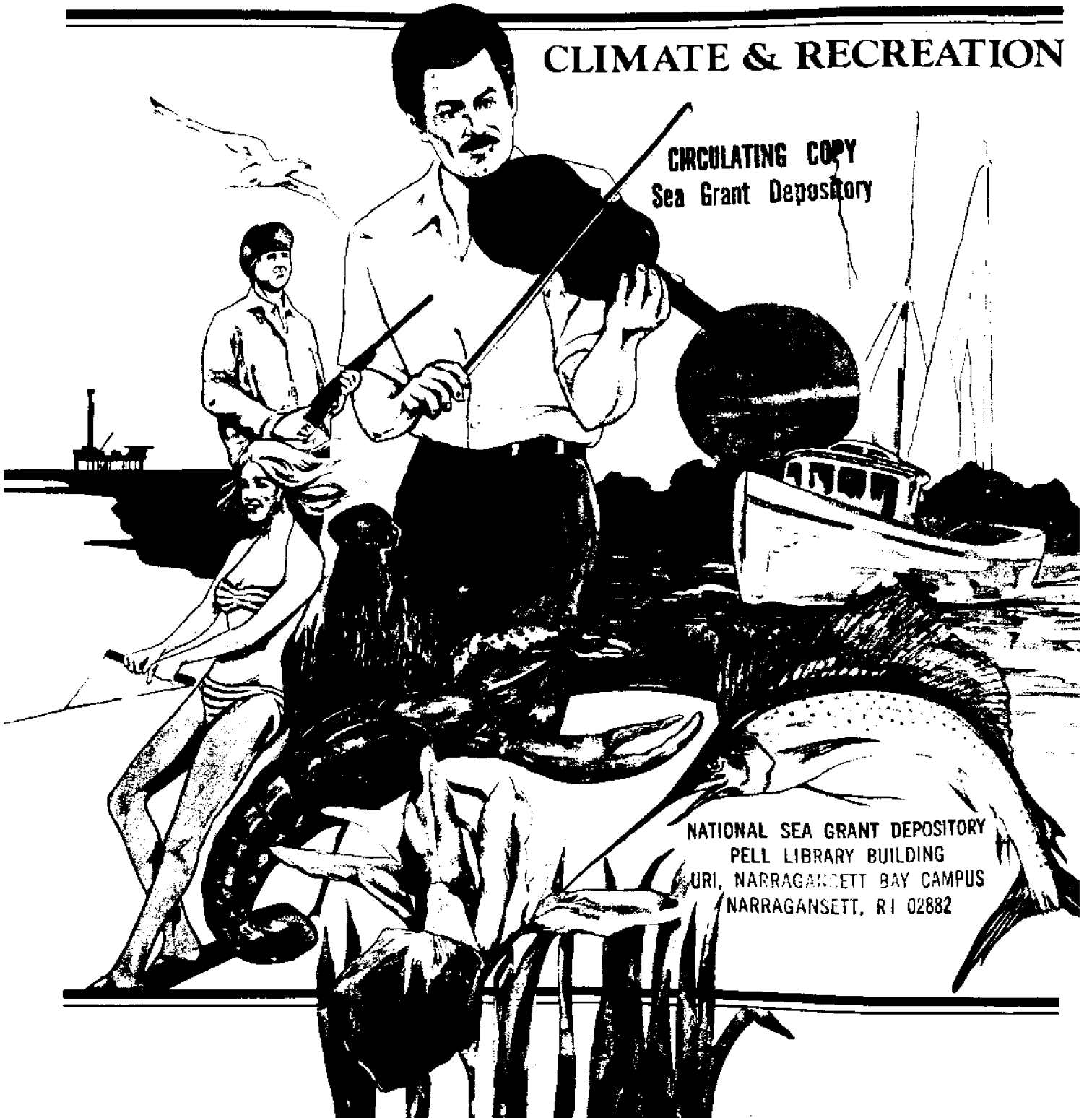


# COASTAL LOUISIANA



CLIMATE & RECREATION

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# COASTAL LOUISIANA

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## CLIMATE & RECREATION

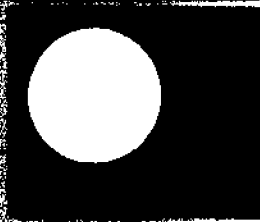
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LOUISIANA SEA GRANT COLLEGE PROGRAM  
CENTER FOR WETLAND RESOURCES  
LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70803

Introducing Coastal Louisiana

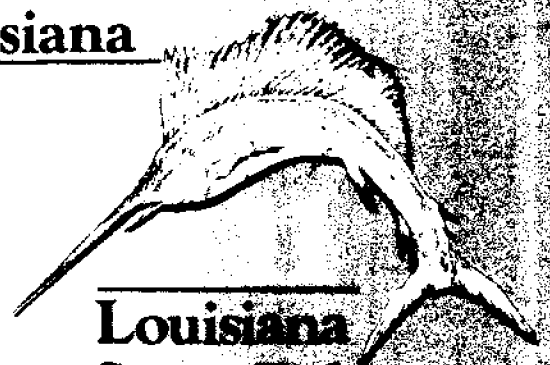
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# Introducing

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# COASTAL LOUISIANA

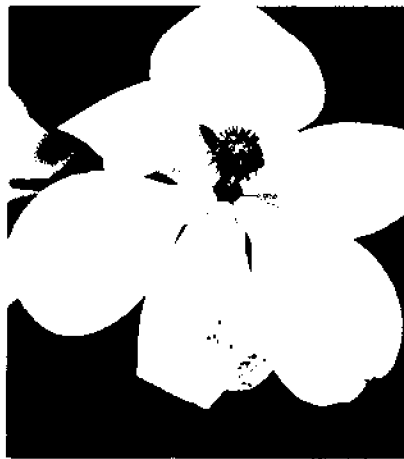
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Coastal Louisiana was created by the Mississippi River, which deposited sediments over thousands of years to form a series of broad overlapping deltas. The river periodically altered its course, forming a new delta with every move, and today's coastal region is composed of several distinct delta lobes that are rich in natural and cultural resources.

Louisiana's coastal region is unique: countless lakes, bays, ponds, and tidal inlets surrounded by sweeping "prairies" of trembling marsh grasses; narrow sandy beaches rimming the Gulf; and oak-crowned ridges (*cheniers*) rising from flat, coastal savannahs. It is densely crisscrossed by marshy, wandering bayous and straight, man-made canals and partially ringed by slender barrier islands. The lacy configuration of Louisiana's coast gives the state some astonishing measurements: the official shoreline is only 216 miles long, but if one followed the ragged lines of protruding marshes and indented bays, the journey would be more than 15,000 miles.

Marshes and estuaries nurture such an abundance of fish and wildlife that



Louisiana is among the leading producers in the United States of finfish, shrimp, crabs, oysters, and furbearers. Offshore waters yield wealth of another kind—oil and gas. Coastal waters bristle with drilling rigs and teem daily with a variety of industrial boat traffic. Waterways are usually crowded with a hodge-podge of vessels, en route to both drilling grounds and fishing grounds—often the same destination.

Though the people of coastal Louisiana are a colorful mixture of ethnic heritages—Spanish, French, Italian, African, and German—most consider themselves French, specifically Cajun French. The Acadians, or Cajuns, were a French-speaking people who were exiled from their Canadian homeland, Nova Scotia, by the English in the 18th

century. Many found their way to south Louisiana, where the rich fishing, hunting, and farming opportunities induced them to stay. Today it is common to hear south Louisianians of German, Italian, or Anglo-Saxon descent proudly refer to themselves as Cajuns—indeed, in coastal Louisiana, being Cajun is a way of life as well as a matter of ancestry.

For many of the older inhabitants of coastal Louisiana, French was the first language they learned and the one they speak exclusively at home, although in recent years the influence of television and the influx of immigrants from all parts of the nation have affected these language patterns considerably. Cultural traditions are primarily French Catholic. For example, Mardi Gras ("Fat Tuesday"), the last great celebration before the rigors of Lent begin on Ash Wednesday, is celebrated throughout south Louisiana with masquerade balls, parades, parties, and community-wide gumbo dinners. The celebration in New Orleans is, of course, the most famous one; there, the carnival season begins on Twelfth Night, January 6, and does not end until midnight of Mardi Gras day.

It is a distinctive culture. Its food makes spicy and imaginative use of both seafood and rice, staples in south Louisiana cuisine. Its traditional music, a unique blend of mellow accordion, sweet-and-sour fiddle, and, recently, the steel guitar, compels the feet to dance. And it is a fun-loving culture. South Louisianians like nothing better than a party, a festival, a *cochon-de-lait* (pig roast), or a *fais do-do* (dance), and any excuse will do. In south Louisiana, it's always *laissez les bon temps rouler*—let the good times roll—and indeed they do.



The fruits of Louisiana agriculture, fisheries, and industry are honored with fairs and festivals throughout the state, especially in south Louisiana, where weekends of parades, music, dancing, games of chance, eating contests, arts and crafts exhibits, and—of course—much beer drinking attract thousands of people. Among the large and famous festivals are those celebrating crawfish in Breaux Bridge; sugar cane in New Iberia; rice in Crowley; strawberries in Ponchatoula; crabs in Lacombe; shrimp and petroleum in Morgan City; oysters in Galliano; and oil in Jennings. Various favorites of Louisiana cuisine also have their day: *boudin* (the sausage) in Broussard; *sauce piquante* in Raceland and Kinder; red beans and rice in New

Orleans; seafood in Lafitte; gumbo in Bridge City; and jambalaya in Gonzales. South Louisianians even honor themselves and their special heritage, with the Festivals Acadiens in Lafayette; the Cajun festivals at Galliano, Pointe aux Chenes, and Mamou; the French-Acadian music festival in Abbeville; and the two-week, nationally famous Jazz and Heritage Festival in New Orleans. Numerous fishing rodeos are held in coastal Louisiana each year, the most famous being the tarpon rodeos at Grand Isle and Golden Meadow. Even Bastille Day, July 14, is celebrated, with a community festival in Kaplan.

The people of coastal Louisiana are farmers, raising rice, sugar cane, crawfish, cattle, and soybeans. They are

fishermen and trappers, trawling for shrimp and menhaden (called *pogies* in Louisiana), working crab traps and oyster beds, or trapping muskrat, alligator, and nutria for their valuable skins. They work in the vast oil and gas industry that flourishes in south Louisiana—on the drilling rigs, the tow boats, the supply vessels, and the dredges—and they load and unload cargo at Louisiana's four major deepwater ports. Their recreation is often an extension of their livelihoods—commercial shrimpers also fish for pleasure, trappers hunt deer and ducks, and offshore drillers like to swim and scuba dive.

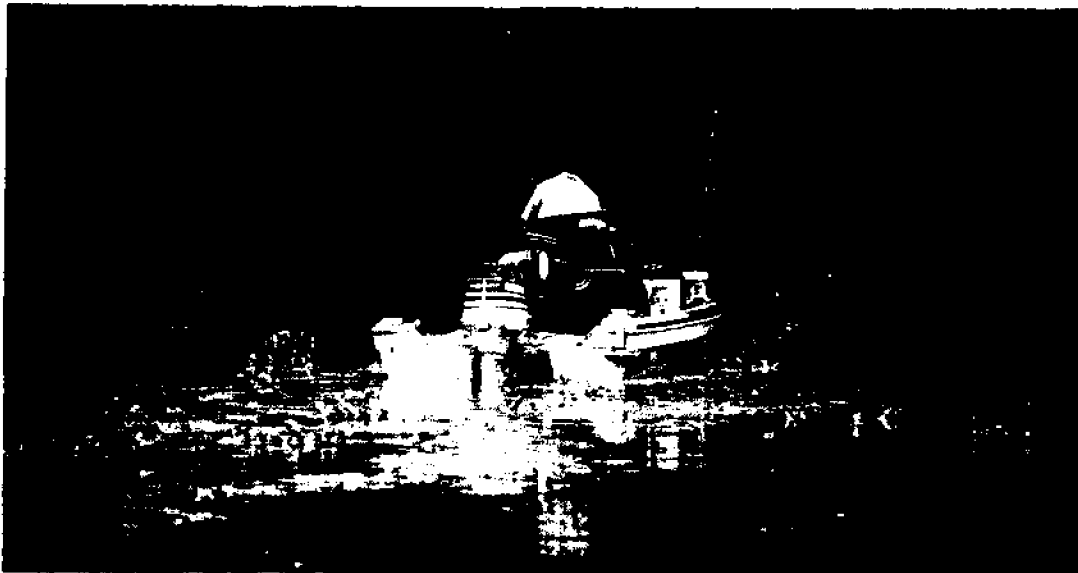
Recreational opportunities for visitors in south Louisiana are varied and numerous. There is something for everyone, whether it is antebellum plantation hopping along the River Road, sight-seeing and elegant dining in New Orleans, or fishing for king mackerel in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The delights of New Orleans are well-known. It is a sophisticated port city with a unique historical identity that has wisely been preserved, and vacationers there can experience all the charm of the most cosmopolitan European city.

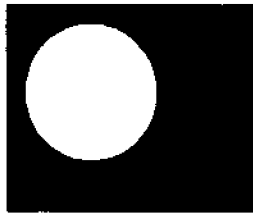
But the coastal region directly bordering the Gulf of Mexico has nothing of the luxury and convenience found in New Orleans or in the holiday resorts of Florida and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The demands of industry, the necessities of daily work, the area's unstable marshes, and the threat of hurricanes have all combined to limit resort construction on Louisiana's coast. There are few easy-to-reach sandy beaches with access to the Gulf and the ones that exist are narrow and brown with silt. Fishing camps are often crude affairs of weathered wood, sometimes built on stilts to avoid flooding, or trailers set down on a piece of shore property, and they coexist with various types of industrial construction. And, since the continuous marsh erosion taking place in Louisiana's coastal region is no respecter of buildings, some of the older structures, originally built on shore, now stand in water and are accessible only by boat. Not even cemeteries are immune; it is not uncommon to see

gravestones teetering precariously on the edge of a caving bank.

Restaurants are often of the ketchup-bottle-plastic-tablecloth variety, though the food they serve, especially seafood, is fresh, delicious, and, in many places, would be considered gourmet cuisine. Motels offer only the simplest accommodations. Nightclubs along the coast are generally boisterous, catering to offshore oil-field workers and sportsmen.

So Louisiana's coast is a plain place, a workman's place, where recreation and work are simultaneous and sometimes indistinguishable from each other. If one is seeking elegance and comfort, Louisiana's coast is not the place to find it. But the coast does offer a breathtaking natural beauty, plentiful fish and wildlife, a subtropical climate that allows outdoor recreation year-round, and friendly, helpful people whose relaxed way of life makes visitors welcome.





# The Coastal Climate

## Weather

Whether it's Spring Fiesta in New Orleans or New Iberia's fall Sugar Cane Festival, activities in coastal Louisiana are very much tied to the region's climate—a climate characterized by abundant rainfall, with mild winters and hot, humid summers that are flanked by pleasant transitional seasons.

Each season displays its own special colors. Warm autumns and mild winters encourage the blooming of deep red camellias and creamy white gardenias. In spring, country roads are ablaze with the magentas, pinks, yellows, and whites of azalea, dogwood, jessamine, and tung-oil blossoms. Ivory magnolias line summer streets and purple water hyacinth carpets the bayous. The coastal landscape is dotted with numerous parks and gardens, where every season's colors glow against a backdrop of live oaks gray with Spanish moss.



Louisiana's luxurious coastal vegetation is aided by average daytime temperatures that remain above 60° F year round. Even on winter nights, freezes are unusual. Close to the Gulf of Mexico, winter readings drop to freezing or below on only one to three days annually, but this occurs on 18 to 20 days inland near Baton Rouge and Lafayette. The Gulf of Mexico and prevailing southerly breezes temper the extremes of both winter and summer and also provide the moisture for abundant rainfall. During the winter, cold periods (northers) are brief, usually lasting one to three days and frequently accompanied by rain. Winter still provides pleasant weather for visiting the Garden District in New Orleans or strolling through the huge gardens on the capitol grounds at Baton Rouge. The table indicates that there are about seven to ten good sightseeing days per winter month. Good sightseeing weather is at a peak from mid-March through May and again from September until November. Whether one is attending the water sports carnival in May at Lake Charles or the fall frog festival at Rayne, the weather cooperates on about 20 to 25 days per month during these seasons. Days are often sunny, with temperatures in the mid-seventies to low eighties and pleasant southerly breezes.

From mid-May to about the end of September, daytime high temperatures

## Sightseeing Weather Days

	New Orleans	Baton Rouge	Lake Charles
January	9	8	7
February	10	9	8
March	17	18	16
April	25	26	25
May	23	25	24
June	13	15	12
July	11	13	10
August	11	14	12
September	17	19	18
October	27	26	25
November	17	17	17
December	10	9	9

*A day is considered a good sightseeing day if (using the 10 am, 1 pm, and 4 pm C.S.T. observations):*

- temperatures reach 65-90°F two or three times
- when temperatures climb above 84°F, relative humidity remains below 46 percent two or three times
- precipitation occurs no more than twice
- visibility is greater than one mile at least once
- windspeeds are less than 17 knots two or three times



average 85° to 90°F on 80 to 100 days per season. At night they remain in the seventies (°F). Conditions are generally hot and humid, with frequent afternoon thunderstorms. Close to the water, these conditions are tempered somewhat by sea breezes; at Burrwood, for example, on the farthest point of land in the Gulf of Mexico, an average of just 31 90°F days is recorded. Relief can be found on the few beaches available along Louisiana's coast or on a boat.

## Waves

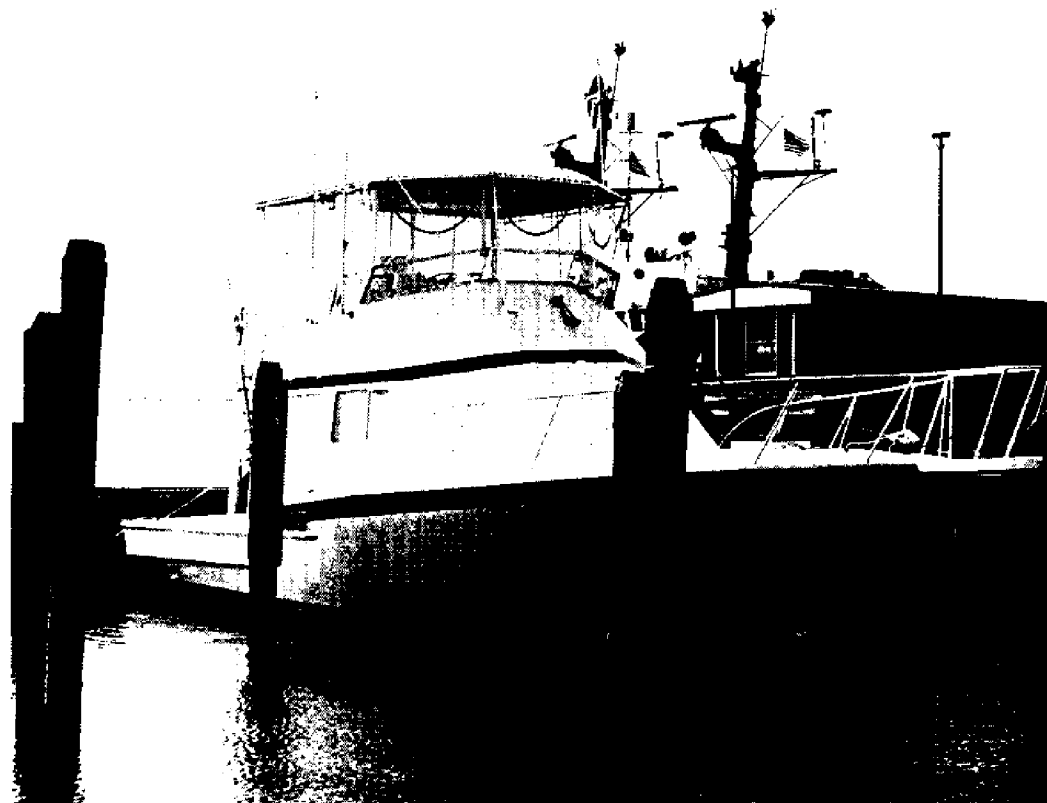
Louisiana's broad continental shelf and position on the northern margin of the Gulf of Mexico result in a coastline with relatively low wave energy. Generally, in nearshore waters, waves are no greater than two or three feet in height, except during the passage of tropical storms in the summer and severe cold fronts in the winter, when strong winds can whip up seas along the coast and in nearby bays and lakes.

In offshore waters, wave heights are generally less than four feet, particularly from May through October. However, wave heights greater than 10 feet have been encountered throughout the year; "northers" occasionally generate seas of 20 feet or more offshore, as do tropical cyclones in summer and fall. A deep-water wave height of more than 30 feet was observed during hurricane Carla.

Rough seas are most frequent from November through March. During any season, however, small-craft operators should be alert to approaching storms and high wind forecasts. The onset of storms is often quite sudden and brisk winds of 20 to 30 knots can rapidly build treacherously choppy seas, even in shallow bays and lakes.

## Tides and Currents

Along the eastern half of Louisiana's coastline, including Chandeleur and Breton sounds, the Mississippi River delta, and the recreational beaches at Grand Isle, the astronomical tides are less than one foot in height and are typically diurnal; that is, only one high tide and one low tide occur each day. Farther west along the coast from Atchafalaya Bay to the mouth of the Sabine River, the character of the tide gradually changes, so that on most days there are two high tides and two low



tides, but they are usually of unequal magnitude. The range of rise and fall also increases along the western half of the Louisiana coast, although nowhere does the predicted tide exceed two feet.

In order to choose the best fishing times, recreational boaters and fishermen need to be aware of the predicted tides in Louisiana. But they should also be aware that unpredicted water surges caused by bad weather often exceed normal tide range. These "meteorological" tides and their associated currents are produced by the rapid shift of wind from south to north, which regularly accompanies the passage of cold fronts in winter and spring. Away from channels and river mouths, surface currents seldom exceed two knots. Along the Gulf shoreline,

currents run parallel to the coast. West of the Mississippi River delta, they generally move westerly.

## Clothing

Most of the year—certainly from May through October—coastal recreation in Louisiana requires only very light clothing, and short-sleeved shirts, bathing suits, and jeans or shorts are adequate. The winter months, of course, demand warmer clothing—wind-resistant jackets, sweaters, and heavy shirts and trousers. But even during December and January, one must often be prepared to peel off layers of clothing as the sun heats up the day. Winter or summer, however, rain gear is usually necessary, as storms are frequent.

# Sport Fishing

## Finfish

Because Louisiana's climate is mild and its offshore and estuarine waters abound with an astonishing variety of finfish, fishing and boating are not only coastal Louisiana's most important recreation, but an integral part of the local culture. A complex system of waterways takes anglers into vast marshes or to the open sea for year-round fishing. Commercial marinas and charter boat companies are numerous, making it an easy matter for visitors to arrange fishing trips or to launch their own boats. Besides game fish, Louisiana coastal waters offer shrimp, crabs, and oysters.

The fresh, brackish, and saline marshes of Louisiana's coast—a seemingly infinite vista of waving marsh grasses laced with canals—provide prime fishing, shrimping, and crabbing areas. Coastal estuaries form vast nursery grounds for both finfish and shellfish, which mature in these protected waters and then migrate to the open sea. The major estuarine fish species available in brackish and saline marshes are speckled trout, redfish (red drum), flounder, sheepshead, and croaker. Freshwater marshes offer various species of bass, sac-a-lait (crappie), sunfish, and bream (bluegill).

In the southeast section of the coast, especially productive fishing grounds occur in the region associated with Terrebonne, Timbalier, and Barataria bays; in the Mississippi delta; and in the marshes east of the Mississippi River to Lake Borgne. Thousands of marshland acres are designated as wildlife management areas, owned by the state of Louisiana and open to the public for fishing, hunting, and other outdoor recreation. The southwest coast offers both salt- and freshwater marsh fishing



at the federally owned Sabine and Lacassine wildlife refuges, as well as the rich brackish marshes at Rockefeller Refuge, which is open for sport fishing much of the year. Fishermen should check with refuge headquarters for details concerning public access. Calcasieu Lake, where speckled trout, redfish, flounder, and shrimp are plentiful, is noted for its excellent saltwater fishing.

The aluminum bateau, 14 to 16 feet long, powered by a small outboard motor, is ubiquitous in Louisiana marsh fishing. These boats are easily maneuvered in the marsh, especially when water levels are low, though sometimes marsh vegetation is so thick or the water is so shallow that it is necessary to push a boat along with a long paddle or push pole. Marsh fishing is especially popular in the winter and

early spring, when such species as speckled trout and redfish move inshore and are plentiful there. It is not uncommon to catch both freshwater and estuarine species in the freshwater areas.

The offshore angler in Louisiana will find deep-sea fishing as fine as any in the nation. Rig-fishing—near the thousands of oil platforms erected in the Gulf of Mexico—is popular and especially productive, because the platforms function as artificial reefs, attracting a wide variety of fish. Game fish commonly found in the Gulf include tarpon, lemonfish (cobia), both blue and white marlin, king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, dolphinfish, red snapper, pompano, bonito, sailfish, tuna, grouper, and wahoo.

In rig-fishing, the angler should be cautious. The platforms are encrusted

with barnacles and can do serious damage to small craft and human hands, so fishermen should be careful in operating boats close to them or in attempting to tie up to them. Platforms are not easily boarded from a small boat, and should not be viewed as a haven in severe weather.

Many visiting offshore fishermen prefer to charter a boat and thus benefit from the services of an experienced guide, though if a fisherman has his own boat, he can gain access to the Gulf via public launching ramps or the facilities at commercial marinas throughout the coast. Marsh waterways can be intricate, however, and before setting out alone, the visitor unaccustomed to them should obtain a map of the area.

Those without boats can also find fishing opportunities in coastal Louisiana, though public access to saltwater is limited. Surf fishing is popular, and surf fishers can catch a variety of species from the beaches at Grand Isle, Elmer's Island, Fourchon Beach, or Holly Beach. At these beaches flounder are often caught at night when the fish move to the shore and bury themselves in the sand. Carrying a spear and a lantern or flashlight, the fisherman wades in the shallows; when he finds a buried flounder, which resembles a flatfish, saucer-shaped lump in the sand, he spears it. Other popular fishing sites include the public fishing pier at Grand Isle State Park, the abandoned bridge at Caminada Pass, and the rock jetties at Port Fourchon and Cameron.

In Louisiana public waters, there is no closed season on sport fishing, though there are creel limits on a number of species (see *Louisiana Sport Fish*).

## Shrimp

Trawling for shrimp is both commercial venture and recreation in coastal Louisiana. The major shrimp species found in coastal waters are white shrimp and brown shrimp.

For shrimping, the state divides its waters into two classes—**inside**, open to shrimping only twice a year, and **outside**, open all year long. Inside waters include lakes, bays, and tidal channels. Outside waters are a narrow zone extending seaward three miles from the coastline. The spring shrimping season for inside waters starts in late May and lasts at least 50 days. The fall

season begins on the third Monday of August and lasts until December 21. Though outside waters are open to shrimping year-round, the most productive months are May and June and from late August to December.

Recreational shrimping is popular in Louisiana and the recreational shrimp catch has been estimated to equal the inshore commercial catch. No licenses are required, provided that the recreational shrimper's trawl is no longer than 16 feet, that he uses the catch for his own consumption, and that he catches no more than 100 pounds of shrimp per day. Any fisherman who uses a longer trawl, catches more than 100 pounds of shrimp in one day, or intends to sell his catch is subject to commercial license requirements. More detailed information about Louisiana shrimp laws may be obtained from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries or from the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program.

A trawl does not have to be large to be effective. For inshore shrimping, a 16-foot trawl pulled behind a 14-foot skiff can yield a plentiful harvest. Cast nets are also effective, especially in areas around weirs. Seines are useful along the Gulf beaches in the months from August to December, as, during this period, strong southerly winds often push offshore shrimp into concentrations near the shore.

## Crabs

The blue crab is an abundant shellfish in Louisiana coastal waters, and catching it is a popular pastime for all ages. Most crabs are caught in inshore waters or along Gulf beaches at such places as Grand Isle, Holly Beach, or Elmer's Island. Crabbers in boats should respect floating objects, as they may be part of a commercial crabber's crab traps.

Beach crabbers can fish for crabs by setting out baited trot lines or crab nets with wooden floats and checking them often during the day. Chicken necks or fish heads tied at regular intervals along a trot line are usually effective for attracting crabs; in removing the crabs that cling to the bait, a dip net is helpful.

## Oysters

Most oyster grounds in Louisiana are privately leased and not open to recreational fishing, though there are public oyster beds in Lake Calcasieu, where taking oysters with tongs is permitted. Fishermen often find clumps of wild oysters growing on shell deposits and pipe lines in the brackish marshes, but caution should be used in removing and opening the oysters, as their shells are sharp.

# Louisiana Fish Records

The Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association awards certificates for the largest fish caught in 15 freshwater and 35 saltwater categories. Fishermen receive awards if their fish place in the top ten of each category. Anyone catching a potential record fish may obtain an application form from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, from rodeo weighmasters at major rodeos, or from the sports editor of the *Baton Rouge State Times*.

To enter a fish for record consideration,

the fisherman must have a picture of the fish and the signatures of two witnesses who saw the fish weighed on state-inspected scales. If the fish is caught in a recognized fishing rodeo, the weight recorded by the weighmaster is acceptable without additional witnesses. Other requirements are specified on the application form.

Record applications should be mailed to the sports editor, *Baton Rouge State Times*, P.O. Box 588, Baton Rouge 70821.

# Weather Guide to Offshore Louisiana

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>Air Temperature(°F)</b>												
mean	63.0	64.0	66.0	71.0	77.0	82.0	84.0	84.0	82.0	77.0	70.0	65.0
<32° (%)	0.1	*	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
>85° (%)	0.0	*	*	0.7	4.0	21.0	40.0	40.0	18.0	4.0	0.5	0.1
<b>Surface Wind</b>												
mean (knots)	13.0	13.0	13.0	12.0	10.0	9.0	8.0	9.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	13.0
>34 kn (%)	1.1	1.0	1.1	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.1		0.2	0.9	0.9	0.9
<b>Relative Humidity</b>												
mean (%)	79.0	80.0	80.0	81.0	81.0	78.0	77.0	77.0	78.0	75.0	76.0	78.0
<b>Precipitation</b>												
% frequency	3.0	5.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	4.0
thunder and lightning (%)	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	3.0	2.1	1.4	0.8	0.5	0.6
<b>Visibility</b>												
<1/2-mi (%)	1.1	1.0	1.1	0.4	*	*	0.1	*	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3
<b>Sea Surface Temperature</b>												
mean °F	68.0	67.0	68.0	71.0	77.0	82.0	85.0	85.0	84.0	80.0	75.0	71.0
<b>Mean Wave Height (ft)</b>	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0
<b>Cloud Cover</b>												
% overcast (%)	26.0	27.0	23.0	17.0	10.0	7.0	8.0	10.0	13.0	13.0	20.0	23.0

\*Less than 0.5%

Environmental Guide for the U.S. Gulf Coast. Prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Environmental Data Service, Coastal Oceanographic Center, Asheville, North Carolina, November 1972.

# Louisiana Sport Fish

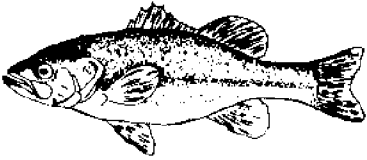
## Freshwater Fish

1. **LARGEMOUTH BASS** *Micropterus salmoides*  
Local Name: green trout, black bass  
Size: La. record, 12 lbs.; average, 1-3 lbs.  
Season: year-round, although feeding decreases in colder weather and increases as weather warms; creel limit, 15-day  
Fishing Methods and Baits: wide variety of methods, most commonly with artificial lures such as plastic worms, spinner baits, or plugs; also fly fishing; crawfish, small frogs, insect larvae, worms, and bait minnows, all excellent bait; commonly enters brackish water.
2. **SPOTTED BASS** *Micropterus punctulatus*  
Local Name: Kentucky bass  
Size: La. record, 4 lbs., 14 oz.; average, 1 lb.  
Season: year-round; creel limit, 15 day  
Fishing Methods and Baits: same as largemouth bass; prefers flowing streams and does not tolerate any degree of brackish water.
- 3a-b. **CRAPPIE (WHITE AND BLACK)** *Pomoxis spp.*  
Local Name: sac-a-lait, white perch, speckled bass, or speckled perch  
Size: La. record 6 lbs., generally up to 2 lbs.  
Season: year-round, best in spring; creel limit, 50 day  
Fishing Methods and Baits: same as bluegill but small minnows for bait.
4. **BLUEGILL** *Lepomis macrochirus*  
Local Name: bream, sunfish, perch  
Size: La. record for bream, 2 1/2 lbs.; generally 6 oz. to 1 lb.  
Season: year-round; creel limit on all types of bluegill combined, 100 day  
Fishing Methods and Baits: wide variety, can pole to bait casting; crickets, worms, or crayfish, artificial lures like jigs or spinners are excellent.
5. **STRIPED BASS** *Morone saxatilis*  
Local Name: striper, barfish  
Size: La. record 33 lbs., generally 10-20 lbs.  
Season: best fishing in spring; creel limit 5 day  
Fishing Methods and Baits: casting or trolling with bait (fish) or lures. Note: Hybrid striped bass white bass have been stocked in La.; creel limit of 5 day.
6. **WHITE BASS** *Morone chrysops*  
Local Name: striper, barfish  
Size: La. record 3 lbs., 4 oz.; generally 1-2 lbs.  
Season: best fishing in winter and spring; creel limit, 25 day  
Fishing Methods and Baits: best with light tackle and flies, spinners, or with bait minnows.
7. **WARMOUTH** *Lepomis gulosus*  
Local Name: goggle-eye  
Size: La. record 1 1/2 lbs., generally 6-12 oz.  
Season: same as bluegill or most sunfish; creel limit 100 day  
Fishing Methods and Baits: same as bluegill
8. **YELLOW BASS** *Morone mississippiensis*  
Local Name: striper, barfish  
Size: La. record not listed for species; generally 1-2 lbs.  
Season: best fishing in spring; creel limit, 50 day  
Fishing Methods and Baits: similar to white bass.

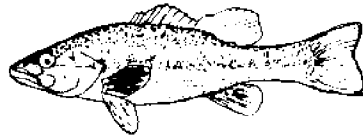
## Saltwater Fish

9. **AMBERJACK** *Seriola dumerilii*  
Local Name: jack  
Size: La. record 130 1/2 lbs., commonly 1-50 lbs.  
Season: most common during summer  
Fishing Methods and Baits: stillfishing with live bait, most often near rigs; jigging or trolling with artificial lures or natural baits like squid and fish.
10. **WHITE MARLIN** *Tetrapturus albidus*  
Local Name: white marlin  
Size: La. record 134 lbs., usually 50-60 lbs.  
Season: generally May to October  
Fishing Methods and Baits: similar to blue marlin but smaller bait should be used.
11. **SHEEPSHEAD** *Archosargus probatocephalus*  
Local Name: sheepshead  
Size: La. record 21 1/2 lbs., commonly 3-5 lbs.  
Season: year-round; best in winter  
Fishing Methods and Baits: bottom-fishing with shrimp, oyster, or crab pieces on hook near pilings, rigs, or bridges.
12. **SNAPPER** *Lutjanus spp.*  
Local Name: red, gray, candy, schoolmaster, and cubera snapper  
Size: La. record 79 lbs., commonly 1-5 lbs.  
Season: year-round  
Fishing Methods and Baits: bottom-fishing with cut baits, squid, jgs, generally near rigs.
13. **FLORIDA POMPAÑO** *Trachinotus carolinus*  
Local Name: pompano  
Size: La. record 8 1/2 lbs., generally 2-4 lbs.  
Season: best time in La. is November to March  
Fishing Methods and Baits: bottom fishing, using small jigs or hooks with shrimp or squid.
14. **ATLANTIC CROAKER** *Micropogonias undulatus*  
Local Name: croaker, bull croaker  
Size: La. record 8 lbs., commonly 1-3 lbs.  
Season: year-round, but most common in warmer months; generally gone from bays by late October; good offshore in winter  
Fishing Methods and Baits: bottom fishing with pieces of crab, shrimp, or squid; also small "touts."
15. **TRIPLETAIL** *Lobotes surinamensis*  
Local Name: blackfish  
Size: La. record 39 1/2 lbs., generally 20-30 lbs.  
Season: best fishing in summer  
Fishing Methods and Baits: stillfishing near wrecks or around rigs with shrimp or small fish.
16. **TUNA** *Thunnus spp.*  
Local Names: generally referred to simply as tuna; bluefin, yellowfin, and blackfin are species sought in La. waters.  
Size: La. records 691 lbs. (bluefin); 211 lbs. (yellowfin); and 31 lbs. (blackfin)  
Season: best fishing for all three species, May to July  
Fishing Methods and Baits: trolling with fish or artificial lures; for blackfin tuna, stillfishing with live fish near rigs.
17. **KING MACKEREL** *Scomberomorus cavalla*  
Local Name: king, kingfish, or king mackerel

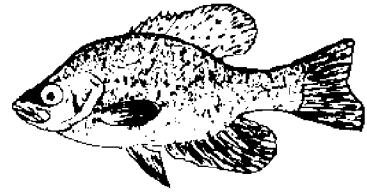
## Freshwater Fish



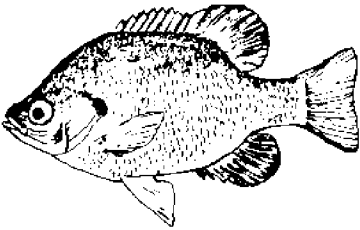
1. LARGEMOUTH BASS



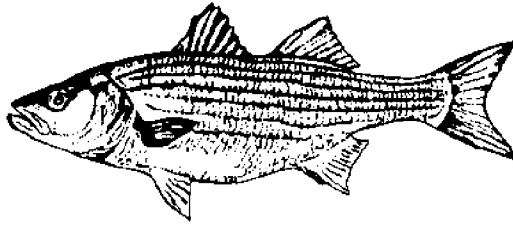
2. SPOTTED BASS



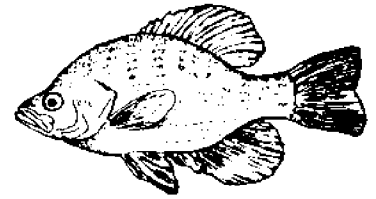
3a. BLACK CRAPPIE



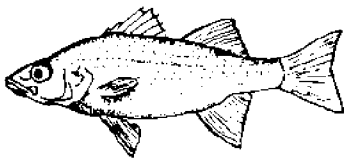
4. BLUEGILL



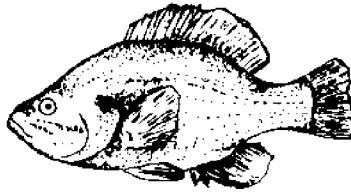
5. STRIPED BASS



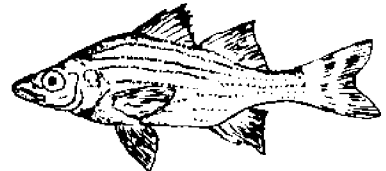
3b. WHITE CRAPPIE



6. WHITE BASS

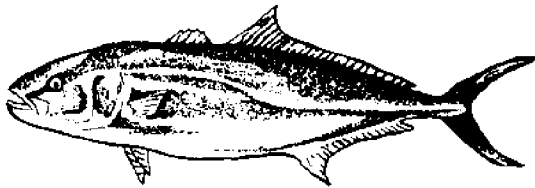


7. WARMOUTH

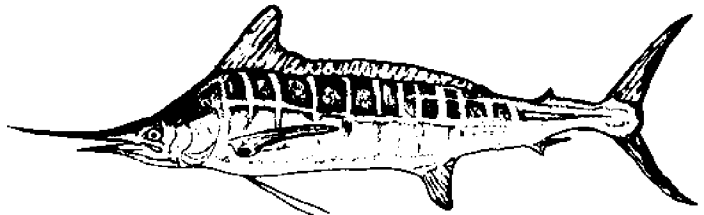


8. YELLOW BASS

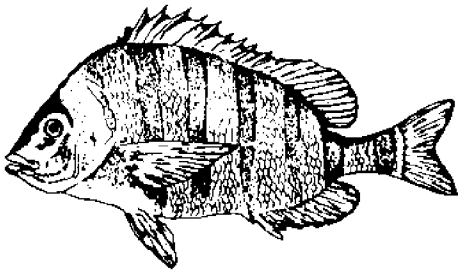
## Saltwater Fish



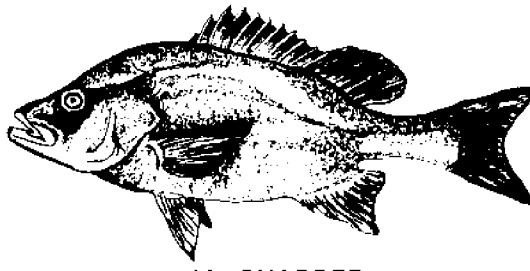
9. AMBERJACK



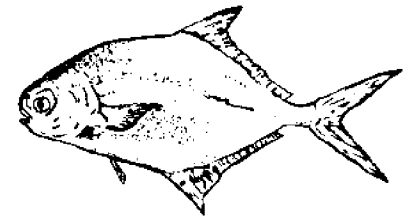
10. WHITE MARLIN



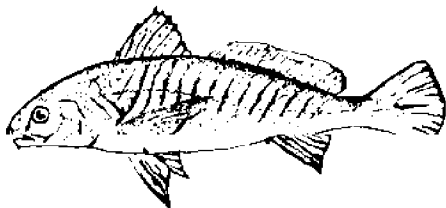
11. SHEEPSHEAD



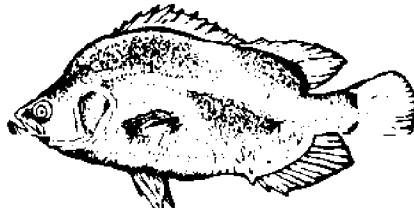
12. SNAPPER



13. FLORIDA POMPANO



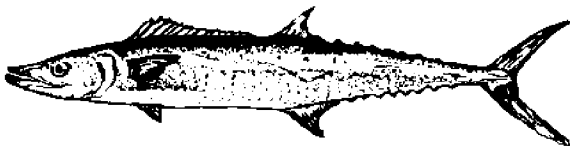
14. ATLANTIC CROAKER



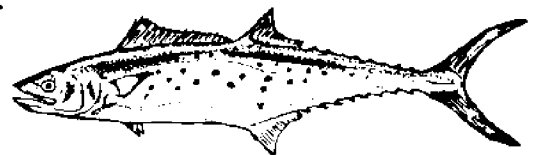
15. TRIPLETAIL



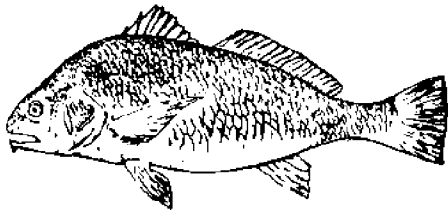
16. TUNA



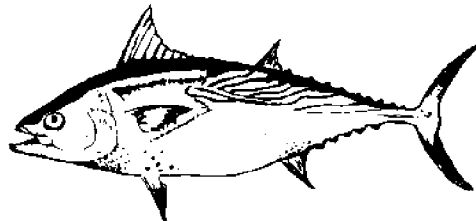
17. KING MACKEREL



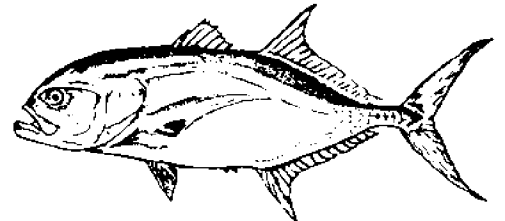
18. SPANISH MACKEREL



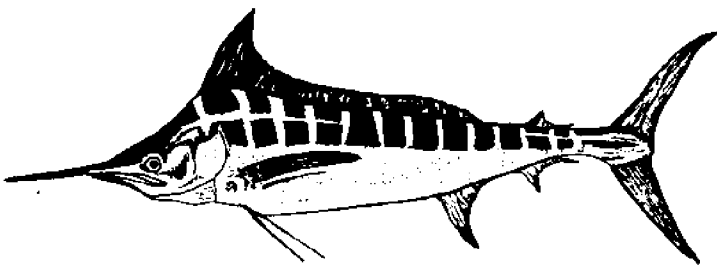
19. BLACK DRUM



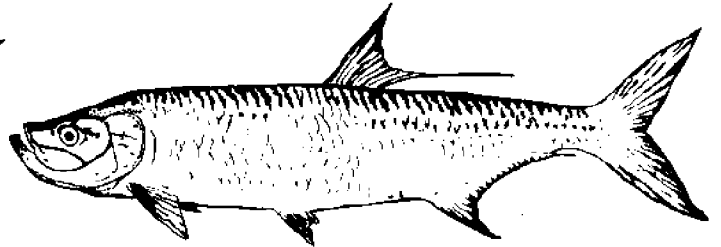
20. LITTLE TUNA



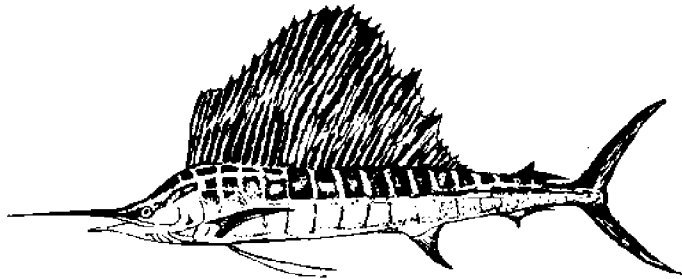
21. JACK CREVALLE



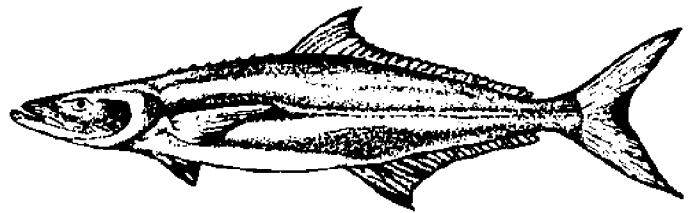
22. BLUE MARLIN



23. TARPON



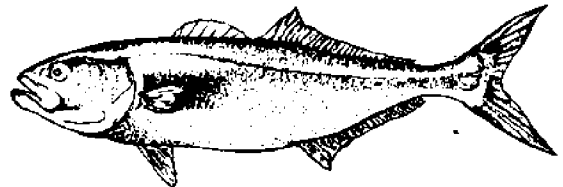
24. SAILFISH



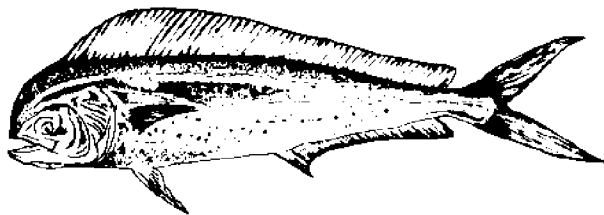
25. COBIA



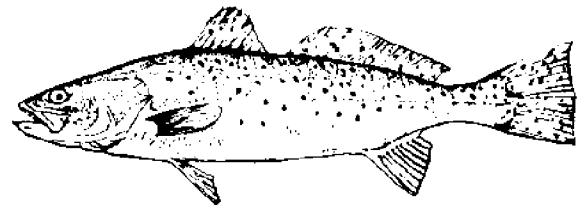
26. WAHOO



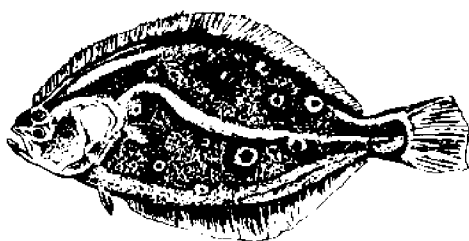
27. BLUEFISH



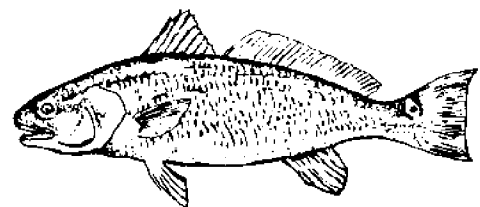
28. DOLPHIN



29. SPOTTED SEA TROUT



30. SOUTHERN FLOUNDER



31. RED DRUM

- Size: La. record 82 lbs., "school mackerel" generally 10-40 lbs.  
 Season: year-round; best late fall and winter  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: trolling with strip bait, spoons, jigs, or surface plugs; also stillfishing with live fish near rigs.
18. **SPANISH MACKEREL** *Scomberomorus maculatus*  
 Local Name: Spanish mackerel  
 Size: La. record 10½ lbs., generally 1-4 lbs.  
 Season: summer and fall  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: trolling or casting with jigs, lures, or spoons.
19. **BLACK DRUM** *Pogonias cromis*  
 Local Name: drum, sea drum, drumfish  
 Size: La. record 77 lbs., usually 20-50 lbs., common 1-5 lbs. in marsh  
 Season: year-round  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: bottom-fishing with clams, crabs, or shrimp.
20. **LITTLE TUNA**\*\*\* *Euthynnus alletteratus*  
 Local Name: bonito (not true bonito)  
 Size: generally 5-10 lbs, sometimes to 20 lbs.  
 Season: year round  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: trolling or casting with artificial lures; sometimes with fish.
21. **JACK CREVALLE** *Caranx hippos*  
 Local Name: jack  
 Size: La. record 51½ lbs., commonly 20-35 lbs.  
 Season: year-round, most common in summer and early fall  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: casting with plugs, spoons, or live bait such as mullet; also drift fishing.
22. **BLUE MARLIN** *Makaira nigricans*  
 Local Name: marlin  
 Size: La. record 1018½ lbs., usually 300-500 lbs.  
 Season: most common May to October  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: trolling offshore with artificial lures, spanish mackerel, ballyhoo, mullet, squid.
23. **TARPON** *Megalops atlanticus*  
 Local Name: silver king, grande écaille  
 Size: La. record 222¾ lbs., sometimes 150-175 lbs., commonly 75-150 lbs.  
 Season: summer and early fall  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: trolling with plugs, spoons, mullet or squid; also stillfishing with mullet and crab.
24. **SAILFISH** *Istiophorus platypterus*  
 Local Name: sailfish  
 Size: La. record 96 lbs.  
 Season: best fishing from May to October  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: similar to marlin.
25. **COBIA** *Rachycentron canadum*  
 Local Name: lemonfish or ling  
 Size: La. record 105¼ lbs., commonly 10-50 lbs.
- Season: most common late spring to early summer  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: casting with plug, live bait such as mullet or squid near rigs, buoys, floating debris.
26. **WAHOO** *Acanthocybium solanderi*  
 Local Name: wahoo  
 Size: La. record 139¼ lbs.  
 Season: best fishing April through August  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: trolling with balao (halfbeaks) or mullet (similar to marlin), probably most caught while marlin fishing.
27. **BLUEFISH** *Pomatomus saltatrix*  
 Local Name: bluefish  
 Size: La. record 21 lbs., commonly 1-5 lbs.  
 Season: year-round, but most common in summer around rigs  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: trolling or jigging with artificial lures; stillfishing with cutbait; will strike at almost anything; use of wire leader recommended.
28. **DOLPHIN** *Coryphaena hippurus*  
 Local Name: dolphinfish, dorado, bull dolphin  
 Size: La. record 71¼ lbs., commonly 10-20 lbs.  
 Season: most common in June and July  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: surface trolling with fish (mullet or flying fish) and squid; also artificial lures.
29. **SPOTTED SEA TROUT**\* *Cynoscion nebulosus*  
 Local Name: speckled trout, "spec." trout  
 Size: La. record 12 lbs. 6 oz., sometimes 6-8 lbs., commonly 1-4 lbs.  
 Season: year-round, but fishing generally best in fall and early winter in marshes; in warmer weather in open waters and along beaches  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: casting with jigs ("tout" or other shad rigs), spoons or plugs; still or drift fishing with shrimp or cockaho minnows; shad rigs, baited with shrimp and with a popping cork.
30. **SOUTHERN FLOUNDER** *Paralichthys lethostigma*  
 Local Name: flounder, mud flounder  
 Size: La. record 12 lbs., commonly 1-5 lbs.  
 Season: can be caught year-round, larger ones caught from November to February  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: bottom fishing with shrimp or cockaho minnows; also, gigging in sand at night, using spear and lantern.
31. **RED DRUM**\* *Sciaenops ocellatus*  
 Local Name: reds; small ones called "rat reds" or "puppy drum," large ones "bull reds"; rarely called channel bass.  
 Size: La. record 56½ lbs., generally 20-40 lbs. (bulls), common 5-10 lbs.  
 Season: best fishing in late summer and early fall (bull reds); fall and early winter in marshes (rat reds and puppy drum).  
 Fishing Methods and Baits: bottom fishing with cut mullet or crab for bulls; casting with jigs, shrimp, crabs, or cockaho minnows for smaller reds.

Fish Illustrations by JOHN BROWN

\*These are the only two saltwater fish for which there is a creel limit—a combined total of 50 speckled trout and redfish per day, with a maximum of two days' catch in possession. Fishermen may not have more than two redfish longer than 36 inches per day.

\*\*La. records are listed for snapper; there are 4-6 species in La. waters. The cubera and red snapper are the largest.

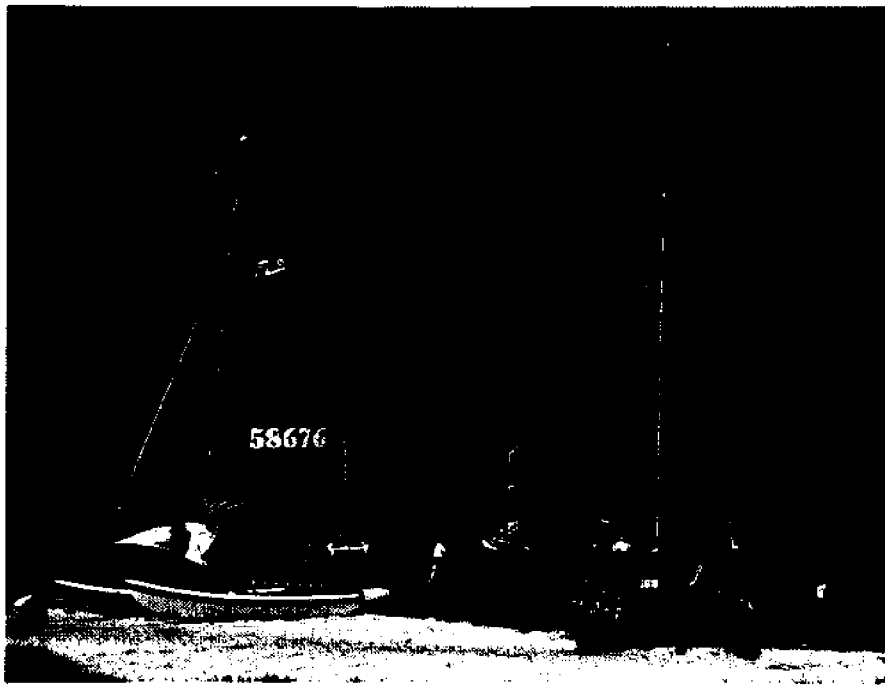
\*\*\*This fish is popular as a sport fish but is not widely regarded as a good food fish.



# COASTAL LOUISIANA CHARTER FISHING FLEET

PORT or AREA	DOCK or MARINA	BOAT	CAPTAIN	Phone Number	Boat Size	Passenger Capacity	Charter Dive Parties
Hopedale	Traillored Boat	Casa Nostra	Richie Matta	(504) 241-0671	21'	3	NO
	Hopedale Grocery & Marina	Logie Joe	Ed Martin	(504) 887-7469	28'	6	NO
Empire	Battistella's Marina Empire, La. 70050	Captain Don	Don Pfiffner	(504) 436-4420	36'	16	YES
		Cougar	Stanley Coulon	(504) 656-2487	47'	20	NO
		Early Bird	Louis Ramm	(504) 361-9086	46'	20	NO
		Ditch Digger	Bill Harrington	(504) 657-5214			
		Deep Sea Lady	James Matthews	(504) 657-7206			
		Miss Mississippi	Butch Thornton	(504) 282-8111	60'	45	NO
		Pat Al	Allen Kahoe	(504) 466-1860	46'	18	NO
		Sandy	Larry Johnson	(504) 561-8778	40'	6	NO
		Bluewater I (Topaz)	Frank Galle	(504) 454-2208	36'	6	NO
		Superfish	Stanley Wormuth	(504) 393-0044	31'	6	NO
		The Insanity	Warren Kirsch	(504) 833-8668	30'	6	NO
	Buras	Buras Boat Harbor	Taj 2 (Slip 106)	Jack Brooks	(504) 271-4062	40'	6
Miss Kelly (Slip 107)			Jack Brooks	(504) 271-4062	38'	6	NO
Venice	Elzey Marina Venice, La. 70041	Aw Heck	Dave Bailly	(504) 656-2304	31'	6	YES
		George Anthony	Gary Duncan	(504) 534-7684	50'	28	NO
Grand Isle	Martin's Marina P.O. Box 273 Grand Isle, La. 70358	Pompano	Buddy Pons	(504) 272-5904	46'	6	NO
		Bogalee	E. G. Ballard	(504) 787-2122	50'	6	YES
		Kelty-O	Mickey Readenour	(504) 878-2240 775-5256	42'	20	NO
		Magnum	Jonny Reader	(504) 787-9308	35'	6	NO
		La Lunette	Myron Fischer	(504) 787-9308	38'	6	NO
		Lana Dave	Red Beek	(504) 787-9308	43'	6	NO
		Miss Alison	John Daigle	(504) 787-2553			
		Sea Hawk	Tim Sebastian	(504) 787-2750	47'	15	NO

	Wahoo	Doc Kennedy	(504) 787-2474	50'	6	NO
	X-Rated	Tim Torrance	(504) 787-2212	42'	6	NO
	Sausage Time	Chris Caldwell	(504) 888-4882	32'	6	YES
	Blue Jay	Harry Caldwell	(504) 888-4882	59'	30	YES
	Bon Voyage Marin	Joe Shepard	(504) 787-2132	23'	4	NO
<b>Bayou Fourchon or Belle Passe</b>	Bayou Fourchon Marina Rt. 1, Box 260 Golden Meadow, L. 70357	Charlie Hardison	(504) 396-2442	62'	42	NO
	Silkie	Frank Hardison & Chuck Denstaff	(504) 396-2442	49'	6	NO
	Starfish	David Harrelson	(504) 396-2442	50'	20	NO
	Swordfish	Bill Lang & Ernie Ballard	(504) 396-2442	50'	20	NO
<b>Cocodrie</b>	Sportsman's Parade Star Route 500 Chauvin, La. 7034	Stu Scheer	(504) 594-2414	20' to 26'	4-5	NO
<b>Intracoastal City</b>	Danny Richard Mana	Stan Strobel	(318) 234-4269	38'	6	YES
	Celeste Marie	Richard Hendrix	(318) 232-9140	52'	12	YES
	Yama 3	Daniel Morris	(318) 893-6952	52'	6	YES
<b>Grand Chenier</b>	Larry's Seafood Dkk	S. A. Cooley	(318) 478-1777	40'	6	NO
	Olmstead Shipyard Marina	David Willoughby	(318) 478-0752 477-0704	50'	12-15	YES
	Larry's Seafood Dkk	Butch Crain	(318) 538-2411	65'	12	YES
	McCall Dock	Dale McCall	(318) 538-2063	65'	30	YES
<b>Cameron</b>	Near Mobil Oil Dock	Jep Turner	(318) 477-5310	60'	18	NO
	Cameron Ice Haus Dock	Wendell Lindsey	(318) 433-4931	38'	6	YES
	Charlie Hebert's Landing	Walter Miller	(318) 433-6773	38'	6	NO
<b>Houma</b>	Three Boats	Annie Miller's Terrebonne Swamp and Marsh Tours	(504) 879-3934	16' / 19' / 20'	Swamp and Marsh Tours, No Fishing, No Dive Parties	
<b>New Iberia</b>	Port of Call Marir Rt. 4, Box 415FF New Iberia, La. 7560	Henry Bernard Ira Toups Richard Sellers	(318) 356-6756 (318) 364-7625 (318) 364-4707	47' 47'	8 10	YES YES
<b>Dulac</b>	Reach Out Landin	Pascal Townsend	(504) 563-2590		4	
<b>Paradise Island off Cocodrie</b>	Louisiana Fishingodge P.O. Box 507 Golden Meadow, L. 70357	Guides, fishing boats, accommodations provided	(504) 798-7117			NO



## Sailing

Southerly breezes make sailing popular in a number of lakes and bays along Louisiana's coast, particularly in lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne in the southeastern area and in Vermilion Bay in the southwest. As indicated by the sailing weather table, conditions are good to excellent from mid-March through mid-November. During this period, winds frequently range from 7 to 16 knots. Temperatures are warm, and showers, though plentiful, are usually brief. Winter provides a number of good sailing days, although many are spoiled by cold fronts and low pressure systems with their rain and strong, gusty winds.

## Diving

Scuba diving—most of it near the oil production platforms in the Gulf of Mexico—is a very popular sport in coastal Louisiana. Traveling to the rigs, about 20 miles out into the Gulf, divers can enjoy spearfishing, photography, and underwater sightseeing.

A number of charter boats take scuba divers as well as fishing parties, and some take only divers. Dive clubs and shops are numerous throughout the coastal area, and there are several major spearfishing competitions held each year.

## About Boats

Though Louisiana boating laws are too long and complex to list here in their entirety, they generally reflect common-sense safety rules that most people would follow anyway. The visitor to Louisiana can write to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for a complete list of the state's boating regulations. There are, however, a few

helpful and salient points that can be stressed here.

- If a visitor's boat is registered in another state, he does not have to register it in Louisiana, unless he plans to keep it in the state for more than 90 consecutive days.
- Regardless of size, every boat must carry at least one life preserver for each person on board, including rowboats without motors. Only devices approved by the U.S. Coast Guard are acceptable.
- All boats must have an efficient sound-producing mechanical device—a horn, whistle, or bell.
- If a boat is operated between sunset and sunrise, it must have lights; for manually operated boats, a flashlight or lantern is sufficient, but for motorboats, depending on size, a more complicated system of lighting is required.
- Regardless of size, every boat must carry a fire extinguisher whenever open flames or devices for heating and cooking are used onboard. The type of fire extinguisher required depends on the size and type of motorboat.
- Paddles, anchor, rope, flares, and first-aid kit are not required by law but can be important to have for both safety and convenience.

### Sailing Weather Days

	Southeastern Louisiana	Southwestern Louisiana
January	8	6
February	9	8
March	16	15
April	23	22
May	24	24
June	21	21
July	19	18
August	18	16
September	21	20
October	22	19
November	14	13
December	9	8

*A day is considered a good sailing day if (using the 7 am, 10 am, 1 pm, and 4 pm C.S.T. observations):*

- windspeeds of 7-16 knots occur at least twice
- precipitation occurs no more than twice
- visibility reaches 2 miles or more at least once
- temperatures of 65°F or more occur at least twice

# Hunting



Louisiana's coastal prairies and marshes offer a variety of game species for the hunter. Deer, squirrel, rabbit, snipe, woodcock, and dove are plentiful in coastal areas, but the millions of waterfowl that winter in south Louisiana each year attract more hunters—many from throughout the nation—than any other game species. Though much prime hunting land is posted and open only to private hunting clubs, the coastal wildlife management areas maintained by the state are open to the public and offer excellent opportunities for hunting.

The state's population of white-tailed deer is large. In coastal Louisiana deer are found in the swampy areas of the lower Atchafalaya basin, along the timbered natural levees at the edges of marshes, and in the coastal prairies of southwest Louisiana.

Throughout the state deer hunting seasons vary in length and opening time, depending on the characteristics of the local habitat and deer population. The use of trail dogs—in which hunters stand near deer trails while their dogs flush the animals from cover—is common in Louisiana deer hunting (though illegal in wildlife management areas), as is stalk, or still, hunting, in which the hunter walks quietly along a deer trail looking for deer or hides near an area used by them.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries permits hunters to kill both bucks and does in several areas of the state at certain times of the year, but these regulations vary from season to season. There is also an archery season, in which hunters may take deer with the bow and arrow, so long as they do not use dogs.

Louisiana has two species of squirrels—the fox and the grey—but because each species has various geographic subspecies, Louisiana



squirrels appear in a variety of colors and sizes. The state also has two species of rabbits, of which the swamp rabbit is most commonly found on the coast. Both squirrel and rabbit hunting are major sports throughout the state and are also popular in the coastal area. Game birds include the migratory woodcock, found in the lower Atchafalaya basin and commonly called "bec" in Louisiana; several species of dove, of which the mourning dove is a year-round resident; and the resident bobwhite quail.

By far, waterfowl hunting has always been the most important hunting sport in coastal Louisiana. Each winter, Louisiana's coastal marshes, lakes, swamps, and rivers, as well as the vast acreage of cultivated rice fields, attract vast numbers of ducks and geese; it has been estimated that more than two-thirds of the great Mississippi Flyway's waterfowl spend the winter in Louisiana's coastal wetlands. Besides ducks and geese, the state is also host to gallinules, coots, snipe, and rails, all migratory, marsh-dwelling birds available to the hunter.

Geese, which include white-fronted geese (also called speckle-bellied geese), make their way to Louisiana marshlands and mud flats in the fall and stay until mid-March or early April. Ducks, the most numerous group of waterfowl in Louisiana, include 37 species; all are migratory except the mottled duck, the fulvous tree duck, and the wood duck, which live in the state year-round. Surface-feeding ducks include the mallard, widgeon, shoveler, pintail, teal, black duck, and gadwall; they are commonly found in shallow marshes and ponds and feed on aquatic plants. Divers, or underwater feeders, include the canvasback, redhead, ruddy duck, mergansers, ring-necked duck, and lesser scaup.

## Licenses

**Fishing:** Any Louisiana resident between the ages of 16 and 60, who uses a rod and reel or pole with artificial lure, is required to have a basic fishing license. Nonresidents of the state must have in their possession a basic nonresident fishing license. Nonresidents may choose to purchase either an annual or a seven-day license, depending on how long and how often they fish in Louisiana waters. Fishing licenses can be purchased from most local sporting goods stores, marinas, and sheriff's offices.

**Hunting:** All resident hunters between the ages of 16 and 60 must have a basic resident season license when hunting game. In addition, there is a big game permit required for hunters who hunt big game (deer, turkey, or bear). These permits can be obtained from parish sheriff's offices free of

charge. Resident hunters who wish to hunt deer or turkey with a bow and arrow must also have an archery license in addition to the basic license and the big game permit.

Nonresidents may obtain basic season or short-term hunting licenses from parish sheriff's offices; there is also a nonresident big game permit and a nonresident archery license. Military personnel are given resident license privileges while on active duty.

For safety, both resident and nonresident deer hunters must wear "hunter orange" on the head, chest, and back if hunting on public lands, such as wildlife management areas.

Complete hunting and fishing regulations may be obtained from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

# Camping

Opportunities for camping in coastal Louisiana are numerous. Tent campers who rough it at Holly and Rutherford beaches, at Grand Isle, and at Elmer's Island can enjoy swimming, crabbing, and surf fishing, while campers in wildlife management areas like Bohemia, Biloxi, Attakapas, and the Atchafalaya delta can fish and hunt or simply enjoy being outdoors.

For those who prefer the comfort of camping out in recreational vehicles, there are a number of recreation areas in the coastal area that have campsites with trailer hookups, notably state parks like Fontainebleau and St. Bernard.

Detailed information about camping facilities in coastal Louisiana can be obtained from the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

# Bird Watching

Bird watchers can find a bonanza in coastal Louisiana. Besides the millions of waterfowl that spend the winter in the coastal marshes each year, the coast serves as an important resting place for thousands of warblers and other songbirds that migrate to Central and South America to spend the winter and then, in the spring, fly back across the Gulf of Mexico to their northern nesting areas.

Many wading birds like the ibis, stilt, snipe, and gallinule are permanent residents. Several kinds of herons—for example, the small cattle egret and the beautiful snowy egret with its long white plumes—are common in coastal Louisiana, as are sea birds like laughing gulls and terns. Brown pelicans, the state bird, swoop in small v-shaped flocks over the coast; almost annihilated by the use of DDT, these birds have made a recovery, though they are far less numerous than they used to be.

Other birds found commonly in Louisiana include the red-winged blackbird, mockingbird, purple grackle, killdeer, belted kingfisher, myrtle warbler, mourning dove, cardinal, purple martin, wood thrush, yellow-billed cuckoo, ruby-throated hummingbird, cedar waxwing, eastern bluebird, and eastern kingbird.



An excellent way for nature enthusiasts to enjoy both the bird life and plant life of coastal Louisiana is to travel Louisiana highway 82, which follows the coast from the Texas border to Pecan Island and then veers northward. Just north of the highway is the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge, a wintering area for ducks and geese, where nature study and bird watching are permitted throughout the year. Holly Beach in Cameron Parish is an important area for bird watching. Plovers, willets, snipes, sandpipers, gulls, terns, and pelicans are numerous, as are migrating songbirds, especially in the early spring. The Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge in the coastal marshes of southwestern Louisiana is host to thousands of ducks, geese, coots, and wading birds and is also an important resting area for migrating songbirds. For

bird watchers with boats, the Marsh Island Wildlife Refuge and Game Preserve between the Gulf of Mexico and West Cote Blanche Bay is a major area for migrating waterfowl, as are the Delta National Wildlife Refuge and the Pass-a-Loutre Wildlife Management Area at the mouth of the Mississippi River in the southeastern portion of the coast.

Avery Island, rising from the marshes and coastal savannahs north of Vermilion Bay in Iberia Parish, offers the Jungle Gardens, in which flourish native vegetation and exotic plants from all over the world, and Bird City, in which colonies of nesting herons can be viewed. Grand Bois Park, near Houma in Terrebonne Parish, is partly a wilderness area containing a wide variety of birds.

# Coastal Wildlife Management Areas

The state of Louisiana maintains 35 wildlife management areas across the state, representing every kind of terrain and vegetation found in Louisiana. These are open to the public for a variety of outdoor recreation—fishing, hunting, camping, boating, hiking, and birdwatching—though facilities vary at each and some are far more primitive than others.

Major wildlife management areas in the coastal region include the Atchafalaya delta, Attakapas, Bohemia, Biloxi, Manchac, Pass-a-Loutre, Pointe-au-Chien, Salvador, Sabine Island, and Wisner. In addition, the

state-operated Rockefeller Refuge is open to the public (though not for hunting), as are the federally owned Sabine and Lacassine refuges.

In general, the interiors of these coastal areas can be reached only by boat; types of terrain include fresh-to-saline marshes, cypress-tupelo swamps, forested ridges, and bayous, lakes, and ponds.

Detailed maps of these areas and complete information about locations, facilities, and permits are available from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

## COASTAL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Name of Area	Acreage	Location	Recreational Activities/Facilities											
			Hunting					Fishing		Camping Area				
			DEER	TURKEY	RABBIT	SQUIRREL	WATERFOWL	SALT	FRESH					
Atchafalaya Delta	126,375	St. Mary Parish-Atchafalaya Bay—18 miles southwest of Morgan City												
Attakapas	25,500	St. Mary, St. Martin, and Iberia parishes, 20 miles northwest of Morgan City												
Biloxi	39,583	St. Bernard Parish, Hopedale, 9 miles south; Shell Beach 6 miles southwest Hwy. 46												
Bohemia	33,000	Plaquemines Parish, 4 miles south of East Pointe-a-la-Hache												
Manchac	8,325	St. John the Baptist Parish, 17 miles northeast of LaPlace, and east of U.S. Hwy. 51												
Pass-A-Loutre	66,000	Plaquemines Parish, 10 miles south of Venice, access by boat on Mississippi River												
Pointe-au-Chien	29,000	Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes												
Sabine Island	8,100	Calcasieu Parish												
Salvador	31,000	St. Charles Parish, 10 miles southwest of New Orleans												
Wisner	21,621	Lafourche Parish, 8 miles south of Leesville and 5 miles west of Grand Isle, Highway 1												

# Vacation Hazards

Visitors to coastal Louisiana should be aware of a number of hazards that could endanger their lives or, at the least, cause annoyance. Most of these, of course, are not peculiar to Louisiana but apply to any coastal area, and the exercise of common sense is the best defense against them.

## Weather

### Thunderstorms and Hurricanes.

As in any marine area, the weather in coastal Louisiana can be treacherous; thunderstorms, which are most frequent during July and August, can strike with astonishing suddenness and anyone outdoors—in particular those on open water—should be alert to warnings. Masses of dark clouds, along with any steady increase in wind speed—especially if the wind is moving in a direction opposite to a strong tidal current—are obvious indicators of an approaching squall or thunderstorm and boaters should head for the shore immediately. Besides wind and waves, which can overturn a boat, lightning is a serious danger and kills more people each year than hurricanes or tornadoes.

The safest place to be during a storm is indoors, of course, but if caught in the marsh or afloat in the open Gulf, the most important rule to remember is to stay down. Those in large boats should go below if possible, keeping away from any metal objects not grounded by the boat's protection system. If on land with no shelter available, it is wise to seek protection in ditches or under low shrubs. Open spaces should be avoided.

Hurricanes are severe tropical cyclones with torrential rains and winds reaching or exceeding 75 miles per hour. Louisiana's position on the Gulf makes it vulnerable to the devastating effects of hurricanes and, in the past 30 years, a number of these storms have caused widespread death and property destruction in the coastal region. Of particular note are hurricane Audrey, which inundated the coastal parishes in 1957 with waves over 12 feet high; hurricane Betsy in 1965, with winds of 136 miles per hour; and hurricane Camille in 1969, which brought storm surges over 24 feet high and winds of 200 miles per hour.

While hurricanes can form any time, the official season for them is June to November. The months when Louisiana seems especially vulnerable are August, September, and October.

**Fogs.** In the winter and early spring, when light southerly winds bring warm, moist air from the Gulf of Mexico to flow over the colder surfaces of inshore water bodies, heavy fogs result. In the summer, too, frontal fogs occur, associated with heavy seasonal rainfall and with the passage of cool fronts through the area. Though these fogs can prevent river and coastal traffic from moving, they usually affect visibility only in the early mornings and disappear with the sun by noon.

**Rip Currents.** Rip currents are strong, narrow outflows of water rushing from the beach back toward the sea. These currents are very strong and one beach may have several at one time. In Louisiana, rip currents are especially common in coastal bays and inlets and in the tidal passes between barrier islands. Swimmers caught in these currents often try to fight them in an effort to get to shore, but this can cause exhaustion and panic and can even lead to drowning. Because rip currents break up the normal wave pattern and are usually visible in the water, swimmers should be able to avoid them. Since a rip current is usually only about 10 to 12 feet wide, a swimmer caught in one can swim parallel to the shore and soon be out of it, or he can let the current carry

him out beyond the surf zone where the current quickly dissipates.

**Sun.** The semitropical Louisiana sun can be brutal to unprotected skin, even during the winter, and a reliable sun screen, applied liberally and often, is a necessity for boaters, swimmers, and fishermen. Protective clothing should also be carried along on boats or to the beaches.

## The National Weather Service

Before venturing outdoors, boaters and fishermen should check local weather and sea conditions. The National Weather Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provides general marine weather reports and forecasts as well as special warnings along the Louisiana coast. Stations are located in Lake Charles, Baton Rouge, and Slidell. Mariners can tune to 162.40 MHz, 162.475 MHz, or 162.55 MHz for the continuous broadcasts, which can usually be received 20 to 40 miles from the transmitting antenna, depending on the terrain and the quality of the receiver used. Where transmitting antennas are on high ground, the range is greater, 60 miles or more. Offshore weather information is broadcast hourly from Lake Charles and Slidell.

This information is also available by recorded telephone message in New Orleans and Baton Rouge:

(504) 522-2686 (New Orleans)

(504) 355-4823 (Baton Rouge)





## Animals

**Alligators.** South Louisiana is famous for its alligators and they are found in the lakes, bayous, bays, and marshes of the coast, both fresh and brackish. Though these reptiles have a fearsome reputation, it is largely undeserved. They are sluggish and generally not aggressive and unless antagonized—for example, stepped on or teased—they will not attack a person. To be on the safe side, however, the marsh fisherman or crabber would be wise to investigate any harmless-looking log before stepping on it.

**Snakes.** Though Louisiana contains six species of poisonous snakes (two kinds of moccasins, three kinds of rattlers, and the coral snake), the "cottonmouth," also called the water moccasin, is the poisonous species most commonly found in the coastal wetlands. It commonly frequents freshwater marshes and swamps but is occasionally found in brackish areas. The cottonmouth reaches a length of three to four feet and can be identified by the deep, brown-black color of its back, the black and yellow pattern on its underside, and the white, cotton-like lining visible when its mouth is open. The snake is dormant during the winter months and sluggish in the early spring, sunning itself on banks and logs. In the summer and early fall, however, it is active and dangerous. Despite a common belief, these snakes **do** bite in the water,

so swimmers should be careful. Boaters should check any overhanging shrubs or branches carefully before dropping anchor.

**Jellyfish.** Several species of jellyfish, as well as the Portuguese man-of-war, are common in Louisiana coastal waters, especially during the months of July, August, and September. Jellyfish stings are painful and swimmers, beach crabbers, and fishermen should watch for these creatures in the water.

**Insects.** An inevitable nuisance in the humid Louisiana marshes is the mosquito, which appears in legion in the spring and does not abate until late fall. Mosquitoes are most active from late afternoon to early morning, particularly in areas where there is little wind. Other nuisances are gnats, which are active both day and night and a problem for marsh fishermen who anchor close to clumps of marsh grass, and horse flies, which are numerous on coastal chenier ridges and natural levees. Boaters and fishermen in the marsh should apply insect repellent to all areas of exposed skin, especially when outside after sunset.

# For Further Information

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
P.O. Box 44095  
Capitol Station  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism  
Office of Tourism  
666 North Foster Drive  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806

National Weather Service Forecast Office  
1120 Old Spanish Trail  
Slidell, Louisiana 70458

Communications Office  
Louisiana Sea Grant College Program  
Center for Wetland Resources  
Louisiana State University  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803

National Oceanographic Data Center  
NOAA Environmental Data and  
Information Service  
Washington, D.C. 20235

## **Southeastern Louisiana**

Greater New Orleans Tourist and Convention Commission  
334 Royal Street  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130

Grand Isle Tourist Commission  
P.O. Box 776  
Grand Isle, Louisiana 70358

## **Southwestern Louisiana**

Lafayette Convention and Visitors Commission  
P.O. Box 52006  
Lafayette, Louisiana 70505

Atchafalaya Delta Tourist Commission  
P.O. Box 2332  
Morgan City, Louisiana 70381

Lake Charles, Calcasieu Parish  
Convention and Tourist Commission  
P.O. Box 1912  
Lake Charles, Louisiana 70601

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