

# Lagniappe



**EXTENSION PROGRAMS**  
Agriculture and Forestry  
Community Leadership  
Economic Development  
Environmental Sciences  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
4-H Youth Development  
Natural Resources

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## GULF STURGEON HABITAT PUBLIC HEARING

The Gulf sturgeon is a large, primitive fish that ranges from the Louisiana rivers east of the Mississippi River into Florida Panhandle rivers and the nearby estuary waters. Research in Louisiana indicates that after spawning in the Pearl and Bogue Chitto Rivers, Gulf sturgeon spend the rest of the year in the brackish/saline waters of Mississippi Sound. Gulf sturgeons were common before 1900 but are now threatened with extinction by dams on spawning rivers, pollution and overfishing. Since 1991, the species has been listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, but "critical habitat" was not designated for the fish.



Earthjustice, a San Francisco-based environmental law firm sued the National Marine Fisheries Service to force the designation of critical habitat. The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana ruled in their favor, requiring a determination of critical habitat for the species by February 28, 2003. David Guest, attorney for Earthjustice said about the ruling, "This is a great thing, because in the big picture, the environment is the economy and so there will be an enormous economic benefit from the recovery of Gulf sturgeon."

NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are holding four public hearings on their proposal for areas for Gulf sturgeon critical habitat, including the Pearl and Bogue Chitto Rivers, Lake Pontchartrain (east of the causeway), Lake Catherine, Little Lake, The Rigolets, Lake Borgne, and nearby Mississippi Sound. The local hearing will be held at 7 p.m. on August 22, 2002 at the Airport Hilton Hotel, 901 Airline Dr., in Kenner. A public information session on the subject will be held at the same location from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m., immediately before the hearing.

Critical habitat designation will ensure that federal agencies and the public are aware of all of the habitat needs of Gulf sturgeon that may need special management or protection. A critical habitat designation does not establish a preserve or refuge, nor



does it affect citizens, groups, or non-federal agencies who do not require federal permits or funding. It also does not affect existing developed sites such as dams, piers, marinas, bridges, boat ramps, pipelines, oil rigs, or public swimming areas. However, with designation, federal agencies are required to consult on any action they take that might affect the species.

Public comment can be sent to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1601 Balboa Ave, Panama City, FL 32405, faxed to 850/763-2177 or e-mailed to [gulfsturgeon@fws.gov](mailto:gulfsturgeon@fws.gov)

## WHATCHA EATIN'?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has just released an interesting report on food consumption and imports. In the early 1980s, average food consumption was 1,800 pounds per person per year. By 2000, it was over 2,000 pounds per year. The average person consumed 20% more fruits, vegetables and cereals, but only 7% more animal products. Consumption of animal products dropped from 46% of the average American's diet to 43%.

The report says that the belief that benefits exist from eating more fiber and less animal fats has clearly shaped the pattern of U.S. food consumption and that these trends favor more imports of foreign food products. From the early 1980s to 2000, the imported food share of total food consumption increased from 7% to almost 9%. The increase was not equal for all food items, as the table below clearly shows. The thing that really jumps out from the table is how high the import percentage was of total seafood consumption in 1980, and how much it increased by 2000.

Food Item	Percent Imported By Year		
	1980	1990	2000
Beef	8.7	9.7	11.0
Pork	3.3	5.6	5.2
Lamb	9.4	11.4	35.6
<b>Seafood (All)</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>68.3</b>
<b>Seafood (Fresh Frozen)</b>	<b>56.8</b>	<b>65.8</b>	<b>81.7</b>
Dairy	1.7	1.9	2.7
Fruit (Fresh & Frozen)	5.8	13.2	21.8
Fruit Juices	11.6	48.6	31.6
Tree Nuts	25.5	35.6	38.5
Vegetables (Fresh & Frozen)	5.9	9.6	14.0
Vegetables (Processed)	3.1	3.6	3.9
Vegetable Oils	15.6	18.0	20.2
Spices	4.8	7.2	13.9
Wheat	0.3	4.1	8.7
Rice	0.3	5.1	9.6
Cane and Beet Sugar	45.4	29.9	16.4

The report says that a variety of factors are driving the overall increase in food imports, including a strong U.S. dollar and a strong economy from 1996 to 2000. As Americans have shifted more of their diet to vegetables and fruits, foreign sources offer off-season supplies. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) lifted tariffs on Mexican fruit and vegetable exports to the U.S. Some products are also imported because of more ethnic demand. Improved shipping and storage technology have also made importing foods easier. Some of the increase in beef imports was due to less U.S. beef being available after U.S. herds were sold off. Also economic recession in many Asian countries diverted Australian and New Zealand beef to the U.S.

Source: *The Import Share of U.S. – Consumed Food Continues to Rise*. FAU-66-01. Alberto Jerardo. Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. July, 2002.

## **FOOD FIGHT!**

Concern over the effects of imports on domestic fisheries goes back to at least the 1950s. One of the first affected was the U.S. oyster canning industry, which was completely displaced by Asian canned oysters. Next affected were canned shrimp. A combination of cheaper imports and changing consumer demand shifting away from canned seafood products resulted in a steady decline in the number of shrimp canneries.

Imports of frozen shrimp steadily increased until the 1980s, when they exploded. Much of the latter increase was due to wide-spread use of shrimp farming technology in Latin America. This was followed by even larger farmed shrimp production in Asia. U.S. shrimp industry leadership has twice looked at taking anti-import action and is now considering the possibility again.

In the mid-1990s, the Louisiana crawfish industry began to receive strong competition from imports of much less expensive frozen tail meat from China. They filed an anti-dumping petition and in August, 1997, they won. Duties (import taxes) were to be applied on each pound of imported Chinese crawfish for 5 years. For a variety of reasons, the collection system did not get up and running for 4 years. In the meantime, U.S. Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia introduced legislation, which passed Congress in 2000, that required that anti-dumping duty money collected should be shared out to the surviving U.S. businesses that were injured by the dumping. In early June, 2002, Louisiana crawfish meat processors received word that they would receive at least \$8 million in duties to be divided amongst them.

However, in Mid-July, the World Trade Organization (WTO) declared the Byrd Amendment illegal. (This may not affect the payout to Louisiana crawfish processors). Complaining countries, which include Canada, Australia, Brazil, Chile, India, Indonesia,

Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Mexico, and the European Union say that they are being penalized twice, once when they have to pay duties, and then again when the duty money is given to their American competitors.

Byrd called the ruling "appalling", and said that "the WTO has decided that it and not the U.S. Congress has the authority to determine how American tax dollars are spent." He added that foreign companies would not have been hit by the law if they had obeyed international trade rules in the first place. The U.S. is expected to appeal the WTO ruling.

Following the success of the crawfish anti-dumping initiative, the blue crabmeat-producing industry in the southeastern U.S. pursued anti-dumping help in March, 2000. While imported crabmeat has been around for many years, a big jump in imports of high-quality imported crabmeat took place in 1998 and 1999, primarily from Thailand and Indonesia, but also the Philippines. This anti-dumping petition failed, and crabmeat imports have continued.

On another issue, involving both imported crawfish and shrimp, authorities earlier this year detected the presence of chloramphenicol, a banned antibiotic in imports of crawfish and shrimp from China. The Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture, rapidly followed by other state commissioners, began testing imported Chinese seafood and preventing sale of products with the chemical present. While their actions taken were for consumer protection, commercial shrimpers clearly stated that they hoped the issue would slow imports.

The latest import battle is over basa and tra, species similar to the farm-raised channel catfish produced in the southern U.S. These fish are farmed in Vietnam and imported into the U.S., where they are estimated to have captured 12-20% of the market. Imports of the fillets, which sell for less than U.S. farm-raised catfish, have increased from 130,000 pounds in 1996 to 12.5 million pounds in 2001. The Catfish Farmers of America (CFA) maintained that these products are mislabeled as "farm-raised catfish", and that importers are taking advantage of an expensive promotional campaign paid for with American fish-farmers' money.

CFA lobbied for and got language in the national 2001 Farm Bill that prohibited these fish from being sold as "catfish" in the U.S. Vietnamese fisheries exporters responded by the formation of the Vietnamese Association of Seafood Exporters and Processors (VASEP) to help their exporters. CFA followed at the end of June by announcing that they had filed an anti-dumping petition against Vietnamese exporters with the U.S. International Trade Commission and the U.S. Department of Commerce.

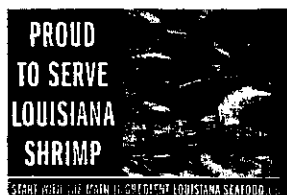
Reaction in Vietnam has been almost panic. VASEP has hired an international law firm to help defend its exports. Vietnamese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Phan

Thuy Thanh called the dumping charges "slanderous", adding "Vietnamese enterprises always observe international and U.S. trade regulations and they conduct their business according to market mechanisms". She warned that the dumping complaint could "sabotage the developing relationship between the U.S. and Vietnam." Ironically, coming from a communist country, Vietnam's Trade Minister Vu Khoan sent a strongly worded letter to U.S. officials complaining about a "plot that undermines free trade."

The seafood import issue will not go away in the near future. Consumer demand for seafood in the United States is increasing. Commercial harvests from wild fisheries are decreasing, either because of strict management measures or reallocation of fish stocks to recreational fishermen. Meanwhile, for a variety of reasons, aquaculture in the U.S. is a slow-growth industry. The result is that many seafood dealers feel that they must turn to imports to supply their customers.

Source: *U.S., Vietnam in Word Battle over Catfish*, 6/16/02. *Vietnam goes on the Offensive, Creates Seafood Marketing Fund to Help Exporters*, 6/18/02. *U.S. Catfish Farmers File Antidumping Suit Against Vietnam*, 6/28/02. *Vietnam Rejects U.S. Catfish Industry Dumping Charges*, 7/5/02. *WTO Declares "Byrd Amendment" Illegal*, 6/18/02. *The Wave*

## EAT LOUISIANA !



The Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board has announced a new consumer awareness campaign to encourage diners to ask for Louisiana seafood. At the heart of the campaign are two colorful, professionally photographed PROUD TO SERVE decals available free to any restaurant that serves home grown seafood.

"We have bragging rights to the best seafood in the world," says Ewell Smith, Executive Director of the board, "So, let's brag! We want restaurants to show their colors. It's simply a way for them to let their customers know they serve superior product...bragging rights." Smith says that right now shrimp and crawfish decals are available and response has been so good that the board is developing decals for blue crabs, oysters and finfish.

Anyone interested in the PROUD TO SERVE program may contact Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board Executive Director Ewell Smith at 1-800-222-4017 or cell phone 504-214-3985.

## COAST GUARD SAFETY ALERT

The U.S. Coast Guard is alerting the fishing industry in the Gulf of Mexico of a deadline for commercial fishing vessels to meet stability requirements that have been in existence since 1991. In 1999, the Coast Guard discovered this requirement was not

being followed in the Gulf of Mexico. Since then, they have been educating the commercial fishing industry about this requirement. The Coast Guard is now moving forward with the enforcement phase and will begin issuing penalties Gulfwide. Starting October 1, 2002 any vessel found in violation of these requirements will be issued a citation. Stability regulations apply to vessels 79 feet or more in length if the vessel:

- Had its keel laid on or after September 15, 1991, or
- Had major construction started on or after September 15, 1991, or
- Has been substantially altered on or after September 15, 1991

Stability instructions, tests, and calculations ensure that the master, operator or person in charge of a fishing vessel has enough stability information to allow them to operate the vessel in a safe and stable condition.

Vessel owners must provide and post the stability instructions before **October 01, 2002**. Where tests or calculations are necessary to evaluate stability, it is the owner's responsibility to select qualified individuals (naval architects or professional engineers) to perform the tests or calculations. The cost of these tests or calculations could be more than \$4000. The owner is required to maintain the test results, calculations and instructions.

By **April 1, 2003**, vessels built after September 15, 1991 must meet watertight and weathertight requirements.

- Each opening on a deck or bulkhead that is exposed to weather must have a watertight door.
- Unless the opening has a "quick-acting watertight closure device, the coaming (bottom lip) of the doorway must be 24 inches above deck for vessels 79 feet and longer, and 12 inches for vessels less than 79 feet long. A watertight doorsill may be welded in place on the lower part of the doorway to raise it to the required height or the entire doorway can be raised.
- The coaming to a fish hold that has constant crew attention when opened, must only be 6 inches in height.
- Except on an exposed forecastle deck, a coaming is not required on a deck above the lowest weather deck.
- Each window and portlight located below the first deck above the lowest weather deck must be provided with an inside deadlight. Each deadlight

must be efficient, hinged, and arranged so that it can be effectively closed watertight.

- An opening in a vessel below the weather deck which is used for discharging water or debris resulting from processing or sorting operations must be fitted with a means to ensure the opening can be closed weathertight. This means of closing must be operable from a location which is outside the space containing the opening.

Questions on these requirements should be directed to one of the Coast Guard Civilian Fishing Vessel Safety examiners below:

Dave Johnson, New Orleans —1-800-981-1197  
 Tim Arant, Morgan City—1-800-884-8724  
 Mark Jones, Port Arthur—1-800-422-3762

## 2002 LOUISIANA FISHERIES LEGISLATION

### House Bill 169 (Act 22) — Dewitt & Hammet

Renews the sales tax exemption for commercial fishermen.

### House Bill 241 (Act 75) — Downer & & others

Repeals the 15 cent per barrel severance tax on shrimp taken in state waters and creates a 15 cent per barrel excise tax on shrimp taken in state waters and on shrimp imported into the state. A barrel of head-on shrimp is calculated at 210 pounds; for headless shrimp, a barrel is 125 pounds, and for peeled shrimp it is 75 pounds.

### House Bill 243 (Act 26) — LeBlanc

Provides supplemental funding for various state agencies, including \$700,000 to the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry to continue testing seafood imports from China for chloramphenicol.

### House Bill 244 (Act 77) — Morrish & others

Creates a \$13 fee on boat trailers, to be collected once every four years when trailer is licensed, until January 1, 2008. The money collected will go into the Aquatic Plant Control Fund. Of this money, an amount not to be more than 15% shall be used to fund research and public education on aquatic weed control by the LSU Agricultural Center. The rest of the money is to be used by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (DWF) to control aquatic weeds. None of the money may be used for salaries and related benefits for DWF. Also, the funds cannot be used to replace current funding for the plant control program as it currently exists.

### House Concurrent Resolution 8 — Baudoin & Ullio

Asks the U.S. Congress to assist the Federal Trade Commission, the Food and

Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in protecting citizens from seafood containing chloramphenicol.

House Concurrent Resolution 26 — Montgomery

Commends American Electric Power, the Conservation Fund and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for their conservation efforts at the Catahoula Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

House Concurrent Resolution 41 — Jack Smith

Requests the U.S. Congress and the Louisiana congressional delegation to ensure \$17 million funding for the fiscal year 2003-2004 for the Cooperative Enforcement Initiative (for fisheries) between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the states along the Gulf of Mexico.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 13 — Gautreaux

Urges and requests the Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture to require that all shrimp and crawfish meet U.S. Food and Drug Administration standards on chloramphenicol before sale in Louisiana. Also urges and requests the Commissioner of Agriculture to create rules and regulations on the responsibilities of the crawfish and shrimp industries and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture on inspections for chloramphenicol.

State concurrent Resolution 16 — Dupre & Ullo

Requests U.S. Congress to set quotas on certain imported seafoods to be tested before they are allowed to enter the country.

State Concurrent Resolution 62 — Romero & Marionneaux

Urges and requests the Executive Assistant of Coastal and Marine Activities, the Office of the Governor and the Director of the Atchafalaya Basin Program to conduct an evaluation of proposed projected and planned actions within the Atchafalaya Basin for improving water quality and to make recommendations on how the projects and actions may be moved forward.

Senate Resolution 36 — Dupre & Ullo

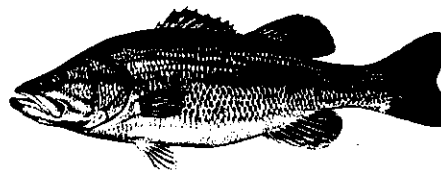
Creates the South Central Louisiana Shrimp Fisherman's Legislative Advisory Committee to study and monitor the shrimp industry and make recommendations to the Louisiana Senate and to the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission on the management and development of the shrimp industry. The 17 voting members shall be appointed as follows: One member shall be appointed each by the Terrebonne Fisherman's organization, the Dulac Fisherman's Association, the Louisiana Inshore Shrimpers Association, the United Commercial Fisherman's Association, the Organization of Louisiana Fishermen, and the Jefferson Parish Marine Fisheries Association; one member each, who must be a licensed commercial shrimper, appointed by the Mayors of Grand Isle, Jean Lafitte, and Westwego; and two members, who must be licensed



shrimpers, from each of the parishes of Lafourche, St. Mary, Terrebonne, and Vermilion, appointed by legislators from these parishes. Two non-voting members, one a biologist and one from enforcement, shall be appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

## MARSH BASS

Bass fishermen have long recognized that there seem to be some differences between largemouth bass from low-salinity marshes and those from purely freshwater habitats. Although some changes have occurred in recent years, brackish marsh bass are usually considered to be more plentiful, but smaller than freshwater bass. Also, bass anglers frequently described them as having a more stocky body build or being "chunkier" than other bass. From these differences, the question often arises as to whether marsh bass are a genetically different strain or whether the differences are due to habitat differences.



In the late 1980s, biologists at the LSU School of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries looked closely at brackish marsh bass to see if they could answer some of these questions. They conducted both lab and field studies. For the lab study, 24 fish were collected from brackish water canals and marshes near Cut Off, LA. Salinities in this area averaged 2 parts per thousand (ppt). For comparison, full strength seawater is about 35 ppt salinity. Another 24 fish were taken from Ben Hur Lake, which is freshwater at 0 ppt. All the bass were held for two weeks to settle down and actively begin feeding, before any experiments began. The freshwater fish were held at 0 ppt salinity and the marsh bass were started at 2 ppt, with salinity gradually being reduced to 0 ppt. Each fish had its own tank. The bass were then assigned equally to one of four categories of salinities — 0 ppt, 4 ppt, 8 ppt, or 12 ppt. Salinities were increased gradually by 1 ppt per day, until the final salt concentration was reached. The whole time, the bass were fed live golden shiners in an amount equal to 2% of the weight of each bass. Each fish was weighed before and after the 20-day experiment to determine growth rates.

All the bass, both marsh and freshwater, that were held at 12 ppt stopped feeding within 1 week and died before the experiment ended. No difference in growth rates occurred in the marsh bass held at 0 ppt, 4 ppt and 8 ppt and the growth rate for freshwater fish at 0 ppt and 4 ppt was the same. However, the growth rate of freshwater fish held at 8 ppt was lower than for those held at 0 ppt. When the two groups were compared, marsh bass outgrew freshwater bass at 8 ppt and freshwater bass grew faster than marsh bass at 0%. At 4 ppt, growth rates were the same.

In the field studies, 133 marsh bass were collected from the same marshes over 12 months. These fish were compared to 115 freshwater bass collected from False River. The results of detailed measurements made agreed with fishermen's

observations. Bass from brackish marshes do have a stockier body build. Length at each age for the first 4 years of their life was then back-calculated for both groups of bass. The analysis showed that at each age, freshwater bass were longer than marsh bass, especially for age 1 and 2 fish.

Examination of the stomach contents of the marsh bass collected showed a high percentage of invertebrates (animals without backbones) compared to the typical diet of adult largemouth bass. Grass shrimp were the most common food item by count and brown shrimp were the most food item by weight. The most common fish eaten were gulf killifish (cacoehoes), silversides (glass shiners), and menhaden (pogies). Fish are generally considered to be a superior food item to invertebrates for producing growth in predator fish such as largemouth bass.

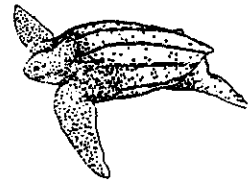
The biologists noticed large numbers of gulf killifish and menhaden in the open waters of the canals, yet the marsh bass preferred to stay in underwater grass beds that held less prey fish. They suggested that marsh bass stayed in the grass beds, even though the food supply was poorer, because the grass beds provided protection from even larger predators such as alligators, redfish and alligator gar. They noted that 40% of the bass they collected from the marsh had open wounds or scars. In marshes, largemouth bass are in the middle of the food chain, rather than near the top, as they are in most freshwater habitats.

They concluded that the differences in growth and body shape of marsh bass are due to salinity, food availability, and the risk of being eaten by larger predators. Overall, the marsh environment was considered excellent for largemouth bass.

Source: *Growth of Largemouth Bass in Low-Salinity Environments*. Michael R. Meador and William E. Kelso. Transactions of the American Fisheries Society. 199:545-552. 1990.

## NEW LONGLINE RULES

The National Marine Fisheries Service has issued new longline and shark gillnet rules for the protection of threatened loggerhead and endangered leatherback sea turtles. The rules are phased to take effect in 3 steps on July 9, August 8 and October 7, 2002. The rules for bottom and pelagic longlines in the Gulf are as follows:



### July 9, 2002

- For pelagic longlines used by highly migratory species (HMS) permit holders, all gangions must be 10% longer than any floatline, if the length of the floatline plus the length of the gangion is 100 meters (330 feet) or less.

- All vessels that have a federal HMS permit for bottom or longline gear are required to post in the wheelhouse, National Marine Fisheries Service-issued guidelines for the safe handling of accidentally hooked or entangled sea turtles.

**August 8, 2002**

- Captains of vessels using pelagic longline gear must report any sea turtle deaths with 48 hours of returning to port.

**October 7, 2002**

- Hooks used on pelagic longline vessels fishing for HMS must be made of corrodible, non-stainless steel.

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**THE GUMBO POT**

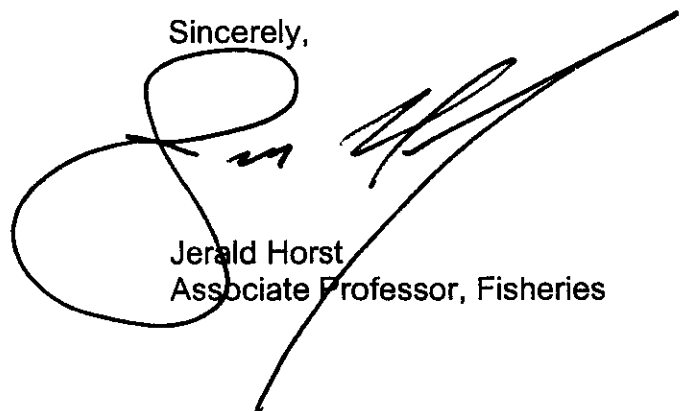
**Cajun Salsa**

This recipe passed the LSU AgCenter office "taste test." Interestingly, both people that were sensitive to pepper and people that like pepper, liked the dish. I used a "medium" picante sauce.

1	tsp butter	1	cup Italian dressing
1	lb peeled crawfish	1	can whole kernel corn, drained
1	bunch green onions, chopped	1	can black-eye peas, drained
1	cup picante sauce		

Sauté the crawfish tails in butter until firm. Mix all of the ingredients and refrigerate, preferably overnight, to ""marry" the ingredients. Serve with tortilla chips. Serves 10-12

Sincerely,



Jerald Horst  
Associate Professor, Fisheries