



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

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News Release

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15-38-MMS
June 3, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Boats fill MS Sound for start of shrimp season

BILOXI, Miss. – More than 300 boats filled the Mississippi Sound before sunrise Wednesday, as shrimpers waited for 6 a.m. to lower their trawls into the water and begin this year's shrimp season.

"The opening day of shrimp season is something our scientists prepare for all year," said Jamie Miller, executive director of MDMR. "It's part of the culture of the Coast, with generations of fishermen working hard to provide our state and region with fresh, Gulf shrimp. It's also a large part of this area's economy because it provides shrimpers a way to make a living and helps draw tourists."

Horace Cruthirds of Gulfport took out his recreational boat early Wednesday and was catching shrimp south of the Gulfport Harbor.

"It's going to be good," he said of this year's shrimp season. "I was raised on a trawl boat. This isn't the way I make my living, but I do come out here to catch shrimp and have fun."

An aerial survey showed 310 shrimp vessels were observed working in Mississippi waters Wednesday. The heaviest concentrations were 42 boats east of Deer Island, 25 south of Deer Island, 41 south of the Broadwater, 36 northeast of Horn Island and 28 southwest of Long Beach.

"We communicated with several boats that reported decent catches of 40-50/50-60-count brown shrimp between Deer and Horn islands," said Rick Burris, director of MDMR's Shrimp and Crab Bureau. "We also had reports of 50-60s and even some 36-40s west of the Gulfport Ship Channel. The unfortunate side for these guys is the large volume of shrimp already on the market is driving the price of our Mississippi shrimp way down."

MDMR announced last week that shrimp season would begin June 3. Shrimp season opens in Mississippi territorial waters when MDMR sampling confirms shrimp have reached the required legal size of 68-count per pound.

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.

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