LSU AgCenter
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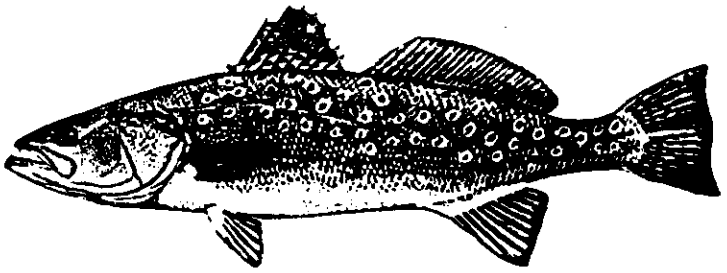
SEA GRANT PROGRAM



LAGNIAPPE

CHANGES, CHANGES

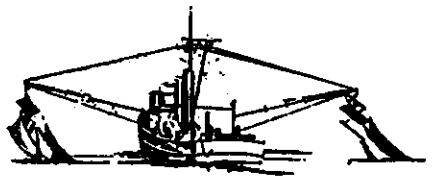
If you haven't already heard, my job assignment with the LSU AgCenter has been changed. I am now no longer the Marine Advisory Agent for the Parishes of Jefferson, St. Charles, St. John, and part of Orleans. My new role is that of fisheries specialist, and I am assigned to work on statewide fisheries issues and programs. Most of my work will be done through one of our eight Marine Advisory Agents.

My replacement is Mark Schexnayder. Residents of the four-parish area are very fortunate to have Mark, a 14-year veteran fisheries biologist. Prior to accepting this position, Mark was the Crustacean Program Manager for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. In that role, one of his duties was management of one of the state's most valuable fisheries, the shrimp fishery. Mark is no stranger to this area, having served for four years on the Jefferson Parish Marine Fisheries Advisory Board. He also managed the department's Marine Lab on Grand Terre Island.

No interruption of services will occur. You will continue to receive the monthly newsletter produced with the assistance of our eight area fisheries agents. Mark's office will be at 1855 Ames Blvd. in Marrero and he may be called at 504/349-5644. Please make him feel welcome in his new job.

Jerald Horst

UNDERWATER OBSTRUCTION REMOVAL UPDATE



Bruce Ballard, administrator of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources Underwater Obstruction Removal Program has reported the completion of another underwater obstruction removal project. A total of 20 obstructions were totally or partially removed from near shore waters off of the beaches of Jefferson, Lafourche and Plaquemines Parishes and 3 more from the inshore waters of Terrebonne Parish.

The estimated total weight of the removed obstruction was 518 tons and filled 3 barges. The cost of the project was $124,760. Locations and descriptions of the removed objects is listed below.

1) Six 4' x 4' x 6' metal mixing tanks filled with concrete. Lat.-- 29° 04.087' N, Long.-- 90° 16.629' W.

2) Five wooden pilings. Lat.-- 29° 04.546' N, Long.-- 90° 15.355' W.

3) Ninety tons of cast iron pipe and the debris from old lighthouse (lighthouse remains in place). Lat.-- 29° 03.034' N, Long.-- 90° 20.973' W.

4) Half of a very deteriorated 50' x 100' metal barge (other half remains in place). Lat.-- 29° 11.443'N, Long.-- 90° 37.019' W.

5) Destroyed channel marker. Lat.-- 29° 13.311' N, Long.-- 90° 39.498' W.

6) Four 36-inch dredge pipes 75 feet long. A 3' x 3' steel plate. A metal 20' x 20' x 10' frame structure. Lat.-- 29° 13.444' N, Long.-- 90° 39.737' W.

7) Sixty pound metal bar. Lat.-- 29° 16'787' N, Long.-- 89° 51.928' W.

8) Fifty-foot shrimp boat. Lat.-- 29° 17.530' N, Long.-- 89° 50.686' W.

9) Two pilings. Lat.-- 29° 18.193' N, Long.-- 89° 49.808' W.

10) A 3-inch pipe. Lat.-- 29° 18.481' N, Long.-- 89° 47.001' W.

11) Boom and rigging of a large shrimp boat. Lat.-- 29° 18.433' N, Long.-- 89° 46.902' W.

12) Forty-foot cypress tree and two other trees. Lat.– 29° 18.402' N, Long.– 89° 45.672' W.

13) Pipes, boards and metal bar. Lat.– 29° 18.457' N, Long.– 89° 46.721' W.

14) Piling. Lat.– 29° 03.175' N, Long,– 90° 20.303' W.

15) Five pilings. Lat.– 29° 03.217' N, Long.– 90° 20.306' W.

16) Five pilings. Lat.– 29° 03.180' N, Long.– 90° 20.358' W.

17) Piling. Lat.– 29° 03.199' N, Long.– 90° 20.319' W.

18) Pipe. (A nearby piling located during the survey could not be found by the removal contractor). Lat.– 29° 06.733' N, Long.– 90° 09.926' W.

19) Pipe. Lat.– 29° 04.749'N, Long.– 90° 13.048' W.

20) Pipe and jagged metal. Lat.– 29° 15.575' N, Long.– 89° 56.455' W.

21) Fifty-five foot wooden shrimp boat. Lat.– 29° 12.636' N, Long.– 90° 00.912' W.

22) A portion of a buried dredge barge (part of it remains). Lat.– 29° 13.250' N, Long.– 89° 59.435' W.

23) Steel plate and pipe. Lat.– 29° 09.246' N, Long.– 90° 05.768' W.

Underwater obstructions cause millions of dollars of damage to shrimp trawls and recreational and commercial boats. The major amount of money used in this program came from unused Hurricane Andrew disaster funds provided through the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. These funds are nearly depleted, and unless another source of funding is found, the program will have to be severely reduced.

L.D.W.F. ANNOUNCES AVAILABILITY OF RECREATIONAL GEAR LICENSES THROUGH POINT-OF-SALE

Recreational gear licenses are now available at any location that sells Louisiana hunting and fishing licenses. Recreational gear licenses are for sports anglers using crab traps, slat traps, trawls, oyster tongs, wire nets, crawfish traps, pipes or drums, and cans or buckets. The licenses will also be available by phone or via the Internet. With the new system, recreational fishermen may make their purchases using credit cards, checks or by whatever payment method is allowed by the vendor.

According to Janis Landry, LDWF licensing manager, "The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries initiated the point-of-sale program in September. Through this action, we are able to provide better service for our customers. Some 15,000 recreational gear licenses are sold per year. The point-of-sale system eliminates the need for the consumer to fill out a paper application and provides convenience."

Previously, recreational gear licenses were available only by mail or in person at LDWF Baton Rouge headquarters or at the New Orleans office on Canal Street. Recreational gear licenses are also available through LDWF telephone sale at 1-888-765-2602, the LDWF Internet website at www.wlf.state.la.us as well as participating vendors throughout Louisiana.

NETWORK UNHAPPY WITH N.M.F.S.

Earlier this year the Marine Fish Conservation Network blasted the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), while supporting new federal legislation to put even more teeth in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. This is the act that sets U.S. fisheries policy and management in federal waters.

The Network faulted NMFS, as well as the New England, North Pacific and Pacific Fishery Management Councils, for failing to prevent fisheries failures in New England, Alaska and the West Coast that have cost U.S. taxpayers more than $160 million in aid to fishing families since 1994. According to the Network, Congress will soon be considering another $421 million in federal disaster relief for fishermen affected by recent crab, salmon and groundfish stock collapses in these same regions. The report further points out that every single managed species whose status is known is overfished.

The Network accuses NMFS of "reckless mismanagement" in approving fishery management plans that fail to meet congressional standards, while at the same time, NMFS' own scientists were preparing a report to Congress that overfishing levels in the U.S. were at an all time high. The Network news release also stated that in an October 1999 report that NMFS admitted that they did not know the status of nearly 75% of the nation's managed stocks.

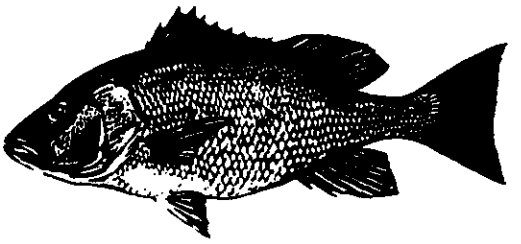
What does this mean to Louisiana fishermen. It would be easy to answer "nothing", since none of the management failures mentioned in the release were in the Gulf of Mexico. But federal fisheries laws passed as part of the Sustainable Fisheries Act apply to all regions, the Gulf as well as the Atlantic and the Pacific.

Secondly, the Marine Fish Conservation Network made it obvious that the national environmental movement is now a major player in fisheries management. It's not just "sports" and "commercials" any more. Their agenda and timetable may or may not be the same as those of the fishing industries.

The Network announces itself as a coalition of more than 90 environmental groups, fishing associations and scientists. It is clear that fisheries management expectations will become higher and that legislation more complex. What remains to be seen, is if funding will be increased enough to allow management agencies to meet what the law requires.

Source: *Marine Fish Conservation Network News Release 3/9/2000.*

REEF FISH MANAGEMENT



The reef fish group which includes such recreationally and commercially important fish as snappers and groupers, has surely become the center of fisheries management controversy in recent years in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic. Recreational, charter and commercial fishermen are at odds with each other, and all three groups are unhappy with the National Marine Fisheries Service. On top of that, national environment organizations have jumped in.

Now the largest and most prestigious organization of fisheries scientists in the world, the American Fisheries Society (AFS) has weighed in by issuing a policy statement on reef fish management. In a nutshell, AFS says that the way reef fish are currently managed does not work and that new approaches must be tried. Snappers and groupers, they say, are slow-growing, late-maturing fishes with unusual life histories.

AFS cites the following reasons for their position:

- Reef fish have complicated life histories using many habitats. Snappers and groupers spawn on offshore reefs; their tiny larvae free float in the open ocean 20-50 days; their young settle out in nearshore habitats such as seagrass, mangroves, oyster reefs and marshes; then they move offshore to use other habitats, before finally joining other adults on reefs or reef-like habitat. Less than half of reef fish species can even be identified in their larval stage.

- Traditional stock assessments don't work. Virtual population analyses (VPAs) only give information on a year class (population of fish produced by one year's spawn) after it has already passed through the fishery, and no information on the year classes that need managing. Management by using spawning potential ratios (SPRs) doesn't work either, because the emphasis is on determining a species' total egg production by females. Most grouper species change sex. They are hatched and live the first part of their lives as

females, and then later in life change sex to males. Since most fisheries target larger fish, it is possible to have a healthy number of egg-producing females, but not enough males to fertilize their eggs.

- Because many species of reef fish live close together in small areas, closure of harvest on a species that needs protection doesn't work. Fishermen still catch them while fishing for other species. Even though they usually are released, many die anyway.

- Size limits to protect young fish work better on shallow water fish. Deep water fish have a high release mortality. During years of very successful spawns, which should produce bumper year-classes, there are just that many more undersized fish present to catch.

- Bag limits may make fishermen less efficient, but do little to reduce overall harvest as more fishermen enter the fishery or make more trips. The same holds true for trip limits.

- Temporary closures on a single species causes fishermen to fish harder during the open period or target other reef fish, where they will still catch the species under closure as bycatch anyway.

As a result, AFS states that many reef fish are in trouble. Jewfish and Nassau grouper are so overfished that they are candidates for the Endangered Species List. Warsaw grouper and speckled hind may soon follow. On top of this, AFS says that stock information is available for only 5 out of 55 reef fish species in the Gulf of Mexico and 22 of 73 species in the Atlantic.

AFS makes the following recommendations:

- Establish large Marine Protected Areas where no fishing of any kind is allowed. This protects the age structure, genetic diversity, and community structure of fish stocks, as well as the habitat.

- Adopt the use of individual transferable quotas (ITQs) as a commercial harvest management method.

- Use VPAs and SPRs as management tools with caution, because they may paint an overly rosy picture of the fish stock.

- Harvest levels must be set at near what would die of natural causes anyway. Special protection should be given to groups of spawning fish (spawning aggregations) and to large male groupers.

Source: *Long-lived Reef Fishes: The Grouper-Snapper Complex.* AFS Policy Statement. F.C. Coleman, C.C. Koenig, G.R. Huntsman, J.A. Musick, A.M. Eklund, J.C. McGovern, R.W. Chapman, G.R. Sedberry, and C.B. Grimes. Fisheries, Vol. 25, No. 3. American Fisheries Society.

MORE ON RED SNAPPERS

To get some idea of the frustrations involved in fisheries management, one only has to see the written testimony presented by Dr. Bob Shipp, Chairman of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council at the congressional fisheries hearing held in New Orleans on December 14, 1999.

In his testimony, Shipp zeroed in on red snapper management. He stated that depending on which technical model scientists use, the annual safe harvest of red snapper in the Gulf, once the stock is recovered, will be well over 100,000,000 pounds. Again depending on which model is used, a harvest of this size will require a total of 2 to 4 billion pounds of snapper swimming in the waters of the Gulf at one time.

Sounds good! Except at no time in the history of the red snapper fishery, from when it was a virgin stock to when fishermen took more than the safe harvest, did the catch ever get higher than one-fifth of the supposedly safe future harvest of 100,000,000 pounds.

That, however, is the target, at least on paper. Shipp states, "Nevertheless, the draconian measures necessary to attain this theoretical goal (in about the year 2033) would cut the current yield by more than half, and virtually eliminate the fishery, both commercial and recreational, as we know it, and in the process cost the associated coastal tourist industry well over a $100,000,000 annually."

OYSTER FIELD DAY

The Louisiana Sea Grant College Program will hold a field day at its Grand Isle Oyster Hatchery on Saturday, June 24, 2000, from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. The field day is an informal, outdoor demonstration for oyster industry members to learn about on-going and future oyster research and development activities at the hatchery. A tour of the hatchery will include larval and algal rearing, broodstock maintenance, and oyster seed production system operation and maintenance.

Off-bottom oyster culture techniques for use in the planned Grand Isle Aquaculture Park will also be discussed, as well as, recent advances in oyster genetics, including triploid and tetraploid oysters. A free oyster po-boy lunch sponsored by the Louisiana Oyster Dealers and Growers Association will be served after the workshop.

To attend or for more information, please call the Sea Grant Grand Isle Oyster Hatchery at 504/787-3131 for meal planning purposes. The hatchery is located behind the Cajun Holiday Motel's blue and white boat shed, about ¼ mile from the Grand Isle Bridge. The workshop is sponsored by the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program.

CHARTER BOAT INDUSTRY PROFILE

With the recent proposal by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council to bring offshore charter boats under limited entry management, has come an interest in profiling the current charter industry. Since the last such study was done in 1989, researchers from several states teamed up in 1998 to do another study.

A trained interviewer conducted a 59 question personal interview with 96 operators. This is about 22% of the estimated 430 charter operations in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Some of the results are summarized below.

- Most (81%) of the charter boat operators operate on a full time basis. On average they have lived near their home port for 24 years and have operated a charter boat from there for 14 years.

- The average charter boat was 39 feet long and had a total passenger capacity of 12 people. Alabama had the largest charter boats at an average of 46 feet and 15 passengers, and Texas the smallest with 35 feet and 9 passengers.

- Sixty-three percent of the operators offered half-day trips, 98% offered full-day trips and 48% offered overnight trips. Average base fees were $417 for half-day trips, $762 for full-day trips and $1,993 for overnight trips. Of the total trips taken, 16% were half-day 78% full-day, and 6% were overnight.

- For those operators offering each trip type, the average number of trips per year were 36 half-day trips, 85 full-day trips and 8 overnight trips. The period of May through August accounted for 60% of all trips, 25% were taken in September through December and 15% were taken January through April.

- The species most targeted by charter boat operators (at least once a year) were snappers (91%), king mackerel (89%), cobia (76%), tuna (55%), and

amberjack (52%). Surprisingly, redfish came in at 47%, even though harvest from federal waters is not allowed.

- Numbers of fish were reported to be up by 79% of the operators and the average size of fish was also reported to be larger by 74%.

- Average investment by charter operators was $92,713 for the hull and superstructure, $9,058 for the engine, $5,231 for electronics, and $7,298 for other equipment and tackle.

- Items with the highest average annual expenditures were wages and salaries $19,725, hull and superstructure $18,300, fuel and oil $10,256, maintenance and repair $8,584, engine $4,890, insurance $3,799, docking fees $3,034, and advertising $2,986.

- Estimated annual gross revenue (income) for charter boats was $68,934. After annual expenses are deducted, most charter operators do not appear to be highly profitable.

- Estimated jobs provided by the offshore charter industry were 270 in Alabama, 211 in Mississippi, 118 in Louisiana, and 385 in Texas.

- Problems listed by charter boat operators were weather/natural events (94%), high cost of overhead (93%), fishing regulations (85%), cost of insurance (85%), profitability (73%), fuel costs (70%), too many operators (65%), and competition with other operators (61%).

- When asked what part of fisheries management they were most unhappy with, 54% said red snapper regulations, 15% said lack of fisheries management by region, and 12% said enforcement issues.

The study noted that the number of offshore charter boat operators had increased from 210 in 1987 to 430 in 1997. Most of the increase occurred in Alabama, Mississippi and Texas. During that time period, the average length of charter boats had increased by 7 feet, average horsepower by 313 hp and average capacity by 2.1 passengers. On average there was increased reliance on offshore fish species and decreased reliance on inshore species during that period. Using standardized dollars to take out the effects of inflation, charter boat base trip fees increased by approximately 40%.

Source: *A Cross-sectional Study and Longitudinal Perspective on the Social and Economic Characteristics of the Charter and Party Boat Fishing Industry of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas.* Stephen G. Sutton and Robert

B. Ditton, Texas A & M University, John R. Stoll, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, and J. Walter Milon, University of Florida.

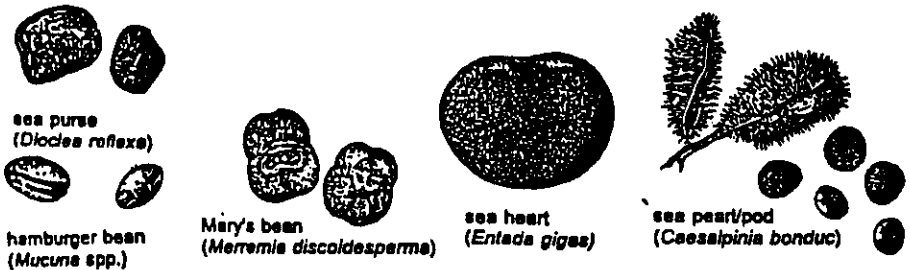
SPANISH MACKEREL AND GROUPER LIMITS

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has announced that the daily recreational bag limit for on Spanish mackerel has been increased from 10 to 15 fish in federal waters. The commercial Spanish mackerel quota for the Gulf was increased to 5.187 million pounds at the same time. The recreational limit in state waters remains at 10 until Louisiana makes a decision about a change.

Several changes were also made by NMFS on grouper regulations. The minimum size limit for gag and black groupers has been increased to 22 inches for recreational fishermen and 24 inches for commercial fishermen. In addition to the size increases, the Gulf commercial fishery for gag, black and red grouper will have a one-month closure each year, from February 15 to March 15.

LUCKY BEANS

Whether you call them sea-beans, lucky beans, or drift seeds, they can be found on most any Louisiana beach. They come from trees and vines that grow along tropical shores and rain forests all over the world. The seeds fall from their parent plant into waterways such as the Amazon River, then drift through outlets to reach the ocean. Once in the ocean they are carried by currents until they wash up on beaches sometimes thousands of miles from their origin. Sea-beans are hard and buoyant, which helps them survive their long voyages.



Sea Beans

Several species are commonly found on Louisiana beaches. The largest is called the sea heart, *Endata gigas*. This huge vine is a common plant in all of the tropical forests of South America. In Guyana it is known as the "monkey ladder" because of the "S" or ribbon shaped growth of the trunk. These climbing vines can be enormous, with vines reaching 500 feet in length and over 1 foot in diameter. In jungle environments, the large vines make at least 50 to 100 foot plants before they flower and make seeds. It is assumed that this size is required to reach the tall jungle canopy. Sea-hearts are legumes,

which is the bean and pod producing family. The pod of the sea-heart may be eight feet in length and contain many seeds.

Other commonly found sea-beans in Louisiana include the hamburger bean *Mucuna spp,* sea purse *Dioclea reflexa,* Mary's bean *Merremia discoidesperma,* and sea pearl *Caesalpinia bonduc.* Additional information about sea-beans can be found by logging onto seabean.com. on the Internet.

Source: *The Drifting Seed.* Vol. 5, No. 2. September 1, 1999.

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THE GUMBO POT
Crab Bread

This is an excellent recipe. It is originally derived from one by Andrew Jaeger of Andrew Jaeger's House of Seafood. If you are unfamiliar with lemon zest, it is simply shredded scrapings from the outside of lemon peel. The gadget department in most grocery stores sells a small, inexpensive zesting tool which makes the job easy.

- 8 oz soft cream cheese
- 1 tbsp garlic, minced
- ¼ cup white wine
- ¼ cup green onions, chopped
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp Worcestershire sauce
- ½ tsp blackening seasoning
- ¼ tsp Tabasco sauce
- ½ tsp lemon zest
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp Creole mustard
- ½ lb crabmeat
- 4 oz shredded cheddar cheese
- ¼ cup green onions, chopped
- ½ loaf French bread

Heat cream cheese, garlic and wine in a sauce pan until cream cheese melts. Add first ¼ cup of green onions, black pepper, Worcestershire sauce, blackening seasoning, Tabasco sauce, lemon zest, lemon juice, and Creole mustard. Mix well over low heat and add crabmeat. Remove from heat. Slice French bread in half lengthwise. Spread mixture evenly on French bread halves. Sprinkle the second ¼ cup of green onions and cheddar cheese over the top. Bake in 300° oven until cheese melts. Serves 4

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