



Louisiana State University

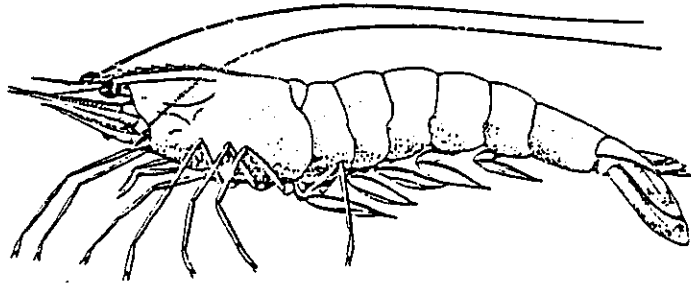
Agricultural Center

Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service

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Jefferson Parish Office
1825 Bonnie Ann Drive
Marrero, LA 70072
(504) 349-5644

SEA GRANT PROGRAM



LAGNIAPPE

REMINDER

Just a reminder that our telephone number has changed to 349-5644. I apologize for any inconvenience that any of you may have had during the changeover. We are attempting to get an answering machine for the times when neither I nor my secretary is in. In the meantime, if you don't get an answer, please call back. Thank you for your patience.

BLACK DRUM PERMITS EXPIRING

Commercial fishermen are reminded that all bull drum permits expire on August 31 of this year. The sale of black drum over 27 inches long is illegal without this permit. As a service to fishermen, we have these applications in our office in Marrero. Anyone wishing to get a permit or renew their old one may call or write our office. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries will only issue a permit to those people who have sent in all their monthly reports for the last year.

SHRIMP BOAT NUMBERS GOING DOWN

The number of shrimp boats operating in the southeastern United States has been debated for several years now. Some National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) representatives have stated that the numbers have increased or remained the same. Many commercial shrimpers have said that the numbers have gone down. These figures are very important, since one way of meeting the legal requirement of reducing fish bycatch in shrimp trawls is by reducing fishing effort with less vessels and boats. The numbers shown in the table below were obtained by Corkey Perret of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries from Tom Allen of the NMFS Financial Assistance Program. Documented vessels are over 5 net tons and Coast Guard documented. Boats are under 5 tons and registered with the state.

The table shows that the numbers of both vessels and boats peaked in 1983. By 1992 the number of vessels had dropped to the level of 1965 and by 1990 the number of boats had dropped to below the 1979 level. Boat numbers were not available for 1991 and 1992.

SOUTHEAST REGION, 1960
(North Carolina to Texas)

Year	Documented Vessels	Boats	Total Craft	Percentage Vessels	Yearly Changes Documented Vessels	Annual Change Total Craft
1960	3,782	3,903	7,605	49	0	0
1961	3,513	3,744	7,257	48	-269	-420
1962	3,407	4,815	8,222	41	-106	965
1963	3,504	5,245	8,749	40	97	527
1964	3,537	5,029	8,666	37	33	-193
1965	3,622	5,476	9,090	40	85	532
1966	3,654	5,707	9,361	39	32	263
1967	3,860	5,738	9,598	40	206	237
1968	4,125	5,855	9,980	41	265	382
1969	4,242	5,623	9,065	43	117	-115
1970	4,333	5,222	9,555	45	91	-310
1971	4,306	5,663	9,959	43	-27	404
1972	4,537	6,400	10,017	45	231	58
1973	4,928	5,810	10,738	46	391	721
1974	4,749	5,246	9,995	48	-179	-743
1975	4,670	6,313	10,903	43	-79	900
1976	5,094	6,490	11,504	44	424	601
1977	5,221	6,504	11,725	45	127	141
1978*	5,564	6,050	12,414	45	343	689
1979*	5,738	7,015	12,753	45	174	339
1980*	5,951	7,427	13,378	44	213	625
1981*	5,973	7,370	13,343	45	22	-35
1982*	5,979	7,180	13,169	45	6	-184
1983*	5,986	7,663	13,639	44	7	400
1984*	5,900	7,329	13,229	45	-86	-410
1985*	5,740	7,340	13,080	44	-160	-149
1986*	5,394	7,398	12,792	42	-346	-200
1987*	4,964	7,400	12,364	40	-430	-428
1988*	4,092	6,480	10,572	39	-872	-1792
1989*	3,980	6,600	10,400	38	-112	-92
1990*	3,900	6,664	10,544	37	-80	-64
1991*	3,767	NA	NA	NA	-133	NA
1992*	3,626	NA	NA	NA	-141	NA

*Preliminary - subject to revision.

Source: Fishery Statistics of the United States, N.M.F.S., U. S. Department of Commerce, annual issues and preliminary date.

SHRIMPERS IN A SQUEEZE

Louisiana's most valuable commercial fishery is easily the shrimp fishery. In 1992, shrimp landings were worth \$144.9 million dollars and produced half of all the dockside sales of commercial seafood production in Louisiana. In spite of its overall economic importance to the state, many individual shrimpers are struggling to stay profitable. If shrimp landings had dropped, the reason for poor profits would be obvious. However, the table below shows that landings for the Gulf of Mexico region have stayed about the same for the last 18 years.

YEAR	GULF LANDINGS (Thousands of lbs)	PRICE POUND	DEFLATED PRICE	IMPORTS (Thousands of lbs)
1975	106,982	\$3.85	\$9.97	228,705
1976	139,195	4.05	9.93	265,973
1977	166,785	3.85	8.87	264,733
1978	156,198	4.06	8.68	233,511
1979	129,929	4.75	9.12	258,435
1980	131,008	3.58	6.06	247,424
1981	171,391	3.56	5.46	248,066
1982	132,277	2.51	3.63	306,161
1983	126,931	4.41	6.20	387,976
1984	162,093	4.86	6.60	388,118
1985	167,144	3.40	4.46	409,169
1986	192,526	3.04	3.93	452,323
1987	163,813	3.20	3.99	539,858
1988	142,283	4.69	5.62	562,581
1989	146,005	3.91	4.47	535,082
1990	160,773	3.35	3.64	554,894
1991	145,971	3.03	3.12	609,188
1992	132,257	3.10	3.10	667,086

If a shortage of shrimp isn't the problem than what is? The number of offshore and inshore shrimp boats in 1992 is about the same as it was in 1975, (see the article before this one), so it isn't the number of boats. The problem, apparently is price.

At first glance, prices are down only about 22% from the 1975-76 period. But it is really much worse than that. The column listed as "deflated price" in the table above takes inflation out of the picture and shows you what past shrimp prices really were in today's dollars. For example, in 1975, when fishermen received \$3.85 a pound for their shrimp, they were really getting \$9.97 per pound in today's dollars. Another way of looking at it, is that if the price of shrimp would have kept up with the cost of catching them and the cost of living for fishermen's families, the average dockside price of shrimp would be about \$10.00 per pound. One final way of looking at it, is that for a fisherman to the same living that he did in 1975, he would have to catch three times as many shrimp now as he did then.

The reason behind the price drop is that the supply of shrimp is increasing faster than demand. The world supply of shrimp in 1975 was 2.96 billion pounds. In 1992 it was estimated at 5.7 billion pounds, of which 28% was produced by aquaculture. The amount of shrimp imported into the United States almost tripled between 1975 and 1992.

Outside of slowing imports (which is highly unlikely), there are only a few options for improving the profit picture for shrimpers.

- 1) Reduce the number of shrimpers, so that those left catch more.
- 2) Grow shrimp to a larger and possibly more valuable size.
- 3) Dramatically increase demand for and consumption of shrimp.
- 4) Lower the cost of catching of shrimp.
- 5) Do nothing and hope for the best.

The first two options would cause a lot of social changes, as people would either be taken out of the fishery or would not be able to shrimp with their traditional methods. Option number 4 also has obstacles, such as the proposals to increase fuel taxes. Also, the demand to reduce finish bycatch may possibly cause problems, if a "magic bullet" can't be found that reduces bycatch without shrimp loss. Any loss of shrimp catch without a lowering of costs of production would put shrimpers in a more serious cost-price squeeze than they are in now.

Our shrimp industry, while being a very small part of nation's economy, is a very important part of Louisiana's coastal economy. When shrimping is unprofitable, more fishermen are forced into other, already crowded fisheries, or they must compete for increasingly scarce land jobs.

FRESHWATER MUSSEL HARVESTING PERMITS

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has approved the licensing system and a set of regulations for the harvest of freshwater mussels (clams). These animals are valuable not for their meat but for their shells. Small beads are cut from their shells and implanted into live pearl oysters in other parts of the world. This process produces the famous cultured pearls seen so often today.

The new regulations require a \$100 mussel permit for residents, protects endangered

mussels, provides minimum sizes for commercial mussels and creates harvesting and reporting regulations. Permits may be applied for through the Inland Fisheries Division, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, P O Box 9800, Baton Rouge 70890-9000. (504) 765-2328.

THE GUMBO POT

This month's recipe won the Catfish Cooking contest at the Catfish Festival in Des Allemands. It was prepared by Roy J. Lunk

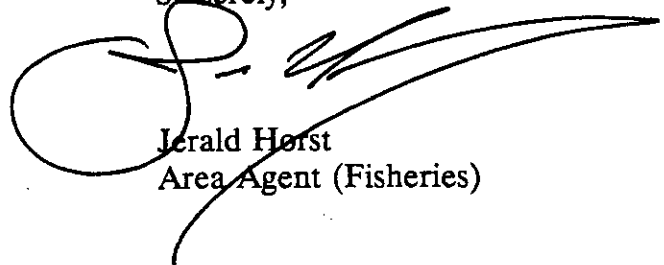
Stuffed Bell Peppers

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| 1 | lb catfish filets | 1/3 | loaf French bread |
| 4 | large bell peppers | 5 | oz. can evaporated milk |
| 1 | onion (diced) | 1/3 | cup bread crumbs |
| 1/2 | cup shallots | 1 | tsp paprika |
| 1 | stalk celery (diced) | 1/3 | cup margarine |
| 2 | tbsp parsley flaked | | red pepper |
| 1 | tbsp margarine | | salt |
| 1 | cup crabmeat | | black pepper |
| 3 | eggs or equivalent egg substitute | | lemon pepper |

Boil catfish in water seasoned with dash of salt until flaky. Core bell peppers and parboil for 5 minutes. Saute' onion, shallots, celery, and parsley in 1 tbsp margarine until tender. Mix fish, crabmeat, and sauteed ingredients in mixing bowl. Add 3 slightly beaten eggs and mix. Soak French bread in milk then mash and flake with fork. Add bread to mixture and blend well. Add red pepper, salt, black pepper and lemon pepper to taste.

Stuff bell peppers. Mix bread crumbs and paprika and top stuffed peppers with mixture. Melt 1/3 cup butter or margarine and season to taste with lemon pepper. Pour into baking pan and place peppers in pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes, basting twice with margarine during cooking time. Serves 4.

Sincerely,



Lerald Horst
Area Agent (Fisheries)