

# Gulf & South Atlantic News

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## OH LOWLY GULF OYSTER— ARE YOU A GIFT FROM THE GODS?

This issue of Gulf & South Atlantic News will feature several articles about oysters. The Foundation is currently involved in a project to promote Gulf oysters and dispel the myths and fears about the dangers of eating raw oysters, as well as 'getting the word out' about Post Harvest Processing (PHT). The first phase of the project is funded by NOAA/ National Sea Grant (# NA16RG-1720) and will last two years.

In addition to the latest updates on Foundation programs, on the following pages you will learn about oyster biology, current efforts to educate the public about oysters, as well as some information on *Vibrio vulnificus*. Although the majority of people will never experience sickness after eating raw

oysters, it is imperative that the public be informed of the risk. This is especially true of the 'at-risk' and immune system compromised population segment.

So read on— in the following pages we will look for 'pearls of wisdom' and take an in-depth look at why we are all fascinated with the oyster.



## A QUICK LESSON ON OYSTERS

*If you would like to shuck your own oyster try the method below, otherwise purchase them shucked. CAUTION: Never hold the oyster in your bare hand while shucking it!*

**Step 1:** Wash and lightly brush the oyster under cool, running water. With your gloved hand, firmly hold the posterior end of the oyster against a hard surface. Make sure that the right valve is facing up. Using an oyster knife with a short blade, insert it into the hinge.

**Step 2:** Rotate the knife until the pressure pops the hinge.

**Step 3:** Move the knife around the upper edge of the right valve until the adductor muscle is felt— sever it. Place the right valve off to the side. Carefully slide the knife under the meat and sever the muscle on the opposite side.

Arrange the oyster on a bed of ice until ready to serve. Store live oysters in a covered container in the refrigerator at 35-45 degrees F with the lid slightly open. Drain excess liquid daily. Do not store live oysters in an airtight container! Use immediately if shucked!

Now is a good time for a short lesson in oyster biology! Orient your oyster so the anterior end is pointed away from you. The dorsal and ventral sides of the oyster are determined by the internal anatomy. The dorsal side of the oyster is on your left, which is the location of the rectum and anus. The ventral side of the oyster is on your right, which is the location of the gills and mouth. The mantle is a thin layer of tissue that lines the inner part of each valve. It contains glands that extract elements from the water and convert them to compounds that make up each valve. Calcium carbonate makes up about 98 percent of each valve, this is the same material used to make chalk. The tentacles around the mantle are used for sensory perception. Directly under the mantle are the largest organ of the oyster, the gills. These help to move water/ exchange gas. The adductor muscle, which is about 20-40% of the oyster's soft weight is located toward the posterior end & contains two types of fibers comprising the translucent and white portions. **OKAY!** Enough biology already! Let's get to the *eating!*

## G&SAFFI- FOUNDATION NEWS

### SEA GRANT FUNDED PROJECT INVOLVES FLORIDA, MISSISSIPPI, & LOUISIANA

The official project title is “Integrated Oyster Market Research, Product Development and Evaluation, Promotion and Consumer Education for the Gulf of Mexico’s Oyster Industry-NA16RG1720”. We just call it the SG Oyster project or #81.

In a nutshell, the Foundation is the overall coordinator working with three state partners– Florida Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Seafood and Aquaculture, Mississippi’s Department of Marine Resources,

and Louisiana’s Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board/Oyster Task Force to reach one goal– promote Gulf oysters!

Dr. Tom Jamir, the former G&SAFFI Program Director is Project Consultant, helping to tie together all the various parts of this project. He is also developing the website which will link each agency and the Foundation.

Each partner is developing specific materials and/or projects to promote Gulf oysters and different Post Harvest Processing technologies (PHT). Florida is concentrating on freezing as their PHT and is also developing informational materials targeting at-risk individuals. Mississippi will be conducting marketing research, new product concept development, sensory evaluation,

industry technology transfer, and general market promotion of PHT oysters plus value-added oyster products. Louisiana will primarily focus on tradeshow promotion of PHT and fresh oysters, and developing informational materials for the general public, especially those at risk, about the dangers of eating oysters contaminated with Vv. Be on the lookout for posters, books, and other educational materials being developed by this dynamic partnership.

We are funded for 2 years and are currently seeking funds for years 3&4. If all this talk about oysters is making you salivate, GOOD! There is a recipe on page 5 that should make you run out and buy a dozen Gulf oysters for dinner tonight. Better yet,



## TROPICAL STORMS FORCE CLOSURE OF STATE FISHERY

The 2002 hurricane season is nearly over, but back to back storms caused the closure of LA state waters due to excessive water.

Tropical storms Hanna, Isadore and Lili brought high winds and excessive rains to the Gulf coast. These rains caused rivers to swell and flood, causing nutrients and soils to run off the land and into the Gulf. During periods such as these, states will sometimes close their oyster beds because of the possibility that excessive runoff will bring E.coli and cholera-like bacteria from flooded septic systems into the oyster



grounds. Louisiana’s oyster season had just been open about 4 weeks when the area was hit by the storms. Other areas affected by closures included Delaware Bay, NJ after authorities traced oysters that sickened three people to the Garden State.

The storms may have a silver lining though. Each year a large area of low oxygen water forms just off the mouth of the Mississippi River and extends out into the Gulf. The area, known as the ‘Dead Zone’ can create problems for marine life, especially those that cannot escape to waters with a normal oxygen content. Large tropical storms like hurricanes tend to churn up the water, breaking up the mass of hypoxic water.

## VIBRIO VULNIFICUS- A NATURALLY OCCURRING MICROBE

*Vibrio vulnificus* (Vv), one of a family of marine bacteria, is naturally found in oysters harvested from warm estuarine waters. The levels of this bacteria fluctuate, generally with the summer months of May to October having the highest levels.

The bacteria has been identified as an agent with 3 different disease syndromes. Individuals with liver disease or compromised immune systems are most at risk. Most cases of sickness implicate raw oysters from the shell rather than commercially processed oysters. Cooking or storage on ice for 3 days has shown to drop Vv levels by as much as 90%. However, many

other processing methods exist that can reduce the levels of Vv in oysters.

Three of these processes gaining in popularity are leading the way toward a safer product. These processes are: quick freezing (IQF), high pressure, & pasteurization. With IQF, oysters are ‘blast frozen’, stored on trays, packed, and shipped. With high pressure, oysters are subjected to high pressure in a water bath which also has the added benefit of loosening the meat from the shell. With pasteurization, oysters are immersed in a hot water bath of about 140° for up to 10 minutes, then cooled before being shucked and packed for shipment to retailers.

# NOAA/NMFS FEDERAL UPDATE

## Southeast Regional Office

### RED SNAPPER COMMERCIAL SEASON OPENS

The Gulf of Mexico red snapper recreational season opened at Noon on November 1, 2002. The season closed at Noon on November 10, 2002. A total of 1,041,444 pounds were available for the opening.

### FINAL RULE ON STONE CRAB TRAP FISHERY

NMFS has published the final rule to implement Amendment 7 to the FMP for the Gulf of Mexico stone crab fishery. Actions approved establish a Federal trap limitation program in the EEZ off Florida's west coast including Monroe County (Keys). Effective Dec 2, 2002 a person aboard a vessel, except in compliance with FFWCC's stone crab trap limitation program, possessing or using a stone crab trap, possessing more than 1 gallon of claws or selling claws in or from the management area, a valid Federal commercial vessel permit must have been issued & onboard the vessel.

## NOAA, Washington D.C.

### GILLNETS RESTRICTED TO PROTECT WHALES

NOAA Fisheries has implemented a rule to prohibit the nighttime deployment of gillnet straight sets from Nov 15 through Mar 31 each year off the coasts of FL and GA. The intent is to reduce the chance of large whales becoming entangled. The restriction applies from near Sebastian Inlet, FL northward to near Savannah, GA from the shore seaward to 80°W longitude.

## INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES OBSERVER CONFERENCE

NOAA announces it will be one of the sponsors of the International Fisheries Observer Conference to be held Nov 18-21, 2002 in New Orleans, LA. Dr. William Hogarth, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries is scheduled to provide the opening remarks and welcome to conference participants. More than 150 presentations and posters have been scheduled.

\*NOTE\* Foundation Gulf Coordinator Gary Graham is one of the scheduled presenters. On Wed Nov 20th, he will speak on the subject "Thoughts Regarding the Observer's Role in Data Collection vs. Violation Situations".

## LARGE COASTAL SHARK ASSESSMENT AVAILABLE

The meeting report of the shark evaluation workshop and large coastal shark assessment report are now available. A substantial amount of new information on catch estimates, biological data, and extended fishery-independent/ fishery-dependent catch rate series has become available since the previous stock assessment conducted in 1998 had classified the resource as overfished.

## FINAL RULE ISSUED FOR RED CRAB FISHERY

NMFS issued the final rule implementing approved measures contained in the Atlantic deep-sea red crab FMP. Included are a limited access program for the directed fishery, a TAC level, days-at-sea allocation effort control program, permitting and reporting requirements, an interactive voice response system limited access vessels, trip limits and incidental harvest allowances, trap/pot limits, processing at sea restrictions, and a framework adjustment process among other measures. The final rule became effective on Oct 21, 2002.

# COUNCIL UPDATES

## MID-ATLANTIC COUNCIL

The Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council will hold it's next meeting Dec 10-12 at the Sanderling Resort in Duck, North Carolina

## SOUTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

During the Sep 16-19th meeting, David Cupka was selected as Chairman. Clarence Lee was elected to serve as Vice-Chairman. Earlier in the month, the Shrimp Advisory Panel (AP) and Bycatch Reduction Device AP held a joint meeting. The Shrimp Committee will continue its review of Amendment 6 to the Shrimp FMP. The Snapper-Grouper Committee will also continue to review the draft options paper for Amendment 13 to the Snapper-Grouper FMP.

Several seats are open for representation on various advisory panels. The Shrimp AP had 2 new seats approved for more representation of larger vessels operating off the GA coast. One commercial seat is available for the new Protected Resources AP, and additionally there are 2 seats available for the Wreckfish AP plus one seat available for the Calico-Scallop AP. Persons interested in these positions must submit an application no later than Nov 18, 2002. The next Council

meeting will be held Nov 2-6 in New Bern, NC.

## GULF OF MEXICO COUNCIL

Jim Fensom of Panama City, FL was elected Council Chairman during the Sep 9-12 meeting. The position of Vice-Chairman remains empty as elections are being deferred until November after an 8/8 tie vote. The logo contest with a prize of \$500 was extended and remains open until Dec 30. The contest is open to everybody and the design that best depicts the mission of the Council will be declared the winner. The next Council meeting will take place Nov 12-15 at the Westin Beach Resort in Key Largo, FL.

## ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

The 61st annual meeting of the ASMFC will be held Nov 17-21 at the Williamsburg Lodge in Williamsburg, VA.

## GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

The Gulf States MFC met Oct 14-17 at Hawk's Cay Resort in Duck Key, FL. Many agenda items were covered despite the threat of tropical storm warnings that threatened the Keys.



Oyster Net Photo Courtesy City-As-School High School, Manhattan, New York City, NY

## G&SAFFI PROJECT UPDATES

GSAFF #76 (NA87FM0221 YR III) “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”

Two proposals were accepted for funding. They are: *Fishery Independent Estimation of Abundance, Mortality, Age Frequency, and Growth Rates of Red Snapper– A Comparison Across Years, and New Estimates from Deeper Offshore “Longline” Areas* by Dr. Stephen Szedlmayer of Auburn University, Fairhope, AL (#76-02) and *Assessment of Stock Structure and Female Effective Population Size of Red Snapper in the Northern Gulf of Mexico* by Dr. John Gold of Texas A&M University, College Station, TX (#76-03). For #76-02, work has begun with 276 specimens caught during 7 trips in water as deep as 134 ft. For #76-03, a 3-month no-cost extension has been requested due to personnel problems encountered during this quarter year.

GSAFF #78 (NA87FM0221 YR II– additional) “*Enhancing Industry Contribution Towards Documentation of Fishing Effort and Bycatch Reduction in the Shrimp Fishing Industry and Documentation of Catch Composition of the Rock Shrimp Fishery of the Southeastern United States*”

The G&SAFFI Program Director began work on the final report for this grant and it is currently under review. A total of 5 candidate BRDs were selected for testing. Eleven trips were made and 475 tows were completed. A synopsis of this report will be available after Nov 30 on the Foundation website with the final report available after review.

GSAFF #81 (Florida Sea Grant Award NA16RG1720, R/LR-Q-23) “*Integrated Oyster Market Research, Product Development and Evaluation, Promotion, and Consumer Education Program for the Gulf of Mexico’s Oyster Industry*”

Dr. Tomas Jamir continues to act as Project Consultant for this unique project. He is currently working on the website that will link all the partners together. He is also serving as advisor and providing technical guidance to MS-DNR in helping review materials and deliverables.

MS-DNR has visited various oyster processors and began videotaping for the technology transfer portion of the project. They have completed and reviewed profiling and sensory evaluation survey instruments for use in gathering baseline data to compare consumer attitudes between raw and PHT oysters, as well as continuing the literature review. Preliminary sites have been selected for using these survey instruments, but have been somewhat delayed by the tropical storms and weather during the quarter. Sensory Evaluation is still scheduled to be conducted by food scientists at Oregon State University while Mississippi State University will do the economic benchmarking research.

The Oyster Task Force of the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board remains the lead agency for the project’s development of new oyster product program promotion strategies and coordination of the public presentation aspect. A new brochure has been developed and should be available shortly.

The Florida Department of Agriculture Bureau of Seafood and Aquaculture Marketing will be managing a Chef’s focus group at the International Restaurant Show in New York this November. They have also drafted some of the required educational materials and completed a press release containing oyster recipes.



GSAFF #82 (MARFIN NA17FF2009) “*Enhancing Industry Contribution Towards Documentation of Fishing Effort and Bycatch Reduction in the Shrimp Fishery of the Southeastern United States*”

Preliminary work has begun on this project. We had hoped to have a meeting between the G&SAFFI Program Director and Coordinators during the scheduled October Board of Trustees meeting. Unfortunately, that meeting was cancelled, and so arrangements have been made for G&SAFFI staff & coordinators to meet with John Watson, Jim Nance, or other NMFS personnel during the November International Fisheries Observers Meeting in New Orleans in November. It is hoped that at least 10 designs can be found to be tested and we are currently seeking new designs in addition to candidates currently under development. If you have or know of someone that has a design that could be tested, please contact the G&SAFFI office as soon as possible for more information.

GSAFF #84 (NA17FD2367) “*Development of a Vessel Buyout Business Plan for the Southeastern US. Commercial Shark Fishery*”

The Request For Proposals (RFP) for this project has been completed and has been submitted for review by the NMFS technical monitor for this project. After revisions, the RFP was sent out to cooperators and economists. There are four areas for which we have funding and each requires a 20% match. Rusty Hudson has been contracted for the position of

(Continued on page 5)

## MORE NEWS FROM THE FOUNDATION

(Continued from page 4)

Stock Analysis Consultant. He will be working closely with Mr. Robert Spaeth of SOFA helping get industry involvement in finalizing the draft plan.



GSAFF # 85 (NA16FM2817 Year IV) “*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*”

This is a continuance of the appropriation grant. The labs at Texas A&M University are to be subcontracted to do organoleptic studies to determine if consumers prefer domestic wild-caught Gulf shrimp to freshwater farm-raised imports. Some educational materials will be produced promoting southeast shrimp. The remaining funds will be used to look at how imports have affected processors by updating an eco-

nomie survey that was done a few years ago. Benthic habitat mapping for comparing shrimp abundance with habitat profiles will round out the remainder of this project.

GSAFF # 86 (NA17FM2815) “*TEDS, Sea Turtles and the Shrimp Fishery of the Southeast U.S.— An Update is Needed*”

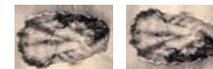
This cooperative agreement will help compile a database to define turtle interactions, TEDs being used, and regional sea turtle abundance for comparison to shrimp trawling effort. The contracts for performance of this project have been drawn up with work and selection of a working group to begin soon.

GSAFF #87 (MARFIN NA17FF2867) “*Technology Transfer of New Turtle Excluder Device Modifications and Updated Bycatch Reduction Device Information to the Southeastern Shrimp Industry*”

Funding has been approved for this cooperative agreement and we will begin performance of this project after the new TED regulations have been released.



## Gulf Oysters— Table Fare with Flair



You should have 1-1½ dozen oysters per person. Oysters have, apparently, always been linked with love. When Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, sprang forth from the sea on an oyster shell and promptly gave birth to Eros, the word "aphrodisiac" was born. So it is fitting the wife of the Program Director submits these recipes for you to enjoy!

### Key West Style Gulf Oyster Shooters with Champagne

Put 1 oyster in a shooter or shot glass. Add a dollop of cocktail sauce, fresh horseradish, a shake of Tabasco® sauce and a squeeze of key lime juice. Slowly pour champagne to just below lip of shooter. Consume this slow, pausing to mix & chew before swallowing. Try using spicy vodka or dark beer for a different flavor.

### Classic Fried Gulf Oysters

Dip shucked meats in lightly whipped raw egg and roll in seasoned bread crumbs. Heat olive or peanut oil in a shallow pan and fry oysters until golden brown. Serve with lemon slices, crackers, & hot sauce or Worcestershire sauce. Make it a dinner by serving them with steamed broccoli & baked potato!

### Campin' Gulf Oysters

Prepare barbeque grill or campfire coals and when ready, add some wet oak chips. Place whole, live oysters on the grill and let steam in their juices until they open. Pry open and serve with lemon slices, crackers, hot sauce, & plenty of ice cold beer. Be sure to enjoy a sunset with this Gulf oyster treat!

### My Daddy's Oyster Stew

In a large saucepan heat 1/2 cup butter over medium heat until melted. Quickly add 3 Tablespoons chopped shallots and 1 extra-small clove crushed garlic, then cook until they are translucent. Pour in 1 quart half-and-half cream while stirring continuously.

Take care NOT to burn the liquid! When mixture is nearly boiling, pour in 2 12-oz containers of Gulf oysters along with their juice. Add salt to taste or add 1 package powdered chicken bullion. Add a touch of finely ground black pepper and stir continuously until the Gulf oysters curl at the ends. Immediately remove from the heat. Sprinkle a little paprika over the stew before serving. Serves 4 with crackers and a bottle of Louisiana Hot sauce.

### Oyster Stuffing

Just in time for Thanksgiving! Drain and lightly rinse 1 pint Gulf oysters. Lightly chop and set aside. In a large mixing bowl combine 1 teaspoon salt or adobo with 1/2 teaspoon each: pepper, thyme, sage, basil. Lightly whip in 1 raw egg. Add 2 cups of bread crumbs, 1/4 cup virgin or green olive oil, and 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese. Fold in oysters and mix completely. This is sufficient to stuff a 8-lb turkey. If baking separately, serve with a garnish of fresh cilantro.

### Half-time Treats

Now the half-time we're talking about has absolutely nothing to do with competitive team sports. It was said that Casanova would start a meal eating 12 dozen oysters to 'fortify' himself. Just so you don't have to stop and run to the store, keep plenty of Gulf oysters in the refrigerator, along with fresh Florida strawberries, green grapes, and a bottle of champagne. Don't forget to keep a selection of fresh, seasoned crackers plus a large bar of dark chocolate handy. Now you are ready for 'half-time'!

**Approximate nutritional values for 4 ounces (114 grams) of raw, edible portion: calories--80; calories from fat--20; total fat--2 grams; saturated fat--0.5 gram; cholesterol--55 milligrams; sodium--190 milligrams; total carbohydrate--4 grams; protein--9 grams; calcium--10% DV\*; iron-- 45% DV.**

(Nutrition information reprinted from www.fl-seafood.com)



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### NOVEMBER

- 5 ELECTION DAY– Did you vote?
- 9 NCFA 50th Anniversary Celebration, New Bern, NC
- 12 EPA-OST meeting re: Concentrated Aquatic Animal Production Effluent Limitations, Atlanta Federal Center, Atlanta, GA
- 12-14 Symposium on the Effects of Fishing on Benthic Habitats, Doubletree Westshore Hotel, Tampa, FL
- 12-15 Gulf of Mexico FMC meets in FL at Westin Beach Resort, 97000 South Overseas Highway, Key Largo, FL
- 13-14 Gulf of Mexico Port Samplers meeting, Hilton Hotel, St Petersburg, FL
- 16-21 Atlantic States FMC meets in Williamsburg, Virginia
- 18-21 Third Biennial International Fisheries Observer conference meets at the Astor Crown Plaza, New Orleans, LA
- 19-22 The Western Pacific Regional Fish-

- ery Management Council hosts the 2nd International Fishers Forum at the Hawaii Convention Center in Honolulu, Hawaii  
**FREE** to all Longline Fishermen
- 20-24 Sixth International Conference on Shellfish Restoration, Charleston, South Carolina

### DECEMBER

- 2-6 South Atlantic FMC meets at the Sheraton Grand New Bern, 100 Middle Street, New Bern, NC
- 10-12 Mid-Atlantic FMC meets at the Sanderling Resort in Duck, NC
- 24 Watch out for Reindeer and Sled
- 25-31 Foundation Offices closed for holidays. We will reopen Jan 2<sup>nd</sup>
- 31 Please don't drink and drive.

### JANUARY 2003

- 1 Happy New Year! Resolve to buy only American commercially produced seafood.
- 9-13 GOIC Annual Meeting aboard

- Carnival Cruise ship Holiday departs from New Orleans, LA
- 13-16 Gulf of Mexico FMC meets at the Holiday Inn Riverwalk, San Antonio, TX
- 27-31 SE Coastal Ocean Science Conference & Workshop, Francis Marion Hotel, Charleston, SC
- 29-31 National Academy of Science Committee on Cooperative Research in National Marine Fishery Service meets in Tampa, FL.

### FEBRUARY 2003

- 23-26 RecFishII National Symposium at the Tradewinds Sirata Resort, Saint Petersburg, FL

### MARCH 2003

- TBA Summit for Sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery

