

# SEA HARVEST NEWS

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## **Gulf Council to hear more Testimony on Shrimp Vessel Permit Moratorium**

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will be meeting May 9 – 12 at the Palace Casino Resort, 158 Howard Avenue, Biloxi, MS. On Wednesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> at 8:45 a.m., the Council will hear public testimony on Shrimp Amendment 13 which would establish a moratorium on issuance of commercial shrimp vessel permits in the Gulf of Mexico. Other proposed actions in Amendment 13 include:

1. Establish by-catch methodologies
2. Require completion of a Gulf shrimp vessel and gear characterization form
3. Strengthen the system for reporting landings.

For more information contact the Council at 813-228-2815 or email: [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org). Information is also available on the Council's website at [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org).

The Shrimp Management Committee of the Gulf Council will be meeting May 9<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the same location as the Council meeting. The committee meeting is a good place to learn more about Amendment 13 and what is being recommended. There is no public testimony at the committee meeting but the public can talk to committee members before and after the meeting.

### **Alabama Shrimpers to vote on May 5<sup>th</sup>**

On May 5, licensed and authorized shrimp boat owners/producers will be able to vote whether

to impose an assessment on themselves to be used for the promotion of the shrimp industry in the state of Alabama. Shrimpers have to be certified by the Organized Seafood Association of Alabama in order to vote. Certified shrimpers can vote at the following locations on May 5<sup>th</sup> between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.:

1. Bayou La Batre Community Center  
12745 Padgett Switch Road  
Bayou La Batre, AL 36509
2. Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center  
4170 Commanders Drive  
Mobile, AL 36615
3. Baldwin County Extension Office  
302 A Byrne Street  
Bay Minette, AL 36507
4. Nelson Net Shop  
16746 Kennedy Road  
Bon Secour, AL 36511

### **New National Marine Fisheries Service Phone Numbers**

The Southeast Regional Office (SERO) of the National Marine Fishery Service (NMFS) also referred to as NOAA Fisheries, has changed locations and phone numbers. The new phone numbers are:

Directorate, Office of the Regional Administrator  
727-824-5301

Operations, Management and Information Division.....727-824-5301

Sustainable Fisheries Division  
727-824-5305

Protected Resources Division  
727-824-5312

Habitat Conservation Division

727-824-5317

Highly Migratory Species Management Division  
727-824-5399

Permits Branch  
727-824-5326

State/Federal Liaison Branch  
727-824-5324

General Counsel  
727-824-5370

Office of Law Enforcement  
727-824-5344

Damage Assessment/Restoration Center  
727-824-5391

Southeast Financial Services Branch  
727-824-5377

### **Red Snapper Season to Open**

The recreational fishery for red snapper in Gulf of Mexico federal waters will open on April 21, 2005 with a 16-inch minimum size limit and a four-fish bag limit. Red snapper and most other fish must be landed with heads and fins intact. The fishery will close October 31, 2005, when the recreational quota of 4.47 million pounds is projected to be caught.

### **Survival of Small Fish**

One of the harder things for fishery scientists to determine is how many fish survive from the time eggs are fertilized during spawning until young fish are readily caught either by fishermen or researchers. It is assumed that most species produce many more eggs, larval fish, and small juvenile than can possibly survive to adulthood. Many, if not

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most, are eaten by predators or lost to environmental conditions (lack of food, weather, etc.). But, figuring out how many survive to any particular point (1 day, 10 days, 3 months) is difficult and often involves assumptions based on little data. Why is this important?

Two current major issues facing fishery managers have to do with estimating survival in young fish (also shrimp, crabs and other sea life). The two issues are the proposed offshore LNG plants that would destroy millions of eggs, larval fish and possibly some small juveniles and the ongoing debate over the effect of shrimp trawls on red snapper populations.

In both cases, the question boils down to – Are the numbers being killed meaningful relative to the number that would die of natural causes? The debate will center around estimating the effect these activities have on the catchable populations of important fish and shellfish.