



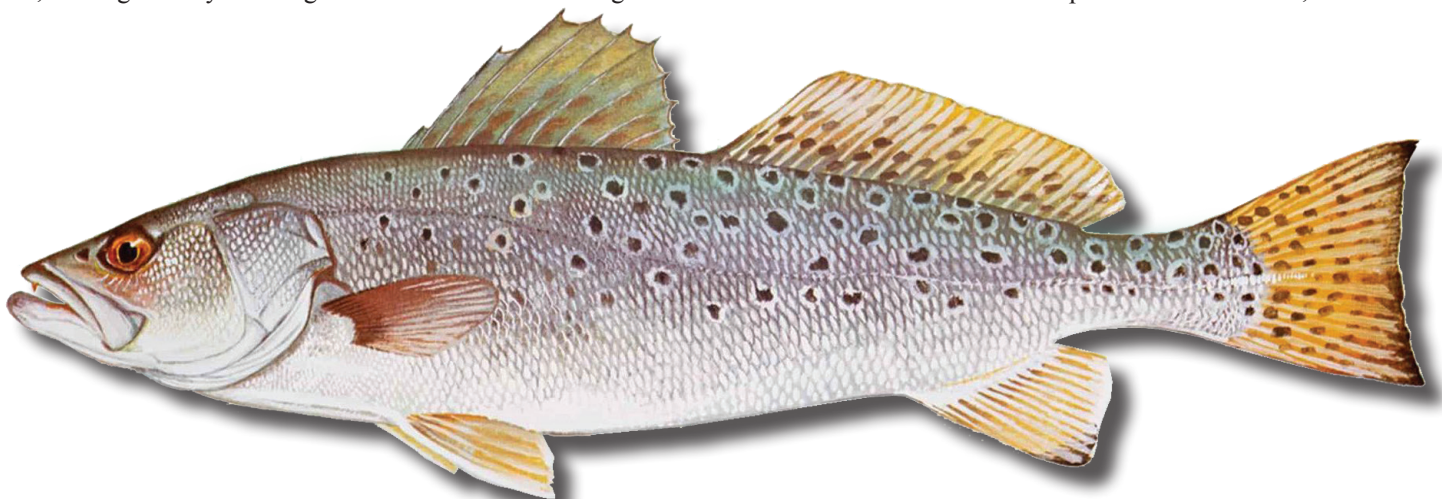
Spotted Seatrout

Often called “specks” due to the numerous dark spots they have on their upper back, spotted seatrout (*Cynoscion nebulosus*) are a popular game fish. These fish can be identified by their elongated bodies, elevated back and long pointed heads with the lower jaw extending beyond the upper. They have silvery gray or greenish color on the upper sides of their bodies, along with an iridescent sheen of light blue or purple on the upper back. The average size of an adult seatrout is about 14 inches long and weighing around one to four pounds; however, there have been records of fish caught measuring over 28 inches long and weighing up to 12 pounds.

Ranging from Cape Cod to the Gulf of Mexico, spotted seatrout are found most commonly in upper estuaries. They favor locations where there are discontinuities in the current, such as mouths of water bodies, gullies, trenches or bends. Seatrout don't like hard bottoms and are often found near sea grass and salt marshes with flowing waters. Spotted seatrout often spend their summers in high-salinity waters close to the gulf, and their winters in low-salinity waters near the shore. When young, seatrout can be seen traveling in schools of up to 50 fish but begin to move and hunt solo after about 25-weeks-old. This species spends most of their entire life in or near the estuary where they were spawned, with most tagged fish being found within a mile of where they were originally tagged.

The spawning season for spotted seatrout is from mid-April to September, with both females and males moving closer to shore to spawn and release eggs. Sexual maturity is around 12 inches for females and varying smaller sizes for males. Water temperature and salinity levels play a role in the locations the fish chose to spawn in, making estuaries ideal places for the females to release their eggs. The number of eggs released during each spawning season increases as the female grows older, going from 66,000 eggs at age one to 354,000 eggs by age five. The males produce a drumming sound to attract females and fertilize the eggs as the female releases them. The eggs hatch 18 hours after fertilization, and the fish take refuge in bottom vegetation and shell. At six to eight weeks old, the fish are about two inches long and can reach up to eight inches long by one year.

Seatrout are quick and aggressive ambush predators, making short lunges to capture and swallow their prey whole using their large front canine teeth and smaller lower teeth to hold onto prey. Males often gather in schools to feed with the incoming tide, feeding in early morning hours and at times of strong current flow. Their diet consists of shrimp and other small fish, such



as pinfish, anchovies and croakers. Seatrout have a few primary predators, such as sharks, bottlenose dolphin and large birds. The average life span of the fish is eight to 12 years, with males only living up to five years. Older and larger fish have been found to harbor an internal parasite popularly known as spaghetti worms, but these worms don't seem to harm to the fish. Although visually unappealing, these parasites do not harm humans either and can be taken out while cleaning or cooking the fish.

The best method to catch seatrout is with free-line live shrimp near the bottom to entice the fish out of the grass. Attaching a cork will also allow the bait to drift over the grass beds, preventing the hook from getting snagged on bottom debris. The current limits for speckled seatrout in Louisiana are 25 daily per person-bag, or 15 daily per person with no more than two fish over 25 inches. The minimum length is 12 inches for every fish.

– Skylar Bueche

For more information:

[Aspects of the Biology of the Spotted Seatrout, *Cynoscion nebulosus*, in Mississippi](#), Robin M. Overstreet, Gulf Research Reports, 1983.

[The Reproductive Biology of Spotted Seatrout, *Cynoscion nebulosus*](#), Along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Nancy J. Brown-Peterson and James W. Warren, Gulf of Mexico Science, 2001.

[The Spotted Seatrout Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico, United States: A Regional Management Plan](#), Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, March 2001. Includes an detailed and extensive biological description of spotted seatrout.

A Boater's Guide to Handling Oil and Fuel Spills

With the start of the summer season, we hope you are enjoying time on the water. With that in mind, we have created a Gulf-wide waterproof one-page guide on how to prepare for and respond to an accidental oil or fuel spill on your own vessel. This fact sheet will tell you what products to have in place to prevent and/or contain leaking oil and which authorities to call for help in every Gulf state – <http://masgc.org/oilscience/oil-spill-science-boaters-guide.pdf>.

Want to help us spread the word? Email Emily Maung-Douglass (edouglass@lsu.edu) at Louisiana Sea Grant if you would like to order hard copies of this or any of our other outreach publications in bulk for distribution.

Twilley Honored by Environmental Law Institute

Louisiana Sea Grant executive director Robert Twilley is the recipient of the 2017 National Wetlands Award for Science Research from the Environmental Law Institute (ELI). He received his award in a ceremony in Washington, D.C., on May 18 at the U.S. Botanic Gardens.

“(Robert) is a world-class wetlands researcher who has been conducting vital research for 35-plus years focused on some of the most impressive global wetland ecosystems,” said John White, who nominated Twilley for the award. “He has conducted research on submerged aquatic vegetation beds in the Chesapeake Bay, on mangrove forests in the southwest Florida Everglades and had participated in both scientific and management positions related to the massive coastal wetland losses of the Mississippi River Delta,” added White, a professor in the College of the Coast and Environment at Louisiana State University.

Over his career, Twilley has produced 150 peer review publications, which generated hundreds of citations. Of note, his work includes the first global carbon budget and a blue carbon value of mangroves. As a defender of wetlands and a leader in wetland science, he has pioneered a variety of research partnerships, collaborations and outreach projects. He has also testified in several U.S. House and Senate subcommittee hearings and delivered briefings to a variety of other departments in the U.S. government.

Twilley earned his B.S. and M.S. degrees from East Carolina University in biology. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Florida in plant ecology/systems ecology. He is a professor in the Department of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences at LSU, and was named Louisiana Sea Grant College Program executive director in 2012.

Now in its 28th year, the National Wetlands Awards has recognized more than 200 individuals from across the country for their exceptional and innovative contributions to wetland conservation. With its non-partisan, independent approach, ELI promotes solutions to tough environmental problems. The Institute's unparalleled research and highly respected publications inform the public debate and build the institutions needed to advance sustainable development. For more information on other 2017 National Wetlands Award winners, visit <http://elinwa.org/2017-national-wetlands-awards-winners>.

LOUISIANA MANAGEMENT

Pilot Program for Management of Red Snapper in State, Federal Waters

An innovative pilot program is beginning by Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) designed to help recreational anglers. The two-year pilot program will incorporate the use of handheld technology to produce real-time data on what anglers are catching. Additionally, anglers won't have to fish their limit during a particular season. They will be able chose what days are best for them to go fishing.

Gov. John Bel Edwards, who has consistently supported state management of Gulf waters, said, "I asked Wildlife and Fisheries to develop a program that could eventually lead to Louisiana controlling red snapper fishing, even in what is determined to be federal waters. This pilot program could not come soon enough as the federal government has limited anglers to just three days to fish red snapper this year."

LDWF Secretary Jack Montoucet said, "Just like the governor, we have heard from anglers across Louisiana and it is clear what they want most is the flexibility to fish for red snapper when it makes sense for them and their families. So we are going to test a new way of doing this. Instead of using a season, we are going to try giving fishermen a set number of red snapper that they can catch in federal waters and ask them to record that data on their smartphone."

The pilot program – to be in operation in 2018-2019 – is the linchpin of LDWF's Exempted Fishing Permit Application for State Management Pilot Project (or EFP). It has been delivered to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and is expected to be deliberated by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council at its next meeting in June.

Here's how the EFP program will work. There will be 150 study participants selected by random drawing and subsequently contacted by e-mail. They will have the choice of accepting or refusing to participate. If that angler declines, then another one will be chosen at random. The participants would be able to catch 25,000 pounds of red snapper per year. The anglers would have to abide by the federal size limit. The EFP program would have no daily bag limit and the total limit per EFP participant would be determined by the number of fish allocated to each participant

What this program is attempting is several fold, Montoucet said. "We are trying to show we can scientifically monitor the red snapper caught in the federal waters, provide anglers with more days of access to the fish and allow them to make larger catches. And most importantly, the state wants to show that we can use state-of-the-art-technology to safely control the red snapper population on our own."

Participants in the pilot program will be recording the fish they catch and throw back on their smart phone and with that real-time data. Using that information, LDWF will ask the federal government to increase the amount fish allotted to private anglers in the future.

GULF OF MEXICO MANAGEMENT

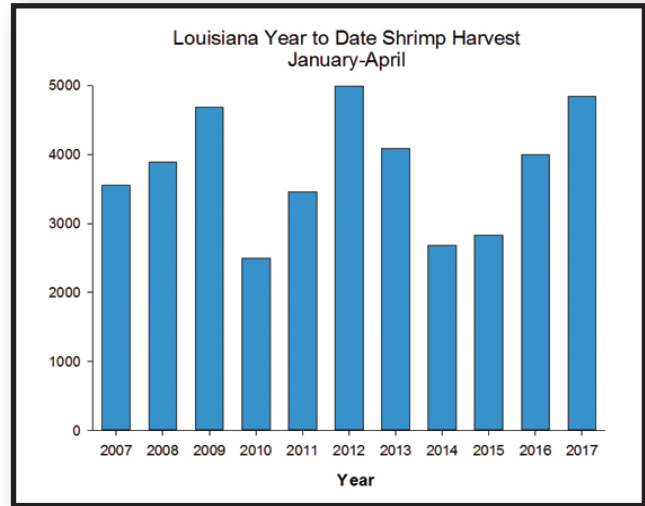
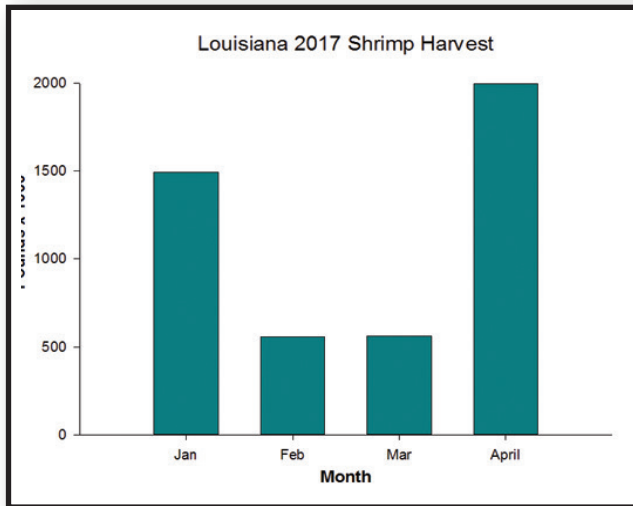
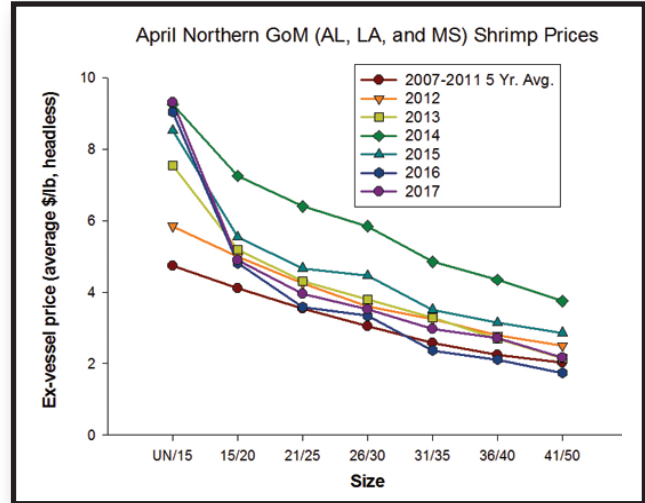
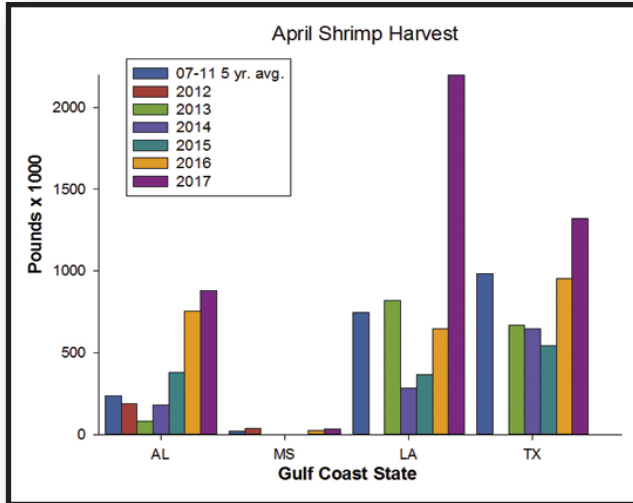
The Latest Edition of Gulf Fishery News is now Available Online

The spring edition of the Gulf Council Fishery News is now available with stories on the 2017 Federal Red Snapper Season, the council website redesign, regulations changes, actions awaiting implementation and future stock assessments. The newsletter can be found at http://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Newsletter_Spring-2017.pdf?x98733.

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



Important Dates & Upcoming Events

May 26, 2017 – Commercial King Mackerel season closed in Louisiana waters

June 13-16, 2017 – LDWF Kids Fishing Day Camp at Woodworth Outdoor Education Center

THE GUMBO POT

BAKED STUFFED FLOUNDER

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:

½ cup chopped celery	½ pound crabmeat
½ cup chopped green onions with tops	2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 clove garlic, minced	½ pound shrimp, boiled and chopped
¾ cup butter, in all	1 egg, slightly beaten
1½ cups moistened unseasoned croutons	salt, pepper, and cayenne pepper to taste
	4 medium sized flounder, washed, scaled, with heads removed

Method:

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Sauté celery, onions, and garlic in ¼ cup butter over low heat. Add bread cubes, shrimp, crabmeat, parsley, and egg. Mix well. Season to taste with salt, black and cayenne pepper. Set aside. Split thick side of flounder lengthwise and crosswise forming a cross; loosen meat from bone to form pocket for stuffing. Melt ¼ cup butter; brush fish well with melted butter, salt and pepper.

Fill pockets with seafood stuffing mixture. Melt remaining ¼ cup butter in shallow baking pan. Place fish in pan, making sure not to overlap. Cover and bake for 25 minutes, until fish flakes easily with a fork. Remove cover and bake another 5 minutes. Serve at once.

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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