



Pallid Sturgeon

The pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) is one of the world's 24 sturgeon species and one of four freshwater sturgeon species in the U.S.

Often considered a living fossil, pallid sturgeon have remained essentially unchanged for 70 million years. A unique looking fish, pallid sturgeon have a skeleton made of cartilage and have rows of scutes along their body instead of scales. They have long snouts that protrude outward surrounded by whiskers to sense their environment.

They inhabit channels within large rivers, such as the Mississippi, Atchafalaya and Red rivers in Louisiana. Adults range in size from 19.5 to 31.2 inches and can weigh up to 65 pounds. They are highly migratory within rivers and feed primarily on aquatic insects and small fishes.



Juvenile pallid sturgeon. Photo source: Flickr, USFWS Midwest Region

Historically, pallid sturgeon was targeted as a commercial fish species namely for their eggs which are made into expensive caviar. However, pallid sturgeon take approximately seven to ten years to mature and they spawn infrequently, so the commercial take of their eggs led to a steep decline in their population. In 1990, pallid sturgeon were listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act because of overharvesting, habitat degradation and declines in water quality, as well as the construction of dams that prevented migration to spawning sites.

Despite regulations that prevent any harvest of pallid sturgeon, they are still considered endangered and their population is decreasing. Very little is known about the life history of this ancient species, but more data could lead to increased success in pallid sturgeon conservation.

– Lauren Bonatakis

Sources:

www.wlf.louisiana.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/fact_sheet_animal/32189-Scaphirhynchus%20albus/scaphirhynchus_albus.pdf

www.fws.gov/fisheries/freshwater-fish-of-america/pallid_sturgeon.html

www.lsuagcenter.com/portals/communications/publications/agmag/archive/2002/spring/pallid-sturgeon-a-louisiana-living-fossil

www.iucnredlist.org/species/19940/9111329

Chair, Vice-Chair of Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Al Sunseri of New Orleans was elected chair of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (LWFC), and Bill Hogan of Ruston vice-chair during the Commission's January meeting. The two commissioners will serve in those positions through 2019.

Sunseri, who served as vice chair the previous year, is a lifelong Louisiana resident and is the owner and general manager of New Orleans' P&J Oyster Co. He was a founding member of the Gulf Oyster Industry Council. In addition to serving on several boards, Sunseri has helped draft state laws and regulations relating to the oyster industry and coastal restoration.

Hogan is a longtime Louisiana resident and president and CEO of Ruston Bank. He was born in Nashville, Tenn., grew up in Fort Smith, Ark., and graduated from Oklahoma State University with a degree in finance. A member of Ducks Unlimited for 29 years, Hogan has served as state chairman of DU and is a member of the National Wild Turkey Federation.

New Translated Publications, Oil Spill Science Seminars, Presentation Videos available on Sea Grant Oil Spill Team Website

- Spanish and Vietnamese translations are now available for *Storms and spills and Where did the oil go? A Deepwater Horizon fact sheet*. They can be viewed and downloaded: <https://gulfseagrant.org/oilspilloutreach/publications/>.

- Registration is now open for the upcoming seminar *Birds & oil spills* to be held Feb. 28 in Baton Rouge. This free event, held in partnership with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife service, will feature speakers on a variety of topics related to oil spills and birds, including toxicological effects, impacts to marsh dwelling and migratory species, as well as oil spill response, rehabilitation and monitoring efforts. It will also be live-streamed for those who can't attend in person. To register: <https://gulfseagrant.org/oilspilloutreach/presentations/birds-oil-spills/>.

- New dates have been set for upcoming workshops in the National Academies, GoMRI and Sea Grant collaborative series on oil spills and public health. Regional meetings are planned in Anchorage, Alaska, on Feb. 20-21; Virginia Beach, Va., on March 29 and Santa Barbara, Calif., on April 5. To learn more: <https://gulfseagrant.org/oilspilloutreach/collaborative-workshop-series/>.

- Videos from two of our recent seminars are now online.

1. To view presentations from *Technology used to study oil spills, Part 2*:

<https://gulfseagrant.org/oilspilloutreach/presentations/technology-used-to-study-oil-spills-part-2/>.

2. To see speakers and panels from *Prioritizing health and oil spill preparedness*:

<https://gulfseagrant.org/oilspilloutreach/presentations/prioritizing-health-and-oil-spill-preparedness/>.

Important Dates & Upcoming Events

Feb 18 – Louisiana's Seafood Future regional fisheries meeting, YMCA, 278 Civic Center Dr., Port Sulphur, 5:30 p.m.

Feb 19 – Louisiana Seafood Future regional fisheries meeting, Docville, 5124 East St, Violet, 5:30 p.m.

Feb 27 – Shrimp Task Force, Terrebonne Council Meeting Room, 8026 Main Street, Houma, 10:00 a.m.

Mar 7 – Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission Meeting, 9363 US-165, Woodworth, La, 9:30 a.m.

Mar 7 – St. Bernard Dock Day, TBD*

Mar 8 – Venice Dock Day, TBD*

Mar 12 – Lafourche Dock Day, TBD*

Mar 14 – Terrebonne Dock Day, Houma, TBD*

Mar 18 – Delcambre Dock Day, TBD*

Mar 21 – Cameron Dock Day, TBD*

April 4 – Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission Meeting, LDWF Building, Quail Dr., Baton Rouge, 9:30 a.m.

April 8 – Lafitte Dock Day, TBD*

* Please visit <https://www.lafisheriesforward.org/> for more information on the Dock Days.

Oyster Changes

Oyster Harvest in East Portion of Calcasieu Lake

Oyster harvest in the east portion of the Calcasieu Lake Public Oyster Area reopened in Cameron Parish at one half-hour before sunrise on Jan. 21 under the following conditions:

1. The reopening of the east portion of the Calcasieu Lake Public Oyster Area shall not supersede any public health closures.
2. All oysters aboard a vessel harvesting in the east portion of the Calcasieu Lake Public Oyster Area are deemed to have been taken from east portion of the Calcasieu Lake Public Oyster Area.
3. Oyster scrapers are prohibited on vessels harvesting oysters in Calcasieu Lake.
4. The daily and possession sack limit is set at 10 sacks of oysters per vessel.

The oyster population in Calcasieu Lake is managed in two separate units (East and West Cove). Upon reassessment of the available oyster resource relative to current conditions in West Cove, it was determined that the east portion can reopen to allow additional harvest.

Harvest Closure in Public Oyster Seed Grounds East of the Mississippi

Oyster harvest closed in a portion of the public oyster seed grounds east of the Mississippi River, in St. Bernard Parish, at one half-hour after sunset on Jan. 20.

The portions of the public oyster seed grounds to be closed are as follows:

- the area within the portion of Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Shellfish Harvest Area 3 that is north of latitude line: 29 degrees 59 minutes 30 seconds north in St. Bernard Parish, and;
- the following cultch plants within the coordinates described below:

3-Mile Pass (2013)

- 30 degrees 03 minutes 56.70 seconds N
89 degrees 22 minutes 15.40 seconds W
- 30 degrees 03 minutes 56.70 seconds N
89 degrees 22 minutes 15.40 seconds W
- 30 degrees 03 minutes 18.00 seconds N
89 degrees 22 minutes 06.30 seconds W
- 30 degrees 03 minutes 30.49 seconds N
89 degrees 22 minutes 38.17 seconds W

Drum Bay (2013)

- 29 degrees 53 minutes 13.00 seconds N
89 degrees 17 minutes 40.21 seconds W
- 29 degrees 53 minutes 16.51 seconds N
89 degrees 16 minutes 51.12 seconds W
- 29 degrees 52 minutes 56.17 seconds N
89 degrees 16 minutes 49.80 seconds W
- 29 degrees 52 minutes 53.99 seconds N
89 degrees 17 minutes 40.43 seconds W

The oyster population in the public oyster seed grounds has been in decline for several years, and the recommended threshold in this portion of the public seed grounds, east of the Mississippi River, has been met. The closure is necessary to protect undersized oysters, allowing growth for future harvest opportunities. Continued harvest might threaten the long-term sustainability of remaining oyster resources in this area. Protection of the remaining oyster resources is in the long-term best interest of the oyster populations in this public oyster seed ground.

Portion of Public Oyster Seed Grounds to be Undesignated

LWFC took the first step in the effort to un-designate a portion of the Public Oyster Seed Grounds east of the Mississippi River. The initiative will now undergo a public comment phase to allow interested parties to provide input on this potential action. If ultimately promulgated as a final rule, the action would not occur until the first lottery phase of the oyster moratorium lifting process commences. Lifting the long-standing oyster lease moratorium and turning some public oyster grounds into leasable areas are part of an ongoing effort by the state to assist the oyster industry in adapting to changing coastal conditions.

Approximately 40,248 acres of the seed grounds in Bay Eloi and northern Breton Sound will no longer be designated as a seed ground upon commencement of the first lottery phase of the oyster moratorium lifting process (also described as Phase Four of Section 2 of Act 595 of the 2016 Regular Session of the Legislature).

The below described areas will no longer be designated as a seed ground and will be available for oyster leasing upon commencement of the first lottery phase of the oyster moratorium lifting process.

North Breton Sound

- 89 degrees 24 minutes 00.000 seconds W
29 degrees 41 minutes 00.468 seconds N;
- 89 degrees 24 minutes 00.000 seconds W
29 degrees 34 minutes 30.000 seconds N;
- 89 degrees 27 minutes 56.000 seconds W
29 degrees 34 minutes 30.000 seconds N;
- 89 degrees 27 minutes 56.000 seconds W
29 degrees 41 minutes 12.400 seconds N;
- following the current public oyster seed ground boundary line and shorelines back to point of beginning.

Bay Eloi

- 89 degrees 17 minutes 12.190 seconds W
29 degrees 45 minutes 49.160 seconds N;
- 89 degrees 23 minutes 46.500 seconds W
29 degrees 41 minutes 09.948 seconds N;
- following the current public oyster seed ground boundary line and shorelines back to point of beginning.

Public comments will be accepted at LWFC monthly meetings in February and March and/or can be submitted in writing by mail to Carolina Bourque, LDWF Marine Fisheries Biologist, 200 Dulles Drive, Lafayette, LA 70506, or via e-mail to cbourque@la.gov, prior to 9 a.m., March 7, 2019.

To view a map of the current oyster opening areas visit <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/oyster-season>.

Louisiana Shrimp Watch

Due to the partial federal shutdown, the December values are not yet available.

THE GUMBO POT

CRAWFISH DIP

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:

1 stick (8 tablespoons) butter
 1 large onion, diced
 1 medium bell pepper, diced
 1 clove garlic, minced
 ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
 1 pound Louisiana crawfish tails, cooked and peeled
 Salt, pepper and hot sauce, to taste
 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
 Crackers or Melba toast, for serving

Method:

Melt butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Sauté onion and bell pepper until onion is transparent. Add garlic, parsley, crawfish and seasoning. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add cream cheese and reduce heat, stirring until smooth. Taste and adjust seasonings.



Lagniappe Fisheries Newsletter

Editor: Julie Lively

Web coordinator: Melissa Castleberry

Copy editor: Roy Kron



For more information, contact your local extension agent:

Thu Bui

Assistant Extension Agent, Fisheries
St. Mary, Iberia, and Vermilion Parishes
Phone: (337) 828-4100, ext. 300
tbui@agcenter.lsu.edu

Nicole Lundberg

Area Agent – Fisheries/Coastal Issues
Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes
Phone: (985) 873-6495
nlundberg@agcenter.lsu.edu

Carol D. Franze

Marine Agent
Southeast Region
Phone: (985) 875-2635
cfranze@agcenter.lsu.edu

Kevin Savoie

Area Agent (Southwest Region)
Natural Resources-Fisheries
Phone: (337) 475-8812
ksavoie@agcenter.lsu.edu

Albert ‘Rusty’ Gaudé

Area Agent, Fisheries
Jefferson, Orleans, St. Charles and St. John Parishes
Phone: (504) 433-3664
agaude@agcenter.lsu.edu

Dominique Seibert

Area Agent - Coastal Advisor
Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parishes
Phone: (504) 433-3664
dseibert@agcenter.lsu.edu

Thomas Hymel

Watershed Educator
Iberia, St. Martin, Lafayette, Vermilion,
St. Landry, & Avoyelles Parishes
Phone: (337) 276-5527
thymel@agcenter.lsu.edu

Mark Shirley

Area Agent (Aquaculture & Coastal Resources)
Jefferson Davis, Vermilion, Acadia, St. Landry,
Evangeline, Cameron, Calcasieu, Lafayette,
Beauregard, & Allen Parishes
Phone: (337) 898-4335
mshirley@agcenter.lsu.edu

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 Lively at janderson@agcenter.lsu.edu

Julie A. Lively

Associate Professor
LSU Agcenter & Louisiana Sea Grant
114 RNR Building
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
Phone: 225-578-0771
Fax: 225-578-4227
janderson@agcenter.lsu.edu