



Fishery Research Presented at Louisiana American Society of Fisheries Meeting

A group of over 125 scientists, researchers and interested parties gathered at the Louisiana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society annual meeting in Lafayette Jan 27-28. Department of Wildlife and Fishery scientists joined with researchers and students from universities and colleges across the state as well as other interested parties to discuss various fishery related research topics. LDWF Secretary Robert Barham began the conference with a keynote address discussing the impacts of the summer oil spill and emphasizing the state's commitment to testing and certifying the state's seafood as safe and promoting Louisiana seafood around the country.

Among the presenters, 19 were undergraduates and graduate students presenting their research on a variety of topics. Research topics covered favorite seafood species like red crawfish, pompano, red snapper, spotted sea trout and redfish. Research with other important species such as baitfish and shark habitat was also presented. For example, soybean-based diets are being tested at the LSU AgCenter Aquaculture Research Station with pompano for a more cost-effective aquaculture feed. Various physiological traits were monitored in red crawfish to indicate low oxygen level stress by researchers at LSU AgCenter School of Renewable Natural Resources. Various presentations by the LSU AgCenter Aquaculture Research Station covered research on growing cocahoe minnows as bait, and other researchers from University of Louisiana-Lafayette looked at copper acclimation in killifish.

Red snapper research by LSU's Department of Oceanography and Coastal Science compared the reproductive biology of the fish at several different habitat sites including active oil platforms and decommissioned platforms compared to their natural habitat. At Southeastern University's Department of Biological Science, spotted sea trout work compared the genetic variation of sea trout between the various Louisiana coastal zones to see if all populations of spotted sea trout are intermixing along the coast or if different estuaries are staying isolated.

Several talks focused on the joint attempted removal of tilapia from Port Sulphur and the subsequent stocking of predatory fish to limit the invasive fish by LDWF, Nicholls State University and UNO's Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Science. To date several tilapia and invasive cichlids have still been found in the area. Other joint work by Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium, LSU, LSU's School of Veterinary Medicine and LDWF focused on increasing survival in recreational catch-and-release fish, such as through fishing gear and handling.



A Joint publication of Louisiana Sea Grant and the LSU AgCenter



Student awards were given for the top three presentations, posters and abstracts. Winners were from across the state. For abstracts, the winners were Christopher Bonvillain, LSU AgCenter School of Renewable Natural Resources (3rd and 2nd place), E Hu, LSU AgCenter's Aquaculture Research Station (1st place). For posters, the winners were Patrick Smith, UNO Pontchartrain Institute for the Environmental Sciences (3rd place); Jonathon McKenzie, UNO's Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences (2nd place) and Christopher Bonvillain, LSU AgCenter's School of Renewable Natural Resources (1st place). Finally, for presentations the winners were William Sheftall IV, LSU AgCenter's School of Renewable Natural Resources (3rd place), Dannielle Kulaw, LSU's School of the Coast and Environment (2nd place) and Justin Merrifield, Nicholls State's Department of Biological Sciences (1st place).

Louisiana Sea Grant Seeks Public Comment for Program Review

The Louisiana Sea Grant College Program (LSG) will have its scheduled four-year review on March 22-23, 2011, in 118 Sea Grant Building, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La. 70803.

A federal Site Review Team convened by the Director of the National Sea Grant College Program will review and discuss LSG management and organization, stakeholder engagement and collaborative network/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) activities.

People who would like to offer comments to the review team on these aspects of the program are invited to submit written statements no later than Friday, March 11, 2011. Comments should be e-mailed to the National Sea Grant College Program at oar.sg.feedback@noaa.gov.

Following the site visit, the review team will produce a report to the National Sea Grant College Program and LSG. The review is part of a larger effort by the National Sea Grant College Program to foster increased cooperation among the 32 Sea Grant Programs nationwide and to understand how local and regional programs and priorities relate to NOAA national needs and priorities.

Louisiana Sea Grant is an ocean and coastal research, extension, outreach and education program. Its administrative office is located at Louisiana State University's Baton Rouge campus, and it has extension, outreach and education offices in parishes throughout the Louisiana Coastal Zone. Louisiana Sea Grant is funded by NOAA, Louisiana State University, Louisiana coastal parishes, a variety of local, state and federal competitive grants and by private endowments. LSG extension, outreach and education specialists provide training, education, expert advice and assistance on safe and sustainable seafood, healthy coastal ecosystems, hazard-resilience in coastal communities and sustainable coastal development. Sea Grant-funded scientists conduct research to help find solutions to these types of coastal issues.

For more information about the review, contact LSG Executive Director Charles Wilson at cwilson@lsu.edu.

Impacts of the National Oil Spill Commission's Report on Gulf Restoration

On May 22, President Barack Obama assembled the National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling by executive order. Their goal: Find the root causes of the disaster and examine the historical problems that have increased the Gulf of Mexico's vulnerability over the past decades.

The BP-Deepwater Horizon disaster created an environmental and economic tragedy that the Gulf Coast will live with for years if not decades. In addition to tragically claiming 11 human lives, the disaster polluted water and wetlands, harmed fish and wildlife and threatened the livelihoods of those who depend on a healthy Gulf for jobs, business and recreation. These problems haven't ended even though the well was capped and sealed for good last September.

Many of the findings and recommendations of the seven-member National Oil Spill Commission were strong, and closely mirrored recommendations made in a report delivered by Navy Secretary Ray Mabus in August of 2010. If fully implemented, the recommendations will go a long way in restoring the Gulf of Mexico to a healthy, resilient state.

Their report prioritizes science and environmental protection as essential criteria for all future decisions made about how to handle natural resources in the Gulf of Mexico. The need now is for Congress to create new laws and policies that will provide these new levels of security for the Gulf.

Of the many recommendations proposed in the 400-page commission report, there are four in particular that would accelerate restoration of the Gulf ecosystem, increase the resiliency and sustainability of local communities and make better use of science to understand impacts from the BP and future oil disasters:

- *Improve scientific understanding of oil spill impacts, particularly for the deepwater environment.*

What this means is that during at-sea oil disasters the U.S. Coast Guard and the federal on-scene coordinator should provide scientists with timely access to the response zone so that they can conduct independent scientific research, and prepare for long-term monitoring in the future. The Oil Spill Commission recommends that the National Science Foundation should expand its rapid-response grant program in coordination with the new National Ocean Council.

- *Provide a fair and transparent compensatory restoration program that is based on the Natural Resource Damage Assessment [NRDA] process.*

This means that NRDA trustees should ensure that the compensatory restoration process should not only be transparent, but appropriate for all damages quantified from the disaster. The commission recognizes in its report that the NRDA process has been primarily focused on coastal impacts, but

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that the location of this spill compels a focus on the potentially significant marine and deepwater impacts of the disaster. They urge that any NRDA settlements reached should provide for long-term monitoring of affected resources, but not just for a return to the baseline conditions. They recommend that settlements allow for a restoration that is an “enhancement” beyond the baseline.

- *Create a long-term restoration program that is permanently funded, grounded in sound science, and is responsive to regional and public input.*

It’s here that the commission calls for Congress to dedicate 80 percent of Clean Water Act penalties to go to environmental restoration of the Gulf of Mexico – something that most environmental NGOs and science groups across the Gulf are calling for. Here, they also echo the Mabus report call for establishment of a coordinated state-federal ecosystem restoration entity that should implement a comprehensive restoration strategy. This strategy, says the commission, should set short- and long-term goals using the following criteria for funding projects: 1) national significance; 2) contribution to achieving ecosystem resilience; and, 3) contribution to environmental problems in the Gulf.

- *Develop better tools to balance economic and environmental interests in the Gulf.*

This call is for the appropriate federal agencies -- including the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior, NOAA and the NRDA trustees -- to better balance the myriad economic and environmental interests concentrated in the Gulf region moving forward. The commission recommends that the National Ocean Council, in collaboration with the relevant federal agencies and the scientific community, expand the Gulf of Mexico Integrated Ocean Observing System. The commission also recognized the needs for increased investments in science and technology for both marine-and land-based systems to help reduce excessive nutrient runoff that contributes to the Gulf’s deadly hypoxia problems.

The role of the commission now is to advocate for these policy changes to be implemented. They’ve held public forums and testified before Congress to ensure that Gulf restoration remains part of the conversation about the Gulf of Mexico’s post-oil disaster future. Their continued work is recognition of the fact that while oil from the surface may be gone, the hard work of full Gulf recovery is only beginning.

Brentin Mock is communications manager for Ocean Conservancy’s Gulf Restoration Center in New Orleans. He can be reached at bmock@oceanconservancy.org.

Closure Date for the South Atlantic Recreational Black Sea Bass Fishery

NOAA Fisheries Service has determined that the 2010-2011 recreational annual catch limit (ACL) of 409,000 pounds for black sea bass has been reached. As a result, the recreational sector for black sea bass in federal waters of the South Atlantic from 35° 15.19’ N. lat., (the latitude of Cape Hatteras Light, NC) to Key West, FL, will be closed, effective 12:01 a.m. (local time) Feb. 12, 2011, through 12:01 a.m. June 1, 2011.

For vessels which have a valid federal charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic Snapper-grouper, the closure applies to state and federal waters. The operator of a vessel that has been issued a federal for-hire permit for snapper-grouper must have landed any black sea bass harvested from either state or federal waters prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, February 12, 2011.

Background:

Black sea bass are overfished (population is too low), and experiencing overfishing (rate of removals is too high). The commercial quota is 309,000 pounds gutted weight, and the recreational allocation is 409,000 pounds gutted weight. Harvest levels must be kept below these levels to prevent fish from being removed too quickly, and to rebuild the black sea bass population.

Amendment 17B to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 17B), which became effective Jan. 31, 2011, retains these values as the respective commercial and recreational ACLs. Amendment 17B also includes black sea bass accountability measures (AMs), which are actions intended to prevent the ACL from being exceeded. If the ACL is projected to be met, the recreational fishery would be closed. If the ACL is exceeded, the ACL for the following fishing year will be reduced by the amount of the overage. That determination will be made before the next fishing year begins.

Amendment 17B to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 17B), which became effective Jan. 31, 2011, retains these values as the respective commercial and recreational ACLs. Amendment 17B also includes black sea bass accountability measures (AMs), which are actions intended to prevent the ACL from being exceeded. If the ACL is projected to be met, the recreational fishery would be closed. If the ACL is exceeded, the ACL for the following fishing year will be reduced by the amount of the overage. That determination will be made before the next fishing year begins.

Commercial Sector:

Commercial harvest of black sea bass closed on Oct. 7, 2010, because NOAA Fisheries Service projected landings would reach the quota by that time. However, an updated report indicated that less fish were landed than expected. The commercial sector for black sea bass reopened from 12:01 a.m. Dec. 1, 2010, until 12:01 a.m. Dec. 15, 2010. It remains closed until June 1, 2011

Black Sea Bass ACLS: Recreational: 409,000 pounds gutted weight

Commercial: 309,000 pounds gutted weight

Black Sea Bass AMs: Recreational: If black sea bass are overfished and the ACL is projected to be reached, the recreational fishery will be closed. If the ACL is exceeded, based on a three year running average of landings, the ACL will be reduced the following year by the amount of the overage. For 2011, the average landings of 2010 and 2011 is used. For 2012 and beyond, the most recent three-year running average is used.

Commercial: fishery closed when ACL is projected to be met.

Public Comment Sought on Revised Control Date for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic

NOAA Fisheries Service announces (76 FR 5325) the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is establishing a revised control date of Sept. 17, 2010, for snapper-grouper fishery in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone. The revised control date replaces an existing Oct. 14, 2005, control date for the snapper-grouper fishery (70 FR 60058). This notice announces the council may, in the future, consider management measures to limit participation or effort for snapper-grouper using the Sept. 17, 2010, control date as part of a management strategy.

The council may recommend a different control date or it may recommend a management regime that does not involve a control date. Other criteria, such as documentation of landings or fishing effort, may be used to determine eligibility for participation in a limited access fishery. The council and/or NOAA Fisheries Service also may choose to take no further action to control entry or access to the fishery, in which case the control date may be rescinded. Any action by the council will be taken pursuant to the requirements for fishery management plan and amendment development established under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

Request for Comments

Comments on the establishment of control dates for this fishery must be submitted by March 2, 2011. You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

Electronic Submissions: Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. To submit comments enter "NOAA-NMFS-2010-0282" in the keyword search and then check the box "send a comment or submission." Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect or Adobe PDF file formats only.

Mail: Karla Gore, Southeast Regional Office, NOAA Fisheries Service, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505.

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Sector Separation Workshop Summary

The summary of the Sector Separation workshop held by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Nov. 8-10, 2010, is now available online at: http://www.gulfcouncil.org/council_meetings/sectorseparationmaterials/Final%20GSSW%20Summary,%20January%202011.pdf.

Seasonal Prohibition of Red, Black, Tiger, Yellowfin or Yellowedge Grouper in Caribbean Federal Waters and Seasonal Closure of Grammanik Bank off St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands Began at 12:01 a.m., Local Time, Feb. 1, 2011

NOAA Fisheries Service would like to remind the public there is a seasonal prohibition on fishing for or possession of red, black, tiger, yellowfin and yellowedge grouper (Grouper Unit 4) in Caribbean federal waters from 12:01 a.m., local time, Feb. 1 through April 30, 2011. This prohibition on

possession does not apply to such grouper harvested and landed ashore prior to the closure. Also, from Feb. 1 through April 30, each year, no person may fish for or possess any species of fish, except highly migratory species, within the Grammanik Bank closed area. The term "fish" means finfish, mollusks, crustaceans and all other forms of marine animal and plant life other than marine mammals and birds. Highly migratory species means bluefin, bigeye, yellowfin, albacore and skipjack tunas; swordfish; sharks; white marlin, blue marlin, sailfish and longbill spearfish.

The Grammanik Bank closed area is bounded by thumb lines connecting, the following points: Point North latitude West longitude:

A 18°11.898' N 64°56.328' W

B 18°11.645' N 64°56.225' W

C 18°11.058' N 64°57.810' W

D 18°11.311' N 64°57.913' W

A 18°11.898' N 64°56.328' W

The closure encompasses the area where a yellowfin grouper spawning aggregation is reported to occur on Grammanik Bank.

King Mackerel Trip Limit to Remain at 50 Fish per Day for Commercial Hook-And-Line Vessels Fishing in the Florida East Coast Subzone

The daily vessel trip limit will remain at 50 fish for commercial hook-and-line vessels fishing for Gulf group king mackerel in federal waters of the Florida east coast subzone.

Based on landings data, NOAA Fisheries Service determined that more than 75 percent (or 780,469 pounds) of the 1,040,625-pound quota has been harvested for this fishery segment before Feb. 1, 2011. If 75 percent of the quota had not been harvested, the trip limit would have increased to 75 fish.

The 50-fish daily trip limit will remain in effect until March 31, 2011, unless the subzone's quota is reached. If the 1,040,625-pound quota is harvested during February or March 2011, the subzone will be closed and the daily trip limit will be reduced to zero king mackerel until the 2010/2011 season ends on March 31, 2011. Such a closure would be effective upon filing the notification with the Office of the Federal Register.

From Nov. 1 through March 31, the Florida east coast subzone for Gulf group king mackerel is the area north of 25° 20.4' N. lat. (a line directly east from the Miami-Dade/Monroe County, Florida, boundary), and south of 29° 25' N. lat. (a line directly east from the Volusia/Flagler County, Florida, boundary).

Under the Florida Administrative Code established by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the daily trip limit for king mackerel harvested in state waters off the east coast of Florida also will remain at 50 fish.

Comments Sought on Compatible Queen Conch Closures Rule

NOAA Fisheries Service is seeking public input on a proposed rule to modify the Queen Conch Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to implement compatible closures with U.S. Virgin Islands (U.S.V.I.) territorial waters. The intended effect of this proposed rule is to provide further protection for queen conch.

Background:

Currently, fishing for and possession of queen conch is prohibited in the Caribbean exclusive economic zone, with the exception of an area known as Lang Bank east of St. Croix, which is open to harvest of queen conch from Oct. 1 through June 30. In St. Croix territorial waters, queen conch is managed under a 50,000 pound quota and a seasonal closure from June 1 through Oct. 31. The proposed rule will implement compatible closures in federal waters with the St. Croix territorial regulations to close the queen conch fishery after the local government has determined the quota in St. Croix has been reached. The proposed rule will also extend the seasonal closure in federal waters to June 1 through Oct. 31, each year, consistent with the territorial seasonal closure.

Request for Comments:

Written comments on this proposed rule must be received no later than Feb. 22, 2011.

Public Comment Sought on a Proposed Rule to Establish a Fixed Closed Season for the Recreational Harvest of Greater Amberjack in the Gulf of Mexico

NOAA Fisheries Service has published a proposed rule that, if approved and implemented, would establish a June 1 through July 31 seasonal closure for recreational harvest of greater amberjack in or from the Gulf of Mexico federal waters. The intended effect of the proposed rule is to maintain the rebuilding plan targets for the overfished greater amberjack resource, reduce the likelihood of exceeding the recreational quota for greater amberjack, minimize in-season quota closures for greater amberjack during peak recreational fishing months and increase social and economic benefits for Gulf recreational fishers by maximizing the number of fishing days available to the recreational sector.

Background:

In 2009, the recreational sector exceeded its greater amberjack quota. The recreational sector was closed on Oct. 24 after NOAA Fisheries Service projected the recreational quota was met. Final landings indicated the recreational quota was exceeded by 9 percent. In accordance with established accountability measures, the recreational quota for 2010 was reduced to account for this overage. In response to this quota closure, the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council developed a regulatory amendment to establish a fixed closed season to the harvest of greater amberjack by the recreational sector. Based on public input, the council selected to have a seasonal closure during June and July. These are peak recreational harvesting months of greater amberjack; closing federal waters during this time frame is expected to allow recreational fishing for greater amberjack to occur in all other months of the year, without exceeding the quota before year's end.

This two month closure coincides with the open recreational seasons for other managed reef fish species, including red snapper, and provides recreational fishers the opportunity to fish for at least

one of the targeted species year round (provided the recreational quota for greater amberjack is not exceeded). A closed season for Gulf greater amberjack that overlaps with an open season for Gulf red snapper is intended to minimize the social and economic impacts to recreational fishers in the Gulf.

Dates: Comments must be received no later than 5 p.m., eastern time, on Feb. 23, 2011. Addresses: You may submit comments, identified by "0648-BA48", by any one of the following methods:

Electronic Submissions: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Mail: Rich Malinowski, Southeast Regional Office, NOAA Fisheries Service, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701.

Instructions for electronic submissions: No comments will be posted for public viewing until after the comment period is over. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All personal identifying information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

Commercial King Mackerel Season Opens July 1

Data indicates Louisiana lands 90 percent of Western Gulf of Mexico Quota

The 2011 commercial king mackerel season will begin July 1, 2011. The season opening date was set at the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission meeting. Once the season opens, it will remain open until the quota of approximately 1 million pounds is met.

King mackerel is a significant commercial fishery in Louisiana. From 2000 through 2009, Louisiana has landed, on average, an amount equal to approximately 90 percent of the allotted western Gulf of Mexico quota. In 2009 approximately 926,000 pounds were landed in Louisiana. A significant amount of the king mackerel landed in Louisiana is shipped to markets in the northeastern U.S., primarily for New York.

Currently, the 2010-2011 commercial king mackerel season is still open, as the established quota has not yet been harvested; however, it is expected to close prior to July 1.

State Waters Close to Harvest of Gag Grouper

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission announced the recreational harvest of gag grouper in state waters will be prohibited effective immediately. The latest stock assessment for the species indicates that gag grouper in the Gulf of Mexico are overfished.

Federal fisheries managers recently announced a temporary rule that closes Gulf federal waters to recreational fishing for gag grouper. The closure will remain in place while they develop long-term measures to improve gag grouper populations.

The commission's actions allow regulations in state waters to complement regulations of the National Marine Fisheries Service for federally managed waters. NMFS and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council typically request consistent regulations for Louisiana waters to enhance effectiveness and enforceability of regulations.

Oyster Lease Relocation Program Approved

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission approved the Oyster Lease Relocation Program for select oyster leases that have been non-renewed by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) since 1998. This new program will move 19 oyster leases, comprising 700 water-bottom acres to a relocation area of approximately 1,483 acres east of the Mississippi in the open waters of Breton Sound.

Under existing LDWF policy, oyster leases that lie completely within the public oyster seed grounds are not renewable following the expiration of the original 15-year lease term. The Oyster Lease Relocation Program offers the 19 identified leaseholders who are subject to this non-renewal policy, an opportunity to obtain a replacement lease of equal size in a new area.

The relocation area was determined jointly by LDWF and the Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration, in consultation with the Louisiana Oyster Task Force. Prior to being chosen, the relocation area received extensive investigation to determine its appropriateness in terms of suitable water bottom, firmness, salinity regime and conflicts with existing oil and gas infrastructure (pipelines, wells, etc.). Following a public comment period, the commission will consider ratifying a final rule for the Oyster Lease Relocation Program at its May meeting.

Oyster Season Remains Closed East of the Mississippi and in Hackberry Bay

Originally scheduled to open Nov. 15, season opening will be reevaluated at Feb. 3 Commission meeting

The 2010-2011 oyster season for public seed grounds east of the Mississippi River and in Hackberry Bay will remain closed for now. The season, which was originally supposed to open Nov. 15, 2010, has been under evaluation each month at the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission meetings since November. The commission has elected to keep the season closed each month in order to allow oyster spat (young oysters less than one inch in length) to develop.

Samples taken by Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries biologists throughout the fall and winter of 2010 indicated the presence of a reproductive event in some areas east of the Mississippi River. The reproductive event resulted in the presence of significant numbers of oyster spat. This spat set represents potential rebound of the oyster resources in this area for future years.

Significant oyster mortalities were also previously documented during summertime biological sampling in some areas, which further decreased an already stressed oyster resource. The continued season delay will help to protect and conserve the remaining oyster resources located in these areas.

The public grounds east of the Mississippi River contribute approximately 28 percent of all oyster harvest in Louisiana on an annual basis, but are currently at some of their lowest oyster availability levels in the last 20 years.

All remaining public oyster areas throughout the coast will continue with the current oyster season framework as set by the commission at their August 2010 meeting. Most of these areas opened to harvest on Nov. 15, 2010.

Seasonal Closure For Shallow Water Grouper in the South Atlantic

Closure Begins January 1, 2011: A seasonal prohibition on the harvest of shallow water snapper-grouper species in federal waters of the South Atlantic was effective 12:01 a.m. Jan. 1, 2011 through April 30, 2011, and applies to recreational and commercial harvest of shallow water grouper species. During this time, no gag, black grouper, red grouper, scamp, rock hind, red hind, coney, graysby, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper and tiger grouper may be harvested, possessed, sold or purchased. The closure also applies to shallow water grouper taken in South Atlantic state waters by any person on board a vessel holding a federal snapper-grouper permit, including a South Atlantic Charter/Headboat permit for Snapper-Grouper. This seasonal closure is part of a suite of management measures contained in Amendment 16 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region, which became effective on July 29, 2009.

Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures for Nine South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Species

NOAA Fisheries Service has published a final rule implementing Amendment 17B to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 17B). This final rule, establishes annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures (AMs) for nine snapper-grouper species (golden tilefish, snowy grouper, speckled hind, warsaw grouper, gag, red grouper, black grouper, black sea bass, and vermilion snapper) as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. ACLs are set at levels that prevent overfishing (when the rate of removals is too high). AMs are management controls established to ensure that ACLs are not exceeded, or they may correct for overages if ACLs are exceeded during a fishing season.

In addition to specifying ACLs and AMs for nine snapper-grouper species, Amendment 17B allocates 97 percent of the golden tilefish ACL to the commercial sector and 3 percent of the ACL to the recreational sector, and specifies management measures intended to address overfishing, including:

- A prohibition on harvest and retention of speckled hind and warsaw grouper in federal waters of the South Atlantic.
- A prohibition on harvest and retention of snowy grouper, blueline tilefish, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, queen snapper, and silk snapper, beyond 240 feet (73 m) in federal waters of

the South Atlantic. This species prohibition is intended to reduce incidental catch of speckled hind and warsaw grouper.

- And a bag limit reduction for snowy grouper from one fish per person per day, to one fish per vessel per day.

Effective Date:

All measures in Amendment 17B were effective Jan. 31, 2011.

Clarification on the New Seasonal Closure of Bajo de Sico in the U.S. Caribbean

NOAA Fisheries Service published a final rule to the Regulatory Amendment to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Fishery of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands modifying the Bajo de Sico Seasonal Closure. The final rule was published in the Federal Register on Nov. 2, 2010, (75 FR 67247), and the provisions became effective Dec. 2, 2010.

The final rule modified the Bajo de Sico seasonal closure from a three-month closure to a six-month closure, and prohibited fishing for and possession of Caribbean reef fish in or from the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) portion of Bajo de Sico from Oct. 1 through March 31, each year. In addition, fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gillnets or trammel nets is prohibited within the EEZ portion of Bajo de Sico year-round.

The final rule allows fishers to harvest species not managed by the council, including highly migratory species (HMS) or other non-HMS coastal migratory pelagics.

The final rule also prohibited anchoring in the Bajo de Sico EEZ year-round. This final rule also added spear to the list of allowable gears in the commercial sector of the Caribbean reef fish fishery.

For the 2010-2011 fishing year, Bajo de Sico will be closed for Caribbean reef fish from Dec. 2, 2010, through March 31, 2011. For each consecutive year, starting with 2011-2012, the full six-month closure, Oct. 1 through March 31, will be in effect.

Modifications to Programmatic General Permit SAJ-71 for Holders of the Federal Permit for Aquacultured Live Rock in the Exclusive Economic Zone

NOAA Fisheries Service is issuing a notice to current holders of the Federal Permit for Aquacultured Live Rock in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) regarding changes to the Programmatic General Permit SAJ-71 (PGP SAJ-71). The PGP SAJ-71 was created by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is intended to simplify and speed processing of permits for live rock aquaculture in federal waters offshore of the state of Florida. The PGP SAJ-71 was reissued in 2010 and contains two new special conditions that impact current and future holders of the Federal Permit for Aquacultured Live Rock in the EEZ.

Background: On Feb. 6, 1995, the Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued the PGP SAJ-71 permit for live rock aquaculture in federal waters offshore of the state of Florida. PGP SAJ-71 was issued pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, and gave

general authority to NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, for its administration for the deposition of materials for the purpose of live rock aquaculture in the EEZ off the coasts of Florida. It was reissued in 2000 and 2005. Currently, there are 23 active SAJ-71 permits.

Live rock consists of certain living marine organisms or an assemblage thereof attached to a hard substratum (including dead coral or rock). During the past several decades, a large demand for live rock has occurred, due to a large increase in the number of public and private marine aquaria. In meeting this large demand for live rock, commercial harvesters have adversely impacted areas of naturally occurring reefs and hard bottom areas. In response, in 1989, the state of Florida prohibited the taking of live rock. This, in turn, caused the harvesters to shift their efforts out of state waters and into the EEZ [The EEZ surrounding the state of Florida encompasses the area between approximately 9 nautical miles offshore and 200 nautical miles offshore on the Gulf coast, and the area between approximately 3 nautical miles offshore and 200 nautical miles offshore on the Atlantic coast.] Because of fishing pressure in the EEZ, the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, established under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), and NOAA Fisheries Service have prohibited live rock harvesting in the EEZ from North Carolina through Texas. An exception is made for aquaculture operations.

After the PGP SAJ-71 was reissued in 2005, two coral species, *Acropora palmata* (elkhorn coral) and *A. cervicornis* (staghorn coral), were listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (71 FR 26852).

The two new special conditions in the PGP SAJ-71 are:

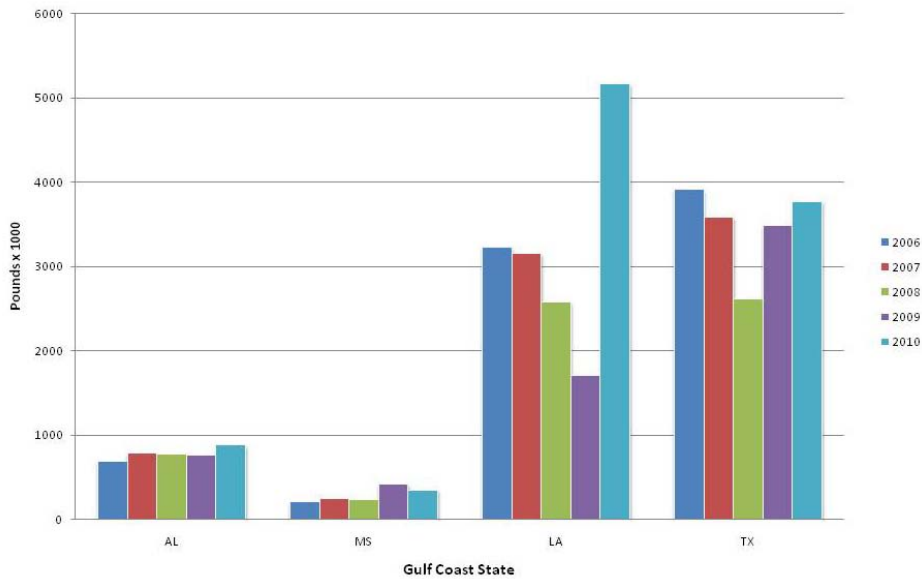
Condition 10: This general permit does not authorize the placement of materials for the construction and/or renourishment of artificial reefs, the construction of impoundments and/or semi-impoundments of waters of the U.S., or structures such as but not limited to aquaculture docks, circulating systems including inflow and outfall structures, platforms, etc. Furthermore, this permit does not authorize the deployment of offshore and/or nearshore cages for the culture or holding of motile species or the placement of materials for lobster harvesting (such as lobster casitas).

Condition 13: Each rock must be visually inspected for the presence of *Acropora palmata* (elkhorn coral) and *A. cervicornis* (staghorn coral) prior to harvesting. Harvest of any rock with these *Acropora* spp. attached is prohibited. For more information on *Acropora* spp. visit: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/esa/acropora.htm>.

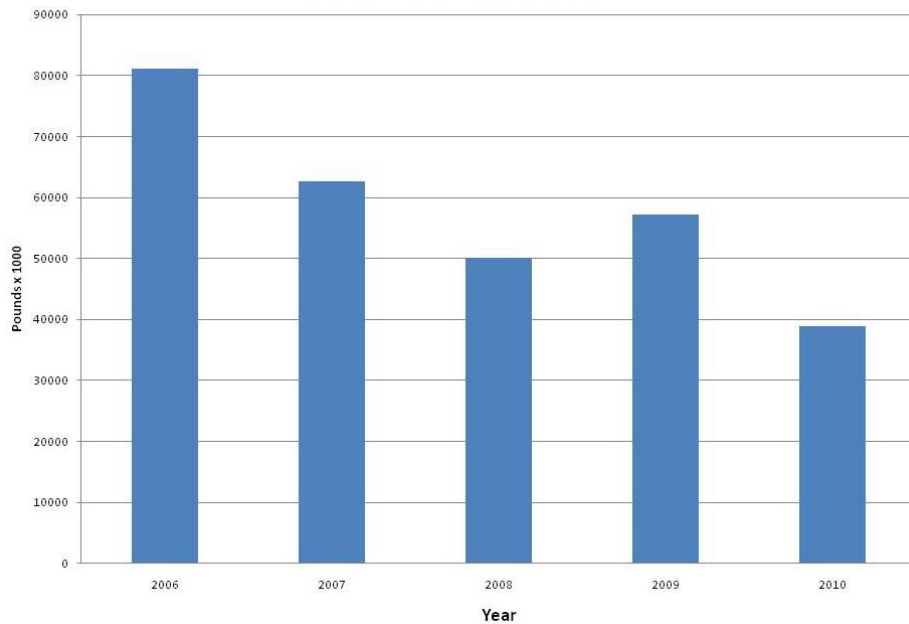
Louisiana Shrimp Watch

Louisiana specific data portrayed in the graphics are selected from preliminary data posted by NOAA on their website. All data portrayed are subject to final revision and approval by NOAA. Shrimp landings are ex-vessel prices, inclusive of all species harvested. Missing, inadequate or withheld reports are portrayed as “zero” in these graphics. Price graphics reflect central Gulf states only (Texas and Florida are reported independently). For more information, please refer to: www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/market_news/index.html.

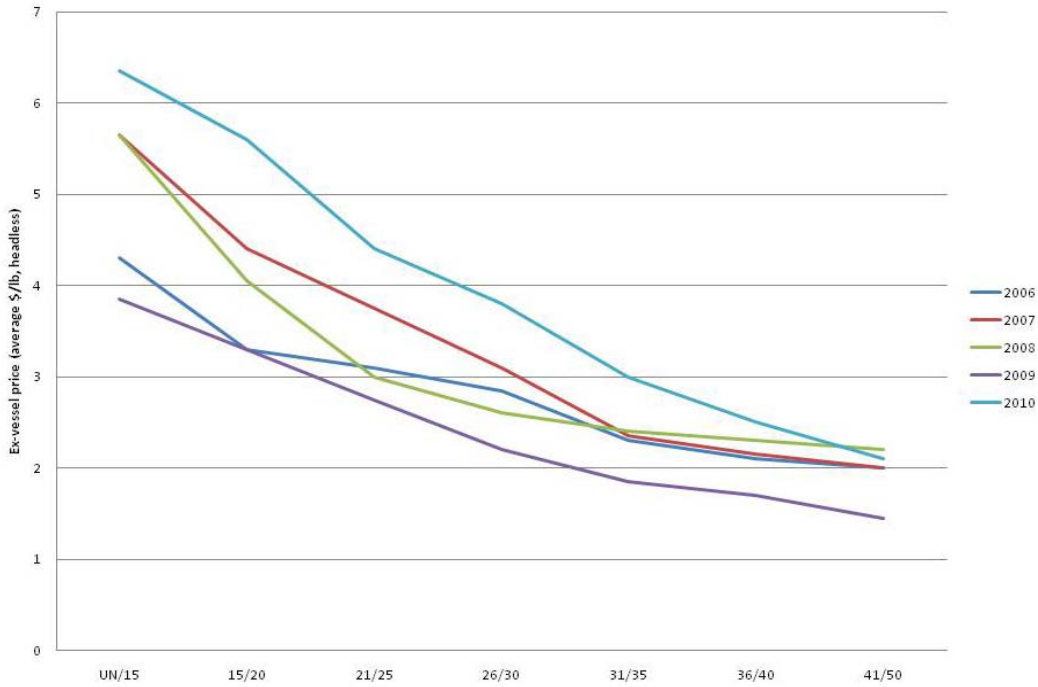
December 2010 Shrimp Harvest



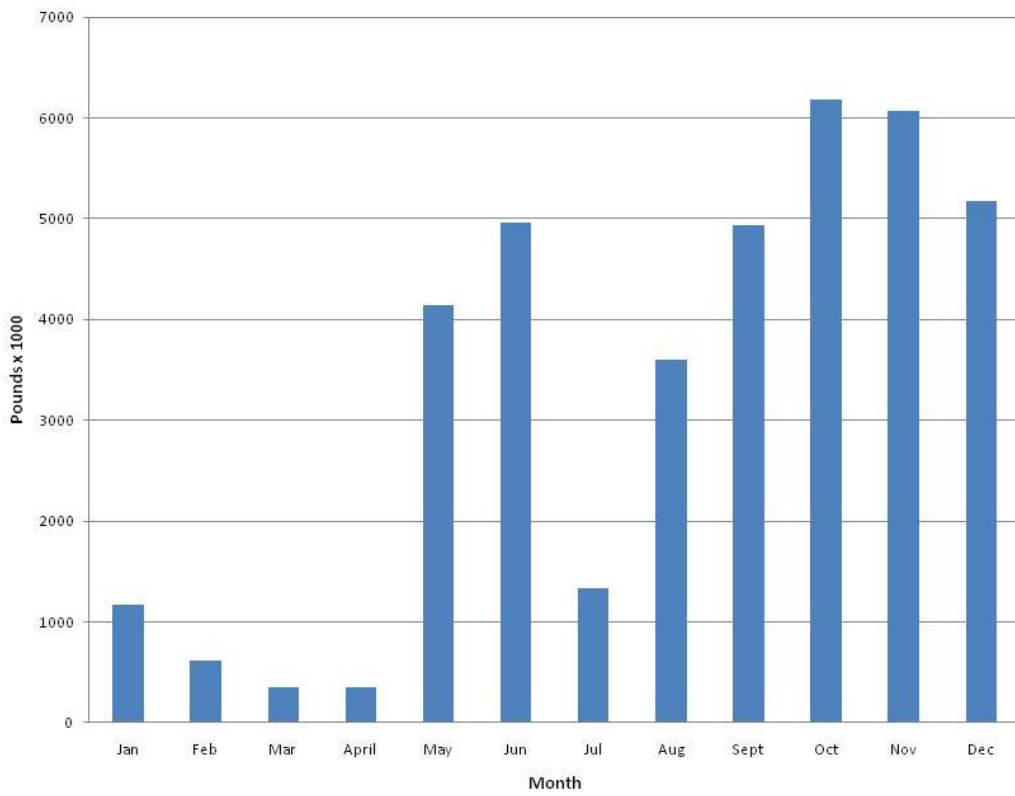
LA Year To Date Shrimp Harvest



December N. G. of M. Shrimp Prices



LA 2010 Shrimp Harvest



The Gumbo Pot
Crawfish Willy Coln

Chef Willy Coln, who came to town to run the kitchens of the Royal Sonesta, then opened his own terrific German restaurant on the West Bank, and finally was the executive chef of the Inter-Continental Hotel, retired last year. Here is one of the dishes he developed for the latter hotel's Veranda Restaurant, where it was served as an appetizer.

2 Tbs. butter
 1 Tbs. chopped French shallots
 1 tsp. chopped garlic
 1 Tbs. chopped green onions
 1 lb. crawfish tails
 1 oz. brandy
 2 Tbs. fresh tomato, peel and seeds removed, chopped
 1/2 cup crawfish stock
 2/3 cup whipping cream
 1/4 tsp. salt
 1/8 tsp. cayenne
 4 sheets puff pastry dough, 3 inch square (available at grocery stores)
 1 beaten egg yolk

1. Melt the butter over medium heat in a medium skillet until it bubbles. Sauté the shallots, garlic, and green onions until limp.
2. Add the crawfish tails and sauté until heated through. Carefully pour the brandy over the skillet contents and touch a flame to it. (If you're comfortable with flaming things and have firefighting resources.) When the flames die down (or all the alcohol boils away), stir in the tomato and the crawfish stock and bring to a boil.
3. Stir in the whipping cream, salt, and cayenne and heat through (but do not boil). Adjust seasonings and remove from the heat. Spoon into small ramekins and serve.
4. For an impressive presentation, top each ramekin with a piece of the puff pastry. Push it down around the sides to form a cap. Brush the pastry with beaten egg and bake in a preheated 400-degree oven until the top browns lightly. When your guests cut into the pastry cap, the wonderful aroma will hit them in the face.

Recipe provided by Tom Fitzmorris

If you have a favorite seafood recipe that you would like to share, please send it to Julie Anderson janderson@agcenter.lsu.edu for inclusion in future issues.



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We would like to hear from you! Please contact us regarding fishery questions, comments, or concerns you would like to see covered in the Lagniappe. Anyone interested in submitting information, such as articles, editorials, or photographs pertaining to fishing or fisheries management is encouraged to do so.

Please contact Lagniappe editor Julie Anderson at janderson@agcenter.lsu.edu

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