



Wilson's Plover

Named after the ornithologist Alexander Wilson, the Wilson's plover is a tropic and sub tropic species of bird that can be found along the coastlines of North/Central America.

Mature adults are medium brown on top, white on bottom, and display a darker brown collar around their neck. The Wilson's plover also has a distinctively long, thick beak which allows them to penetrate sand and mud to catch small crustaceans, insects, or other marine invertebrates.

While they do forage throughout the day and night, they primarily use the falling tide to expose fiddler crabs which comprise up to 99 percent of this plover's diet. The Wilson's plover will run and lunge to catch crabs before vigorously shaking it to remove its legs before swallowing it.

The Wilson's plover is entirely dependent on the narrow strip of sand that forms along shorelines or mud flats along the bayside. They rely on these areas for both food and nesting. According to most observations, Wilson's plovers are monogamous. They arrive on nesting grounds having already been paired.

The males will make several scrapes for their female partners to investigate as potential nesting sites. Once nesting sites have been chosen, both male and female plovers will group together with neighboring pairs to either attack or distract potential threats such as foxes, raccoons or gulls away from eggs and chicks. These nests blend into their surroundings remarkably well, but while this protects them from most natural threats, it makes it difficult for human beachgoers to notice the nests before it is too late.



Dick Daniels (<http://carolinabirds.org/>)

Increases in development and recreation by humans along shorelines continues to degrade critical habitat for Wilson's plovers and many other types of shorebirds. These birds are currently listed as a species of "least concern", but their populations are steadily decreasing as human development and climate change continues.

– Bailey Pentz

LDWF Begins Online Ordering for Oyster Hatchery Larvae

The online ordering portal to provide the oyster industry with hatchery-reared oyster larvae produced at the Michael C. Voisin Oyster Hatchery began April 19, 2022.

Requests will only be taken via the online ordering portal and will be filled based on the order that they are received with prioritization given to in-state orders. Requests made in writing or by phone will not be accepted. Larger orders may be reduced or split based on the availability of larvae and seed. Payment will not be required at the time of request submission. LDWF will contact those requesting hatchery products at a later date for payment.

The online ordering form can be found at www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/alternative-oyster-culture.

For more information, contact Program Development at (225) 765-3980, (855) 262-1764, or at Oversightprograms@wlf.la.gov.

LDWF Commercial Fishing Licenses for Sale

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' new commercial license fee structure went into effect on Nov. 15, 2021. Commercial fishermen are reminded that most of their licenses can be renewed online by going to www.wlf.louisiana.gov and clicking on the "Buy A License" link at the top of the webpage. However, some licenses are not eligible for renewal due to the changes from the 2021 legislative session. Licenses not eligible for renewal will need to be purchased in person or by mail.

Commercial License applications can be found online at www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/forms.

Details about those licenses that are not eligible for renewal:

Resident Commercial Vessel License – any individual or business that has more than one licensed vessel will not be able to renew a vessel license. Those individuals will need to apply for a new license for each vessel.

Senior Commercial Fisherman – any individual that has a senior commercial license will not be able to renew their license. Each individual will have to apply for a new license and will be required to purchase the necessary gear license.

Individual Gear Licenses – these licenses (examples: crab drop net, hoop net, slat traps, eel pot, minnow trap, can, pipe, bucket, flounder gig, set net, dip net, etc.) have been streamlined into two gear licenses: Other Freshwater Gear and Other Saltwater Gear (except for oyster gear, crab trap, crawfish gear and shrimp gear). Individuals who previously held gear licenses that are no longer available will need to purchase a new gear license.

Retail Dealer License – these licenses will no longer be available. Retail Dealers will be able to renew online but will be obtaining a Wholesale/Retail Dealer license.

First-time applicants can apply by mail or in person. When applying in person, you must provide the following:

- Resident applicants must provide proof of residency such as a Louisiana driver's license, (held continuously for 12 months), voter's registration, vehicle registration and state income tax.
- Non-residents applicants must provide proof of residency from their domiciliary state, such as driver's license, voter's registration, vehicle registration and state income tax.
- Applicants applying for a license in a business name must provide documentation showing proof of valid federal tax ID number assigned to business name and proof of authorized signature, or an occupational license will be required.

For commercial licenses inquiries, contact (225) 765-2898.

NOAA Fisheries Announces Changes to VMS Reimbursement Program

NOAA Fisheries' Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) manages a grant that provides cost reimbursement for the initial purchase of a required Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) transceiver unit. The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission in collaboration with OLE distributes the allocated reimbursement funds to eligible, confirmed vessel owners and operators.

Due to current budgets, the funding and spending of the reimbursement grant has been examined closely and the following adjustments and clarifications have been made to the VMS reimbursement grant:

- Reimbursement requests made under the Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting (SEFHIER) program have been placed first in the prioritization queue, effective through April 30, 2022. All non-SEFHIER reimbursement requests will be placed on hold until May 1, 2022. On May 1, 2022, requests will be processed in the order they were received, beginning with non-SEFHIER requests that were put on hold.

- The maximum reimbursable amount for the purchase of VMS units in programs that allow cellular VMS units (aka enhanced mobile transceiver units – cellular or EMTU-C) is reduced from \$3,100 to \$950. The reduction is based on average costs for a cellular VMS. This new maximum reimbursable amount applies to any unit purchased on or after March 24, 2022. The SEFHIER program allows for the use of cellular VMS units and, therefore, the reimbursement for all VMS units for the SEFHIER program is reduced to \$950. The maximum reimbursable amount for programs that only use satellite VMS (aka EMTU) units is under review.
- Some vessels received Thorium-Triton satellite VMS units at no cost while participating in the third phase of the Gulf of Mexico Electronic Reporting for For-Hire vessels pilot program through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)/CLS America. The Thorium-Triton is an approved VMS unit for the SEFHIER program. Therefore, vessels that received this unit through the pilot program will not be eligible for reimbursement by the government for another VMS unit for that vessel.
- Additional information about these adjustments can be found in the *Law Enforcement Policy Directives*, 06-102: Vessel Monitoring Systems Funding Prioritization Process.

Additional Information:

- The list of type-approved VMS units can be found on the SEFHIER program webpage: www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/rules-and-regulations/approved-vessel-monitoring-system-vms-units-reporting-southeast-hire-integrated
- Information about the reimbursement program can be found on the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission website: www.psmfc.org/program/vessel-monitoring-system-reimbursement-program-vms
- The Power Down Exemption form (PDE) can be found on the program website, in the Information for Gulf of Mexico Permit Holders section, under Important Forms.
- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the VMS requirement and all aspects of the SEFHIER program are available on the program website.

Gulf of Mexico Greater Amberjack Recreational Fishing Season Reopens May 1-31, 2022

NOAA Fisheries reminds recreational fishermen that the Gulf of Mexico greater amberjack recreational fishing season reopened 12:01 a.m., local time, on May 1, 2022, and will close at 12:01 a.m., local time, on June 1, 2022.

What this Means:

- The recreational fishing year for greater amberjack is Aug. 1 through July 31 as set by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and implemented by NOAA Fisheries.
- Preliminary landings indicate the recreational greater amberjack quota has not been met and is not projected to be met, allowing the recreational fishing season to reopen May 1, 2022.
- The recreational fishing season for greater amberjack will close again during its second seasonal closure, starting June 1, 2022, through July 31, 2022.
- The 2022/2023 recreational greater amberjack fishing season will reopen on August 1, 2022.

Greater Amberjack Recreational Management Measures:

- Fishing Year: Aug. 1 – July 31
- Seasonal Closure: Nov. 1 – April 30, and June 1 – July 31
- Minimum Size Limit: 34-inch fork length
- Accountability Measures: In-season closure and payback of any overage of the annual catch limit
- Bag Limit: 1 fish per person
- 2021/2022 annual catch limit: 1,309,620 lbs. whole weight
- 2021/2022 annual catch target: 1,086,985 lbs. whole weight

UPDATE: Louisiana Shrimp Watch

Shrimp watch data is not included in this issue of Lagniappe due to some changes being made to the Monthly Gulf Coast Shrimp Statistics report posted by NOAA Fisheries. Changes are being made to make the report more consistent and reliable. All landing data will be based on trip ticket data provided by the Gulf states and no estimations will be made. Stakeholders can expect to see the January 2022 report in mid-April.

THE GUMBO POT

STUFFED EGGPLANT WITH CRAB*

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:

- 3 medium size eggplants, split lengthwise
- 1 eggplant, peeled and cubed
- ½ pound white crabmeat
- ½ pound ground pork
- ¼ pound butter
- 1 cup chopped onions
- ½ cup chopped celery
- ½ cup chopped red bell pepper
- ¼ cup diced garlic
- ½ cup diced tomatoes
- ½ cup ground andouille sausage
- 1 cup rich chicken stock
- salt and cracked black pepper to taste
- 1-½ cups seasoned Italian bread crumbs
- ¾ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Method:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Boil the three split eggplants in lightly salted water until tender. Remove and cool under tap water. Using a metal spoon, scrape meat from inside of the halved eggplants, being careful not to tear the shell. Save the shells to be stuffed later. Add this scraped meat to the uncooked cubed eggplant and set aside. The cubed eggplant has been added to ensure that enough vegetable will be available at the time of stuffing. In a four quart sauce pot, melt butter over medium high heat. Sauté onions, celery, bell pepper, garlic, tomatoes and andouille approximately ten to fifteen minutes or until vegetables are wilted.

Add ground pork and slow cook until golden brown and each grain of meat is well separated. Add small amounts of chicken stock, should the meat mixture become too dry during cooking. When mixture is browned, add eggplant, and continue to cook an additional thirty minutes until vegetables, meat and eggplant are well blended. Remove from heat and season to taste using salt and cracked black pepper. Gently fold in crabmeat and sprinkle bread crumbs into the mixture to absorb most of the liquid. Using a metal cooking spoon, stuff shells with cooked eggplant mixture, dividing equally between the six shells. Sprinkle additional bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese on top of stuffed eggplant and place on baking pan. Bake until bread crumbs and cheese are golden brown.

* Serves 6

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

Lagniappe Fisheries Newsletter

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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.

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