



An Overview of the Catch Share Approach to Fishery Management

This article is part of a series. Next month we will feature a story on sector management as it relates to catch shares.

Oceans seem to be an unlimited resource for fisheries production, but time and time again man has proven his ability to overexploit the seemingly unlimited marine bounty. Whether it is with whales, cod, redfish or tuna, we have proven that technology can advance faster than the biological capacity for replenishing stocks. As a result, policies must be put into place to manage these finite resources. Some policies may be popular, while others not so much, but in the end they all seek to ensure the long term longevity of the natural oceanic bounty.

The newest concept for managing marine fisheries is the idea of catch shares. To explain how catch shares work, let's start with a work comparison. Pretend that at work, the boss will occasionally restock the refrigerator with food. This food is available to everyone in the office. What might happen is that everyone would make a mad dash to stake a claim on their share of the food, perhaps rapidly consuming more than they would under normal circumstances before their favorite item was gone. The concept of catch shares would be equivalent to the boss assigning different shelves in the refrigerator to each of the office workers. This way the rush to consume could be avoided, because everyone knows that their portion of the food would be available to them whenever they wanted to eat it. The size of the portions may vary depending on the amount of food that is stocked, but the percentage of the total would remain the same based on past usage of the resources.

So let us apply this concept to marine fisheries. The natural ability for fish stocks to replenish themselves is governed by three basic principles: growth rate, survival rate and reproduction rate. These rates vary for individual species and areas.

To help simplify the diversity of marine fisheries, we can separate life histories into two developmental strategies: r-selection and K-selection. The r-selected species (think weeds or mice) are commonly found in unstable or rapidly changing environments, which favor the ability to reproduce quickly. An example of r-selection is Gulf killifish (*Fundulus grandis*, aka cocahoe minnows), native to the variable intertidal marsh environment. They grow very quickly, reaching sexually maturity a few months after hatching, and rarely living longer than a few years. The r-selected species typically serve as the base

of the food chain in marine ecosystems.

On the other hand, K-selected species (think trees or elephants) are commonly found in stable environments with little disturbance or fluctuations. This tends to favor slower growth rates and delayed reproduction, typified by top-level predators. An example of K-selection is red snapper (*Lutjanus campechanus*), which live close to the bottom in fairly constant deep water habitats. Unlike Gulf killifish, red snapper typically reach sexual maturity at 2-5 years old, and can live for more than 50 years. Furthermore, while a 2-5 year old red snapper may be sexually mature, the fecundity (the number of eggs produced by a female) is much lower than older and larger females. Because of the slower reproductive rate, K-selected species are often more susceptible to overfishing due to the potential of early harvest or mortality.

These different life histories and developmental strategies require different management techniques to ensure healthy and sustainable populations.

For Gulf killifish, fishery management is fairly easy because the rapid reproductive rate and plethora of available habitat makes overfishing nearly impossible. Additionally, bait fishermen tend to self-regulate by using traps that only harvest the larger adult fish (larger mesh size), allowing the more numerous juveniles the chance to continue growing and eventually reproduce. For red snapper, fishery management is much more complex. The Gulf of Mexico red snapper stock has been depleted and fished at an unsustainable rate since the late 1980s. As fishing quotas were reduced, fishermen raced to capture their share of a shrinking pie resulting in shortened fishing seasons, and derby-style fishing in potentially unsafe conditions. To alleviate these problems, a majority of eligible fishermen voted to support a commercial catch share program in early 2004 by developing a red snapper Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) program which was implemented by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in 2007.



Red Snapper. Credit: Diane Rome Peebles

The use of catch shares as a management strategy only serves to allocate how the fishery stock “pie” is sliced, it does not dictate how big that “pie” is, or using the earlier example – how much food the boss stocks in the refrigerator. The amount of harvestable stock is contingent on the recruitment ability of the size of the breeding population for each fishery. In the case of red snapper, overcapitalization led to too many fishermen wanting a slice of the pie for the fishery to be environmentally and economically sustainable. Initial allocation of catch shares were issued to program participants based on the amount of red snapper landings reported during a specific time period (Class 1: 1990-2004; Class 2: 1998-2004), with no person owning more than 6 percent of the total for any single fishing year.

The IQF program has reduced the harvestable quota and participant numbers; however, for those that remained in the fishery, the result has been an increase in red snapper prices and change in season length from roughly 77 days to year-round. Also, the catch share program allows for transferring of IFQ by either sale or lease, which allows fishermen the opportunity to either enter or exit the fishery in

an organized and predictable manner.

While catch share management has both its supporters and critics (like any other management strategy), it has proven to be a powerful and flexible tool that allows managers to accomplish a variety of goals. There are a number of fisheries that have adopted catch share programs in the regions managed by NMFS. In the Gulf of Mexico region, the grouper and tilefish fisheries were added in 2010; however, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006 (MSRA) mandates that annual catch limits be set to end overfishing for all other stocks by 2011.

So now is the time to become familiar with the catch share approach to fisheries management, because like it or not, it is the strategy that has been chosen to regulate fisheries. In the end, the goal is to ensure healthy and productive oceans, and sustainable fisheries are an essential component which would allow for economic and social benefits for this long term goal.

-Craig Gothreaux

For more specific or general information on catch shares, check out these sources of information for this article: Q and A on catch shares published in an earlier issue of *Lagniappe* - <http://www.seagrantsfish.lsu.edu/pdfs/lagniappe/2010/01-2010.pdf>

From NOAA/NMFS
http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/domes_fish/catchshare/index.html

Sea Grant Personnel Help Fishermen Navigate TAA

Louisiana fishermen who registered for the federal Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) program during the fall of 2010 could receive as much as \$12,000 per person. TAA is including shrimp and catfish as approved commodities this cycle. The federal program is designed to aid commodity producers – such as farmers and fishermen – who have suffered losses due to imports. Almost 2,300 Louisiana shrimpers and catfish farmers who experienced losses in 2008 qualified for TAA.

“It’s important that shrimpers follow through with TAA regulations and requirements if they want to receive compensation,” said Rex Caffey, Louisiana Sea Grant and LSU AgCenter economist. “Fishermen can qualify for up to \$12,000. And that’s not limited to one person per household. “If an applicant can prove economic risk to a spouse or child who, for example, is a co-owner in the business, then they could also be compensated up to \$12,000. So TAA can have a substantial impact on many of the state’s fishing families,” Caffey added.

Fishermen who qualified for TAA – had an active commercial fishing license, harvested shrimp during the 2008 calendar year, and met other requirements – were contacted through the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries about the program. “The deadlines for applying have ended,”

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said Kurt Guidry, LSU AgCenter economist and TAA coordinator for the state. “The first application period ended in September and the second on Dec. 23. Shrimpers who applied during the second round had until March 23 to complete their initial orientation training in order to continue to the next stages of the program.”

Producers who applied and were approved under the first signup period had to complete the initial orientation component by Dec. 22, 2010. A total of 17 workshops were held throughout the state in November and December to make training opportunities available to fishermen. In all, there are four steps.

Step Two entails 12 hours of intensive technical training which can be taken in a classroom or online (see following class schedule). The third step is preparing an initial business plan and having it approved by the TAA program. The fourth and final step is developing a long-term business plan with the assistance of the National TAA Center at the University of Minnesota. “After the first three steps are completed, fishermen can receive up to \$4,000 in compensation. If a shrimper wants to receive up to an additional \$8,000, then he or she must continue to the program’s final step,” said Guidry. “The intent of this training is to help Louisiana shrimp harvesters become more efficient and competitive for international marketing,” added Caffey.

Information on TAA can be found at <http://taaforfarmers.org/TAAoverview.aspx>.

ALL PRODUCERS MUST PRE-REGISTER TO ATTEND A WORKSHOP. When preregistering, please keep in mind you will need to pre-register for two days in order to get the full nine hours. The LSU AgCenter will offer additional workshops in June or July during the break in shrimp season. You will receive a letter with information about those workshops later in the year. To pre-register by phone, please contact Lynda Shoalmire at 225/578-2363 or Todd Cooper at 225/578-6312. Producers may also pre-register by emailing the desired workshop date and location, your name, address and phone number to Lynda at lshoalmire@agcenter.lsu.edu or Todd at tcooper@agcenter.lsu.edu. Given the large number of producers in the program, please be patient when trying to register.

2011 TAA Shrimp Intensive Technical Training Workshops: Meeting Dates, Locations, and Training Topics

□ April 4 and 5, 2011 Belle Chasse Civic Auditorium

8398 Hwy 23, Belle Chasse, Louisiana 70037

*** This meeting offered in Vietnamese Only***

□ April 6 and 7, 2011 Greater Covington Center

317 North Jefferson Hwy, Covington, Louisiana 70435

** This meeting will be offered in English Only**

□ April 8, 2011- Day 1 St. Theresa Hall

101 North Leonard Drive, Abbeville, Louisiana 70510

** This meeting will be offered in English Only**

□ April 11 and 12, 2011 Houma-Terrebonne Civic Center

346 Civic Center Boulevard, Houma, Louisiana 70360

** This meeting will be offered in English Only**

□ April 13 and 14, 2011 Frederick J. Sigur Civic Center

8245 W. Judge Perez Drive, Chalmette, LA 70043

** This meeting will be offered in English Only**

□ April 15, 2011 – Morning Day 2 VN Reception Hall

1201 East Lafayette Street Abbeville, Louisiana 70510

*** This meeting offered in Vietnamese Only***

At each location, Day 1:

8:30 am - 9:00 am – Registration

9:00 am - Noon - Advancements in Gear Technology and Quality Management

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm - Coast Guard Licensing and Federal Laws

Day 2:

8:30 am - 9:00 am - Registration

9:00 am - Noon - Developing a Business Plan

April 15, 2011 - Afternoon

St. Theresa Hall

101 North Leonard Drive, Abbeville, Louisiana 70510

12:30 pm – 1:00 pm - Registration

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm - Developing a Business Plan

** This meeting will be offered in English Only**

Louisiana Saltwater Series Fishing Tournament Kicks off at Seaway Marina

The Louisiana Saltwater Series Fishing Tournament, hosted by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, will open April 2 in Lafitte at the Seaway Marina. The series is dedicated to catch-and-release saltwater angling through a series of agency-sponsored fishing tournament. The series was developed by LDWF in conjunction with the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation to promote conservation of Louisiana's saltwater sport fish resources targets, one of Louisiana's most valuable sport fish, redfish.

The grassroots-based tournament provides anglers with the opportunity to give back to the resource. Contestants vie for cash prizes and test their skill while enjoying the thrill of the competitive sport. Each series includes two-man teams with a \$200 entry fee for each event. For teams consisting of three members, only two of the members may be 16 or older. The tournament is a 100 percent payout series. This year, a youth division was established to introduce young anglers to the sport of fishing and to teach the catch-and-release approach to conservation. Participants under 16 years of age will compete against one another in a separate category for trophy catch; all youth anglers will be recognized.

The 2011 series is comprised of six fishing events and a championship. Tournament locations are scheduled across the coast. The 2011 tournament schedule is as follows:

- April 2 Lafitte, Seaway Marina;
- April 30 Lake Calcasieu, Calcasieu Point Landing;
- May 14 Venice, Venice Marina;
- June 18 Delacroix, Sweetwater Marina;
- July 23 Slidell, Dockside Bait and Tackle/The Dock;
- Aug. 20 Port Fourchon, Moran's Marina; and
- Championship Oct. 7-8 Empire, The Delta Marina.

For complete information, including rules, regulations and entry forms go to www.lasaltwaterseries.com.

Grass Carp Used to Combat Aquatic Weeds

Biologists with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries recently stocked Spring Bayou with 5,000 triploid grass carp as part of a continued effort to help control unwanted aquatic vegetation. This is the second installment of grass carp into this complex of shallow sloughs, bayous and lakes. A stocking of 11,000 carp was made in early 2008. Unfortunately, desired results were not achieved due to the effects of Hurricane Gustav that included extensive fish kills.

Aquatic vegetation control in the system was once naturally achieved by water level fluctuations of the Red River, but a dam installed on Little River in 1955 stabilized water levels and curtailed backwater flooding. The absence of water fluctuation, combined with the introduction of the invasive aquatic plant hydrilla, has created the need for extensive control measures. Dredging, water manipulation and herbicides have all been used with limited success. Control by use of grass carp was reserved until all other methods were given ample opportunity.

While use of a biological control measure is an attractive alternative to drawdowns or the long-term use of expensive herbicides, success using this control method is variable. Potential flood events may allow many of the stocked carp to escape the system. Triploid grass carp are sterile, thus eliminating the concern of the species forming breeding populations in the Spring Bayou or neighboring water systems. However, the risk is that remaining numbers may not be adequate to control the vegetation problem. "At this stage, when boaters aren't even able to use the complex, we're willing to try it," said Mike Wood, LDWF Director of Inland Fisheries.

The stocking was a cooperative effort of the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury, Spring Bayou Restoration Team and Avoyelles Wildlife Federation. The effort received strong support from Sen. Eric LaFleur and Rep. Robert Johnson.

New Anti-Littering Campaign

The new slogan of “Pick It Up or Pay It Out” will be used extensively to raise awareness of the consequences of littering in Louisiana. Pick It Up or Pay It Out is a cooperative effort of law enforcement agencies in Louisiana including the LDWF Enforcement Division, Louisiana State Police, Louisiana’s Sheriff’s Association and other law enforcement agencies to implement zero tolerance litter policies in their jurisdictions with increased patrols. The Office of the Lieutenant Governor and Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles has also joined KLB in this new anti-littering campaign. “Every time someone drops a piece of paper on the ground, throws a cigarette butt out the window, or dumps trash on abandoned land, they are trashing Louisiana for all of us,” said LDWF Secretary Robert Barham. “We all think that a little bit of trash here and there isn’t a big deal, but it adds up. We are blessed to live in a state with some of the world’s most phenomenal natural and wildlife resources. Protecting Sportsman’s Paradise is essential to ensuring that future generations may continue to enjoy the great outdoors throughout our state. We all have the chance to do our part.”

In addition to citations and fines, Pick It Up or Pay It Out also wants to educate Louisianans of the indirect economic costs of littering including real estate devaluation, loss of new industry and business and loss of tourism and ecotourism, especially in “Sportsman’s Paradise.”

“As I travel the state I continue to see trash along our Interstates, state highways and local roads. We are attempting to market Louisiana as an adventure travel destination, and we must become more aggressive in our efforts to combat this problem,” Lt. Governor Jay Dardenne said. “We are a state of great natural beauty that should not be marred by carelessness and disregard.” According to Keep Louisiana Beautiful, cleanup crews picked up an estimated 450,000 bags of trash in the state in 2004.

KLB Director Leigh Harris states that, “Litter costs Louisiana taxpayers well over \$40 million annually. With the help of Louisiana State Police, Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries, the Louisiana Sheriff’s Association and the Lieutenant Governor’s Office, we hope Louisiana citizens become even more aware of the legal consequences associated with littering.” Littering in Louisiana can result in fines from \$50 to \$5,000. Those who litter can also expect to serve between four and 10 hours of community service, suspension of their driver’s license for one year and even the possibility of jail time for up to 30 days. LDWF Enforcement Division agents issued 1,001 littering citations for fiscal year 2009-10 and logged 7,958 patrol hours for littering enforcement.

LDWF also took over the state’s 1-888-LITRBUG (1-888-548-7284) hotline last June. Citizens can call the hotline to report people that litter and littering sites to the department for further investigation. Since June 1, the Enforcement Division has received 731 calls.

LOUISIANA RULE CHANGES

Public Meetings to Discuss Proposed Changes for Toledo Bend, Caddo Lake and Sabine River

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries will host three public meetings to present proposed recreational harvest regulations for freshwater game fish on the waters of the Toledo Bend Reservoir, Caddo Lake and Sabine River. The proposed regulations were developed in an effort to establish uniform regulations governing Louisiana and Texas’s bordering waters. Public comment will be taken on all items under consideration by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission through May 5. The meeting dates and locations include:

- April 4 at 7 p.m., SRA Office, 15091 Texas Hwy, Many, LA
- April 5 at 7 p.m., LDWF Office, 9961 Hwy. 80, Minden, LA
- April 7 at 7 p.m., LSU Ag Center, 7101 Gulf Hwy, Lake Charles, LA

To view the full notice of intent and all proposed regulations changes, visit website <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/proposedregulations>. Public comment will be accepted through May 5 and can be submitted directly to Ashley Wethey at awethey@wlf.la.gov, or by mail at P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000.

Oyster Season to Close Early in East Side of Calcasieu Lake

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Secretary Robert Barham issued an emergency order to close the oyster season in the east side of Calcasieu Lake (DHH Harvest Area 29) at one-half hour after sunset on Friday, March 25, 2011.

The season was previously set by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to remain open until April 30, 2011, except for the 2009 cultch plant, but the commission gave authority for an early closure to Secretary Barham in order to protect and conserve the public oyster resource.

LDWF Office of Fisheries biologists have monitored the health of the public oyster resource throughout the oyster season, which opened on Nov. 15, 2010, through biological sampling and harvest tracking. LDWF monitoring activities have determined that the public oyster resources have sustained heavy harvest pressure and continued harvest may threaten the long-term sustainability of the remaining oyster resources.

Within the past week, LDWF enforcement agents have encountered numerous oyster harvesting violations within harvest area 29. As a result, agents have seized oysters and fishing equipment.

An early closure of these public oyster seed grounds will help protect the remaining oyster resources and help sustain that resource for the future. The west side of the Calcasieu Lake public oyster area (DHH Harvest Area 30) is scheduled to remain open to the harvest of oysters until April 30, 2011.

LDWF Extends Shrimp Season in Breton and Chandeleur Sound

The shrimp season in the open waters of Breton and Chandeleur sounds will be extended until further notice. Current data indicates that marketable quantities of white shrimp remain in these areas. By extending the shrimp season, Secretary Barham hopes to provide added economic opportunity to shrimp harvesters, while still limiting risk to juvenile brown shrimp.

Preliminary LDWF trip ticket data indicates Louisiana shrimp landings for 2010 totaled approximately 72.9 million pounds and had a dock-side value of \$104.2 million. White shrimp landings accounted for 76 percent of total shrimp landings and 79 percent of the value.



White shrimp.
Photo credit: Paula Ouder

The opening dates for the 2011 spring inshore shrimp season will be set by the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission at the May 5 meeting at LDWF headquarters.

GULF OF MEXICO RULE CHANGES

Public Hearings Scheduled for Federal Mackerel, Cobia and Spiny Lobster Fisheries

Federal fishery managers are soliciting public input on measures proposed for species managed jointly by the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico councils, including king mackerel, Spanish mackerel and cobia. Measures are also being proposed for the lobster fishery, also managed jointly. Annual catch limits (in pounds or numbers of fish) and accountability measures (AMs) must be set for these species by the end of 2011, as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act to prevent overfishing. The measures will impact both commercial and recreational fishermen who fish in federal waters along the Atlantic coast and Gulf of Mexico. A series of seven public hearings are scheduled regarding the following:

Amendment 18 to the Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plan

Because of their migratory nature, king mackerel and Spanish mackerel are currently managed between the two councils using separate migratory groups. Amendment 18 includes alternatives for setting ACLs for both Gulf and South Atlantic migratory group king mackerel and Spanish mackerel, as well as options for establishing a similar approach to management for cobia. The hearings will only address Atlantic Migratory Groups of king and Spanish mackerel and cobia; the Gulf Council will conduct hearings prior to June on Gulf Migratory Groups.

Under the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's preferred management alternatives for king mackerel, the ACL for the Atlantic Migratory Group would be set at 10.46 million pounds, and no additional restrictions would be necessary. The stock is not overfished nor undergoing overfishing. The current commercial ACL (quota) for Atlantic Migratory Group king mackerel is 3.71 million pounds. The allocation for king mackerel would stay the same, with 62.9 percent of the ACL allocated to recreational anglers and 37.1 percent to commercial fishermen. The current bag limit for king mackerel is three per person/day from Georgia through New York and two per person/day off the east coast of Florida. The minimum size limit for both commercial and recreational fishermen is 24 inches (fork-length).

Fishermen targeting Spanish mackerel in the South Atlantic could see a reduction in harvest with an ACL of 5.29 million pounds as proposed in Amendment 18. The current allocation of 45 percent recreational and 55 percent commercial would remain the same, but in order to avoid exceeding the ACL, the amendment contains a proposal to reduce the recreational bag limit from 15 to 10 fish per person/day. The annual commercial quota would be reduced from 3.87 million pounds to 2.91 million pounds. The stock is not undergoing overfishing, but a 2008 stock assessment could not determine if the stock was overfished. For cobia, the council's preferred ACL alternative would keep current management measures in place with a two per person/day bag limit and a 33 inch fork-length minimum size limit. The commercial fishery operates under the same restrictions. The amendment contains alternatives to establish new sector allocations for cobia and possible spawning season closures.

Spiny Lobster Amendment 10

Amendment 10 to the Spiny Lobster Fishery Management Plan will meet the requirements to set

ACLs and AMs to prevent overfishing of Caribbean spiny lobster in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. The amendment also considers possible sector allocations for spiny lobster in state and federal waters from North Carolina through Texas. The amendment contains management alternatives for several other issues regarding the lobster fishery, including: removal of some species of lobster from the Fishery Management Unit; limiting fishing areas to protect threatened staghorn and elkhorn corals; updating framework procedures and protocol for enhanced cooperative management; modifying regulations regarding the use of “shorts” or undersized lobster as attractants; modifying tailing requirements for vessels that obtain a tailing permit; requirements for gear markings on trap lines to help identify any entanglements with endangered species; and provisions to allow public removal of derelict traps.

Public hearings for the amendments will take place from 5-7 pm. Council staff will provide an overview of each amendment and be on hand to answer questions. Local council representatives will take formal comments on the public hearing documents any time between those hours.

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is also accepting written and email comments until 5 pm on April 29. Copies of the public hearing documents with details on how to submit written comments will be posted on the council’s website at www.safmc.net and available by contacting the council office at 843/571-4366 or toll free 866/SAFMC-10.

Public Hearing/Scoping Meeting Schedule

Monday, April 11

Hilton New Bern Riverfront
100 Middle Street
New Bern, NC 28562
Phone: 252/638-3585

Tuesday, April 12

Hilton Garden Inn
5265 International Blvd.
N. Charleston, SC 29418
Phone: 843/308-9330

Wednesday, April 13

Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum
175 Bourne Avenue
Pooler, GA 31322
Phone: 912/748-8888

Thursday, April 14

Crowne Plaza Riverfront
1201 Riverplace Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32207
Phone: 904/398-8800

Monday, April 18

Radisson Resort at the Port
8701 Astronaut Blvd.
Cape Canaveral, FL 32920
Phone: 321/784-0000

Tuesday, April 19
Hawks Cay Resort
61 Hawks Cay Blvd.
Duck Key, FL 33050
Phone: 305/743-7000

Wednesday, April 20
Doubletree Grand Key
3990 S. Roosevelt Blvd.
Key West, FL 33040
Phone: 305/293-181

Regional Survey of the Economic Contributions of Saltwater Angling

The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) and NOAA are surveying saltwater anglers across the Gulf of Mexico to update and improve estimates of the overall economic contributions of saltwater recreational fishing to the Gulf and U.S. economy. This study is part of the 2011 National Marine Recreational Fishing Expenditure Survey.

“This is the kind of new and enhanced information that will help several levels of recreational fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico,” said Larry Simpson, GSMFC Executive Director.

NOAA, GSMFC and the saltwater angling community need timely economic data to help evaluate the economic importance of recreational fishing activities. The data will give a more updated look at the economic effects of fishing regulations and changes in the ecosystem caused by natural or manmade events such as the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster. The information gathered in the survey will contribute to more informed decisions on a variety of recreational fishing issues.

NOAA and the GSMFC will survey a random sampling of the approximately three million saltwater anglers in the five Gulf states and Puerto Rico. The survey will include a random sampling of people who fish from shore, docks, party or charter boats and privately owned boats. Surveying began in January and will continue throughout the year in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Puerto Rico. It will begin in Texas in March and April. This is NOAA’s and GSMFC’s second survey focusing on how much saltwater anglers spend on their sport throughout the Gulf region.

GSMFC and its state partners will ask anglers how long their fishing trips last and how much they spend on bait, boat fuel, ice, charter fees and other expenses. Anglers will also be asked to participate in a follow-up survey that will ask them to estimate what they spent on durable goods such as boats and fishing tackle used for saltwater angling for the previous 12 months. Those who participate in both parts of the survey will help NOAA and GSMFC produce accurate economic information.

Economists from NOAA’s Fisheries Service and the GSMFC as well as state partners are assisting with the 2011 survey. Once the economic data are collected, they will be analyzed and released as a NOAA report. The most recent economic study in 2008 showed that anglers’ expenditures generated more than \$12 billion in sales and supported more than 113,000 jobs throughout the Gulf region.

The GSMFC's principal objectives include the conservation, development, and full utilization of the fishery resources of the Gulf of Mexico in order to provide food, employment, income, and recreation to the people of these United States.

CONTACT: Alex Miller	Sabrina Lovell
GSMFC Economist	NOAA Economist
228.875.5912	301.713.2328 x101
amiller@gsmfc.org	2011NES@noaa.gov

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council to Meet in Orange Beach, Ala.

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will meet April 11-14 at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, AL. Council committees will convene Monday at 8:30 am beginning with closed sessions and will meet through most of Wednesday. The full council will convene at 3:30 pm Wednesday. The council is expected to adjourn by 4:15 pm Thursday. Agenda highlights are summarized below. For a copy of the detailed agenda or to review briefing book materials, please visit the council website at www.gulfcouncil.org or call 888-833-1844.

The Joint Allocation and Reef Fish Management committees will meet Monday at 4 pm to discuss Reef Fish Amendment 28, which addresses grouper allocation issues.

Beginning Tuesday at 8:30 am, the Sustainable Fisheries/Ecosystem Management Committee will meet to review a public hearing draft of the Generic Annual Catch Limit/Accountability Measure Amendment. The committee will also review possible sector separation scenarios.

The Coastal Migratory Pelagics (Mackerel) Management Committee will then meet to review the public hearing draft of Amendment 18, which will establish annual catch limits and accountability measures for coastal migratory pelagics.

Immediately following committee recess on Tuesday, the council and NOAA Fisheries will host an informal question and answer session on Gulf of Mexico fishery management issues.

Wednesday the Reef Fish Management Committee will meet to discuss the following:

- Take final action on the gag interim rule
- Review of public hearing draft of Reef Fish Amendment 32
- Receive a report on the greater amberjack update assessment
- Receive a summary of the scoping meetings on the Earned Income/Crew Size Amendment
- Receive a report of the Reef Fish Limited Access Privilege Program Advisory Panel meeting

Finally, the Joint Shrimp/Reef Fish Management Committee will meet to discuss the adjustment to the shrimp trawl red snapper bycatch mortality target goal.

The full council will convene Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. beginning with *Fisheries 101*. Public testimony will begin at 4 pm, and will be accepted on exempted fishing permits (if any), and final action on the interim rule for gag. The council will also hold an open public comment session to give members of the public an opportunity to address the council on fishery issues that may not be on the agenda.

Open public comment will be taken immediately following public testimony until 6 pm. Comment cards must be completed before the start of public testimony.

Beginning Thursday at 8:30 am, the council will receive presentations on fishery dependent/independent sampling and on the oil spill recovery in the Gulf of Mexico. The council will then deliberate and take action on committee recommendations made earlier in the week. The meeting is expected to conclude by 4:15 pm.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the council and committees for discussion, in accordance with the M-SFCMA, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during these meetings. Actions of the council and committees will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agendas and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under Section 305(c) of the M-SFCMA, provided the public has been notified of the council's intent to take action to address the emergency.

The established times for addressing items on the agenda may be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the timely completion of discussion relevant to the agenda items. In order to allow for such adjustments and completion of all items on the agenda, the meeting may be extended from, or completed prior to the date established in this notice. Meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Kathy Pereira at the Council office five days prior to the meeting.

OTHER REGULATION CHANGES

New Control Date Established for the South Atlantic Golden Crab Fishery

NOAA Fisheries Service announces the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council established a control date of Dec. 7, 2010, for the golden crab fishery. The council is concerned about the potential for excess harvesting capacity in the fishery. This notice announces the council may, in the future, consider management measures to limit participation or effort in the fishery using the Dec. 7, 2010, control date as part of a management strategy.

A control date is a date chosen by a fishery management council and may be used by a council or NOAA Fisheries Service as an eligibility criterion allowing future access to fisheries, or sectors of fisheries. Publication of a control date informs fishermen that a fishery management council is considering future action to restrict access to the fishery and is intended to discourage speculative entry into a fishery.

At their Dec. 2010 meeting, the council voted to establish a control date for the golden crab fishery in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone. The control date will allow the council to evaluate fishery participation and address any level of overcapacity.

The establishment of this control date does not commit the council or NOAA Fisheries Service to any particular management regime or criteria for entry into this fishery. Fishermen would not be guaranteed future participation in the fishery regardless of their entry date or intensity of participation in the fishery before or after the control date under consideration.

The council may choose to use a different control date, or to give variably weighted consideration to fishermen active in the fishery before and after the control date. Other qualifying criteria, such as documentation of landings and sales, may be considered for entry into the fishery. The council may choose to take no further action to control entry or access to the fishery, in which case the control date may be rescinded.

Request for Comments

Written comments on this advanced notice of proposed rulemaking must be received no later than 5 pm., local time, on April 20, 2011, in order to be considered by NOAA Fisheries Service.

Electronic copies of the advanced notice of proposed rulemaking, published in the *Federal Register*, may be obtained from the *Federal Register* website at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>, or by sending a written request to:

NOAA Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
Sustainable Fisheries Division
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

You may submit comments, identified by 0648-BA83, 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. 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. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

- Mail: Karla Gore
NOAA Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
Sustainable Fisheries Division
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

- Fax: 727-824-5308, Attention: Karla Gore

Commercial King Mackerel Hook-and-Line Fishing Prohibited in the Southern Florida West Coast Subzone

Commercial fishing for Gulf group king mackerel in the southern Florida west coast subzone is closed effective 12:01 am, local time, March 23, 2011, for commercial hook-and-line vessels. NOAA Fisheries Service has determined the 2010/2011 commercial quota of 520,312 pounds of king mackerel from this subzone has been reached. The closure will remain in effect through the end of the fishing year, June 30, 2011.

From Nov. 1 through March 31, the southern subzone is that part of the Florida west coast subzone

off Collier and Monroe Counties, FL. This is the area south and west from 25° 20.4' N. lat. (a line directly east from the Miami-Dade/Monroe County boundary on the east coast of Florida) to 26° 19.8' N. lat. (a line directly west from the Lee/ Collier County boundary on the west coast of Florida). Beginning April 1, the boundary between Atlantic and Gulf groups of king mackerel shifts south and west from the Flagler/Volusia County boundary on the Florida east coast to the Monroe/Collier County boundary on the Florida west coast. Therefore, beginning April 1, the closed southern subzone is reduced to the area off Collier County, FL, between 25° 48' N. lat. and 26° 19.8' N. lat., and Monroe County re-opens to commercial king mackerel fishing for Atlantic group king mackerel.

Closure of the commercial king mackerel sector in the Gulf of Mexico southern Florida west coast subzone complies with regulations implemented under the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic. The closure is necessary to protect the Gulf group king mackerel resource. In cooperative actions, the state of Florida will close commercial harvest of king mackerel concurrently in adjoining state waters.

During the closure period, no person aboard a vessel for which a commercial permit for king mackerel has been issued may fish for or retain Gulf group king mackerel in federal waters of the closed subzone. There is one exception, however, for a person aboard a charter vessel or headboat. A person aboard a vessel that has a valid charter/headboat permit and also has a commercial king mackerel permit for coastal migratory pelagic fish may continue to retain king mackerel in or from the closed subzone under the two-fish daily bag limit, provided the vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat. Charter vessels or headboats that hold a commercial king mackerel permit are considered to be operating as a charter vessel or headboat when they carry a passenger who pays a fee or when more than three persons are aboard, including operator and crew.

During the closure, no king mackerel caught in the closed subzone may be purchased, bartered, traded or sold. This includes recreational and tournament-caught fish. The prohibition of sale, however, does not apply to trade in king mackerel that were harvested, landed ashore and bartered, traded, or sold before the closure and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the existing regulations. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the regulations as published in the *Federal Register*.

Seasonal Prohibition on the Possession of Mutton and Lane Snapper in U.S. Caribbean Federal Waters

There is a seasonal prohibition on fishing for or possession of mutton and lane snapper from 12:01 am, local time, April 1 through June 30 each year in U.S. Caribbean federal waters. Caribbean federal waters are those waters extending 200 nautical miles offshore from the nine-mile seaward boundary of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the three-mile seaward boundary of the territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

This action complies with regulations implemented under Amendment 3 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Fishery of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to address required provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and is necessary to protect these resources. The Caribbean Fishery Management Council, in cooperation with NOAA Fisheries Service, developed the amendment.

Draft National Aquaculture Policies Released

The Department of Commerce and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are seeking public comment on two complementary draft national aquaculture policies that support sustainable marine aquaculture in the United States. The intent of the policies is to guide Commerce and NOAA's actions and decisions on aquaculture, and to provide a national approach for supporting sustainable aquaculture.

To view the draft Commerce policy visit:

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/aquaculture/doc_policy/

To view the draft NOAA policy visit:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/aquaculture/policy2/comments.htm>

Commerce and NOAA are each accepting comments on their respective draft policies through midnight eastern time, on April 11, 2011. Directions for submitting comments online are at <http://aquaculture.noaa.gov>.

Comments also may be submitted:

- By fax to 301-713-9108 (Attn: Susan Bunsick)

- By mail to:

NOAA Aquaculture Program

Attn: Public Comment

1315 East West Highway

SSMC3, Mail Code: F

13th Floor, Room 13152

Silver Spring, MD 20910

After the submitted comments have been reviewed, Commerce and NOAA will each issue their final national aquaculture policies. For more information on the DOC and NOAA draft policies, contact:

Phone: (727) 551-5755

Email: Jess.Beck@noaa.gov

Commercial Harvest of Vermilion Snapper in the South Atlantic Federal Waters

The commercial harvest of vermilion snapper in the South Atlantic federal waters is closed, effective 12:01 am (local time) March 10, 2011, until 12:01 am (local time) July 1, 2011. NOAA Fisheries Service has determined the 2011 January through June commercial quota of 315,523 pounds of vermilion snapper will have been reached by this date.

During the closure period, no person aboard a vessel with a commercial snapper-grouper permit may commercially fish for vermilion snapper in federal waters of the South Atlantic. During the closure, all harvest or possession of vermilion snapper in or from South Atlantic federal waters is restricted to the bag and possession limits and the sale or purchase of such fish is prohibited.

In addition, for a person on board a vessel with a federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat snapper-grouper permit, these provisions of the closure for vermilion snapper would apply regardless

of whether the fish are harvested in state or federal waters.

Closure of the commercial fishery for vermilion snapper in the South Atlantic complies with regulations implementing the Amendment 16 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region and is necessary to protect the snapper-grouper resource.

The operator of a vessel with vermilion snapper in excess of the bag or possession limit aboard must have landed such vermilion snapper prior to 12:01 am, local time, March 10, 2011, and all sale or purchase of vermilion snapper must occur prior to 12:01 am, local time, March 10, 2011. The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to sale or purchase of vermilion snapper that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 am, local time, March 10, 2011, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

Commercial Harvest of Golden Tilefish in the South Atlantic Federal Waters

The commercial harvest of golden tilefish in the South Atlantic federal waters is closed, effective 12:01 am (local time) March 9, 2011, until 12:01 am (local time) Jan. 31, 2012. NOAA Fisheries Service has determined the 2011 commercial quota of 282,819 pounds of golden tilefish will have been reached by this date.

During the closure, all harvest or possession of golden tilefish in or from South Atlantic federal waters is restricted to the bag and possession limits and the sale or purchase of such fish is prohibited. In addition, a person on board a vessel for which a federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for the South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery has been issued, is restricted to the bag and possession limits and sale or purchase of such fish is prohibited during the closure for golden tilefish and would apply regardless of whether the fish are harvested in state or federal waters.

Closure of the commercial fishery for golden tilefish in the South Atlantic complies with regulations implementing the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region and is necessary to protect the snapper-grouper resource.

The operator of a vessel with golden tilefish in excess of the bag or possession limit aboard must have landed such golden tilefish prior to 12:01 am, local time, March 9, 2011, and all sale or purchase of golden tilefish must occur prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, March 9, 2011. The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to sale or purchase of golden tilefish that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, March 9, 2011, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the existing regulations. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the regulations as published in the *Federal Register*.

King Mackerel Trip Limit Decrease in the Southern Florida West Coast Subzone

The daily vessel trip limit is reduced to 500 pounds beginning 12:01 am, local time, March 8, 2011, for commercial hook-and-line vessels fishing for Gulf group king mackerel in the southern Florida west coast subzone. NOAA Fisheries Service is reducing the trip limit after determining 75 percent (or 390,234 pounds) of the 520,312-pound quota has been taken.

From Nov. 1 through March 31, the southern subzone is that part of the Florida west coast subzone off Collier and Monroe Counties, FL. This is the area south and west from 25° 20.4' N. latitude (a line directly east from the Miami-Dade/Monroe County, Florida boundary) to 26° 19.8' N. latitude (a line directly west from the Lee/ Collier County, Florida, boundary). Beginning April 1, the southern subzone is reduced to the area off Collier County, FL, between 25° 48' N. latitude and 26° 19.8' N. latitude.

The 500-pound daily trip limit will remain in effect for the southern subzone until the 520,312-pound quota is reached or through the end of the fishing year, June 30, 2011, whichever occurs first. Beginning April 1, the area off Monroe County is considered part of the Atlantic king mackerel fishery, and the trip limit will be 1,250 pounds.

Reporting Oiled Fish or Gear

To report contact with oiled fish or oiled fishing gear, the Gulf Council has made available the following information: To report oiled fish or fishing gear at the federal level, call 1-800-info-fda (1-800-463-6332). To report oiled fish or fishing gear at the state level, visit www.gulfcouncil.org/news_resources/oil_spill_gulf_mexico.php#State%20Information. For general oil spill information, visit www.gulfcouncil.org/news_resources/oil_spill_gulf_mexico.php.

Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010- (P.L. 111-281)

New Requirements for Commercial Fishing Industry Vessels

Section 604 of the “Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010,” (P.L. 111-281) signed into law on Oc. 15, 2010, makes numerous significant changes to chapter 45 of Title 46 United States Code (U.S.C.), “Uninspected Commercial Fishing Industry Vessels” and chapter 51, “Load Lines.” These new requirements build on the requirements set forth in the Commercial Fishing Industry Vessel Safety Act of 1988. When implemented through new or amended regulations, the commercial fishing industry should experience enhanced worker and vessel safety.

Parity for All Vessels: Uniform safety standards are established for all vessels, particularly those vessels operating beyond three nautical miles of the baseline of the territorial sea and coastline of the Great Lakes. In Title 46 U.S.C. §4502(b)(1), “documented” is deleted, so there will no longer be different standards for federally-documented and state-registered vessels operating on the same waters. Title 46 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 28, subpart C must be amended to reflect the change in applicability, and other requirements discussed in some of the following paragraphs.

Replacing Boundary Line with Three Nautical Miles: The “Boundary Line,” used as the demarcation line for operating area and equipment standards, was often confusing and not uniform around the U.S. coastline. Title 46 U.S.C. §4502(b)(1)(A) is amended by deleting the words “Boundary Line” and replacing them with “3 nautical miles from the baseline from which the territorial sea of the United States is measured or 3 nautical miles from the coastline of the Great Lakes.” The “3-mile line” is well-known and shown on most charts. Various sections of 46 CFR Part 28 must be amended to reflect this change that will affect several equipment carriage requirements.

Survival Craft: All fishing industry vessels operating beyond 3 nautical miles are required to carry survival craft that will meet a new performance standard for primary lifesaving equipment. Title 46 U.S.C. §4502(b)(2)(B) is amended by deleting the words “lifeboats or liferafts” and replacing them with “a survival craft that ensures that no part of an individual is immersed in water.” This means that lifefloats and buoyant apparatus will no longer be accepted as survival craft on any commercial fishing vessel operating beyond 3 nautical miles. 46 CFR Part 28 must be amended to reflect this change. There could be a phase-in period for this requirement to become effective.

Records: A new provision requires the individual in charge of a vessel operating beyond 3 nautical miles to maintain a “safety logbook” - a record of equipment maintenance and required instruction and drills. Title 46 U.S.C. §4502(f) is amended to add this requirement. 46 CFR part 28 must be amended to set forth the requirement. It will be incumbent upon the master/individual in charge of the vessel to maintain these records onboard.

Examinations and Certificates of Compliance: A dockside safety examination at least once every two years is now mandatory for vessels operating beyond 3 nautical miles. A “certificate of compliance” will be issued to a vessel successfully completing the exam. Title 46 U.S.C. §4502(f) is amended to add this requirement, and 46 CFR part 28 must be amended to implement it. Voluntary exams will continue to be promoted for vessel operating inside 3 NM.

Related to the requirements for an examination and certificate of compliance, is the authority to terminate a vessel’s voyage for unsafe operations as set forth in Section 608 of the Authorization Act. Individuals authorized to enforce Title 46 may remove a certificate from a vessel operating in a condition that does not comply with the provisions of the certificate. And, if the vessel does not have the required certificate onboard, or if the vessel is being operated in an unsafe condition, it may be ordered to return to a mooring and remain there until the certificate is issued/reissued or the hazardous condition is corrected. Title 46 U.S.C. §2117 is amended to change this requirement and authority, and 46 C.F.R. part 28 must be amended to implement it for fishing vessels.

Training for Operators: A new provision applicable to vessels operating beyond 3 nautical miles requires individuals in charge of the vessel to pass a training program covering certain competencies. This is covered in a new 46 U.S.C. §4502(g) and 46 CFR part 28 must be amended to set forth the requirement. The training must include seamanship, navigation, stability, fire fighting, damage control, safety and survival, emergency drills, and more. Credit can be considered for recent experience on fishing vessels. A certificate will be issued upon successful completion of the training, and refresher training is required every five years. A publicly accessible database listing individuals that have completed the training is required to be established.

Construction Standards for Smaller Vessels: Vessels built after Jan. 1, 2010, and less than 50 feet overall in length must be constructed in a manner that provides a level of safety equivalent to the standards for recreational vessels established under Title 46 U.S.C. §4302. This provision is set forth in a new Title 46 U.S.C. §4502(h) and allows the Coast Guard to develop standards using the authority established in §4302. Implementing regulations must be developed.

It should be noted that “overall in length” means the horizontal distance of the hull between the foremost part of the stem and the aftermost part of the stern excluding fittings and attachments. This is different from the “registered length.”

Load Lines: The Authorization Act amends 46 U.S.C. §5102(b) making assignment of a load line a requirement on fishing vessels 79 feet or greater in length and built after July 1, 2012.

Further, in Title 46 U.S.C. §5103, a new paragraph (c) is added that requires fishing vessels built on or before July 1, 2012, that undergo a substantial change to the dimensions of or type of vessel completed after July 1, 2012, or a later date set by the Coast Guard, to comply with an alternate load line compliance program developed in cooperation with the industry. Regulations must be developed to implement this program. It is anticipated that the Commercial Fishing Safety Advisory Committee will be engaged to provide recommendations on alternate compliance programs here, and those related to vessel classing below.

Classing of Vessels: The Authorization Act amends Title 46 U.S.C. §4503 to make that section applicable to fishing and fish tender vessels in addition to fish processing vessels. A new paragraph (c) is added that requires survey and classification of a fishing vessel that is at least 50 feet overall in length, built after July 1, 2012, and operates beyond 3 nautical miles.

A new paragraph (d) is added 46 U.S.C. §4503 that requires:

(1) development of an alternate safety compliance program by Jan. 1, 2020, for vessels over 50 feet in length, built before July 1, 2012, and are 25 years of age or older;

(2) an alternate safety compliance program for vessels built before July 1, 2012, that undergo a substantial change to the dimension of or type of vessel completed after the later of July 1, 2012, or a date to be determined by the Coast Guard; and

(3) owner(s) of 30 or more vessels subject to (1) who enter into a compliance agreement with the Coast Guard can delay meeting the requirement of (1) until Jan. 1, 2030.

The alternative safety compliance programs are to be developed in cooperation with the industry, and may be developed for specific regions and fisheries. Further, in this new paragraph (d), vessels classed before July 1, 2012, are required to remain in classification and have a current certificate on-board.

A new paragraph (e) is added Title 46 U.S.C. §4503 that requires the Coast Guard to prescribe the alternate safety compliance program for older vessels by Jan. 1, 2017.

Other Provisions: Title 46 U.S.C. §4502 is amended by also adding requirements for the Coast Guard to establish a Fishing Safety Training Grants Program and a Fishing Safety Research Grant Program. The grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. The federal share of the activities costs cannot exceed 75 percent. Regulations must be developed to implement these programs.

Title 46 U.S.C. §4508 is amended to rename the current “Commercial Fishing Industry Vessel Safety Advisory Committee” to the “Commercial Fishing Safety Advisory Committee” and reauthorizing it until Sept. 30, 2020. The amendment also expands the committee to 18 members representing various groups and with particular expertise, knowledge, and experience regarding the commercial fishing industry.

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force Opens State Information Call Lines

The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, which has been charged by President Obama with developing a restoration strategy for the Gulf, recently announced the availability of a toll-free number for individuals who have questions or suggestions related to the mission of the task force.

Under its charge, the task force must propose a Gulf coast ecosystem restoration agenda by Oct. 5, 2011. A series of listening sessions are being held throughout the Gulf coast states for community members to provide individual input that will inform the development of the restoration strategy. The goal of the listening sessions is to obtain individual input on priority issues, existing impediments and key outcomes or actions for the restoration of the gulf coast ecosystem.

Citizens from the five Gulf coast states, which include Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, can call the state information call line at 855/427-9263 to receive additional information on task force meetings and other activities within their state.

The touch tone automated menu provides general information about task force activities and allows callers to be transferred to a task force staff member located in each state. Hours of operation are 8:30 am to 4:30 pm (CST) Monday through Friday. The state information call line staff includes representatives from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Interior and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force was established by President Obama through an executive order on Oct. 5, 2010. It is an advisory body made up of lead officials from state representatives appointed by the president upon recommendation of the governors of the five Gulf states and 11 federal agencies and White House offices

Citizens can receive automatic updates by emailing the task force at GulfCoastTaskForce@epa.gov. More information on the task force, visit www.restorethegulf.gov/task-force

Marsh Restoration with Gulf Saver Bags

Volunteers from around the state and country assisted the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' (LDWF) marsh restoration efforts March 24 with a second installation of Gulf Saver Bags at Pass a Loutre Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Pass a Loutre WMA encompasses 115,000 acres and is the oldest wildlife management area in Louisiana.

Common Ground Relief coordinated the effort for the Restore the Earth Foundation and LDWF, bringing in students on spring break from Ohio State University, and representatives of Bayou Rebirth, (San Francisco) For the Bayou, Global Green and Plaquemines Parish officials and citizens.

The volunteers assisted LDWF Coastal and Non-game Resources Division personnel distribute 800 Gulf Saver Bags at the WMA that forms the southeast tip of Plaquemines Parish, where the Mississippi River empties into the Gulf of Mexico. The vital wetland habitat within the WMA provides a natural home and breeding grounds for shrimp, crabs, oysters and more than five million migratory birds. Hurricane activity and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010 have further advanced the effects of coastal erosion to this southeastern Louisiana shoreline that forms the first line of defense against storm surge and tidal fluctuations.

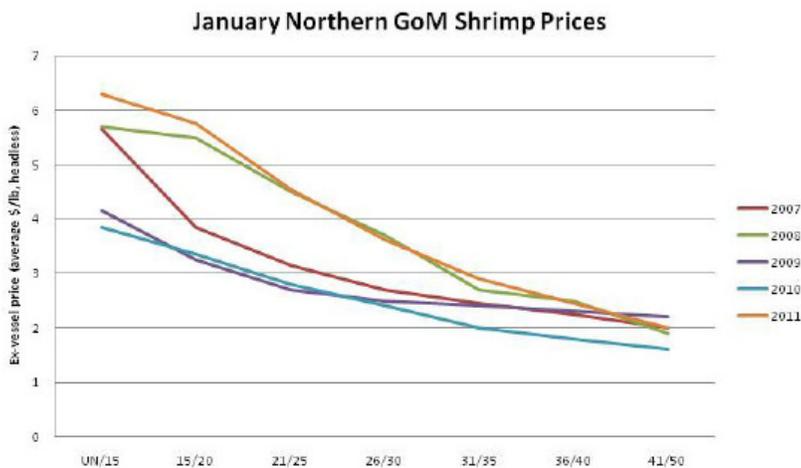
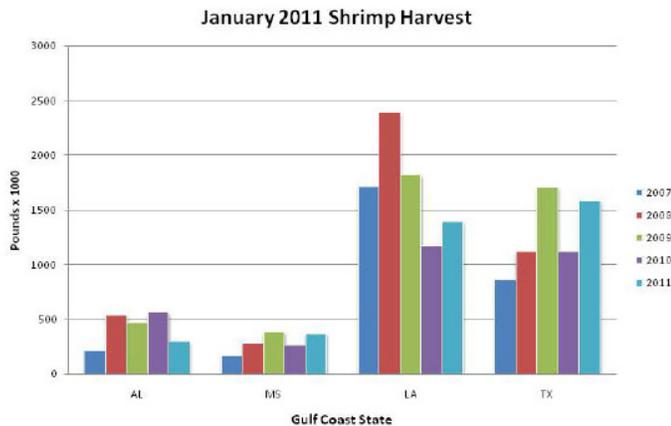
The Gulf Saver Bag is a package of native marsh grasses with its own supply of natural nutrients and oil eating micro-organisms combined to support, feed and protect the new growth of marsh grasses in areas of need. The bag is standard biodegradable burlap weighing 20 pounds when packed. Placement by hand from small transport vessels minimizes disruption of shallow sediment along deteriorating coastal land mass. The 800 bags placed along the marsh shoreline Thursday

supplement the 400 bags distributed by an initial volunteer effort in December 2010.

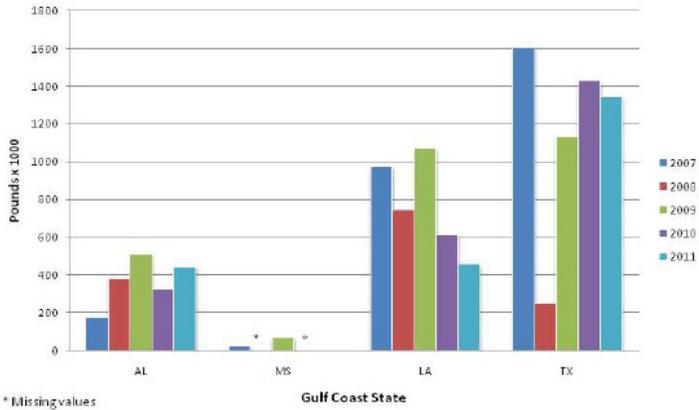
Funding for materials used at Pass a Loutre was provided by donations from individuals and matching donations from the Coypu Foundation, the Ittleson Foundation, State Farm Insurance and Restore Americas Estuaries. Additional funds were raised though benefit concerts held in San Francisco and sponsored by For the Bayou, as well as a Benefit the Bayou concert held in Cape Cod, and a car wash held by Ben Franklin High School in New Orleans. For more information on the Gulf Saver Bag project, visit www.gulfsaversolutions.com.

Louisiana Shrimp Watch

Louisiana specific data portrayed in the graphics are selected from preliminary data posted by NOAA on their website. 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. Due to a delay in reporting, January and February are presented.

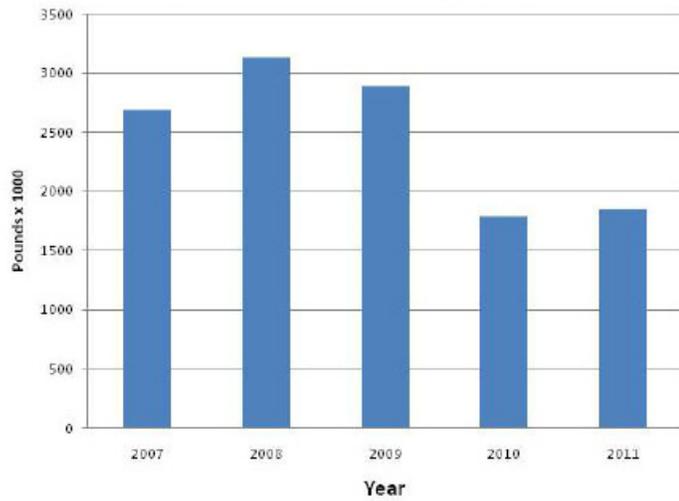


February 2011 Shrimp Harvest

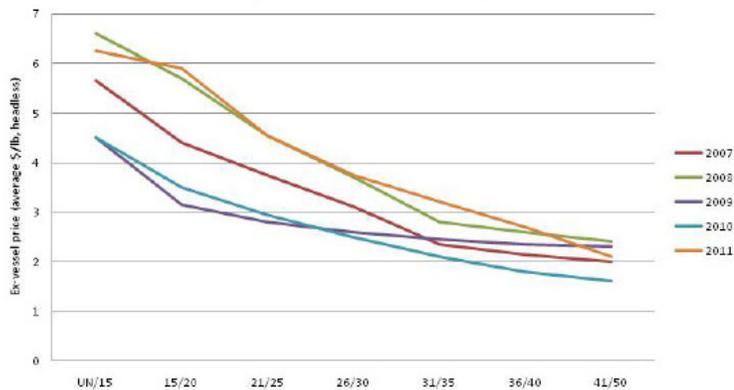


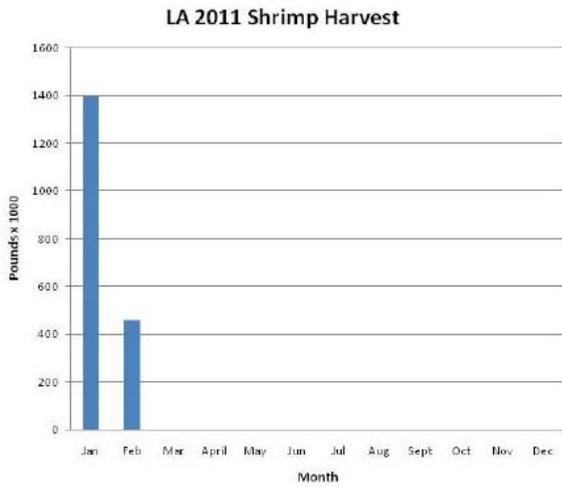
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LA Year To Date 2011 Shrimp Harvest



February Northern GoM Shrimp Prices





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
jfalgout@agcenter.lsu.edu

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

Albert 'Rusty' Gaudé – Area Agent, Fisheries
Jefferson, Orleans, St. Charles and St. John Parishes
Phone: (504) 433-3664
agaude@agctr.lsu.edu

Thomas Hymel – Watershed Educator
Iberia, St. Martin, Lafayette, Vermilion,
St. Landry, & Avoyelles Parishes
Phone: (337) 276-5527
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

Alan Matherne – Area Agent (Fisheries & Coastal Issues)
Terrebonne, Lafourche, and Assumption Parishes
511 Roussell Street
Houma, LA 70360
Phone: (985) 873-6495
amatherne@agcenter.lsu.edu

Kevin Savoie – Area Agent (Southwest Region)
Natural Resources-Fisheries
Phone: (337) 475-8812
ksavoie@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
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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