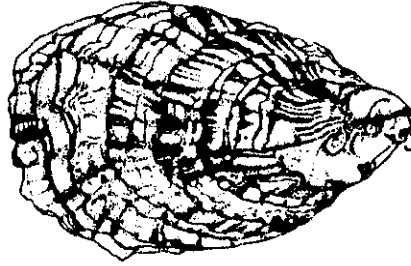


# LOUISIANA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

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## SEA GRANT PROGRAM



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LAGNIAPPE

## LOUISIANA FISHERIES FEDERATION TO MEET

The Louisiana Fisheries Federation (LFF) will be holding their first annual convention in Baton Rouge on February 2, 3 and 4. The Federation which has members from all parts of the seafood industry, will be holding the meeting at the Chateau Capital Hotel. Workshops are planned for different fisheries such as shrimp, crabs, oysters, finfish and underutilized species. There will also be a segment on the under-water obstructions project. As you probably know, this project involves finding and charting of snags and trawl hangs. Persons interested in attending the convention should contact the Federation at 999 North 9th Street, Suite 425, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. Their phone number is 344-7306.

## MARSH BURNING

Marsh burning is something that many trappers do nowadays to improve their trapping grounds. What most trappers in brackish marshes are trying to do is get rid of the wiregrass and let the three-corner grass make a comeback in the burned area.

However, a mistake that many trappers make is that they think that a burn will do this no matter what time of the year they burn. Also, many times they don't take the water level in the marsh into consideration.

There are two main types of marsh burns in brackish marshes. The most common is a "cover or wet burn." This burn is made when water levels in the marsh are right at or just above the roots of the plants. This type of a burn will burn off the wiregrass and if it is made in the fall or winter the faster-growing three-corner grass will get the jump on the wiregrass. If this burn is made at the wrong time of the year, however, the wiregrass will just come right back.

The second kind of burn, a "root burn" is made during very dry spells. As water isn't covering the roots, the fire burns the roots of the marsh plants and really sets them back. Since three-corner grass roots are deeper than wiregrass roots, they survive and the wiregrass roots are destroyed. The only thing to be careful of is that the marsh shouldn't be too dry because then even the three-corner grass roots will be killed and you'll just end up with a mudflat. If this type burn is done right, the three-corner grass gets such a jump on the wiregrass that you won't have to burn again for 2 or 3 years.

Finally, burning shouldn't be done in the spring or summer. A burn at this time not only doesn't help the three-corner grass as much, but it destroys the nests of summer (mottled) ducks and marsh hens.

Source: Marsh Burning. Presented at the Marsh and Estuary Management Symposiums by Clark M. Hoffpauer, La. Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. 1967.

#### ATCHAFALAYA BASIN

The Atchafalaya Basin or Spillway as it is also called, is the largest wild crawfish producing area in the state. Each year when the rivers of the state go into flood stage, large areas of the Basin go underwater and start the cycle that will produce the large spillway crawfish that we all love to eat.

At the present time, the Atchafalaya Basin is mostly privately owned. However, the Federal Government may buy almost the entire spillway between Krotz Springs and Morgan City. The reason that they feel that they need to do this, is to keep the area from being converted from woods and swamps to soybean fields in the future.

If the Federal Government buys it, and it looks a lot like they will the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will manage it. The important thing about that is that the Corps has 10 different management plans which they can use to manage this 443,000 acre area. These plans run all the way from reducing the Atchafalaya's flow way down and causing the area to produce less fish and crawfish and more timber and wildlife, all the way to heavily flooding it, which will produce more fish and crawfish and less timber and wildlife.

What they do with this area will depend largely on what the public says at a series of hearings to be held this month. Since the crawfish supply is very important to seafood retailers in this area, dealers should attend one of these meetings and make their voices heard. The meetings will be as follows:

- January 20, 10 a.m. - Department of Transportation & Development Building Auditorium, Baton Rouge.
- January 23, 7 p.m. - Block High School Gymnasium, Jonesville.
- January 25, 7 p.m. - Tulane University McAlister Auditorium, New Orleans
- January 27, 10 a.m. - USL Angelle Auditorium, Lafayette
- January 30, 7 p.m. - Morgan City Municipal Auditorium, Morgan City.

#### EEL NEWS

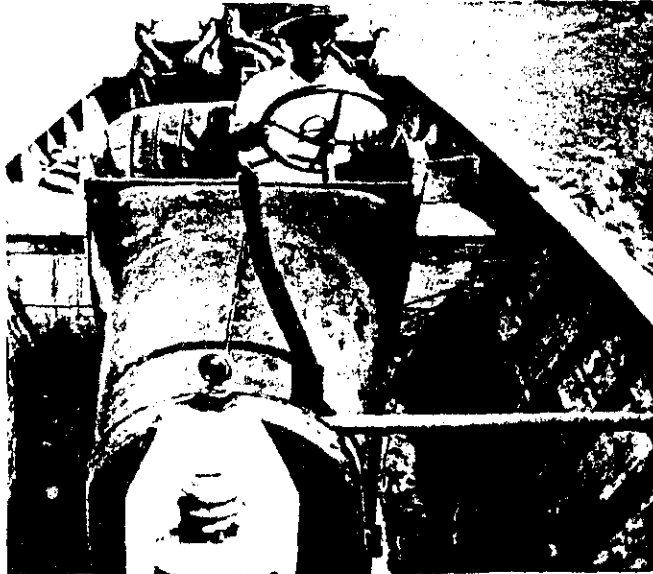
With the cool weather and the slowing down of crab and shrimp fishing, many fishermen are again becoming interested in eel fishing. May Usannaz, eel buyer of Chef Menteur Pass, has been getting in a pretty good supply lately. She has about 700 pounds of live eels in her tanks right now. Many crab fishermen have been using a few eel traps mixed in with their crab traps and have been doing fairly well.

Also, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is beginning a study to learn more about the eel's habits and movements in Louisiana. Their results should prove interesting. One final note, anyone interested in fishing for eels needs to get an experimental fishing permit from the Seafood Division of the Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission.

#### YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY BABY

Commercial fishing is one of the very oldest industries in this country. Fishing was the backbone of the early American colonies. However, fishing then was a lot different than fishing today. You had to row or sail your boat to get around. Probably the biggest change in

commercial fishing occurred when motors were put in boats. Recently, I found this picture of a proud commercial fisherman on the Mississippi River with his motorboat. The picture was taken in 1930 and he looks real proud of his rig. Times have changed haven't they?



#### NEW FILM IN

I will be showing a new film on oysters at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, January 23. I haven't seen the film myself yet, but I understand that the film shows in detail how a conch finds the oyster he wants and how it opens the shell. This is supposed to be an outstanding film.

It will be shown at the East Bank Commercial Fishermen's meeting at the Fort Pike Fire Station. The station is located on Hwy. 90 between the Chef Menteur and the Rigolets Passes. Anyone interested in seeing this film is welcome to attend.

#### PARASITES ON PARASITES

Probably the most interesting of all the parasites or diseases of blue crabs is a flukeworm with the tongue-twister name Microphallus basodactylophallus.

This little worm is all but invisible in crabmeat and they seem to be quite common. Cooking of course kills it. The life cycle of this worm is very complicated as it is only immature in the crab. It matures in the gut of a racoon which gets infected by eating the crab. The adult worms in the coon pass eggs in the coon's waste. Saltwater snails pick up these eggs and the worms multiply more in the snail before they leave and go to the crab.

However, as I said earlier, this parasitic worm is all but invisible. That is unless the parasitic flukeworm gets his own parasite. This microscopic one-celled parasite is a parasite on a parasite. When the flukeworm in the crab gets this parasite, it swells up and turns black.

Some fishermen call these blackspots "buckshot" and the infected crabs are sometimes called "pepper crabs." By the way, these little spores don't hurt the crab, but they sure are tough on the flukeworm.

Source: Marine Maladies? Worms, Germs and Other Symbionts From the Northern Gulf of Mexico. 1978. R.M. Overstreet. Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium.

#### THAWING FROZEN SEAFOOD

The favorite method of storing seafood both commercially and at home, is by freezing. While many people think they know how to freeze seafood, not many know how to properly thaw it.

There are two proper methods of thawing seafood. The first method is by thawing in the refrigerator. This takes planning ahead however, because you will need about 18 hours per pound of frozen food. The second method is thawing under cold running water. This only takes  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour per pound. Either way, keep the food in its original wrapper until it is thawed.

The reason that thawing at room temperature or in warm water isn't recommended, is because the thinner edges thaw very quickly and will actually start to breakdown or spoil before the center is thawed.

Also, thawed seafood will spoil easier than fresh seafood and should be used within a day after thawing.  
California Sea Grant, Marine Briefs.

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#### THE GUMBO POT

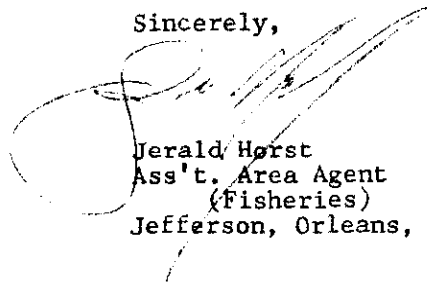
##### Angels on Horseback

Since this is oyster time, I think that it's only appropriate that I put in an oyster recipe this month. This is a recipe that I've seen around for years, but never got around to trying until about two months ago. Since I've tried it, I've used it 4 or 5 times. It is quick and easy and makes a delicious snack or appetizer.

2 dozen large oysters	1/8 tsp. pepper
12 slices bacon	1/8 tsp. paprika
1/2 tsp. salt	2 Tbsp. parsley

Drain oysters and lay each oyster across a half slice of bacon. Sprinkle with the seasonings and fasten with a toothpick. Place the oysters on a rack over a shallow baking pan to catch the drippings. Bake at 450° in oven or until bacon is crisp. Remove toothpicks and serve. Serves 6.

Sincerely,



Jerald Horst  
Ass't. Area Agent  
(Fisheries)  
Jefferson, Orleans, St. Charles

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