Lagniappe

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'R' You Going to Eat that Oyster?

Oysters. Photo credit: Paula Ouder

September marks the beginning of the "R months," otherwise thought of as oyster season along the Gulf coast. While this custom of not consuming oysters in the warmer spring and summer months may hold some merit, new technologies are allowing many restaurants to serve these delicious creatures year-round.

The Eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) is a bivalve mollusc that feeds by filtering microscopic organisms out of the water column. Oysters are individual animals but build on top of each other in aggregations known as reefs. This is highly beneficial for these animals as group living provides safety in numbers against predators and increases the likelihood of successful reproduction. Oysters release their eggs and sperm into the water column during spawning. Oyster larvae are free-floating planktonic organisms that use physical and chemical cues to find a suitable hard surface on which to permanently settle and grow, typically on the shell of an adult oyster.

Reproduction is one main reason oysters are often avoided in R-less months. Oyster spawning is typically triggered by elevated water temperatures. During this time, adult oysters do not eat and are expending so much energy to spawn that the meaty tissue humans consume is very small and tasteless. Many harmful algal blooms also coincide with warmer ocean temperatures, and oysters may absorb some of this toxic material into their tissue during feeding. These are the two main reasons oysters are not customarily harvested during the spring and summer.

However, oysters have a longstanding cultural tradition along the Gulf Coast, including creating a livelihood for many generations of fishermen. The Gulf states currently produce two-thirds of the total U.S. commercial oyster harvest. In addition to their economic value, oysters also offer many important ecosystem services, meaning they benefit the surrounding ecosystem as well as humans. These

services include improving water quality and clarity through their filter-feeding capabilities, reducing the rate of shoreline erosion by serving as a physical buffer against wave energy and storm surges, and provide habitat to a variety of fish and invertebrates, many of which themselves are commercially valuable.

Despite the economic and ecological importance of oysters, global populations have dramatically declined due to unsustainable overharvesting, diseases and other stressors such as pollution and oil spills. Fortunately, Gulf oysters are still considered to be in “fair” condition and aquaculture and restoration efforts have become a vital resource. In fact, the farming of genetically manipulated oysters, such as those at the Louisiana Sea Grant oyster lab in Grand Isle, Louisiana, offers a potentially alternative market to naturally harvested oysters. At the very least this technique allows us to enjoy fatter, juicer oysters throughout the year – even in months without an “R.”

- Jenessa Kay

Louisiana Fisheries Forward Educational and Training Program Unveiled

Louisiana Fisheries Forward (LFF) is a voluntary educational program for members of the commercial seafood community. A collaboration of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and Louisiana Sea Grant College Program at LSU (Sea Grant), LFF was established with the goal of improving the economic success of Louisiana’s commercial fishing industry.

LFF provides a structured mechanism to develop and deliver, over a three-year period, relevant and timely information to the seafood industry. Content is presented via the Internet, using training videos and fact sheets, and directly to communities with hands-on workshops, training days and demonstration projects that showcase new technology and best practice methods.

“Louisiana Fisheries Forward is about establishing a method to communicate important information to our commercial seafood community,” said Robert Barham, secretary, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. “This communication will help our fishermen, dealers and processors stay abreast of global trends, new equipment, handling practices, technology and rapidly evolving regulations. This program will help our seasoned veterans as well as newcomers to the industry improve their already high-quality Louisiana seafood, and help them take their product to the next level.”

Robert Twilley, Ph.D., executive director of Louisiana Sea Grant College Program, concurs, “Louisiana is the second largest seafood-producing state in the U.S., yet the commerce and culture of our industry is at risk. We believe the time is here for a fisheries renaissance, as more and more consumers look for locally sourced and sustainably managed seafood. Louisiana is already well positioned to meet that demand. Working together, we can enhance product quality, promote innovative business practices, and reduce our environmental footprint to ensure the continued success of commercial fishing.”

Though officially unveiled recently, Louisiana Fisheries Forward initiatives are already in motion. LFF enhances the current outreach programs of Sea Grant, including the two-day Fisheries Summit in Houma and Dock Days along the coast. Working with LDWF and seafood industry leaders, these

training days present a wider range of diverse and challenging topics and reach a greater number of people.

Cool Bait

As we move into the hottest part of summer, coastal angling success depends on being on the water through some really hot weather. During this period, it's sometime necessary to use live bait to have any success. The key to being successful with live bait is to manage the water quality in your holding tank.

A basic understanding of live bait handling could mean the difference in a successful fishing trip. The first consideration is water quality. A number of water quality requirements should be considered. These are oxygen, temperature and salinity.

Many bay boats manufactured recently have built in bait wells with flow through pumps. These work well if not overloaded with bait. For fishermen who do not have a built in bait well, or even a boat, the most popular method of ensuring adequate oxygen is to use a l2-volt aerator that sits inside of the bait well. Another method is to an external pump with an air stone, which blows diffused air. This set up is recommended because it will not cause heat buildup like a submersible pump.

Temperature and salinity should be considered next. If possible, you should fill your bait well or bucket with the same water the bait was being held in when purchased. If this is not possible, you may acclimate the bait to the water at the site of the fishing location by adding small quantities of water until the desired temperature and salinity are reached. This is especially important if there is a large temperature and salinity difference.

Rapid changes in water temperature and salinity, more than 5 degrees and 10 parts per thousand, can cause temperature shock and osmotic stress. Remember, cooler water holds more oxygen than warm water. Cooling the water with ice will chill the water and not reduce the salinity too much. Caution should be taken when adding ice to the water, as too much ice will cool your bait too fast and kill it. These steps may seem unnecessary but, if these steps are not taken, your bait will die much sooner.

All finfish have protective mucus — "slime" coat that protects them from external stress. If this mucus is removed by handling the fish, it can cause the fish to become stressed and die. This can be overcome by using a dip net to remove bait from the live well and wetting your hands before hooking the bait. This also serves as a means of not contaminating the water in which the bait is living. Insect repellant and sunscreen are two sources of contamination for your bait. After time, the concentration of chemicals could build up to levels that will affect the performance of your bait.

Lagniappe Fisheries Newsletter

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Many types of tanks are suitable for holding and maintaining live bait. Homemade tanks can be constructed of plastic or fiberglass. All metals should be avoided when possible. Round tanks are preferred, since bait tends to huddle in the corners of square or rectangular tanks. This is especially true of menhaden (pogies).

For more information, visit www.seagrantfish.lsu.edu/resources/factsheets/tipslivebait.htm.

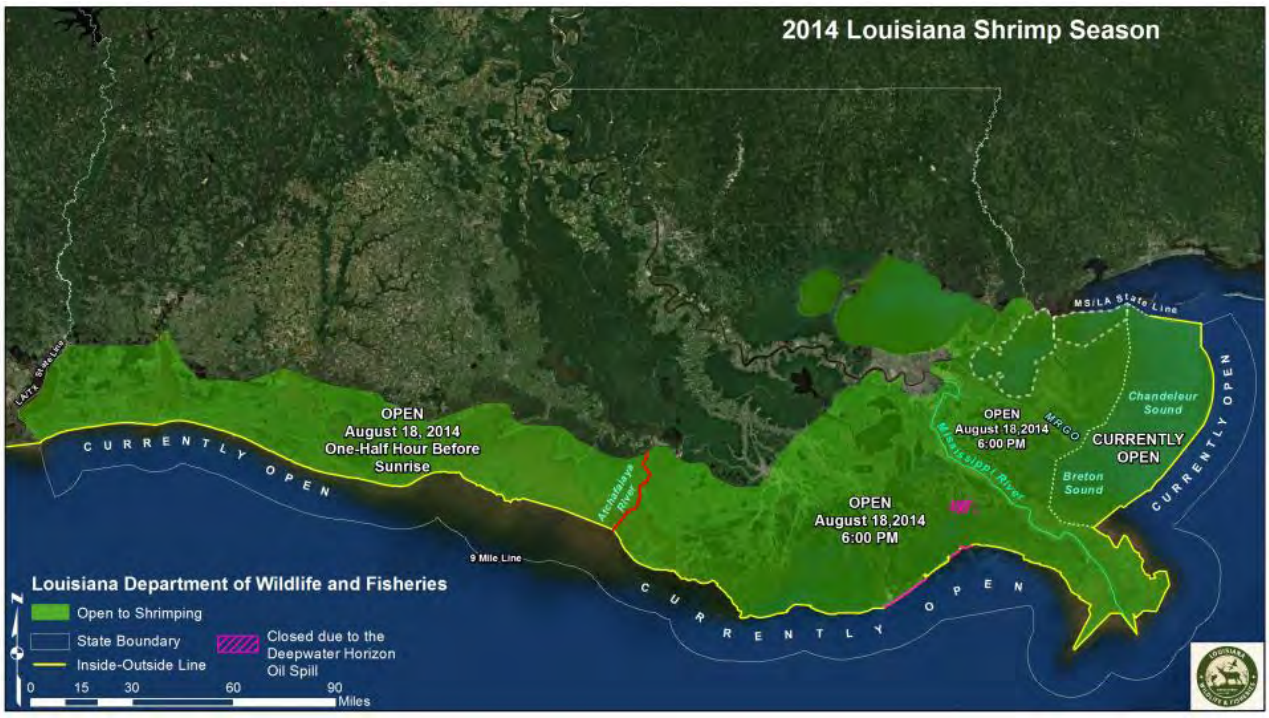
- Kevin Savoie

Louisiana Sea Grant Launches Redesigned Website

Louisiana Sea Grant (LSG) has launched a redesign of its website – www.laseagrant.org. Stop by to see all the information waiting for you including calendar of events, many species profiles, and links to our online blogs and other newsletters and publications.

LOUISIANA REGULATIONS

Fall Shrimp Season



Map of 2014 Fall Shrimp Season Courtesy of LDWF

The season opened as follows:

One-half hour before sunrise - Monday, Aug. 18 - inside waters from the western shore of the Atchafalaya River and the Atchafalaya River Ship Channel westward to the Louisiana/Texas state line

6 p.m., Monday, Aug. 18 – state inside waters east of the Atchafalaya River

Tow Time Regulations Reminder: Federal Turtle Excluder Device (TED) regulations require skimmer net fishermen to limit tow times. Maximum tow times are 55 minutes from April 1 to Oct. 31 and increase to 75 minutes from Nov. 1 to March 31.

2014-2015 Louisiana Oyster Seasons

The following opening dates were set for the upcoming oyster season:

- **Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2014** - the Little Lake, Barataria Bay, Deep Lake, Lake Tambour, and Vermilion/East and West Cote Blanche/Atchafalaya Bay Public Oyster Seed Grounds will open at one-half hour before sunrise. No harvest of oysters for market sales is allowed on any public oyster area prior to the second Monday in October. Therefore, any and all vessels harvesting on the open public oyster seed grounds between Sept. 3, 2014 and Oct. 12, 2014 shall be harvesting seed oysters for bedding purposes only and shall not have sacks or other containers typically used to hold oysters on board the harvest vessel.
- **Monday, Oct. 20, 2014** - all remaining public oyster seed grounds and reservations, including Lake Borgne, Bay Junop, Lake Mechant, the Lake Machias/Fortuna sacking-only area, the Bay Long sacking-only area, and a sacking-only area in Mississippi Sound (St. Bernard Parish) west of a line of longitude at 89 degrees 22 minutes 50.0 seconds W and east of a line of longitude at 89 degrees 29 minutes 0.0 seconds W will open at one-half hour before sunrise.
- **Monday, Oct. 27, 2014** - the oyster season in the west cove portion of the Calcasieu Lake Public Oyster Area (DHH Harvest Area 30) will open at one-half hour before sunrise.

The following areas shall remain **closed** for the 2014/2015 oyster season:

- Bay Gardene Public Oyster Seed Reservation
- Hackberry Bay Public Oyster Seed Reservation
- Sister Lake Public Oyster Seed Reservation
- Lake Chien and Lake Felicity Public Oyster Seed Grounds
- The east side of the Calcasieu Lake Public Oyster Area (LDHH Harvest Area 29)
- Sabine Lake Public Oyster Area
- 2011 cultch plant in California Bay within the following coordinates:

California Bay (2011) – Plaquemines Parish

A. 29 degrees 30 minutes 40.42 seconds N
   89 degrees 34 minutes 03.19 seconds W
B. 29 degrees 30 minutes 27.18 seconds N
   89 degrees 33 minutes 21.85 seconds W
C. 29 degrees 29 minutes 54.99 seconds N
   89 degrees 33 minutes 20.24 seconds W
D. 29 degrees 30 minutes 02.74 seconds N
   89 degrees 34 minutes 03.93 seconds W

- 2012 cultch plants in Lake Fortuna, and Bay Crab, and the 2013 cultch plants in 3-Mile Pass and Drum Bay within the following coordinates:

Bay Crab (2012) – Plaquemines Parish

A. 29 degrees 34 minutes 41.72 seconds N
   89 degrees 36 minutes 22.86 seconds W
B. 29 degrees 34 minutes 31.45 seconds N
   89 degrees 35 minutes 48.68 seconds W
C. 29 degrees 34 minutes 08.12 seconds N
   89 degrees 36 minutes 07.94 seconds W
D. 29 degrees 34 minutes 23.03 seconds N
   89 degrees 36 minutes 43.20 seconds W

Lake Fortuna (2012) – St. Bernard Parish

A. 29 degrees 39 minutes 08.04 seconds N
   89 degrees 30 minutes 28.93 seconds W
B. 29 degrees 38 minutes 33.31 seconds N
   89 degrees 29 minutes 15.45 seconds W
C. 29 degrees 38 minutes 10.57 seconds N
   89 degrees 29 minutes 40.71 seconds W
D. 29 degrees 39 minutes 04.41 seconds N
   89 degrees 30 minutes 32.61 seconds W

3-Mile Pass (2013) – St. Bernard Parish

A. 30 degrees 03 minutes 56.09 seconds N
   89 degrees 22 minutes 32.52 seconds W
B. 30 degrees 03 minutes 56.70 seconds N
   89 degrees 22 minutes 15.40 seconds W
C. 30 degrees 03 minutes 18.00 seconds N
   89 degrees 22 minutes 06.30 seconds W
D. 30 degrees 03 minutes 30.49 seconds N
   89 degrees 22 minutes 38.17 seconds W

Drum Bay (2013) – St. Bernard Parish

A. 29 degrees 53 minutes 13.00 seconds N
   89 degrees 17 minutes 40.21 seconds W
B. 29 degrees 53 minutes 16.51 seconds N
   89 degrees 16 minutes 51.12 seconds W
C. 29 degrees 52 minutes 56.17 seconds N

89 degrees 16 minutes 49.80 seconds W
D. 29 degrees 52 minutes 53.99 seconds N
89 degrees 17 minutes 40.43 seconds W

Closure dates will be determined by LDWF secretary Barham on an "as needed" basis, based on biological and harvest data, or if enforcement issues are encountered. The secretary is also authorized by the commission to take emergency action to reopen areas previously closed if the threat to the resource has ended, and to open public areas if substantial oyster resources are located.

Public notice of any opening, delay, or closure of a season will be provided at least 72 hours prior to such action, unless such closure is ordered by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals for public health concerns.

To view the maps and other oyster season information please visit: http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/oyster-seasons

GULF OF MEXICO REGULATIONS

Greater Amberjack Commercial and Recreational Sectors

The commercial and recreational harvest of greater amberjack in the Gulf of Mexico closed at 12:01 a.m. on Aug. 25, 2014, and remain closed until Jan. 1, 2015.

The 2014 landings data indicate the 409,000-pound commercial annual catch target and the 888,839-pound recreational annual catch target will be harvested by Aug. 24, 2014.

During the closure:

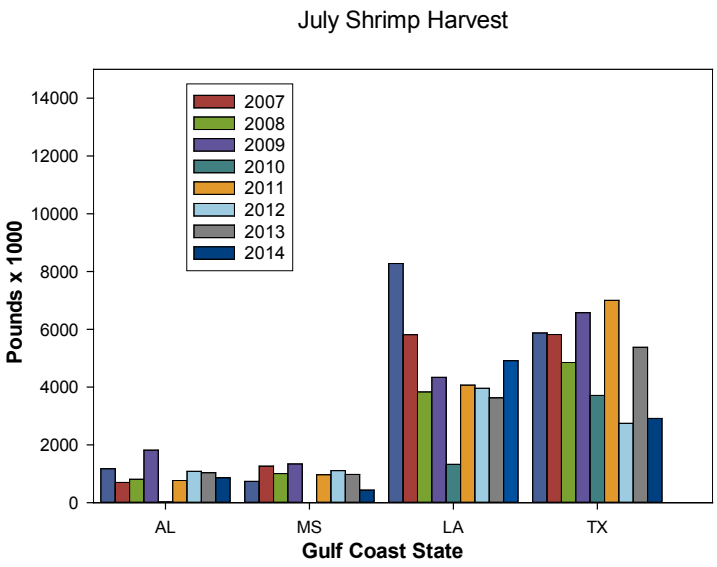
- Commercial harvest or possession of greater amberjack is prohibited.
- Recreational harvest or possession of greater amberjack is prohibited.
- The closure applies in both state and federal waters for vessels that have a valid Gulf of Mexico commercial reef fish vessel permit or a reef fish charter/headboat permit.

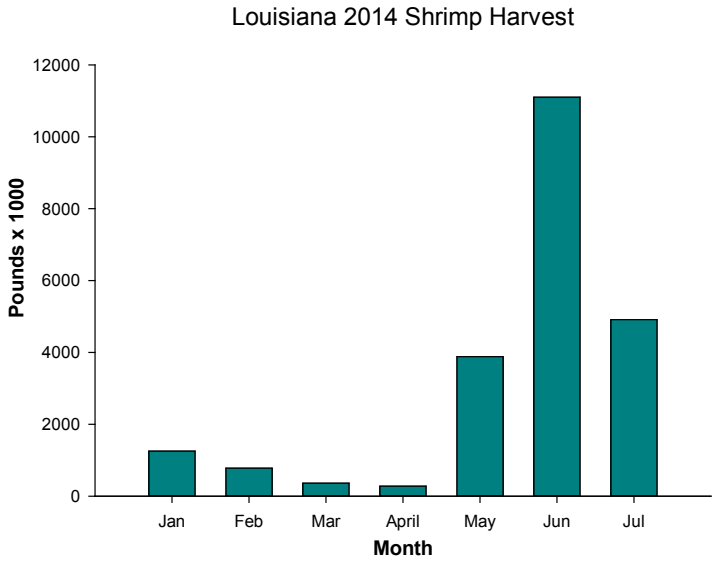
This closure is necessary to protect the greater amberjack resource. This population is considered overfished (the population is too low).

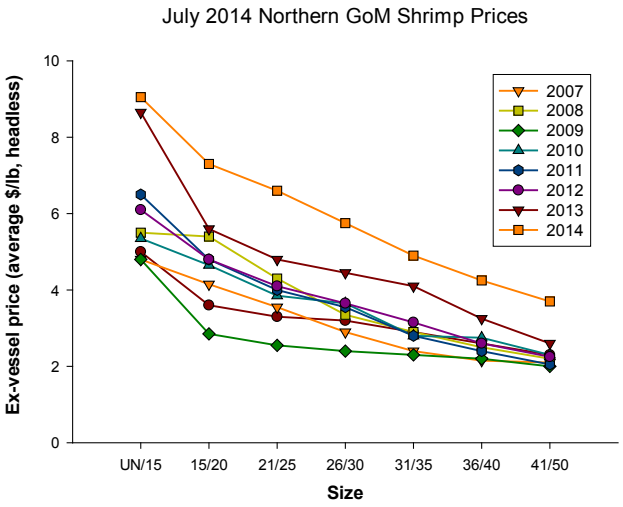
The Louisiana fishery also closed at this time.

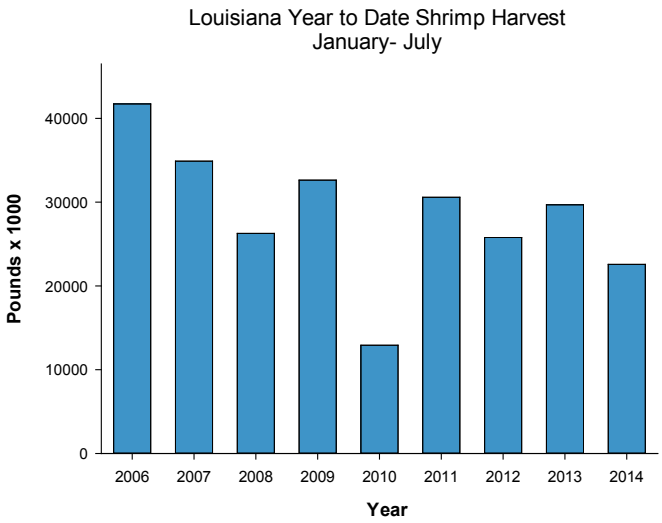
Louisiana Shrimp Watch

Louisiana specific data portrayed in the graphics are selected from preliminary data posted by NOAA on its website. All data portrayed are subject to final revision and approval by NOAA. Shrimp landings are ex-vessel prices, inclusive of all species harvested. Missing, inadequate or withheld reports are portrayed as "zero" in these graphics. Price graphics reflect central Gulf states only (Texas and Florida are reported independently). For more information, please refer to: www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/market_news/index.html.









Fish Gear Coordinates- July

There are no Fishermen's Gear Compensation Program incident sites for July 2014. There were 0 paid and 0 denied claims for the month. This information is published in the August edition of the Louisiana Register.

The Gumbo Pot

Stuffed Mirliton with Shrimp and Crabmeat

Recipe courtesy of *Louisiana Kitchen & Culture* and *Broussard's Restaurant, New Orleans, LA.* For more recipes or to subscribe to their magazine or free newsletter, please visit http://louisiana.kitchenandculture.com/

Courtesy of *Louisiana Kitchen & Culture*

Ingredients:
2 oz. butter
1 shallot, chopped
1 teaspoon Dill, chopped
1/2 cup heavy cream
4 oz. Louisiana shrimp, peeled and deveined
4 oz. lump Louisiana crabmeat
1/4 cup white wine

Method:
Split 1 mirliton in half. Remove stone and boil in saltwater until tender. Cool, then remove inside and save to mix with shrimp and crabmeat stuffing.

Shrimp & Crabmeat Stuffing: Sauté butter and shallots in pan. Add the cream and then reduce to 1/2. Next add the wine and dill. Fold the shrimp and the crabmeat into the sauce. Cook for 5-10 minutes, depending on size of shrimp. Season with salt and pepper. Scopp into the mirliton. Sprinkle tops with bread crumbs and 1 pat of butter. Then bake in 350 degree oven until hot and serve with wild rice and a marinara sauce.

If you have a favorite seafood recipe that you would like to share, please send it to Julie Anderson janderson@agcenter.lsu.edu for inclusion in future issues.

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We would like to hear from you! Please contact us regarding fishery questions, comments or concerns you would like to see covered in the Lagniappe. Anyone interested in submitting information, such as articles, editorials or photographs pertaining to fishing or fisheries management is encouraged to do so.

Please contact Lagniappe editor Julie Anderson Lively at janderson@agcenter.lsu.edu.

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