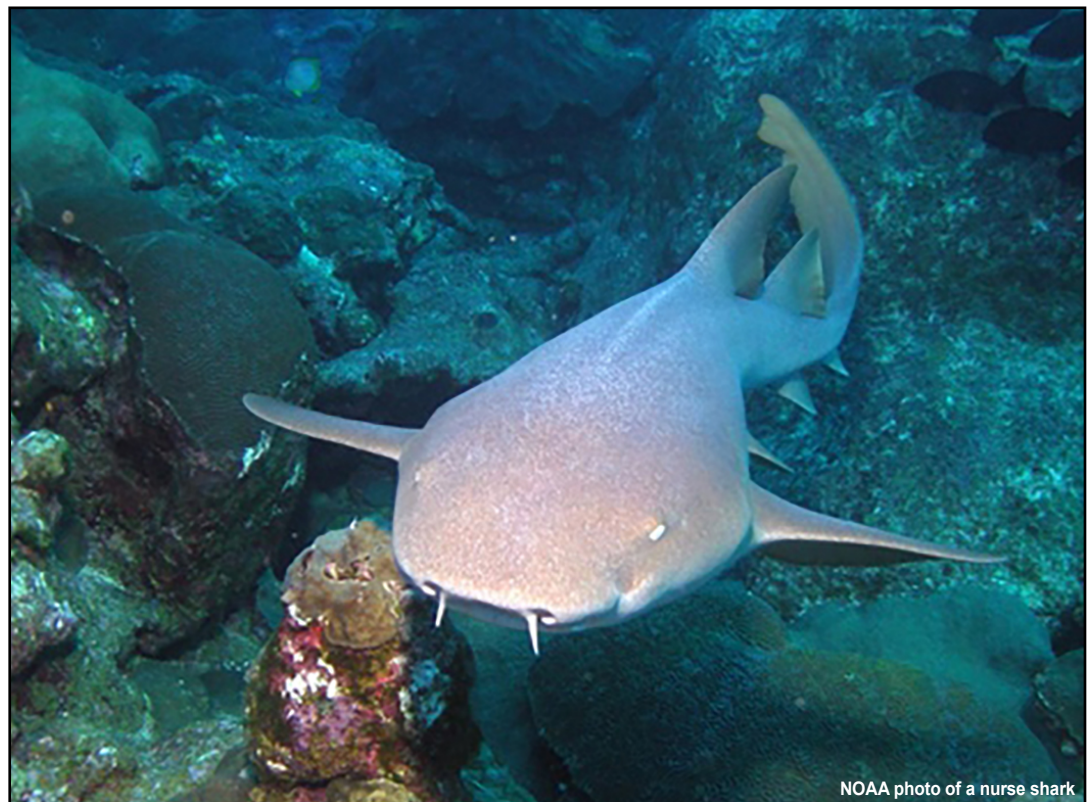




Couch Potatoes of the Ocean

The nurse shark (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*) is a largely nocturnal fish normally residing in warm, shallow coastal waters. Unlike most species of sharks, nurse sharks are exceptionally sedentary, generally sluggish in nature and spend most of the daylight hours resting. Interestingly, nurse sharks often rest in groups of up to 40 individuals piled on top of one another. They like to rest in caves, in crevices and under ledges on the bottom of coral reefs and tend to return to particular resting sites. Even so, they will hunt alone at night. Because they are docile, inactive and unlike other sharks remain perfectly still during the day, they are vulnerable to coastal fisheries and an easy target for spearfishing. This is the species of shark most likely to be encountered by scuba divers or snorkelers within their range.

A slow-moving bottom-dweller, the nurse shark can be yellow-brown to gray-brown in color, although newborns have a spotted coloration that fades with age. Nurse sharks can be identified by two moderately long barbels between the nostrils that surround the mouth. They are known for their smooth skin. Adult females tend to be slightly larger than males, and this shark can use its large front fins to “walk” on the ocean floor.



NOAA photo of a nurse shark

The nurse shark is also known as the cat shark or carpet shark, although the etymology of the name “nurse” is unclear. It may come from the sucking sound it makes when feeding, which can sound like a nursing human baby. More likely the name comes from “hurser”, which is the Old English word for a sea-floor shark.

During twilight hours and at night, the nurse shark feeds on the ocean floor using suction to swallow their prey whole. With limited vision, they use hearing to detect prey. Nurse sharks can generate suction forces among the most powerful of any aquatic vertebrate. Although they have been known to generate enough pressure to suck a queen conch right out of its shell, they are opportunists and more commonly prey on small fish and some invertebrates. Conversely, shared habitats have allowed nurse sharks to become the prey of American alligators and crocodiles. They are also sometimes food for other sharks.

– Bailey Pentz

Commercial Large Coastal Shark Possession Limit

The possession limit for commercially harvested large coastal sharks (great hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, nurse shark, blacktip shark, bull shark, lemon shark, sandbar shark, silky shark, spinner shark and tiger shark) increased from 45 to 55 per day on March 10, 2022. The adjustment was made by Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Secretary Jack Montoucet, as authorized by Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (LWFC) action in LAC 76.VII.357.H.2, after he was informed by NOAA Fisheries of a similar in-season adjustment in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

The quota adjustment is a result of under harvest in the current quota year. The commercial large coastal sharks season is scheduled to end on Dec. 31, 2022.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) would also like to remind commercial harvesters that the season for the harvest of all sharks is prohibited from April 1 through June 30 of each year for state-permitted commercial harvesters.

There is still no possession of sandbar sharks allowed unless a commercial fisherman has in their name and in possession a valid federal shark research permit as described in federal regulations (50 CFR 635.32(1)).

Commercial Fishing for Bait Menhaden

The commercial season for the harvest of bait menhaden opened on Thursday, March 14, 2022, based upon a request from the bait menhaden industry to the LWFC.

The commercial season for the harvest of bait menhaden typically opens on Nov. 2 and runs through Dec. 1 with a 3,000 metric ton quota. In the event that quota is not harvested during the normal December season, the bait season may resume April 1 of the following year, unless commission action occurs to reopen the season earlier.

The bait industry requested the LWFC open the season two weeks earlier on March 14 to meet customer demand.

Commercial and Recreation Closed Season for Flounder

A Notice of Intent was set to close recreational and commercial harvest of southern flounder from Oct. 15 to Nov. 30 of every year. Modifications in this rule create one statewide closed season for southern flounder for both the recreational and commercial sectors.

This closed season is necessary to attempt to recover the stock of southern flounder, which is overfished based on results from the most recent flounder stock assessment. LDWF staff briefed the LWFC on management options necessary to recover the stock. Those options require a minimum of a 50 percent reduction in mature female southern flounder harvest. The LWFC chose to move forward with an annual closed season in the fall to allow mature female flounder to escape inshore waters and move offshore to spawn. The closed season is projected to help the stock recover to a healthy biomass target by 2028.

Interested persons may submit comments relative to the proposed rule to Jason Adriance, Fisheries Division, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000 or via email to jadriance@wlf.la.gov prior to noon on May 2, 2022. The full notice of intent can be found at www.wlf.louisiana.gov/assets/Resources/Publications/Commission_Action_Items/Southern-Flounder-Comm-and-Rec-Consolidation-2022-NOI_css.pdf.

Recreational Offshore Landing Permit (ROLP) System Requires Action from Permit Holders

A new Recreational Offshore Landing Permit (ROLP) website is in development by LDWF. The new site is meant to improve the quality of the permit holder database, update aspects of the permit to comply with recent legislative changes, improve the look and feel of the site and make it mobile-friendly. The new website is scheduled to go live by late April.

The changes will require sub-account ROLP permit holders to take action to prevent the deletion of their account. Previously, a single ROLP account (primary account) could include multiple permit holders (sub-accounts). In the new website, each ROLP account will be limited to one ROLP permit. Sub-accounts were deleted from the system on March 25, 2022, unless the sub-account holder moved their account to a primary account.

All ROLP accounts will be impacted by the ROLP website migration to some degree or another. Additional news releases will be published to guide permit holders through the process. The migration is expected to be completed by the end of April.

The ROLP is a free permit that is required in addition to all other applicable licenses and/or permits to possess the following offshore fish species or species groups in Louisiana state waters:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. Tunas | 6. Groupers |
| 2. Billfish | 7. Hinds |
| 3. Swordfish | 8. Cobia |
| 4. Amberjacks | 9. Wahoo |
| 5. Snappers | 10. Dolphinfinh |

The ROLP was developed to better quantify and characterize the charter and recreational anglers that fish beyond Louisiana's territorial waters and plays a critical role in State's LA Creel Program.

For questions or assistance, contact LDWF at rolp@wlf.la.gov.

Shrimp Excise Tax / Oyster Severance Tax No Longer Paid

As of Nov. 15, 2021, all wholesale/retail seafood dealers are not required to report or pay shrimp excise and oyster severance taxes to LDWF. The 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature repealed LA R.S. 56:506 and LA R.S. 56:446 which required LDWF to collect the excise and severance taxes.

Any payments made from December 2021 forward will be voided and returned to the seafood dealers.

Please contact Jennifer Riddle (225) 765-2655 or Nikki Wisman (225) 765-2863 if you have any questions regarding the law change.

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

LEMON SHRIMP & GREEN BEANS*

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 lb. peeled and deveined medium shrimp, salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp. olive oil, divided
- 1 lb. green beans, washed, snapped
- ¼ cup thinly sliced shallot
- 1 tsp. lemon zest
- 1 tsp. dried dill
- 2 tbsp. butter, divided
- 2 tbsp. lemon juice

Method:

Toss shrimp with a little salt and set aside for a few minutes.

Heat half the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the green beans, shallot, lemon zest and dill and combine; cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until beans are crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in half the butter; transfer to a platter and keep warm.

Return skillet to heat with remaining olive oil and butter; when butter foam subsides, add shrimp and salt and pepper to taste and cook, stirring until shrimp curl and turn pink; do not over-cook. Stir in lemon juice and deglaze pan, scraping up browned tasty bits; return beans to pan and toss to coat. Serve at once.

*Serves 4

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.

Please contact Lagniappe editor Julie Lively at julieann@lsu.edu

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