



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MDMR Marine Patrol cites man for unrefrigerated oysters

BILOXI, Miss. – Marine Patrol officers with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources cited an Ohio man Wednesday night for unlawful possession of unrefrigerated shellfish and careless driving.

Chea Vicheth, 44, of Columbus, Ohio, was transporting oysters from Louisiana to Alabama when officers stopped him about 9:15 p.m. on U.S. 90 in Hancock County for driving erratically. Officers determined he was carrying 100 sacks of raw oysters and multiple boxes of live crabs and that the refrigeration unit was not operational.

The temperature inside the cargo hold was about 76 degrees, and the oyster meat was about 78 degrees. The required temperature is 45 degrees or below before a vehicle begins moving.

“Oysters that are not kept under proper temperature controls pose significant health risk to the public,” said Joe Jewell, director of MDMR’s Office of Marine Fisheries. “At particular risk are those individuals with compromised immune systems.”

Vicheth told officers the refrigeration unit was not working properly when the oysters were loaded onto the truck.

The seafood was seized by Marine Patrol officers and disposed of according to MDMR regulations with assistance from the Hancock County Sheriff’s Office.

Both citations are misdemeanors, and Vicheth faces a fine of up to \$500 for each. The investigation is continuing.

Editor’s Note: A short video of the incident is attached.

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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