

LOUISIANA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Jefferson Parish
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SEA GRANT PROGRAM



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LAGNIAPPE

HANG FUNDS

In the last year I have recieved a lot of questions on the state and federal hang funds. I thought that this would be a good time to go over both funds and explain how they work.

As some of you know there are two funds—federal and state. The state fund, which is officially called the "Fishermen's Gear Compensation Fund" covers damage to a commercial fisherman's gear or vessel caused by underwater obstructions in state waters. That includes inside waters and outside waters out to 3 miles offshore. The federal fund covers damage to fishing gear from 3 miles out to 200 miles offshore. We'll discuss the federal fund first and then the state fund.

THE FEDERAL FUND

If your hang or damage occurred outside of the 3 mile limit you will need to make a report to the Fishermen's Contingency Fund within 5 days of when the damage occurred.

You can make the report by calling or writing the address below.

Chief, Fisheries Development Analysis Branch
Southeast Region
National Marine Fisheries Service
9450 Koger Blvd., Duval Bldg.
St. Petersburg, FL 33702
(813) 893-3271

This report should include the following information:

- 1) your name and address
- 2) boat name and Coast Guard numbers
- 3) location of the obstruction
- 4) what you were doing when the damage occurred
- 5) a description of the damage
- 6) date of damage
- 7) a description of the hang, if known
- 8) whether or not the hang had a buoy or light on or near it.

After they get your five day report, the fund will send you a formal claim form to fill out. In the past not many fishermen have used the federal fund because of the red tape and delay. Some people had to wait over a year to get paid. Recently, they have worked very hard to streamline the claim process and they hope to be able to pay fishermen within 90 days of the claim. In addition to paying for gear damage the federal fund also will pay for lost profits due to down time from the damage. Most fishermen have found, however, that unless they really have a lot of down time, it's not worth claiming.

for lost profits, because it really makes the claim a lot more complicated.

While there are still many problems with the federal fund, the new streamlining procedures have made making a claim a lot easier. One of the key points for you to remember is to make the preliminary report within 5 days by letter, telephone, or radiotelephone.

THE STATE FUND

This fund has been in existence now for two years and has really proven to be a real benefit for Louisiana commercial fishermen. The fund pays for damage to both gear and vessels caused by underwater obstructions in state waters. As I mentioned earlier, this includes both inside waters and outside waters out to 3 miles off the beaches. So far, the fund has paid 130 claims totalling \$152,567. In March, they will be hearing 21 more claims for \$24,478. They have paid claims for everything from busted or lost trawls to hull damage on 100 foot boats to a lower unit on a catfisherman's outboard. The maximum amount that the claim fund can pay on any single claim is \$5000.

If you feel that you have a claim in state waters, you must notify the fund office in Baton Rouge within 30 days of the damage. You can either call or write the fund as shown below:

Fishermen's Gear Compensation Fund
Dept. of Natural Resources
P. O. Box 44396
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
(504) 342-4600

When you call or write the fund they will want to know the following things:

- 1) your name, address and telephone number
- 2) name and registration numbers of your boat
- 3) your commercial fishing license number
- 4) where the damage occurred
- 5) date and time of day of damage
- 6) identification of obstruction, if known
- 7) description and estimated value of the damage

After receiving this first report, Ed Wagner, who is the fella who will be handling your claim, will send you a one-sheet claim form to fill out. The claim form is pretty simple, but I'd like to give you a few pointers here on filling it out.

First, answer all the questions, if you leave any blank, they will have to send it back to you.

Second, be sure that you include some proof that you make at least 50% of your income from commercial fishing. That's because this fund is only for commercial fishermen. You can either send in a copy of the first page of your income tax statement which shows that you are a commercial fisherman or even better a written statement from a seafood buyer stating that you are a commercial fisherman.

Another important part of the claim, is a statement from someone who witnessed the damage. It can be from a deck hand or from someone who was fishing near you. If you were fishing alone and no one else was fishing near you, a statement from someone who saw the damage back at the dock will do.

If your deck hand can't write too well, you can write it out yourself and have him sign it. It doesn't have to be fancy, but be sure to include the name of the witness and the name or numbers of the damaged boat, the date the damage occurred and how it happened.

If the damage occurred in an area of active oil exploration or production, Ed will send you the name and address of a company man to contact. Write him a letter, explaining the damage and ask if his

company will pay for the damage. If they do, you are home free. If they won't then the fund will pay you after a hearing. If the damages were under \$500, you won't even have to attend the hearing. If the damages are over, you will need to attend and tell them your story.

I know this sounds complicated but it is not nearly as bad as it sounds. In fact its really pretty simple. I've helped many fishermen fill out their claim forms and anytime you need any help on doing one feel free to call me or drop by my office in Marrero.

I encourage fishermen to file a claim for any damage over \$50. If you mend your own nets you can even claim your own labor. Just get a little receipt book from the dime store and write yourself a little receipt for the hours you put in mending the net. Charge what net menders in your area would charge you by the hour to patch nets.

Another little point might help your claim is a photograph of the damage. If you have some place to keep a camera dry on your boat, it would be good to have one handy. A picture is worth a thousand words.

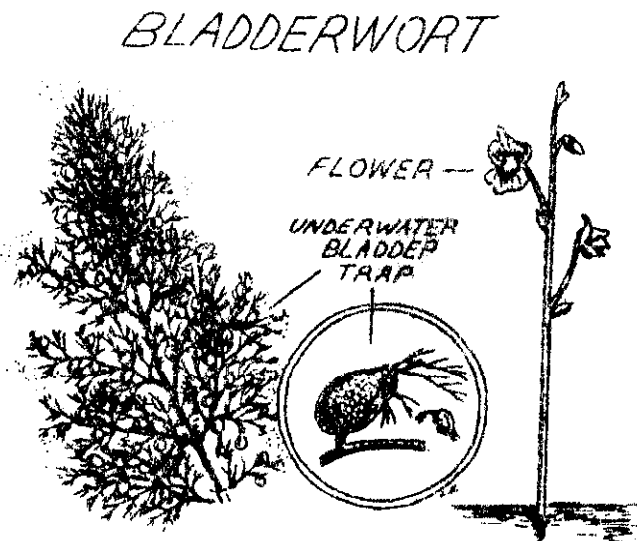
Remember if you have any questions on either the state or the federal funds or if you need help in filling out a claim, feel free to contact me and I'll do what I can.

PLANTS THAT EAT ANIMALS

That sounds like something out of a horror movie from the Amazon, but the truth is that we do have several carnivorous (animal eating) plants right here in Louisiana. Most of them grow either in the water or in low wet swampy places.

These plants have chlorophyll just like other green plants and make most of their own food, but they eat meat as a kind of "diet supplement" or "vitamin".

One of the more common meat-eating plants is bladderwort, shown below:



This plant is an aquatic or water plant. The only part of the plant that sticks out of the water are the flower stems which have pretty little yellow flowers on them. The bladderwort has little air filled bladders on it. Each bladder has trigger hairs around its mouth. When a tiny water bug touches one of the triggers, a little trap door opens and sucks in some water along with the bug. The trap door closes and then the walls of the bladder produce a digestive fluid which dissolves the little critter. The emptied bladder and triggers are then reset to wait for the next meal.

SOURCE: Pennsylvania Angler. November 1980.

TOUGH LAWS

Last year the West German parliament made it a criminal act to pollute the environment, with punishment of up to five years in jail. In Proposing what is probably the strictest environmental legislation in the world, the German Minister of Justice said "The environment in the future is to have the same status of a protected interest as does capitol, property and one's bodily health. The declared purpose of this parliament is that the conviction shall take root in the public consciousness so that the polluter is considered no worse, but not a hair better, than the arsonist, the swindler or the thief".

SOURCE: African Wildlife.

RECORD BOOKS

We still have a few more commercial fishermen's record books and tax guides available. The record books are becoming so popular that I had to order a second shipment. If you still haven't gotten yours call or write my office before we run out.

THE GUMBO POT

Boiled Seafood

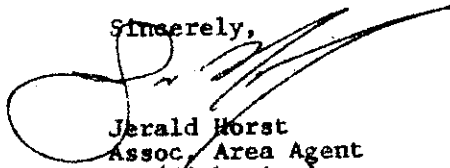
This month I'm not going to give you a recipe, but rather talk about a way of cooking. Boiling seafood has a long heritage in Louisiana with crab, shrimp or crawfish boils being a family tradition.

One of the problems that anyone who has boiled seafood has faced is getting enough seasoning into the seafood without over cooking it. Shrimp and tender, early season crawfish are very easy to overcook. The usual way of boiling seafood is to add the seasonings to the water, boil the crawfish or shrimp and let them soak up the seasoning after the burner is out. The problem is that the seafood keeps on cooking even if the water isn't boiling.

Recently, Randy Montegut, our Marine Advisory Agent from the Vermillion-Iberia area put me onto a better way. I've tried it and it works like a charm. His technique is to boil the crawfish or shrimp in plain unseasoned water. When they are done, get them out of the water and into a washtub (not an ice chest—it will melt). Then squeeze lemons and sprinkle salt and ground crab boil over the seafood and mix it in well. Sample a couple and if ybu need more seasoning, add some, if not, dump them from the tub on the table and let them cool (As long as they are packed in the tub their heat keeps on cooking them). The ground crab boil can usually be bought from a local seafood retailer.

The only disadvantage to this method is that you will have to boil your corn, onions, and potatoes separately if you like vegetables. The big advantage is that you have perfect control over the seasonings and you'll never have mushy crawfish or shrimp that stick to their shell.

Sincerely,



Jerald Horst
Assoc. Area Agent
(Fisheries)
St. Charles, Jefferson,
Orleans