



## LDWF Warns Public of Potential Fish Kills Due to Freezing Temperatures

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) warns the public of potential fish kills throughout coastal Louisiana due to freezing water temperatures.

If fish kills do occur, evidence of such could be delayed as fish may not be visible for a week or more after a cold kill.

Coastal species commonly impacted by low water temperatures are sand seatrout (a.k.a. white trout), red drum, black drum and spotted seatrout.

“Typically, water temperatures below 40 degrees Fahrenheit for more than a day cause problems for spotted seatrout, whereas red drum are slightly more tolerant and will begin to experience problems when temperatures dip into the mid-30s,” explained LDWF fisheries biologist Jason Adriance. “The rate at which the water cools is also important. If fish have a chance to acclimate and move, the potential for survival is higher.”

Inland fisheries biologists are not expecting severe impacts to freshwater sport fishes, although fish kills may occur in inland waters. There is the potential for small, isolated mortality of shad due to the colder-than-normal water temperatures, but this should not pose a significant impact to the populations.

Should you come across significant numbers of dead or dying fish, LDWF encourages you to contact the department. Contact information and requested reporting specifics are available at: [www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/fish-kills](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/fish-kills). Be prepared to provide your name, phone number (in case additional information is needed), along with the location, including good directions to the fish kill site, the approximate quantity, species of fish and their condition (still dying, all dead, decomposing, etc.).

Anglers should be aware that creel and size limits remain in effect, as well as legal methods of take, and harvesting fish beyond those regulations is illegal.



### Additional Information from Louisiana Sea Grant on Cold-water Fish Kills:

Winters in the northern Gulf can result in periods of extreme cold air and water temperature which result in large-scale fish kills. Most fish are ectotherms (cold-blooded) which means that their metabolisms are closely tied to the temperature of the water, and during extreme cold, less than 40°F (4°C), their metabolisms cannot function properly and the fish dies. Fish that are especially vulnerable to low temperatures are fish that typically live in shallow coastal waters that can rapidly change temperature during extreme cold events; examples: spotted seatrout and red drum.

### When should we be concerned for a fish kill?

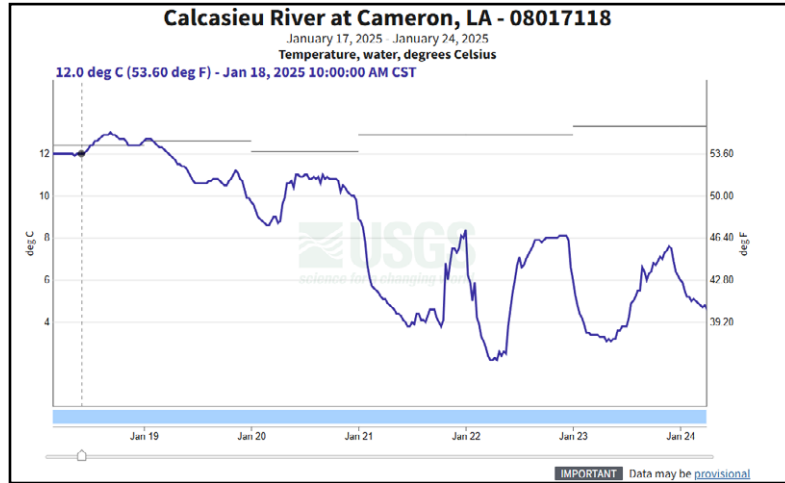
Fish mortality due to cold can occur in two scenarios, when water temperatures rapidly drops (for spotted seatrout less than 39°F [4°C]), or when temperatures are prolonged for five to seven days (for spotted seatrout less than 41°F [5°C]) (Ellis et al. 2017). Of coastal species, spotted seatrout are typically the most vulnerable. Red drum can also be susceptible to immediate low temperatures dips 37°F [3°C]) (Procarione and King 1993).

**What were the water temperatures in this last extreme cold event in Louisiana?**

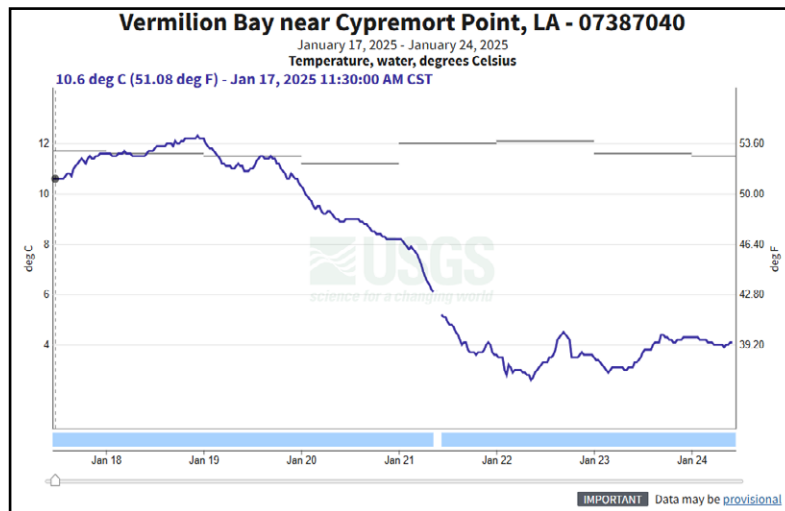
All this data is available on the USGS website: <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/state/louisiana/#dataTypes=00010>

Coastal water in every southern coastal basin dipped to less than 39°F (4°C), with some more inland monitors dropping less than 36°F (2°C).

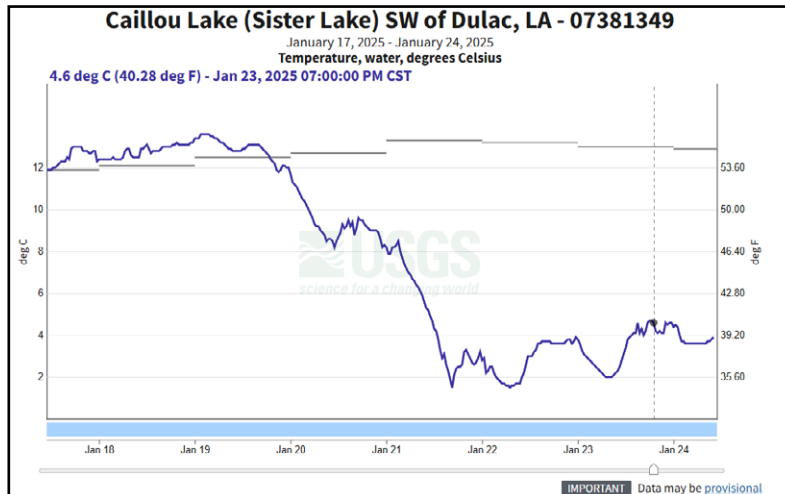
**Calcasieu:**

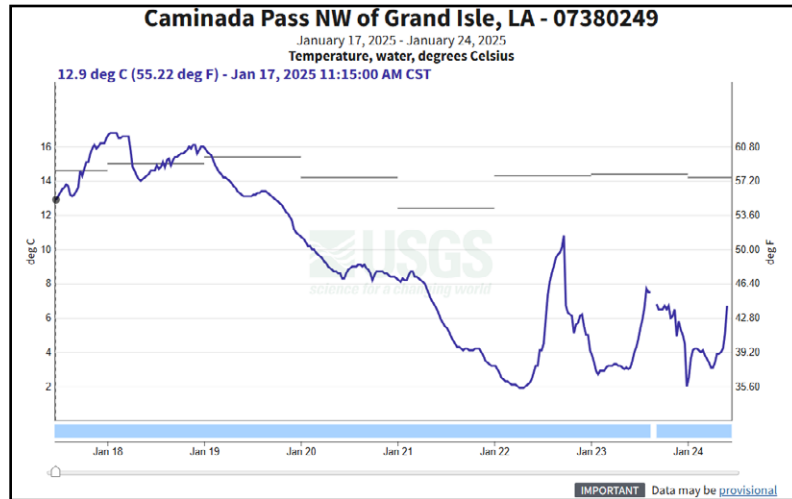
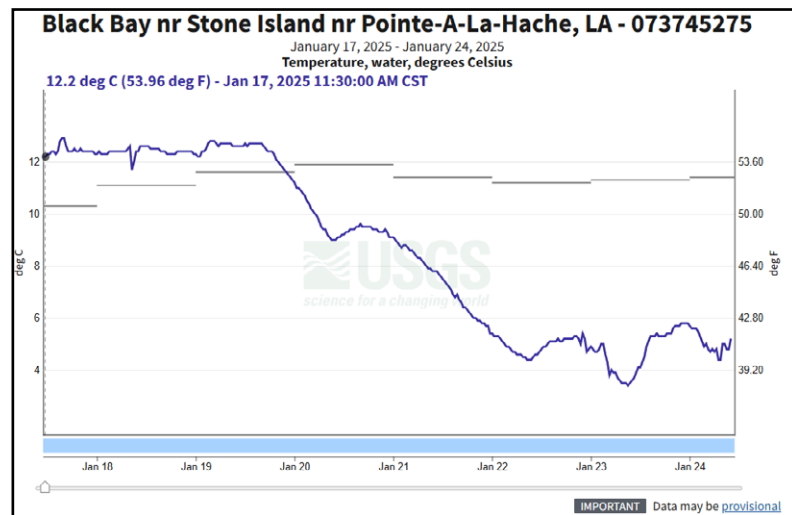


**Vermilion:**



**Terrebonne:**



**Barataria:****Breton Sound:**

These data indicate that we may see widespread mortality for spotted seatrout in the coastal zone, it's unclear if we'll see the same for red drum. All fish kills should be reported to LDWF at ([www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/fish-kills](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/fish-kills)) or call (800) 442-2511.

Be prepared to give information:

- Your name, email address and phone number
- Date and time you noticed the fish kill
- Specific location of the fish kill (parish, waterbody, landmark and/or GPS coordinates)
- Approximate number of fish and species
- Estimated date the fish kill occurred
- Whether fish are still dying
- Other agencies you contacted.

**More reading:**

Ellis, T. A., J. A. Buckel, J. E. Hightower, and S. J. Poland. 2017. Relating cold tolerance to winterkill for spotted seatrout at its northern latitudinal limits. *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology* 490:42-51.

Procarione, L. S., and T. L. King. 1993. Upper and lower temperature tolerance limits for juvenile red drums from Texas and South Carolina. *Journal of Aquatic Animal Health* 5:208-212.

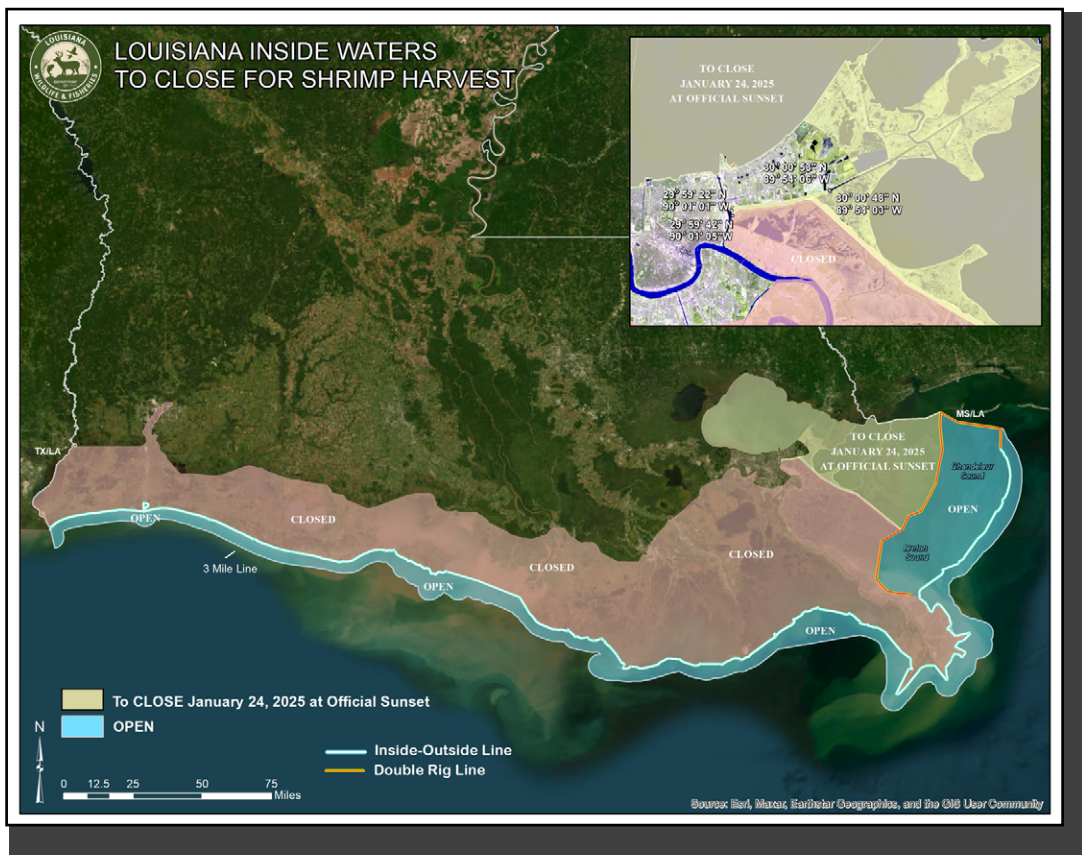
## New State Shark Regulations are Now in Effect

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) announced that recreational anglers may keep any size and quantity of blacktip and bull shark as of Jan. 20, 2025. The new regulations for blacktip and bull sharks only apply in state waters, and anglers should be aware that regulations differ in federal waters. Along with new regulations for blacktip and bull sharks, shortfin mako sharks are now prohibited from being possessed either commercially or recreationally in any waters.

Additionally, daily commercial fishing trip limits have been increased to 55 large coastal sharks (great hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, nurse shark, blacktip shark, bull shark, lemon shark, sandbar shark, silky shark, spinner shark and tiger shark) per licensed state commercial shark permit holder (previously 45) when the season is open. With these new regulations, the LDWF secretary may modify trip limits as deemed necessary.

LDWF would also like to remind commercial harvesters that there is no longer a prohibited season for the commercial harvest of sharks from April through June, and lastly, there is no possession of sandbar sharks allowed unless a commercial fisherman has in their name and in possession a valid federal shark research permit as described in federal regulations (50 CFR 635.32(1)).

## Fall Inshore Shrimp Season Closed an Additional Portion of State Waters on Jan. 24



The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) announced that the 2024 fall inshore shrimp season closed as follows:

A remaining inside waters open to shrimp harvest from the Mississippi/Louisiana state line westward to the eastern shore of South Pass of the Mississippi River closed at official sunset on Jan. 24, 2025, except for the following areas:

The open waters of Breton and Chandeleur Sounds as bounded by the double-rig line described in R.S. 56:495.1(A)2. See above map of the closure areas.

Recent biological sampling conducted by the department indicates that the average white shrimp size within these portions of state inside waters is smaller than the minimum possession count allowed by law. A closure is needed to protect the small white shrimp in these waters and provide an opportunity for growth to larger and more valuable sizes. R.S. 56:498 provides that the possession count on saltwater white shrimp for each cargo lot shall average no more than 100 (whole specimens) per pound except during the time period from Oct. 15 through the third Monday in December.

The department will continue monitoring the remaining open areas and close them when biologically appropriate. Notice of any opening, delaying or closing of a season by the secretary will be made by public notice at least 72 hours prior to such action.

## LDWF Reminds Crab Fishers of the Upcoming Derelict Crab Trap Removal Program Closure Areas and Dates

Since 2004, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and individual volunteers and organizations have successfully removed and disposed of over 57,000 abandoned and derelict crab traps. Removing these crab traps is especially important to boating safety and crab harvesting efforts.

In August 2024, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (LWFC) adopted a Notice of Intent (NOI) allowing the removal of derelict crab traps along Louisiana's coast from the five following described areas in 2025:

- The first closure occurs in the Pontchartrain Basin, west of the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway, from 12 a.m. Feb. 1, 2025, through 11:59 p.m. Feb. 14, 2025.
- The second closure occurs in the Vermilion-Teche Basin, all waters north of Marsh Island, from 12 a.m. Feb. 1, 2025, through 11:59 p.m. Feb. 14, 2025.
- The third closure will occur in the Barataria Basin, south of Lafitte, from 12 a.m. Feb. 8, 2025, through 11:59 p.m. Feb. 21, 2025.
- The fourth closure will occur in the Terrebonne Basin, between Dulac and Cocodrie, extending to the shrimp inside-outside line, from 12 a.m. Feb. 15, 2025, through 11:59 p.m. Feb. 28, 2025.
- The fifth closure will occur in the Calcasieu Basin, the northern half of Calcasieu Lake, from 12 a.m. Feb. 17, 2025, through 11:59 p.m. Feb. 26, 2025.

All crab traps within the derelict crab trap removal areas are prohibited during the closure period. Any crab traps that remain in the closure areas are subject to removal and disposal. Crab traps may be removed between one-half hour before sunrise and one-half hour after sunset. Only LDWF or those designated by LDWF will be authorized to remove derelict crab traps in the closure areas. Abandoned traps must be brought to LDWF-designated disposal sites.

These trap removal regulations do not provide authorization for access to private property. Authorization to access private property can only be provided by individual landowners.

## BOEM Finalizes Fisheries Mitigation Guidance for Offshore Wind Energy Projects

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has finalized guidance aimed at mitigating the impacts of offshore wind energy projects on commercial and for-hire recreational fisheries.

BOEM's final guidance provides a national framework for addressing social and economic impacts on the fishing industry affected by offshore wind development. This comprehensive final guidance, informed by extensive public input, establishes clear processes for the offshore wind industry to address potential disruptions to fisheries. It ensures consistency and promotes fair treatment of fishermen, regardless of their home or landing port.

BOEM initiated the guidance development process in late 2021 by issuing a Request for Information and opening up a 45-day public comment period. Using input provided during that comment period, BOEM then published draft guidance in June 2022 and opened another 60-day comment period. From late 2021 through August 2022, BOEM held seven workshops to engage stakeholders and gather input. Public participation was extensive, with nearly 200 oral and written comments submitted.

BOEM incorporated changes into the final guidance based on the feedback gathered, including:

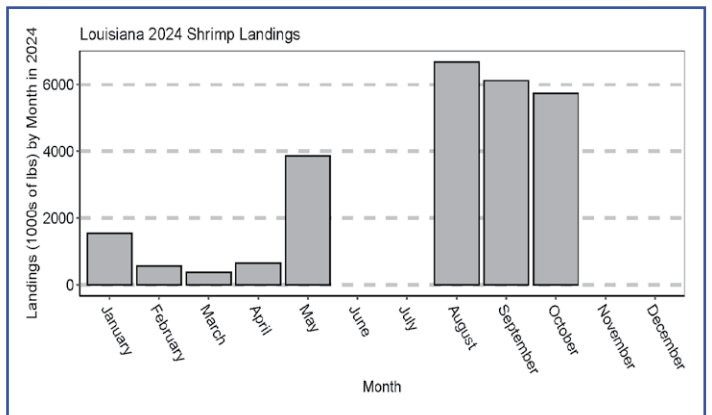
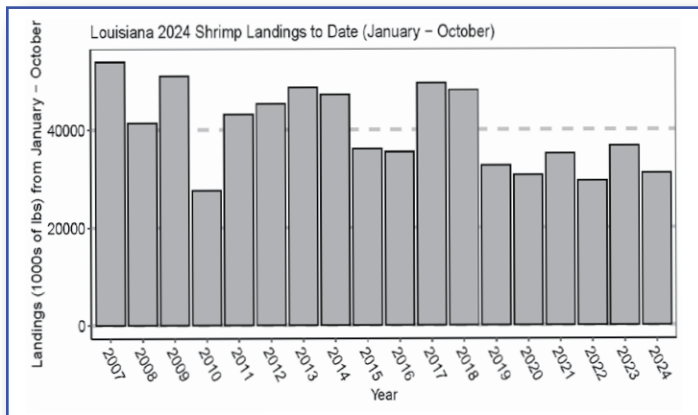
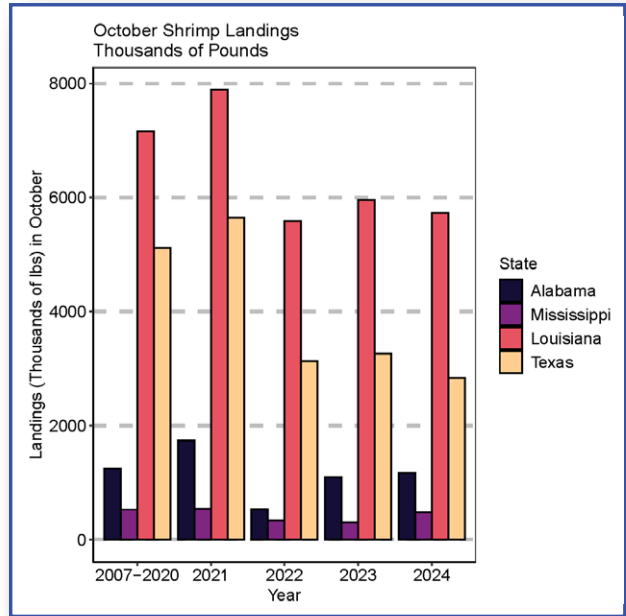
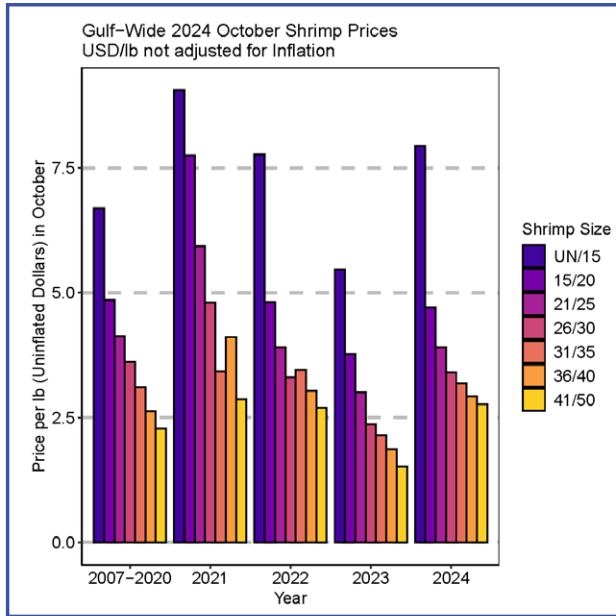
- Clarifying that the guidance is not meant to apply to potential impacts to treaty or tribal fishing, which would likely be subject to separate mitigation considerations after consultation with tribal governments.
- Focusing recommendations on commercial and for-hire recreational fisheries.
- Expanding on acceptable alternative mitigation strategies.
- Enhancing consistency with recent lease provisions and regional fund administration efforts.
- Revising sections on cable burial.
- Removing sections on floating offshore wind foundation types due to insufficient impact analysis at this time. BOEM is developing separate guidance specific to floating infrastructure.



The guidance emphasizes early engagement and transparency with fishing communities, encouraging lessees to document interactions. Recommendations in the guidance address design considerations, safety protocols and financial compensation processes. Compensation measures extend through construction, early operations and decommissioning, ensuring comprehensive coverage for affected fisheries.

## Louisiana Shrimp Watch

The shrimp watch data for the January issue includes data through October 2024. All landing data is based on trip ticket data provided by Gulf States Fisheries Commission and no estimations have been made.



# The Gumbo Pot

## **Crawfish Boulettes and Gravy\***

*Recipe courtesy of Evelyn Gutierrez Watts*



### **Ingredients\***

- 1 medium sized onion minced
- 2 bell pepper minced
- 4 stacks of celery minced
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 lb. ground garfish
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1 cup of milk
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper to taste
- Fish fry
- ½ cup light roux
- 3 green onions sliced
- Parsley coarsely chopped

- Melt butter in sauté pan over medium heat. Cook onion, bell pepper and celery until fragrant and slightly brown while stirring occasionally, about 3-5 minutes. Reduce heat to low, add garlic, cook for 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside to cool.
  - In a large bowl, combine ground gar, egg, panko, milk, Worcestershire sauce, salt, black pepper and half of the sauté veggies. Use hands to mix well but try not to over work the meat.
  - Form boulettes hand full size, coat with fish fry and brown in sauté pan with little cooking oil.
  - Warm up second half of sauté veggies in a Dutch oven, add roux and dissolve with warm water.
  - Add garfish boulettes to the gravy, bring up to a boil and immediately lower the heat to simmer for 30 min.
  - Add green onions and parsley, and let cook for additional 10 min.

*\*Serves 8, serve with white rice and veggies of choice.*



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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.

### Please contact Lagniappe editor Jeffrey Plumlee at:

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<https://louisianalagniappe.wordpress.com/>

## Lagniappe Fisheries Newsletter

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