

LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

April 26, 2018

**Robert J. Samanie, III
Chairman**

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Samanie, III", is positioned below the printed name and title.

The following constitute minutes of the Commission Meeting
and are not verbatim transcripts of the proceedings.

Audio files of the meetings are kept at the
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

2000 Quail Drive

Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808

For more information, call (225) 763-5775

AGENDA
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

April 26, 2018 – 9:30 AM

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Commission Special Announcements/Personal Privilege
5. Receive a Presentation and Consider a Declaration of Emergency to Set the Opening Date for the 2018 Spring Inshore Shrimp Season in the Area Between the Mississippi River and the Western Shore of Freshwater Bayou Canal – Peyton Cagle
6. Public Comments
7. Adjournment

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF
LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

Thursday, April 26, 2018

The special meeting of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission was **Called to Order** at 9:30 AM on April 26, 2018, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Headquarters Building in the Louisiana Room by **Chairman Samanie**.

Commissioner Courville led the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

Chairman Samanie asked for the **Roll Call**. The following Commissioners were present:

Bobby Samanie
Chad Courville
Joe McPherson
Jerri Smitko
Bart Yakupzack

Commissioners Al Sunseri and Bill Hogan were absent from the meeting.

Secretary Jack Montoucet was also present.

Chairman Samanie called for **Commission Special Announcements/Personal Privilege** and none were heard.

Chairman Samanie asked that Mr. Peyton Cagle, Fisheries Biologist, come forward for his agenda item, **Receive a Presentation and Consider a Declaration of Emergency to Set the Opening Date for the 2018 Spring Inshore Shrimp Season in the Area Between the Mississippi River and the Western Shore of Freshwater Bayou Canal**. Mr. Cagle's presentation on brown shrimp in Zone 2 included a diagram of a shrimp's life cycle; the different evaluations used for shrimp management and what occurred at the Regular April 2018 Commission Meeting. Next discussed was hydrology which included monthly southeast area rainfall, monthly Mississippi River discharge, south Barataria Bay monthly water temperatures (deviations from 68°F) and north Barataria Bay monthly salinity (deviations from 10 ppt). The presentation continued with brown shrimp sampling results for work week 17 from Coastal Study Areas (CSA) 3, 4 and 5 showing what was captured from 6' trawls by catch per unit effort (CPUE) and average size; CSA 3 size frequency and predicted crossover dates (April 30, 2018), CSA 4 size frequency and predicted crossover dates (April 26, 2018), CSA 5 size frequency and predicted crossover dates (May 8, 2018); primary brown shrimp area combining CSA 3 and 4 CPUE and average size; primary brown shrimp area crossover date of April 29, 2018; current white shrimp data from CSA 5 for work week 17 and projected data for work weeks 18, 19 and

20; Vermilion Bay white shrimp data for work week 17 for CPUE and average size; and predicted April 2018 and May 2018 tidal range for Barataria Pass. Mr. Cagle then recommended to open Zone 2 on Monday, April 30, 2018. (A copy of Mr. Cagle's presentation is included in the Appendices Section of the Minutes.)

Commissioner Yakupzack asked when did the season open last year and Mr. Cagle stated Zone 2 open on May 8, 2017 and there was a push to have an earlier opening but it never happened. He added some of the CPUE this year was well above last year's data. **Chairman Samanie** asked if follow-up crops were coming in CSA 3 and 4 which may result in a one or two crop season. Mr. Cagle showed a graph for CSA 3 projected size frequency and crossover dates which did not show any future crops. **Chairman Samanie** felt this could be bad for the inshore shrimpers and Mr. Cagle commented this was one of the largest crop of shrimp ever seen. He added that staff was concerned that if the season did not open, a percentage of the crop would be lost. **Commissioner Courville** asked for public comments. Before opening the meeting for public comments, **Chairman Samanie** read a statement on time limits and respect to the Commission, staff and others in attendance. **Commissioner Courville** asked that the speakers state where they drag for shrimp.

Mr. David Camardelle, Mayor of Grand Isle, stated he has been a commercial fisherman all of his life and was elected by commercial fishermen, and then asked that the Commission and Department look at the zones. Right now was not the time to open the season in his area with all of the freshwater that has been brought into their area from the Davis Pond project. Mr. Camardelle added that you cannot compare Terrebonne Basin with that to the west and to the east. Another problem was all of the freshwater that flowed through the area from opening the Spillway in March and April. To open the season on April 30 would be too early, according to the Mayor and the fishermen in his area; they would like to see a later opening. **Chairman Samanie** asked Mayor Camardelle if this was a one crop season, what would he say to the fishermen in Lafitte. Mayor Camardelle stated he spoke with the Mayor of Lafitte and he was in favor of opening early but he was not aware the date was going to be April 30.

Mr. Dean Blanchard, Blanchard Seafood, began by thanking Mr. Cagle for talking with him. He added that if the biology was right, the season should open but he talked about the small shrimp that were caught last year and the low prices given for them. Mr. Blanchard asked that the season open on April 30, but if the shrimp were small, to close it and wait for them to grow. He then wanted to see Zone 2 split at Bayou Lafourche. **Commissioner McPherson** told Mr. Blanchard it seemed he made the same comments at the April Regular Meeting and then asked, if it was right to open for forty cents, why would anyone shrimp to lose money and Mr. Blanchard commented he wanted to see happy fishermen with money in their pockets instead of the fishermen having to borrow money from him.

Ms. Roxanne Sevin, RCP Seafood, stated she has been shrimping for about 40 years and she had the opportunity to go out and caught shrimp 90 per pound with white shrimp count being 20-22 per pound. She agreed with Mr. Cagle that if there is no recruitment, it would be a very short season and felt the season should open Monday, April 30. Ms. Sevin added that no matter what the price will be, if a person needs to make a living, he will go out and shrimp.

Ms. Ruth Pitre, Ocean Harvest, commented she has been in the shrimp business for 60 years and added this was to be a May season, not April. She felt opening on April 30 would be too early and felt May 7 or May 14 would be better. Ms. Pitre noted a lot of the boats were not ready for an early season and her ice plant was down.

Mr. Barry Rogers, Houma, Louisiana, thanked the Department and Commission for the new ride-along program and agreed with Mr. Cagle's presentation on opening on April 30. He asked that consideration be given to the communities of Pointe-aux-Chenes, Bayou Dularge, Venice and Lafitte as their boat blessings would be Sunday of the upcoming weekend. Mr. Cagle explained how the program of side-by-side sampling occurred with staff and commercial shrimp captains pulling one net each. The protocol has been approved but additional information was needed before the program could get started. **Commissioner Smitko** asked that everyone involved in the program sign an Indemnity and Hold Harmless Agreement and felt it should be part of the protocol. Assistant Secretary Patrick Banks mentioned this procedure has been done with oysters for years and they coordinate with the associated Task Force so they can give the Department who should be involved with the program. Also, he added that Enforcement would be fully involved with the program as those commercial fishermen are operating under the Department's umbrella using commercial gear outside of the seasons. Assistant Secretary Banks stated he would discuss the Indemnity issue with Legal staff.

Mr. John Brown, Barataria, Louisiana, began stating he has 35 years' experience and felt the season should have opened 2 weeks prior to now. He added that the shrimp were moving out and asked why could the outside fishermen catch the shrimp but those same shrimp were not big enough to catch in inshore waters and Mr. Cagle responded by stating the outside waters were open and that some of the larger shrimp were escaping from inshore waters. Mr. Brown explained the tide cycle with shrimp and asked that the season should open as soon as possible.

Mr. Rocky Ditcharo, Ditcharo Seafood, suggested moving the inside-outside line 3 miles and then asked who called for the special meeting and **Chairman Samanie** answered he was the only one that could call a special meeting. **Commissioner Smitko** stated she contacted the Chairman and felt that based on the data, what she was hearing and representing the interests of commercial fishermen on the Commission, she wanted a special meeting. Mr. Ditcharo wanted the season to open May 7th and noted that some of the plants were not ready for a season. He then asked **Commissioner Smitko** what experience does she have in the shrimp industry and she answered she owns a portion of a shrimp boat. Mr. Ditcharo felt the plants, knowing the season would be opening, would drop their prices. **Commissioner Smitko** commented it was supply and demand that affects the prices. Secretary Montoucet felt the meeting needed to get back on track of when to open the shrimp season.

Mr. Timothy Schouest, Jr., Erath, Louisiana, stated he has never heard of a season opening in April. He added that the shrimp will leave an area for warmer waters when a cold front moves through and then comes back in when the weather warms up. Mr. Schouest noted the shrimp were small around the time of the snow last December. He then asked that the shrimp season open from Mississippi to Texas all at the same time so all of the boats do not congregate in one area.

Mr. Troy Schultz, Sr., asked that if there are only one or two crops, why not let the fishermen with the small skiffs be given the chance to catch them and make money. He felt no matter which area was open, statewide or by zones, wherever the shrimp are that is where the boats will be.

Mr. David Chauvin thanked the Commission for giving their time on this important issue and then thanked the Department biologists for their hard work in sampling and compiling the data that is presented. He felt everyone agreed that times were changing, such as weather patterns, and the way the water moves. The data shows that the crossover date was much earlier than normal and the season could open and asked if the Department could do a study on the changes affecting brown shrimp production.

Mr. Kenneth Helmer, Barataria, Louisiana, agreed with Mr. Chauvin that times are changing and felt some of the laws and regulations should change with the times. He asked that if the shrimp are marketable and make the count, open the season so he can work.

Ms. Claudia Helmer, Barataria, Louisiana, stated it was time to open the season in the inside waters. In 15 minutes on one of her trips, they had 15 bushels and then within 1 hour, they had 30 barrels of shrimp.

Mr. Gerry Helmer did not wish to speak but **Chairman Samanie** asked when he would like to see the season open and Mr. Helmer said April 30.

Mr. Felix Alexie, Jr., did not wish to speak but wanted the season to open on April 30.

Mr. Ted Portier, Chauvin, Louisiana, stated he had a bait license and was able to shrimp and caught marketable sized shrimp but in the years he has been shrimping, the opening date should be in line with the weather and other circumstances. Mr. Portier then asked that the season open on April 30.

Mr. Gary Muth, Sr., Barataria, Louisiana, asked to open the season on April 30, but felt if the Department biologists were experienced to let them do their job. He wondered what would be next if the Commission did not go with the biology.

Mr. Kevin Lirette did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on May 7.

Mr. Wayne Lirette did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on May 7.

Ms. Brandi Lovell did not wish to speak but did not state when she wanted to see the season open.

Ms. Angelia LaCoste did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on May 7.

Mr. Kermit Deck did not wish to speak and did not state when he wanted the season opened.

Mr. Charles Frelich did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened later than April 30.

Ms. Mary LeBlanc did not wish to speak but wrote to not open the bay early, but open on May 14 or May 21 in all zones, no split.

Mr. Ricky Trahan did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on May 1, 2018.

Ms. Lynn Trahan did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on May 1, 2018.

Mr. Jake Billiot did not wish to speak but asked to open the season the first Monday in May.

Mr. Kenneth Guillory did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Mr. Jordan Helmer did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Mr. Stephen Alexie did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Mr. Kevin Martin did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Mr. Darrin Helmer did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Mr. Troy Schultz, Jr., did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Mr. Joe Nguyen did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Mr. Danny Gros did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Mr. Gary Mayfield did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Mr. Timothy Danos did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Mr. Gary Gros did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Mr. Craig Neal did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Mr. Peter Nguyen did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Mr. Ernest Ruttle, Jr. did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Ms. Carolyn Trosclair did not wish to speak but wanted an early opening.

Mr. Paul Verdin did not wish to speak but wanted an early opening.

Mr. Craig Authement did not wish to speak but wanted the season to open April 29.

Mr. Benny Alexie did not wish to speak but wanted an early opening.

Mr. Ted Adams did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Mr. Michael LoBue did not wish to speak but wanted the season opened on April 30.

Hearing no further comments, **Commissioner Smitko** thanked and appreciated the fishermen's commitment and passion on this issue and for getting involved. She then made a motion for the inside waters from the eastern shore of South Pass of the Mississippi River westward to the western shore of Freshwater Bayou Canal open at 6:00 AM on Monday, April 30, 2018.

Commissioner Courville asked Col. Sammy Martin if there was an enforcement concern with an AM or PM opening and he was told the Enforcement Division could handle any opening.

Commissioner Courville then seconded the motion. **Commissioner McPherson** asked if the Secretarial authority to advance or delay the opening dates should be included in the motion.

Commissioner Smitko amended her motion to include giving the Secretary authority to delay or advance the opening dates, to close any waters to protect white shrimp or if enforcement problems develop and having a 72-hour notice prior to any action. **Commissioner Courville** seconded the amended motion. **Commissioner Yakupzack** asked the Department to review the comments given on moving the 3-mile line and changing the zone lines especially around Lafourche before the next shrimp opening in August. **Commissioner Smitko** felt one of the gravest problems the fishermen face with the brown shrimp season is the Freshwater Diversion. She asked the Department to work with the others responsible for deciding when to divert water or when to shut it down and possibly reach a resolution. Secretary Montoucet commented that when they contacted CPRA on this issue, this was the first time that Davis Pond was closed immediately. **Commissioner McPherson** commented that science has improved through the years and it was now known what was needed to protect the resource. Once you get past protecting the resource, then you needed to decide the utilization and equitable distribution of the resource, which was difficult. **Commissioner McPherson** also thanked the fishermen for attending the meeting.

Ms. Brittney Breaux, Cut Off, Louisiana, stated she was not against the early opening but asked the Commission to remember that ice plants were given 72 hours to build ice. She asked that the season open on Wednesday, May 2 or Thursday, May 3.

Hearing no further comments, the motion passed with no opposition.

(The full text of the Declaration of Emergency is made a part of the record.)

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

**Wildlife and Fisheries Commission
Department of Wildlife and Fisheries**

Opening of Zone 2 Spring Inshore Shrimp Season 2018
April 26, 2018

The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission was notified that recent biological samples indicated brown shrimp could reach marketable sizes before the scheduled May 3, 2018 Wildlife and Fisheries Commission meeting, and a special Commission Meeting was called by the Commission to review that data. After considering the biological information and public input, the Commission took action to open the spring shrimp season in the inshore waters of Zone 2.

In accordance with the emergency provisions of R.S. 49:953 of the Administrative Procedure Act which allows the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to use emergency procedures to set shrimp seasons and R.S. 56:497 which provides that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission shall fix no less than two open seasons each year for all or part of inside waters and shall have the authority to open or close outside waters and to increase the minimum mesh size provided in R.S. 56:499 for any trawl, skimmer net, or butterfly net for the duration of any special shrimp season or regular shrimp season extension, the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission does hereby set a portion of the 2018 Spring Shrimp Season in Louisiana state waters to open as follows:

That portion of state inside waters from the eastern shore of South Pass of the Mississippi River westward to the western shore of Freshwater Bayou Canal shall open at 6:00 a.m. on Monday, April 30, 2018.

The Commission hereby grants authority to the Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to delay or advance these opening dates if biological and technical data indicate the need to do so, and; to close any portion of Louisiana's inside waters to protect small juvenile white shrimp if biological and technical data indicate the need to do so, or enforcement problems develop. Notice of any opening, delaying or closing of a season by the Secretary will be made by public notice at least 72 hours prior to such action.

Robert J. Samanie III,
Chairman

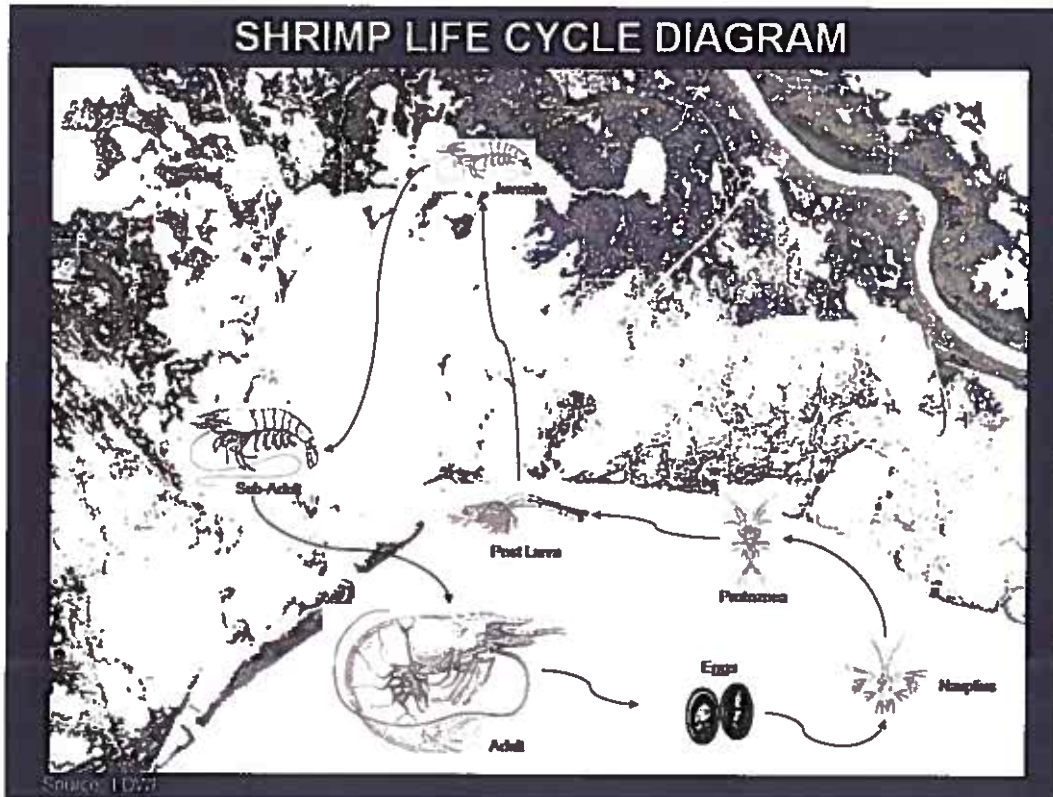
There being no more public comments, **Commissioner Smitko** made a motion for **Adjournment**, seconded by **Commissioner Courville** and unanimously approved.

APPENDICES



Consider a Declaration of Emergency Setting the Opening Date for the 2018 Spring Inshore Shrimp Season in Zone 2

Peyton Cagle | LWFC Meeting | April 26, 2018



Shrimp Management

Multiple evaluations used for shrimp management

1. Current size frequency
 2. Prediction of shrimp growth
 3. Catch/Effort by size interval
 4. Summary into commercial grades
 5. Weekly summary – compare week-to-week
 6. Annual summary – compare year-to-year
- All of the above can be completed by shrimping zones, basins, or CSA
 - A combination of these resources allow the department to make biological management recommendation

April LWFC Meeting

Brief update on the opening of Terrebonne offshore waters

- Early collection of offshore samples
- White shrimp CPUE and size

Snapshot of the upcoming spring sampling protocol

- 6' schedule
- 16' schedule
- 20' schedule

The mention of brown shrimp presence in all basins and an abundant brown shrimp resource in Zone 2

Possibility for the LWFC to consider a special Commission meeting



Hydrology

Rainfall in Southeast Louisiana

- January and February were lower than the LTA

Mississippi River discharge

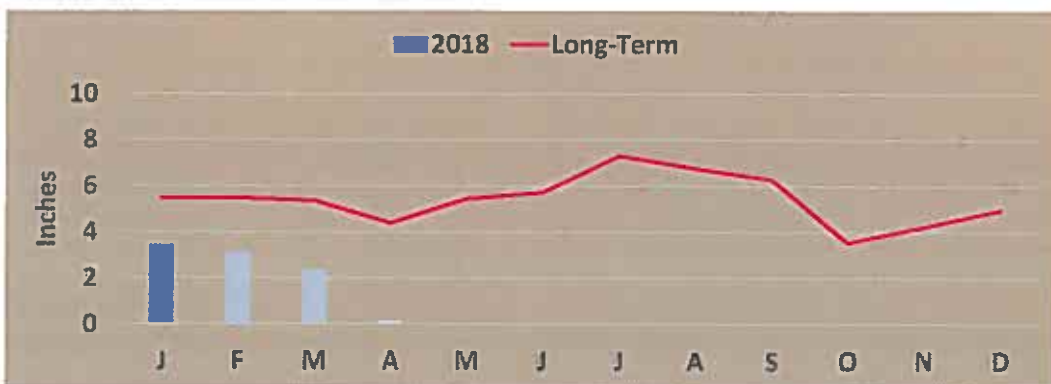
- January was below the LTA
- February was very close to the LTA

Monthly water temperatures in South Barataria Bay

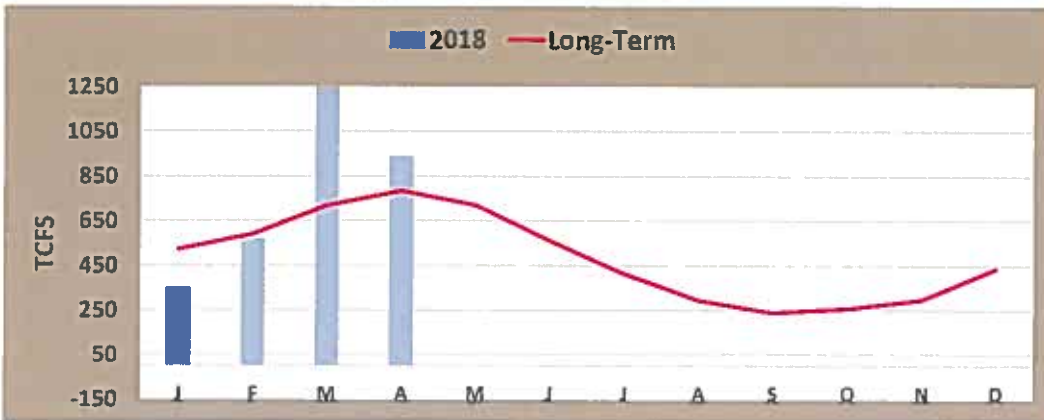
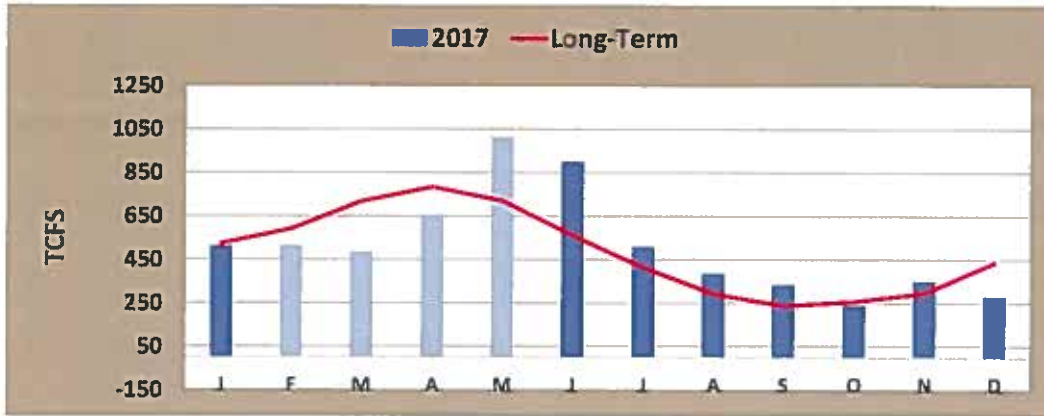
- January was below the LTA
- February was much warmer than the LTA



MONTHLY SOUTHEAST AREA RAINFALL

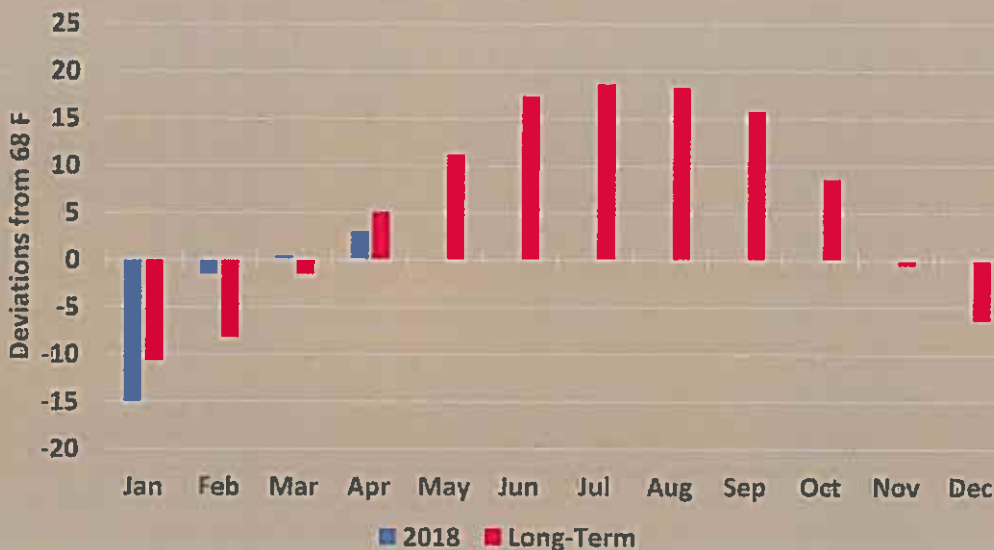


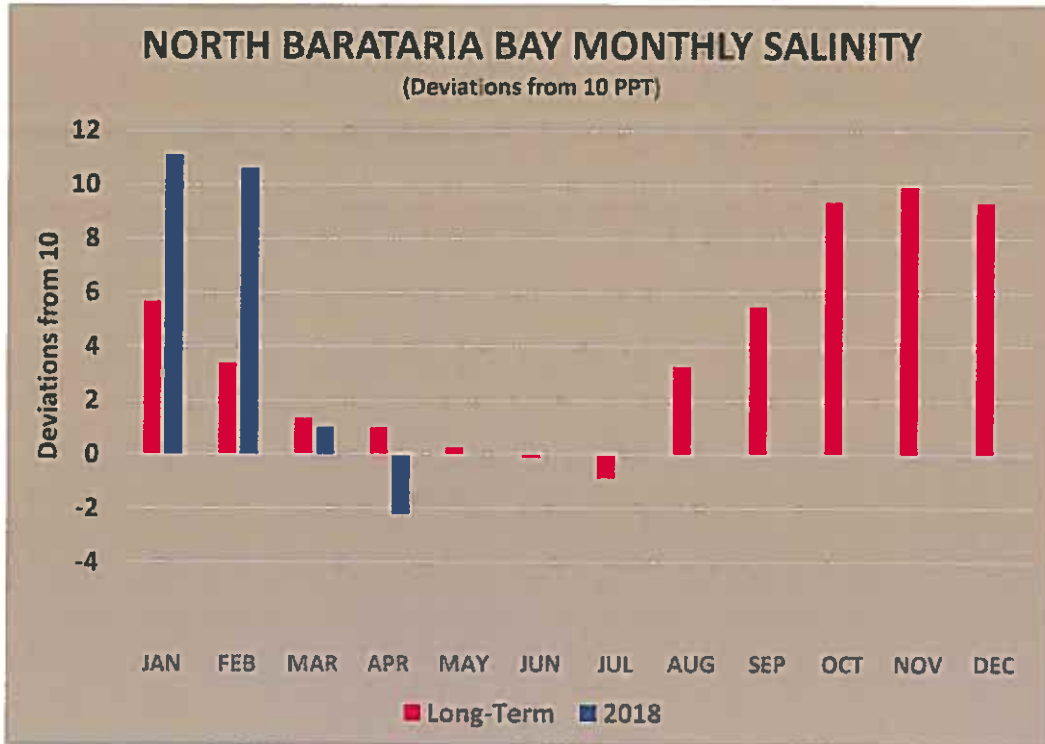
MONTHLY MISSISSIPPI RIVER DISCHARGE



SOUTH BARATARIA BAY MONTHLY WATER TEMPERATURE

(Deviations from 68 F)

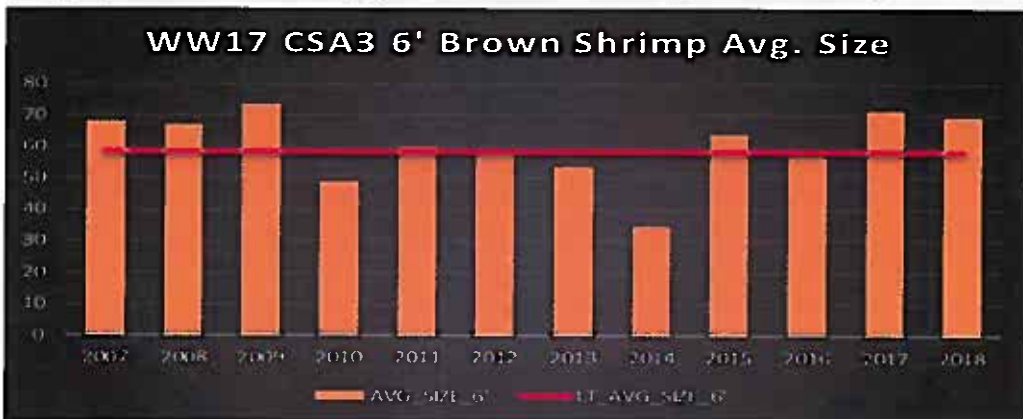
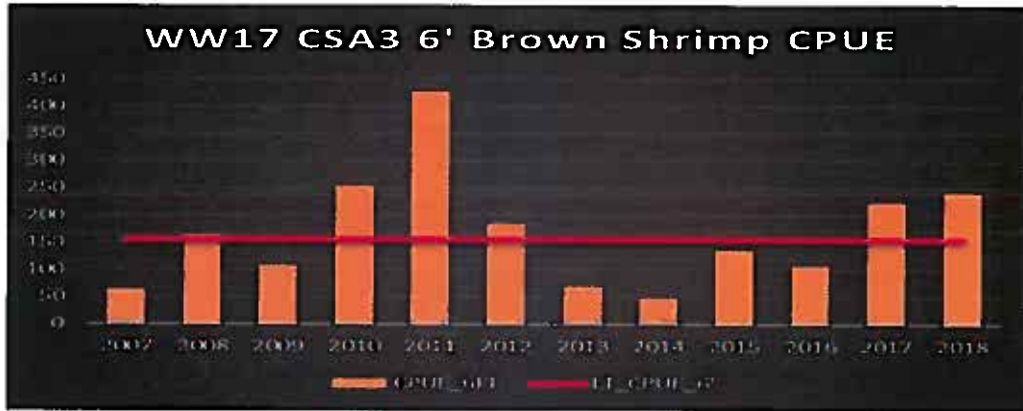




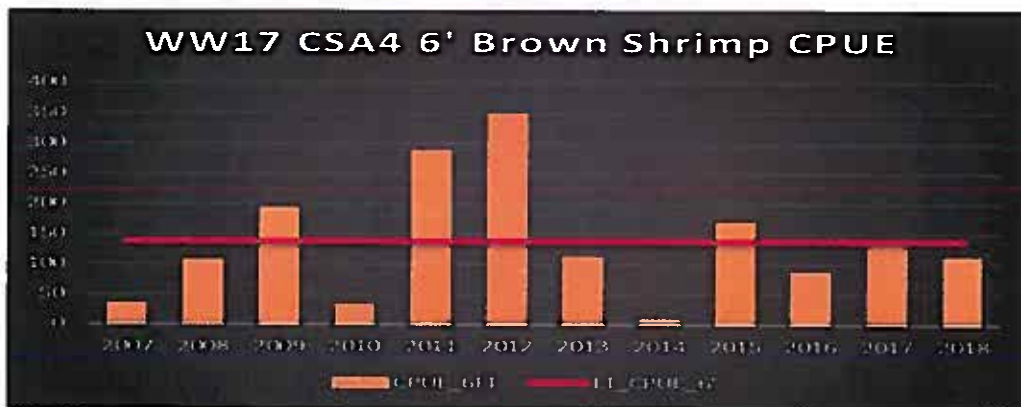
Current WW17 Inshore Spring Sampling Data



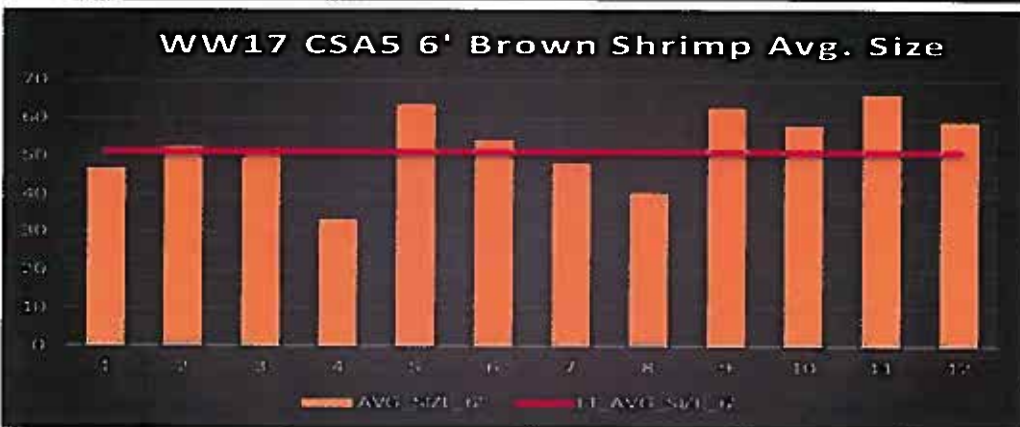
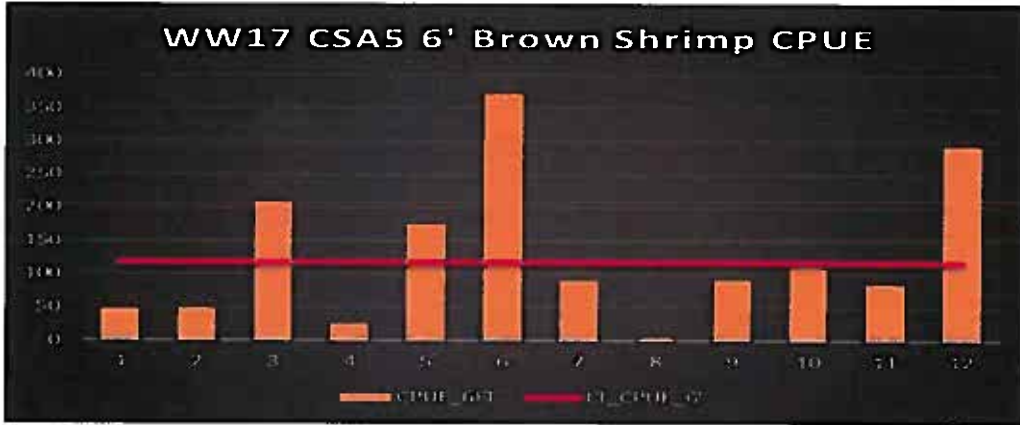
CSA3 WW17 Data



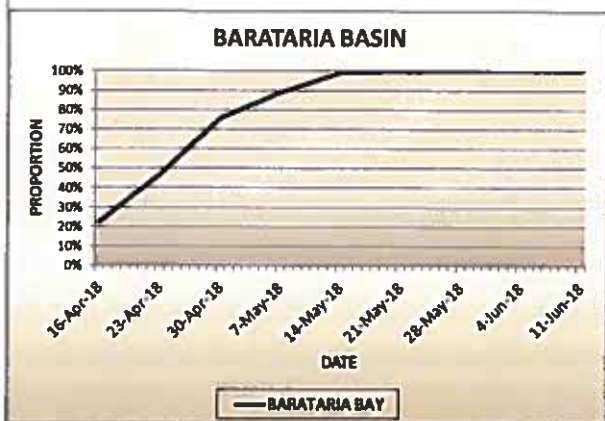
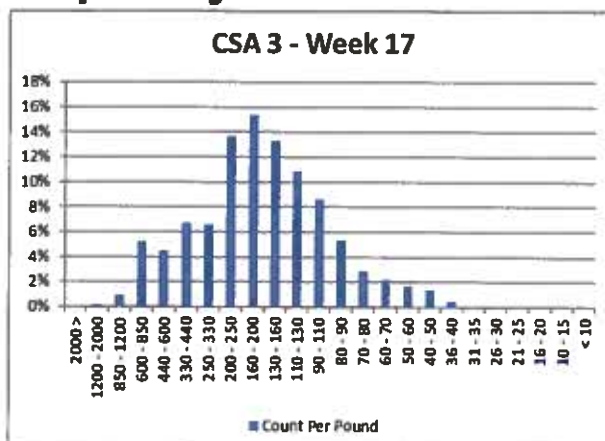
CSA4 WW17 Data



CSA5 WW17 Data



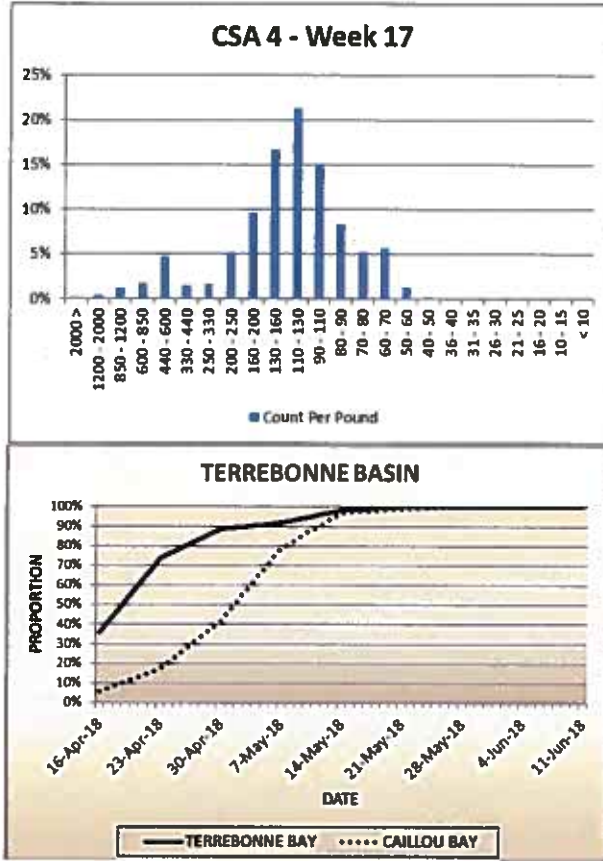
CSA 3 Size Frequency and Crossover Dates



Predicted Crossover Date
4/30/2018



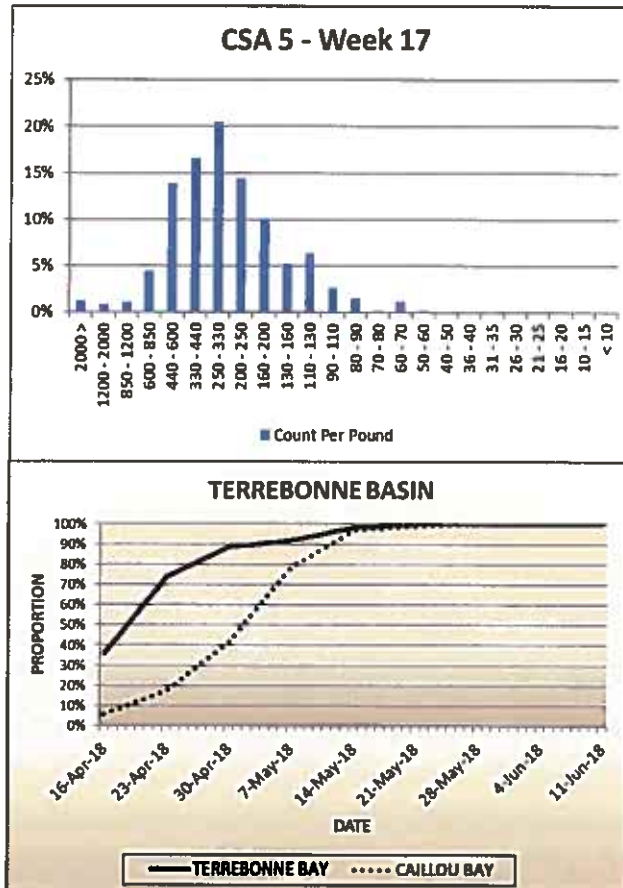
CSA 4 Size Frequency and Crossover Dates



Predicted Crossover Date
 Eastern Terrebonne
 4/26/2018



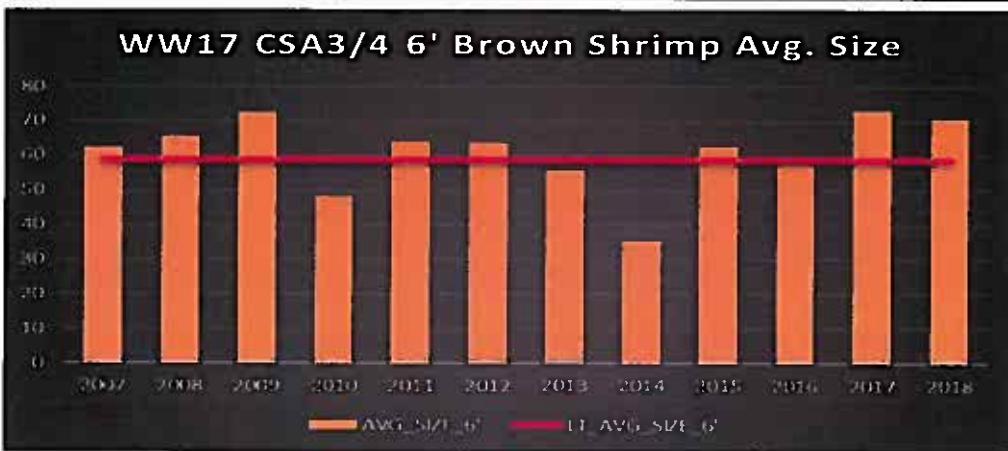
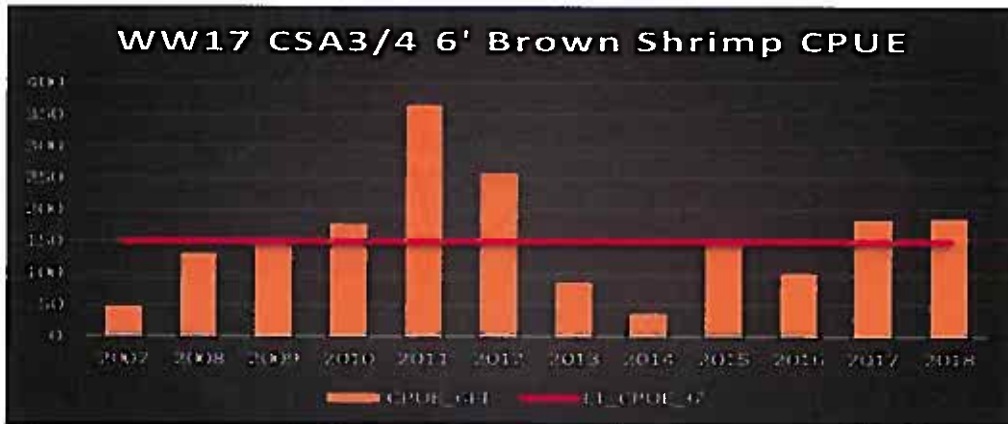
CSA 5 Size Frequency and Crossover Dates



Predicted Crossover Date
 Western Terrebonne
 5/8/2018

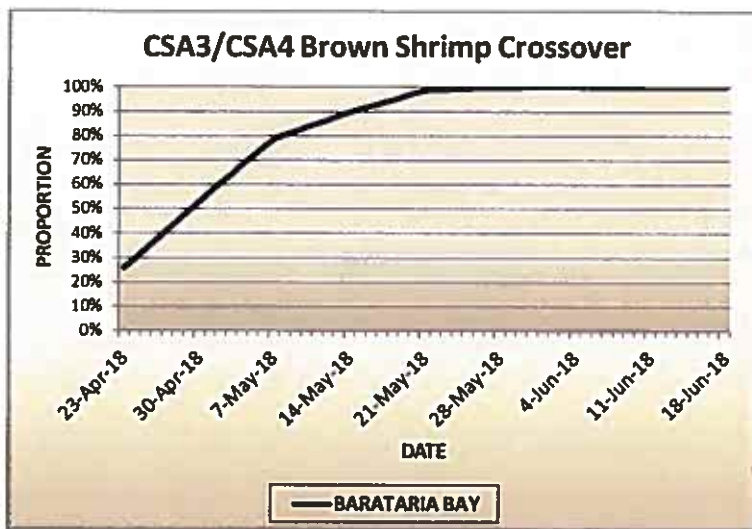


Primary Brown Shrimp Area

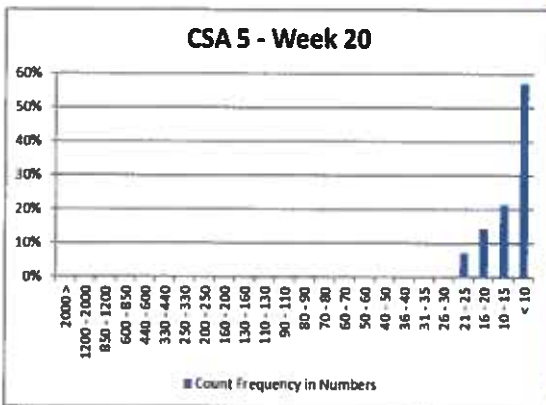
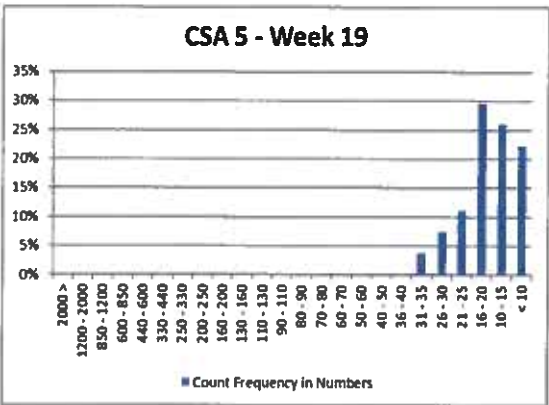
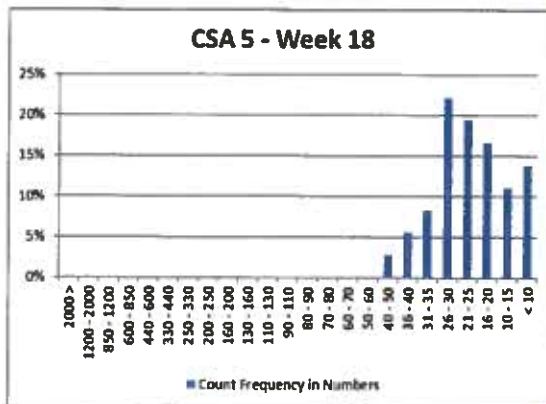
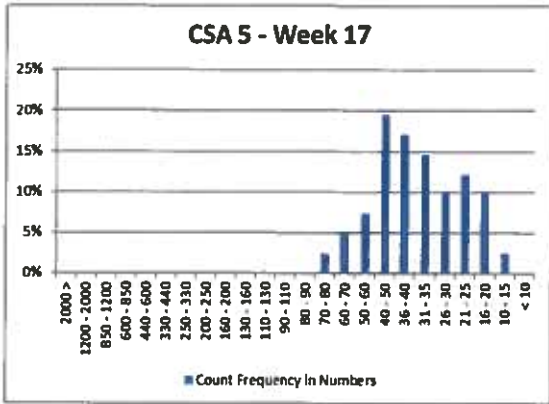


Primary Brown Shrimp Area Crossover

Predicted crossover date
4/29/2018



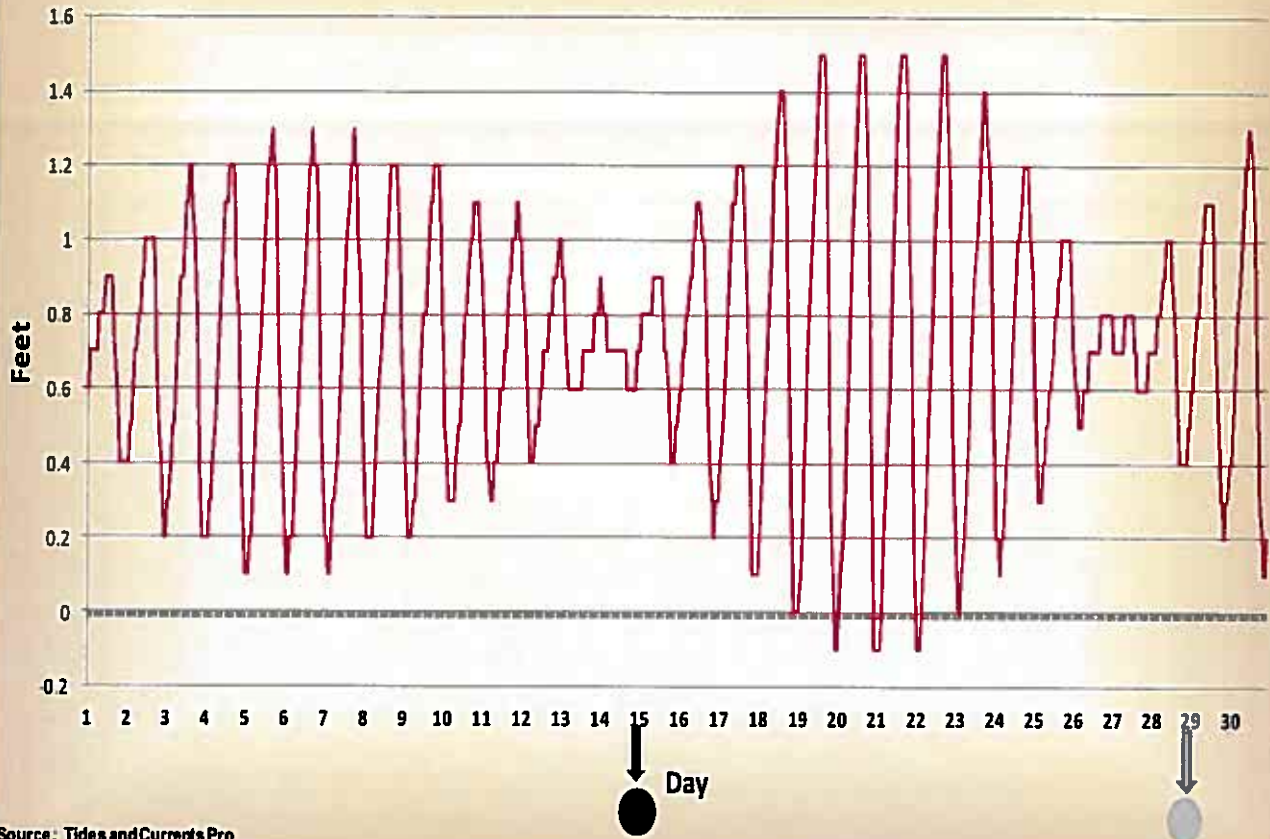
CSA 5 White Shrimp Data



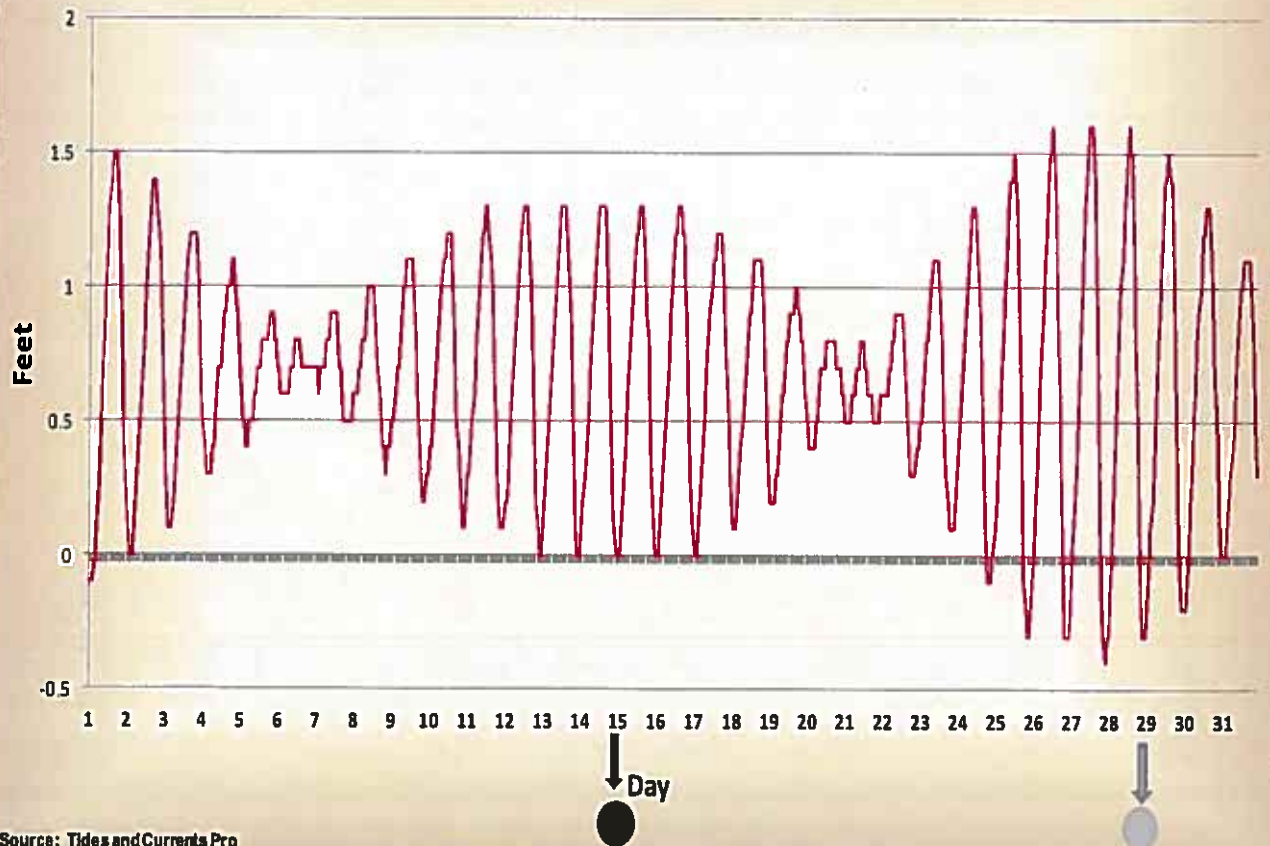
Vermilion Bay WW17 White Shrimp Data



Predicted April 2018 Tidal Range Barataria Pass, Louisiana



Predicted May 2018 Tidal Range Barataria Pass, Louisiana



QUESTIONS?

Peyton Cagle
LDWF Biologist DCL-B
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peyton.cagle@la.gov

