

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Estimated at dockside, shrimp consistently ranks as Louisiana's largest commercial fishery by value. With exceptions, the fishery contributes 55%-65% of the state's total saltwater fish and shellfish harvest and in excess of 85% of the value of the state's edible production.

The value of Louisiana's seafood landings in 1990, excluding aquaculture production, equalled \$279 million at dockside. The value of the state's shrimp landings for the same year equalled \$153 million, or 55% of the total. This value exceeded that of the state's menhaden fishery (\$41.7 million) by a factor of more than three, the value of the state's oyster industry (\$29.9 million) by a factor of five, and the state's blue crab fishery (\$14.2 million) by a factor exceeding ten.

This management plan addresses the problems and potentials of Louisiana's penaeid shrimp fishery. The plan was developed by a project jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), Louisiana State University (LSU), and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and

Fisheries (LDWF). The DOC provided funding through a NOAA-NMFS MARFIN Project. LSU experts including a biologist, an economist, and an attorney provided the scientific information necessary to evaluate the management options suggested by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. The early development of the plan was guided by the goal of "maximizing the economic benefits of the fishery to Louisiana and the region". Subsequent review of the draft plan by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission's Shrimp Management Committee (committee) resulted in refining the set of feasible management actions and a elaboration of the management goals. After review by the committee, public comment was solicited. The final product of this process is a set of proposed actions to be addressed by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission and the Louisiana Legislature in the future management of the fishery.