



**NOAA** NATIONAL OCEANIC AND  
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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### **NOAA predicts below-average season for commercial harvest of brown shrimp in western Gulf of Mexico**

The harvest of brown shrimp in the western Gulf of Mexico is expected to be 55.0 million pounds, which is slightly below the historical 52-year average of 56.6 million pounds, according to NOAA's annual forecast. The prediction covers the period from July 2013 through June 2014 for state and federal waters off Louisiana and federal waters off Texas.

NOAA scientists make the annual prediction of brown shrimp catches based on monitoring of juvenile brown shrimp abundance, growth estimates and environmental indicators. They predict shrimp catches for state and federal waters off Louisiana from west of the Mississippi River to the Texas-Louisiana border to be approximately 29.0 million pounds this season. The Texas portion of the catch is predicted to be 26.0 million pounds.

Most of the shrimp harvested in the U.S. – 68 percent – comes from the Gulf of Mexico, especially Texas and Louisiana. Total domestic shrimp harvest brought in \$518 million in 2011.

“Brown shrimp are important to the economy of Gulf coast communities,” said Roger Zimmerman, Ph.D., Director for NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center's Galveston Laboratory. “They are popular among seafood consumers and as bait used by recreational anglers. We always like to see plenty of shrimp available in seafood markets and bait shops. But this year recruitment of shrimp larvae to the bays has been late which may impact their abundance.”

Young brown shrimp begin entering estuaries in Texas and western Louisiana in mid-February and continue through July, depending on environmental conditions. This year, two environmental indicators – saline water in marshes and winds sustaining tidal height – increased area, but cool spring temperatures were unfavorable for shrimp growth. The result is that shrimp production for the 2013-2014 season is expected to be average to below average for the fishery.

Juvenile brown shrimp abundance and growth estimates are obtained by monitoring the inshore commercial shrimp fisheries in Texas and the inshore and nearshore fisheries in Louisiana. Data for these forecasts are obtained from NOAA Fisheries Galveston Laboratory, NOAA port agents, NOAA's National Climatic Data and Weather centers, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and the commercial shrimp industry.

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