Proposed Fishery-related Bills for the 2017 Louisiana Legislative Session

The following is a brief summary of the bills proposed in the 2017 session that could impact fishing or fisheries. We’ve included the number, author and brief synopsis. More information including the full text and current status can be found at www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillSearch.aspx?sid=last.

HB156 – DWIGHT – FISHING/OYSTERS: Limits the gear used for oyster harvest on Calcasieu Lake and Sabine Lake to tonging.

HB474 – GAROFALO - FISHING/OYSTERS: Authorizes the issuance of an alternative oyster culture permit to a person holding an oyster lease on a privately owned water bottom.

HB475 – GISCLAIR - FISHING/CRABS: Provides that the removal of derelict crab traps coincide with the closure of crab season by authorizing the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to prohibit certain crab traps when the season is closed for biological or technical reasons.

HB591 – STOKES – FISHING/LICENSES: Allows purchase of a senior hunting and fishing license by any person who turns 60 years of age at any time during the calendar year in which the license is purchased.

HB614 – GISCLAIR – SEAFOOD: Authorizes the Grand Isle Port Commission to use an additional 13 acres of a specified portion of water bottom, water column and water surface for a seafood research program undertaken in cooperation with the Louisiana Sea Grant program in seafood production research.

SB77 – LAMBERT - WILDLIFE/FISHERIES DEPT: Allows the use of gill nets for taking of shad as bait fish during the closed season and on weekends of the open season with certain limitations: (1) The shad gill net shall not exceed 150 feet in length. (2) No more than 50 pounds of shad shall be taken per day. (3) The gill net shall be attended at all times.

SB103 – RISER - WATER/WATERWAYS: Provides that if the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission fails to take action on the proposed rules and regulations within 180 days after submission by the commission, then the proposed rules and regulations shall be deemed to be adopted.

SB207 – ALLAIN - FISH/FISHING: Limits the permissible uses of monies in the Saltwater Fish Research and Conservation Fund.

SCR1 – MORRISH - COASTAL PROTECT/RES AUTH: Approves the comprehensive master plan for integrated coastal protection.

- Skylar Bueche and Julie Lively

Inshore Shrimp Season Fills the Void with Access to Local Catch

The spring inshore shrimp season is around the corner. Though most of the state outside waters have been open since March 17, the multitude of inshore fishing vessels, dubbed the “mosquito fleet”, greatly increase the volume and availability of local, wild-caught shrimp.

“This short spring season brings in mostly brown shrimp from saltier estuaries,” said Dominique Seibert, Louisiana Sea Grant/LSU AgCenter area fisheries agent in St. Bernard and Plaquemines parishes. “These smaller shrimp are more likely to be floating in shallow waterways at this time of year… perfect for scooping up with the skimmer and butterfly nets of inshore boats.”

Inshore shrimping trips may be limited to one day or night for the smaller boats, and four or five days for the larger vessels. Boats must be loaded with enough fuel, ice and supplies for the trip, though some shrimpers have recently opted to install
mechanical chilled water systems as a way to store shrimp and cut expenses for ice. These boats may be smaller in length, it still takes significant capital investment to get into the business and stay in it for the long haul.

“Each shrimp boat represents a small business enterprise and may have been in the same family for several generations,” said Seibert. “Even a smaller shrimp boat may have more than $100,000 invested, with constant repairs and maintenance required to keep vessels in working condition. Each trip is a gamble with hopes that shrimp catches will allow for a profit.”

To help the shrimp industry thrive, LouisianaDirectSeafood.com, an initiative administered by Louisiana Sea Grant and LSU AgCenter, provides an online resource for consumers to connect with fishermen in four main coastal areas: Cameron, Delcambre, Lafourche-Terrebonne, and Southshore/New Orleans. Each area has its own website, where fishermen can post their most recent catch for sale, and how to contact them directly. Facebook pages and e-newsletters for each region also serve to keep consumers in the know.
LOUISIANA REGULATIONS

Spring Shrimp Season

On May 1, the remainder of the Louisiana offshore waters opened to shrimping at 6 a.m.

For the inshore waters, the opening dates for the 2017 Louisiana spring shrimp season were as follows:

- The portion of state inside waters from the Mississippi/Louisiana state line to the eastern shore of South Pass of the Mississippi River at 6 a.m. on Monday, May 15
- The portion of state inside waters from the eastern shore of South Pass of the Mississippi River to Freshwater Bayou at 6 a.m. on Monday, May 8
- The portion of state inside waters from Freshwater Bayou to the Louisiana/Texas state line at 6 a.m. on Monday, May 15

LDWF biologists monitored hydrological parameters and conducted over 500 trawl samples throughout the state’s estuarine and nearshore waters over the last five weeks to develop management recommendations for spring inshore opening dates. The department provided projections of the dates when a minimum of 50 percent of the inshore brown shrimp population sampled reach sizes of 100 count per pound or larger.

The federal waters off Texas (9 to 200 nautical miles) and state waters closed on May 15 to allow the brown shrimp to grow. This closure is usually 45 to 90 days.

Commercial Fishery For Large Coastal Sharks

The commercial fishery for large coastal sharks in Louisiana waters closed effective May 4 at 11:30 p.m. This closure is concurrent with the National Marine Fisheries Service’s closure of commercial fishing for large coastal sharks in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The season is currently closed in state waters, due to the annual seasonal closure of recreational and commercial shark harvest. The season is scheduled to reopen in state and federal waters on Jan. 1, 2018.

During the closed season, all commercial harvest, possession, purchase, exchange, barter, trade, sale or attempt to purchase, exchange, barter, trade or sell large coastal sharks or their fins is prohibited.

Vessels that have been issued or that possess a federal shark research permit may continue to operate under the conditions of that permit, which includes the presence of designated NOAA Fisheries observers aboard the vessel for the duration of the trip until the quota for the federal shark research fishery is achieved.

GULF OF MEXICO REGULATIONS

NOAA Announces the 2017 Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Recreational Seasons

The 2017 Gulf of Mexico federal red snapper recreational seasons open for the private angling and federally permitted for-hire components on June 1, 2017, at 12:01 a.m., local time. The private angler component season will be three days and the federally permitted for-hire component season will be 49 days in federal waters.

Closing dates for each component are:

- Private Anglers: June 4, 2017, at 12:01 a.m., local time.
- Federally Permitted For-Hire Vessels: July 20, 2017, at 12:01 a.m., local 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:

Fish Gear Coordinates – February and March

In accordance with the provisions of R.S. 56:700.1 et. seq., notice is given that five claims in the amount of $24,276.20 were received for payment during the period April 1-30, 2017.

There were five paid and zero denied.

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates, in Degree Decimal Minutes, of reported underwater obstructions are:

- 29 09.110 89 28.560 PLAQUEMINES
- 29 10.688 89 29.164 PLAQUEMINES
- 29 11.371 89 31.556 PLAQUEMINES
- 29 11.784 90 38.377 TERREBONNE
- 29 50.510 89 41.471 SAINT BERNARD

A list of claimants and amounts paid can be obtained from Donald Haydel, administrator, Fishermen’s Gear Compensation Fund, P.O. Box 44277, Baton Rouge, LA 70804 or you can call (225) 342-7591.

Important & Upcoming Events

May 11, 2017 – Commercial King Mackerel Fishing in the Gulf of Mexico opens

March 6, 2018 – Louisiana Fisheries Forward Summit
THE GUMBO POT

SHRIMP SHOOTERS

Recipe courtesy of Louisiana Kitchen & Culture.
For more recipes or to subscribe to their magazine or free newsletter, please visit http://louisiana.kitchenandculture.com/

Ingredients:

- 2/3 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup white balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoon grated lemon rind
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce
- 1 1/2 lb. peeled, large cooked Louisiana shrimp
- Romaine lettuce heart leaves

Method:

Whisk together first 7 ingredients in a large bowl.
Place cooked shrimp and vinaigrette mixture in a large zip-top plastic freezer bag. Seal and chill at least 8 hours or up to 24 hours, turning bag occasionally.
Arrange lettuce leaves in 8 (6- to 8-oz.) glasses. Spoon shrimp mixture evenly into glasses. Arrange glasses in a baking dish and surround with ice to keep chilled.

Be sure to visit the Lagniappe blog for additional news and timely events between issues.
https://louisianalagniappe.wordpress.com/

Lagniappe Fisheries Newsletter
Editor: Julie Anderson Lively  Web coordinator: Melissa Castleberry  Copy editor: Roy Kron
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.