

Gulf & South Atlantic News



Volume 6, No. 1

A Publication of the Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc.

© March 2004

Covering activities from 1/1/04 - 3/31/04

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mr. Jack Amason, GA
National Blue Crab Industry Assn.

Ms. Wilma Anderson, TX
Texas Shrimp Association

Mr. Joey Daniels, NC
Wanchese Fish Company

Mr. Byron Despaux, LA
Despaux Enterprises, Inc.

Mr. Phil Horn, MS
Clark Seafood Company, Inc.

Mr. Rutledge Leland, SC
South Carolina Seafood Alliance

Mr. Fulton Love, GA
Georgia Shrimp Association, Inc.

Mr. Chris Nelson, AL
Bon Secour Fisheries, Inc.

Mr. Ross Pritchard, AL
Dixie Bag & Burlap

Mr. Jerry Sansom, FL
Organized Fishermen of Florida

Mr. Jerry Schill, NC
North Carolina Fisheries Association

Mr. Mark Smith, SC
South Carolina Shrimpers Assn.

Mr. Sal Versaggi, FL
Southeastern Fisheries Association

Mr. Mike Voisin, LA
Motivatit Seafood, Inc.

Mr. Barney White, TX
White Consulting, Inc.

Ms. Kay Williams, MS
Save America's Seafood Industry

Gulf & South Atlantic News

is published quarterly by

the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc., the research and conservation partner of the southeastern U.S. commercial fishing industry

To contact the Foundation, call

Ph: (813) 286-8390

Fax: (813) 286-8261

E-mail:

gulfsouthfdn@worldnet.att.net

On the web at:

www.gulfsouthfoundation.org

Ms. Judy L. Jamison,
Executive Director

Mr. David A. Medici,
Program Director

Antidumping Suit Makes Its First Hurdle Unanimous Rule By ITC

The antidumping suit brought about by the Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) and shrimp harvesters/processors has overcome its first hurdle. On February 17, 2004 the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) voted unanimously that the U.S. shrimp industry had been materially injured over the past three years by foreign shrimp imports. The suit was filed against six countries (Brazil, China, Ecuador, India, Thailand, and Vietnam) on December 31, 2003. Antidumping investigations began January 21, 2004 to determine if foreign shrimp were being

dumped into the U.S. market illegally.

The domestic shrimp fishery is one of the largest fisheries in the United States, being ranked 6th in quantity (landings) and 1st in ex-vessel value. In 2002, the U.S. domestic shrimp landings totaled 316.8 million pounds valued at 460.9 million dollars. Although the value of shrimp is high when compared to other fisheries, the price per pound of shrimp has dropped precipitously since 2000. This price drop is being linked to an increase in foreign shrimp imports. Shrimp products,

(Continued on page 2)

New BRD Requirements

The National Marine Fisheries Service published its final rule requiring the use of by-catch reduction devices (BRDs) in the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery. Shrimp trawlers operating east of 85°30' west longitude are required to have a certified BRD installed in trawl nets. The rule went into effect February 9, 2004 and states that any net with a headrope length over 16 ft must have a certified BRD installed. Trawlers targeting royal red shrimp are exempt from the BRD requirement. This rule is to complement existing regulations for the western Gulf of Mexico. Devices certified for use include the "fisheye", "Gulf Fisheye", "Jones-Davis", "Expanded Mesh", and "Extended Funnel".

The "Extended Funnel" and "Florida Finfish Excluder" are certified BRDs for use in Florida Territorial waters.



Public Oyster Conference Change in Hotel Information

****PLEASE NOTE CORRECT****

****HOTEL PHONE NUMBER****

The Foundation is sponsoring a conference on July 31, 2004 to present results of Year II research on Oyster Education (Florida Sea Grant/NOAA Coop. Agree. R/LR-Q-23).

The conference will be coordinated by the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board and held in conjunction with the 2004 Louisiana Foodservice Expo in New Orleans, LA at the Morial Convention Center from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm. Hotel reservations may be made at the **Hilton Riverside New Orleans Hotel** by calling:

(504) 561-0500

Conference topics will include oyster product research/development, technology transfer, marketing efforts of Gulf Oysters and post-harvest products, and *Vibrio vulnificus* education efforts targeting at-risk consumers and food service professionals.

FOUNDATION PROJECT UPDATES

"A Program to Improve Documentation of Fishing Effort in the Southeastern U.S. Shrimp Fishery and to Better Define Biological Parameters for the Red Snapper Stock Assessment Models-Phase 3"- (Coop. Agree. NA87FM0221)

Performance on this award ended 3/31/04; the final public presentation of results was held March 24-25, 2004 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Tampa, FL. See page 3 for the presentation agenda. The final report for this project will be available early summer, 2004.



"Enhancing Industry Contribution towards Documentation of Fishing Effort and Bycatch Reduction in the Shrimp Fishery of the Southeastern United States"- (Coop. Agree. NA17FF2009)

The scope of this project is to increase the number of industry designed bycatch reduction devices (BRD) certified for use in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic shrimp fisheries. The Foundation held a Gear Review Panel on February 19-20, 2003, to assist the shrimping industry in its quest to reduce the amount and type of incidental bycatch. Field-testing of industry-designed devices is currently underway. Field coordinators have been excited about the ob-

server-collected data and want to submit the Adam's Double Opposed Fisheye BRD to NMFS for certification. The Foundation is still considering potential BRD designs to include in field-tests. If you feel as though a BRD you have created shows potential, please contact the Foundation.

"Development of a Buyout Business

(Continued on page 4)



FOUNDATION HIRES NEW PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Mr. David A. Medici, formerly a research assistant/graduate student at North Carolina State University, has been named to the position of Program Director for the Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc.

As Program Director, Mr. Medici has overall responsibility of the technical aspects for all Foundation projects and coordinates performance activities for all project personnel, including contractors. The Program Director also plays a major role in drafting the Foundation's funding proposals and applications, coordinating ana-

lytical efforts, and preparing all programmatic reports concerning project performance.

Mr. Medici graduated from the University of Rhode Island (URI) with a B.S. degree in Marine Biology. While completing his studies at URI, Mr. Medici worked as a laboratory technician conducting/assisting in research dealing with the biology and ecology of a variety of commercially important species. This research earned him awards for his accomplishments in the biological sci-

(Continued on page 3)



(Continued from page 1)

whether fresh, frozen, or value added, are the most consumed seafood within the United States. Although the domestic, wild-caught harvest is large, this supply cannot meet the U.S. shrimp demand.

Most imported shrimp is farm-raised. Historically, farm raised shrimp have been an agricultural product grown when rice fields were in need of rotation. These farms were small in scale, and shrimp grown on these farms were sold on a local level. With technological advances in aquaculture and a high demand from overseas consumers, many companies residing in tropical and subtropical countries started to convert small scale farms into large production facilities where labor is inexpensive. The reduced production costs allow importers to offer shrimp at a reduced **2**

price.

The antidumping suit brought about by the SSA claims that Brazil, China, Ecuador, India, Thailand, and Vietnam have been illegally dumping shrimp into the U.S. market, creating hardships for domestic shrimpers. The SSA wants the ITC to restore fair trade by imposing tariffs on shrimp imported from the six countries listed in the suit. Tariffs would allow U.S. shrimpers to expect a higher ex-vessel price for their product, allowing them to meet operational costs and expand business. The dumping of shrimp in the U.S. market can be linked to the overproduction of shrimp by exporting countries and import regulations imposed by European countries.

The Department of Commerce is expected to make a preliminary determination in this case on June 8, 2004.

Shrimp Effort Public Presentation: March 24-25

The final public presentation for Foundation project #76 was held March 24-25 at the Embassy Suites hotel, 555 N. Westshore Blvd., Tampa FL 33609. The purpose of this project was to better estimate the effort of the commercial shrimp fleet within the Gulf of Mexico, define data deficiencies within the red snapper stock assessment model, and initiate pilot studies to address these concerns. The meeting agenda is listed below:

March 24, 2004:

- 1:00 pm **Opening Remarks**
Ms. Judy Jamison, Executive Director
- 1:15-1:45 pm Overview of Year III Program Activities
Mr. Gary Graham, Program Coordinator
- 1:45-2:15 pm Overview of observer program activities
Mr. Russell O'Brien, Observer/Vessel Coordinator
- 2:15-3:00 pm "Development of direct measures of Gulf of Mexico shrimp effort as a means to evaluate existing measures of effort and juvenile red snapper bycatch-Year III".
Dr. Benny Gallaway, LGL Eco. Res. Associates
- 3:00-3:15 pm Break
- 3:15-4:15 pm "Fishery independent estimation of abundance, mortality, age frequency, and growth rates of red snapper, *Lutjanus campechanus*. A comparison Across years and new estimates from deeper offshore longline areas".
Dr. Stephen Szedlmayer, Auburn University

- 4:15-5:00 pm "Red Snapper Analysis"
Dr. Benny Gallaway, LGL Eco. Res. Associates

March 25, 2004:

- 8:00 am **Opening Remarks**
Ms. Judy Jamison, Executive Director
- 8:15-9:15 am "Assessment of stock structure and female effective population size of red snapper (*Lutjanus campechanus*) in the northern Gulf of Mexico".
Dr. John Gold, TX Agricultural Exp. Station
- 9:15 - 10:15 am "Development of an Electronic Logbook to Assess Shrimp Trawl Catch and Effort Linked to a Vessel Monitoring System"
Dr. Peter Rubec, FL Fish and Wildlife Con. Com.
- 10:15-10:30 am Break
- 10:30-11:15 am Three-year program summary
Mr. Gary Graham, Program Coordinator
- 11:15-11:30 am **Discussion**
- 11:00 am **Adjourn**

Council Meetings

SOUTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

June 14-18
Pier House
1 Duval St.
Key West, FL 33040

September 20-24
Pawleys Plantation
70 Tanglewood Dr.
Pawleys Island, SC 29585

GULF OF MEXICO COUNCIL

May 17-20
Westin Beach Resort,
97000 Overseas Highway
Key Largo, FL 70112

July 12-15
Omni
4 Riverway
Houston, TX 77056

Program Director

(Continued from page 2)

ences. Continuing his education at North Carolina State University in the Department of Marine, Earth, and Atmospheric Sciences, Mr. Medici completed his M.S. degree (Marine Science) while studying the protection and spawning migration of female blue crabs within NC waters. Mr. Medici also completed a graduate minor in Geographic Information Science (GIS). GIS was a central part of David's thesis research and he has a firm understanding of the theory and use of geographic data to solve a variety of "real world" problems, including data modeling and analysis.



FOUNDATION UPDATES

(Continued from page 2)

Plan for the Southeast U.S. Commercial Shark Fishery”-
(Coop. Agree. NA17FD2367)

There has been great concern about the decline of shark populations in the Gulf and South Atlantic. As a result, entry into the fishery has been limited; 285 directed permits and 585 incidental permits have been issued. The Foundation was granted funds to research the feasibility of a buyout within the shark fishery. This research would be an immense help to the commercial industry by allowing fishermen to voluntarily leave the fishery while being paid a fair price for their efforts, vessels, and/or permits. Dr. Michael Jepson (independent contractor)

has been collecting U.S. census data and conducting preliminary analysis on port city demographics. Subcontractors have experienced delays when trying to acquire industry data (logbook and permit) from the National Marine Fisheries Service. This data will allow researchers to assess the feasibility of the buyout and compute a vessel “fair price”. Other project cooperators and objectives include: Dr. Charles Adams (University of Florida) will be conducting a literature review of past buy-back programs in the commercial fishing and general agricultural industries, collecting vessel cost and earnings data, recent market sales data, and vessel characteristic data to determine a “fair market price”, computing “fair market values” for shark fishing vessels using market value assessment techniques; Dr. Walter Keithly (Louisiana State University) will be conducting a literature review, developing a fair and unbiased buyback scheme for the shark fishery, reviewing federal regulations and guidelines, and compatibility of these reviews with alternative buyback scenarios, collaborating with industry and NMFS representatives to formulate a “preferred” buyback program and method for implementation of a shark vessel buyback; Dr. Doyle Hanan (Hanan & Associates) will be developing a stock assessment and fishery management policy analysis and developing a total-allowable-catch regimen for two, three, and 5-10 year periods to summarize the most current assessment results. The necessary paperwork need to fulfill this project’s objectives has been filed with NMFS and we hope to have access to data by the end of April, 2004.

“A Fresh Look at the Combined Effects of Consumer Flavor Preferences, the Impacts of Imports, and Benthic Habitats on the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Shrimp Fisheries”- (Coop. Agree. NA16FM2817)

Recently, shrimp consumption has reached an all time high while dockside prices for domestic, wild-caught

shrimp have dropped precipitously. This plummet can be attributed to the import of millions of tons of foreign farm-raised shrimp (see page 1 for more information). Concerns have been raised as to the effect that foreign imports have on the U.S. shrimp fishery. The foundation has funded several projects that will directly benefit the domestic shrimp fishery. The goal of these projects is to investigate the preference of domestic consumers, educate a variety of interest groups about the biology and ecology of domestic shrimp, and predict the abundance of shrimp within U.S. waters.

Several subcontractors (Ms. Marilyn Barrett-O’Leary, Louisiana State University; Mr. Richard Vendetti, University of Georgia) are focusing efforts on the education of the public-at-large and grade- and high-school students about the domestic shrimp fishery. Education of these interest groups will be achieved through various channels including handouts, presentations by commercial fishermen, and via the World Wide Web (see insert below). Educational work has been progressing rapidly.

Additional effort is being used to develop a niche based market for domestic, wild-caught shrimp. Sensory

Visit us at
www.gulfsouthfoundation.org
Or E-mail
gulfsouthfdn@worldnet.att.net

Visit us at www.seagrantfish.lsu.edu

Get information, publications and Web links about

- Aquatic Species
- Fishing Gear
- Fish Habitats
- Fishery Regulations
- Fishery Management Issues
- Fishery Socio-Economic Issues
- Fishery and Seafood Experts



and chemical tests are being conducted (Dr. Russell Miget, Texas A&M University) and show that the majority of panelists (~150 panelists) can distinguish the difference between farm-raised and wild-caught shrimp. Of those that can detect the difference between farm- and wild-caught shrimp, 50% prefer the unique taste of the wild-caught product. To that end, work is also being conducted to promote domestic shrimp to tourists through tourist education and chef training (Dr. William Norman, Clemson University).

To give fishermen the ability to accurately predict shrimp abundance in time and space, Electronic Log-Books (ELB) will be utilized. ELBs allow effort and catch data to be accurately and quickly recorded. The ELB proof of concept was successfully completed through a previous Foundation project and a subcontractor (Dr. Peter Rubec, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, FMRI) is now in the process of integrating dataloggers into the system to allow environmental data to be recorded. Environmental data (temperature, salinity, and depth) will allow oceanographers

(Continued on page 5)

MORE NEWS FROM THE FOUNDATION...

(Continued from page 4)

tractor; Mr. Richard Vendetti, University of Georgia) have been conducting workshops of shrimp aggregation. This shops throughout the region. While at data, coupled with shrimp landings these workshops, Field/Regional Coord- data, will allow researchers to predict dinators show industry the new gear shrimp abundance in time and space. requirements, proper installation proce- This would be an invaluable tool to dures, and troubleshoot any problems industry as it would give fishermen the that industry might be having with the opportunity to focus their efforts and transition.

increase landings. Through previous Foundation sponsored research, coop- erators identified problems with the current method of estimating effort.

"Technology Transfer of New Turtle Excluder Device Modifications and Updated Bycatch Reduction Device Information to the Southeastern Shrimp Industry"- (Coop. Agree. NA17FF2867)

New regulations are now in *"Integrated Oyster Market Research, effect for the use of BRDs and TEDs. Product Development and Evaluation, To help "ease the pain" and confusion Promotion, and Consumer Education of these regulations throughout the Program for the Gulf of Mexico's Oyster southeast shrimp fishery, Foundation Industry: YII"*- (Coop. Agree. Field/Regional Coordinators (Mr. Gary NA16RG2195) Graham, Texas A&M University; Mr. Lindsey Parker, University of Georgia; Mr. Russell O'Brien, Independent Con-

tractor; Mr. Richard Vendetti, University of Georgia) have been conducting workshops of shrimp aggregation. This shops throughout the region. While at data, coupled with shrimp landings these workshops, Field/Regional Coord- data, will allow researchers to predict dinators show industry the new gear shrimp abundance in time and space. requirements, proper installation proce- This would be an invaluable tool to dures, and troubleshoot any problems industry as it would give fishermen the that industry might be having with the opportunity to focus their efforts and transition.

The first round of field work- shops has ended and a second round is being planned. To assist Field/Regional Coordinators with their efforts, additional workshop media are to be printed in three languages: Eng- lish, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

If you would like the Founda- tion Field/Regional Coordinators to stop by your port or net shop, please contact the Foundation.

Vibrio vulnificus is a naturally occurring halophilic pathogen. Each



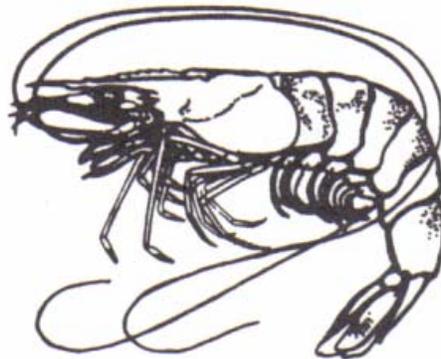
year a small number of raw shellfish consumers become ill as a result of this pathogen. In healthy individuals, sick- ness is usually short lived, but for an extremely small portion of the popula- tion, especially those with compromised livers and immune systems, sickness is more severe. The Foundation has un- dertaken a study to develop and evalu- ate the sensory characteristics of post- harvest processed (PHP) oysters and educate a variety of groups about PHPs. Post-harvest processes are utilized by oyster processors to reduce the levels of *V. vulnificus* in raw shellfish to unde- tectable levels, thus making the con- sumption of raw oysters safe. Many PHPs exist, including: heat-cool pas- teurization, quick freezing, and hydro- static pressurization.

(Continued on page 6)

Recipes

Shrimp conga

- 1/2 Pound raw, peeled, deveined shrimp
- 2 Tablespoon lime juice
- 1/2 Teaspoon salt
- 1/4 Teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 Cup margarine or butter, softened
- 1 1/2 Oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 Oz. Roquefort or Blue Cheese, crum- bled



Place shrimp in a single layer in 1 1/2 quart shallow baking dish. Sprinkle shrimp with lime juice, salt and pepper. Cream together mar- garine, cream cheese, and Roquefort cheese. Spread over shrimp. Cover with aluminum foil, crimping it to edges of dish. Bake in hot oven, 400° F., for 8 to 10 minutes. Makes approximately 30 hors d'oeuvres.

Shrimp Newburg

- 1 Pound cooked shrimp
- 1/4 Cup Margarine or butter, melted
- 2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3/4 Teaspoon salt
- 1/4 Teaspoon paprika
- 1/8 Teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 Pint half and half cream
- 2 Egg yolks, beaten
- 2 Tablespoons sherry
- Toast Points

In a 10 in. skillet, combine margarine, flour, salt, paprika and pep- per. Add cream and smooth. Stir a little of the hot sauce into egg yolks; add egg yolks to remaining sauce, stirring constantly. Add lobster meat; heat. Remove from heat and slowly stir in sherry. Serve immediately on toast points. Makes 6 servings.

.....Continued Foundation Updates

(Continued from page 5)

An Oyster Planning Meeting for this project was held October 30, 2003 in Tampa FL. Discussion revolved around the effort and goals of each co-operator (Ms. Ruth Posadas, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources; Mr. Paul Balthrop and Ms. Joanne McNeely, Florida Bureau of Seafood and Aquaculture Marketing;; Ms. Tracy Mitchell and Mr. Ewell Smith, Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board; Dr. Thomas Jamir, N.E. Aquaculture Center, UMASS Dartmouth).

Media created during year one of this study was distributed at foodservice expositions, technology meetings, and to interest groups (e.g., schools and universities). Due to the vast amount of educational material distributed, reprints are being produced.

"At-Risk *Vibrio vulnificus* Educational Program Targeting the Medical/Professional Community"- (Coop. Agree. NA03NMF4270393)

V. vulnificus infections are rare,

but for at-risk individuals that do become sick, there is a 50% chance of mortality. It is this concern that sparked the Foundation to undertake an at-risk consumer education campaign. At-risk consumers include individuals with compromised immune systems or those with chronic illness (e.g., liver disease).

The goals of this project are to:
 (1) Compile, analyze, integrate, evaluate, and publish current information of *V. vulnificus* consumer education material;
 (2) Develop an illness reduction strategy and implementation program for at-risk consumers;
 (3) Develop educational materials targeted at the medical and at-risk community;
 (4) Identify and solicit individuals and organizations essential to implement illness and education programs.

An Oyster Education Planning Meeting was held October 30, 2003 in Tampa FL. Attendees discussed current *V. vulnificus* literature and the goals of each cooperator (contracts pending). This project was executed November 1, 2003.

If you would like to discuss any of the Foundation's projects please contact:

**Ms. Judy Jamison,
Executive Director**

or

**Mr. David Medici,
Program Director**

April

- ◆ Gulf & South Atlantic States Shellfish Conference
April 18-21
Clarion Resort Buccaneer
Jekyll Island, GA 31527
- ◆ Gulf Oyster Industry Council Annual Meeting
April 29 - May 3
New Orleans, LA

May

- ◆ American Fisheries Society 4th World Fisheries Congress
May 2-6
Vancouver, British Columbia
- ◆ 55th Tuna Conference
May 2-5
University of California
Los Angeles, CA
- ◆ Industry/NMFS TED/BRD Meeting
May 4-5
Sheraton Suites Hotel
Tampa, FL

UPCOMING EVENTS

June

- ◆ Fishery Information Network
June 2-4
The Fajardo Inn
Puerto Real, Puerto Rico
- ◆ Southeastern Fisheries Assn., Inc. 52nd Annual Meeting
June 2-5
Sarasota, FL
- ◆ Preliminary Determination Regarding Shrimp Dumping
June 8
Department of Commerce



July

- ◆ 51st Annual Louisiana Foodservice Expo & Oyster Conference
July 31 - August 2
Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, LA

September

- ◆ 2nd National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration
Sept. 12-14
www.estuaries.org/2ndnationalconference.php
Seattle, WA

November

- ◆ 4th International Fisheries Observer Conference
Nov. 8-11
Manly Pacific Hotel
Sydney, Australia
- ◆ 5th Mote International Symposium in Fisheries Ecology
Mote Marine Laboratory & FSU
Nov. 9-11
Sarasota, FL

**Mackerel and Reef Fish
Moratoria**

A moratorium has been in effect on the issuance of commercial permits for king mackerel and reef fish in the Gulf of Mexico region. This moratorium is to expire on October 15, 2005 and December 31, 2005 for king mackerel and reef fish, respectively. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council intends to develop a draft supplemental environmental impact statement that describes and analyzes management alternatives to limit entry in the king mackerel and reef fish fisheries. Alternatives include: (1) A "no action" alternative allowing the moratoria to expire; (2) An extension of the moratoria; (3) Limit license access for each fishery. Written comments on this matter were to be received by the Gulf Council by March 5, and a series of scoping meetings were held during February and March.

**Regional
Fisheries
News**

Proposed Pound Net Rules

All species of sea turtles that occur in U.S. waters are either endangered or threatened. As a result, the Endangered Species Act of 1973 mandates that these species be conserved. During 2003, NMFS monitored 56 active pound net leaders with stretched mesh measuring less than 12 inches. 17 sea turtles were documented to have interactions with the leaders and 5 were entangled. With this data and other historical data, "NMFS proposes to prohibit the use of all pound net leaders from May 6 to July 15 each year in the Virginia water of the mainstem of the Chesapeake Bay, south of 37°19.0' north latitude and west of 76°13.0'

west longitude and all waters south of 37°13.0' north latitude to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, and the James and York Rivers downstream of the first bridge in each tributary" (Federal Register, Vol. 69, No. 25, pp. 5810-5817). Comments on this action were to be received no later than March 8.

Gulf Shark Closure

The National Marine Fisheries Service has announced the closure of the commercial small coastal shark fishery by persons issued a general Atlantic Shark permit in the Gulf of Mexico region. This action was effective March 18, 2004 and will last until June 30, 2004. The fishery was closed due to quotas for the semi-annual season in the Gulf being exceeded. This closure does not affect the South Atlantic or North Atlantic shark fisheries.

Vermilion Snapper FMP

On October 30, 2003, NMFS declared vermilion snapper overfished. As a result, NMFS is preparing a vermilion snapper rebuilding plan. Seasonal closures, quotas, minimum size limits, bag limits, and trip limits are being considered as management strategies to rebuild stocks. The Gulf Council intends to prepare a draft supplemental environmental impact statement that describes and analyzes management alternatives associated with establishing the rebuilding plan that is based on specific biomass targets and thresholds. This rebuilding plan will be implemented through an amendment to the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Plan. All written comments addressing the scope of the draft impact statement were to be received by March 15.

Kemp's Keep Producing

The number of Kemp's ridley sea turtle nests is on the rise! The number of turtle nests recorded during 2003 on Mexican beaches was 29% higher (8323 nests) than last year; 2002 also marked a record setting year (6436 nests). Females of the Kemp's ridley species typically spawn every other year, and produce 2-3 nests. Females invade Mexican beaches, excavate nests during the morning hours, and lay as many as 100 eggs which incubate over a 1.5-2 month period. Abundance of turtle nests is highest at Rancho Nuevo, Mexico. A total of 476,138 eggs were estimated to hatch during 2003.

levels were at an all time low. This population reduction has been attributed to egg collection, killing of adults for meat and other products, and the incidental catch of turtles in fishing gear. Since the listing of the Kemp's ridley turtle as endangered, it is illegal to collect eggs, kill any year-class of turtle, and turtle excluder devices are required on certain fishing gears. The commercial fishing industry has been active in the modification of gear to allow turtle escapement.

If the current trend in Kemp's ridley nest abundance continues, 2004 should be a benchmark year.

Kemp's ridley turtles are listed as an endangered species and by the mid-1980's population



Lincoln Center, Suite 740
5401 W. Kennedy Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33609-2447

Upcoming TED/BRD Meeting

Industry and NMFS to Discuss R&D of Bycatch Devices

The Foundation will be convening a TED/BRD workshop to discuss recent research, development, and regulations of turtle excluder and bycatch reduction devices. This meeting will be held in Tampa, FL (May 4-5, 2004), to afford a central location for industry/NMFS members from the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico regions to assemble. The workshop will include a total of 50 representatives from the commercial fishing industry and state/federal management agencies. The specific objectives to be discussed are (1) current research, development, and regulations regarding TEDs; (2) finfish reduction achieved by the "Fisheye" BRD; (3) current studies being undertaken by the Foundation and NMFS that address bycatch reduction; (4) alternatives BRD designs and regulations and their impacts on the commercial shrimp fishery of the Gulf and South Atlantic.



Meeting information is listed below:

Industry/NMFS TED/BRD Meeting
May 4-5, 2004
Sheraton Suites Hotel
4400 West Cypress Street
Tampa, FL 33607
Phone: (813) 873-8675
Fax: (813) 877-6766

If you have questions regarding this meeting,
please contact the Foundation at:

Phone: (813) 286-8390

Fax: (813) 286-8261

E-mail: gulfsouthfdn@worldnet.att.net

Executive Director, Ms. Judy Jamison, celebrates her 25th year with the Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc. We at the foundation would like to thank Ms. Jamison for her continued efforts to help all who have a vested interest in the commercial fishing industry of the Gulf and South Atlantic.