

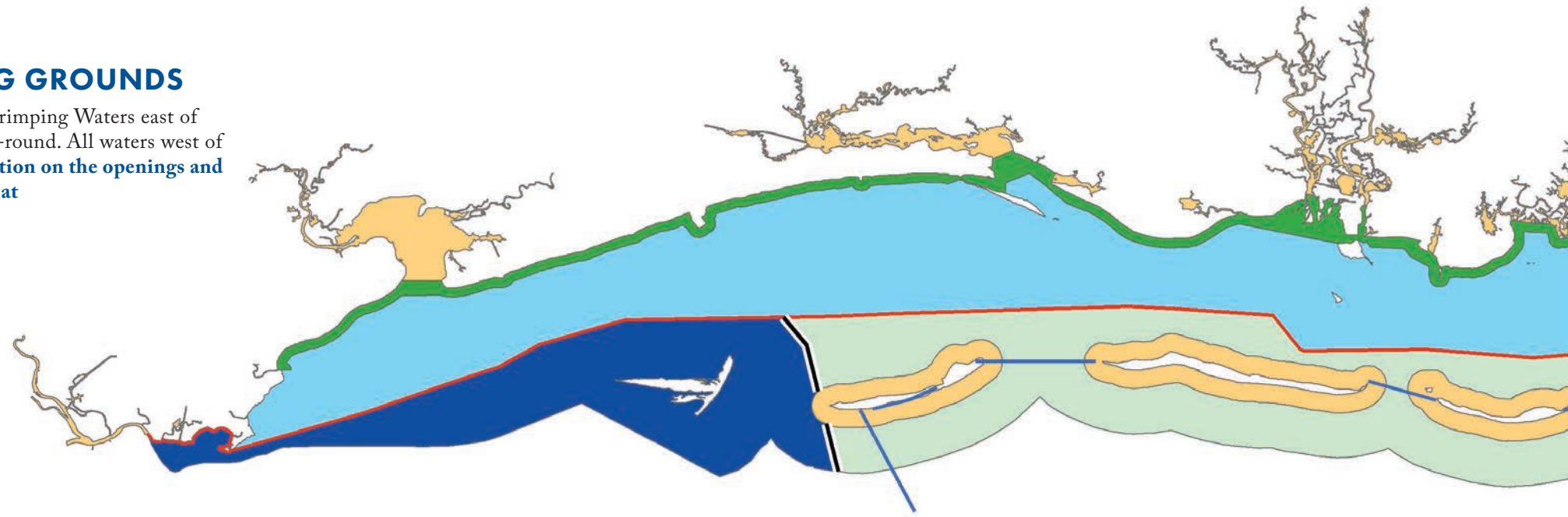
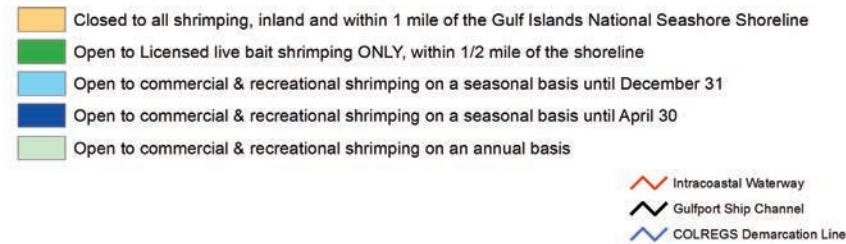
SHRIMPING *the* SOUND

A newsletter from the Shrimp and Crab Bureau at the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources



MISSISSIPPI INSHORE AND TERRITORIAL SEAS SHRIMPING GROUNDS

State Law (MS CODE 49-15-64.1) was amended in March 2017 to allow all Mississippi Territorial Shrimping Waters east of the Gulfport Ship Channel (GPT) and south of the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) to remain open year-round. All waters west of GPT and south of the ICW will continue to close annually on May 1. **For the most up to date information on the openings and closings of Mississippi's Shrimping Waters, please call the Mississippi Shrimp Information Hotline at (866) WE-TRAWL (866-938-7295).**



MDMR BEGINS SAMPLING FOR THE ANNUAL OPENING OF BROWN SHRIMP SEASON

The MDMR Shrimp and Crab Bureau, along with the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory's (GCRL) Center for Fisheries Development, began extensive sampling for brown shrimp in the Mississippi Sound in April 2017. The sampling is necessary for MDMR's fisheries scientists to determine the exact date for the opening of the 2017 shrimp season. GCRL pulls plankton tows in the Back Bay looking for brown shrimp post larvae, while MDMR staff pulls trawls coastwide to find juvenile and adult brown shrimp. In order for a shrimp to be of legal size (68 count), it must be approximately 100 mm or 3.94 inches long. The brown shrimp season's opening date can be determined when the majority of the shrimp are of that legal size. Environmental factors such as salinity, water temperature, rainfall and moon phase are also considered when setting the opening of the season. It has been found that the optimum growing conditions for brown shrimp occur when the salinities are above 10 parts per thousand (ppt) and water temperatures are greater than 68 degrees Fahrenheit (°F).

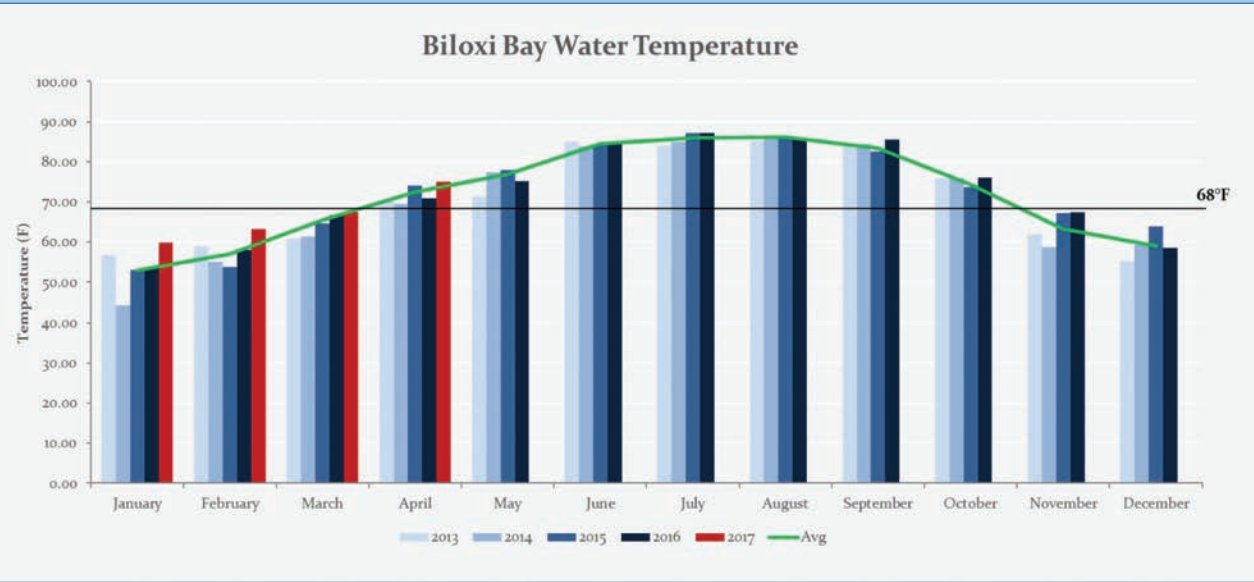


Figure 1. Biloxi Bay Water Temperature (January-April 2017)

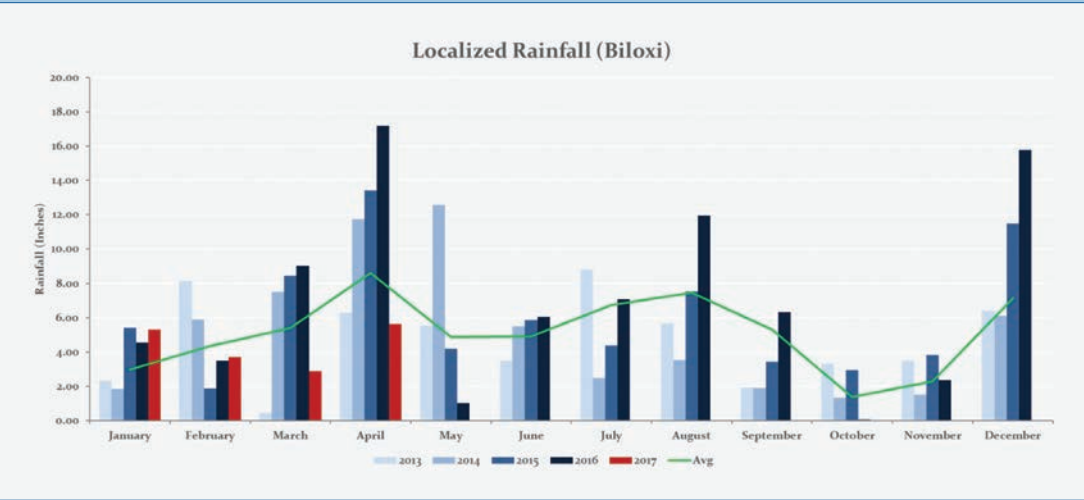


Figure 2. Monthly Rainfall for Biloxi Bay (January-April 2017)

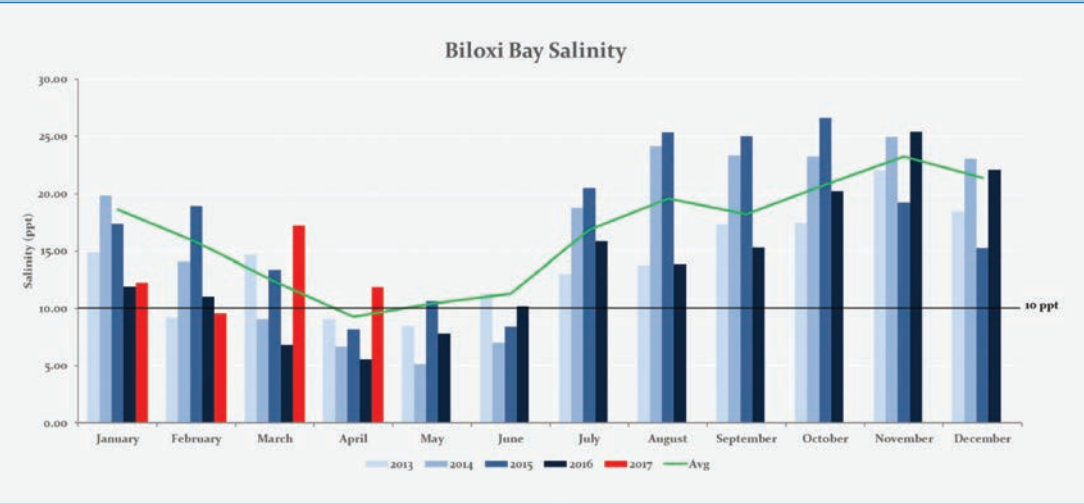


Figure 3. Biloxi Bay Salinity (January-April 2017)

REQUIRED FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN TRIP TICKET MONTHLY SUBMISSION FORM

A Fresh Product Permit (free permit) is required if you sell your catch to anyone other than a licensed seafood dealer or processor and/or transport your catch out of state. This is a reminder that while in possession of a Fresh Product Permit you must submit a Monthly Submission Form (see example on page 4) by the 10th of the following month indicating the number of trips taken, even if that number is zero. If you sell your catch to anyone other than a licensed seafood dealer or processor, and/or transport your catch out of state, you must fill out a trip ticket for each trip and send it in with your Monthly Submission Form. The important landing information you submit is strictly confidential and can only be viewed by you and employees of the MDMR designated as information confidentiality port reporters. Your reports are valuable to fisheries managers. The regulatory authority is provided below.

TITLE 22 PART 09 - RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR STATISTICAL REPORTING AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF STATISTICAL DATA FOR MARINE FISHERIES IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

CHAPTER 05 FRESH PRODUCT PERMIT/SECONDARY FRESH PRODUCT PERMIT

100 A licensed commercial fisherman may only sell to a seafood dealer/processor. A validly licensed commercial fisherman may sell only their catch to a consumer if they have in their possession a fresh product permit obtained from the MDMR. A secondary fresh product permit may be obtained from the MDMR for a commercial fisherman's spouse or family member that will allow them to sell their catch to consumers while the commercial fisherman continues to fish. There will be no fee for this permit

CHAPTER 06 SEAFOOD REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

100 Each seafood dealer/processor is hereby required to complete Mississippi trip tickets provided by the MDMR. Commercial fishermen, who sell their catch to individuals other than a Mississippi dealer/processor or transport their catch out-of-state, are hereby required to complete Mississippi trip tickets provided by the MDMR and be in possession of a fresh product permit. A completed Mississippi trip ticket is only required for the initial point of sale of the seafood product. All trip tickets shall be returned to the MDMR or electronically submitted on or before the 10th of each month for actual transactions from every commercial fisherman during the preceding month. A trip ticket summary form that states the total trips taken in a given month shall be submitted by the 10th of each month by the seafood dealer/processor or commercial fisherman.

CHAPTER 13 SECTION 100 PENALTIES

Any unlawful act under this Part committed by any person, firm, or corporation shall be deemed a violation of the provisions of this Part and shall constitute a misdemeanor and upon conviction, said person shall be punished in accordance with Mississippi Code Ann. § 49.15.63, as amended, unless a penalty is specifically provided elsewhere in the Mississippi Code Ann. of 1972, as amended.

If you have any questions or need help, please contact the Trip Ticket Office at 228-374-5000.

EXAMPLE

TRIP TICKET
MONTHLY SUBMISSION FORM
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Trip Ticket Coordinator
1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, MS 39530
(228) 374-5000 or (800) 374-3449

This report must be submitted monthly in order to comply with the requirements of MS Title 22 Part 9 and rules and regulations adopted pursuant to those statutes. Completed trip tickets for the time period should accompany this form. DO NOT STAPLE TRIP TICKETS.

USE BLUE OR BLACK INK ONLY

Fresh Product or Dealer License Number

License No.

1	0	0	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Current Date:

0	6
---	---

 /

0	4
---	---

 /

1	5
---	---

Reporting Period

From:

0	5
---	---

 /

0	1
---	---

 /

1	5
---	---

To:

0	5
---	---

 /

3	1
---	---

 /

1	5
---	---

No of tickets

0				
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By signing this document I hereby certify the following:

the attached trip tickets represent all transactions of fish and shellfish obtained from anyone other than a licensed dealer for the reporting period described above.

all records (receipts) submitted in this report constitute all transactions required to be reported by law.

all the attached information is accurate and accounts for all actual business transactions required to be submitted in this report.

I understand that providing false information may result in criminal consequences.

PRINT
Dealer/Processor or
Fisherman Name:

John Doe

SIGNATURE
Licensed
Dealer/Processor or
Fisherman:

John Doe

[illegible]

Trip Ticket examples

HAVE YOU CAUGHT ANY ASIAN TIGER SHRIMP?

Asian Tiger Shrimp (*Penaeus monodon*) is an invasive species because exotic shrimp, such as the tiger shrimp, may pose environmental threats, such as spreading disease, aggression toward native shrimp and competition for food and habitat.

CHARACTERISTICS

- Distinct dark and light “tiger” striped pattern along their shell
- Can grow to more than 10 inches long and weigh more than a half-pound
- Smaller juveniles may occur in the bays and near the shore

HOW TO REPORT YOUR TIGER SHRIMP:

1. Write down the trawl information
 - Captain's name and/or vessel name
 - Date and time
 - Location (latitude and longitude)
 - Water depth
2. Freeze individual shrimp (with head on) in a separate Ziploc bag labeled with trawl information.
3. Arrange pick up with MDMR, 228.374.5000 or report.invasive@dmr.ms.gov.



▲ photo credit: Lauren Evans, Ecotao Enterprises

▲ photo credit: Captain Benjamin Lopez, F/V Lady Monica, by Tony Reisinger



MISSISSIPPI SHRIMP PROCESSORS WORKING WITH NATIONAL CAMPAIGN IN SUPPORT OF THE DOMESTIC SHRIMP INDUSTRY

What do Idaho potatoes, Florida oranges and Maine lobster have in common? The origin of these foods helped create iconic brands. Now, area shrimp processors are helping educate consumers and the food service industry about the domestic shrimp industry through the Wild American Shrimp marketing campaign.

In a wake of a sea of imported shrimp flooding the U.S. market and driving down prices, members of the American Shrimp Processors Association (ASPA) launched a campaign to promote the history and importance of the domestic shrimp industry and the superior qualities of Gulf and South Atlantic shrimp. The goals of the campaign are to bring a “face” to the domestic shrimp industry by profiling processors and their families and educating consumers and restaurants of the benefits of eating and serving this premium ingredient. Success means that as the Wild American Shrimp brand has grown, demand for Gulf shrimp increases, and prices and profits rise, which is good for everyone in the industry.

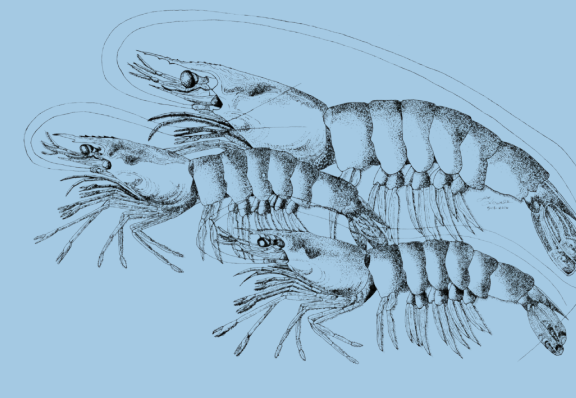
While shrimp remains the most popular seafood consumed in the U.S., approximately 90 percent are imported. The Wild American Shrimp campaign works to educate consumers to ask for, look for and buy domestic shrimp for their homes and in restaurants. Through a national public relations effort, social media marketing, print and online advertising, and promotions, the campaign educates people about the differences in imported shrimp and why buying domestic is so important. By telling the story of processors’ families and the history of the shrimp industry, a campaign theme emerged: “Every Shrimp Has A Tail, But Our Shrimp Have A Story.”

Some of the most successful marketing strategies for Wild American Shrimp have been harnessing the power of social media, a robust website, in-restaurant and grocery store promotions, and recruiting chefs and food writers to advocate for domestic shrimp suppliers.

The Wild American Shrimp’s Facebook page now has over 181,000 likes, monthly Twitter chats generate thousands of impressions and engagement is high on other platforms like Instagram and Pinterest. Through the website, americanshrimp.com, consumers can locate retailers who sell Wild American Shrimp, learn about proper ways to prepare, read profiles and history of the 30+ member processor businesses, and a lead generation tool for restaurants to source product. In 2016 alone, the website generated requests for over 2 million pounds of shrimp.

ASPA’s marketing firm, The Focus Group, has identified high end, independent restaurant groups in the Northeast and Midwest to develop special menus featuring Wild American Shrimp and promoting recipes developed by the chefs. A select group of high-profile chefs have been recruited and given the title of “Chef Advocate.” Currently, 31 chefs have this designation and include James Beard Award winners, Michelin star award-winning chefs, winners of regional and national seafood cooking competitions and those on the “Chefs to Watch” industry lists. ASPA uses these relationships to bring Gulf shrimp front-and-center at some of the best restaurants in the country.

To learn more about the American Shrimp Processors Association and the Wild American Shrimp marketing effort, visit americanshrimp.com or contact Dr. David Veal, ASPA Executive Director, at director@americanshrimp.com.



MISSISSIPPI SHRIMP PROCESSOR MEMBERS

Biloxi Freezing, Inc.
C.F. Gollott & Sons, Inc.
Golden Gulf Coast Packing
Gulf Pride Enterprises
M&M Processing, LLC
Ocean Springs Seafood
R.A. Lesso, Inc.

MISSISSIPPI CHEF ADVOCATES

John Curran, City Grocery Restaurant Group
David Dickensauge, Corks & Cleaver
Matthew Kajdan, Estelle Wine Bar and Bistro
Robert St. John, Crescent City Grill / Purple Parrot Cafe
Rob Stinson, Baja Beach / The Reef / Salute

MISSISSIPPI RESTAURANTS SERVING WILD AMERICAN SHRIMP (and featured on MS Seafood Trail)

303 Jefferson
1908 Provisions
Adventures’ Pub and Spirits
Bayview Gourmet
Bill’s Creole and Steak Depot
Blow Fly Inn
Branch Cocktail Bar
Bravo Italian Restaurant & Bar
Cameron’s Fish & Wine House
City Grocery
Costa Cucina
Crescent City Grill
Don’s Seafood
Elite
Ely’s
Fan and Johnny’s
Giardina’s
Half Shell Oyster House
Harbor View Café
Highlight’s Sports Bar & Grill
High Tide Café
Hotel Whiskey
J. Broussard’s
Jacks by the Tracks
Juju & Crista’s Shrimpboat Café
Kepler’s Italian Grill
Lil Ray’s Poboys & Seafood

Local 463 Urban Kitchen
Lou’s Full-Serv
Mary Mahoney’s Old French House
Mosaic Tapas Restaurant & Bar
Off the Hook
Purple Parrot Café
Rayner’s Seafood
Restaurant 1818
Rolling River Bistro
Scranton’s
Scrooge’s Restaurant and Pub
Snackbar Bistro
Snapper’s Seafood
Table 100
The Blind Tiger
The Caboose
The Castle Restaurant
The Cornerstone
The Dock Bar & Grill
The Manship
Thirty-Two
Tien
Tom’s Extreme Pizzeria
Trinity Lee Bayou Café
Walker’s Drive-In
Walnut Hills Restaurant
Weidmann’s

What new requirements are being proposed by NOAA Fisheries Service?

Why is NOAA Fisheries Service proposing new TED requirements?

Who would be affected by the proposed requirements in the southeastern shrimp fisheries?

Are the proposed TED requirements different than existing TED requirements for other vessels?

Where can I find information on the proposed requirements?

Did NOAA Fisheries Service analyze the effects of southeast shrimp fisheries on sea turtles and other endangered or threatened species?

What effect does the proposed rule have on observer requirements for skimmer trawl, pusher-head trawl and wing net (butterfly trawl) vessels?

For questions, please contact Michael Barnette at (727) 551-5794 or michael.barnette@noaa.gov.

Please note: The following form was developed for law enforcement as a means of capturing the most frequent TED violations and is not a comprehensive guide to the TED regulations. There are still ways to violate the regulations not specifically listed on the form. The form is shared with shrimpers as a courtesy; however fishermen need to follow all of the regulations - not just the boarding form. For full TED regulations contact your local NOAA office at (228) 762-4591.

GULF COUNCIL UPDATE - APRIL 2017

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council met in Birmingham, Alabama, April 3 - 6, 2017, to discuss a number of fishery issues. The following is a summary of the Council’s actions concerning the federal shrimp fishery:

SHRIMP


The Council approved the annual Texas shrimp closure for 2017. The closure is part of a cooperative seasonal closure with the State of Texas and runs concurrent with its mid-season closure. The shrimp fishery is closed annually off Texas to allow brown shrimp to reach a larger and more valuable size prior to harvest and to prevent waste of brown shrimp that might otherwise be discarded because of their small size. The Council took final action on Shrimp Amendment 17B.

THE COUNCIL SELECTED

aggregate maximum sustainable yield

112,531,374

POUNDS OF TAILS



aggregate optimum yield of

85,761,596

POUNDS OF TAILS

The Council also decided to allow **VESSELS POSSESSING SHRIMP TO TRANSIT FEDERAL WATERS** without a federal permit if their trawl doors and nets are out of the water and bag straps are removed



set a minimum threshold

1,072

ACTIVE SHRIMP PERMITS

The Council will convene a review panel to review the details of a permit pool if the **NUMBER OF PERMITS REACHES 1,175 PERMITS**

The amendment will be transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for approval and implementation.

CORAL AMENDMENT 7

The Council reviewed the summary of comments from the scoping workshops conducted on Coral Amendment 7, which considers designating protections for 15 priority deep-water coral areas in the Gulf of Mexico. The Council decided to move forward to develop an options paper for Coral Amendment 7, and initiate a new coral amendment that would address the remaining areas proposed by the coral scientists that are not included in Coral Amendment 7.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100 | Tampa, Florida 33607
(888) 833-1844 | gulfcouncil.org | facebook.com/gulfcouncil

2017 MARINE MAMMAL AUTHORIZATION CERTIFICATE

The shrimp fishery has been reclassified from a Category III to a Category II fishery under the Marine Mammal Protection Act by NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service. This means all commercial shrimp vessels must be registered and have an authorization certificate on-board. Commercial shrimpers with valid federal permits are automatically registered for the program. Commercial fishermen who believe they should be registered, but have not been or who want to verify they are registered in the NMFS Southeast Region, should contact the NMFS SERO MMAP Hotline at 727-209-5952.

For convenience, a copy of the certificate follows this article. More information can be found online at sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/protected_resources/marine_mammal_authorization_program/.

NOAA’s NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS)
2017 MARINE MAMMAL AUTHORIZATION CERTIFICATE

Authorization:

Pursuant to Section 118 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) (16 U.S.C. 1387), the implementing regulations at 50 CFR Part 229, and subject to the terms and conditions below, NMFS issues this Authorization Certificate, which, when presented in combination with a current and valid federal fishing permit, authorizes the taking of non-endangered marine mammals incidental to commercial fishing in Category I or II fisheries.

Terms and Conditions:

- All incidental mortality or injury of marine mammals occurring in the course of commercial fishing operations must be reported to NMFS within 48 hours after the end of each fishing trip in which the incidental mortality or injury occurred.
- This Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, must be on board the vessel during commercial fishing operations.
- Authorization Certificate holders must comply with any applicable take reduction plans and emergency regulations.
- If requested to do so by NMFS or a designated contractor providing observer services to NMFS, an Authorization Certificate holder must take aboard an observer to accompany the vessel on fishing trips.
- When necessary to deter a marine mammal from damaging fishing gear, catch, other private property, or from endangering personal safety, the vessel owner, operator, or crew members may use measures which do not result in serious injury or mortality of the animal, as required by the deterrence provisions of the MMPA.
- A marine mammal may not be intentionally killed in the course of commercial fishing operations except where imminently necessary in self-defense or to protect the life of a person in immediate danger. Such lethal taking must be reported to NMFS within 48 hours. Any marine mammal incidentally taken must be immediately returned to the sea unless NMFS directs otherwise.
- This Authorization Certificate, or copy, must be made available upon request to any state or federal enforcement agent authorized to enforce the MMPA, any designated agent of NMFS, or any contractor providing observer services to NMFS.
- This certificate is not transferable. In the event of a change in vessel ownership, the Authorization Certificate is void and a new Authorization Certificate must be obtained by the new owner.
- If the registered vessel is sold or destroyed or is replaced by a new designated vessel, an authorization must be obtained for the new vessel.
- Any person who violates these Terms and Conditions, regulations under 50 CFR Part 229, or any provisions of Section 118 of the MMPA shall be subject to the penalties set forth in the MMPA.
- If there are changes in your mailing address or vessel ownership, notify the NMFS Southeast Region Protected Resources Division at 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL, 33701, (727) 209-5952, within 30 days.
- This certificate is valid from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017



GULF SHRIMP HAVE VALUE BEYOND MARKET PRICES

By Bonnie A. Coblentz • MSU Extension Service

Wild-caught shrimp contribute millions of dollars to Mississippi’s economy each year, and experts say better flavor gives them a competitive advantage over imported and pond-raised shrimp.

Dave Burrage, Mississippi State University Extension Service fisheries specialist, said consumers who participate in blind taste tests tend to prefer the taste of wild-caught Gulf shrimp over that of pond-raised, imported products.

“Fresh Gulf shrimp get their distinctive flavor from their natural diet, as opposed to the artificial feed given to shrimp raised in captivity,” Burrage said. “If you have ever stood on the beach where waves are breaking and smelled the salt mist in the air, that is what fresh shrimp taste like.”

“Mississippi shrimpers have no trouble selling all they catch, as shrimp continue to be the leading seafood item consumed in the U.S.,” he said.

Ben Posadas, Extension seafood marketing specialist at the Coastal Research and Extension Center in Biloxi, said imported shrimp comprise about 90 percent of the total supply in the United States.

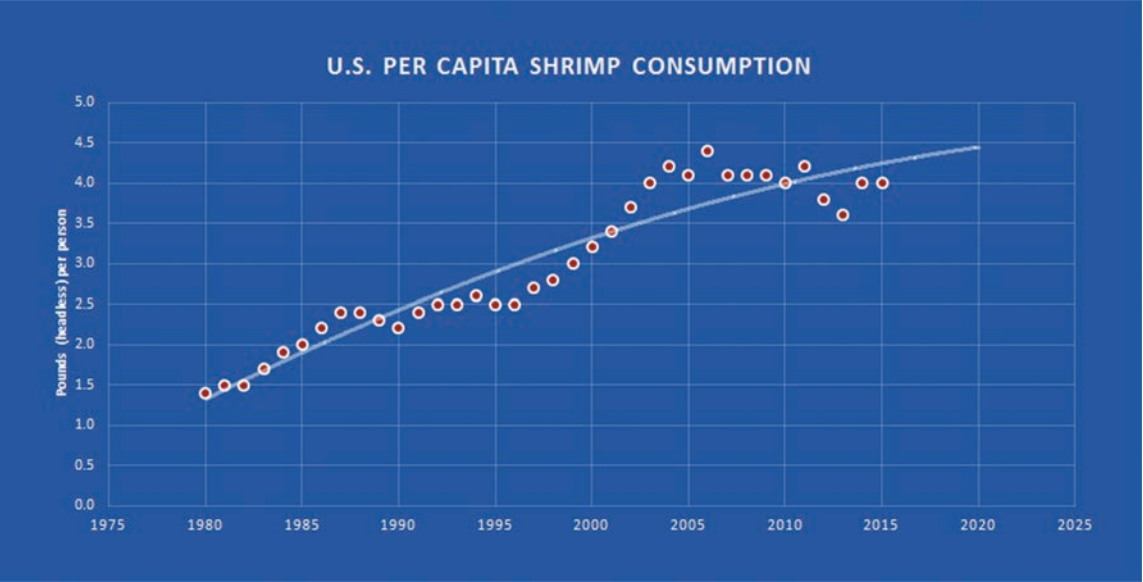
“Imports of shrimp have led to the continued decline in shrimp prices over time, since imported shrimp are cheaper,” Posadas said.

Imported shrimp are handled as commodities, while wild-caught Gulf shrimp can be handled and marketed as specialty products. India and Indonesia are the two largest importers of shrimp to the U.S.

“Large institutional buyers like restaurant chains prefer to buy from the commodities market,” Posadas said. “They buy cheaper shrimp, which are mostly imported.”

The shrimp industry in the Gulf of Mexico suffered two severe blows in recent years. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina destroyed much of the shrimp boat fleet and processing facilities along the Gulf Coast. In 2010, the massive Deepwater Horizon oil spill devastated the Gulf region.

“Fresh Gulf shrimp get their distinctive flavor from their natural diet, as opposed to the artificial feed given to shrimp raised in captivity.”



“Gulf marketing efforts have been geared toward restoring confidence in Gulf shrimp and in recovering our market share,” Posadas said.

Most Gulf shrimp are sold fresh, and buying local shrimp helps both the fishermen and the regional economy. Earl Ross is a retired shrimper who lives in Biloxi. He shrimped for about 25 years, and his last shrimp boat was the Lady Dizzy, which he harbored in Ocean Springs.

“Gulf shrimp are a better product,” Ross said. “They taste better than foreign shrimp and pond-raised prawns.”

Ross said until consumers recognize and value the flavor difference, wild-caught Gulf shrimp will continue to hold a small part of the market.

“Unfortunately, a lot of people are going to buy based just on price,” he said. “If they haven’t experienced the flavor of Gulf shrimp, they don’t know what they’re missing.”

The Gulf Coast Seafood organization promotes the wild-caught products of the Gulf of Mexico landed in Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana, Alabama and Florida.

“High in demand, the Gulf Coast produces 70 percent of the nation’s oysters, 69 percent of domestic shrimp and is a leading producer of domestic hard and soft-shell blue crabs,” the organization states on its website at eatgulfseafood.com. “And as pioneers in many commercial fishing practices, Gulf Coast seafood’s taste profile is superior because of the nutrient-rich environment found in the Gulf.”

The coalition focuses on expanding global market share for wild seafood from the Gulf of Mexico.

For more information contact Benedict Posadas, Ph.D., at ben.posadas@msstate.edu.



AUDUBON NATURE INSTITUTE’S GULF UNITED FOR LASTING FISHERIES

Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries (G.U.L.F.) is the sustainable seafood program out of Audubon Aquarium of the Americas in New Orleans. Over the last five years, G.U.L.F. has been dedicated to promoting and advancing the sustainability of Gulf of Mexico fisheries.

Despite the rigorous management of state and federal fisheries, many companies have developed strict sourcing policies for products and are now demanding third-party assurances of sustainability. To meet this need, G.U.L.F. verifies that the marine resources of the Gulf of Mexico are fished responsibly, recognizing the needs of the environment and the people who depend on that environment for their livelihood. Through our work with MDMR and local fishermen in Mississippi, we have developed programs to assist fisheries in meeting global best practices, give a voice to our fishing culture and economy and communicate the successes of our fisheries.

G.U.L.F.’S INITIATIVES:

G.U.L.F. Responsible Fisheries Management Certification – Seafood certification is valuable because it offers an objective and neutral assessment of a fishery. Third-party certification is increasingly a requirement for products in the national and global marketplace. Audubon G.U.L.F. has created a certification, called the G.U.L.F. Responsible Fisheries Management Certification, designed to meet the needs of Gulf of Mexico fisheries.

Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) – Many retailers recognize that fisheries may face challenges in achieving certification for a variety of reasons. FIPs provide a tool for fisheries not certified to demonstrate sustainable practices and define steps for the fishery to improve sustainability and potentially achieve certification in the future.

Tow the Time Campaign – In partnership with Louisiana Sea Grant, G.U.L.F. developed Tow Time decals for skimmer vessels as a visual reminder for the seasonal tow time restrictions.

WAYS TO BE INVOLVED IN SUSTAINABILITY:

SKIMMER TRAWLS	Display a Tow Time decal on your vessel. While this may seem simple and not necessary, it is an easy step to demonstrate the industry’s dedication and compliance with tow times until the results of the proposed rule for TEDs in skimmers is final.
OTTER TRAWLS	Schedule a courtesy gear check with MDMR, Sea Grant or NOAA’s Gear Monitoring Team. Each of these organizations will check your TED while the vessel is still at the dock and ensure it is fully compliant. There is no penalty associated with these courtesy inspections and is another way to demonstrate the industry’s commitment to sustainability.
JOIN A FIP	G.U.L.F. currently leads shrimp FIPs in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Contact us for more information on these projects or if you are interested in joining.

If you are a skimmer fisherman and would like a tow time decal, contact Ashford Rosenberg at arosenberg@auduboninstitute.org or Rick Burris with MDMR at rick.burris@dmr.ms.gov. If you have any questions about G.U.L.F. or our projects, contact Ashford Rosenberg at arosenberg@auduboninstitute.org or 504-398-3188. For more information, visit audubongulf.org.

GULF-WIDE BLUE CRAB TAGGING PROJECT

by Zachary Darnell, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Division of Coastal Sciences
Gulf Coast Research Laboratory

Researchers at the University of Southern Mississippi’s Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL), led by Dr. Zack Darnell, are tagging mature female blue crabs across the Gulf Coast. This project is a collaboration with state fisheries management agencies and commercial crabbers, with the goal of gaining a better understanding of crab migrations throughout the bays, bayous, estuaries and offshore waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Female blue crabs migrate seaward to spawn, moving to the high salinity waters needed for the offspring to survive. When a crab is tagged, researchers record the location, date, and tag number. When that crab is later recaptured and reported, researchers can use the information on where and when it was caught to determine when it began the migration, how far and how fast the crab moved and the route taken by the crab. This information is important for understanding blue crab migrations into and out of each states’ fishable waters, and for ensuring the continued productivity of this valuable fishery.

Over the last year, nearly 6,000 female blue crabs have been tagged and released and over 800 of these have been recaptured and reported. Tagging will continue for at least another year. Tags are orange, printed plastic rectangles attached with wire wrapped around the lateral spines of the crabs.

Additional commercial crabbers are being recruited to help tag crabs. **If you are interested in working with GCRL personnel to tag crabs, contact Zack Darnell at 1-800-624-2857 or zachary.darnell@usm.edu.**

REWARD

IF CAUGHT, PLEASE REPORT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO 1-800-624-2857 OR CRABTAGS.ORG:

- Tag Number
- Capture Date
- Capture Location (*GPS if possible*)
- Egg Mass/Sponge Color (*if present*)

REWARD INFORMATION:

- \$5-50 for each reported tagged crab
- Additional reward for a frozen crab with the tag still attached. A GCRL employee will pick up your crab (*first 500 returned crabs only*).





ENHANCE • PROTECT • CONSERVE

SHRIMP AND CRAB BUREAU

1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

The Honorable Phil Bryant, *Governor*

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

Jamie M. Miller, *Executive Director*

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

Richard Gollog, *Chairman*
Commercial Seafood Processors

Steve Bosarge, *Vice Chairman*
Commercial Fishermen

Jolynne Trapani
Nonprofit Environmental
Organizations

Ron Harmon
Charter Boat Operators

Mark H. Havard, II
Recreational Sports Fishermen

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS?

Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Shrimp and Crab Bureau
228.374.5000

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT OPEN AND CLOSED AREAS, CALL THE SHRIMP HOTLINE

1.866.WE.TRAWL or 1.866.938.7295



PRST STD
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 144
Biloxi, MS 39530

*MDMR Shrimp and Crab Bureau extends our gratitude to
Dave Burrage for his contributions to the Mississippi seafood industry
and to this publication. Dave Burrage is retiring from the MS AL
SeaGrant and Mississippi State University after 32 years of service.*

