



Species Profile: Rock Hind (*Epinephelus adscensionis*)

This handsome little grouper is fairly common in Louisiana, sometimes taken by anglers targeting snapper at relatively shallow rigs. But though it occurs across the state, it is not abundant in any locations, so most anglers who reel one in haven't seen it before and may not be able to identify it. In fact, it is very tasty, has no size limit, and is counted in the 5-person aggregate bag limit for black, gag, red, yellowfin, scamp, yellowmouth, yellowedge, misty, snowy and red hind groupers.



Identification of the rock hind can be a bit tricky, since there are other spotted reddish groupers. But the spots in the rock hind tend to be smaller on the back and larger on the belly, and it has dark blotches on its back. The species that is most likely to be confused with the rock hind is the red hind (*Epinephelus guttatus*) which has small red spots all across the body, and each red spot has a small dark fleck in the center. The lower fins (pelvic and anal) and tail (caudal) fin of the red hind are also black-rimmed.



Another species in the same genus that might cause confusion is the speckled hind (*Epinephelus drummondhayi*, limit one per vessel), but it has light spots on a reddish-brown background. Additionally, the yellowfin grouper (*Mycteroperca venenosa*) has reddish spots and sometimes exhibits an overall reddish color phase. This one is easy to separate because the pectoral (side) fins are always rimmed in yellow or orange.

The genus *Epinephelus* contains more than 180 species, with examples in seas all over the world.

The rock hind is named for its habitat preference: It is almost always found on hard structure. Though seen at shallower oil rigs, some specimens come from sites over 100 feet in depth. It tends to be solitary, and feeds mostly on crabs (70 percent of the diet) and fish (20 percent). The largest specimen on record weighed 8.99 lbs. In Louisiana, our No. 1 record (8.74 lbs) is very close to the maximum, but the range of records down to 2.19 pounds leaves plenty of room for more entries.

Hind, Rock <i>Epinephelus adscensionis</i>			
Weight(Lbs.)	Angler's Name	Location Caught	Date Caught
8.74*	Prentiss Perkins, DDS.	Vermillion Block 200	May 28, 2001
4.45*	Bennie R. Hux	Blk. 92 off SW Pass	May 1999
3.50*	Paul Hebert	South Timbalier Block 130	July 2005
3.16*	Georgie DeRoche	Grand Isle Block 47	August 2005
2.81*	Mike Bourgeois	South Timbalier Blocks	October 2007
2.50*	Danny Crosby	East Bay, Venice	December 2007
2.19*	Danny Crosby	East Bay, Venice	December 2007

Sources:

Fishes of the Gulf of Mexico. H.D. Hoese and R.H. Moore. 1998. Texas A&M University Press. 422 p.

<http://www.fishbase.org/Summary/SpeciesSummary.php?id=14>

http://www.laoutdoorwriters.com/index.asp?pg=fr_list&div=3&wt=Saltwater&FishID=40

Recreational Red Snapper Fishery Closes August 5, 2008

NOAA Fisheries Service reminds fishermen that the recreational fishery for red snapper in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico will close effective 12:01 a.m. local time Aug. 5, 2008, through Dec. 31, 2008, the end of the current fishing year. The recreational fishery in federal waters will reopen on June 1, 2009, the beginning of the 2009 federal recreational fishing season.

Closure of the recreational red snapper fishery in federal waters complies with regulations implemented under the Fishery Management Plan for Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico, and in accordance with requirements specified in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. NOAA Fisheries Service is required to close a fishery or fishery sector in federal waters when the quota is met or projected to be met.

For information on the factors leading up to these regulations, visit <http://www.seagrantfish.lsu.edu/faqs/index.html>

Wetland Values Publication Available

Early in U.S. history, the contiguous 48 states contained an estimated 221 million acres of wetlands. Today, approximately 100 million acres of wetlands remain in this same area, and they continue to play a large role in the United States' economic, social and ecological health. In those early years, few people realized that wetlands performed numerous functions for individuals and communities and provided value to their lives. Today, many Americans support the need for wetland protection and restoration because they have seen the direct and indirect impacts of wetland loss in Louisiana and in many other parts of the country. *Functions and Values of Wetlands in Louisiana* is a full-color booklet that defines wetlands, identifies their major ecological, social and economic functions and values.

Copies are \$3 each (includes shipping and handling) from Louisiana Sea Grant Communications Office, 101 Sea Grant Building, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803; jsche15@lsu.edu; 225/578-6448.



Giant Salvinia. Sea Grant file photo

Controlling Salvinia Infestation

Two species of the floating invasive salvinia plants are causing major problems in Louisiana. Common salvinia, *Salvinia minima*, which is native to Central and South America, was first identified in Florida in the 1930s. From there it has spread to every southern state in the United States. Giant salvinia, *Salvinia molesta*, also native to South America, has spread to almost every temperate and tropical country worldwide. It has become known as the most noxious of all aquatic weeds.

While giant salvinia at maturity is quite a bit larger than its cousin the common salvinia, the two can be distinguished from one another through close observation of the upper leaves. Both species have many small spike-like hairs on the upper leaf surface. The giant salvinia's hairs split into four prongs that rejoin at the tips to form a structure that resembles an eggbeater or cage. The four prongs on common salvinia do not rejoin at the tip. The giant's young plant leaves lie flat on the water similar to the common salvinia in size and appearance, however as the giant salvinia grows and matures the leaves begin to fold upward and inward.

Giant salvinia is much more damaging than its smaller cousin because of its ability to grow into dense mats that can cover entire water bodies with a thick layer of vegetation. These mats smother native plants by blocking the penetration of sunlight into the water. Other consequences of giant salvinia are reduced dissolved oxygen in waters shaded out, causing fish kills and reduced production of submerged aquatic plants. This severely reduces the value of an area as waterfowl habitat. Solid mats of giant salvinia may also reduce or eliminate boating and fishing opportunities simply because boats are not able to push through the thick mats.

Controlling salvinia is difficult and can be quite costly. Common salvinia does not tolerate salinities and dies in a few days at levels at or above 3-4 parts per thousand. Giant salvinia is more tolerant requiring salinities of 7-10 parts per thousand for a week to begin killing it. In areas where salt water is not an option, such as in fish ponds and freshwater marshes, herbicides are an option. Diquat dibromide, commonly sold under the brand name of REWARD, is a contact herbicide which is effective at controlling salvinia. Another option is to use an aquatic labeled formulation of glyphosate, commonly known as the roundup family of herbicides. It is widely sold under many brand names. When applying these two herbicides it is important to add a surfactant which breaks the surface tension of the herbicide mixture allowing it to coat the plant and stick to it long enough to work.

Lagniappe Fisheries Newsletter

Editor: Glenn Thomas

Web coordinator: Melissa Dufour

Copy editor: Roy Kron

Layout/design: Jessica Schexnayder

When controlling salvinia in waterfowl hunting areas, time of application should be considered. It is most desirable to control unwanted vegetation without killing desirable waterfowl foods if possible. The ideal time is early in spring before the peak of growing season when infestations are light, water levels allow easy access and it is less costly to spray small areas of growth. This should be followed by spot spraying throughout the summer to maintain control.

In ponds with no flow, another herbicide option is to use SONAR or AVAST, which requires a long residence time to be effective. They are quite costly, but one application gets control for up to a year.

-Kevin Savoie

New State Legislation on Fisheries Topics

The following list includes some of the most pertinent new legislation (bills and resolutions) from the 2008 Regular Session that affects state fisheries. Click on the link to go directly to the text of the law or resolution. Go to the Louisiana Wildlife Federation site http://www.lawildlifefed.org/articles_detail.cfm?id=68 for information on nearly all the actions concerning natural resources. Additionally, a search of keywords at the Louisiana Legislature site <http://www.legis.state.la.us/> will turn up every document that refers to your topic of interest.

HB 343 ([Act 16](#)) by Perry and others. Re: SHRIMPING. Establishes latitude/longitude coordinates relative to night time shrimping in the Vermilion Bay area.

HB 475 ([Act 722](#)) by St. Germain. Re: CRAB EXPORT. Establishes a \$100 annual crab export license for any wholesaler or retailer who ships any type of crab out of state, and provides for allocation of the fees collected.

HB 488 ([Act 280](#)) by Gisclair. Re: OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE. Requires that marine biologists from LSU, LUMCON and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries review an aquaculture project to be located in state offshore waters prior to permitting of the project by the state.

HB 699 ([Act 363](#)) by Rep. St. Germain & Sen. Dupre. Re: WILDLIFE VIOLATORS COMPACT. Authorizes the LDWF to become a participant in the Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact to facilitate the compliance of Louisiana citizens with the wildlife conservation laws of the other participating states (and the compliance of the citizens of the other participating states with Louisiana's wildlife conservation laws) by providing for the suspension of Louisiana hunting/fishing license privileges of Louisiana residents and nonresidents who violate the wildlife conservation laws of another participating state and fail to comply with the terms of the violation as well as the suspension of hunting and fishing privileges by residents of other participating states who violate Louisiana wildlife conservation laws and fail to comply with the terms of the violation.

HB 701 ([Act 23](#)) by Rep. St. Germain and Sen. Dupre. Re: DEFINING FISH; AQUACULTURE REGULATION. Defines recreational, commercial and game fish and applies the terms consistently throughout the statutes; reinstates the authority for the regulation of aquaculture, especially as regards aquaculture and commercial sale of game fish species, to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries from the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

HB 702 ([Act 24](#)) by St. Germain and others. RE: SHAD SEINES & GILLNETS. Provides for the taking of legal sized freshwater commercial finfish with shad seines and shad, skipjack herring and up to 25 freshwater commercial fish during the open shad fishing season.

HB 798 ([Act 808](#)) by Hutter. Re: OYSTER LEASES. Sets forth a procedure and conditions for lifting the moratorium on leasing certain state waterbottoms for oyster production.

HB 848 ([Act 92](#)) by Hutter. Re: OYSTER HARVESTING. Adjusts the dates and seasons for the harvest of seed oysters and market oysters from public oyster seed grounds.

HB 1025 ([Act 27](#)) by St. Germain. Re: NONRESIDENT HUNTING & FISHING LICENSES. Establishes daily nonresident hunting and fishing license fees and repeals provisions for "trip" licenses of more than one day duration; makes exception for nonresident native-born Louisianans by provided such with a temporary license valid for 5 consecutive days at the same cost as the basic resident licenses and any special licenses or stamps required.

HB 1138 ([Act 320](#)) by Gisclair. Re: SHRIMPING. Increases the allowable size of shrimp trawl doors.

HB 1142 ([Act 321](#)) by St. Germain and other. Re: OYSTER CARGO VESSEL. Authorizes the LWFC to promulgate rules to establish an oyster cargo vessel permit for a fee of \$250/year (resident), \$1,000/year (nonresident) for vessels receiving and holding oysters transferred to such vessels on the harvest grounds and sets forth minimum provisions for such rules.

HB 1383 ([ACT 922](#)) by Wooten. Re: OYSTERS. Restricts access to the public oyster seed grounds through initiation of a new oyster seed ground vessel permit and provides for an Oyster seed Ground Vessel Permit Appeals Board.

Senate Bills & Resolutions

SB 13 ([Act 37](#)) by Dupre. Re: RECREATIONAL HOOP NETS. Increases the number of recreational hoop nets that can be used with a recreational hoop net gear license from 3 to 5.

SB 22 ([Act 38](#)) by Sen Dupre & Rep. St. Germain. Re: FINFISH STOCK ASSESSMENT. Requires the stock assessment for flounder, black drum, and sheepshead on a biannual basis and presented to the Legislature in even-numbered years rather than annually.

SB 744 ([Act 564](#)) by Dupre. Re: CHARTER BOAT LANDING REPORT. Authorizes the LDWF to solicit the completion and return of landing reports from charter boat licensees containing information concerning catch, effort and other data determined by the LWFC to be useful in managing fisheries.

SB 800 ([Act 570](#)) by McPherson. Re: WATERWAY ACCESS/STATE WATERBOTTOM LEASES. Requires that public access to public waters be maintained in any lease of public lands by the state to a private lessee; makes exceptions for waterbottoms for which the title is disputed or when restrictions are necessary to protect the public welfare; further provides that, except for mineral, oyster or alligator leases or state mineral board leases, the expiring leaseholder may have the right to match the highest bid in order to keep the lease if the LDWF determines there is a public need to maintain the current lessee.

[SCR 25](#) by Dupre & Rep. Dove. Re: RED SNAPPER REGULATIONS. Requests the states of Florida and Texas to implement state regulations identical to the federal regulations for the red snapper season like Louisiana and Mississippi have done in order to prevent over-fishing and restore the red snapper stocks.

[SCR 36](#) by Morrish. Re: OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE. Expresses the opposition of the Legislature to offshore aquaculture in the Gulf of Mexico and memorializes Congress to oppose the authorization of offshore aquaculture in the Gulf.

[SCR 38](#) by Dupre. Re: LOUISIANA WATERS. Memorializes to extend the current 3-mile territorial seaward boundary of Louisiana to marine leagues (approximately 9 geographic miles).

[SCR 64](#) by Dupre. Re: SALTWATER ANGLING TASK FORCE. Establishes the Louisiana Recreational Saltwater Fishing Task Force to advise the LDWF, LWFC and the Louisiana Legislature on matters pertaining to the management, development, and promotion of the saltwater recreational fishing industry in Louisiana including saltwater recreational fishing access and opportunities and improving communications between the users of the resource and the department. The voting members (9) shall be appointed by the LDWF Secretary from nominations submitted by: CCA of Louisiana, Louisiana Wildlife Federation, Louisiana Charter Boat Association, Louisiana Marine Trades Association, and in addition include a member from each of the following sectors – retail tackle industry, bait industry, marina owners, spearfishing/scuba, saltwater angling.

[SCR 132](#) by Crowe. Re: LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN TWIN SPANS. Urges the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to preserve a portion of the old Interstate 10 twin span bridge crossing Lake Pontchartrain to be used as a park and fishing pier.

President Signs Clean Boating Act Legislation

On July 30, President Bush signed S. 2766, “The Clean Boating Act of 2008,” which permanently restores a long-standing exemption for recreational boats from permitting requirements under the Clean Water Act. The Clean Boating Act of 2008 (s. 2766) specifically amends the Clean Water Act to provide a statutory exemption for recreational vessels from the NPDES permitting program: a permit is not required for “for the discharge of any graywater, bilge water, cooling water, weather deck runoff, oil water separator effluent, or effluent from properly functioning marine engines, or any other discharge that is incidental to the normal operation of a vessel, if the discharge is from a recreational vessel.” A recreational vessel is defined as one that is (i) manufactured or used primarily for pleasure; or (ii) leased, rented, or chartered to a person for the pleasure of that person. Vessels subject to Coast Guard inspection and engaged in commercial use or carrying paying passengers are excluded from this definition so will be subject to the EPA’s new vessel permitting program.

Although recreational vessels are now explicitly excluded from the NPDES program, the EPA is required to take actions which could lead to future regulations. The Clean Boating Act requires the EPA, within one year, “to determine the discharges incidental to the normal operation of a recreational vessel for which it is reasonable and practicable to develop management practices to mitigate adverse impacts on the waters of the United States.” The EPA must consider: the nature of the discharge; the environmental effects of the discharge; the practicability of using a management

practice; the effect that the use of a management practice would have on the operation, operational capability, or safety of the vessel; applicable Federal and State laws; applicable international standards; and the economic costs of the use of the management practice.

The EPA is required to revisit this determination every five years. In developing in proposed general permit for recreational vessels, the EPA has already done a lot of fact-finding with respect to some discharges from recreational vessels. Some activities (such as hull cleaning and graywater discharges) may warrant future management practices.

If the EPA determines that it is reasonable and practicable to develop a management practice, it must develop federal standards of performance within one year. Then the Coast Guard must set “regulations governing the design, construction, installation, and use of management practices for recreational vessels as are necessary to meet the standards of performance.” These regulations should be issued as soon as possible, but no later than one year. The result may be some new regulations within the next two years.

For more information visit the National Sea Grant Law Center at <http://www.olemiss.edu/orgs/SGLC/lawcenterhome.htm>

THE GUMBO POT

Pecan Encrusted Red Snapper

Recipe courtesy Glenn Thomas

3 pounds snapper fillets, cut into 4-inch pieces
 One strip thick-cut smoked bacon
 One cup pecans
 Two tablespoons seasoned bread crumbs
 One tablespoon minced garlic
 Two teaspoons Seafood Magic seasoning
 Limes and parsley and paprika (garnish)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Chop bacon, spread in baking pan or large iron skillet, bake for 10 minutes. Grind pecans in food processor; fine, but not powdered. Mix pecans with bread crumbs and dry seasoning. Remove pan with bacon bits from oven; don't drain, allow to cool a few minutes, add minced garlic to bacon. Coat fillets in bacon/garlic mixture, then coat well with pecan mixture, pressing into fish. Return fish to baking dish and top fillets with remainder of pecan mix. Bake at 375 for 10-15 minutes depending on thickness of fillets. Brown very carefully under broiler if needed – pecans scorch very quickly! Dust lightly with paprika and allow to rest five minutes before serving – garnish with parsley and lime wedges.



For more information, contact your local extension agent:



David Bourgeois – Area Agent (Fisheries)
Lafourche & Terrebonne Parishes
Phone: (985) 873-6495
E-mail: dbourgeois@agctr.lsu.edu

Thu Bui – Assistant Extension Agent, Fisheries
St. Mary, Iberia, and Vermilion Parishes
St. Mary Parish Court House
500 Main Street Rm. 314
Franklin, LA 70538-6199
Phone: (337) 828-4100, ext. 300
Fax: (337) 828-0616
TBui@agcenter.lsu.edu

Carol D. Franze – Associate Area Agent
Southeast Region
21549 Old Covington Hwy
Hammond, LA 70403
Phone: (985) 543-4129
Email: cfranze@agcenter.lsu.edu

Albert 'Rusty' Gaudé – Associate Area Agent (Fisheries)
Plaquemines, St. Bernard, and Orleans Parishes
Phone: (504) 433-3664
E-mail: agaude@agctr.lsu.edu

Thomas Hymel – Watershed Educator
Iberia, St. Martin, Lafayette, Vermilion,
St. Landry, & Avoyelles Parishes
Phone: (337) 276-5527
E-mail: thymel@agctr.lsu.edu

Kevin Savoie – Area Agent (Southwest Region)
Natural Resources-Fisheries
Phone: (337) 475-8812
E-mail: ksavoie@agctr.lsu.edu

Mark Schexnayder – Coastal Advisor (Fisheries)
St. John, St. Charles, Jefferson & parts of Orleans Parishes
Phone: (504) 838-1170
E-mail: mschexnayder@agctr.lsu.edu

Mark Shirley – Area Agent (Aquaculture & Coastal Resources)
Jefferson Davis, Vermilion, Acadia, St. Landry, Evangeline,
Cameron, Calcasieu, Lafayette, Beauregard, & Allen Parishes
Phone: (337) 898-4335
E-mail: mshirley@agctr.lsu.edu

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For questions or comments about a story, contact Lagniappe editor Glenn Thomas at gthomas@agctr.lsu.edu.

R. Glenn Thomas, Ph.D.
Associate Professor Fisheries
School of Renewable Natural Resources
Room 227 RNR Bldg., LSU
Phone: 225.578.0771 Fax: 225. 578.4227
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
gthomas@agctr.lsu.edu
Web site: www.lsuagcenter.com



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