

L.D.W.F. SCHEDULES PUBLIC MEETING TO PRESENT TILAPIA ERADICATION PLAN FOR PORT SULPHUR AREA

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The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) will present plans for eradication of tilapia in Plaquemines Parish waterways during a **public meeting set for 6 p.m. Thursday, May 21 in the Belle Chasse Auditorium**, 8398 LA Hwy. 23, Belle Chasse.

LDWF Office of Fisheries staff will detail how biologists and technicians plan to utilize the fish-specific toxicant rotenone to remove the exotic species from an area north and south of Port Sulphur along LA Hwy. 23.

Rotenone, a naturally derived fish toxicant, is approved by the Environmental Protection Agency and will biodegrade within four days within the waterways where it is used. Once tilapia removal has been verified, LDWF plans to re-stock area waterbodies with indigenous species.

A commercial and recreational fishing closure, in effect since May 5, includes both public and private waters bounded on the north by St. Jude Road, on the east by the Mississippi River main levee, on the south by Milan Drive and on the west by the back levee of the drainage ditch. During the closure, no person is allowed to take or possess or attempt to take any species of fish from waters within the closed area. No person can possess while on the waters of the closed area any fishing gear capable of taking fish. The area will remain closed to fishing until reopened by the Secretary of LDWF.

Tilapia, fish native to Africa, are exotic species capable of displacing native fish and are currently prohibited from being possessed in Louisiana except under extremely restrictive permits issued to tilapia producers. It appears the tilapia are currently confined to an area that can be treated. If allowed to spread, tilapia could result in drastic environmental, recreational and economical impacts, and fishermen, both commercial and recreational, could be pathways that spread tilapia into other Louisiana waters.

For more information on the fishing closure and tilapia, visit the LDWF web file www.wlf.louisiana.gov/tilapia. Any fisherman landing a tilapia, outside of the closure area, is asked to contact LDWF's Office of Fisheries by phone or e-mail at 225-763-5415 or hfox@wlf.la.gov.

For more information, contact Bo Boehring, ph. 225-765-5115 or bboehring@wlf.la.gov.