



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2013 Mississippi Shrimp Season Opens to Large Shrimp, Small Catches

BILOXI, Miss.—The 2013 Mississippi shrimp season opened at 6 a.m., June 11, 2013, to beautiful weather and beautiful shrimp but small numbers, based on early reports from shrimp fishermen. 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, shrimp effort increased on opening day, with 250 shrimp boats counted in Mississippi waters, compared to 210 boats observed last year. Boats were concentrated north of East Ship Island (60 there) and scattered along the shoreline mostly to the east.

As predicted based on intensive sampling prior to the season opening, heavy rains in April and May that reduced salinities contributed to smaller catches reported earlier this morning. Early harvest reports were less favorable (50-60 count brown shrimp, 70-90 lbs per 1 hour trawl) for those shrimpers who ventured further away from the Biloxi Channel area where the majority of the fleet worked. Best catches were reported from the Biloxi Channel area where shrimpers brought in nice 40-50 count brown shrimp in small numbers (100 lbs per 1 hour trawl).

"The opening of shrimp season is an integral part of our culture here on the coast and greatly contributes to our economy. I appreciate the dedication of our fishermen and look forward to enjoying the fresh, gulf shrimp they provide," said MDMR Executive Director Jamie Miller, who was out with Marine Patrol at the start of opening day observing Marine Patrol officers boarding shrimp boats and conducting compliance and safety checks.

"Some late morning and early afternoon shrimpers' reports told of abundance picking up south of Deer Island and north of Ship Island as the day progressed, with hauls of at least 300 lbs of 40-50 count shrimp per trawl," said Traci Floyd, MDMR Shrimp and Crab Bureau Director. "Things could improve for our hard-working shrimpers as night falls, when brown shrimp become more active."

MDMR's Marine Patrol was out on the waters starting at 4 a.m. June 11 with 8 boats, 20 officers, three reserve officers and two dispatchers to help ensure a smooth shrimp season opening.

Shrimp effort was up on opening day and the weather cooperated for the first time in a few years. Everything went smoothly," said Lt. Col. Rusty Pittman, Interim Chief of Enforcement of MDMR's Marine Patrol. "Most shrimp boats checked were in compliance; but we did have eight violations, which resulted in eight citations: five for state violations and three for federal. The three federal violations dealt with TEDs (turtle excluder devices)."

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Since April 30, 2013, the number of resident commercial shrimp licenses sold was 380 and the number of non-resident commercial was 101. There were 93 recreational shrimp licenses sold.

Recreational and commercial shrimp season will close at midnight, Dec. 31, 2013, north of the Intracoastal Waterway, and at midnight, April 30, 2014, 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 1: Aerial photo shows concentration of shrimp boats working north of Ship Island.



Photo 2: An opening day haul is pulled in.



Photo 3: A shrimpers trawls in the western sound.



Photo 4: Shrimp boats congregate south of Deer Island where catches were favorable on opening day.



Photo 5: With his net in the water, a shrimper tries his luck south of Deer Island.



Photo 6: A shrimper trawls south of Gulfport on opening day of shrimp season.

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