



Lagniappe

September 2012 Volume 36, No. 9

Keep Live Bait Alive

In late summer, when water temperatures are hot and fish become a little less active, many coastal anglers rely on live bait. A basic understanding of live bait handling could mean the difference in a successful fishing trip. The first consideration is water quality. A number of water quality requirements must be considered. These are oxygen, temperature and salinity.

Many new bay boats have built-in bait wells with flow through pumps. These work well if not overloaded with bait. For fishermen who do not have a built-in bait well or even a boat, the most popular method of insuring adequate oxygen is to use a 12-volt aerator that sits inside of the well or bait bucket. Other methods are to use time-released oxygen tablets or an external pump that blows diffused air. Submersible pumps are not optimal since they can cause heat build-up in the well.

Temperature and salinity should be considered next. If possible, fill your bait well or bucket with the same water the bait was held in when purchased. If this is not possible, acclimate the bait to the water at the fishing site by adding small quantities of water until the desired temperature and salinity are reached. This is especially important if there is a large temperature and salinity difference. Rapid changes in water temperature and salinity, more than five degrees and ten parts per thousand, can cause temperature shock and osmotic stress.

Remember, cooler water holds more oxygen than warm water. Cooling the water with ice will cool the water and not reduce the salinity by much. Caution should be taken when adding ice to the water, though, as too much ice will chill your bait too fast and kill it. These steps may seem unnecessary but, if not taken, your bait will die much sooner.

All finfish have a protective mucus — slime — coat that protects them from external stress. If this mucus is removed when handling the fish, it can cause the fish to become stressed and die. This can be overcome by using a dip net to remove bait from the live well and wetting your hands before



Baitfish. Photo credit: Paula Ouder

hooking the bait. This also serves as a means of not contaminating the water in which the bait is living. Insect repellent and sunscreen are two sources of common contamination.

Many types of tanks are suitable for holding and maintaining live bait. Homemade tanks can be constructed of plastic or fiberglass. Metals should be avoided when possible. Round tanks are preferred, since bait tends to huddle in the corners of square or rectangular tanks. This is especially true of menhaden (pogies).

- **Kevin A. Savoie**

Source: <http://www.seagrantfish.lsu.edu/resources/factsheets/tipslivebait.htm>

Have You Lost Crab Traps?

Did you lose traps during Isaac? If you are a commercial or recreational crabber and have lost traps for any reason including storms, accidental catch in other gear, or vandalism, please reporting them at: www.surveymonkey.com/s/LMHYN7P.

The LSU AgCenter and Louisiana Sea Grant are collecting information on lost crab traps as part of the derelict crab trap cleanup project. This information is being collected for informational purposes only. The data you provide will help guide cleanups in the future as well as provide us information on the loss rate of traps. This information will not be used for any type of enforcement. Thank you for your participation.

Report Hurricane Isaac-Related Fish Kills

Officials with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) are reminding residents in areas that may be impacted by Hurricane Isaac that fish kills may occur as a result of the storm. Residents who encounter a fish kill are encouraged to report the kill immediately at 1-800-442-2511.

Large amounts of rainfall across southern Louisiana may cause fish kills, particularly in natural water bodies surrounded by lands converted from forests to agricultural land. High levels of rainfall may erode organic matter, carrying it into bayous and canals connected to lakes. Organic matter may consume high amounts of dissolved oxygen in the water, suffocating aquatic life.

Fish kills may also be caused by the rapid mixing of stratified waters, or layers of warm oxygenated water over cooler anoxic water. In some instances, the result will be that the water can no longer support underwater life. In the past, tropical storms and hurricanes have caused fish kills.

Prevent the Spread of Exotics

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission took measures to prevent the spread two of exotics, the apple snail and Rio Grand cichlid. Both species pose a threat to native habitat and fish populations.



Rio Grande Cichlid. Photo credit: Konrad P. Schmidt

In order to promote the removal of apple snails, the commission made it illegal to buy, sell or possess the exotic species. Apple snails eat vast amounts of vegetation and reproduce at a rapid rate, disrupting the natural ecological process. They are primarily a threat to wetlands and rice plants.



Apple snail. Photo credit: David Knott, SERTC

The Rio Grand cichlid tends to outcompete native fish for habitat and bedding areas. The commission's action revises the existing rule to allow an individual to retain the fish, as long as it is killed upon capture.

National Hunting & Fishing Day

LDWF is celebrating National Hunting and Fishing Day (NHFD) on Sept. 22. This year celebrates 30 years of bringing families to the outdoors.

NHFD is a national event celebrated by all 50 states on the fourth Saturday in September. It was created in 1972 when Congress passed two bills establishing a specific day to celebrate the conservation contributions of our nation's hunters and anglers. Forty years later, the events are still going strong.

LDWF introduced its first NHFD event in 1982 at the Monroe district office. In the following years, three more locations were developed in Baton Rouge, Minden and Woodworth. Today, more than 10,000 people statewide attend the celebrations, creating the largest public event for the department.

"Our goal is to bring people outside, enjoy the activities we offer and hopefully, send them home with a renewed interest and appreciation for Louisiana's natural resources," said LDWF Secretary Robert Barham. "The quality of time families and friends spend together at National Hunting and Fishing Day is unique, and we know this because we see the experience passed on to younger generations.

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Parents who spent time at NHFD as kids are now bringing their children to the events. That speaks for the value of the experience.”

All four events are free. The number and types of exhibits vary at each location but all include exhibits on LDWF management programs, shooting and fishing demonstrations, exhibits from local chapters of Ducks Unlimited, Safari Club and CCA, and supporting businesses from the local communities. Attendees have the chance to try their skills at the shooting ranges, fishing ponds and boating activities, as well as learn about wildlife with live animals.

Another great aspect of NHFD is the food. Louisiana is known for its food and NHFD serves it up in traditional style for everyone to taste. Local businesses and chefs cook up venison, catfish, shrimp, alligator and pig with the flare only Louisiana can offer.

For more information on National Hunting and Fishing Day, contact one of the four locations or go to www.wlf.louisiana.gov.

NHFD Locations:

Monroe- LDWF District 2 Office

368 Centurylink Dr.

Monroe, LA 71203

318/343-4044

Baton Rouge- Waddill Outdoor Education Center

4142 N. Flannery Road

225/765-2800

Minden- Bodcau Wildlife Management Area

1700 Bodcau Dam Rd.

Haughton, LA 71037

318/371-3050

Woodworth- Woodworth Outdoor Education Center

661 Robinson Bridge Rd.

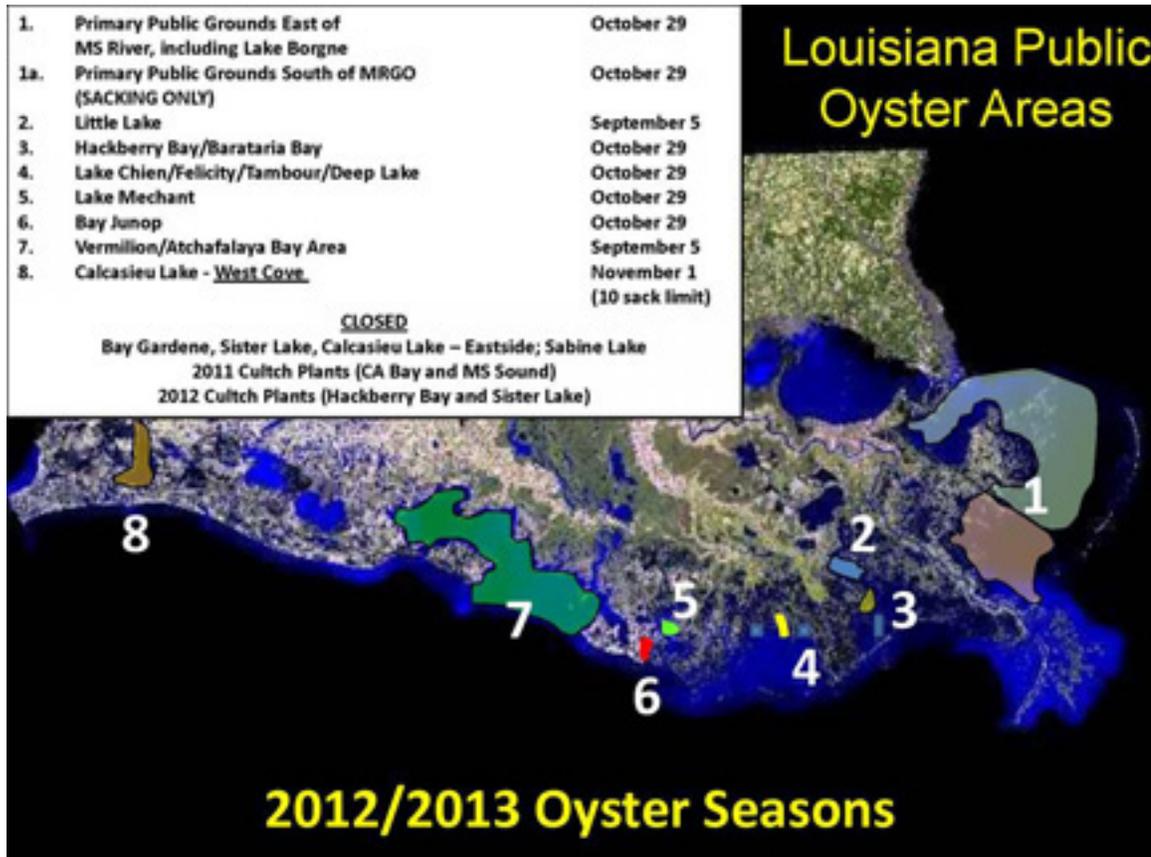
Woodworth, LA 71485

318/484-2212

LOUISIANA REGULATIONS

2012-2013 Louisiana Oyster Seasons

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission set the 2012/2013 oyster seasons based on oyster stock assessments provided by LDWF biologists and comments received from members of the public, including the oyster industry.



The following opening dates were set for the upcoming oyster season:

- The Little Lake Public Oyster Seed Grounds and the Vermilion/East and West Cote Blanche/Atchafalaya Bay Public Oyster Seed Grounds opened at one-half hour before sunrise on Wednesday, Sept. 5, 2012.
- All remaining public oyster seed grounds and reservations will open at one-half hour before sunrise on Monday, Oct. 29, 2012, except for the Bay Gardene and Sister Lake Public Oyster Seed Reservations, which will remain closed. The area of the public grounds east of the Mississippi River and south of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet will be restricted to the harvest of market sacks only, and no seed oyster harvest will be allowed.
- The oyster season in the west cove portion of the Calcasieu Lake Public Oyster Area (DHH Harvest Area 30) will open at one-half hour before sunrise on Thursday, Nov. 1, 2012. The sack limit during this time period is set at 10 sacks per person, per vessel, per day.

In addition to closures in Bay Gardene and Sister Lake, the 2011 clutch plants in Mississippi Sound and California Bay and the 2012 cultch plant in Hackberry Bay will remain closed. The east side of Calcasieu Lake (DHH Harvest Area 29) and the Sabine lake Public Oyster Area will also remain closed for the entire 2012/13 oyster season.

Closure dates will be determined by LDWF Secretary Barham on an “as needed” basis, based on biological and harvest data, or if enforcement issues are encountered. The secretary is also authorized to take emergency action to reopen areas previously closed if the threat to the resource has ended, and to open areas if substantial oyster resources are located.

Public notice of any opening, delay, or closure of a season will be provided at least 72 hours prior to such action, unless such closure is ordered by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals for public health concerns.

Portion of Coastal Waters Due to the Emergence of Oil on Adjacent Beaches

LDWF Secretary Robert Barham announced an emergency closure of a portion of coastal waters due to the emergence of a large tar mat and concentrations of tar balls on adjacent beaches, effective Sept. 4. This action was taken in coordination with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, which will assist with the investigation to determine the extent, source and impacts of the oil in the environment.

The area affected by this emergency closure includes the portion of state outside waters seaward a distance of one mile from the shoreline from the eastern shore of Belle Pass at 90 degrees 13 minutes 30 seconds west longitude eastward to the western shore of Caminada Pass at 90 degrees 02 minutes 46.6 seconds west longitude.

The only fishing activity allowed in the closed area is recreational, rod and reel (hook and line) fishing for finfish. The following activities are prohibited:

- all commercial fishing
- recreational harvest of shrimp, crabs and oysters

The harvest of live bait by wholesale/retail seafood dealers who hold a special bait dealers permit and who harvest live bait for sale to recreational fishermen exclusively is also permitted.

In addition to this closure, certain areas are still closed to recreational and commercial fishing due to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Maps of the areas still closed to recreational and commercial fishing are posted on the LDWF website at www.wlf.louisiana.gov/oilspill.

Commercial King Mackerel Season to Close August 22

The commercial season for king mackerel in Louisiana waters closed at noon on Wednesday, Aug. 22, 2012.

The closure was made based on data gathered by LDWF biologists and the National Marine Fisheries Service that the annual quota for king mackerel of 1.01 million pounds for the western zone of the Gulf of Mexico would soon be met.

Each year, a commercial quota is established for Gulf of Mexico group king mackerel by NMFS based on recommendations by the Gulf and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. That figure is then divided into allocations for various zones and fisheries. According to the best information available, the 1.01 million pound commercial quota of king mackerel for the western zone of the Gulf of Mexico will be harvested by Aug. 22, 2012.

While there are relatively few king mackerel harvested or targeted by Louisiana recreational anglers, a substantial commercial fishery does exist, which typically lands 800 to 900 thousand pounds annually at Louisiana ports. A significant portion of the king mackerel landed in Louisiana ports is shipped to markets in the northeast United States.

GULF OF MEXICO REGULATIONS

Western Gulf of Mexico Closing to King Mackerel Commercial Fishing

NOAA Fisheries Service closed the Western Zone of the Gulf of Mexico to commercial fishing for king mackerel effective 12:00 noon (local time) Aug. 22, 2012. The commercial quota of 1,180,480 pounds for this zone is projected to be reached by this date. The Western Zone is from the U.S./Mexico border to the Alabama/Florida boundary. Gulf states (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama) are expected to close adjoining state waters at the same time.

During the closure, no commercial fisherman may fish for or keep king mackerel in or from the closed zone. There is an exception for people aboard a vessel that has a charter/headboat permit for coastal migratory pelagic fish and a commercial king mackerel permit. Those people may keep the 2-fish per person daily king mackerel bag limit from the closed zone, if the vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat. Vessels 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 people are aboard, including operator and crew.

During the closure, no king mackerel caught in the closed zone may be bought, sold, or traded. This includes recreational and tournament-caught fish. King mackerel that were traded or sold before the closure and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor may still be sold.

News from Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council met in New Orleans, Aug. 20-23, 2012. Here is a brief summary of the council's actions. For additional information, please visit www.gulfcouncil.org/news_resources/Press%20Releases/Council%20Update%2008-12.pdf.

Gray Triggerfish - Reef Fish Amendment 37 was voted to be sent out for public hearings. The amendment considers modifying the rebuilding plan for gray triggerfish and making changes to commercial and recreational management measures. The council also requested that NOAA Fisheries Service extend the interim rule that reduces overfishing of gray triggerfish by lowering commercial and recreational annual catch limits for another 186 days until Amendment 37 can be approved and implemented.

Shallow-Water Grouper Accountability Measures - Amendment 38 received final approval, which revises the accountability measures for shallow-water grouper. Under this revision, only the species for which the annual catch limit was exceeded will have its season shortened. The amendment also revised the Generic Framework Procedure to allow future changes to accountability measures through a framework process (also called a regulatory amendment), rather than require a full plan amendment. The final amendment will be submitted to NOAA Fisheries, which must review and approve the amendment before it is implemented.

2013 Recreational Gag Season: The council also approved for public hearings, a draft framework action that considers a split recreational gag season for 2013. Some fishermen have asked for a split season to allow for two or three fishing seasons during the year. However, the council has asked for an analysis of reducing the gag bag limit from two to one fish per person, which could extend the recreational season. The framework also includes alternatives to modify or eliminate the annual February-March recreational shallow-water grouper closure. Given the regional differences in recreational harvest of gag, the council also directed staff to begin development of a plan amendment for regional management of the recreational gag harvest.

Regional Management of Red Snapper: A scoping document for regional management of recreational harvest of red snapper is in development. In August, the council received additional details from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries about a proposed pilot project for regional management of red snapper, and they reaffirmed the motion to pursue regional management of red snapper.

Sector Allocation - Reef Fish Amendment 28: The Gulf Council reviewed a scoping document that explores setting allocations for gag, red grouper, black grouper and red snapper, based on various scenarios. After receiving extensive public testimony, the council agreed to table discussion on the amendment until after it receives the 2013 red snapper benchmark assessment. The assessment is expected to be complete in the summer of 2013.

Coastal Migratory Pelagic Amendments 19 and 20 are still in progress. Amendment 19 considers limiting the sale of recreationally caught fish and making changes to the permit requirements for coastal migratory pelagic fisheries. Amendment 20 considers modifying commercial zone boundaries, changing the commercial opening date for the western zone, and establishing a transit provision.

Generic Amendment for Dealer Permits and Electronic Reporting received final approval to an amendment that changes federal seafood dealer permit and reporting requirements. Because this is a joint amendment, approval by the South Atlantic Council is necessary before the amendment can be sent to the Secretary of Commerce for approval and implementation. If approved, the amendment would require a universal dealer permit to purchase all federally-managed species, except South Atlantic coral, South Atlantic *Sargassum*, Gulf of Mexico coral and coral reefs and penaeid shrimp species.

For-Hire Charter Vessel Electronic Reporting: An amendment to require electronic reporting for for-hire charter vessels is in development. The amendment will also include options to bring headboat reporting requirements in line with current Southeast Fishery Science Center electronic reporting requirements.

The council also directed staff to develop a scoping document for a days-at-sea pilot program for the red snapper recreational for-hire sector. The intent of this proposal is to allow for-hire vessels to optimize their use of available fishing days given the short red snapper season and potential loss of days due to weather.

Fixed Petroleum Platforms and Artificial Reefs as Essential Fish Habitat: The council agreed to form an Ad Hoc Artificial Substrate Advisory Panel made up of members of the petroleum industry, state artificial reef biologists, and others as appropriate, to assist the council with our fixed petroleum platforms and artificial reefs as potential essential fish habitat.

Exempted Fishing Permit - Recreational Harvest of Red Snapper at Fishing Tournaments: LDWF submitted a new exempted fishing permit (EFP) application proposing that the department be allowed to use the remaining tags at an additional tournament, the Louisiana saltwater series recreational tournament, (Sept. 28-30, 2012, with a weather date of Oct. 26-28, 2012). Since this request does not increase the take of red snapper beyond what was previously authorized, the council recommended that NOAA Fisheries approves the EFP.

Red Snapper Recreational Catch Overrun in 2012 and Reevaluation of 2013 Quotas: The council received preliminary catch estimates for the recreational red snapper season. Currently collected data accounts for 3.23 mp, or about 82 percent of the 3.959 mp recreational quota. Private recreational data from July and data from Texas' creel survey are still needed to finalize catch estimates. NOAA Fisheries projects recreational landings will be 4.4 to 4.8 million pounds of red snapper so far this year. Part of the reason for the increase in landings is because the average weight of recreationally caught red snapper continues to increase. The average weight for 2012 was projected to be 6.34 to 6.97 pounds, but the observed average weight was 7.14 pounds. Because the red snapper quota will be exceeded in 2012, there will not be an automatic increase in 2013. Instead, the council has requested that the Southeast Fisheries Science Center rerun the red snapper projections incorporating the most recent landings, and report the results to the council's Scientific and Statistical Committee and the council during their October meetings.

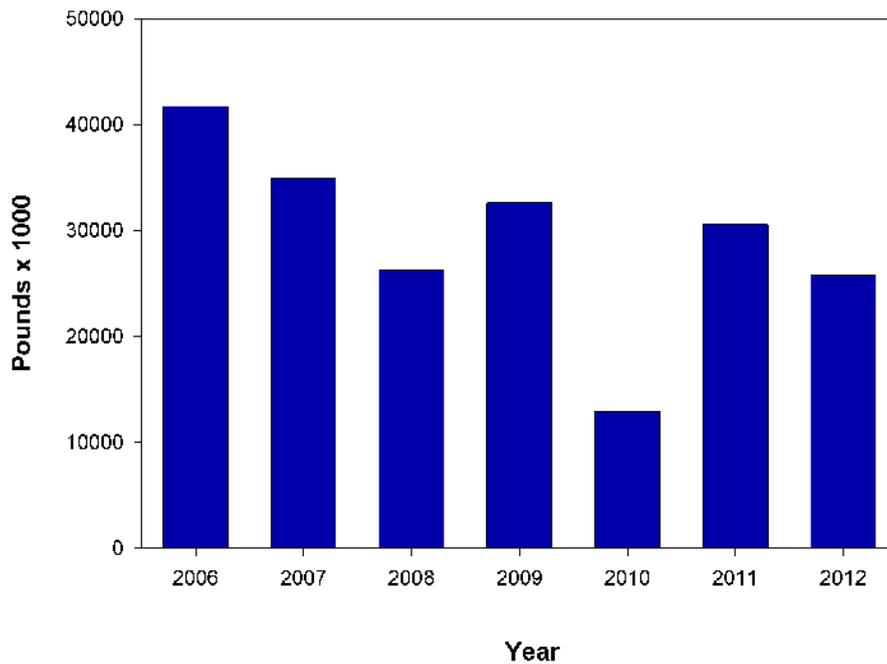
Vermilion Snapper Emergency Rule Requested to Increase 2012 Annual Catch Limit: Based on a recent update stock assessment that found the vermilion snapper stock is neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing, the council began developing a regulatory amendment to increase the vermilion snapper annual catch limit beginning in 2013. The council has requested that NOAA Fisheries implement an emergency rule to increase the 2012 vermilion snapper annual catch limit from 3.42 mp to 4.19 mp.

To comment on active amendments, visit www.gulfcouncil.org/fishery_management_plans/scoping-thruimplementation.php.

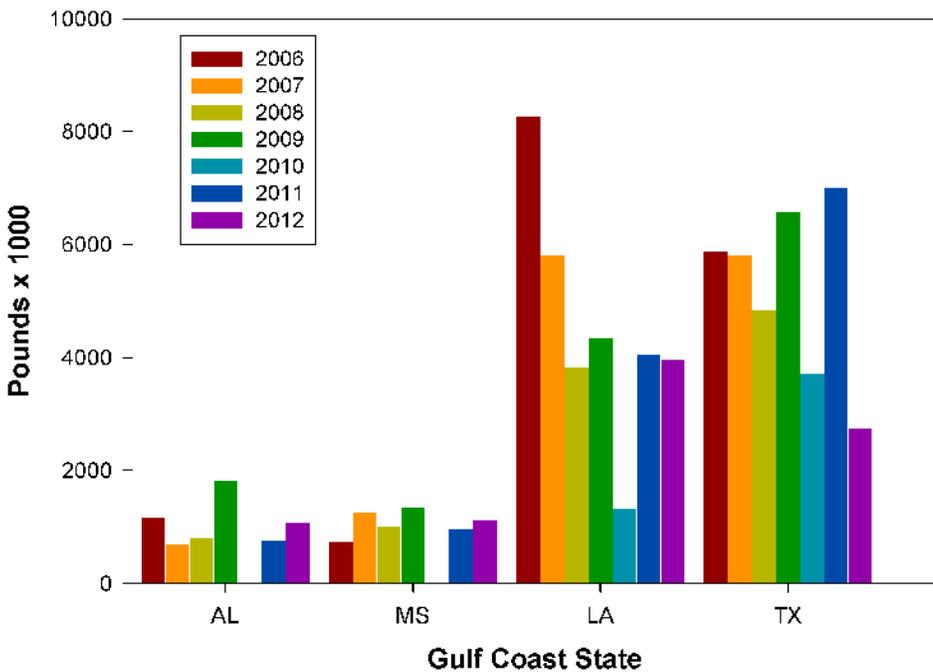
Louisiana Shrimp Watch

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.

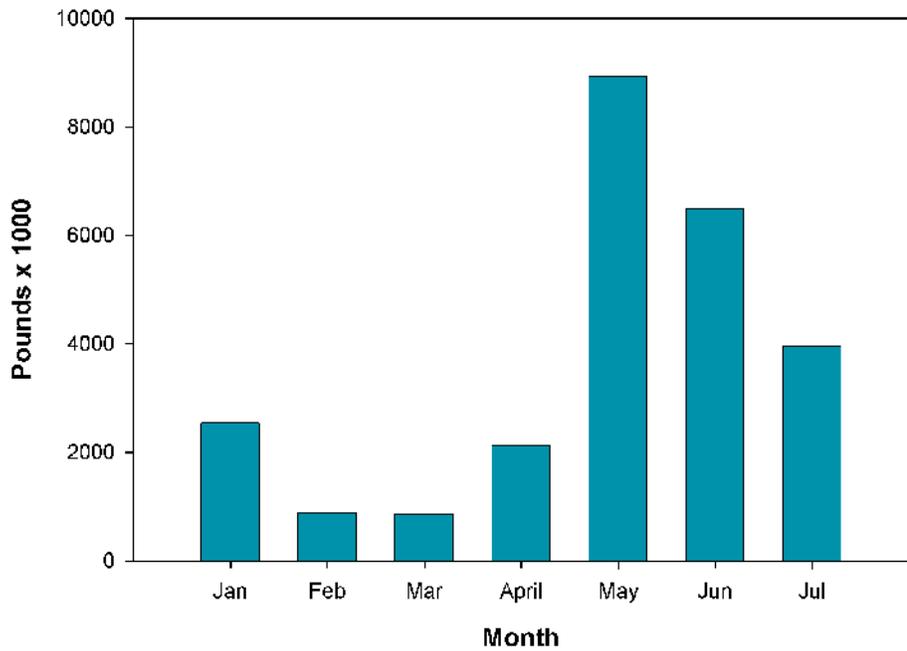
Louisiana Year to Date Shrimp Harvest



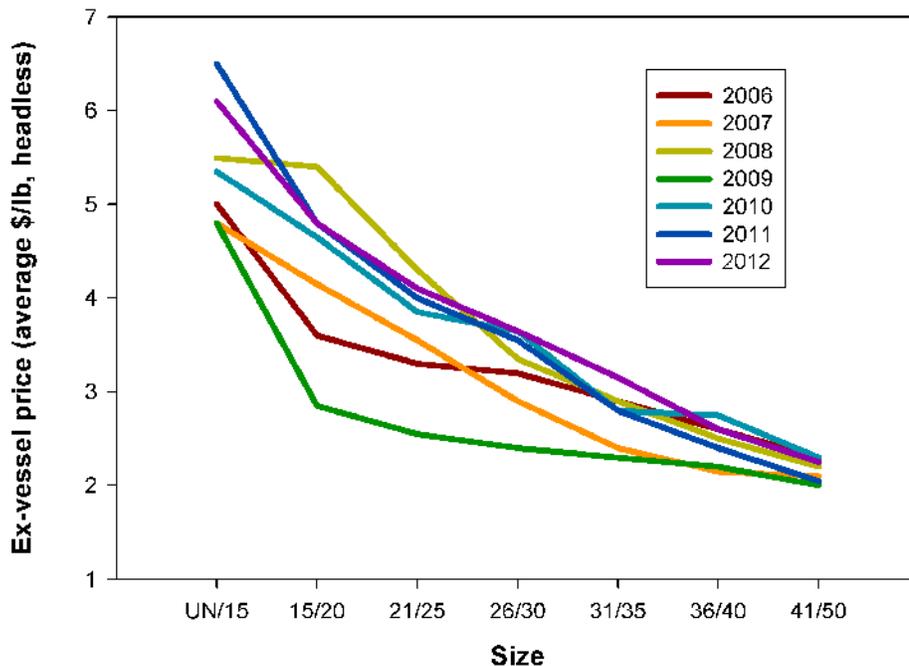
July Shrimp Harvest



Louisiana 2012 Shrimp Harvest



July Northern GoM Shrimp Prices



The Gumbo Pot

Marinated Avocado Crawfish and Crab Salad

Recipe courtesy of *Louisiana Kitchen*. For more recipes or to subscribe to their magazine or free newsletter, please visit <http://louisiana.kitchenandculture.com/> and Galatoire's Cookbook: *Recipes and Family History from the Time-Honored New Orleans Restaurant* (Random House, 2005) by Benson & Rodrigue

Ingredients:

- 2 soft ripe avocados, preferably Haas
- 1 cup Creole Mustard Vinaigrette
- 1/2 pound jumbo lump Gulf crabmeat
- 1/2 pound fresh peeled Louisiana crawfish tails
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 4 heads butter lettuce, torn into bite-sized pieces, washed and dried
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 6 hearts of palm, rinsed and dried

Method:

Slice the avocados in half lengthwise, remove the pit and peel them. Chop the avocado into large

dice, about ½-inch. Add the avocado to a small bowl with the vinaigrette, toss and refrigerate for 2 hours.

Add the crab, crawfish and parsley to the avocado. Fold the mixture taking care not to break the lumps of crabmeat or to mash the soft avocado. Chill the mixture for 1 hour before serving.

Add the lettuce to a large mixing bowl with the olive oil, salt and pepper. Toss the mixture until the leaves are evenly coated. Slice the hearts of palm on a bias, end to end, creating long triangular shapes.

Create a bed of lettuce on 6 chilled plates. Evenly distribute the marinated avocado, crawfish and crab salad atop the lettuce. Lean 2 slices of hearts of palm against the avocado salad for added flavor and garnish.

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.



Photo credit: Louisiana Kitchen



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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.

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