



Louisiana's Annual Free Fishing Weekend to be Held June 8-9

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) invites you to take part in its annual Free Fishing Weekend on Saturday, June 8, and Sunday, June 9. Louisiana's Free Fishing Weekend allows residents and visitors to fish Louisiana waters without an otherwise required fishing license.

"Each year we designate a weekend of fishing with no need to purchase a fishing license as an incentive for families and friends to enjoy one of our states most beloved pastimes," explained LDWF secretary Madison Sheahan. "Please take this opportunity to make memories with your loved ones and introduce them to the great sport of fishing."

While a fishing license is not required, all fishing regulations, including size, season, catch limits and gear restrictions will remain in effect during Free Fishing Weekend.

For an added bonus, LDWF has stocked adult-sized catfish at 17 ponds across the state as part of the Get Out and Fish! Program.

In addition, a Recreational Offshore Landing Permit (ROLP) is still needed during Free Fishing weekend when possessing tunas, billfish, swordfish, amberjacks, groupers, snappers, hinds, cobia, wahoo, dolphinfish and gray triggerfish. When registering for an ROLP, anglers should choose the "Free Fishing Weekend" option for the license type. Anglers can skip the "LDWF Fishing License Number" field. A Free Fishing Weekend ROLP will be valid Saturday, June 8, and Sunday, June 9 only.

LDWF reminds the public that, at any time outside of Free Fishing Weekend, anglers 18 and older must possess a Louisiana fishing license to fish in any Louisiana public waters. Anyone who decides to continue fishing for the remainder of the year must purchase a state fishing license at <https://louisianaoutdoors.com/>.

By purchasing a fishing license, you also help provide funding for public fishing and boating access, fishing programs and education, and fisheries management through the Sport Fish Restoration Fund.



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What is ‘Crash Trawl Week’ at LDWF: Marine Fisheries Staff Big Push for Timely Brown Shrimp Data

Shrimp “Crash Trawls” are an all-hands-on-deck effort by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Marine Fisheries Section that takes place each year during work week 18 (18th week of the calendar year). The purpose of this effort is to assess the average size, distribution, and abundance of brown shrimp ahead of the May Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission meeting, where the marine fisheries staff provide a recommendation on a season-opening and structure for the spring inshore shrimp season.

Leading up to week 18, the department begins sampling with six-foot trawls weekly, starting the first week of April. At the same time, 16-foot trawls are conducted every other week in April. The purpose of different-size trawls is to sample juvenile penaeid shrimp in shallow edge habitats in the interior marshes with the six-foot trawl and to sample penaeid shrimp in the larger bays and waterways with the larger 16-foot trawl gear. Both trawls are used to determine relative abundance, size distribution, and average size of penaeid shrimp.

Week 18, or “Crash Trawl” week, is unique because it’s the same week as the commission meeting. All five regional marine fisheries offices across the state, all the boats, and all the staff head out on either Sunday or Monday to sample. They use their 16-foot trawl stations and a random sample of six-foot trawl stations across the coast with the goal of having all the samples sorted and entered into the database by close of business on Tuesday of that week. This allows our managers in each of the five offices to converge at LDWF headquarters for the annual shrimp meeting to work with the crustacean program manager, Peyton Cagle, in developing the department’s shrimp season recommendation based on the most recent data.



This data and our recommendation is presented to the Shrimp Task Force. The task force will review the department’s recommendation and formulate their recommendation for the LDWF commission. During the commission meeting, the crustacean program manager will present the latest shrimp data as well as the department’s season recommendations for consideration. Finally, the commission will pass a motion to set the season structure and potentially give the secretary the authority to open and close the shrimp season if any enforcement or biological need is necessary. This is the process that sets the shrimp season in place each year.



Upcoming Workshop to Focus on Improving Estimates of Recreational Fishing Effort

Key Message:

The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, with support from NOAA Fisheries and other federal, regional and state partners, is hosting a workshop to identify new, feasible ways to validate the accuracy of current recreational fishing effort estimates. The workshop will identify projects for estimating fishing effort from private recreational vessels that can be used to validate and/or replace existing approaches. Selected projects would be implemented in 2025 or 2026. The meeting agenda will be available on the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission website under Upcoming Meetings and the NOAA Fisheries event page.

Where/When:

Hilton Riverside, New Orleans (Two Poydras St., New Orleans, LA 70130), and virtual June 4 – 6, 2024, from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. CT

Why:

Inflation Reduction Act funding has been allocated for the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission to host a workshop to improve recreational fishing effort estimates. These estimates represent one of the greatest sources of uncertainty in total recreational catch. With multiple recreational surveys (federal and state) in place in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic, we have observed large differences in the amount of estimated recreational fishing effort between the various surveys.

IRA funding will be used to address scientific and management uncertainty in recreational catch statistics for red snapper and dozens of other species. Our joint intention is to set the gold standard for validation and improvement of state and federal recreational data collection to provide better measures of catch, effort, and discards. This will benefit millions of anglers in the world’s largest recreational fisheries.

The workshop will focus on reviewing existing approaches and methods for estimating recreational fishing effort; exploring new, non-traditional methods that could be used for effort estimation; and recommending priority research studies to validate and improve effort estimates. A draft work plan will be developed to fund projects throughout the Southeast in 2025 and 2026.

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Gulf Council to Meet in Houston, Texas June 24 – 27, 2024

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (council) will meet at The Omni Houston Hotel in Houston, Tx., from June 24-27, 2024. During this meeting, the council plans to finalize appointments to its Ad Hoc Commercial Red Snapper/Grouper-Tilefish Advisory Panels, Reef Fish and Shrimp Advisory Panels and select Scientific and Statistical Committee Members for the 2024-2027 term.

During this meeting, the council also plans to continue discussing and developing a new For-hire Data Collection Program and discuss NOAA Fisheries Guidance on the MRIP-FES Transition Document. The council will continue working on distribution issues and requirements for participating in the Individual Fishing Quota Program. The council will also consider the 20-Fathom Recreational Seasonal Closure for Shallow-water Grouper and discuss lane snapper overfishing. The council will review the Reef Fish AP’s recommendations on the charter for-hire annual catch target buffer and red snapper season as well as draft actions. The council will hear and update its recreational initiative and the 2024 recreational gag season. Finally, the council will work on modifications to Spanish mackerel catch limits and king mackerel management measures.



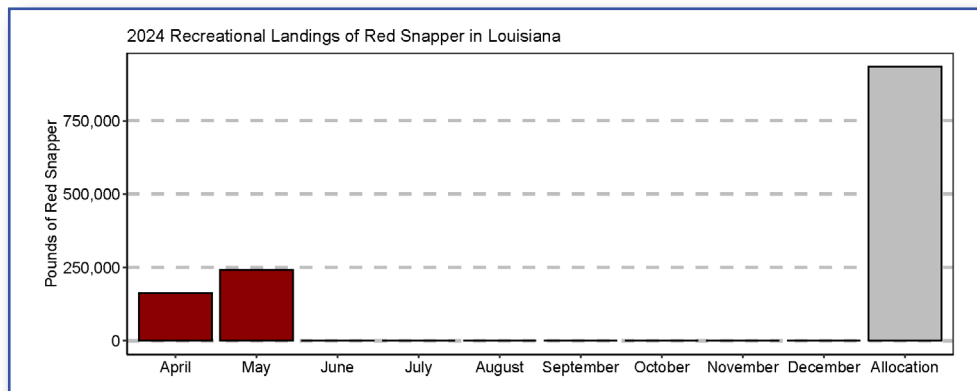
The meeting will convene at 8:30 AM, CDT each day. The full council will convene for a closed session at 2:45 PM, CDT on Monday, June 24, and again for an open session at 10:45 AM, CDT on Wednesday, June 26. Public comment will be held from 1:30 – 5:00 PM, CDT on Wednesday, June 26. The council welcomes public comment from both in-person and virtual participants. Instructions on how to provide comment will be located on the meetings materials webpage as soon as it’s available.

Full committee and council agendas and meeting materials will be posted as they become available on the council meeting webpage.

Louisiana Snapper Watch

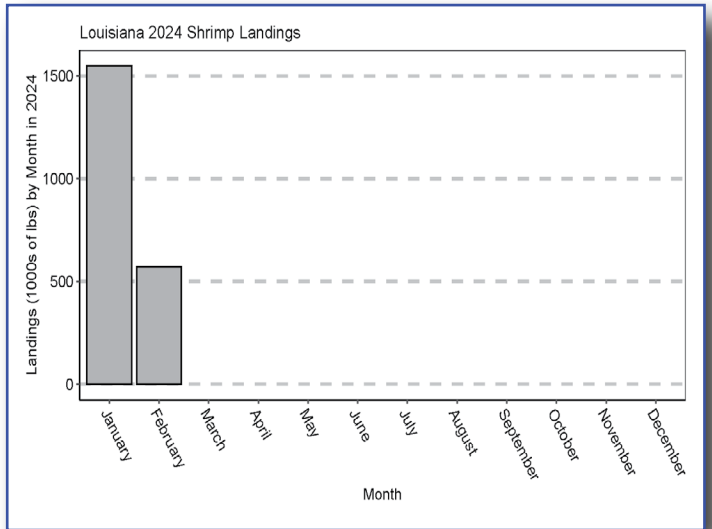
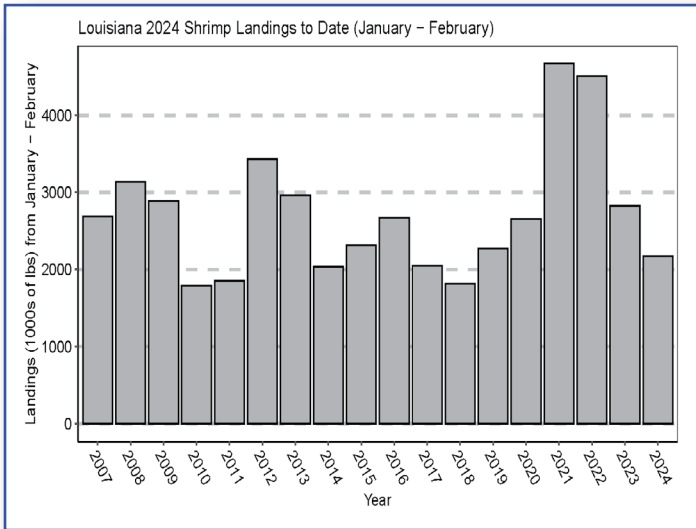
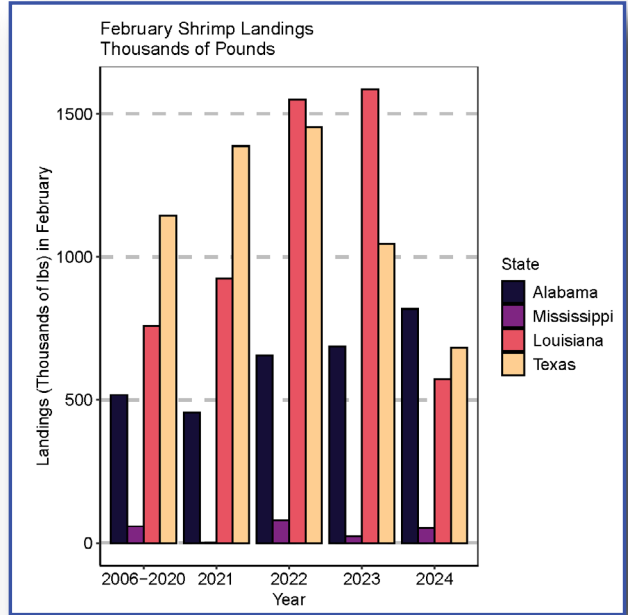
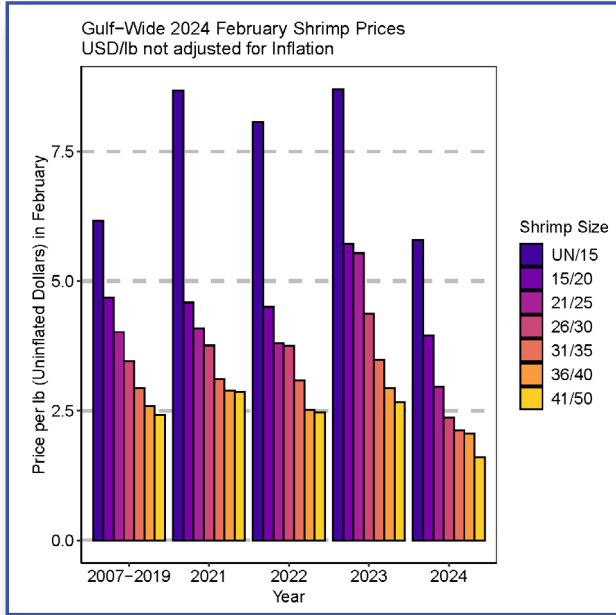
The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) released the latest private recreational Red Snapper landing estimates through May 19, 2024. LA Creel, LDWF’s near real-time landings data collection program, indicates that 241,406 pounds, or 25.8% percent, of Louisiana’s 2024 annual private recreational allocation of 934,587 pounds have been harvested during the 2024 Red Snapper season.

The private recreational Red Snapper season began Monday, April 15, in both state and federal waters, running seven days a week with a daily bag limit of four fish per person and a 16-inch total length minimum size limit. The season will remain open until recreational landings approach or reach Louisiana’s allocation.



Louisiana Shrimp Watch

The shrimp watch data for the June issue includes data through February 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

Pompano Pontchartrain

Recipe courtesy of Antoine's Restaurant



Ingredients:

One 1 lb Gulf caught Florida pompano
Salt and pepper
3 tbsp oil
1 ½ lbs picked Louisiana blue crab meat
10 oz butter
1 oz parsley
3 lemons, halved

Directions:

1. Season the fish with salt and white pepper. Heat oil in a large skillet or grill pan over medium-high heat. Add fish, skin side up, and cook for about 3 minutes or until browned. (You may have to cook fish in 2 batches, add more oil as necessary.) Flip fish and cook for an additional 3 minutes or until cooked through. Keep warm.
2. While the fish is cooking, heat the crabmeat and melted butter in another large skillet over medium heat. Season with salt and pepper. Cook just until crabmeat is hot.
3. To serve, place a pompano fillet in the center of each plate, and top with 3 ounces of crabmeat. Garnish with chopped parsley, parsley sprigs, and a lemon half.



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/>

Lagniappe Fisheries Newsletter

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