Lagniappe

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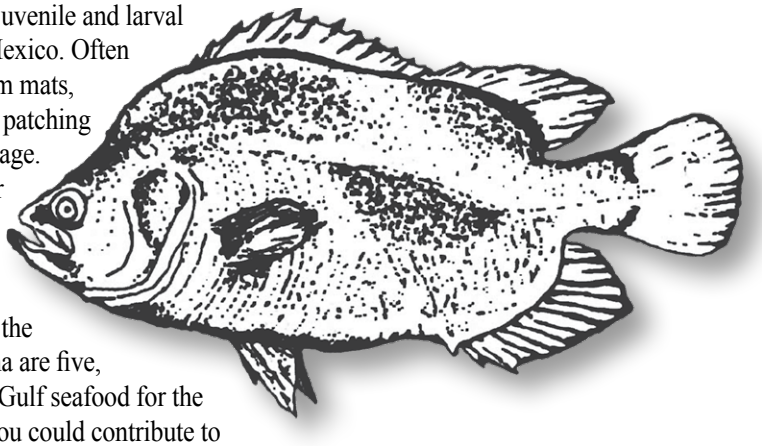
Chasing tripletail

Tripletail, or blackfish, is a medium sized saltwater fish that is fairly common for anglers to encounter off the coast of Louisiana in the summertime. Typically, anglers encounter tripletail close to structure, commonly crab pots or pilings, floating at the surface. Tripletail are not your typical ambush predators that lie in wait on the bottom or behind structure, tripletail lie unmoving at the surface mimicking debris until unsuspecting prey swim by. Fishing for tripletail can be incredibly satisfying – but time consuming. Due to tripletail being lie and wait predators, they have high site fidelity to particular sites or structures. This behavior requires anglers to pursue the fish by visiting multiple structures in a fishing trip resulting in more than average hours on your motor. Tripletail landings are predominantly from the recreational sector, with very few fish landed commercially, predominantly as bycatch in the shrimp fishery.

Luckily for anglers, tripletail aren't picky eaters. Two diet studies conducted across the northern Gulf of Mexico, one out of Louisiana and one out of Mississippi, showed remarkably different results when it comes to diet preference. Tripletail diets in both studies were reported in an index, which combines the proportional weight (%W), number (%N), and how frequently a prey item was found in all tripletail studied (%O) into an index of relative importance (%IRI). For tripletail caught in Mississippi, a vast majority of their diet was comprised of fish (%IRI, Mississippi 61.1 percent; Louisiana 21.1 percent) while in Louisiana the dominant prey was shrimp (%IRI, Mississippi, 25.7 percent; Louisiana 74.87 percent). The authors attribute the variety to the opportunistic feeding behavior of tripletail, eating the most abundant (and closest) prey they can get their mouth around.

While tripletail are common along the coast in the summertime, during the winter months, they are largely absent from the coast and can be found offshore. A widely held hypothesis is that spawning tripletail remain offshore during the summer between June and August which is when scientists see juvenile and larval fish in their fishery independent surveys. Young tripletail seek out and recruit to floating debris offshore, including sargassum mats. Sargassum is critical habitat for many species of pelagic fishes that live offshore. Including tripletail, one study of sargassum communities found 36 species of juvenile and larval fish using mats as nursery habitat offshore in the northern Gulf of Mexico. Often tripletail are hard to miss when they are juveniles living in sargassum mats, they are well camouflaged when they are young, with bright yellow patching coloration matching their sargassum habitat and turn brown as they age. Tripletail do not stay in nursery habitat for long; however, after their first year tripletail are reproductively active and start their seasonal migrations. Females can be as long as 20 inches after their first year, which is just above the Louisiana creel size of 18 inches.



Chasing tripletail can offer a challenging but rewarding day on the water for Louisiana anglers in the summer. Creel limits for Louisiana are five, 18-inch fish a day so a successful day means plenty of fresh caught Gulf seafood for the whole family. If you are interested in research on tripletail or how you could contribute to learning more about them, contact *jplumlee@agcenter.lsu.edu* to find out more.

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Sea Grant LOUISIANA

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Louisiana Breaks Ground on Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion

Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) broke ground on Aug. 10, 2023 on the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion project at Mississippi River Mile 60.7 in Plaquemines Parish. Representatives of many state and federal agencies, non-profits, and the surrounding communities attended the kick-off of this important restoration and land-building project.

As part of the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group, the agencies charged with restoring Louisiana's natural resources after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, CPRA is leading the construction and eventual operation of the Mid-Barataria sediment diversion.

When operational, the sediment diversion will reconnect the Mississippi River to Louisiana's Barataria Basin estuary to restore wetlands and contribute to the broader restoration of its ecosystem. Over 50 years, the sediment carried by the project is projected to restore over 13,000 acres of wetland habitat. These restored wetlands will increase protection for nearby communities and infrastructure, reduce impacts from storms, support healthier Gulf fisheries, and benefit many species important to the region's economy and environment.

The 2010 oil spill and response activities killed swaths of wetland plants that help stabilize coastal areas. Without this shoreline protection, the existing trend of coastal land loss was accelerated by the spill, especially in the state's Barataria Basin estuary. The species, fisheries, and communities that rely on estuarine habitats face serious challenges due to the continued loss of wetlands, increasing estuarine salinities, as well as sea level rise and land subsidence.

Approved for funding in February 2023, five months after the final plan was released, this first-of-its-kind project represents one of the largest and most innovative coastal habitat restoration efforts ever undertaken. The Louisiana Trustees approved the allocation of $2.26 billion from Natural Resource Damage Assessment funds from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill settlement towards the total project cost of $2.92 billion. The project plan and budget include funds for a suite of monitoring, and mitigation measures to offset impacts, to the extent practicable.

Project Features and Mitigation

Next steps for the project construction include site preparation activities and the temporary relocation of Highway 23 in the fall of 2023.

Project features include a controlled gate structure through the river levee, a manmade channel, and an outfall structure in the basin. Construction is anticipated to take approximately five years and is projected to produce an economic impact of nearly $1.5 billion in sales and approximately 12,400 jobs in the region.

Another major component of the project includes investments in mitigation measures for communities and natural resources, such as fisheries that may be impacted by project operations. Mitigation and stewardship measures were developed through outreach and feedback gathered from residents and stakeholders over the last several years. Elevation surveys of residences and infrastructure in communities south of the project identified for mitigation are already underway.

To support near-term needs, CPRA already identified avenues and partnerships for $10 million of the mitigation funding for implementation of some fisheries stewardship measures. These measures were prioritized based on the ability to meet current, urgent needs and expand effectiveness with near-term implementation. CPRA and its partners will continue working with the fishing industries and other stakeholders to best implement the stewardship measures outlined in the project's mitigation plan. This is an ongoing process that will occur throughout construction and continue into the operations period of the project.

LDWF Now Accepting Applications for Two Fall Women's Fishing 101 Workshops

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation (LAWFF) are teaming up to present two Women's Fishing 101 Workshops this fall. The workshops are open to women over the age of 18 who are looking to become knowledgeable and confident anglers.

The workshops cover a variety of skills to help make fishing more enjoyable. LDWF biologists and aquatic volunteer instructors will train 15 women per event in fish identification, best fish handling practices, preparing fishing equipment, basic fishing skills, as well as cleaning, storing and cooking fish. Participants will be randomly selected from the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 workshops and get the chance to apply their skills on an overnight weekend fishing trip under the direction of LDWF biologists and volunteer instructors during May and June 2024.

Fall Workshop Dates:

Saturday, Oct. 28, 2023 – LDWF Waddill Wildlife Refuge, Baton Rouge

Saturday, Nov. 18, 2023 – LDWF Waddill Wildlife Refuge, Baton Rouge

Women's Fishing Workshop will be limited to 15 participants per date. Participants must be first-time attendees and may only attend one workshop. Selected registrants will be notified via email prior to each workshop. Applications will not be reviewed until after the application period has closed.

While not required to register, participants must possess a valid Louisiana fishing license to participate in the workshop. To purchase a fishing license, visit *www.wlf.louisiana.gov/licenses-and-permits*.

The Women's Fishing Workshops are hosted in conjunction with the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation (LAWFF). The Foundation was formed to help expand and support LDWF education and research programs with additional resources developed through its own facilities. Encouraging support for LDWF programs is the major focus of the Foundation, accomplished by connecting people and businesses with Louisiana's natural resources. For more information, visit *www.lawff.org*.

Photos courtesy of Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

National Hunting and Fishing Day

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) participates in National Hunting and Fishing Day, an event celebrated by all 50 states every year on the fourth Saturday in September. National Hunting and Fishing Day was created in 1972 when Congress passed two bills establishing a specific day to celebrate the conservation contributions of our nation's hunters and anglers. More than 40 years later, these events are still going strong.

LDWF's first National Hunting and Fishing Day event was in 1982 at the Monroe regional office. Since then, they have added three more locations in Baton Rouge, Minden and Woodworth. Today, more than 10,000 people attend the celebrations throughout the state, making National Hunting and Fishing Day LDWF's largest public event.

Louisiana's National Hunting and Fishing Day events are free. Each location's event varies but all include exhibits on LDWF's research and conservation efforts, shooting and fishing demonstrations, and exhibits from local chapters of Ducks Unlimited, the Safari Club and the Coastal Conservation Association, as well as local businesses. Attendees can try their skills at the shooting ranges, fishing ponds, and boating activities and learn about wildlife with live animal demonstrations.

Location	Address	Contact	Date
Baton Rouge: Waddill Outdoor Education Center	4142 North Flannery Road Baton Rouge, LA 70814	225.765.2927	Sept. 23, 2023
Minden: Bodcau Shooting Range	168 Ben Durden Road Haughton, LA 71037	318.371.3050	Sept. 23, 2023
Monroe: Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge	480 Richland Place Drive Monroe, LA 71203	318.343.4044	Sept. 23, 2023
Woodworth: Woodworth Shooting Range	661 Robinson Bridge Road Woodworth, LA 71485	318.484.2276	Sept. 23, 2023

NOAA Fisheries Delivers Report to Congress on Improving International Fisheries Management

In its 2023 Report, NOAA Fisheries identified seven nations and entities for Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing: Angola, Grenada, Mexico, the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, The Gambia and Vanuatu.

Identifications for the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan include information related to seafood-related goods produced through forced labor. The PRC and Vanuatu are additionally identified for shark catch without a regulatory program comparable to that of the United States. This is the first time, as part of this report, that NOAA Fisheries identified nations for shark catch, and considered forced labor in the seafood sector when making IUU fishing dentifications.

Certification Determinations

The 2023 report also announced certification determinations for 31 nations and entities identified for IUU fishing and/or bycatch of protected marine life from its 2021 Report.

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

Costa Rica, Guyana, Senegal and Taiwan received positive certification determinations for taking actions to remedy the IUU fishing activities identified in the 2021 report to congress.

Mexico, the PRC and the Russian Federation received negative certifications for failing to take actions to remedy their reported activities.

Protected Marine Life Bycatch

Croatia, Egypt, European Union, Grenada, Guyana, Japan, Mauritania, Morocco, the People's Republic of China, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and Taiwan received positive certifications for taking corrective actions to address their protected marine life bycatch activities identified in the 2021 Report.

Algeria, Barbados, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Namibia, Senegal, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia

and Turkey received negative certifications for not having a regulatory program comparable to that of the United States to reduce bycatch of sea turtles in pelagic longline fisheries in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas waters beyond any national jurisdiction.

Additionally, Mexico has been negatively certified for its lack of a comparable regulatory program to reduce or minimize bycatch of endangered North Pacific loggerhead sea turtles.

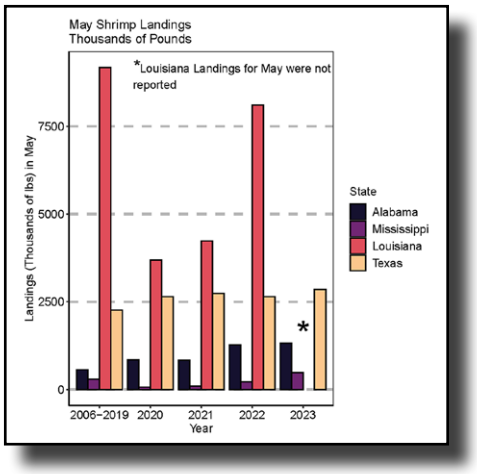
NOAA Fisheries will work with nations and entities to address the identified activities – which helps ensure that the fish and fish products the United States imports are caught sustainably and legally.

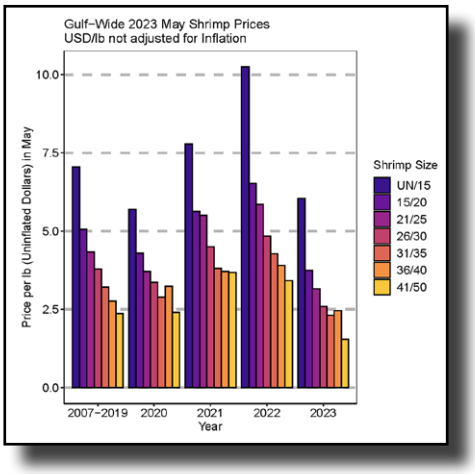
Read the report here: *www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2023-08/2023RTC-ImprovingIFManagement.pdf*

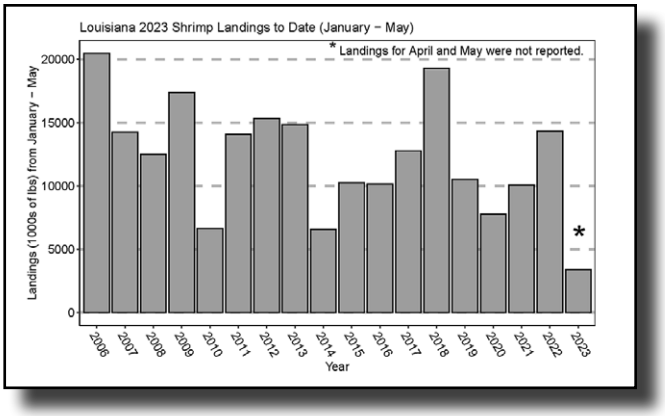
Read a summary here: *www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2023-08/2023.ReportSummary.ImprovingIFManagement.pdf*

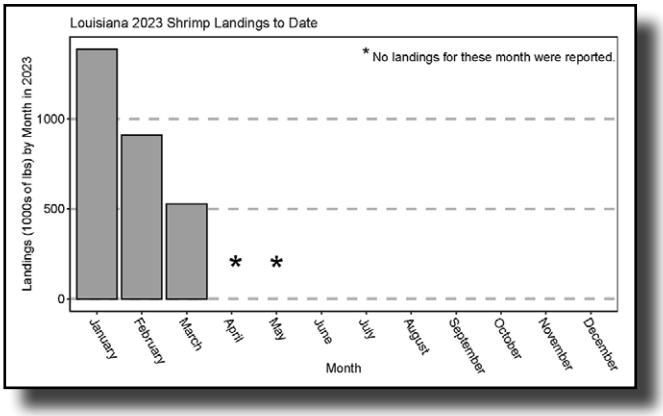
Louisiana Shrimp Watch

The Shrimp watch data is here for the September issue but is missing data for Louisiana from April and May. All landing data is based on trip ticket data provided by Gulf States and no estimations have been made.









THE GUMBO POT

Shrimp and Andouille Pot Pie*

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 sheet frozen puff pastry (half of 16-ounce package all-butter puff pastry or half of 17.3-ounce package r egular puff pastry), thawed
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3½ cups sliced leeks (white and pale green parts only; from 3 large)
- 1/2 lb Andouille sausage, cut into scant 1/2-inch cubes
- 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- 1/3 cup dry vermouth or dry white wine
- 1 1.5-ounce package concentrated classic seafood stock (such as Glace de Fruits de Mer Gold) mixed with 2 cups water; or 2 cups bottled clam juice
- 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 Yukon Gold potato (8-ounce), peeled, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1/2 cup chopped green onions
- 1½ lbs deveined peeled uncooked Louisiana shrimp, cut into 1-inch pieces

Method:

● Preheat oven to 400°F. Roll out pastry on floured surface to 12-inch square. Cut out four 5 1/2-inch rounds. Place on parchment-lined baking sheet; bake until golden, about 15 minutes. Cool on sheet. Can be made 1 day ahead. Wrap airtight and store at room temperature.

● Preheat oven to 400°F. Whisk cream and flour in small bowl. Melt butter in large skillet over medium heat. Add leeks and sauté until tender, about 10 minutes. Add Andouille and garlic and sauté 4 minutes. Add white wine or vermouth; simmer until liquid evaporates, about 3 minutes. Add seafood stock mixture and thyme. Bring to simmer. Add potato and green onion and cook uncovered until potato is tender, about 6 minutes.

● Add cream mixture to skillet; stir. Simmer until sauce thickens and boils, about 3 minutes. Reduce heat. Add Louisiana shrimp; simmer until just opaque in center, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

● Divide hot filling among four 1 1/4-cup baking dishes. Top each with pastry round. Bake until filling bubbles, about 5 minutes.

**Serves 4*

For more information, contact your local extension agent:

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

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