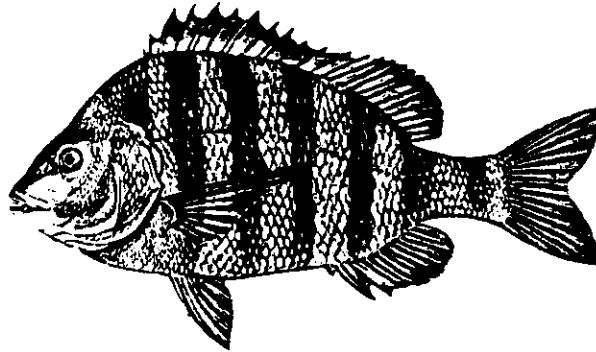


SEA GRANT PROGRAM



LAGNIAPPE

HOW YOU CALL DAT AGAIN?

"Rondeau seabream." It's a name that sure will look better on a fine restaurant's menu than "sheepshead." The sheepshead, *Archosargus probatocephalus*, is a delicious, lean, white-fleshed table fish. It became increasingly important to the restaurant industry as redfish were declared gamefish and the supply of commercially-produced speckled trout has dried to a trickle. Its major drawback is its name, which tends to turn off all but the most knowledgeable seafood diner.

Recognizing this problem, the **Louisiana Seafood Standards of Identity Task Force** requested the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) several months ago to allow the use of "rondeau seabream" in place of sheepshead in trade. The task force not only cited the terribly unappetizing name, but also the fact that two other entirely unrelated fish species in the U.S. are known as sheepshead, creating consumer confusion.

FDA maintains what it calls "The Seafood List." This list is FDA's official guide to acceptable market names for seafood sold in interstate commerce and the agency follows these guidelines very closely. Inventing new names off the cuff is illegal and considered deceptive. FDA very seldom makes exceptions.



In this instance, they did. On June 28, Dr. Scott R. Rippey of FDA responded to the task force with a letter of no objection to the use of the market name "rondeau seabream". Rippey agreed with the task force that members of the porgy family are known worldwide as "seabream" of one sort or another, and that the word "rondeau" is a French name for this fish.

Both seafood dealers and restaurateurs can now feel comfortable in using the new name.

MARINE RESOURCES CONSERVATION ACT - UPDATES

In 1995, the Louisiana Legislature passed Act 1316, the Louisiana Marine Resources Conservation Act, one of the single-most important pieces of fisheries legislation ever passed in the state. This act, also called the gill net law, did many things besides severely restrict the use of saltwater gill nets in Louisiana.

One of the provisions of the act was the creation of a commercial rod and reel license to keep a stable supply of fish, especially speckled trout, to restaurants. The law provided that to be eligible to purchase the license, that a person must prove that he held a gill net license in two of the years 1993, 1994, and 1995 and that he earned more than 50% of his income from commercial fishing in two of those same three years. Also, any person who had ever been convicted of any class 3 or greater fisheries-related violation was not eligible for the license. Commercial speckled trout harvest was limited to a season between November and April. Commercial speckled trout landings are shown below for the two years before the act, the year of the act and the four years after the act.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>POUNDS</u>
1993	1,138,070
1994	1,023,687
1995	658,084
1996	774,474
1997	549,505
1998	111,979
1999 (preliminary)	54,377

Surprisingly, commercial speckled trout landings have declined each of the four years since the act. This is surprising, as it would seem logical that landings would increase rather than decrease as fishermen developed skills with rods and reels. However, exactly the opposite has occurred.

Another part of the Louisiana Marine Resources Conservation Act created the "Commercial Fisherman's Economic Assistance Fund." This fund was supposed to provide job training for gill netters put out of work by the act, and also to pay for buying nets made

illegal or useless by the act. Qualifications to get assistance from the fund were the same as those for the commercial rod and reel license. The act also provided for a portion of the money to be used by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Enforcement Division.

Recreational fishermen who fished in saltwater were assessed \$3 per year from the date that the act went into effect in 1995 through June 30, 1998, to fund the Assistance Fund. A breakdown of the funds collected and how they were spent is as follows.

\$ 2,074,118	total funds collected
\$ 62,034	used for net buy-back
\$ 0	used for job training
\$ <u>116,327</u>	used by LDWF Enforcement
\$ 1,895,757	balance

The \$1,895,757 balance from the Commercial Fisherman's Economic Assistance Fund was moved to a new fund, the "Saltwater Fishery Enforcement Fund", by Act 804 of the 1999 Legislature. These monies are to be used by LDWF to enforce all saltwater fishery and fishery-related laws, rules and regulations in coastal parishes.

THE FUTURE OF RECREATIONAL FISHING

With Louisiana's superb recreational fishing, generous limits, and increasing numbers of anglers, it is easy to miss the fact that things are not the same everywhere in the country. At the recent *RecFish 2000* meeting in San Diego, California, a symposium focused on managing marine recreational fisheries in the next century, several speakers presented an eye-opening picture.

Kriston P. LaVine, Program Manager for the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, pointed out that on a national basis the number of recreational fishermen has leveled off and not grown as the population has. In many states, participation in sport fishing has substantially declined.

According to LaVine, 24 million people in the U.S. own a fishing rod but haven't fished in the last year. If these people went fishing once in the coming year, license sales would double. She went on to say that any effort to get more people into fishing should target these people rather than those who have never fished before.

Bob Ditton, a professor at Texas A&M University went even further. He said that changing U.S. demographics — an aging population, an increasing percentage of racial

minorities, and an increasing urban population — are all bad news for recreational fishing. In 1985, 26% of the U.S. population fished. In 1998, the percentage dropped to 17%.

Broken down further, the numbers show that recreational fishing is dominated by early middle-aged, white males who live in rural or suburban areas. Only 12% of the urban population fishes, 8 % of all females, 8 to 9% of races other than white, 7% of males aged 55-64, and 3% of males over the age of 64. Ditton presented the projected changes in racial composition of households between 1990 and 2030.

<u>Racial Group</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2030</u>
White	75.7%	60.2%
African-American	11.7%	13.8%
Hispanic	9.0%	17.2%
Other (mostly Asian)	3.6%	8.9%

The result of the projected growth in the number of older people, minorities and urban-dwellers is that angler growth is falling behind population growth.

- * A 29% increase in U.S. population is expected between 1990 and 2030.
- * A 19% increase in saltwater anglers is expected between 1990 and 2030.
- * A 14% increase in freshwater anglers is expected between 1990 and 2030.

Is this good or bad? On the good side, it means lower increases in fishing pressure on fish populations. The flip side is recreational fishing may lose status, funding and support. Activities and interests that don't keep up with population growth are seen as minor and receive less attention and support. For example, at one time in this country, cockfighting and bear-baiting were activities that had a lot of participants and therefore support.

Ditton states that demographic changes will directly impact the characteristics of saltwater sports fishermen.

- * Future saltwater anglers will be less educated
- * Future saltwater anglers will have less disposable income
- * Future saltwater anglers will be less knowledgeable
- * Future saltwater anglers will require lower fees.
- * Future saltwater anglers will support management less.

This means that fisheries managers will have to adopt broader thinking about future saltwater anglers.

- * The definition of what is ethical, affordable or satisfying angling will change.
- * Perceived benefits will change — people will fish more for food.

- * Less support for catch-and-release angling will exist.
- * The species of fish targeted will change
- * Less support will exist for user fees — paying taxes for benefits.
- * More people will view the role of management as preventing harvest rather than protecting fish

Ditton says that we have very little experience with dealing with such angler attitudes today. He goes on to add that public attitudes will also change.

- * More public support will exist for environmental protection, nonconsumptive uses, subsistence uses, and animal welfare arguments.
- * Less public support will exist for fishing for "sport", money fishing tournaments, catch-and-release fishing, and trophy fishing.

He cited the example of modern day Germany, where catch-and-release is against the law because of animal welfare concerns. Fishermen must take a course, pass a test, know the limits, and stop when they catch their limit.

Current trends and projections can be overcome, says Ditton, by interventions targeting women and minorities, without ignoring white males. Effective educational outreach efforts and angler mentorship are important. Urban fishing programs that work are also important, he says. Many now are lip service and many are in suburbs where people already fish.

Sources: *Retaining and Increasing Public Interest and Participation in Fishing, Boating and Stewardship*. Kristen P. LaVine. *Growth, Demographics, and Values of the Marine Angling Community in the 21st Century*. Bob Ditton. *RecFish 2000: Managing Marine Recreational Fisheries in the 21st Century*. June, 2000.

BONNET CARRE' & LAKE PONCHARTRAIN

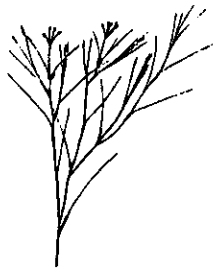
Lake Ponchartrain, in extreme eastern Louisiana, is the largest lake in the state. In recent years it has become the focus of much public attention. The largest city in the state is on its shores; it is an important seafood producing area; it receives heavy sail and motor boat pressure; it has its own "watchdog" foundation; and the flow of research dollars for the lake is increasing.

Anything that may affect the water quality of the lake receives attention. The Bonnet Carre' Spillway is one such area of high interest. This leveed spillway is located 33 miles above New Orleans and connects the Mississippi River to Lake Ponchartrain.

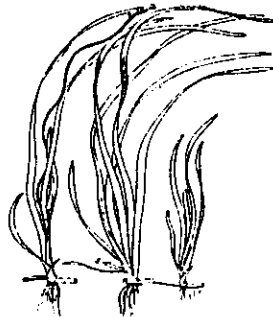
The spillway is designed to lower the potential for flooding of New Orleans during high river flow years by diverting flood waters from the river to the lake.

Completed in 1936, the spillway has been opened eight times, most recently in 1997. This latest opening and its impacts on the lake have attracted the most attention. Several research projects have dealt with this topic.

The first project measured spillway opening impacts on submersed aquatic vegetation (SAV) beds. Often called "underwater grass beds, they have declined since 1953 when they were first studied. The recovery of these historic SAV beds has been made an important goal in lake restorations efforts. Several beds of 3 species of SAV, *Ruppia* (wigeon grass), *Vallisneria* (ribbon grass), and *Myriophyllum* (milfoil) were surveyed from 1996 through 1999.



Ruppia



Vallisneria



Myriophyllum

Based on a comparison of the 1996 and 1997 surveys, the March 17-April 17, 1997 Bonnet Carre' opening caused a decline in *Ruppia* and *Myriophyllum*, but not *Vallisneria*. No SAV increase was caused by the opening.

The *Myriophyllum* bed off of Bayou St. John disappeared completely in June, 1997, probably because of the large algae bloom (growth) caused by plant nutrients from river water. Northshore *Ruppia* beds dropped to 13% of what they were in 1996. By 1998, the beds had recovered to 68% of their 1996 level.

By 1999, an even larger increase in *Ruppia* occurred, but the researchers concluded that this increase totally due higher salinities and clarity following Hurricane Georges. *Vallisneria*, a more freshwater plant, did not increase in 1999, but rather continued its decline.

In another research project, scientists studied the large blue-green algae bloom in the lake which peaked in June, 1997. The bloom produced surface water discoloration, unpleasant odors and minor irritation to some people by algae-produced toxins.

The researchers compared data on dissolved plant nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), water temperatures, wind speed, salinity, and water clarity from years with diversions to years without diversions. The only factors which showed a significant difference between years were nutrient levels and salinity, with high nutrient levels and low salinity being associated with high blue-green algae levels. Both factors, of course, can be produced by Mississippi River diversions into the lake.

Sources: *Current Status of Submersed Aquatic Vegetation in Lake Ponchartrain*. H. J. Cho and M. A. Poirrier. *Factors contributing to Cyanobacterial Blooms in Lake Ponchartrain Determined by Comparing Years With and Without Mississippi River Diversions*. Q. Dortch, T.D. Peterson and R. E. Turner. Basics of the Basin Research Symposium. May, 2000.

POLLUTION IN PONCHARTRAIN

One unfortunate byproduct coming out of increasing public environmental awareness is the perception that most natural waterbodies are heavily polluted. This perception is especially true for waterbodies near cities. Like many perceptions, this one is not entirely true. Research indicates, for example, that Lake Ponchartrain is relatively "clean."

Pollutants in waterbodies accumulate in bottom sediments which in turn are laid down in layers. Reading these layers provides the history of pollution levels in the water body. Researchers from the U.S. Geological Survey have done just that in Lake Ponchartrain, comparing shallower sediments with deeper ones deposited before Europeans settled in the area.

Their monitoring of heavy metals, such as zinc, lead, cadmium, and copper showed modern levels that were quite low in most areas. Zinc was highest in Bayou Trapagnier, the New Orleans Industrial Canal and in areas near Slidell and New Orleans. Lead was highest in Bayou Trapagnier and areas off of the City of New Orleans. Even in these areas, zinc and lead are at moderate levels.

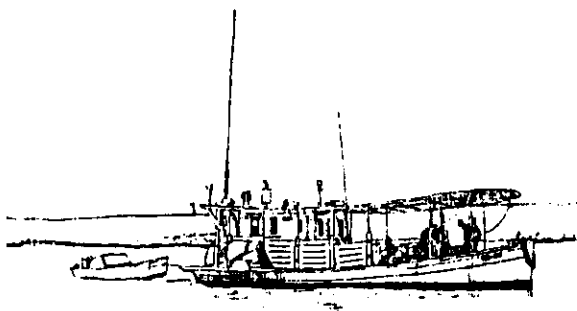
Other pollutants such as PCBs and PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) are even lower than metals. For example, a large creosote discharge in the northeastern part of the lake in 1970 has left only traces of the expected PAHs, probably because of rapid breakdown by "germs" in the lake's warm brackish waters.

Further research shows that opening of the Bonnet Carre' spillway has very little effect on sediment and pollution distribution. In general, sediment accumulation is greatest in the deepest central part of the lake and also is the southwestern part, where water circulation is weakest. Sediment deposit on the edges of the lake tends to be redistributed by winds and storms.

Sources: *Geochemical and Environmental Relationships in Sediments from Lake Ponchartrain and Southern Louisiana Estuaries: Results of Comprehensive Database Development*. Frank T. Manheim and Laura Hayes. *Surficial Sediments Dynamics in Lake Ponchartrain LA as Monitored by Beryllium-7*. M. E. Marot and C.W. Holmes. Basics of the Basin Research Symposium. May, 2000.

OYSTER INDUSTRY SURVEY

Recently, two researchers with Louisiana State University conducted a survey of people in the oyster fishery, their attitudes and their needs. The survey was conducted by detailed telephone interviews with 316 license holders. Oystermen surveyed were broken into three groups based on vessel size, with 91 in the small boat (under 25 ft), 106 in the mid-size boat (25-40 ft), and 119 in the large boat (over 40 ft) classes. The majority (54%) of the small boat operators held tong gear licenses. Dredge gear licenses were held by most of the mid-size (90%) and by 98% of the large boat operators. A very large percentage of the small boat tonging operators were located in Cameron and Sulphur in extreme southwestern Louisiana.



When asked to identify their ethnic background, 37% called themselves Cajun/French, 22% as "white", and 14% as Croatian (Slavonian or Yugoslavian). Croatian oystermen were heavily concentrated in the large boat category who operated 35% of the large boats in the survey. Only 6% of the people in the survey identified themselves as Spanish/Hispanic, 3% as African-American and less than 1% as Vietnamese/Asian.

About 90% of the oyster harvesters were concentrated in six parishes — St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Terrebonne, Cameron, Lafourche, and Calcasieu. Over 71% of the Croatians lived in Plaquemines Parish. Cajun/French were fairly evenly distributed in Terrebonne, Cameron, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines parishes.

Louisiana oystermen are experienced. Less than 10% had been in the business under 5 years, about 40% have 20 or more years of experience and 19% had 30 or more years of experience. Overall, only 11% reported owing any money on their boats. The largest boats were the oldest, with over 65% of the large boats having been built before 1980. Income was dependent on the size of the boat. Almost 56% of the large boat operators reported landing over 4000 sacks of oysters per year, as compared to 23% for mid-size and 11% for small boats.

Oystering is a family business. Over 41% overall (and 58% in the big boat group) stated that the reason they were in the fishery was because it was a family business and 82% said they would make the decision again to become an oyster harvester. Contradicting this, less than 36% would encourage their children to enter the business. Over 51% of the people in the survey reported at least one grandfather in the industry.

About 48% of the respondents said that they felt overburdened a lot or some of the time by the demands of their business, and 50% by their business debt. Fifty-seven percent reported that they didn't have enough money to meet their needs some or a lot of the time. An overwhelming 85% felt overburdened by government rules and regulations. Trust in government was quite low. When asked how much of the time they can trust local government to do what is right, 26% said never, 44% said only some of the time, 22% said most of the time, and 6% said just about always. In spite of that, 94% said that their communities were good places to live.

Well over half (57%) reported income from sources other than oystering, with 68% of this group earning income from other types of commercial fishing. When asked what they would do if they could no longer harvest oysters, the largest group (38%) said they would do some other kind of commercial fishing, although over 31% said they had no idea what they would do.

On some questions, there were sharp divisions within the industry. Almost 80% of the small boat operators felt that there are not too many people in the fishery. Only 47% of the large boat operator felt so, and 50% of them supported limited entry management, compared to only 30% for the small boat group. Disagreement also occurred over the question of moving the oyster program from the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to the Department of Agriculture. Over 79% of the big boat operators favored the move, but less than 46% of the small boat operators did.

On other points, more agreement occurred. All three boat size classes agreed by 68%, that pollution is more of a threat to oyster reefs than overfishing. Agreement also existed across the board (57%) in support of coastal restoration projects. Oystermen were asked to list their three most important problems. They are as follows:

Pollution	26.7%
Regulatory Issues	19.0%
Water Salinity	15.8%
Media Coverage	11.6%
Economic Concerns	7.4%
Health Risk	4.5%
Crowding/Theft	4.2%
Oyster Predators	1.6%

Louisiana's oyster fishery was the most valuable fishery in the state as late as 1925. Even today, it is the largest oyster fishery in the United States. Gulf of Mexico waters account for 58% of all U.S. production, and Louisiana claims nearly a 60% share of all Gulf landings. The backbone of production has been the 403,141 acres of oyster leases in the state, although in recent years, harvest from state managed bottoms has increased substantially.

Source: *Louisiana Oystermen...Surviving in a Troubled Fishery*. Forrest A. Deseran and Carl Riden. Louisiana Sea Grant College Program. 2000.

SHRIMPER/CRABBER CONFLICT

At the June Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission meeting, Vermilion Bay shrimpers again requested that the commission take action about the number of crab traps in the waters that shrimpers share with crabbers. This debate comes up at least once a year and each year the shrimpers are becoming more vocal. Shrimp fishermen maintain that so many crab traps are in use in the area that it is impossible to use shrimp trawls or skimmers and that large numbers of unserviceable traps litter the waters of the bay.

In a written statement prepared for the commission and presented to the Louisiana Crab Task Force, Vermilion Bay shrimpers made the following proposals.

- Limit the number of crab traps to 200 per boat
- Require specific materials for crab trap construction
- Make trap owners responsible for damage caused by their traps
- Either close crabbing during open shrimp seasons or require crabbing to be done with other gear such as dredges or trawls during open shrimp season

The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has requested Department of Wildlife and Fisheries biologists to review the possibilities for legal changes on the subject

ANOTHER STATE BITES THE BULLET

The state of Ohio has added its name to the growing list of states that have requirements to operate a boat. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Watercraft now requires anyone born on or after January 1, 1982, who operates any powerboat over 10 horsepower to have completed a course approved by the National Association of State Boating Laws Administration or to have passed a proficiency exam.

According to Ohio Sea Grant Extension Agent Walter Williams, the new law was partly due to problems with personal watercraft (PWC) users. PWCs' or as they are often called jet skis, are facing more regulation each year. For example, as of April 20, 2000,

the National Park Service has banned PWC use in 66 parks, recreational areas and seashores.

Source: *Twinline*. May/June 2000. Ohio Sea Grant College Program.

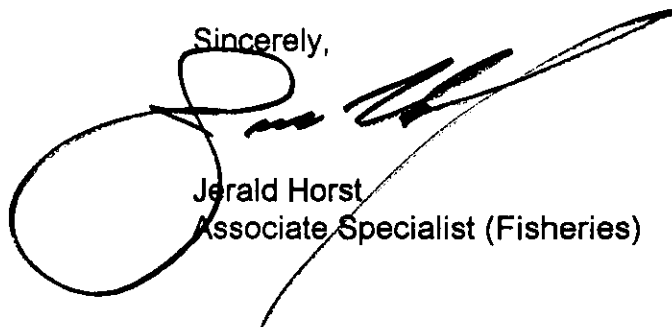
THE GUMBO POT Crabmeat Stuffed Mushrooms

Crabmeat is good with anything, but since I'm a mycophile (mushroom lover) this dish especially appealed to me. This dish may be used as an entree or as an hors d'oeuvres.

1 pound fresh large mushrooms	½ pound crabmeat
½ cup margarine	¼ teaspoon salt
¼ cup chopped green onions	¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
¼ cup chopped white onions	½ cup bread crumbs
¼ cup chopped celery	1 beaten egg
¼ cup chopped garlic	

Remove stems from mushrooms and clean the caps. Melt the margarine in a heavy, medium-sized skillet over medium heat. Saute caps for several minutes until soaked. Remove caps and drain on paper towels. Add the green onions, white onions, garlic and celery and saute for several minutes until soft. Add the crabmeat and mix gently. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add bread crumbs and mix. Reduce heat and slowly add beaten egg, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and stuff into the caps. Bake the stuffed caps in a 9 by 12 inch glass pan at 325 degrees for 30 minutes. Set oven on broil for last 3 minutes to toast the tops. Serves 4-6 as an entree.

Sincerely,



Jerald Horst
Associate Specialist (Fisheries)

Provided by,

Mark Schexnayder
Area Agent (Fisheries)
Jefferson, St. Charles, St. John, Orleans