



Giants of the Deep - Goliath Grouper

The goliath grouper (*Epinephelus itajara*) is a large fish that inhabits tropical and subtropical waters. It can be found in the eastern Pacific, western Atlantic, and eastern Atlantic Ocean from Florida to Brazil, the Caribbean Sea, and the Gulf of Mexico usually in shallow reefs and along structures such as oyster beds, mangroves, rock and coral reefs and artificial reefs like oil rigs. Goliath groupers are unlike most members of the grouper family because they can be found in brackish water.

Prior to 1990, the goliath grouper was recreationally and commercially fished. However, overfishing and environmental factors caused a decline in the population. The goliath grouper is listed as critically endangered on the Red List of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and is now a federally protected species. The goliath grouper was formerly known as the Jewfish until 2001 when the American Fisheries Society (AFS) determined that the name was culturally insensitive and adopted the name that is used today.

Adult goliath groupers have small spots in the fins, body and head and are typically olive, gray or brownish yellow in color. Goliath groupers are opportunistic ambush predators that feed on a variety of food items. This grouper primarily feeds on crustaceans such as crabs, shrimp and spiny lobster. Other prey items include octopus, juvenile sea turtles, gastropods, and a variety of fish such as hardhead catfish, stingray and parrotfish.

The goliath grouper is the second largest member of the grouper family and one of the largest reef fish on earth. An adult goliath grouper can weigh as much as 800 pounds and reach 8.2 feet in length. These fish can live more than 35 years and are slow growers. On average they grow approximately four inches per year until age six, then growth declines sharply to 1.2 inches per year until age 15 and down to 0.4 inches per year after age 25. Due to their slow growth rate, they take several years to reach sexual maturity. Males are



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANGELA COLLINS

considered sexually mature when they have reached a total length of 45.5 inches and are over seven years old, while females reach sexual maturity when they reach a length of 48.2 inches and are at least six years old.

It is believed that goliath grouper are making a comeback, but data is needed before any changes can be made to regulations and management. Due to this believed increase, Florida Sea Grant and Florida Fish and Wildlife have been hosting the Great Goliath Grouper Count (GGGC) since 2010. During this event every spring, volunteer divers go out and collect abundance and size data on any goliath grouper they encounter. This information has been helpful for management to understand if goliath grouper are making a comeback.

Louisiana Sea Grant is partnering with Florida Sea Grant to collect their own goliath grouper sightings. Off Louisiana, goliath grouper are most likely to be found on artificial reef structure like the oil rigs. Louisiana waters are warm enough for these amazing fish to show up in the warmer months. We expect that they might be spotted during spear diving, research, recreational diving or even shrimping activities. If you have ever seen a goliath grouper off the coast of Louisiana (state or federal waters), please let us know. You can report your sighting at <http://tinyurl.com/Ggrouper> or call (225) 578-0771.

– Tom Aepelbacher & Julie Lively

For more information on the Great Goliath Grouper Count, please visit

<https://www.flseagrant.org/news/2016/06/great-goliath-grouper-county-provides-fisheries-managers-stock-assessment-data/>

National Hunting and Fishing Day Events Set

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) will host National Hunting and Fishing Day (NHFD) events on Sept. 24 in Haughton, Woodworth and West Monroe. This year's event in Baton Rouge, however, has been cancelled.

The Baton Rouge NHFD event was set for the Waddill Outdoor Education Center. But the facility and surrounding businesses sustained damage during the historic flood that decimated parts of southern Louisiana.

“In addition to the flood damage, LDWF relies heavily on the generosity of volunteers from our agency and the community to host these NHFD events,” said Charlie Melancon, secretary of LDWF. “We believe those volunteer efforts would be better focused on the recovery tasks occurring in the Baton Rouge area.”

The department encourages the public to attend one of the three other NHFD events that it will host across the state, including:

Bodcau Wildlife Management Area

1700 Bodcau Dam Rd.
Haughton, Louisiana 71037
(318) 371-3050

Woodworth LDWF Outdoor Education Center

661 Robinson Bridge Road
Woodworth, Louisiana 71485
(318) 484-2276

Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Shooting Range

357 Sheriff Fewell Road
West Monroe, Louisiana 71291
(318) 343-4044

NHFD is a national event celebrated in 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 the nation's hunters and anglers.

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

NHFD events are free to the public. 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 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.

For more information about the event, visit www.wlf.louisiana.gov/nhfd2016

Recreational Red Snapper State Season

The state recreational red snapper season closed at 11:59 p.m. on Sept. 5, 2016. Preliminary estimates from the Louisiana Creel survey indicate that the LDWF's self-imposed quota of 1,116,732 pounds of red snapper for the private and charter sectors of the recreational fishery is projected to be harvested by Sept. 5, 2016. Closing the season in state waters avoids an overrun of the overall Gulf of Mexico recreational quota and allows the red snapper stock to continue rebuilding. The secretary of LDWF has the authority to re-open the recreational season, as has been done in previous years, for additional recreational harvest if finalized landings data indicate such harvest would be within conservation targets.

The state red snapper season, which opened on Jan. 8, allowed anglers an opportunity to harvest recreational red snapper for 242 days in state waters.

Fish Gear Coordinates- July 2016

In accordance with the provisions of R.S. 56:700.1 et. seq., notice is given that zero claims in the amount of zero dollars were received for payment during the period July 1-31, 2016. There were zero paid and zero denied.

Important Dates & Upcoming Events

Sept. 22, 2016 – Louisiana's 2017 Coastal Master Plan Modeling Update #3 – Webinar 9am-12pm.

To join the event, please register at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4106531170282292737>

Oct. 6, 2016 – Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Commission October Meeting

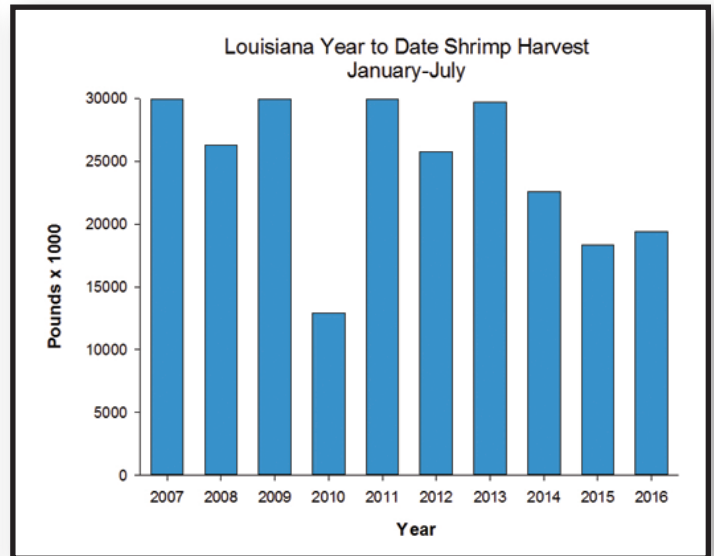
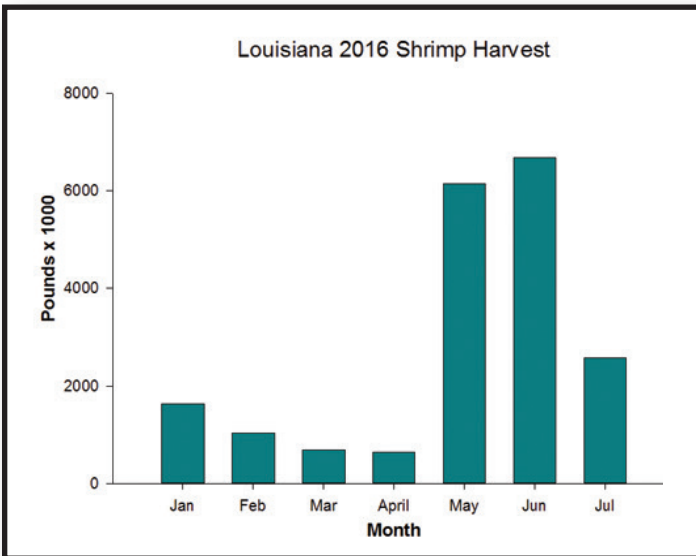
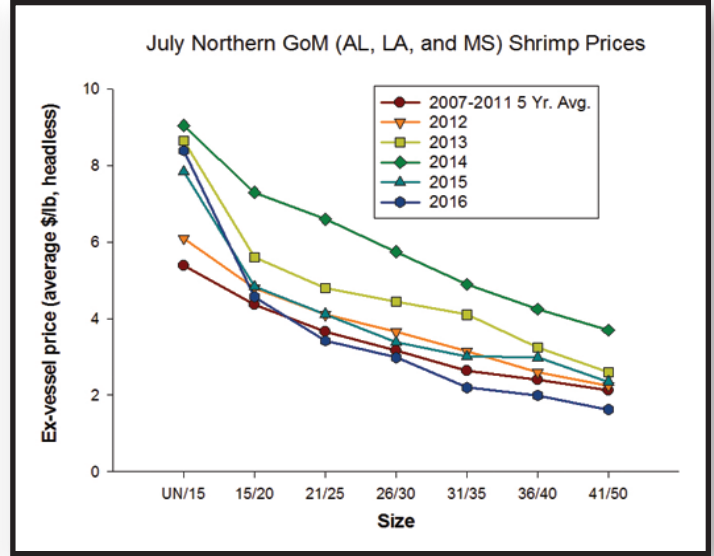
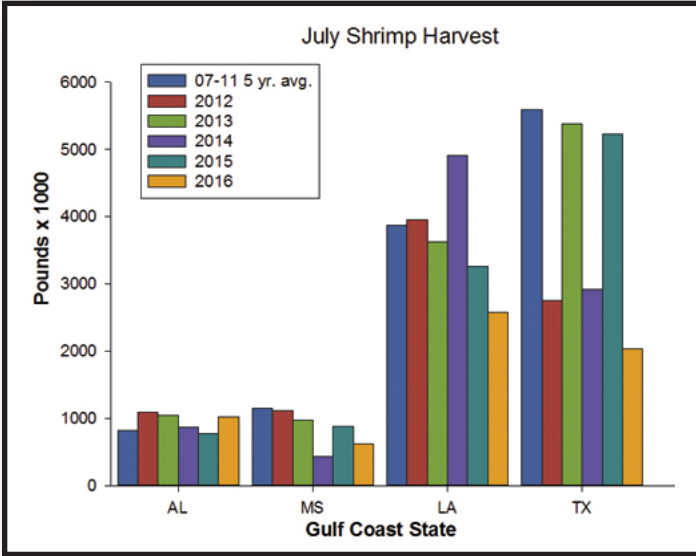
Oct. 17-21, 2016 – Gulf Fishery Management Council, IP Casino & Resort, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, MS 39530, 228-436-3000

Oct. 11-14, 2016 – Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Fall Meeting, New Orleans,
www.gsmfc.org/pubs/Mtg_Notice_10-16.pdf

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



THE GUMBO POT

CEDAR PLANK REDFISH

Recipe courtesy of *Louisiana Kitchen & Culture*.

For more recipes or to subscribe to their magazine or free newsletter, please visit <http://louisiana.kitchenandculture.com/>



Ingredients:

6 untreated cedar planks (8 to 10 inches long)
 ½ c. olive oil
 6-ounce fillets of fresh fish (redfish, speckled trout, or salmon work the best)
 2 tbsp. Creole seasoning
 3 Creole tomatoes
 1 c. basil pesto
 ½ c. balsamic syrup

Chef Sclafani's Basil Pesto:
 ¼ c. grated Parmesan cheese
 ¼ c. grated Pecorino Romano
 1/3 c. toasted pine nuts
 2 c. packed fresh basil leaves
 ¼ c. fresh Italian parsley
 2 tsp. chopped garlic
 ½ tsp. sea salt
 ¼ tsp. fresh ground black pepper
 ½ c. olive oil

Method:

Soak the cedar planks in water for at least an hour before grilling; planks may be reused several times. You should be able to find inexpensive untreated planks at your local hardware store. Preheat grill.

Brush each plank with olive oil. Season the fish on both sides with Creole seasoning; lay the fish in the center of the planks. Cut the tomato in half, lay it on its side and cut into thin slices. Lay the tomatoes shingle-style over the fish, covering the flesh of the fish. Set the plank in the center of the grill and cover immediately. Cook for about 15 minutes or until the fish is cooked and flaky. There will be a bit of smoke but this is from the plank smoldering. Serve the plank on a plate and drizzle with pesto and balsamic syrup.

For the Basil Pesto:

In a small saucepan blanch the basil and parsley in boiling, salted water for 10 seconds. Remove from water and place in an ice bath to stop cooking. Drain and pat dry on paper towels. In the bowl of a food processor, combine the basil, parsley, cheese, pine nuts, garlic, salt, and pepper. Purée on high speed. Slowly add the oil through the feed tube and process until a smooth paste forms.

**Be sure to visit the *Lagniappe* blog for
 additional news and timely events between issues.
<https://louisianalagniappe.wordpress.com/>**

Lagniappe Fisheries Newsletter

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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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