2014-2015

Louisiana Shrimp
Commercial Rules and Regulations

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Contents

03 Harvesters
08 Industry Support
09 Buyers, Sellers, & Transporters
11 Quick Facts

Harvesters

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Harvest Areas

Louisiana commercial fishermen harvest shrimp from Louisiana state waters (inland waters and out to 9 nautical miles) and from offshore federal waters (9 to 200 nautical miles).

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, and the Louisiana Legislature are responsible for managing shrimp fisheries in Louisiana's waters.

Louisiana's state waters are divided into three areas for management purposes:

- Inshore (from the beach inland; further divided by major estuarine basin)
- Beach (beach out to 3 nautical miles)
- Nearshore (3 to 9 nautical miles)

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and NOAA Fisheries are responsible for managing shrimp fisheries in federal waters.

Commercial Harvester Licenses and Fees

To harvest shrimp commercially in Louisiana's waters, you must have the following licenses issued by LDWF:

- A commercial fisherman's license ($55 resident, $460 nonresident)*
- A vessel license in the vessel owner's name ($15 resident, $60 nonresident), unless shrimping with legal land-based gear
- Licenses for the fishing gear you're using*:
  - For each shrimp trawl ($25 resident, $100 nonresident)
  - For each butterfly net ($25 resident, $100 nonresident)
  - For each skimmer net ($25 resident, $100 nonresident)
  - For each cast net ($25 resident, $100 nonresident)

*If you are a Louisiana resident, age 70 or older, you may instead purchase a senior commercial fisherman and gear license for $20.

You must pay an annual gear fee ($10 resident, $40 nonresident).

To commercially harvest shrimp for live bait, you must have a Special Bait Dealer Permit ($110; details on page 6).

To sell shrimp you have caught to anyone who doesn't have a Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer License (besides consumers) or transport your catch out-of-state, you must have a Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer License ($250 resident, $1,105 nonresident).

To sell shrimp you have caught directly to consumers within the state, you must have a Fresh Products License ($20 resident, $120 nonresident). Your spouse may purchase a Fresh Products-Spouse License for $5 to sell directly to consumers.

To apply for LDWF-issued licenses, contact **225-765-2898** or visit LDWF's Headquarters at **2000 Quail Drive in Baton Rouge**. Renew your licenses online at **www.la.wildlifelicense.com**.

To harvest shrimp in federal waters, you must have a federal shrimp permit issued by NOAA Fisheries. There is a moratorium on these permits; you may only apply for one if an original permit is transferred to you. Contact NOAA Fisheries at **877-376-4877**.

Seasons

You may only harvest shrimp during open shrimp seasons (unless you're permitted to harvest live bait under a Special Bait Dealer Permit). The Commission sets shrimp seasons for Louisiana's state waters by area, according to scientific information about environmental and water conditions and the growth rates, distribution, and abundance of shrimp. They also consider input from the industry and other stakeholders. In general, shrimp seasons by area are:

- **Inshore:** open when enough market-sized shrimp are available in these waters for harvest. The spring/brown shrimp season generally runs May to July. The fall/white shrimp season is generally open mid-August to mid-December; some waters stay open into January.
- **Beach and nearshore:** year-round, except from mid or late December to April or May in certain areas to protect small white shrimp and allow them to grow to market size. The Commission can close these waters at other times of the year if necessary.
- **Federal waters off Louisiana:** year-round

Go to **www.wlf.louisiana.gov/shrimp-seasons** for the most up to date information on Louisiana's shrimp seasons.

Size/Possession Limits

There is no size limit for any shrimp harvested during the spring open season nor for brown or seabob shrimp harvested during any open season.

White shrimp is legal size when a pound of white shrimp equals 100 whole shrimp or less. You may not harvest sub-legal white shrimp, except from October 15 through the 3rd Monday in December. Also, when more than half of your catch is seabobs or brown shrimp, no more than 10% (by weight) of your catch may be sub-legal size white shrimp.

Legal Gear

You may only use trawls, butterfly nets, skimmer nets, and cast nets to harvest shrimp during open seasons in Louisiana's waters.

Bycatch Reduction Requirements

Federal law requires all shrimpers fishing with powered otter trawls (except test nets with headrope lengths of 12 feet or less) to equip them with turtle excluder devices (TEDs), which allow incidentally captured turtles to escape the nets. In lieu of TEDs, shrimpers fishing with test trawls and skimmer and butterfly nets must limit the time they tow them to 75 minutes from November 1 through March 31 and 55 minutes from April 1 through October 31 to reduce potential impacts on sea turtles.

When fishing in federal waters, shrimp trawlers must install bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) in each trawl to reduce catch of non-targeted species.

Did you know?

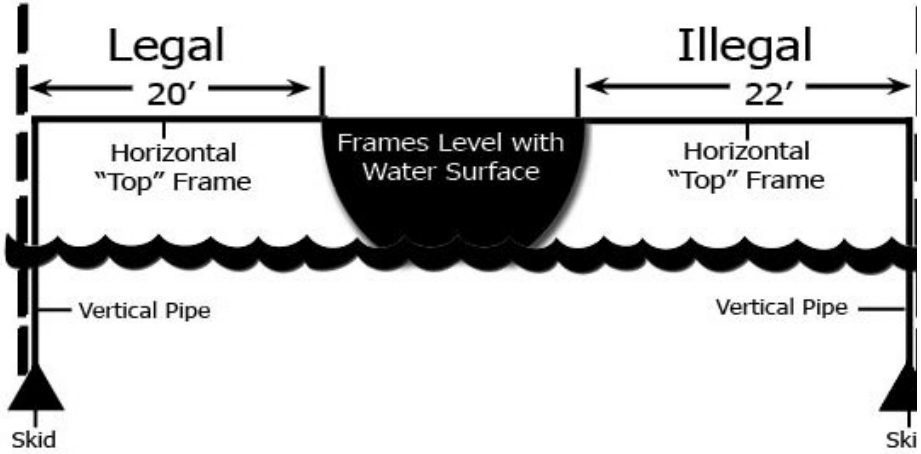
Several thousand people, from harvesters, dealers, and processors to wholesalers, retailers, and restaurants, depend on Louisiana's shrimp resource for their livelihoods. We carefully manage our shrimp resource, not only to sustain shrimp stocks and their ecosystem, but also to sustain the local economies and coastal communities that depend on it and preserve the cultural heritage of this important fishery.

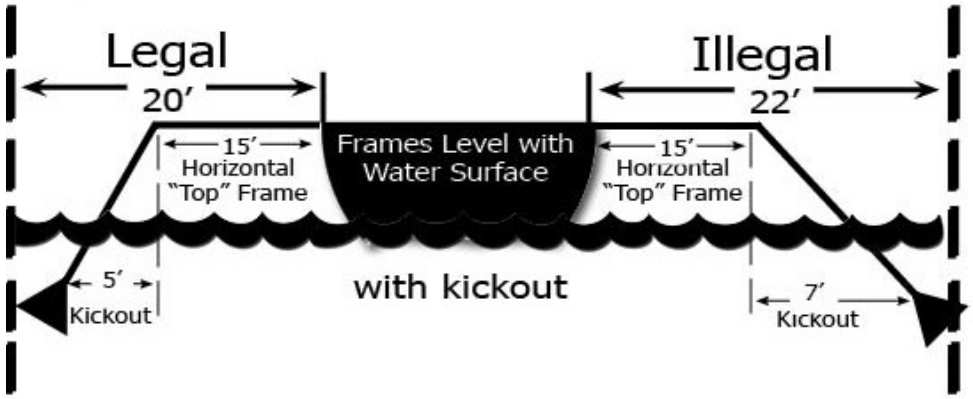
NOAA agents inspecting a shrimper's TED for proper installation.

Gear Requirements

	Trawls
Mesh	Must be at least 5/8-inch bar or 1-1/4 inches stretched mesh. Must be at least 3/4 inch bar or 1-1/2 inches stretched mesh during the fall inshore shrimp season from the western shore of Vermilion Bay and Southwest Pass at Marsh Island to the Atchafalaya River.
Size and number	• *Inshore waters:* regulations permit one trawl measuring 50 feet long or less along the corkline and 66 feet long or less along the lead line OR two trawls not exceeding 25 feet each along the corkline and 33 feet along the lead line, with trawl doors no more than 8 feet long and 43 inches high and no more than two inner sled doors. Each vessel may also pull a test trawl*. • *Beach waters:* A vessel's nets may not exceed a total of 130 feet of cork line and 165 feet of lead line, in addition to one test trawl*. • *Breton and Chandeleur Sounds:* Regulations permit two trawls, each measuring no more than 65 feet long along the corkline and no more than 82 feet long along the lead line, plus one test trawl*. • *Nearshore and federal offshore waters:* up to 4 trawls of any size plus one test trawl. *A test trawl is no more than 16 feet long along the corkline or 20 feet long along the lead line or head rope.
	Butterfly and skimmer nets
Mesh	Must be at least 5/8-inch bar or 1-1/4 inches stretched mesh. Must be at least 3/4 inch bar or 1-1/2 inches stretched mesh during the fall inshore shrimp season from the western shore of Vermilion Bay and Southwest Pass at Marsh Island to the Atchafalaya River.
Size and number	• A single stationary butterfly net may measure no more than 22 feet vertically or horizontally. • Individual nets of double butterfly nets may measure no more than 12 feet vertically or horizontally, unless used on a vessel, in which case they may measure no more than 12 feet vertically by 16 feet horizontally. • Skimmer nets may have an opening circumference of no more than 72 feet and a maximum lead line length of 33 feet.
Other	• Butterfly nets may be mounted no more than 24 inches from the side of the vessel. • Skimmer nets may be mounted to the horizontal net frame at any distance from the gunwale of the vessel as long as the mounting distance and horizontal length of the net frame does not exceed 20 feet from the gunwale. • You may not tie individual nets together. • No sweeper devices, leads, extensions, wings, or other attachments. • You must mark butterfly nets with your identification information when using them in Calcasieu Lake, Calcasieu River, Grand Bayou, and Calcasieu Ship Channel (all within Cameron Parish); if found unmarked, these nets will be seized LDWF agents or other authorized employees.

Examples of legal and illegal skimmer net frames. (20 feet measurement is taken when top frame is in the horizontal position. These sketches are only examples; other skimmer net frame configurations using horizontal measurements less than 20 feet may also be legal.)





Restricted and Closed Areas

Some areas including wildlife refuges, wildlife management areas, and habitat conservation areas may be closed to certain gear types and methods or shrimping altogether and may have different possession limits. These restrictions and closures help protect developing shrimp populations and reduce conflicts among user groups.

Fishermen may not shrimp at night in some areas to limit fishing effort, reducing pressure on the resource, and to reduce conflicts among user groups.

Shrimper/Crab Trap Interactions

If you catch an unserviceable crab trap, you must keep it on your vessel and properly dispose of it onshore. If you catch a serviceable crab trap without a float, return it to the water with a common float (a white, plastic, one-gallon or larger bleach bottle).

Live Bait Shrimp

To commercially harvest shrimp for live bait, you must have a Special Bait Dealer Permit, which allows you to harvest shrimp for bait at any time. The requirements for this permit include:

- A permit application and fee
- $1,000 cash bond, which must be forfeited if anyone associated with the permit violates any of the permit requirements or any commercial fishing laws and regulations
- Background check for previous wildlife or fisheries violations
- Inspection of live bait holding facilities (both onshore and on vessel)
- Proper signage on the vessel identifying that the vessel is working under the bait permit
- Public notice that live bait is available
- Use of an approved, fully operational vessel monitoring system onboard the vessel
- Recordkeeping and reporting

You may only use the following gear under this permit:

- One trawl no more than 25 feet along the cork line and 33 feet along the leadline
- Two skimmer nets with individual nets no more than 16 feet measured horizontally, 12 feet measured vertically, or 20 feet measure diagonally

For more information, visit **www.wlf.louisiana.gov/permit/special-bait-dealer-permit**.

Compliance and Enforcement

Through events, outreach materials, and resources, LDWF works hard to make sure fishermen understand relevant rules and regulations. LDWF's Law Enforcement Division is responsible for ensuring compliance with these rules and regulations through regular patrols and investigations. LDWF partners with NOAA Fisheries and U.S. Coast Guard enforcement agents and officers to increase their enforcement capabilities and carry out their important mission in Louisiana's waters and beyond.

Science-Based Fishery Management

Louisiana's shrimp management program is firmly rooted in science—we determine shrimp seasons based on shrimp growth, distribution, and abundance, which are heavily influenced by environmental and water conditions. Biologists continually monitor these conditions and shrimp populations in coastal marshes and bays. Using these data, they project when the majority of the shrimp population within the state's seven major estuarine basins will reach market size.

Managers then use these projections to determine when and where to open the shrimp season. This science-based, adaptive system has allowed managers to increase shrimp yields and economic opportunities for the shrimp industry by adjusting seasons in response to the conditions that influence the shrimp population.

LOUISIANA IS THE #1 SUPPLIER OF DOMESTIC SHRIMP IN THE NATION.

Industry Support

Certified Authentic Louisiana Wild Seafood

LDWF has launched the Louisiana Wild Seafood Certification Program (LWSCP) to build a brand that guarantees the origin of Louisiana wild-caught seafood. The program establishes rules and guidelines throughout the seafood supply chain that ensure all seafood products bearing the program's logo have been caught in Louisiana waters or the Gulf of Mexico by licensed Louisiana fishermen, then landed, processed, and packaged in our state. The program's goal is not only to increase consumer confidence in the source of their seafood but also to establish Louisiana seafood as a premium product and ensure our industry remains competitive in the constantly changing global marketplace.

The program requires participating seafood dealers and processors to be trained on the program guidelines, state and federal regulations, and best practices for quality and safety. It also requires that participating seafood retailers demonstrate that their seafood products registered and labeled with the LWSCP logo can be traced back to participating dealers and processors. The requirements for this origin-based brand help ensure the integrity and reputation of Louisiana seafood—when buyers see the program's logo, they know they're purchasing authentic Louisiana wild seafood, a product known for fresh flavor, consistent quality, and sustainability.

Find out more at **Certified.LouisianaSeafood.com**.

Seafood Technology Equipment Program

LDWF is developing support for all aspects of the industry, from fishing vessels to processing plants, to modernize their equipment and facilities to improve the quality and safety of seafood. For example, through the Shrimp Refrigeration Program, harvesters, docks, and processors may apply for funds that will help relieve the financial burden of upgrading refrigeration equipment. For more information about the grant program and its requirements, please contact us at **225.765.3980**.

CERTIFIED AUTHENTIC LOUISIANA™ WILD SEAFOOD

Buyers, Sellers, and Transporters

Licenses and Permits

To purchase and resell shrimp in Louisiana, you must have one of the following LDWF-issued licenses:		
If you:	**You must have:**	**Notes:**
Buy shrimp, including bait, in Louisiana from commercial fishermen for sale or resale	A Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer License	$250 resident, $1,105 nonresident. There are no restrictions on whom these licenseholders may sell seafood to.
Buy shrimp from a licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealer for sale to consumers for personal or household use	A Retail Seafood Dealer License	$105 resident, $405 nonresident
Are a commercial fisherman selling shrimp to anyone who doesn't have a Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer License (besides consumers) or transporting your catch out-of-state	A Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer License	$250 resident, $1,105 nonresident
Are a commercial fisherman selling shrimp directly to consumers within the state	A Fresh Products License	$20 resident, $120 nonresident. A $5 Resident Fresh Products-Spouse License is also available for a commercial fisherman's spouse to sell directly to consumers.
To operate any commercial transport vehicle and load, unload, or transport seafood, you must have one of the following LDWF-issued licenses:		
If you:	**You must have:**	**Notes:**
Are a commercial fisherman transporting your catch to a wholesale/retail dealer	A Commercial Fisherman's License	$55 resident, $460 nonresident
Are a licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealer delivering seafood	A Seafood Transport License	$30 for residents and nonresidents
Are a licensed retail seafood dealer picking up seafood from a wholesale/retail dealer and transporting it to your business	A Seafood Transport License	$30 for residents and nonresidents
Are transporting a commercial fisherman's catch to a wholesale/retail dealer for sale	A Seafood Transport License	$30 for residents and nonresidents
Are a wholesale/retail seafood dealer	A Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer Vehicle License	$250 resident, $1,105 nonresident. Applies for all dealer's commercial transport activities.
Ship seafood out of state	A Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer License OR a Transport License purchased with the dealer license	Dealer License: $250 resident; $1,105 nonresident Transport License: $30 for residents and nonresidents

Did you know?

Brown shrimp provide the bulk of Louisiana's production of small shrimp—they're typically harvested at a smaller size than white shrimp, averaging 70 to 80 whole shrimp per pound. Landings of brown shrimp peak in May and June.

Since 2000, **white shrimp** have made up around 60% of Louisiana's annual shrimp landings. They're harvested at an average of 30 to 40 per pound, which leads to a higher average price for white shrimp. Landings of white shrimp peak in the fall.

Recordkeeping and Reporting Requirements

Dealers and retailers must keep records of the following for 3 years:

- The quantity and species of shrimp you purchase
- The date you purchase the shrimp
- The full name and license and/or permit number of the commercial fisherman, wholesale/retail dealer, or out-of-state seller from whom you purchase the shrimp
- The quantity and species of shrimp you sell and the name and license number of the person to whom you sell it
- Quantity and species of shrimp and the date you sell it to consumers

Dealers and retailers purchasing from commercial fishermen or anyone other than a licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealer or fresh products licenseholder must report these transactions every month on LDWF-issued trip tickets, documenting information about the purchase, including what it is, where and how it was caught, shrimp sizes and quantities, etc.

Commercial fishermen who sell their catch directly to consumers (fresh products licenseholders) are also required to complete and submit trip tickets with this information.

This information provides fishery scientists with gear and area specific catch information that improves the accuracy of stock assessments and provides fishery managers with information on impacts of environmental changes and events on the fishery.

Shrimp Excise Tax

Louisiana collects an excise tax on all saltwater shrimp harvested from state waters as well as all shrimp imported into the state. Taxes apply as follows:

- 15 cents per barrel of 210 pounds of head-on, unpeeled shrimp
- 15 cents per barrel of 125 pounds of headless, unpeeled shrimp
- 15 cents per barrel of 75 pounds of headless, peeled shrimp

The first wholesale/retail dealer who receives the shrimp must pay this tax. For imported shrimp brought to cold storage, the dealer storing, brokering, or distributing the shrimp must pay the tax.

Taxes are deposited in Louisiana's Conservation Fund and support LDWF's Law Enforcement Division and its operations.

Louisiana Shrimp Harvest Facts

70%
of Louisiana's annual shrimp landings are caught in state waters (the rest are harvested offshore in federal waters or in waters of other states).

97 million
pounds of shrimp were harvested by Louisiana's commercial fishermen in 2013

$177 million
The dockside value of Louisiana's 2013 shrimp harvest

5,500
Approximate number of licensed shrimpers in Louisiana

Get Involved!

To manage Louisiana's shrimp fisheries, LDWF and the Commission rely not only on data from scientific studies and landings records but also on input from the public. Our decisions directly impact you, so it's important that we have your input as we define management goals and strategies.

We encourage you to participate throughout the management process to ensure that your interests are considered and that you understand the regulatory process and resulting management actions.

The Shrimp Task Force, a group made up of representatives from the shrimp industry and relevant state agencies, meets regularly and is responsible for studying and monitoring the shrimp industry and making recommendations to LDWF, the Commission, and other state agencies on improving production and the economic sustainability of the industry. Task force meetings are open to the public. To receive information about upcoming task force meetings, please email **aroth@wlf.la.gov**.

The Commission's monthly meetings and our open regulatory process provide additional opportunities for public input.

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