



## Not Such an Unusual Sight

Previously thought to be wayward travelers in the northern Gulf of Mexico outside of Florida, West Indian manatees (*Trichechus manatus*) are now spotted with increasing frequency from Alabama through eastern Texas. Manatees typically inhabit northern Gulf of Mexico waters from mid-May through mid-November when temperatures are warmest.

To increase awareness and knowledge of manatee movements in the northern Gulf of Mexico, nearly 10 years ago, researchers from the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL) in coastal Alabama established DISL's Manatee Sighting Network to collect and share manatee sighting reports from the public. Since 2007, DISL/MSN has documented more than 1,500 opportunistic manatee sightings in Alabama and combined these reports with direct tagging and monitoring of manatees as they migrate from wintering sites in Florida to the northern Gulf of Mexico in summer. Although manatee sightings have been recorded in the northern Gulf of Mexico since the early 1900s, these recent sighting data suggest that more manatees are visiting and reliant on northern Gulf habitats than in the past. This research also indicates that some local embayments, such as Lake Pontchartrain, La. and Mobile Bay, Ala. are regular stopover or endpoints on seasonal migrations from wintering sites in Florida. Manatees also have been observed feeding, breeding, and calving in Alabama waters, further establishing the importance of northern Gulf of Mexico habitats to this endangered species.

If manatee populations grow but areas of suitable habitat remain the same or decline in Florida, and climate change allows manatees to travel farther or stay longer in outlying habitats, we may continue to see manatees in greater numbers along the northern Gulf of Mexico coast. Due to lower awareness of manatee presence in areas west of Mobile Bay, Ala., it is possible that more animals visit these areas, but sightings have not been reported. To date, DISL/MSN in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Save the Manatee Club, have distributed more than 300 educational waterway signs in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana to increase the number of public sighting reports and reduce the likelihood of negative interactions between manatees and

people (e.g. boat strikes, entanglements), promoting safe co-usage of local waters.

To support this local research program, report manatee sightings in the northern Gulf of Mexico or anywhere in the U.S. by contacting DISL's Manatee Sighting network by phone (866-493-5803), email ([manatee@disl.org](mailto:manatee@disl.org)) or online at [manatee.disl.org](http://manatee.disl.org) or report to your local wildlife authority. Like us on Facebook as Mobile Manatees Sighting Network. For emergencies such as a dead or injured manatee, immediately contact your local wildlife officials – for Louisiana call the Coastal Wildlife Network, coordinated by Audubon Nature Institute, at (504) 235-3005.

- Ruth H. Carmichael & Elizabeth Hieb



CREDIT DISL/MSN CONTRIBUTOR M. LERCH

A group of manatees in Dog River, a tributary of Mobile Bay, Ala.

## Modified Rules for Commercial Harvest of Blue Crabs

A Notice of Intent (NOI) is under consideration to enact commercial blue crab harvest restrictions in order to reduce fishing pressure on the blue crab stock. The NOI restricts the commercial harvest of immature blue female crabs except those being held for processing of softshell crabs. It also establishes a 30-day closure of the blue commercial harvest and the use of crab traps beginning the third Monday of February. Both management actions would go into effect in 2017 and last through 2019.

Legally licensed commercial crab fishermen may have an incidental take of immature female crabs in their possession, not to exceed two percent of the total number of crabs in their possession. Crabs in a work box, used to sort or cull undersized and/or immature female crabs, are not subject to the immature female restriction while aboard an active fishing vessel. All crab traps remaining in state waters during the closure will be presumed to be engaged in active fishing and considered illegal.

To view the full notice of intent, please visit [www.wlf.louisiana.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/document/40323-noi-crab-season/loi\\_crab\\_season.pdf](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/document/40323-noi-crab-season/loi_crab_season.pdf).

Interested persons may submit comments relative to the proposed rule to Jeff Marx, Marine Fisheries Section, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2415 Darnall Rd., New Iberia, LA 70560 or via email to [jmarx@wlf.la.gov](mailto:jmarx@wlf.la.gov) prior to Sept. 1, 2016.

## Louisiana Fisheries Forward Crab Professionalism Program Reopens

The Louisiana Fisheries Forward (LFF) Crab Professionalism Program will reopen July 1, 2016, allowing commercial fishermen to obtain a new, commercial crab trap gear license. The LFF Crab Professionalism Program was designed to provide Louisiana crab fishermen with the knowledge and tools needed to compete in today's local, national and global economy.

The LFF program was implemented in November 2014 and requires training for fishermen obtaining a crab trap gear license who did not possess a commercial crab trap gear license in two out of the four years, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. Application packets and required course training material can be found at <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/crabtraining>.

## Commercial Fishing Tax Exemption

A commercial fishing vessel owner must have a State Tax Exemption Number in order to not pay the 5 percent state sales tax on purchases of fishing boats, supplies, fuels, lubricants and repairs for the boats of licensed commercial fisherman. A list of what is exempt can be found in Louisiana R.S. 47:305.20.

The commercial fishing vessel owner must complete and submit a Commercial Fishermen Louisiana Sales Tax Exemption Application and send in the required documents to the Louisiana Department of Revenue. This must be done each year.

This application must be accompanied by copies of a current vessel license, proof of vessel ownership, commercial fishing license, and a complete copy of the most current federal income tax return. Proof of vessel ownership may be a copy of the boat registration, or a copy of the U.S. Coast Guard documentation. The vessel license, owner of vessel, fishing license, and federal income tax return must be in the same individual or corporation name.

When a purchase is made the vessel owner gives the vendor his Tax Exemption Number in order to not be charged the 5 percent state tax. In most cases they still have to pay parish taxes. Some parishes have a parish tax exemption in place also. The application can be downloaded at [http://revenue.louisiana.gov/taxforms/1334\(5\\_14\)F.pdf](http://revenue.louisiana.gov/taxforms/1334(5_14)F.pdf)

- Julie Falgout

## Nassau Grouper Listed as Threatened Under Endangered Species Act

NOAA Fisheries has listed Nassau grouper as threatened under the Endangered Species Act due to a decline in its population. The species is in need of more conservation efforts given its population has not yet recovered. A final rule was published in the Federal Register on June 29, 2016 (81 FR 42268) and will become effective on July 29, 2016.

This listing does not change current fishing regulations in the U.S. (including federal waters in U.S. Caribbean territories), as harvest of this species is already prohibited in state, territorial, and federal waters. Commercial and recreational fishing for this species was first prohibited in U.S. federal waters in 1990 when it was listed as a Species of Concern.

Prior to 1990, historical harvest greatly diminished the population of Nassau grouper and eliminated many spawning groups. Because Nassau grouper is a slow growing, late maturing fish, the population has yet to recover despite conservation efforts. In addition, Nassau grouper is still harvested in several Caribbean countries and fishing pressure on the remaining spawning groups continues to threaten the species.

While a threatened listing status does not afford the same strict prohibitions on import, export, and incidental catch that an endangered status does, NOAA fisheries will assess whether to add additional regulatory measures in future rule makings. NOAA fisheries will also organize a recovery team to begin development of a plan to guide the conservation and recovery of the species. The plan will lay out the criteria and actions necessary to ensure species recovery. It will also be used to ensure recovery efforts are on target and being met effectively and efficiently.

## Recreational Gray Triggerfish and Greater Amberjack

The gray triggerfish and greater amberjack recreational fishing seasons in Louisiana and in federal waters will not reopen as scheduled on Aug. 1, 2016. Instead they will remain closed until Dec. 31 and reopen on Jan. 1, 2017, the beginning of the 2017 recreational fishing year.

## Fish Gear Coordinates- June 2016

In accordance with the provisions of R.S. 56:700.1 et. seq., notice is given that seven claims in the amount of \$27,964.30 were received for payment during the period June 1-30, 2016.

There were six paid and one denied.

Latitude/Longitude coordinates, in degree decimal minutes, of reported underwater obstructions are:

29 05.257	89 03.854	PLAQUEMINES
29 18.544	89 51.180	PLAQUEMINES
29 22.316	90 15.530	LAFOURCHE
29 25.401	89 57.678	JEFFERSON
29 33.696	89 58.495	PLAQUEMINES
29 41.058	89 33.139	SAINT BERNARD
30 10.823	89 16.062	SAINT BERNARD

## Important Dates & Upcoming Events

**July 1, 2016** – LFF Crab Program reopens for new license holders

**July 15, 2016** – Shrimp fishery reopened off Texas

**July 17, 2016** – Greater Amberjack closed in Louisiana and Federal waters

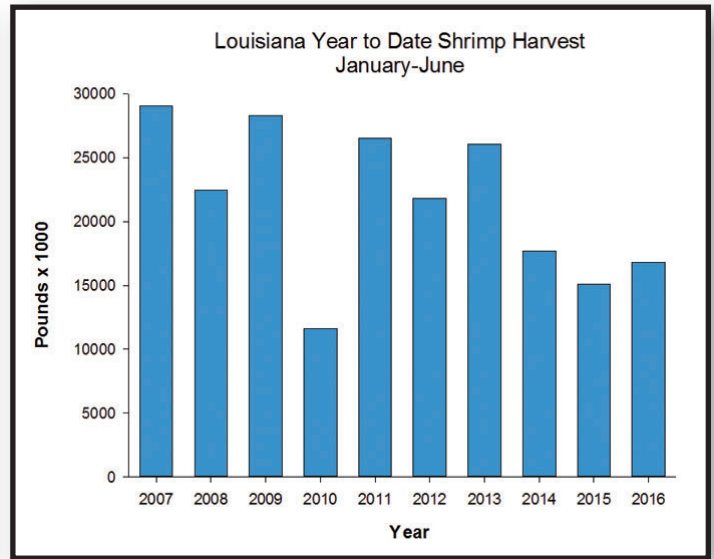
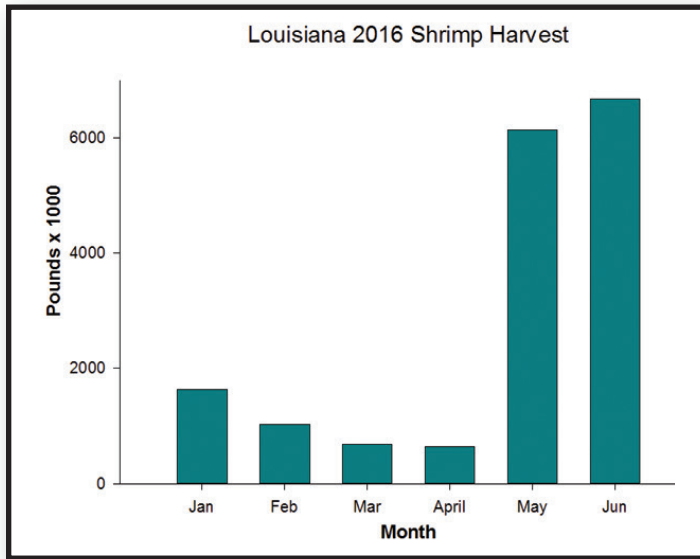
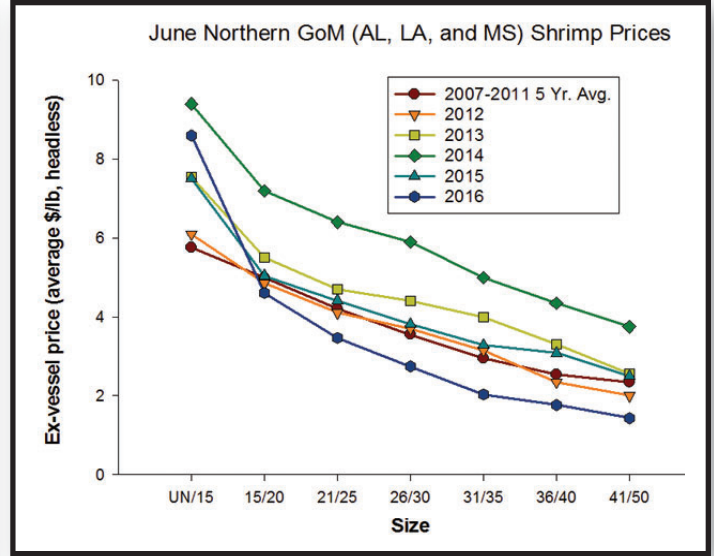
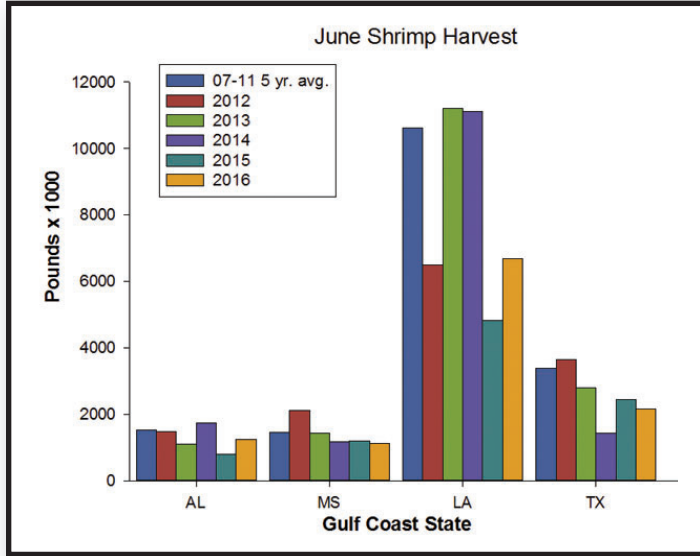
**Aug. 4, 2016** – Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission Meeting

**Sept. 1, 2016** – Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission Meeting

# 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](http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/market_news/index.html)



# THE GUMBO POT

## SEAFOOD LASAGNA

Recipe courtesy of *Louisiana Kitchen & Culture*.

For more recipes or to subscribe to their magazine or free newsletter, please visit <http://louisiana.kitchenandculture.com/>



### Ingredients:

15 oven-ready (rippled-style) lasagna noodles (from two 8-ounce boxes)	2 cups Louisiana lump crabmeat
12 ounces cream cheese, softened, divided	2 cups cooked Louisiana shrimp, chopped
½ cup chicken broth, divided	1½ teaspoons dried basil
2 cups spinach, coarsely chopped	1 jar (25-26 ounces) good marinara sauce
	4 cups (1 pound) grated part-skim or whole-milk mozzarella cheese, divided
	¾ cup finely grated Parmesan cheese, divided

### Method:

Heat oven to 400°F. Dissolve 1½ tablespoons salt in 2 quarts piping hot tap water in a 13-by-9-inch baking dish. Add noodles and soak until soft, about 10 minutes. Drain in a colander.

Meanwhile, cream together 8 ounces of the cream cheese with ¼ cup of the broth; gently fold in spinach, shrimp, and crab meat. Mix remaining 4 ounces cream cheese with remaining ¼ cup broth in a small bowl; set aside.

To assemble, smear ¼ cup marinara sauce over bottom of baking dish, then assemble 4 layers of each of the following: 3 lasagna noodles, a scant cup marinara, 1 cup filling mixture ¾ cup mozzarella, 2 tablespoons Parmesan. Top with remaining 3 noodles, cream cheese-broth mixture, remaining 1 cup mozzarella, and remaining ¼ cup Parmesan.

Spray one side of a large sheet of heavy-duty foil with vegetable-oil cooking spray. Cover baking dish with foil, oiled side down, and bake until bubbly throughout, 40 to 45 minutes. Leaving lasagna on same rack, turn oven to broil. Remove foil and broil until lasagna is spotty brown, 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from oven and let sit for 10 minutes. Cut into squares and serve.

**Be sure to visit the *Lagniappe* blog for  
additional news and timely events between issues.  
<https://louisianalagniappe.wordpress.com/>**

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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 Lively at [janderson@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:janderson@agcenter.lsu.edu).**

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