



Brown and white shrimp, range from the Massachusetts coast to the eastern shore of Central America with highest abundance in the Gulf of America off the Louisiana and Texas coasts. These marine crustaceans grow fast and have a short life span. In addition to their commercial value, these shrimp are an important component in the diets of many finfish species.



Shrimp

(*Penaeus spp.*)



Brown Shrimp
Farfantepenaeus aztecus

- Brownish in color
- Grooves on either side of spine on head and tail
- Medium length antennae
- Predominant in inshore waters in spring and summer



White Shrimp
Litopenaeus setiferus

- Grayish in color
- No grooves on head and tail
- Very long black antennae
- Predominant in inshore waters in summer and fall

Spawning Season

Peak spawning in brown shrimp occurs in the fall, while white shrimp generally spawn from April to October. Eggs hatch offshore and larvae go through about ten developmental stages in two weeks before beginning to look like shrimp. Larvae are not strong swimmers and rely on wind and tidal driven currents for transport into estuaries. Estuaries provide young shrimp with abundant food and protection from predators as they feed and grow.

Habitat

Early juvenile shrimp prefer marsh edge habitats, flooded grasses, and aquatic vegetation in upper estuaries. Shrimp eventually leave these areas and become more bottom oriented. They gradually move into deeper bays and offshore open waters to mature and spawn. Juvenile brown and white shrimp are most commonly associated with soft mud and bottoms with large amounts of decaying vegetation. Adults are more commonly found over mud or sand bottoms.

Diet

Larval shrimp feed almost exclusively on algae and zooplankton, but begin to feed on decaying organic matter as they grow. Juveniles are omnivorous and eat microorganisms, plant material, and small invertebrates. Adult shrimp are more carnivorous and consume large marine invertebrates.

Age and Growth

Shrimp grow rapidly and may reach harvestable sizes, 100 shrimp per pound, in as little as two to three months. Because shrimp shells are rigid and can't expand, shrimp grow through a process known as molting. They shed their old shell and form a new, larger one, which remains soft before hardening. Newly molted shrimp are very vulnerable to predators and seek shelter until their shell hardens. Small shrimp molt several times within a week, but less often as they mature. In the Gulf of America, few shrimp live longer than one year.

Shrimp Fishery Management

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries biologists continually monitor environmental conditions and shrimp populations in coastal marshes and bays. Using this scientific data, they project when the majority of the shrimp population within each of the state's major estuarine basins will reach market size. Managers use these projections to recommend when to open seasons. These recommendations may differ among Louisiana's coastal basins as patterns in shrimp recruitment, growth, emigration, and water conditions can vary widely among basins. Commercial fishermen mainly harvest shrimp using trawls, skimmer nets, and butterfly nets. Recreational fishermen generally use trawls and cast nets to harvest shrimp for both food and bait.



The Louisiana Wild Seafood Certification Program helps you identify seafood caught by Louisiana licensed fishermen and landed, processed, and packaged in Louisiana.

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Shrimp Quick Facts

Americans eat more than 1 billion pounds of shrimp every year.

Louisiana is number one in commercial shrimp landings in the USA.

More than 100 million pounds of shrimp were landed in Louisiana in 2012.

Although Louisiana and the Gulf of America are home to the largest and most valuable shrimp fishery in the USA, more than 90% of the shrimp Americans eat each year is farmed overseas in Southeast Asia and Latin America.

Seabob, pink shrimp, roughneck shrimp, rock shrimp, and royal red shrimp are also harvested along the Gulf Coast, but far less than brown and white shrimp.

Shrimp Seasons

Shrimp are harvested year-round in federal offshore waters of the Gulf of America, but the shrimp fishery in state waters is managed by season according to biological and technical data about shrimp populations. They are generally harvested during the following times.

	Brown Shrimp	White Shrimp
Season*	May through June/July	August through Dec./Jan.
Peak Landings	May through June	October through November

*Check for season and area closures at www.wlf.la.gov/shrimp-seasons