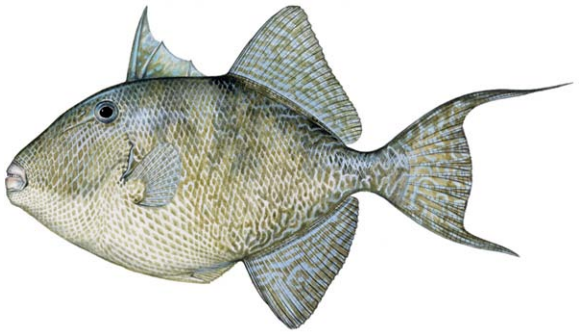
Lagniappe

July 2012 Volume 36, No. 7

Get Your Finger Off That Trigger!



Gray Triggerfish. Credit: Dianne Rome Peebles

The family Balistidae contains approximately 40 species of triggerfish. One of which recently caught the attention of NOAA, the gray triggerfish (*Balistes capriscus*). The gray triggerfish is also known as the grey triggerfish, leatherjacket, pig-faced, trigger-fish, filefish, common triggerfish and turbot. The triggerfish, a popular food fish, occurs in both the eastern and western Atlantic Ocean. In the east, the fish occurs from England to Ireland and in the Mediterranean Sea. Closer to home, the triggerfish is found from Canada to Argentina and in the Gulf of Mexico.

Gray triggerfish spawn for the first time when they reach 12 inches in length and are approximately two years old. Spawning occurs in warm summer waters from July through September. Females lay between 50,000 to 100,000 eggs depending on their size. Eggs are placed on the ocean floor in a nest, an area where sand has been scooped out. Male triggerfish will guard the nest for 48-55 hours until hatching occurs. Males will defend the eggs against not only other sea creatures but against human divers as well!

Juvenile fish differ from adults in color, where they live and what preys on them. Young triggerfish typically have small violet dots and are yellowish in color. They live at the ocean's surface under floating mats of sargassum, floating seaweed found in areas of the ocean with clear blue water. The seaweed provides the small fish with refuge from predators such as tuna, billfish, dolphinfish and sharks. In addition to protection, the sargassum supplies the young fish with food. While swimming along in the seaweed, fish feed on worms such as polychaetes, algae and barnacles. Once the fish reach five to seven inches in length, they pack their bags and move to the ocean floor.

Adult fish live at the bottom of the ocean, up to 180 feet deep, and are often associated with hard bottoms, ledges and reefs. Reef areas are important feeding grounds and provide protection. The combination of structure and coloration help the fish avoid predators such as grouper, sharks and amberjack. Adult fish are gray, yellow-brown or olive green in color with white dots or lines on the body and fins. Some even have blue spots on the dorsal fin or upper body. As triggerfish age, the

colors fade and become less pronounced. Triggerfish have eight strong, sharp peg-like teeth prefect for crushing prey. The fish are predators on invertebrates such as mussels, crabs, sea urchins, shrimp, sand dollars, sea stars and sea cucumbers.

Triggerfish can grow to two and a half feet in length and weigh up to 13 pounds; however, the average size is 15.5 inches and less than five pounds. Age estimates indicate the fish may be able to live up to 13 years. However they are typically harvested at a much younger age decreasing the long-term spawning ability of the population. Assessment of triggerfish populations indicated there are too few fish and too many being taken. In order to help rebuild the population and protect the resource, NOAA recently changed commercial and recreational harvest regulations of gray triggerfish. As of June 11, there is a recreational closure on gray triggerfish effective until Jan. 1, 2013. The commercial harvest will close from July 1, 2012-Jan. 1, 2013. During the closure, commercial and recreational harvest and possession are prohibited in state and federal waters. The 2008 rebuilding plan for the gray triggerfish is currently being revised by the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council. For additional information please see the gray triggerfish stories under Gulf of Mexico Regulations or the information page provided by NOAA at http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/GrouperSnapperandReefFish.htm.

- Nikki Anderson

Cameron Land Loss

For any longtime resident or frequent visitor of lower Cameron Parish, it is obvious that we have coastal marsh being converted to open water. Aside from the catastrophic changes caused by hurricanes and their associated storm surges, land loss has been gradual over the last few decades. Many factors have contributed to the rate of loss, such as channel and canal dredging which connect interior marshes with higher salinity waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

A natural factor that does not garner much attention is drought. The area has been hit with a series of droughts over the last 15 years. Short, seasonal dry periods are a healthy part of the marsh ecology. Typical dry periods in the summer lower water levels allowing many species of vegetation to sprout when the surface of the marsh dries. Normal rainfall keeps these plants growing into the fall and winter when water levels rise again. However, prolonged dry periods associated with droughts dry the marsh soils, which are high in organic matter, to the point of decomposing the organics and causing the soil to compact. When normal rainfall returns the area holds more water due to the compaction that occurred during the drought. This has happened in Cameron Parish in 1999-2000, 2005, 2010 and 2011.

Adding to the problem is sea level rise. Whether you believe that man has had any effect on Earth's climate or in global warming, the science is out there to show that the sea level along the Gulf Coast is rising. The world's oceans have been on the rise since the peak of the last ice age more than 18,000 years ago. The combination of sea level rise and land subsidence is referred to as "relative sea level rise". In most journal articles and government reports on sea level rise, Louisiana is listed as the area to be most impacted by relative sea level rise. While Cameron Parish's coastal area is experiencing the least impact of any coastal parish from relative sea level rise, it is quite significant. The two National Weather Service tide stations to Cameron's east and west, which have more than 100 years of data, show an average relative sea level rise of 5.66 millimeters per year (mm/yr) for

Sabine Pass, Tx., and 9.65 mm/yr for Eugene Island, La. This converts to one third of an inch per year or three inches per decade. Three inches over a decade does not seem like much until you consider that much of Cameron Parish is at three feet or less above sea level.

What does this mean for Cameron Parish and its residents?

1. Let's assume that a high tide of three feet puts water in the street in downtown Cameron. A three-foot tide is not the norm, but does happen several times per year. Using the three-inch per decade average in relative sea level rise, in 30 years (nine inch increase in relative sea level) a two-foot, three-inch tide will put water in the street. A two-foot, three-inch tide is quite common.
2. Assume the life of a tidal marsh management project with water control structures is 30 years. The management goal of the project is constructed to maintain water at a set level. Over the 30-year life of the project, tide water levels will be nine inches higher than planned for, making management goals of the project nearly impossible.

Relative sea level rise will affect every aspect of coastal activities. This is not meant to alarm anyone, only to raise awareness and to plan for sustainable future activities. Anyone who has lived on the coast for 30 years or so realizes, in normal years there is more water to land ratio than ever before. For more information, visit:

www.epa.gov/climatechange/effects/coastal/index.html
http://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/sltrends/sltrends.shtml
www.c2es.org/docUploads/gulf-coast-impacts-adaptation.pdf

- Kevin A. Savoie

Oyster Field Day

The Louisiana Sea Grant Oyster Hatchery held a field day on Saturday, June 16 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event was open to the public, and had more than 30 people from the region attend. Attendees ranged from local oyster producers to those interested in learning what the hatchery does. Visitors toured the hatchery, the LSU Oyster Research and Demonstration Farm and could tour the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' Research Laboratory. They were also treated to oyster spaghetti cooked by Dr. John Supan, the shellfish specialist operating the hatchery.

The field day was sponsored by Louisiana Sea Grant, LSU Agricultural Center, Louisiana Farm Bureau and the Louisiana Oyster Dealers and Growers Association. Since 1990, Louisiana Sea Grant has operated an oyster hatchery on Grand Isle focused on improving the state's oyster production

Lagniappe Fisheries Newsletter

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through research and technology transfer. You can see more on a video by This Week in Louisiana Agriculture: www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=9lYZnP7gIMk#!.

Graduate student Erin Leonhardt (center) explains her research. Photo credit: Julie Anderson

Regional Fishery Management Council Appointments

The Secretary of Commerce has announced the appointment of five new and returning members to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. Along with their colleagues, these new council members will help shape the science-based management of U.S. fisheries and continue the strong commitment to turning the corner on ending overfishing, rebuilding fish stocks, and achieving and maintaining sustainable fisheries and vibrant fishing communities. Council membership represents a diverse spectrum of interests and expertise - from commercial and recreational fishing industries, to environmental interests.

New and returning members include representatives from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. The appointees for 2012 fill obligatory seats for Alabama, Florida and Louisiana and two at-large seats.

Obligatory seats:

John “Johnny” R. Greene Jr. (Alabama)

Juan “John” M. Sanchez (Florida)

Campo “Camp” E. Matens (Louisiana)

At-large seats:

Harlon H. Pearce Jr. (Louisiana)

William “Corky” S. Perret (Mississippi)

LOUISIANA REGULATIONS

Extend Louisiana State Waters

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission took the first bold move to extend state waters from three miles offshore to three marine leagues or approximately 10.357 miles.

The commission approved this action based on Act 336 passed during the 2011 legislative session, which recognizes that the Louisiana gulfward boundary historically consists of three marine leagues and designates that boundary to be enforced by state law regarding the protection and restoration of coastal lands, waters and natural resources and regulation of activities affecting them.

“Today’s action by the commission supports what the governor, Legislature and people of Louisiana want to see from our department,” said Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Secretary Robert Barham. “The bountiful resources that are native to Louisiana’s waters should be managed beyond the three mile boundary currently recognized by the federal regulatory body and this is a bold first step by Louisiana in claiming what is rightful ours.”

LDWF officials encourage fishermen to use caution and their own personal judgment when fishing beyond the three mile boundary that is currently recognized as federal waters, as it is fully expected that federal agents will continue to enforce federal law. Until the time when Congress confirms Louisiana’s action today, the battle will continue over Louisiana’s state water boundary.

To view Act 336 in its entirety click here:

http://www.legis.state.la.us/billdata/streamdocument.asp?did=760938

Commercial Fishing for Gray Triggerfish to Close in Louisiana Waters

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) announced commercial fishing for gray triggerfish closed in Louisiana waters on June 30, 2012, at 11:59 p.m. and will remain closed until Jan. 1, 2013.

Each year, a commercial quota is established for gray triggerfish. Based on current landings, the 2012 commercial quota of 60,900 pounds was projected to be harvested by July 1, 2012.

During the closed season, all commercial harvest, possession, purchase, exchange, barter or sale or attempt to purchase, exchange, barter, trade or sell gray triggerfish is prohibited. This does not apply to fish harvested, landed ashore and sold prior to the effective closure date and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor with appropriate records.

GULF OF MEXICO REGULATIONS

Commercial Harvest of Gray Triggerfish

The commercial harvest of gray triggerfish in the Gulf of Mexico federal waters is closed, effective 12:01 a.m. (local time) July 1, 2012, until 12:01 a.m. (local time) Jan. 1, 2013. NOAA Fisheries Service has determined the 2012 commercial quota (annual catch target) of 60,900 pounds whole weight (ww) of gray triggerfish will be caught by this date.

During the closure:

- Commercial harvest or possession of gray triggerfish is prohibited.
- The closure applies in both state and federal waters for vessels that have a valid Gulf of Mexico commercial reef fish permit.

This closure is necessary to protect the gray triggerfish resource. This stock is considered overfished (the population is too low) and undergoing overfishing (too many are being caught each year).

The recreational quota of 217,100 pounds ww was projected to have been caught. Therefore, the recreational sector was closed to the harvest of gray triggerfish on June 11, 2012.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the existing regulations. Full regulations can be found in the *Federal Register*.

Recreational Harvest of Gray Triggerfish

The recreational harvest of gray triggerfish in the Gulf of Mexico federal waters is closed, effective 12:01 a.m. (local time) June 11, 2012, until 12:01 a.m. (local time) Jan. 1, 2013. NOAA Fisheries Service has determined the 2012 recreational quota (annual catch target) of 217,100 pounds whole weight (ww) of gray triggerfish will be caught by this date.

During the closure:

- Recreational harvest or possession of gray triggerfish is prohibited.
- The closure applies in both state and federal waters for vessels that have a valid Gulf of Mexico reef fish charter/headboat permit.

This closure is necessary to protect the gray triggerfish resource. This stock is considered overfished (the population is too low) and undergoing overfishing (too many are being caught each year).

Commercial harvest of gray triggerfish for the 2012 fishing year are being closely monitored. As of May 8, 2012, approximately 64 percent of the 60,900 pounds ww quota had been landed. The commercial sector will be closed to fishing for gray triggerfish once the commercial quota (annual catch target) is projected to be harvested.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the existing regulations. Full regulations can be found in the *Federal Register*.

Red Snapper Quota Increases and Recreational Season

NOAA Fisheries Service published a final rule for Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper (77 FR 31734). The rule increases the commercial and recreational quotas and establishes the 2012 recreational red snapper fishing season. The recreational season opened on June 1, 2012, at 12:01 a.m. and closes on July 11, 2012, at 12:01 a.m.

The rule sets the 2012 and 2013 quotas for commercial and recreational red snapper harvest. The quotas have been increased because recent population assessments show that overfishing has ended. The red snapper allowable catch increased from 7.185 million pounds whole weight in 2011 to the following:

	2012	2013
Acceptable Biological Catch	8.080	8.690
Commercial Allocation (51%)	4.121	4.432
Recreational Allocation (49%)	3.959	4.258

If the combined commercial and recreational catch exceeds the 8.08 million pound acceptable catch level, the 2013 quota increase would require further scientific review and potential modification by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council.

In addition, the rule eliminated the fixed recreational red snapper closed season of Oct. 1-Dec. 31. By eliminating the Oct. 1 fishing season closure date, OAA Fisheries Service may re-open the recreational season for red snapper if any remaining quota is available, without the delay of additional rulemaking.

Recreational Season

NOAA Fisheries Service projects the 2012 recreational quota will be harvested in 40 days. Recreational landings in 2011 exceeded the quota by 730,000 pounds. Catches in 2011 exceed the 2012 quota; therefore, NOAA Fisheries Service has shortened the 2012 season compared to 2011 to prevent landings from exceeding the 2012 quota.

The population of red snapper is growing and the fish are getting bigger, so more large fish are being caught more quickly, which fills the recreational quota faster.

Without the proposed quota increases for 2012, the 2011 recreational quotas would remain in effect, and the 2012 recreational season would be even shorter.

A copy of the 2012 Recreational Red Snapper Quota Closure Analysis is available online at: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/GrouperSnapperandReefFish.htm

This summary is not a substitute for the actual regulations. We encourage you to read the full text of the regulations, available at www.sero.noaa.gov.

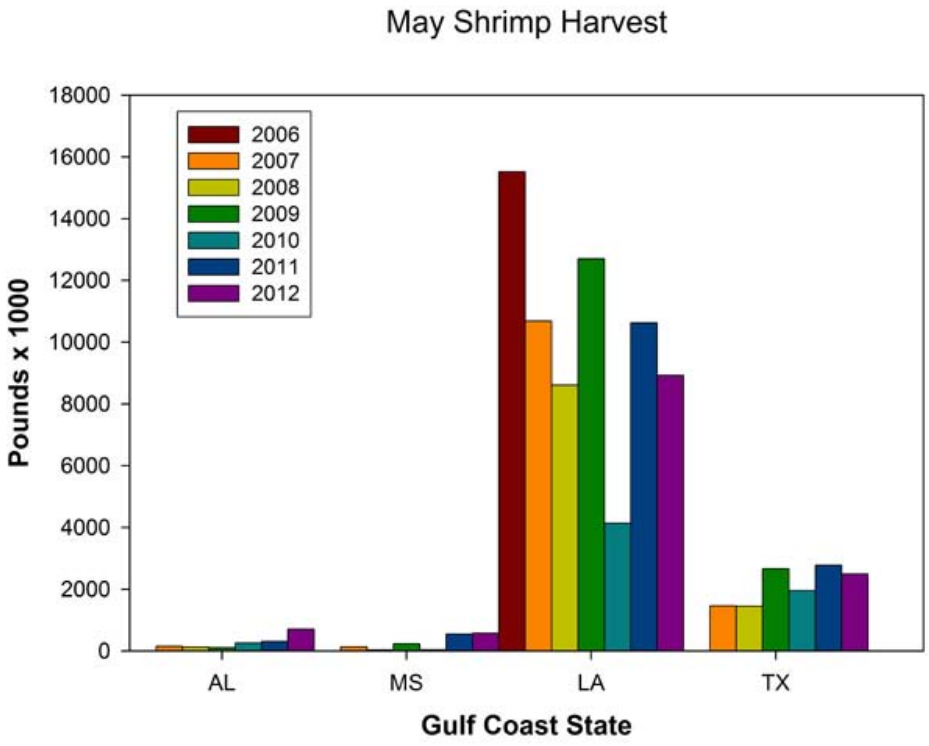
Recreational Harvest of Gag

The recreational harvest of gag opens in the Gulf of Mexico federal waters July 1, 2012 and closes Oct. 31, 2012.

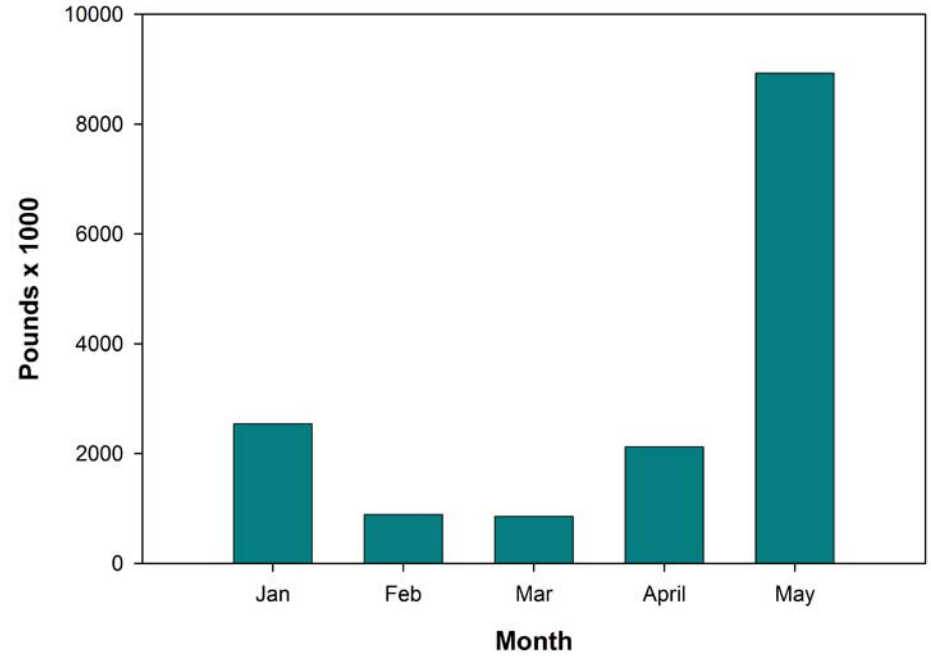
Gag is considered overfished, meaning the population is too low, and experiencing overfishing, meaning the rate of removal is too high. The Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires that overfished stocks be rebuilt and that overfishing be stopped. The July 1–Oct. 31 recreational season was established as one of the management measures designed to help achieve rebuilding and end overfishing of gag in the Gulf of Mexico.

Louisiana Shrimp Watch

Louisiana specific data portrayed in the graphics are selected from preliminary data posted by NOAA on its 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.



Louisiana 2012 Shrimp Harvest



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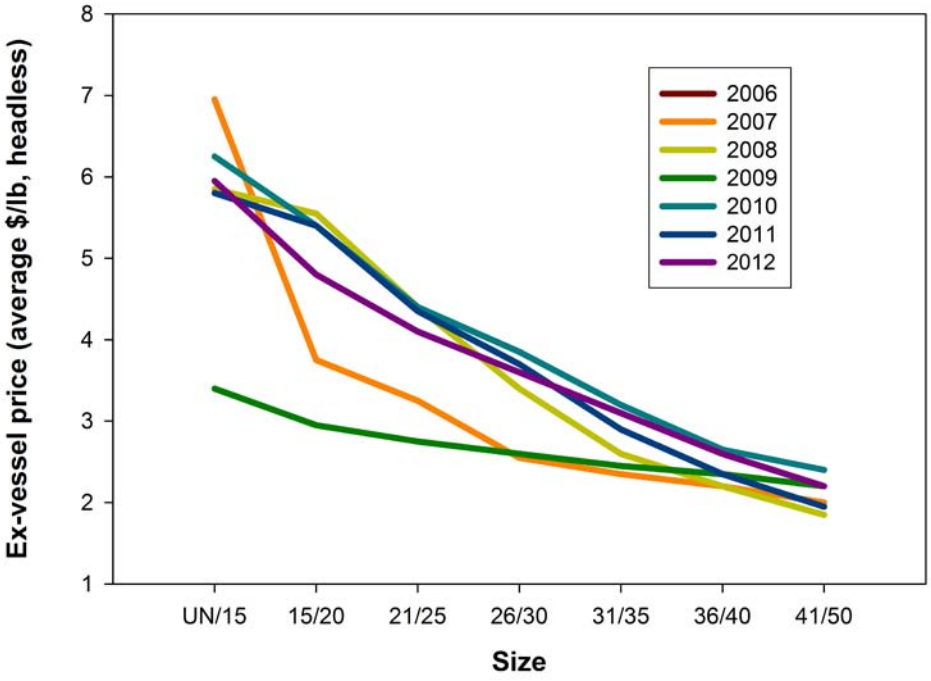

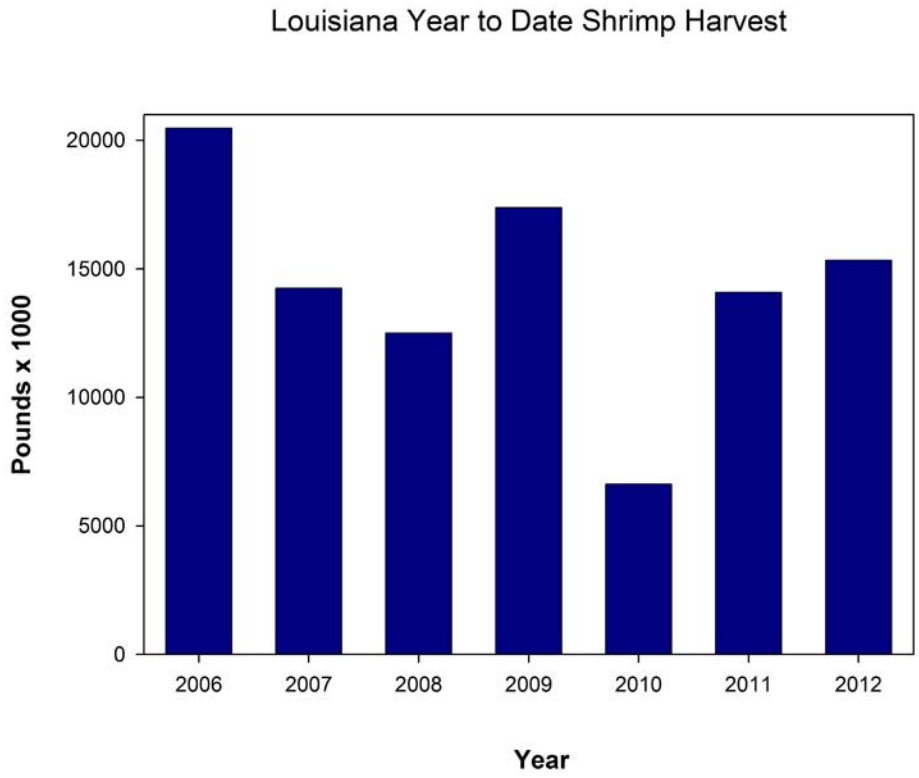

Fish Gear Coordinates

In accordance with the provisions of R.S. 56:700.1 et. seq., notice is given that eight claims in the amount of $40,000 were received for payment during the period May 1, 2012-May 31, 2012. There were eight paid and zero denied.

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates, in Degree Decimal Minutes, of reported underwater obstructions are:

2915.170	8945.056	PLAQUEMINES
2920.155	8957.634	JEFFERSON
2945.256	9310.277	CAMERON
2945.590	9324.262	CAMERON
2950.189	8941.323	SAINT BERNARD
2950.775	8938.752	SAINT BERNARD
2953.596	9320.427	CAMERON

A list of claimants and amounts paid can be obtained from Gwendolyn Thomas, Administrator, Fishermen's Gear Compensation Fund, P.O. Box 44277, Baton Rouge, LA 70804 or you can call 225/342-9388.

The Gumbo Pot

Jyl Benson's Crabmeat Salad

Recipe courtesy of *Louisiana Kitchen*. For more recipes or to subscribe to their magazine or free newsletter, please visit http://louisiana.kitchenandculture.com/

Ingredients:

- 1 pound fresh Louisiana jumbo lump crabmeat, carefully picked over for cartilage
- 1/2 bunch green onions, minced
- 3 tablespoons nonpareil capers
- 1 tablespoon Spanish onion, finely minced
- 1/3 cup (or to taste) McIlhenny's Spicy Mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Makes about 4 cups
Note: As shown, served in ripe Haas avocados

Method:
Combine all ingredients, taking care not to break up the lumps of crabmeat. Chill for at least 1 hour to marry the flavors.

Serving Suggestions: Use the salad to stuff ripe Haas avocados; to stuff Creole tomatoes; make a sandwich with a sliced flaky croissant, crisp lettuce, and tomato slices; use it to top crackers or slices of cucumber; stuff celery sticks; eat it with a spoon.

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.

Jyl Benson's Crabmeat Salad. Photo credit: Louisiana Kitchen

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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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