



LOUISIANA SPRING SHRIMP SEASON TO OPEN MAY 4 IN ZONE 2

The opening date of the 2006 Louisiana spring shrimp season in Shrimp Management Zone 2 was announced at the special April 26 meeting of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (LWFC). The declaration of emergency, which established the season opening date, followed a presentation of the latest biological and hydrological data compiled by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Marine Fisheries Division and public comment from shrimpers, members of the shrimp industry and other concerned citizens.

The Louisiana inshore shrimp seasons in Shrimp Management Zone 2 will open at noon on Thursday, May 4. Zone 2 includes state waters from the eastern shore of South Pass of the Mississippi River to the western shore of Vermilion Bay and Southwest Pass at Marsh Island.

The commission also opened the closed portion of Louisiana offshore territorial waters from the Atchafalaya River Ship Channel at Eugene Island as delineated by the river channel buoy line westward to the eastern shore of Freshwater Bayou Canal at 92 degrees 18 minutes 33 seconds west longitude at noon on Thursday, May 4.

LDWF Secretary Dwight Landreneau was given authority to close the season when biological and technical data indicate that significant numbers of small white shrimp begin recruiting into inshore waters or if law enforcement problems develop.

The LWFC is scheduled to meet on Thursday, May 4 at 9:30 a.m. at LDWF headquarters in Baton Rouge to consider the opening dates of the spring inshore shrimp season in Zones 1 and 3.

Development of LDWF management recommendations for spring inshore opening dates utilize criteria which project the date when a minimum of 50 percent of the inshore brown shrimp population sampled reaches sizes of 100 count (per pound) or larger.

Unseasonably mild water temperatures extending from January, low Mississippi and Atchafalaya River discharge rates and drought-like conditions throughout Louisiana's estuaries have combined to produce highly favorable shrimp growing conditions this spring. High survival of early recruited shrimp and rapid growth rates have produced shrimp sizes above the long-term mean in these waters.

For more information, contact Martin Bourgeois at 225-765-2401 or mbourgeois@wlf.louisiana.gov.

L.D.W.F. RECRUITING HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) is looking for volunteers to become Hunter Education instructors. The Hunter Education Division will be conducting several instructor academies to certify volunteers to teach hunter safety courses and bowhunter education student courses.

The academies are open to the public, free of charge and will be held statewide over the next several months. The next Hunter Education instructor course is from July 7-9 and the next Bowhunter Education instructor course is from August 9-11, both at the Woodworth Educational Center in Woodworth. Volunteers must be 18 years old or older to participate in the academy. Anyone interested in attending or wanting more information about the academies should contact John Sturgis at 225-763-5448 or visit LDWF's Web site at www.wlf.louisiana.gov.

To become a volunteer hunter education instructor, individuals are required to attend a special Instructor Academy for a minimum of twelve hours, successfully complete a mandatory live fire exercise and pass a written test. There is also a background check conducted on the volunteer. Topics covered at the academy include hunting ethics and responsibility, firearms and ammunition, safety in the field, classroom management, and audio-visual and related equipment training.

Instructor academies are also taught year round by Regional Hunter Education Coordinators at the local level on a by-need basis. For information about these courses, please contact the regional hunter education coordinator.

For more information, contact John Sturgis at 225-763-5448 or jsturgis@wlf.louisiana.gov.



BOAT MISSING SINCE HURRICANE KATRINA RECOVERED

On April 5, Enforcement Division agents of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries recovered a vessel reported lost during Hurricane Katrina in the Bayou Chauvin area of Terrebonne Parish.

Agents on routine patrol in Terrebonne Parish encountered a local commercial crabber identified as Dempsey G. Jackson Jr., 39, of Chauvin. During inspection of the required licenses, agents determined that Jackson did not possess the required commercial vessel license for the boat. Using a partial hull identification number and a 2006 state registration validation decal, agents were able to identify the vessel as having been lost during Hurricane Katrina.



Agents questioned Jackson how he acquired the vessel, and he claimed to have purchased the vessel from a FEMA work crew in the Chauvin area after Hurricane Rita. Jackson was cited for possession of stolen property and commercial fish without a commercial vessel license.

If convicted of possession of stolen property, Jackson faces the possibility of imprisonment for up to two years with or without hard labor, or may be fined up to \$2,000 or both. If convicted of possession of commercial fish without a commercial vessel license, he faces \$250-\$500 in fines, or jail time up to 90 days, or both plus court costs.

The vessel in question was seized as evidence and is being held pending disposition of the case.

Agents participating in the case were Lt. Chuck Comeaux and Sgt. Richard Purvis.

For more information contact Lt. Col. Keith LaCaze at 225-765-2469 or kla-caze@wlf.louisiana.gov.

FOUR FROM HOUMA CITED FOR SHRIMPING IN CLOSED AREA

Agents with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Enforcement Division cited four Houma shrimpers for allegedly shrimping in state offshore waters during the closed season on March 28.

Huynh V. Minh, 50, Tuan Van Tran, 40, Thao T. Nguyen, 47, and Phong K. Nguyen, 22, all of Houma were cited when agents allegedly spotted them shrimping in their 86-foot trawl boat fewer than three miles from the beach just south of St. Mary Parish. Shrimping in state offshore waters was closed from the coast out to three miles offshore at the time.

Agents made contact with the vessel and advised them of the violation. Agents then discovered that the four trawl nets that the subjects were using had a total cork length measurement of 215 feet. Shrimpers are restricted to using not more than 130 feet of total cork line in state offshore waters.

All four subjects were issued citations for trawling in state offshore waters during a closed season and using trawls that exceeded size requirements.

The penalty for each of these violations is a fine between \$400-\$750, or jail time up to 120 days, or both plus court costs. For a second offense and all subsequent convictions, trawl licenses shall be revoked for the remainder of the issued year, plus an additional year.

Four shrimp trawls were seized and will be held as evidence. A total of 2,387 pounds of shrimp were seized and sold at fair market value. The proceeds of that sale will be held in escrow pending disposition of the cases.

Agents participating in this case were Agents Scott Dupre, David Boudreaux, and Sgt. Ross Mire.

For more information contact Lt. Col. Keith LaCaze at 225-756-2469 or klacaze@wlf.louisiana.gov.



NEOTROPICAL SONGBIRD TOUR ON SHERBURNE W.M.A.

Birding enthusiasts can experience the wonder and variety of migrating songbirds at the annual Neotropical Songbird Tour, held at the Sherburne Wildlife Management Area (WMA) on Saturday, May 13. Arrival time is between 6:45 and 7:15 a.m. at the intersection of Exit 127 on Interstate 10, located halfway between Lafayette and Baton Rouge, and La. Hwy 975. Look for a gravel pull-off just after turning onto La. 975

The Neotropical Songbird Tour will take participants on one of the leading breeding bird survey routes in North America. Participants will be introduced to bird identification through their songs and chirp notes. These vocalizations, originating from the dense understory or the tall canopy of deciduous bottomland hardwood forest, are usually the first clues to the area's wealth of bird species. Sherburne WMA offers one of the highest densities of nesting neotropical songbirds in North America.

Tour participants will be guided to two sites where facilitators will be available to assist them in bird identifica-

tion. At each site it may be possible to hear as many as 15 species of birds. Some birds are easily seen whereas others are elusive, so binoculars may be useful. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) will also demonstrate mist-netting techniques being used in their monitoring programs on the WMA complex. The bird tour will conclude around 11 a.m.

After the bird tour ends at around 11 a.m., participants are encouraged to attend the LDWF-sponsored Step Outside Day also on the Sherburne WMA. Step Outside Day is aimed at introducing outdoor activities to people with disabilities and children.

The Neotropical Songbird Tour is sponsored by LDWF, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Basin Ranger District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources Atchafalaya Basin Program.

For more information, contact Tony Vidrine at 337-948-0255 or tvidrine@wlf.louisiana.gov.

L.D.W.F. HOSTS STEP OUTSIDE DAY ON MAY 13

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will sponsor the 2006 Step Outside Day on Saturday, May 13 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Sherburne Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

Step Outside Day is designed for people with disabilities or those with little or no opportunity to engage in outdoor activities, but is also open for all kids and adults. The event provides mentoring and a safe hands-on outdoor experience.

Step Outside Day is a national program administered by the National Shooting Sports Foundation to increase participation in outdoor sports. Activities include fishing, archery, boating, .22 rimfire target and trap shooting, flower planter and paddleboat construction, nature photography, bird watching and decoy painting.

Also featured will be exhibits on adaptive equipment, water safety, Louisiana black bear information, turkey trapping demonstrations, trapping techniques, red-cockaded woodpecker monitoring techniques, and turkey and duck calling.

No alcoholic beverages or glass containers will be allowed on the premises. Due to the nature of activities, liability waiver forms must be completed.

Pre-registration is encouraged. To register or get detailed driving directions to Sherburne headquarters, call the Army Corps of Engineers Atchafalaya Basin Project Office at 337-585-0853. Sherburne WMA is located near Krotz Springs on La. 975 three miles south of U.S. 190 on the east side of the Atchafalaya River levee.

For more information contact Tony Vidrine at 337-948-0255 or tvidrine@wlf.louisiana.gov.

