



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2012 Mississippi Shrimp Season Opens to Good Reports

BILOXI, Miss.— Despite windy conditions and choppy seas, shrimp effort increased on opening day of Mississippi’s shrimp season, which began at 6 a.m., May 30, 2012, one of the earliest shrimp season openings on record. Shrimp season opens in Mississippi territorial waters when sampling confirms shrimp have reached the 68-count-per-pound state statute requirement.

According to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources’ (MDMR) Shrimp and Crab Bureau’s aerial survey, 210 shrimp boats were counted in Mississippi waters, compared to 162 boats observed last year. There were 100 boats between Horn Island and Belle Fontaine, 40 off of Long Beach, 36 inside Ship Island and about a dozen boats near the Mississippi-Alabama and Mississippi-Louisiana lines. Other lone boats were scattered along the coast.

“Good reports are coming in from shrimp fishermen near Horn Island,” said Traci Floyd, director of MDMR’s Shrimp and Crab Bureau. “Many boats are catching 31/35- and 36/40-count shrimp there, some up to 200 pounds per drag. We are very pleased to receive favorable catch reports and to see an increase in opening day effort. It is a reflection that more of our shrimpers, despite past obstacles, are again able to participate in the time honored tradition of providing Gulf fresh shrimp for all of us to enjoy.”

Average numbers of 36/40- and 40/50-count shrimp have been reported east of the Gulfport Ship Channel. From the west, north of Cat Island, shrimp fishermen reported catching 40/50- and 50/60-count brown shrimp in good numbers.

MDMR’s Marine Patrol was out on the waters starting at 4:30 a.m. May 30 with 12 boats, 31 officers, and two dispatchers to help ensure a smooth shrimp season opening.

“Shrimp effort was up on opening day and although the winds picked up as the morning progressed we didn’t experience any calls for rescue; everything went pretty smooth,” said Col. Walter Chataginer, Chief of Enforcement of MDMR’s Marine Patrol. “All shrimp boats checked were in compliance with state regulations. Marine Patrol officers are diligently checking for TED [turtle excluder device] violations; all TEDs checked have been in compliance.”

For the new license year, from April 1 through May 30, 2012 to date, the number of resident commercial shrimp licenses sold was 396 and the number for out-of-state was 113.

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Recreational and commercial shrimp season will close at midnight, Dec. 31, 2012, north of the Intracoastal Waterway, and at midnight, April 30, 2013, south of the Intracoastal Waterway. Live-bait shrimping is open year round.

For the latest updates on the Mississippi shrimp fishery, call the toll-free Shrimp Information Hotline at 1-866-We Trawl (866-938-7295). For further information call the MDMR at 228-374-5000, or write to the Department of Marine Resources, 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, MS 39530.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.

PHOTO CREDITS: Photos Courtesy of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources



Photo A: Some first-time opening day shrimpers proudly display their nice 16/20 and larger white shrimp at The Point in Pascagoula.



Photo B: A mixed bag of 16/20-count white shrimp and 50/60- and 60/70-count brown shrimp were caught this morning near the mouth of the Pascagoula River.



Photo C: Shrimp effort increased on opening day of Mississippi's 2012 shrimp season, with favorable catch reports coming in from shrimpers.



Photo D: MDMR's aerial survey of shrimp boats found that 210 shrimp boats were out on opening day, an increase of 48 boats over last year.

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