

SEA HARVEST NEWS

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Shrimp Quality

Gulf shrimp have a distinctive taste that can give wild-caught shrimp an advantage in the market place according to some experts. This apparent advantage can only be realized by producing and marketing high quality shrimp. In other words, flavor alone is not enough to compete against the best quality, imported, pond-raised shrimp. High quality shrimp can be produced by following these procedures.

- Keep tow times short. Shrimp begin to deteriorate as soon as they die. During May and June, no drag should be longer than three hours and from July through September, no drag should be longer than two hours.
- Consider making a basket of shrimp the unit of operation. As soon as the basket is filled, wash it thoroughly and move it to the dipping/freezer operation and then, on to the hold.
- On ice boats that use sodium metabisulfite (dip powder) mix the recommended amount in water (more is not better) and only dip for one minute before draining. Ice the shrimp immediately - do not wait for the entire catch to be worked.
- On freezer boats, proper set up and maintenance of the brine freezer tank is essential. Know the volume of your tank and

use the recommended amount of salt, dip powder, and corn syrup. A properly prepared brine freezer will lower the water temperature to approximately -6° F. A working temperature between 5°F and 0°F will freeze shrimp in the recommended 20 minutes. Recharge the brine system after freezing approximately 1,000 lbs. of shrimp with 20 lbs. of salt and one cup of dip powder. As a general rule, never place more than 15 lbs. of shrimp per 100 gallons of brine but more importantly, freeze shrimp at a rate that keeps the brine temperature between 0°F and 5°F.

- On freezer boats, consider carrying ice during the summer to pre chill shrimp. It takes about 300 lbs. of ice to chill 1,000 lbs. of shrimp tails. Chilling maintains the quality of shrimp while waiting for brine freezing and will help ensure that shrimp freeze within the recommended 20 minutes. Also consider using rigid, perforated plastic boxes in place of the traditional onion sack. The boxes have been shown to reduce physical damage and defects to the shrimp resulting in higher revenues.

This information came from Wild Harvested Shrimp: Technical Assistance Curriculum, Texas Cooperative Extension, Sea Grant College Program, Texas A & M University and has more details on suggestions for handling shrimp as well as information on the growth of imports. If you would like a copy of this 64-page document, please call us at 251-438-5690.

Red Snapper Assessment and Shrimping

Fishery management plans require that fish stocks be periodically assessed to determine the current status of the stock and if management measures are working to meet the goals of the management plans.

This year is the year for a new red snapper

assessment. No assessment has been done for five years in order to provide time for the current regulations to have an effect.

The last assessment lead to the current quotas and size limits as well as requirements for bycatch reduction in the shrimp fishery. The new assessment will certainly address snapper bycatch in the shrimp fishery and its effect on the status of the stocks.

The process of doing a stock assessment has changed since the last red snapper assessment. The current process is called SEDAR (Southeast Data Assessment Review). The process is a three-step process for conducting stock assessments. It consists of a data workshop to compile available data, a stock assessment workshop to prepare the actual assessment, and an assessment review workshop to provide an independent review of the assessment, conduct additional analyses and make recommendations regarding the status of stock in acceptable, biological catch levels. The first two workshops include participants from the fishing industry, non-governmental organizations, state and federal fishery agencies, fishery management council representatives, and fishery management council staff.

The data workshop was held in April while the assessment and review workshops are scheduled for the summer and fall. We will keep you informed as the assessment develops into the management recommendations.

Proposed TED Change

The National Marine Fishery Service

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proposes to allow the use of a double cover flap TED with a modified flap design. This modification will allow the use of a flap that extends up to 24 inches past the posterior edge of the TED frame. This modification has been tested and meets the regulatory requirements for efficiency at releasing sea turtles. A final ruling on this proposal is expected this summer.