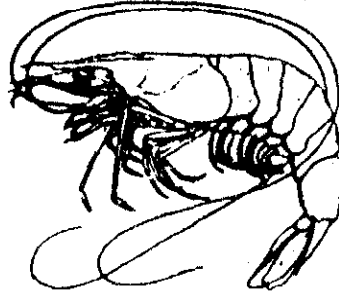


LOUISIANA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Orleans Parish
St. Charles Parish
Jefferson Parish

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Marrero, LA 70072
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SEA GRANT PROGRAM



LAGNIAPPE

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SPECKLED TROUT - REDFISH MEETINGS

As I mentioned in last month's newsletter, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries will be holding three public meetings this month on speckled trout and redbfish.

The comments by commercial and sport fishermen at these meetings will be considered in putting together a management plan that hopefully will at least partially satisfy each group and be best for the trout and redbfish populations.

Each meeting will be from 7 to 10 p.m. and held at the following locations:

March 29	Lake Charles	Police Jury Meeting Room in Parish Government Building
March 30	Houma	Municipal Auditorium 880 Verret Street
March 31	Lafitte	Lafitte Civic Center

These will be very important meetings for both commercial and sport fishermen. If you are interested in this fishery, you will have a chance to put your feelings on the record with the Department at these meetings.

FUEL PRICES

With the current oil glut and lowering crude oil prices many fishermen have been wondering what's going to happen to the price they have to pay for their fuel. While fortune telling is a tricky business and no one's crystal ball is perfect, this is what Dr. Ken Roberts, our Marine economist has to say about the situation.

Crude oil prices are not falling as rapidly as the media makes it appear. The five to seven dollar decrease per barrel of oil recently reported is for OPEC produced crude. Their official price of about \$34 was already out of date because much oil was being sold for close to \$30. Since we import less and less OPEC oil, do not expect big changes at the pump soon. Much U. S. produced oil was already being sold at \$29-\$31 per barrel so OPEC is just lowering its price to meet the real market.

Fuel prices should decline over most of the next fishing season. All fishermen will benefit from lower fuel prices. However, no one knows for certain how far and fast prices will fall before supply and demand get back into balance. At the present time, there is about a 14 cents per gallon difference between the price at the highest cost fuel dock and the lowest in Louisiana. We do know that three things are working in the fisherman's favor. First, it is not until April or May that the period of high fuel use really begins. Lowered prices for crude will probably trickle down to the dock price for fuel by that time. Second, there are only two industries that are large users of marine fuel in south Louisiana - fishing and transportation related to oil development and cargo. As the price of crude drops, less activity may occur in the oil field and then less need for fuel. This lower demand should result in lower prices for

fishermen. Third, fuel docks may get back into the habit of allowing some fuel purchases on credit or part cash, part credit.

Fishermen may also notice that shipyards are doing less repair and maintenance work this spring on oil industry boats. You may find better deals available on your haul out work.

Other supplies like lube and nets may eventually decrease some because crude oil is used to make them.

As gasoline prices go down, skiff operators will obviously be helped. However, lower gasoline prices help all fishermen in another way. Lower gasoline prices give consumers more income to spend on other things and also reduce the cost of driving or vacationing. About 80 percent of the shrimp are eaten while consumers are away from home. As people use the lower gasoline prices to travel more and eat out more often, fishermen and shrimpers in particular should benefit.

In a nutshell, the outlook on the cost side of the picture is the best it has been in five years. The economy is recovering and people are going back to work so the demand side is encouraging. The supply side is always the big question mark! Shrimp imports in 1982 were high-attracted here because of high prices but the market held up. From January through February, 1983 imports were 100% higher than the same period in 1982. Production from large shrimp farms in Ecuador is expected to reach 35 million pounds in 1983, most of it headed to the U.S.

For planning purposes look for good shrimp prices in 1983, perhaps not a record but favorable. Also, look for declining production costs mostly related to fuel. Fuel costs could be 6-9 cents lower in 1983 than the average for 1982. If it averages 7 cents per gallon, that amounts to \$70 per thousand gallons. A slab using 60,000 gallons would have a fuel bill \$4,200 below last year. You may not be able to pocket all this in a good production year because you may simply work the boat harder.

The one dark cloud on the horizon is the slowdown in the south Louisiana oil industry. Oil and oil service workers find it harder to maintain jobs. Many of these individuals may turn to shrimping for income. This additional competition could reduce the average inshore shrimpers catch. The degree to which this will occur depends on the number of other job opportunities for laid off oil field workers.



HANG FUNDS - FOR ALL FISHERMEN

In the last year, I have received a lot of questions on the two hang funds and whether they are for all fishermen or just shrimpers. The answer is that as far as trawls go, the funds are only useful to commercial shrimpers.

However, all commercial fishermen can make a claim for hull and propeller damage from underwater obstructions. The state fund which covers the area where most of our fishermen fish has covered (up to \$5,000) everything from an oyster lugger's hull damage by a pipe to a catfisherman's lower unit on his outboard that hit a submerged piling.

Since there has been so much interest (and confusion) over the two funds, I've decided to go over both the state and the federal hang funds.

THE STATE FUND

This fund has been in existence now for three 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. The maximum amount that the claim fund can pay on any single claim is \$5,000.

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 are over \$500, you will have to attend the hearing.

I know this sounds complicated, but it is not nearly as bad as it sounds. In fact it's really pretty simple. I've helped many fishermen fill out their claim forms and anytime you need 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 \$100. 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 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.

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 15 days after the end of the trip in which 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 15 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.

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.

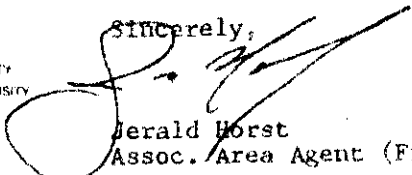
THE GUMBO POT

I have to thank Mike Voisin of The Oyster House in Houma for this recipe. He says he got it from A. J. Buquet of Houma. In any case it is superb and different. I think I ate a gallon of them at the Concerned Shrimpers Annual meeting in Thibodaux last month.

HUITRES MARINADE BUQUET

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1 gallon raw oysters with liquor | 2 shallots, chopped |
| 2 onions, chopped | (green and white) |
| 8 ounces catsup | 1/4 cup green olives, chopped |
| 1 cup salad oil | Tbsp. vinegar |
| Tbsp. horseradish | Tabasco to taste |
| tsp. onion puree | Salt and pepper |
| tsp. garlic puree | 2 lemons, squeezed, Juice
and carcasses |

Blend sauce ingredients. Add oysters and enough liquor to make a thick marinade. Refrigerate 4 hours before serving.

Sincerely,

Gerald Horst
Assoc. Area Agent (Fisheries)