



New Fish Species Added To State Fish Records

The Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association (LOWA) Fish Records Committee recently approved a new species for the Louisiana state fish records. As of Feb. 1, saltwater anglers will have to familiarize themselves more closely with *Epinephelus drummondhayi*: the speckled hind. Several other species were considered for introduction, but the speckled hind won out hands down. Out of the species considered, there were more than three requests for speckled hind in 2009, whereas the other species were single requests over a multi-year period. Anglers can submit and are encouraged to file written requests for introduction of a species not presently listed to the address below.

The LOWA Fish Records chairman annually reviews new species requests and submits them to the committee for consideration. The committee does not necessarily introduce a new species every year. The last new species entry was in 2006.

The speckled hind is often caught while fishing for many of the deep water groupers. These deep water anglers fish in depths of several hundred feet or more. Many use electric assisted reels, but use of any kind of mechanical reel assist makes the catch ineligible for consideration into the state fish records (Rule 2(b)).

Deep water angler Blake Matherne of Metairie will be the first entry into the new category with his 32-pound speckled hind caught off Venice at the South Pass Blks. Expect to see more entries this year, as the 2010 fishing season is just getting underway.

Applications and required rules for both rod and reel and fly-fishing records can be downloaded from www.laoutdoorwriters.com under the "RECORDS" tab. For more information about individual record holders contact, Fish Records chairman Bill Ford at fishrecords@yahoo.com, or P.O. Box 8571, Clinton, LA 70722.



Blake Matherne of Metairie, LA is holding his new state record 32-lb speckled hind caught Jan. 22, 2010, out of Venice, LA. Photo credit: Blake Matherne



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An Integrated Approach for Providing Marine Baitfish to Louisiana Anglers

Live baitfish for saltwater angling in Louisiana tend to be a seasonally available commodity due to the reliance on wild-caught animals. Of particular importance is the cocahoe minnow, *Fundulus grandis*, which is popular for redfish, speckled trout, flounder and many other species. Cultured cocahoe minnows could help supplement the wild-caught baitfish supply and stands as a potential revenue source within Louisiana and the surrounding coastal region. Yearly availability of this species would be well received and propagation of this marine baitfish could provide coastal anglers in Louisiana with a consistent supply of highly valued live bait, and increase overall angler satisfaction.

Personnel from the LSU AgCenter's Aquaculture Research group, Louisiana Sea Grant and the Louisiana Vet School are researching and developing education materials for commercial production and marketing of cocahoe minnows as live bait. Integrating extension and applied research for this project will provide input and direction from stakeholders followed by research on practical production techniques. Then collaborative work will result ultimately in the transfer of applied research back to stakeholders. This new program for baitfish producers should provide a consistent source of cocahoe minnows to Louisiana anglers.

The development of an industry centered on the culture of marine baitfish represents a promising new economic market within Louisiana and the surrounding coastal region. A 2004 survey showed that 47 percent of Louisiana coastal anglers considered the inconsistent availability of live bait to be a significant problem, and the survey also indicated that the cost of live bait was not an important issue for anglers. Previously, the majority of research in this field has focused on traditional large-scale facilities where infrastructure to produce bait would require a large capital investment. However, this project will use input from stakeholders and interested parties to direct research and technology transfer for both small and large operations. Demonstration of practical techniques such as pool spawning and grow-out phase production will serve to accomplish the goal of increasing the consistent availability of a marine baitfish to anglers in Louisiana.

This project will involve significant efforts to extend results of the described applied research to the stakeholders and the general public. Extension tools will include handbooks, mass media (newsletters, columns, news releases), group workshops and Web-based formats. Most critically, one-on-one extension advice will be tailored to each stakeholder's specific conditions and needs. For additional information, contact Sunny Brogan, LSU Extension associate, at (225)765-2848 or sbrogan@agcenter.lsu.edu.

NOAA Takes Steps to Assure Fair and Effective Enforcement, Protect Resources

On March 18, NOAA administrator Jane Lubchenco outlined specific steps the agency has taken and will take to assure that NOAA has an effective and fair enforcement program to protect fisheries and other marine resources that sustain the jobs and economic vibrancy of America's coastal communities.

The review of NOAA's law enforcement program was requested by Lubchenco soon after she was named to head NOAA in 2009. "We said in February we would take action, and that's exactly what we've done," she said.

NOAA's law enforcement program is made up of more than 200 agents and attorneys responsible for ensuring compliance with more than 35 statutes designed to conserve and protect our nation's marine resources and their habitat. The program has jurisdiction over three million square miles of open ocean, more than 85,000 miles of U.S. coastline, the nation's 13 national marine sanctuaries and its marine national monuments. Fair and effective enforcement to protect fish stocks, marine mammals and the marine environment is essential to strong coastal communities with sustainable economies.

The report details several actions already taken by NOAA, including:

- Transferring oversight of the Asset Forfeiture Fund, which holds fines imposed by NOAA, from NOAA's Fisheries Service to the NOAA comptroller.
- Freezing the hiring of criminal investigators until a workforce analysis is completed and approved by Lubchenco that will address the appropriate mix of criminal investigators and civil enforcement officers.
- Requiring high-level review of all proposed charges for alleged violations and of all settlements by the general counsel.
- Filing a rule to place the burden of justifying a particular civil penalty or permit sanction on NOAA rather than the respondent in cases before administrative law judges.

The report also outlines a number of specific actions that the agency intends to take, including:

- Developing a new penalty policy, including a revision of the penalty and permit sanction schedules.
- Reviewing and revising NOAA law enforcement and general counsel operations manuals.
- Developing a communications plan to provide greater outreach to fishermen and fishing communities, and other fisheries stakeholders.

"Under my leadership, I am confident these measures will produce a more effective enforcement system to protect our nation's marine resources for all of us who rely on the many benefits of a healthy marine environment," said Lubchenco. "I encourage commercial and recreational fishermen and others who rely on healthy marine resources to work with us to achieve this goal." Lubchenco's report to the Inspector General is available online at www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2010/PDFs/Response_IGReport.pdf

Lagniappe Fisheries Newsletter

Editor: Julie Anderson

Web coordinator: Melissa Castleberry

Copy editor: Roy Kron

Layout/design: Jessica Schexnayder

Sea Grant Launches Survey of Charter Boat Sector in Gulf of Mexico

More than 1,500 licensed charter boat captains in the Gulf of Mexico will have the opportunity to participate in the 2009 Recreation For-Hire Economic Survey (RFHES), which will be held in mid-April. The RFHES is conducted once every 10 years to gauge the economic health and policy concerns of the charter fishing sector in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and West Florida). This year, participants will be offered payment in exchange for their cooperation.

“The recreational-for-hire industry is one of the most important sectors of our coastal economy, but they are also one of the most heavily surveyed groups,” said Rex Caffey, project leader and professor of natural resource economics at Louisiana Sea Grant and the LSU AgCenter. “We recognize that our respondents’ time is valuable, so we’re glad to have cooperative research funds available for those captains who elect to participate in this study.”

The minimum payment for participating in the voluntary survey will be \$100 per captain. Information collected from the project will be used to construct a baseline assessment of the financial health and economic impact of the RFH industry. Future researchers and policy-makers will have access to this data for determining the economic effects of other external forces, such as economic downturns, fuel prices, policy changes and natural disasters.

Earlier versions of the survey were conducted by Texas A&M University in 1989 and by the University of Florida in 1999. The 2009 survey is being coordinated by Louisiana Sea Grant and the LSU Center for Natural Resource Economics & Policy and is supported by federal fisheries research funding provided via the National Sea Grant College Program and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. For additional information about the study, send emails to: RFHSurvey@lsu.edu or call Rex Caffey or Michelle Savolainen at 225-578-2393.

Control Dates for the King and Spanish Mackerel Fisheries

On March 15, NOAA Fisheries Service published an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking revising control dates for the Gulf group king and Spanish mackerel components of the coastal migratory pelagic fishery. This notice informs participants in the fishery of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council’s intention to consider further limiting access within the commercial sector of this fishery.

Specifically, the council may consider creating a catch share program. To discourage accelerated effort to develop a catch history before the program is implemented, the council may establish eligibility criteria based on catch histories from and before the most recent full fishing season. For king mackerel the date would be June 30, 2009, and for Spanish mackerel the date would be March 31, 2010. Thus, landings of the respective species after these dates may not count toward eligibility under future management programs. The previous control date for both components of the fishery was Oct. 16, 1995. The current notice moves the control dates to the end of the most recent full fishing year to allow incorporation of more recent, as well as historical, fishing activity.

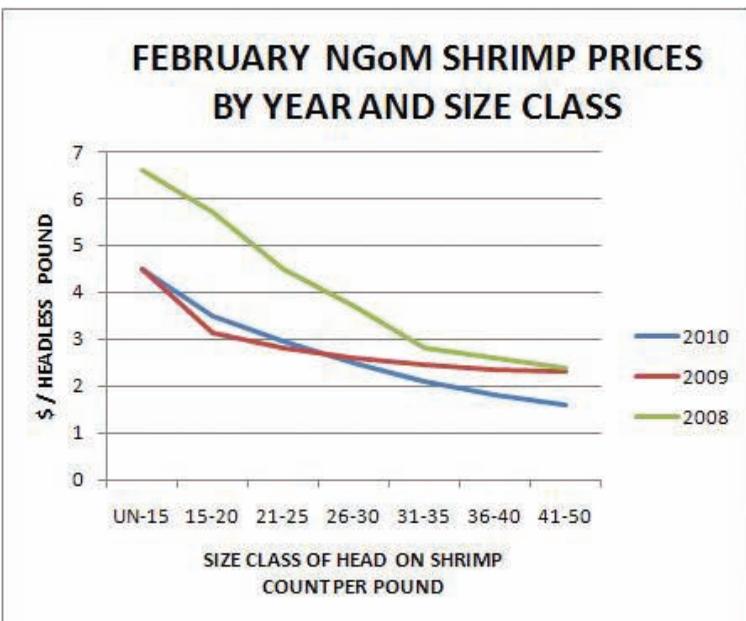
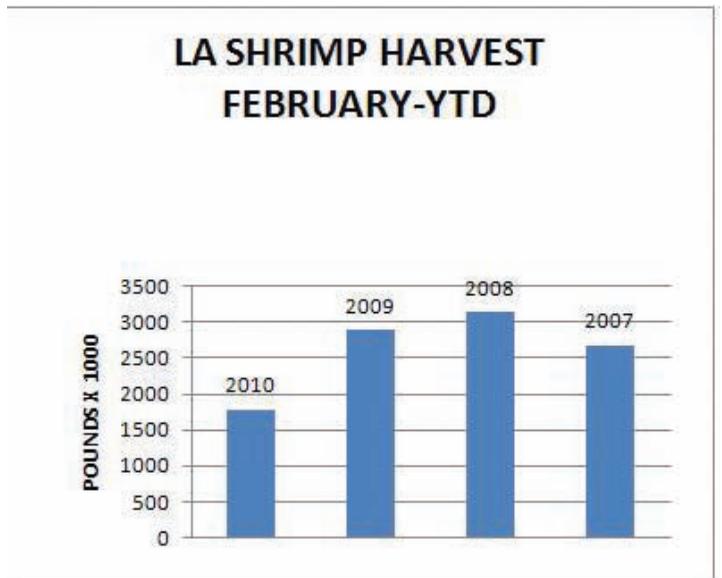
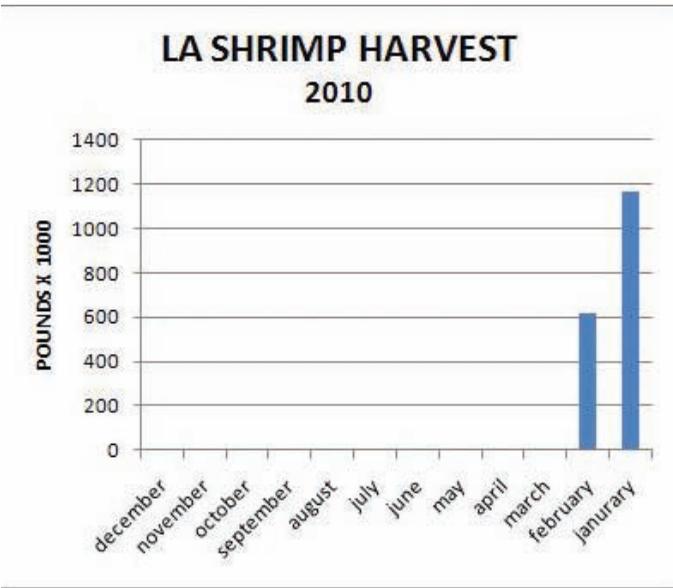
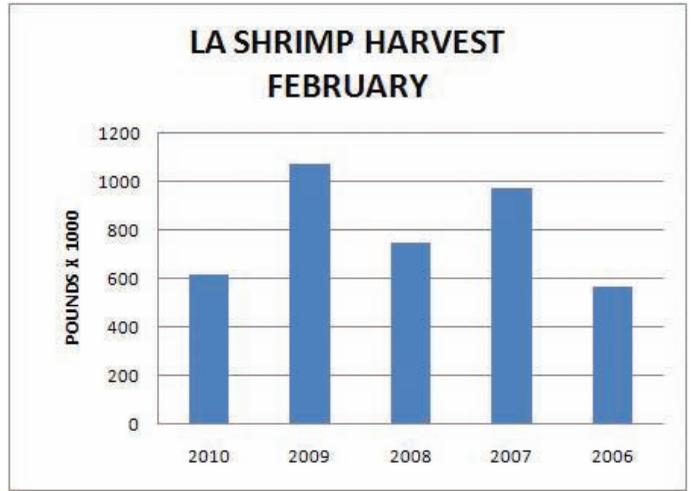
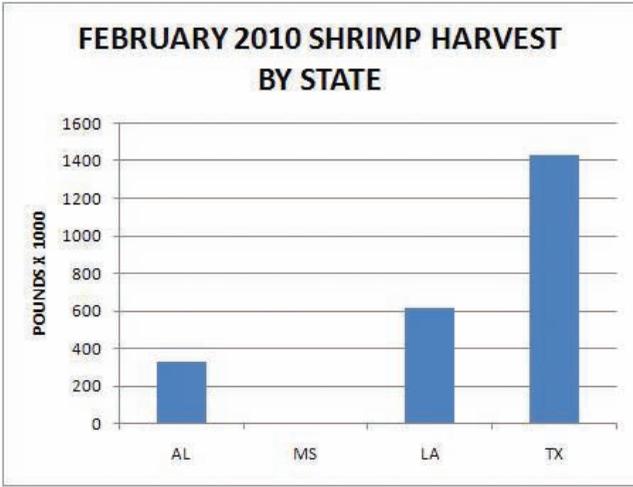
The revision of control dates does not commit the council or NOAA Fisheries Service to any particular management regime. The council may or may not make use of these control dates as part of the

qualifying criteria for participation in any future catch share or other management program for Gulf group mackerel. Fishermen are not guaranteed future participation in the fishery, regardless of their entry date or intensity of participation in the fishery before or after the control dates under consideration. The council may give variably weighted consideration to fishermen active in the fishery before and after the control dates. The council also may choose to take no further action to control entry or access to the fishery, and rescind the control dates.

Publication of the control dates informs the commercial fishing sector that the council is considering management measures in its jurisdictional area that could limit eligibility in the commercial mackerel fishery. Implementation of any program would require preparation of an amendment to the fishery management plan and publication of a notice of availability and proposed rule with pertinent public comment periods.

Comments on the establishment of control dates for this fishery must be submitted by April 14. Comments should apply to the control date as an eligibility requirement for a catch share program, not the catch share program itself.

Submit comments by any of the following methods: Electronic Submissions: Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. All comments received are part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. No comments will be posted for public viewing after the comment period closes. All personal identifying information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NOAA Fisheries Service will accept anonymous comments. To submit comments enter "NOAA-NMFS-2010-0031" in the keyword search and then check the box "send a comment or submission." Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or PDF file formats only. Mail: Susan Gerhart, Southeast Regional Office, NOAA Fisheries Service, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5505.



Louisiana Shrimp Watch

Louisiana specific data portrayed in the graphics are selected from preliminary data posted by NOAA on their Web site. All data portrayed are subject to final revision and approval by NOAA. Shrimp landings are ex-vessel prices, inclusive of all species harvested. Missing, inadequate or withheld reports are portrayed as “zero” in these graphics. Price graphics reflect central Gulf states only (Texas and Florida are reported independently). For more information, please refer to: www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/market_news/index.html

- Rusty Gaudé

L.D.W.F. Hosts Saltwater Series Redfish Tournament

The Louisiana Saltwater Series, hosted by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), commenced March 13 at Seaway Marina in Lafitte with 80 participants taking part in the inaugural event.

Overall weight determined the grand prize winners: the father-son team of Richard Rutland Sr. and Richard Rutland Jr., with a winning total weight of 17.06 pounds that included a 9.66-pound red drum. The duo took home a cash prize of \$2,200. Those who caught the big ones weren't the only winners to come out of this event: The biggest winners were the marine resources that will benefit from the data collected. LDWF was able to tag and release 65 redfish. By encouraging live tag and release, the series has focused attention on the redfish species and the conservation of all marine resources. Years ago, very little tagging data was available and only a handful of fish were tagged each year.

"The more knowledge we have, the better chance we have to improve fishing for this species and care for these resources in a responsible manner," said LDWF assistant secretary Randy Pausina.

All tournament proceeds go to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation and provide funding support for the department's tagging program.

Visit www.lasaltwaterseries.com to learn more about the 2010 Louisiana Saltwater Series, register for upcoming events and to keep up with the standings. The series consists of five tournaments across Louisiana's coast, concluding with a championship event at Delta Marina Boating Center in Empire.

Commercial Fishing for Large Coastal Sharks Closed

Commercial fishing for large coastal sharks, as defined by Louisiana rule (L.A.C. 76:VII.357), closed in Louisiana waters on March 17. The National Marine Fisheries Service also closed the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico at this time.

The commercial season will remain closed in federal waters until 30 days after promulgation of the 2011 seasonal rule for harvest of sharks in the *Federal Register*. Since the opening date of the season in federal waters is not known at this time, no date has been set for the reopening of the commercial large coastal shark fishery in Louisiana state waters.

During the closed season, all commercial harvest, possession, purchase, exchange, barter, trade, sale or attempt to purchase, exchange, barter, trade or sell large coastal sharks or their fins is prohibited. The large coastal shark group is composed of the great hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, nurse shark, blacktip shark, bull shark, lemon shark, sandbar shark, silky shark, spinner shark and tiger shark.

Vessels that have been issued or possess a federal shark research permit may continue to operate under the conditions of that permit. The season for the commercial harvest of small coastal sharks in Louisiana waters also remains closed.

Barataria Sweep Yields Nearly 500 Abandoned Crab Traps

Fisheries biologists and staff from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), with help from volunteers, collected and disposed of 477 abandoned crab traps during LDWF's annual Crab Trap Clean-up Program. The work was conducted on Feb. 27 in conjunction with the program's volunteer day.

This year's clean-up involved temporarily closing a portion of the Barataria Basin Estuary to the use of crab traps for a nine-day period from Feb. 27 through March 8 within portions of Lafourche, Jefferson and Plaquemines parishes. During the closure, any crab trap remaining within the area was considered abandoned and subject to removal. All traps were brought by boat to the designated disposal site at Seaway Marina in Lafitte and crushed, completely filling two 30-cubic-yard, roll-off dumpsters.

"Since 2004, LDWF, together with individual volunteers and volunteer organizations, has successfully removed and disposed of 18,449 abandoned and derelict crabs," according to biologist manager Vince Guillory, who helped develop and coordinate LDWF's Derelict Trap Removal Program.

Through the years, a diverse group of volunteers have participated in crab trap cleanup programs, including commercial crabbers and recreational fishermen, concerned individuals, and representatives from conservation and environmental organizations, state and federal agencies and universities. The Crab Trap Removal Program is viewed as a positive approach to removing derelict crab traps from coastal waters. The program benefits the crab fishery and also reduces potential navigational risks to recreational and commercial fishermen and boaters. Of equal importance, "ghost fishing," a term referencing an unseen mortality of blue crabs and other organisms that enter and perish within abandoned traps, is reduced with their removal.

Funding for the 2010 crab trap cleanup was provided through the derelict crab trap removal program account. Legislation supported by the Louisiana Crab Task Force in 2005 established this account which is funded by a statutorily dedicated portion of recreational and commercial crab trap gear license fees.

Underwater Obstructions

In accordance with the provisions of R.S. 56:700.1 et. seq., notice is given that 13 claims in the amount of \$52,459.32 were received for payment during the period Jan. 1, 2010 – Feb. 28, 2010. There were 12 claims paid and one claim denied.

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates of reported underwater obstructions are:

2917.523	8950.679	PLAQUEMINES
2918.258	8954.361	PLAQUEMINES
2919.679	8959.241	JEFFERSON
2925.401	8958.082	JEFFERSON
2926.368	8958.549	JEFFERSON
2931.378	9140.086	IBERIA
2939.240	8948.170	PLAQUEMINES

2940.397	8939.112	PLAQUEMINES
2941.973	8925.922	ST. BERNARD
2942.196	8948.638	PLAQUEMINES
2945.329	8926.226	ST. BERNARD
2947.991	8938.102	ST. BERNARD
2949.011	8918.740	ST. BERNARD

A list of claimants and amounts paid can be obtained from Gwendolyn Thomas, administrator, Fishermen's Gear Compensation Fund, P.O. Box 44277, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, or can call (225) 342-0122.

THE GUMBO POT

If you have a favorite seafood recipe that you would like to share, please send it to Julie Anderson janderson@agcenter.lsu.edu for inclusion in future issues.



For more information, contact your local extension agent:



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

Julie Falgout – Extension Assistant
204 Sea Grant Bldg.
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803-7507
Phone: (225) 578- 5932
Fax: (225) 578-6331
Email: jfalgout@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 – 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

Lucina Lampila – Associate Professor
111 Food Science Bldg.
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803-7507
Phone: (225) 578-5207
Fax: (225) 578-5300
llampila@agcenter.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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We would like to hear from you! Please contact us regarding fishery questions, comments, or concerns you would like to see covered in the Lagniappe. Anyone interested in submitting information, such as articles, editorials, or photographs pertaining to fishing or fisheries management is encouraged to do so.

Please contact Lagniappe editor Julie Anderson at janderson@agcenter.lsu.edu

Julie A. Anderson
Assistant Professor
LSU Agcenter & Louisiana Sea Grant
114 RNR Building
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
Phone: 225-578-0771
Fax: 225-578-4227
janderson@agcenter.lsu.edu



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