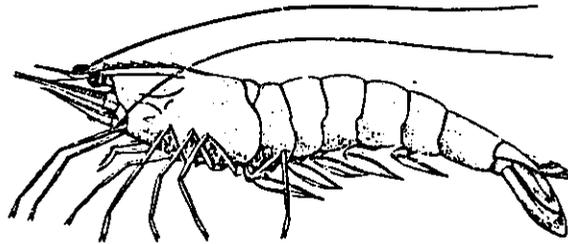




April 8, 2000
Volume 24, No. 5

Jefferson Parish Fisheries Office
1855 Ames Blvd
Marrero, LA 70072
(504) 349-5644
Fax: (504) 349-8817

SEA GRANT PROGRAM



LAGNIAPPE

FEDS WANT NEW T.E.D. RULES

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has issued advance notice of new proposed rules on turtle excluder devices (TEDs). What is behind the proposed rules is that NMFS has found a larger than expected number of dead stranded loggerhead and green sea turtles. Current legal requirements for TED openings are 32 inches wide and 10 inches high. Their research indicates up to 47% of the loggerheads and 7% of green turtles are too thick to go through the 10-inch opening.

Leatherback sea turtles, the giants of sea turtles are a special case, reaching up to 1300 pounds in size. NMFS has handled leatherbacks by seasonally patrolling by air parts of Atlantic coastal waters looking for concentrations of the animals. If they appear, NMFS declares shrimping in the area closed for 2 weeks unless trawls have a 71-inch opening. NMFS does not feel that this system is working since leatherback turtle strandings are up in both the Gulf and on the Atlantic.

In addition to these problems, NMFS reports that while few shrimpers use hooped hard TEDs, confusion exists on rules between these and single-grid hard TEDs. NMFS has also noted that weedless TEDs tend to bend during hard use, allowing the TED bars to be spread more than 4 inches.

Finally, NMFS has noted that softer floats, such as spongex, are crushed by pressure in deep water. Without their buoyancy, the TED can be damaged or not work properly.

In response, NMFS is considering the following options:

- 1) Requiring the 71-inch leatherback opening and a 32-inch grid in all trawls, at all times.
- 2) Increasing the minimum size opening of TEDs in the Gulf from 32 x 10 inches to 35 x 16 inches in all areas.
- 3) Outlawing the use of hooped TEDs.
- 4) Either outlawing the use of weedless TEDs or requiring them to be reinforced.
- 5) Requiring the use of floats such as hard plastic or aluminum floats instead of spongex for use in deep water.

Written public comments on these proposed rules are being requested. They may be mailed to Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or FAXED to 301/713-0376.

IMPACTS OF FLORIDA BASS STOCKING

Florida bass are a subspecies of largemouth bass, closely related to our native subspecies, the northern largemouth bass. They are closely enough related to our bass to hybridize with them and pass on some of the superior growth genes to their young.

The possibility of producing larger bass has made the stocking of Florida bass a very popular subject. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries began stocking of Florida bass in 1981, although initially in very low numbers because of the lack of availability of fingerlings. Through 1999, the department has stocked 21,275,429 Florida bass in Louisiana.

In order to measure whether stocked Florida bass are surviving and spawning in sufficient numbers to have an impact on the quality of fishing, the department samples bass from water bodies that have received Florida bass stockings. Each fish is then analyzed in a laboratory to determine if it is a native northern largemouth bass, a Florida largemouth bass or a hybrid between the two. The results of the last two years of such work are shown in the table on the next page.

Water Body	Number Northern	Number Florida	Number Hybrid	Percentage Hybrid/Florida
Amite River	45	1	4	10.2%
Atchafalaya Basin	70	0	2	2.8%
Lake Bartholomew	84	4	27	27.0%
Black Bayou (Bossier)	42	2	18	32.3%
Lake Bistineau	122	1	0	0.8%
Blind River	23	0	2	8.0%
Bussey Lake	37	0	4	9.8%
Caddo Lake	84	11	38	36.8%
Caernarvon Area	99	2	24	20.8%
Caney Creek Reservoir	13	23	32	80.9%
Lake Chicot	115	24	55	68.7%
Lake Concordia	96	7	55	39.2%
Catfle Lake	44	0	4	9.1%
Cross Lake	102	2	12	11.4%
Lake D'Arbonne	114	2	10	9.5%
Davis Pond Area	25	0	3	10.7%
Des Allemands Area	42	3	0	6.7%
False River	93	15	34	34.5%
Lake Fausse Pointe	69	2	6	10.4%
Henderson Lake	96	0	0	0.0%
Grand Bayou Reservoir	178	7	18	12.3%
Lafitte/Pen Area	62	0	0	0.0%
Lake Providence	53	1	7	13.1%
Lake Rodemacher (Cleco)	26	2	9	29.7%
Ruddock Area	27	0	0	0.0%
Lake St John	54	0	0	0.0%
Spanish Lake	93	12	12	20.5%
Tangipahoa River	30	0	0	0.0%
Tickfaw River	43	0	3	6.5%
Toledo Bend Reservoir	101	12	35	31.8%
Lakes Verret/Palourde/Grassy	158	0	10	6.3%

It is immediately obvious that Florida bass stocking has had more of an effect in some water bodies than others. Generally speaking, the water bodies that had the most Florida bass stocked over the most years showed the highest percentage of fish that are pure Florida bass or their hybrids. The Caney Creek Reservoir sample was 81% hybrid or Florida bass. It is also the lake that has received the most Florida bass stockings, with over 3.2 million over a period of years.

In Chicot Lake, 1.5 million Florida bass have been stocked after the lake was poisoned to remove native northern largemouth bass. Still, early samples showed that the huge majority of fish were natives, until repeated heavy stocking of Florida bass finally had an impact.

Some water bodies such as Lakes Bartholomew, Black Bayou, and Caddo have had less Florida bass stocked than many other water bodies but have a high percentage of Florida bass on their hybrids. According to Gary Tilyou, with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Florida bass do better in some places than others for reasons that are not clearly understood.

Besides the variation from place to place, Tilyou stated that the most important factor in how well these fish become established, is heavy stocking over a period of years. One stocking doesn't seem to do it, but rather a program of repetitive stocking yields the best results. If Florida bass stocking in a water body is stopped, the genetic make-up of the fish population will slowly move back toward a higher percentage of native largemouths, probably due to their better survival in this area. Tilyou further added that in order to see a significant impact, that 30% or more of the bass in the lake should either be Florida bass or Florida/northern hybrids.

ENVIRONMENTAL/ECONOMIC STUDY HELP NEEDED

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is looking for paid help from commercial shrimpers and charter boat operators to participate in a study of environmental disturbances such as the "dead zone", hurricanes and oil spills. The focus of the study is on the economic impact of such environmental disturbances on both the charter fishing and commercial shrimping industries.

Participating shrimpers and charter captains will keep a monthly log book of their fishing activities through the year. In exchange they will be paid an annual amount of \$1,320 (\$110 per month). All information from individual participants will be completely confidential.

Unlike the previous paid study involving shrimpers and charter captains, there are no restrictions on where the fishing must take place in order to qualify. Both inshore and offshore shrimpers and charter operators statewide are eligible for the study. There are

no vessel size requirements, and no observers or special scientific equipment will be on board the vessel. The data will be collected by the captain during normal fishing operations.

Interested individuals should contact research coordinator Steve Welch at 225/765-2708.

TEXAS PREDICTS COLLAPSE OF SHRIMP FISHERY

Shrimp have long been thought of as one of the fisheries species most able to resist being overfishing. They have short life spans, mature early and lay many eggs. Now in our neighboring state of Texas, officials with the Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW) Department are predicting the collapse of their shrimp fishery if commercial harvest is not reduced.

The problem, according to TPW officials, is that shrimping effort in the bays has increased over 300 percent since the 70's and with advances in technology, the number of bay shrimp harvested has increased over 400 percent. Therefore, less shrimp migrate to the Gulf to eventually become adults and spawn. Hal Osburn, Coastal Fisheries Director says that this trend, if continued, will cause the fishery to collapse. Osburn stated "The pressure is on almost all phases of the shrimp during their annual migration. As biologists, we have recognized that this is an unsustainable trend."

After an 18-month study of the fishery, a long list of possible solutions was developed, some of the major ones are as follows:

- ★ Increase commercial shrimp licenses, license transfer and select commercial business license fees by 50%, not to exceed \$100.
- ★ Require bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) in all trawls except bait and sport shrimp trawls.
- ★ Shorten the inshore spring and fall seasons by 15 days and the winter open season by one month.
- ★ Lengthen the inshore commercial bait shrimping season by one month. Bait shrimping would be legal every month except April.
- ★ Set legal shrimping hours for the fall inshore season and for bait shrimping during the fall inshore season of 30 minutes before sunrise to 4:00 p.m. daily.
- ★ Set shrimp gear minimum mesh sizes of 1½ inches for the spring inshore season, 1¾ inches for the fall inshore season, and 1½ inches for the winter season.

- ★ Set a minimum count size of 90 shrimp (head-on) to the pound for the spring season and 50 shrimp (also head-on) for the fall season.
- ★ Establish northern and southern zones, divided at the Aransas Pass jetties, for waters from the beach out to 10 fathoms.
- ★ The southern zone would be closed to all shrimping year-round.
- ★ The northern zone would be closed to all night shrimping, trawls would be limited to no more than two used at a time with a total combined corkline length of 100 feet from the back of one otter door to the back of the other door.

Other management options are also being considered. Final decisions are expected to be made at the August 30-31 meeting of the TPW Commission.

Sources: *Calhoun Currents*. April 2000, John O'Connell. Texas A&M University College Program. *Texas Shores*. Spring, 2000, Texas A&M Sea Grant Program.

NEW FISHERIES LAWS

Several pieces of legislation were passed by the Special Session of the 2000 Louisiana Legislature. If you have a question or would like a copy of any of these new laws, call my office in Marrero. Within these summaries the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries shall be abbreviated as DWF.

Senate Resolution 24 and House Resolution 24 - Theunissen & Flavin
Urges and requests DWF to keep the entire alligator research program at Rockefeller Refuge in Grand Chenier, Louisiana.

Senate Resolution 33 - McPherson & others
Urges and requests the secretary of DWF not to lay off personnel or close wildlife management areas or fish hatcheries, and instead to seek other solutions in reorganizing the finances of DWF.

House Bill 24 (Act 80) - Walsworth & others
Repeals the law that prevents any barricade, barrier, or obstacle of any kind from being placed upon or across any river designated as a Natural and Scenic River. Repeals the requirement that the dam on Big Creek in Grant Parish be removed and authorizes the water district to repair or replace the dam. Allows any water district to perform repairs on any facilities that were in operation at the time the waterway was put in the Natural and Scenic River System.

House Bill 88 (Act 142) - Pierre & others

Defines "residential coastal use" as any coastal use associated with construction or modification of any single-family, duplex, or triplex residence or camp, including outbuildings, bulkheads or piers. Authorizes a fee charge of up to \$100 for non-residential coastal use permits. Also authorizes a fee of \$25 - \$5000, calculated at no more than 10 cents per yard of material, for coastal use permits that include excavation or filling.

House Bill 149 (Act 130) - Odinet

Reorganizes into statutory law in one place all of the requirements for reporting by commercial fishermen and seafood dealers. Some clarifications are also made:

- * Commercial fishermen selling to the public under the fresh products license shall record their fresh products license number in place of the wholesale/retail seafood dealer's license number on commercial receipt forms. Holders of fresh products licenses must complete monthly report forms and send them to DWF.
- * Provides that all out-of-state shipments of fish, fish products and fish by-products shall only be subject to inspection by DWF rather than also having to obtain a certificate of export prior to the shipment leaving the state.

House Bill 182 (Act 33) - Durand

Defines a "marine product line" as a particular model of marine product designed for recreational or commercial use on the water. Makes it unlawful for manufacturers and distributors to enter into an agreement with anyone for the same product line within an existing dealer's area of responsibility.

House Bill 232 (Act 107) - Odinet & others

Provides that the state, its agencies and its employees may not be sued for damages to oyster leases caused by authorized coastal restoration projects. Creates an oyster lease extension system where leases in projected impact areas of coastal restoration projects can be extended year-by-year. Before this, the only options were renewal for 15 years or cancellation. This extension program is available retroactively to leases canceled as far back as December 31, 1996.

If an oyster leaseholder in a projected impact area chooses to give up his lease, he may transfer it to another individual or give it up to the state. The state may in turn lease the area to another person under the same conditions except that the person entering into the lease will not qualify for the oyster lease relocation program.

A very similar system was created for oyster leases in the area of current operational coastal restoration projects. Any such lease may only be renewed or extended if the leaseholder stipulates that the area is capable of supporting oysters since the restoration project began operating there. These leases will contain a clause that the lease is subservient (secondary) to any coastal restoration project and that the leaseholder accepts the risks of producing oysters in the area. Also, in these operational areas, the lease shall provide that the leaseholder may not sue the U.S. Government or its agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for losses due to freshwater diversion projects.

House Concurrent Resolution 56 - Flavin & others

Directs the DWF to present its budget cutting plan to both the House and Senate Natural Resource Committees for approval before putting it into effect.

MADE IN THE U.S.A.



That's what the new red, white and blue logo on the left says. Imports of processed crabmeat have dramatically increased in recent years. The avalanche of imported Asian crabmeat has severely jolted the U.S. crabmeat industry. A large number of crabmeat plants (factories) have permanently closed. More are on the edge of closing.

Out of survival instinct, the blue crab industry from Maryland to Texas has reacted. It has launched an effort to legally slow the flood of imports. Also, at the Boston Seafood Show the National Blue Crab Industries Association unveiled the new logo to help consumers determine if the crabmeat they are considering purchasing is foreign or domestic. The logo was developed by a team of state seafood marketing programs, including the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board.

G.P.S. IS NOW DESCRAMBLLED

Navigation using Global Positioning Signals (GPS) is now five to ten times more accurate than it was on April 30. President Bill Clinton has announced that effective midnight, May 1, the United States will no longer build error into GPS signals. Such error was created for national security reasons, and of course also made GPS-based navigation less accurate unless the user purchased special equipment.

GPS is gradually becoming more heavily used by both commercial and recreational fishermen. In addition to being a useful navigational tool, GPS is used for locating reefs and selected fishing areas, avoiding underwater trawling hazards, and relocating fishing gear such as hoop nets. *Rex Caffey, LSU AgCenter Wetland and Coastal Resources Specialist.*

The main reason that many fishermen continue to use LORAN signal navigation instead of GPS has been the built-in inaccuracy of GPS. This problem no longer exists. The move was timely, as the LORAN system has been scheduled for future shutdown.

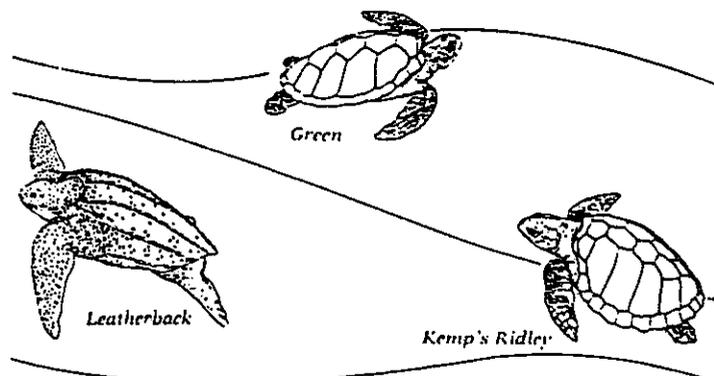
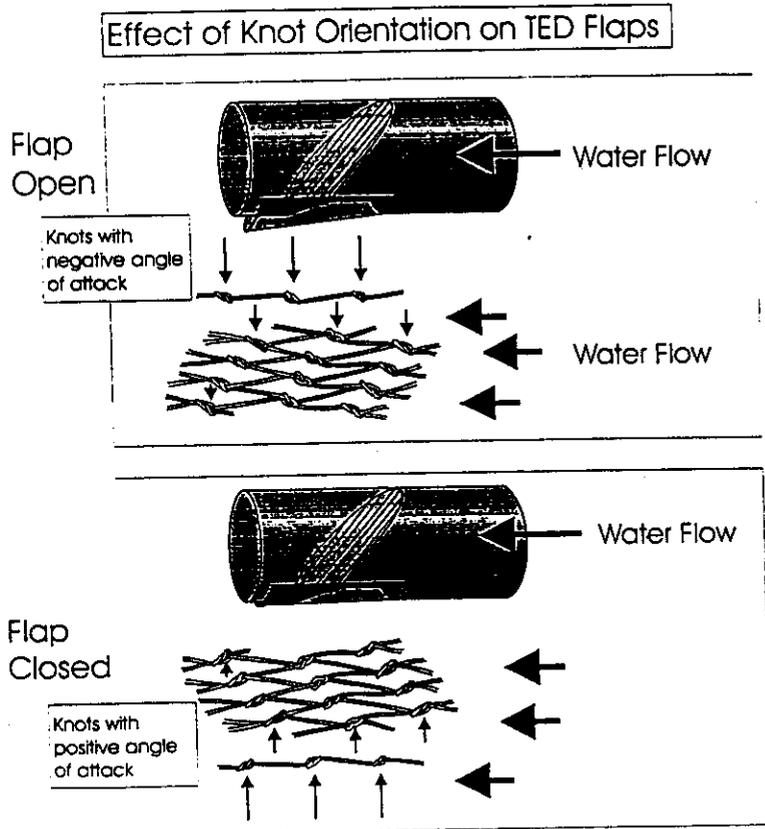
T.E.D. FLAP TECHNOLOGY

Shrimp loss due to TEDs not working right is still a sore spot with commercial shrimpers. The use of a webbing flap over the TED opening will reduce the loss of shrimp, but only if the flap is installed correctly.

According to gear expert John Watson of the National Marine Fisheries Service in Pascogoula, Mississippi, water flow over a towed TED flap can either force the flap closed or actually lift it open.

The deciding factor is which way the webbing in the flap is flipped. This is true for top-shooting TEDs as well as for bottom-shooters.

The Georgia Sea Grant Program has prepared a video clearly showing the effect of webbing knot orientation on TED flaps. These tapes have been distributed to local net shops. A copy is also here in the Marrero LSU AgCenter office. If you would like to view it, call and come in.



FISHERMEN'S GEAR FUND UPDATE

Peggy Rooney, Investigator for the Louisiana Fishermen's Gear Compensation Fund has announced an important change in the procedure for making claims for damaged commercial fishing gear. Effective July 1, claimants will have to provide more exact location information on the obstruction that damaged their gear or boat.

Acceptable will be LORAN-C readings, latitude/longitude from a G.P.S. receiver, or a plot drawn on a National Ocean Survey chart. A list of stores where the charts may be purchased will be provided upon request when the fisherman makes the first call to report gear damage. Increasing numbers of fishermen are now also carrying G.P.S. receivers on their boats. Accurate hand-held G.P.S. receivers are now easily found in the market for under \$200. According to Rooney, this requirement has been in place for some time, but not enforced. Rooney says that more accurate hang locations will make their location for future removal more efficient.

Another procedural change will be that the Compensation Fund office will no longer accept photocopies of purchase receipts for the lost or damaged gear. Original receipts are required. These will be returned to claimants for their bookkeeping needs after verification.

Unchanged are the requirements that a person must prove that he or she is a commercial fisherman with photocopies of their income tax return. Photographs are required of damage to vessels and outboard engines but not for net damage or loss.

Claims for damage can be reported by calling (225) 342-0122. A claimant must have earned at least 50 percent of his or her income from commercial fishing in the previous year to be eligible.

The Fishermen's Gear Compensation Fund has asked that we print the coordinates of sites for which damage has been claimed. These LORAN coordinates are listed below.

26537 46979 Cameron
 26665 46978 Cameron
 26795 46978 Cameron
 26943 46961 Cameron
 27009 46996 Cameron
 27154 46965 Vermilion
 27549 46923 Vermilion
 27551 46924 Lafourche

28085 46888 Terrebonne
 28136 46904 Terrebonne
 28145 46916 Terrebonne
 28364 46836 Lafourche
 28807 47006 St Bernard
 28936 46792 Plaquemines
 28976 46778 Plaquemines
 29031 46867 Plaquemines
 29219 47026 St Bernard

REMINDER TO SHRIMPERS

With the spring shrimp season right around the corner, shrimp fishermen should be aware of the laws governing shrimping over oyster leases. Section 423 B (2) of Title 56 provides that no person shall trawl, seine or use skimmers over a properly marked oyster lease in the year following the seeding of the lease with seed oysters. Such areas must be marked with signs stating "NO TRAWLING OR SEINING — OYSTER LEASE."

The law also states that any person who knowingly trawls or skims over a marked oyster lease is liable for damages as well as a class 3 Wildlife and Fisheries violation. First offense class 3 violations carry a fine of \$250-500 and/or up to 90 days in jail.

THE GUMBO POT Korean Style Grilled Fish

When I first prepared this dish I was worried that all of the sesame would overpower the fish, as I used sesame oil instead of vegetable oil. I shouldn't have worried. The sesame accented the red snapper I used and the marinade on the fish turned a beautiful golden color during cooking. The use of a grill basket makes this dish a snap to prepare.



2	lbs fish fillets	1	tbsp garlic, minced
2	tbsp sesame or salad oil	1	tsp black pepper
1	cup soy sauce	4	tbsp sugar
2	green onions, minced	2	tbsp toasted sesame seeds, crushed
1	tsp fresh ginger, minced		

Mix all of ingredients except fish and let stand for one hour. Put fish and marinade in plastic bag, mix to coat fish and marinade in refrigerator for 1 to 4 hours. Broil over charcoal until fish flakes with a fork (5-10 minutes), turning once. Serves 4 generously.

Sincerely,

Jerald Horst
Associate Specialist (Fisheries)