



NOAA NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Contact: Allison Garrett
727-551-5750
727-330-0309 (cell)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2014

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 53.2 million pounds, which is slightly below the historical 52-year average of 56.5 million pounds, according to NOAA's annual forecast. The prediction covers the period from July 2014 through June 2015 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 29.7 million pounds this season. The Texas portion of the catch is predicted to be 23.5 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.

Young brown shrimp begin entering estuaries in Texas and western Louisiana in mid-February and continue through July, with peak recruitment occurring from February through early April.

A wide array of environmental and biological factors affects the fate of young shrimp entering the estuaries. Three environmental variables: temperature, salinity, and tidal height, have been correlated with subsequent shrimp production.

This year, below normal rainfall amounts and record low temperatures persisted in the winter and early spring in coastal areas of both Texas and western Louisiana. Recruitment of brown shrimp into the bays occurred several weeks later; similar to recruitment in 2013, but substantially later than historical recruitment seasons. Moderate salinities and slightly above average tidal heights provided adequate marsh habitat for juvenile brown shrimp; however, record low

water temperatures observed in Galveston Bay, the result of several weather fronts, were not conducive for optimal shrimp growth which occurs in waters greater than 68° F.

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.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on Facebook, Twitter and our other social media channels at <http://www.noaa.gov/socialmedia/>.

###

Visit us on the web:

<http://www.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

<http://www.galvestonlab.sefsc.noaa.gov>

Follow us on Twitter: https://twitter.com/NOAAFish_SERO

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NOAAFisheries>

Watch us on You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/usnoaafisheriesgov>