

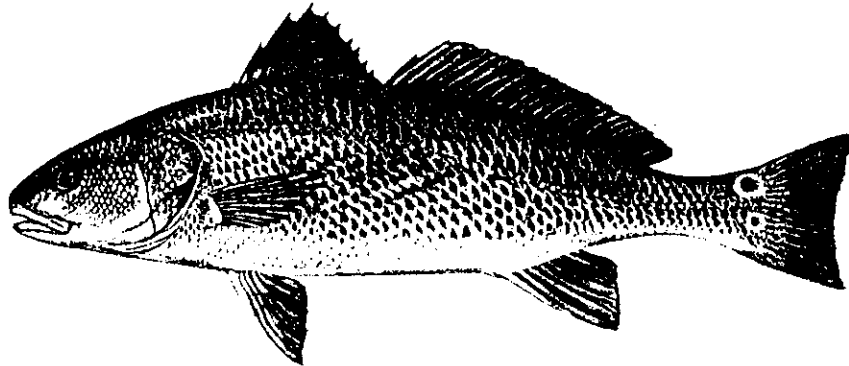


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SEA GRANT PROGRAM



LAGNIAPPE

FEDERAL REDFISH STOCK ASSESSMENT RELEASED

The National Marine Fisheries Service has released its stock assessment for redfish. The results are disappointing and confusing. Their assessment shows that the spawning potential ratio (SPR) for redfish in federal waters is slightly over 10 percent. The conservation standard for redfish being declared a recovered stock is 20 percent.

SPR is the measuring stick used to evaluate a fish population's health. It is simply the ratio of the egg-producing ability of all the mature fish in a fished stock compared to the egg-producing ability that would exist if the stock were unfished.

The disappointment arises from the fact that Louisiana's redfish stock assessment shows an escapement rate into federal waters of 65 - 80 percent with an SPR of over 40 percent. Florida state research shows an escapement rate for redfish of 60-70 percent. Their SPR is also certainly over 20 percent.

Louisiana contributes the most redfish, by far, to federal waters. In fact, Louisiana produces 71% of the entire redfish catch in the entire gulf. Florida is the next largest producer. With the two largest producing states well above the conservation standard, it is difficult to understand how the federal assessment could be at 10 percent since the redfish in federal waters all originally come from the states.

Federal calculations of stock size are done by three methods. The first method is by sampling the amount of redfish eggs and larvae (very small baby fish) free-floating in the water and estimating the total amount of adult fish from those numbers.

The second method is done by conducting surveys from airplanes and spotting schools of redfish on the surface. Less redfish were spotted in 1995 than in 1986-87, but the researcher admits that this method is shaky.

Finally, the best method is with mark-recapture studies. With this method, redfish are tagged, released and allowed to mix with the other redfish. Sampling from the over-all stock then gives a pretty good idea of the size of stock. This method has not been recently used, but is planned for the fall of 1996 and according to the report ... "is badly needed to confirm the status of the adult population."

Source: Status of the Red Drum Stocks of The Gulf of Mexico by C. Phillip Goodyear. National Marine Fisheries Service. June 1996.

LEGISLATIVE MEETINGS

The House Committee on Natural Resources of the Louisiana Legislature has scheduled a two day meeting on August 21 and 22 on subjects of interest to Louisiana fishermen. On the first day, discussion will focus on the possible phase-out of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Each department in state government must be reauthorized periodically. Act 80 of the 1996 1st Extraordinary Session of the Legislature only extended the termination date of the Department for a two-year period, until July 1, 1998. Phase-out of the Department is to begin as of July 1, 1997.

On the second day, these discussions will continue and the feasibility of combining the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Department of Natural Resources and the Governor's Office of Coastal Activities into one department will be considered. Finally, a discussion will be held on the feasibility of transferring regulation of oysters and the oyster industry from the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to the Department of Agriculture.

The meetings will begin at 10:00 a.m. each day and will take place in basement of the State Capitol in Committee Room 5. For more information, you may call the office of the Committee on Natural Resources in Baton Rouge at (504) 342-2402.

SURVEY RESULTS

Several months ago we did a survey of our readership to determine how to serve our readers better. A total of 236 people responded to the questionnaire. I thought that I might share the results with you.

In answer to the first question on how well the newsletter kept its readers informed about new fisheries research and regulations, 85% (202) responded "very good", 14% (34) responded "good" and only one person responded "moderate." No one responded "poor" or "very poor".

A total of 186 respondents (78%) said they had no other source of this information, 33 people (14%) said yes they had another source, but 19 of these respondents were fisheries biologists working for government or universities. Ten people (4%) said they could possibly find another source.

When asked if they could get the newsletter if it was placed in businesses, such as net shops, boat dealers and marine suppliers, 68% (160 people) said "no", 20% (47) said "yes" and 11% (26) said "maybe or sometimes."

Finally, respondents were asked about what subjects they would like to see more of in future issues. Because of the large number of suggestions, I've listed below only suggestions that were made two or more times.

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CRAWFISH INDUSTRY FORMS COALITION

Louisiana Crawfish producers and processors have founded the Louisiana Crawfish Coalition. The group was formed to oppose crawfish imports from China, which may cost \$2 - 3 per pound less than Louisiana crawfish tailmeat and has taken over 40% of the U. S. market for tailmeat. The group will be seeking tariffs and import restrictions against these imports.

FISH PRICES

In a recent news release, the Gulf Coast Conservation Association (GCCA) has announced the results of a study that shows that Act 1316 (the gill net bill) has had no impact on fish prices and that fish prices have actually gone down since that act has gone into effect.

GCCA commissioned the study through the firm of Economic & Issues Research, Inc. Data used for the study included prices paid for certain species of finfish at the dock, at wholesale level, in retail markets and in restaurants.

According to the study, dockside prices for speckled trout fell from \$1.24 in 1991 to \$.95 in 1995. Speckled trout fillets at seafood markets averaged \$5.86 in a 1994 survey compared to \$4.24 in 1996. Black drum fillets declined in price from \$7.15 in 1994 to \$3.18 in 1996. Restaurant surveys also showed a slight decline in price for speckled trout and black drum dishes.

Source: GCCA News Release on "Effects of Act 1316 on the Price of Speckled Trout and Selected Other Finfish" by Roger Burford, Economic and Issues Research, Inc.

FISHERIES SOCIOLOGY

In recent years economists and sociologists have been more actively involved with biologists in the fisheries regulatory process. While biologists are interested in how regulatory changes affect fish populations, sociologists study how these changes affect people.

Recently a research team at the University of Florida studied the impacts of inshore net fishing regulations on Florida commercial fishing families. The study took place in 10 coastal Florida communities and was composed of 95 families, each with at least one child living at home.

- The families interviewed averaged 73% of their earnings from commercial fishing.

- Almost all of them (99%) said that increased marine fisheries regulations had harmed their ability to make a living negatively to very negatively.
- More than half also said that increased numbers of recreational fishermen, increased costs of harvesting fish, and increased coastal development have harmed their livelihood seriously.
- A sizeable minority could be considered poor; 15% could not afford food; 29% could not afford their home and 32% could not afford clothing. A total of 41% had dropped or reduced their health insurance.
- Fishing industry changes caused more depression in the families' wives than in the men.
- In satisfaction with their work, 100% were satisfied with working outdoors and 96% thought that they had a worth-while job in providing food for consumers. However, 82% were unsatisfied by their future as commercial fishermen.

Source: Social Implications of Changes in Fisheries Regulations for Commercial Fishing Families, by Suzanna Smith, in Fisheries, Vol. 20, No. 7.

NEW FISHERIES LAWS

The 1996 Regular Session of the legislature was dedicated to fiscal (money and budget) matters. However, one bill and several fisheries resolutions were passed that involve fisheries.

House Bill 94(Act 24) - Ackal

Allows commercial fishermen to write a signed statement in person while at a Department of Revenue and Taxation Office that they get or intend to get 50% of their income from commercial fishing, in order to get a sales tax exemption certificate. The old law required that they had to have a notarized statement to that effect. Effective immediately.

House Concurrent Resolution 6 - Odinet

Recreates the Oyster Task Force

House Concurrent Resolution 11 - A. Alexander

Requests the U.S. Congress to move the Louisiana coastal boundary line from 3 miles offshore to 10 miles offshore.

House Concurrent Resolution 74 - Murray and others

Creates a study commission of citizens and experts to review the evidence of global climate change and sea level rise and make recommendations and a report to the legislature.

House Concurrent Resolution 116 - Gautreaux

Urges and requests the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to keep the minimum legal size on commercial channel catfish at 11 inches.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 21 - Ullo and Robichaux

Urges and requests the Department of Natural Resources to study combining the Underwater Obstructions Program, the Site Clearance Program and the Fishermen's Gear Compensation Program. These programs are all involved with addressing the problems of underwater obstruction which litter and clog the states waterways and pose a hazard to navigation and fishing.

RECREATIONAL VHF RADIO FEE SUSPENDED

Until further notice from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), recreational vessels do not need a license to operate certain radio equipment on board while operating in U. S. waters. This applies only to vessels which are not required by law to carry a radio, which includes most recreational boats. With this, a marine VHF radio, any type of EPIRB, and any type of radar can be used without a license. However, if you use a single sideband radio, satellite communications, or telegraphy, you must continue to be licensed by the FCC. If you currently hold a license, there is no need to cancel it, return it to the FCC, or request a refund at this time. Even though a station license is not required, you must continue to follow the operating procedures for calling other stations, maintaining a safety watch, and relaying distress messages as specified in the FCC Rules. You may identify your vessel over the air using your current FCC-issued call sign or the name of your vessel. The FCC is proposing to make this rule permanent. In order to let the public know when this rule will be made permanent, they have set up a toll-free hotline. Simply dial 1-800-322-1117, press the number "2", then press the number "1".

Source: Gulf Coast Fishermen. Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service. June, 1996.

WORLD SHRIMP MARKETS

Louisiana's most valuable commercial fishery is shrimp, being worth over \$144 million dockside in 1995. In spite of our state's and other states' impressive production, large quantities of shrimp are imported from other countries. Worldwide production of wild and farm-raised shrimp increased from 3.4 billion pounds in 1980, to 5.5 billion pounds in 1993. About 30% of this production is farm-raised and 60% of the total production is from Asia.

The large worldwide increase in shrimp production has had an effect on shrimp prices. According to a study done by two LSU scientists, the average price of shrimp showed a steady drop from 1980 to 1993. After inflation is taken out of prices, the real

price of shrimp dropped from \$3.29 per pound in 1980 to \$2.18 in 1993, a 34% decline in price. This indicates that the increase in the supply of shrimp has grown faster than the increase in demand for shrimp.

According to the researchers, "...the overwhelming majority of shrimp production growth during the 1980-93 period has been the result of expanded farming activities". The five largest exporting countries of shrimp (by value) in 1993 were also the five largest producers of farm-raised shrimp the preceding year.

The United States and Japan are the world's largest shrimp importers accounting for two-thirds of all imports. In 1993, the U. S. imported 567 million pounds and Japan imported 664 million pounds. Shell-on headless shrimp made up 57% of the imports, peeled shrimp made up 42%, and breaded and canned shrimp were about 1% of the total. Peeled shrimp increased their share of imports after 1990. Canned shrimp imports have steadily declined since 1987.

In 1993, the U. S. imported 18.9% of all the shrimp produced in the world, including 63.9% of all the shrimp produced in Central America, 61.6% of South America's, 17.4% of Asia's and 2.1% of the rest of the world's production.

Source: A Review of World Shrimp Production and Trade- 1980-93, by Walter R. Keithly, Jr. and Yunsheng Song, Louisiana State University.

CACAHOES

In recent years, the use of live bait by saltwater sports fishermen has increased, especially west of the Mississippi River. One of the more commonly used live baits is the gulf killifish Fundulus grandis known locally as the cacahoe and elsewhere as the bull minnow or mud minnow. Mixed in with cacahoies in most live bait tanks will also be a considerable number of longnose killifish Fundulus similis, locally called storm minnows.

This incredibly tough fish has been found in almost all salinities and does not seem to be sensitive to freezes. They spawn from March to September with a peak in March-April and another in August-September. The eggs hatch in 10 to 21 days depending on temperature. They reach a 1½-inch length in 4 to 5 months. Adults eat crabs, fish, shrimp, worms, insects and pieces of plants.

In an attempt to learn something about the cacahoe bait minnow fishery, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries biologist Corky Perret did a survey of commercial minnow trap license holders. In 1989, only 8 commercial minnow trap licenses were sold, 6 in Terrebonne and one each in Jefferson and St. Tammany. In 1995, a total of 131 licenses were sold in coastal parishes, with Terrebonne still leading the way with 45. Lafourche had 22, St. Bernard 21, Jefferson 13 and Plaquemines Parish had 12.

Most minnow dealers surveyed that they would benefit from a year-round supply of cacahoe minnows. Most dealers sold 20,000 or less minnows per year, although one reported sales of over 500,000 in one year.

Most cacahoe minnow trappers do so on a part-time basis, also commercially fishing for shrimp, crabs and fish. Most trappers fish 15 to 20 traps, using pogies for bait. They run them every 15 to 30 minutes, with the best catches occurring on falling tides.

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries seine samples show slightly less cacahoes from 1992 to 1995 than in the 1986 to 1991 period, however great variation exists with the best years often followed by the worst years. Additional multi-year sampling would have to take place to determine the biological status of the stock.

Researchers at LSU have managed to spawn cacahoe minnows in closed systems similar to soft crab systems. Department of Wildlife and Fisheries biologists have gotten them to spawn in open (flow-through) systems and ponds. Culture research is continuing.

Partial Source: Cacaho Minnow Study (unpublished) by W. S. "Corky" Perrett, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. 1996.

TUNA PERMITS REQUIRED

I have been receiving many requests recently for information concerning the new Yellowfin Tuna Permit. Apparently the word hasn't gotten out well. Effective immediately, anyone catching and keeping (including sport fishermen) any tuna species except blackfin tuna must get a permit from the National Marine Fisheries Service. Applicants may call either (508) 281-9370 or (813) 570-5326. The permit is free.

MARINE ADVISORY BOARD NEWS

In response to a request by Westwego city officials, the Jefferson Parish Marine Fishery Advisory Board's Ports and Waterways Task Force, and the Jefferson Economic Development Commission and Port District, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers has developed a plan to perform maintenance dredging in Bayou Segnette. Shallowing in several spots has made passage by Westwego shrimp boats difficult.

Actual dredging may not occur until February 1998, as in-depth design and engineering is needed to prevent more problems from occurring. The Corps expects to meet with Jean Lafitte National Park officials and the other concerned parties in May, 1997 to reach agreement on the best way to do the work. In the past, the National Park Service has opposed dredging the waterway because of possible impacts on the park.

THE GUMBO POT

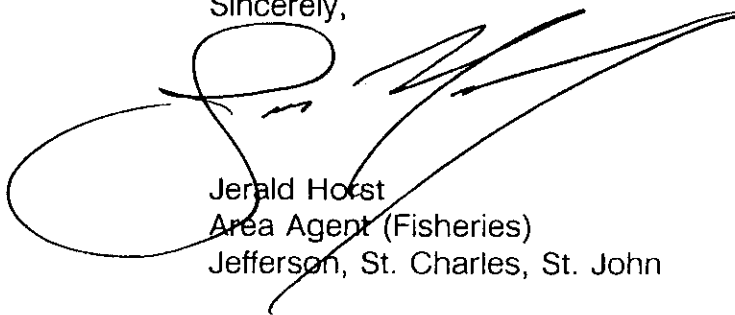
This month's recipe is the first place winner of the Catfish Cooking Contest at the Des Allemands Catfish Festival. It comes from Roy Lunk who has produced other winning catfish recipes in the past.

Fish'n Boats

2	Eggplants	Black pepper
1 lb.	Catfish fillets	Salt
1 lb.	Crabmeat	Lemon peppers
1	Large onion	Garlic powder
½ bunch	Shallots	1 tbsp. Crab boil
1 tbsp.	Parsley flakes	1 tbsp. Cooking oil
1 stalk	Celery	Cheddar cheese
3 slices	Bread	1 tbsp. Paprika
½ cup	Bread crumbs	3 Eggs
1 pkg.	Shell pasta	Vegetables of choice
3 oz.	Evaporated milk	
2 tbsp.	Margarine	

Cut eggplants in half and then remove core. Dice core along with onion, shallots, and celery. Saute with 1 tablespoon oil until onions are clear. Boil fish until flaky in water with 1 tablespoon liquid crab boil and dash of salt. Drain fish water and add fish and crabmeat to sauteed onion and cook with low heat for 15 minutes. Mix eggs, evaporated milk and bread and add to dish along with black pepper, lemon pepper, garlic powder and salt. Cook an additional 5 minutes. Cook pasta according to directions on package. Toss with 2 tablespoons margarine. Set pasta on serving dish along with eggplant halves. Stuff eggplant with dressing. Cover with bread crumbs, sprinkle with cheddar cheese and bake in 375 degree oven for 15 minutes. Garnish with paprika and serve with your favorite vegetable.

Sincerely,



Jerald Horst
Area Agent (Fisheries)
Jefferson, St. Charles, St. John