Lagniappe

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Kemp's Ridley Status Update

Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*) is the most endangered of all sea turtle species. It primarily nests in Tamaulipas, Mexico, but there is a secondary nesting colony in Veracruz, Mexico, and a tertiary nesting colony in Texas.

Kemp's ridley suffered a major setback in nesting in 2010, from which it has yet to recover. The US-Mexico recovery plan for Kemp's ridley predicted this species would be downlisted to threatened status in 2011, but instead nesting dropped by 35 percent in 2010 and since then it has remained well below levels predicted by the recovery plan. Prior to the setback, the annual number of nests at the nester-abundance-index beach in Tamaulipas was increasing at a rate of 19 percent per year, the result of decades of cumulative conservation efforts by Mexico and the US.

Kemp's ridley turtle. Photo: NOAA Fisheries

Although numerous hypotheses were offered as reasons for the setback, none have been confirmed with certainty to date. Most recently it was hypothesized that declining Gulf of Mexico carrying capacity for the Kemp's ridley population prior to 2010 contributed to the nesting setback; contributing factors were hypothesized to be long-term degradation of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem, the rapidly increasing Kemp's ridley population prior to 2010 and declining per capita availability of neritic (i.e., post-pelagic) Kemp's ridley food, including natural prey and scavenged discarded bycatch from shrimp trawling (Caillouet et al. 2018).

The 2019 nesting season begins in April, and sea turtle conservationists and researchers will be waiting to see whether the pre-2010 rapid increase in nest count on the Tamaulipas nester-abundance-index beach resumes.

– Charles W. Caillouet, Jr., PhD
Marine Fisheries Scientist-Conservation Volunteer
Montgomery, Texas

Reference: Caillouet, Charles W., Jr., Scott W. Raborn, Donna J. Shaver, Nathan F. Putman, Benny J. Gallaway, and Katherine L. Mansfield. 2018. Did Declining Carrying Capacity for the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Population Within the Gulf of Mexico Contribute to the Nesting Setback in 2010–2017? Chelonian Conservation and Biology 17(1): 123–133. doi:10.2744/CCB-1283.1

Sea Grant Louisiana

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2019 Legislative Session

The following is a list of proposed House and Senate bills related to fisheries for the 2019 session. The list only includes bills still active as of May 6. Additional information can be found by searching each bill at *http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillSearch.aspx?sid=LAST*

HB 120: Bourriaque: Transfers monies in the Shrimp Trade Petition Account into the Shrimp Marketing and Promotion Fund.

HB 123: Hill: Exempts from the Public Records Act information relative to certain activities associated with stocking and breeding of alligators.

HB 135: Pylant: Provides for airboat trails on the Maurepas Swamp Wildlife Management Area.

HB 142: Leopold: Authorizes additional means of harvesting oysters on the oyster seed grounds under the oyster seed ground vessel permit.

HB 269: Zeringue: Requires a license for taking alligators and eliminates the additional license for an assistant to an alligator hunter.

HB 335: Gisclair: Requires food service establishments serving imported crawfish or shrimp to inform patrons that the seafood is of foreign origin.

HB 355: Gisclair: Prohibits the taking of immature female crabs and provides for enhanced penalties for certain crab fishing violations.

SB 65: Lambert: Provides for the size and location of escape rings on crab traps.

SB 100: Allain: Provides relative to times and methods of taking outlaw quadrupeds.

2019 Spring Shrimp Season

The dates were determined based on information provided by Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) biologists and public comments.

Season openings are as follows:

- The portion of state inside waters from the Mississippi/Louisiana state line westward to the eastern shore of South Pass of the Mississippi River to open at 6 a.m. May 27, 2019.
- The portion of state inside waters from the eastern shore of South Pass westward to the western shore of Freshwater Bayou Canal to open at 6 a.m. May 20, 2019.
- The portion of state inside waters from the western shore of Freshwater Bayou Canal westward to the Louisiana/Texas state line to open at 6 a.m. May 27, 2019.

LDWF biologists have monitored hydrological parameters and conducted weekly trawl samples throughout the state's estuarine and nearshore waters since March to develop recommendations for the opening of the spring shrimp season. Data were used to calculate a 'crossover' date, when a minimum of 50 percent of the inshore brown shrimp population reaches 100 count per pound or larger.

A portion of state outside waters between the Atchafalaya River and Freshwater Bayou remains closed at this time. LDWF biologists are continuing to monitor the abundance and size of shrimp in that area, and the secretary of the department has the authority to open that zone when biological and technical data indicate conditions are appropriate to do so.

Cold Weather Crawfish

This spring, crawfish had a slow start. The culprit is prolonged cold winter temperatures. During normal winters, water temperatures dip into the 50s with the passage of cold fronts, but quickly rebound into the 60s with the return of warmer days between fronts. During these warm-up periods, crawfish become active, feed and grow through molting.

This winter we did not have breaks between fronts allowing water temperatures to warm. Crawfish, being cold-blooded animals, are not very active in water temperatures below 60 degrees. When water temperatures fall below 60, crawfish become almost dormant, not moving, feeding or growing very much.

Crawfish will eat almost anything including living and decomposing vegetation, seeds, algae, microorganisms, and a myriad of aquatic insects, invertebrates and small fish. Although vegetation is the most abundant food source in crawfish ponds, it is thought to contribute little to the direct nourishment of crawfish. Nutrition comes from the microbial rich organisms found colonizing dead and decaying plant and animal matter (detritus) in aquatic environments.

While detritus sustains most natural, aquatic food chains, the really high quality protein and energy rich foods required to maximize crawfish production comes from consuming animal matter such as insects, insect larvae, worms, snails, fish, etc. These organisms are commonly found in detrital rich aquatic environments. When water temperatures are this low, the entire aquatic ecosystem is slowed down.

Spring crawfish production has many variables that affect the timing and volume of production. One of the most important environmental variables is summer rainfall. In most situations, crawfish burrow into the ground during the drier months of the summer. They will burrow as deep as they have to in order to maintain water and humidity in the burrow.

Frequently, this is also when crawfish reproduce. As long as there is ample rainfall, soil moisture ensures good survival of the brood and adults. However, during dry summers the crawfish must burrow deeper into the ground seeking water. This reduces survival because of lack of moisture over the crawfish's gills and the extra energy required expanding burrows, which sometimes collapse.

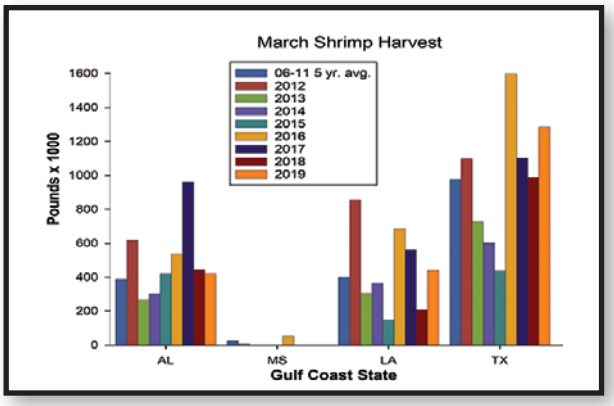
For this season, as days became longer and water temperatures rose into the 60s and 70s crawfish became more active and supplies picked up.

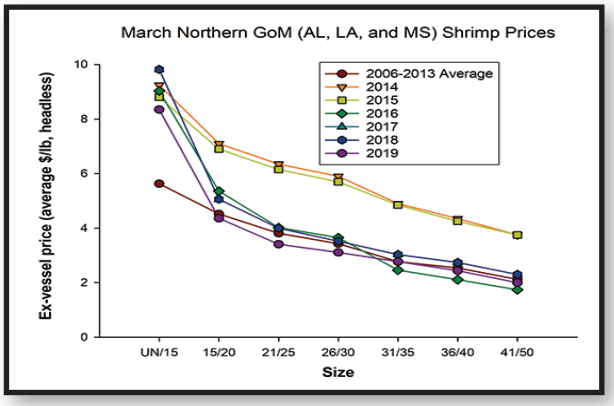
A very wise crawfish farmer told me once, "one sure thing about crawfish production; it's unpredictable."

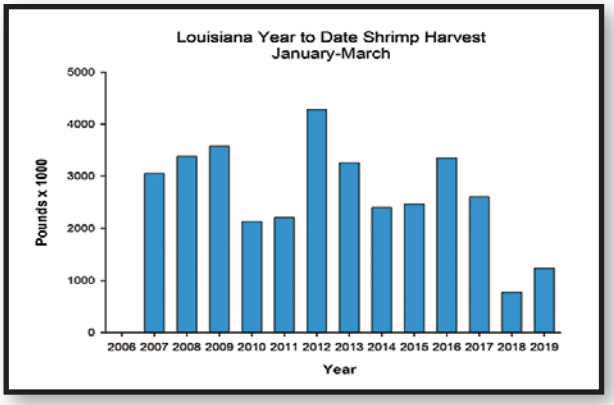
– Kevin Savoie

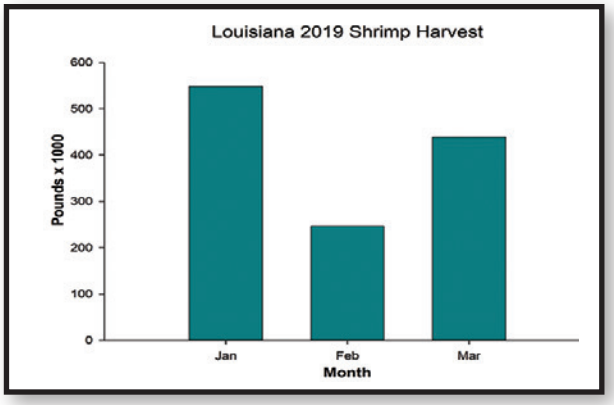
Louisiana Shrimp Watch

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: *www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/market_news/index.html*.









Important Dates & Upcoming Events

June 4, 2019: Crab Task Force Meeting. Location TBD.

THE GUMBO POT

SHRIMP AND CRAB RISOTTO – MAIN COURSE

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:

4 tablespoons butter, in all
1 pound Louisiana shrimp
5 cups chicken broth
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
¼ cup finely minced onion
2 cups Arborio rice
½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
½ pound lump Louisiana crabmeat
salt to taste

Method:

Melt 1 tablespoon butter in a small saucepan; add green onion bottoms and sauté until softened. Add shrimp and green onion tops (reserve a few for garnish) and sauté until shrimp are pink and just cooked through; set aside.

Place chicken broth in a saucepan over medium heat; bring to a low simmer, reduce heat, and keep hot.

Place 1 tablespoon butter and olive oil in a wide heavy pan; place over medium heat. Add minced onion and cook, stirring, until onions are translucent, about 10 minutes; do not brown. Add Arborio rice and cook, stirring constantly, for 3 to 4 minutes; rice will begin to become translucent. Quickly add ½ cup hot broth, stirring constantly until liquid is completely evaporated. Repeat process, ½ cup broth at a time, for about 20 minutes or until all liquid is incorporated and rice is just cooked through; it will be firm, but not crunchy in the center. (If you need more liquid, use very hot water.)

Stir in the reserved shrimp mixture, remaining 2 tablespoons butter, cheese, and crabmeat; remove from heat when cheese melts. Taste and add salt if desired. Serve hot, garnish with green onions if desired.

Serves 6

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

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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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