



Louisiana Market Clams

With a refinement and expansion of our culinary palate, many Louisiana foodies find their attention focused on alternative shellfish dishes. Many of those dishes involve clams exclusively sourced from locations other than Louisiana. Primarily quahog clams (*Mercenaria*



Louisiana clam, Credit: Albert 'Rusty' Gaudé

mercenaria) from the Eastern seaboard and Florida inshore waters, these delicious bivalves are locally imported by wholesalers and retailers alike. Such are later incorporated in a multitude of menu presentations which draw on the long history of New England clam chowders, stuffies, casinos, linguini, and, of course, raw bars. Even dishes like Spanish-style paella would be incomplete without clams as a primary component.

But getting their clams for our dishes is like us calling for California crawfish for our Louisiana crawfish cuisine! Far back into antiquity, Louisiana fishermen have known about large populations of Louisiana clams, right here under our noses. As early as 1904, the forerunners of our natural resource agencies had Southern Quahog beds surveyed. The Louisiana Southern Quahog (*Mercenaria campechiensis*) is a relatively long-lived and heavier cousin of the more utilized Northern Quahog.

Our species is found in inshore and nearshore areas of higher salinity water, normally positioning themselves in the first eight inches of sea bottom. Unlike oysters, quahogs have tubes (called siphons) to bring in algae-laden water to feed on. The openings of these exposed siphons cannot be covered for any length of time. Our clams also have a muscular 'foot' by which they can maneuver vertically in the sea floor, thereby adjusting to changes like hurricane-induced layers of sediment. This explains why our clams can be as much as 30 years old, avoiding the suffocating sediment which periodically kills stationary oyster populations.

These Southern Quahog clams are found in vast numbers throughout the coastal areas off Louisiana, readily available to savvy recreational harvesters with appropriate state permits, myself being one. Experimental commercial harvests of Louisiana *Mercenaria* clams reached an apex in the late '70s with a harvest permit for clams destined for Borden's canned clam chowder, then marketed nationally. Then competing with East Coast shellfish meats, from both nearshore and ocean stocks, the financial insolvency of Louisiana clam meats drove commercial harvesters back to a shellfish which they knew could had local demand and make money – oysters!

Fast-forward to today's culinary climate where Louisiana clams are once again making a comeback into consumer demand. Recently, adjustments in the commercial regulations governing the harvest of Louisiana clams have cleared a pathway for our clams to enter the open public market. Now allowed as incidental bycatch of the oyster industry harvest off both private shellfish leases and public grounds, Louisiana quahogs are harvested, stored, and marketed in the same fashion as our beloved oyster. All regulations on site health oversight, refrigeration, and labeling are identical with present state and federal standards.

As a bycatch of the oyster industry, the public availability of these Louisiana clams will probably be somewhat erratic and confined to the better restaurant venues or select fish houses. Also, as an incidental harvest of the oyster industry which has regulated gear specifications for their harvest dredges, smaller Louisiana quahog clams will be infrequently encountered, with larger clams predominating in availability. Regardless of the shell size, or the culinary dish featuring our clams, begin to look for this "new" Louisiana fishery item when you dine out. Not only are they beautiful to behold as a state resident and fishery resource, but they are a delight to the culinary adventurers that visit and live here.

Albert 'Rusty' Gaudé

Tiger Shrimp Updates

With fall shrimp season in full swing, we are still monitoring catches of Tiger Shrimp. These invasive shrimp first started showing up in Louisiana waters in large numbers during the 2011 shrimp season. Last week, we reminded fishermen to report the invasive shrimp they have caught this year. Already in less than a week, more than 50 reports have come in for the month of August. Around Cocodrie and Grand Isle are popular spots with shrimpers reporting catches of five, 10 or even 25 in one trip out. We have even had reports of catching them in cast nets from shore. While Sea Grant and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the federal agency in charge of tracking invasive species, have only one report for 2014, it appears we are still seeing an increase each year of Tiger Shrimp in Louisiana waters. However, as they are becoming more common, fewer reports are being made. If you catch a Tiger Shrimp, please help us out by reporting it as <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/C277FD5>, and we are told they taste great wrapped in bacon on the grill.

For more information on Tiger Shrimp, please visit www.seagrantsfish.lsu.edu/biological/invasive/tigerprawn.htm.



LOUISIANA REGULATIONS

Michael C. Voisin Oyster Hatchery on Grand Isle

On Aug. 12, 2015, officials with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and Louisiana Sea Grant (LSG) celebrated the opening of the newly constructed Michael C. Voisin Oyster Hatchery on Grand Isle.

Rep. Gordon E. Dove of Houma through legislation named the hatchery after the late Michael C. Voisin of Houma. Voisin, who passed away in 2013, was a respected leader in the oyster industry and served in many leadership roles including, Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commissioner and chairman of the Louisiana Oyster Task Force.

Construction on the oyster hatchery, which is adjacent to the LDWF Fisheries Research Lab facilities, began in April 2013. The new elevated and temperature controlled hatchery features state-of-the-art re-circulating water system that will enable production of hatchery-raised larvae and spat to occur year-round, significantly increasing the production capacity over previous years.

Since 1993, LSG has operated an oyster hatchery on Grand Isle in various locations. In 2005, the hatchery was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and LSG moved its operations to the LDWF Fisheries Research Lab, which allows LDWF and LSG to merge academic research projects and hatchery programs that benefit both the commercial harvesting sector and aid in management of the public seed grounds.

Currently, LDWF deploys hatchery raised *Crassostrea virginica* oyster larvae on the public seed grounds through remote setting spat on-shell and by deploying free swimming larvae. Approximately 13 million spat and 400 million larvae were produced each year, on average, with past operations for use by LDWF in public seed ground rehabilitation projects.

The new hatchery is capable of producing 1 billion *Crassostrea virginica* oyster larvae annually. Those larvae will be utilized by LDWF for augmentation of six early restoration cultch plants. Any excess diploid larvae will be used for various oyster rehabilitation projects on the public seed grounds.

LDWF's Catch and Cook Program

LDWF now offers the Louisiana Catch and Cook Program, allowing anglers to enjoy their catch at a local restaurant, prepared by their favorite chef.

Act 577, authored by Sen. Bret Allain of Franklin during the 2014 Legislative Session, allows participating retail food establishments to prepare certain recreational game fish. Any retail food establishment that wishes to participate in the program can apply to the Department for a participation permit.

"The Catch and Cook Program allows fresh caught Louisiana game fish to be served in our Louisiana restaurants, what could be better than that?" asked Sen. Allain. "It promotes recreational and charter fishing along with some of the best restaurants in the world. This program highlights what Louisiana is famous for."

There is no fee to apply for the permit, and participating restaurants may charge the guest any amount they choose for preparing the item. The guest providing the fish must execute an assumption of risk relieving the establishment of any responsibility. Fish must be cleaned and processed beforehand and can only be served to the party who caught the fish.

To date, 14 restaurants have signed on to the program, and LDWF expects more to join as it gains more publicity. The Louisiana Restaurant Association is currently working with the Department and Sen. Allain's office to further promote program awareness amongst the restaurant community.

For guidelines or to participate in the Catch and Cook Program, visit www.fishla.org/catch-and-cook/.

GULF OF MEXICO REGULATIONS

Public Comment on Proposed Changes to Gulf Shrimp Management

NOAA Fisheries is seeking public comment on Amendment 15 to the Fishery Management Plan for the shrimp fishery of the Gulf of Mexico, U.S. Waters. NOAA Fisheries is also seeking public comment on the proposed rule to implement the management measures contained in the amendment. Amendment 15 proposes to:

- Modify stock status criteria for three species of shrimp (brown, white, and pink):
 - The maximum sustainable yield is the largest average catch that can continuously be taken from a stock under existing environmental conditions.
 - The overfishing threshold determines if the rate of removal of shrimp is too high.
 - The overfished threshold determines if population abundance is too low.
- Make administrative changes to the procedure for modifying management measures.

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has submitted Amendment 15 to NOAA Fisheries for review, approval, and implementation. The Notice of Availability for public comment on this amendment published in the *Federal Register* on Aug. 12, 2015, and the proposed rule published on Aug. 25, 2015. Comments will be accepted through Oct. 13, 2015. We will address all comments specifically directed to either the amendment or the proposed rule in the final rule.

For more information on Amendment 15, please visit the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region website at:

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/shrimp/2015/Am%2015/index.html

Gulf Council Update – August

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council met in New Orleans, Louisiana, Aug. 10-13, 2015.

Red Snapper Allocation – Reef Fish Amendment 28: The council reviewed and took final action on Reef Fish Amendment 28 which reallocates a portion of the commercial red snapper quota to the recreational sector. The resulting allocation for 2016-2017 would be 48.5 percent commercial and 51.5 percent recreational.

Regional Management of Recreational Red Snapper – Reef Fish Amendment 39: The council continued discussions on Amendment 39 which looks at dividing the recreational red snapper quota among regions to allow for the creation of different management measures that better suit each area. During this meeting, the council changed its preferred alternative for Action 1 to Alternative 4 which would establish a regional management program whereby regions would develop management proposals and submit those proposals to a technical review committee. Proposals would then either go back to the region for revision or be

forwarded to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for final review. Any region that chooses not to participate or that does not satisfy the conservation equivalency requirements would be subject to the default federal regulations for red snapper.

Reef Fish Amendments 41 and 42: Amendment 41 explores the design and implementation of flexible measures for the management of red snapper by the charter for-hire fleet; and Amendment 42 explores the design and implementation of flexible measures for the management of reef fish for the headboat fleet. Both options papers will go out for public scoping in the coming months.

Gag and Black Grouper Framework Action: For both gag and black grouper, the council proposed an increase in the recreational minimum size limit from 22 inches to 24 inches total length as a preferred alternative. The council reviewed possible recreational season lengths for gag under either a 22 inch or 24 inch minimum size limit, including possible changes to the season start and end dates. Final action on this framework action is expected during the October council meeting.

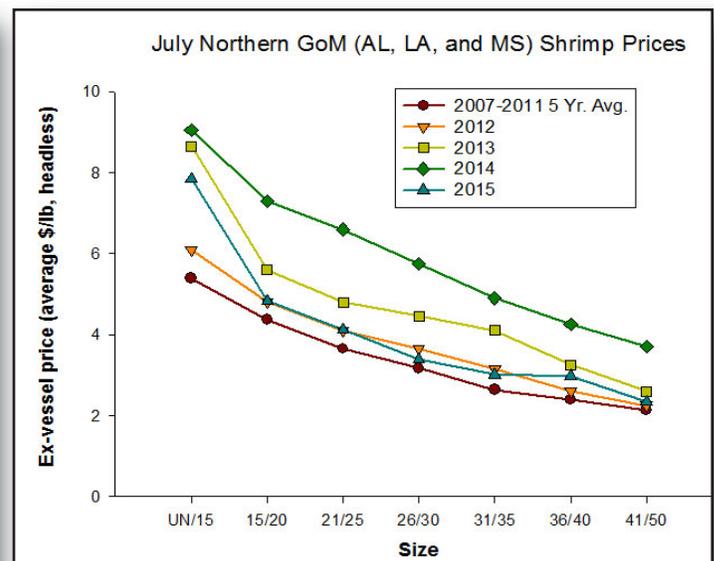
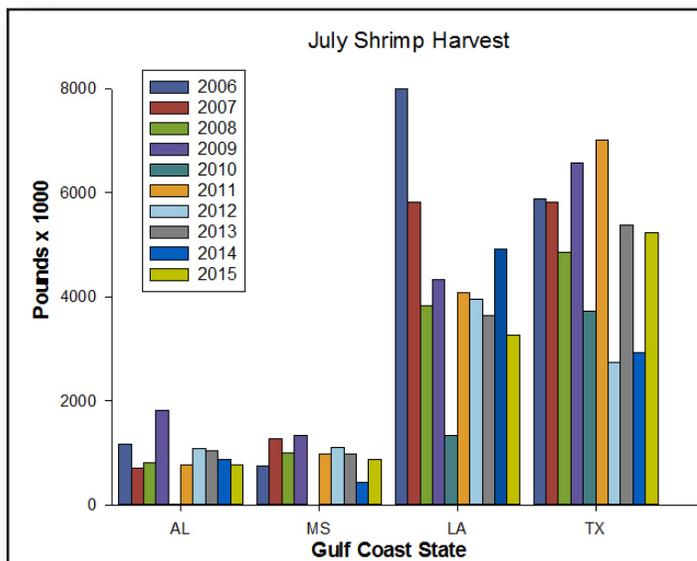
Shrimp: The council reviewed a draft options paper for Amendment 17 that addresses the expiration of the shrimp permit moratorium. Amendment 17A will address the permit moratorium and royal red shrimp endorsements, and Amendment 17B will consider other permit issues such as setting a target number of Gulf shrimp vessel permits and whether to create a Gulf shrimp vessel permit reserve pool, specification of optimum yield, and issues about transiting in federal waters.

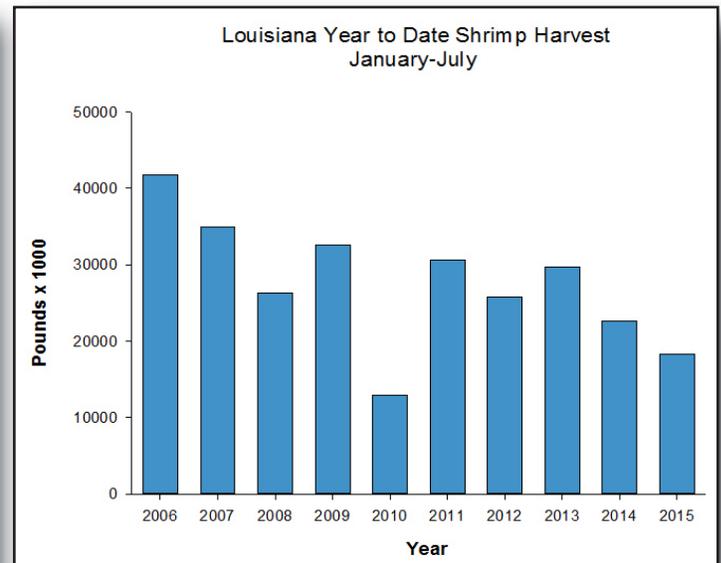
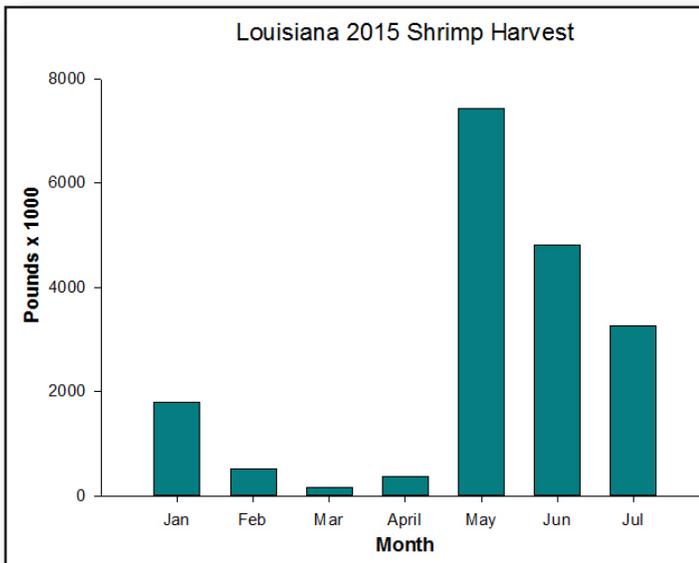
Data Collection: The council reviewed a public hearing draft of a joint amendment between the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils which considers modifying the frequency and method of reporting for charter and headboats fishing for reef fish and coastal migratory pelagics in the Gulf of Mexico, and snapper, grouper, dolphin, wahoo, and coastal migratory pelagics in the South Atlantic.

Louisiana Shrimp Watch

Louisiana specific data portrayed in the graphics are selected from preliminary data posted by NOAA on its 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.





Fish Gear Coordinates - July

In accordance with the provisions of R.S. 56:700.1 et. seq., notice is given that zero claims in the amount of \$0.00 were received for payment during the period July 1-31, 2015.

Events

Sept. 8th – Louisiana state recreational red snapper season closes 12:01 a.m.

Upcoming Events

Sept. 26th – Cameron Shoreline Restoration Project.

See the link to register: rita10.eventbrite.com

Oct. 1, 8, 22, 23, and 29th –

Sea-to-Table Tastings with at Whole Foods around the state.

SEA TO TABLE

Thursdays in October, the Whole Foods Market Louisiana stores will host Sea-to-Table tastings with local chefs, Louisiana Sea Grant, LSU AgCenter and Audubon Nature Institute G.U.L.F.

JOIN OUR SEAFOOD DEPARTMENT • SAMPLE GULF SEAFOOD • ENJOY WINE PAIRINGS

Reservation information available soon!

OCTOBER 1ST	Arabella Station 5600 Magazine Street • New Orleans 504.899.9119
OCTOBER 8TH	Ambassador Caffery 4247 Ambassador Caffery Pkwy • Lafayette 337.314.9653
OCTOBER 22ND	Veterans 3420 Veterans Boulevard • Metairie 504.888.8225
OCTOBER 23RD	Baton Rouge 7529 Corporate Boulevard • Baton Rouge 225.218.0452
OCTOBER 29TH	Broad Street 300 N. Broad Street • New Orleans 504.434.3364

WHOLE FOODS MARKET

THE GUMBO POT

LOUISIANA CLAMS CASINO

Recipe courtesy of *Albert "Rusty" Gaudé*

Ingredients:

- 24 Louisiana Quahog clams- 3-4 inches (for larger-sized clams, reduce number to serving quantity per person or increase ingredients to fit clam components)
- Baking rock salt
- 4-6 slices of bacon (quantity of good tasso/andouille sausage/combo could be used)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 cup minced green onion tops
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ½ cup minced white sweet onion
- ¾ cup minced green and red bell peppers
- ½ teaspoon fresh oregano (mandatory)
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh herbs (oregano, basil, parsley)
- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- ¼ cup grate/shaved Parmesan cheese

Method:

In a large sauté pan, cook bacon over medium heat until lightly crisp but crumbles (not burnt). Tasso/andouille mixture need to be cut into pea-size bits before cooking. Lightly wipe out the sauté pan to remove excess grease, but don't wash it. Heat the pan over medium-high heat for a minute or two, then add the olive oil and butter. Sauté until softened: green onion, garlic, sweet onion and peppers with fresh oregano and a pinch of salt and pepper. Small quantity of red pepper flakes can be used according to taste.

Turn the heat to medium high and add the wine. Reduce the pan liquid until only about ¼ cup remains. Cool the vegetables quickly and completely. Stir in the panko, reserved crumbled bacon, fresh herbs and half the Parmesan cheese. Taste and correct seasonings.

Shuck the clams over clean saucer to capture any juices from the shucking process. Use bottom shells to put individual clam meat and recovered juices. (CAUTION!!!! for shucking as you cannot use an oyster knife. A clam knife or equal should be used) Larger clam meats should be cut into nickle-size pieces. Arrange shells on a bed of rock salt in cake pan or similar.

Divide the stuffing equally among the arranged clam shells, mounding it up slightly on top of the clam meat. Sprinkle the rest of the Parmesan (shaved is best) evenly over the stuffing. Bake at 500°F until the clams are cooked and the topping is deep golden brown, about 7-10 minutes.

Do NOT overcook...eat when slightly cooled but still warm.



For more information, contact your local extension agent:

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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 Lively at janderson@agcenter.lsu.edu.

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