2003.

The NCAFS has a diverse membership. Its 139 members represent fisheries scientists from academic institutions, state and federal management agencies, and private institutions. Most NCAFS members are also members of the American Fisheries Society (AFS). The AFS was founded in 1870 and is the oldest and largest professional society representing fisheries scientists. The AFS promotes scientific research and enlightened management of aquatic resources for optimum use and enjoyment by the public.

Sincerely,

Mallory G. Martin, President
North Carolina Chapter, American Fisheries Society
645 Fish Hatchery Rd
Marion, NC 28752
828-659-3324
martinmg@wnclink.com

cc: Larry Conner, President, Southern Division American Fisheries Society
Ira Adelman, President, American Fisheries Society
Ghassan Rassam, Executive Director, American Fisheries Society

Resolution of the North Carolina Chapter of the American Fisheries Society
On Introductions of Nonnative Aquatic Species¹

Adopted 14 February 2003 by a membership vote of yes

Whereas: The introduction of nonnative aquatic species can serve as an important tool in achieving the first objective in the constitution of the American Fisheries Society (AFS): promotion of the conservation, development, and wise use of fisheries;

Whereas: Scientific reviews indicate that introduction of nonnative aquatic species can also result in the degradation of aquatic ecosystems and their associated fisheries, including the suppression and elimination of native species through competition and predation, the introduction of parasites and disease, hybridization, habitat alteration, and other negative impacts;

Whereas: The eradication of established populations of nonnative aquatic species can be infeasible and unacceptable to certain parties, while control efforts are often costly;

Whereas: The number of nonnative fish species introduced deliberately or unintentionally in some river basins in North Carolina is approaching 45 percent of the known species from these river basins²;

Whereas: The Scientific Council on Fishes of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission's (Commission) Wildlife Advisory Committee has tendered (6 November 2002) strong recommendations to the Commission on banning importation or further intrastate movement of ten species of nonnative fishes deemed actually or potentially injurious to native species and ecosystems;

Whereas: Recent reports of the collection of the snakehead (*Channa* sp.) from North Carolina waters and its possible establishment in nearby states, and the introduction of the spring viremia of carp virus to the Roanoke River Basin through a culture facility have drawn attention to the issue;

¹ Non-native aquatic species are defined, for the purpose of this document, as species that have been moved outside of their native range whether originating in a foreign country or from within the United States.

² Jenkins, R. E., and N. M. Burkhead. 1993. Freshwater fishes of Virginia. American Fisheries Society, Bethesda, Maryland (and references cited therein); Fuller, P. L., L. G. Nico, and J. D. Williams. 1999. Non-indigenous fishes introduced into inland waters of the United States. American Fisheries Society, Special Publications 27, Bethesda, Maryland; North Carolina Division of Water Quality (unpublished data).

Therefore be it resolved that, based on the best scientific information available, it is the position of the North Carolina Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (NCAFS) which includes fisheries professionals from throughout North Carolina's academic institutions, state and federal management agencies, and private institutions that:

1. To reduce the threat posed by the establishment of nonnative aquatic species, the NCAFS encourages a thorough evaluation of proposed introductions according to the recommendations of the AFS Policy on the Introduction of Aquatic Species ³;
2. Existing state and federal regulations on the importation, culture, sale, and release of nonnative aquatic species must be effectively coordinated (intra- and inter-state), enforced, and made more stringent where existing regulations have failed;
3. Actions should be taken by state and federal agencies to identify established populations of nonnative aquatic species not otherwise regulated or managed by said agencies, and critically review or develop management strategies to restore ecosystems degraded by the presence of established nonnative species;
4. The NCAFS will actively participate in the education of the public and private entities regarding the potential risks of nonnative introductions and provide guidance on how to reduce those risks.

³ SEE http://www.fisheries.org/Public_Affairs/Policy_Statements/Index_policy_statements.shtml; accessed January 2003