

SEA HARVEST NEWS

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Near Record Shrimp Landings

Alabama shrimp landings for 2006 hit 23.9 million pounds. Looking through our unofficial records of shrimp landings, I could not find a recent year with higher landings. However, in 1977, Alabama landed 25 million pounds of shrimp and that was said to be the record up until that time.

The dockside value of 1977 shrimp landings was 33.5 million dollars. The value of 2006 landings was 38.5 million dollars.

Record? Oyster Landings Value

Alabama oystermen landed 939 thousand pounds of oyster meats in 2006. These landings are a little higher than recent years but not a record. On the other hand, the value of 3.6 million dollars may be a record. I can't find a higher value between 1950 and 2006. Oyster prices prior to 1950 are such that it is unlikely that a higher value has occurred in absolute dollars (not adjusted for inflation).

Annual Economic Survey of Federal Gulf Shrimp Permit Holders (Quoted from NOAA Fisheries Service)

NOAA Fisheries Service is working to improve its ability to determine the economic and social effects of regulations and other factors that impact the profitability and value of the Gulf shrimp fishery. For this, we need to collect data about

operating expenses and the costs of owning and maintaining shrimp vessels. Together with the introduction of the permit moratorium, we are starting an **Annual Economic Survey of Federal Gulf Shrimp Permit Holders**. Each year we will sample approximately 20% of permitted vessels rather than the entire fleet in order to minimize the overall reporting burden on shrimp fishermen.

We will randomly determine which vessels will be required to participate in the survey this year. In the near future, the owners of the selected vessels will receive notification and the survey material in the mail. We will be asking for total 2006 expenditures by the selected vessel for crew, fuel, ice and other trip supplies; for total vessel maintenance, investment, and overhead; and for payments to the owner. Some further questions are necessary, including information about insurance, vessel value, loans, and depreciation. We have tried hard to limit the collection to a minimum of readily available information from tax or similar forms.

In the interest of fairness and data quality, this data collection effort is **required for permit renewal if you are selected**. Each year a new random sample of vessels (20%) will be drawn, but no vessel will be required to complete a survey two years in a row.

All individual information will be treated as strictly confidential, and will be combined with information from other fishermen to present an overall view of the economic health of the industry or a particular component of the industry (such as average fuel costs for Texas shrimp vessels). This information will help NOAA Fisheries Service conduct economic and statistical analyses on the Gulf shrimp fishery.

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Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management

The new buzz word in fisheries management is ecosystems-based management. In a nutshell, ecosystems-based management tries to take into account all the relevant interactions among species, the physical environment, and human activities in making decisions about managing fish stocks. This line of thinking stands in contrast to the traditional single-species management approach. Recently, several fisheries scientists published what they consider the "Ten commandments for ecosystem-based fisheries scientists." Here they are:

1. Keep a perspective that is holistic, risk-adverse, and adaptive.
2. Question key assumptions, no matter how basic.
3. Maintain old-growth age structure in fish populations.
4. Characterize and maintain the natural spatial structure of fish stock.
5. Characterize and maintain viable fish habitats.
6. Characterize and maintain ecosystem resilience.
7. Identify and maintain critical food-web connections.
8. Account for ecosystem change through time.
9. Account for evolutionary change caused by fishing.
10. Implement an approach that is integrated, interdisciplinary, and inclusive.

Source: Francis et al. 2007. Ten commandments for ecosystem-based fisheries scientists. *Fisheries*. 32 (5): 217-233.

Working Waterfront Surveys

In Alabama, the Alabama Working Waterfronts Coalition is working to protect and preserve

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waterfront access. An initial step in this process is to determine the current status of working waterfronts, first in Mobile County. With funding from the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, a team from Auburn University will conduct this study. Written surveys have been mailed to water dependent and related businesses. The team will follow up these surveys with personal contacts. The data collected from this survey will be important for future efforts. Be on the lookout for a survey, and please take the time to complete and return it. If you have any questions contact Jody Thompson in our office (438-5690).