

Southeastern Fisheries Association, Inc.

Proudly serving the Commercial Fishing Industry for over 50 years!



Hotlines Online Edition



April 2003

GULF COUNCIL ENDORSES RADAR SYSTEM IN TORTUGAS

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has requested National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to continue funding the radar surveillance system for the Tortugas shrimp. Efforts were underway to shut the radar down and push strictly for Vessel Monitoring Systems for all shrimp boats but that is a long way from happening. There are only a handful of poachers left who routinely steal shrimp from the sanctuary and if the fines can move up to the \$25,000 + range that should stop them.

There are also those who make a drag occasionally on their way to the east coast to catch rock shrimp. Hopefully the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and NMFS will have these boats in their sights the next time they stop to steal shrimp from the sanctuary. When someone poaches inside the sanctuary it makes all shrimpers look bad in the eyes of the public. There needs to be more self-policing in the area. When someone sees a boat stealing, they should report the crime to the USCG and NMFS. That's about the only way the sanctuary can be totally closed for the good of the industry.

This newsletter is published by Southeastern Fisheries Association. Please pass it along and encourage others to be added to our mailing list.

If you want to be removed from the list, please contact us.

SFA is a non-profit association founded in 1952, charged with maintaining a viable seafood industry in the Southeast.

Robert P. Jones, Editor

Kudos to the Gulf Council for their efforts to stop poaching in the Tortugas shrimp sanctuary.

GOVERNOR BUSH SUBMITS NOMINATIONS FOR FISHERY COUNCILS

Evidently through some high level political pressure from the Chairman of the Fish and Wildlife Commission, William Ward of Clearwater was submitted by Governor Bush for the number one slot for nomination to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council.

The Governor has historically re-nominated the sitting Council member, as he did on the South Atlantic Council by placing Tony Iarocci in the number one slot. In the Gulf Council situation, Karen Bell, who is an active participant and business owner in the seafood industry, was downgraded to second position and Bob Gill was submitted in the third slot. William Ward already currently sits as a Commissioner of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. If selected by US Department of Commerce Secretary Donald Evans, one man will be holding down two important fishery positions. Mr. Ward will do everything he can to ban longline fishing for grouper, a stance he has long articulated, no matter what the science shows.

This nomination seems to have been engineered by the Coastal Conservation Association, which holds sway over most of the Council appointments. In several Gulf States, the Coastal Conservation Associa-

tion passes on all persons nominated before they even leave the Governors offices. Hopefully, Secretary Evans isn't so beholden to CCA that he reneges on his pledge to better balance the Council membership. There is only one person on the Gulf Council in the commercial fishing industry.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LISTENING SESSIONS

The USDA has announced a series of listening sessions to hear from the public on the Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) regulations. Congress has already passed the COOL and now the USDA is drafting regulations to implement the law. If there is one regulation that will help the domestic fishing industry the most it is this regulation. SFA adopted a policy over 20 years ago calling for Country of Origin labeling and this policy is manifested in the Seafood Quality Code put together by the industry in the 1980s. Selling imported shrimp as domestic shrimp is wrong and Congress has attempted to stop this practice in the marketplace. Hopefully the USDA will not thwart the will of Congress by creating giant loopholes for those who sell foreign goods as domestic goods.

There are high quality imported shrimp on the US market and they should be marketed as such. Never should a black tiger shrimp be sold as an east coast white shrimp or a Gulf white shrimp. Most modern retail markets have no problem showing the country of origin on their seafood or their produce.

(Continued on page 2)

Part of the Education Process of the PUBLIC:

On your next order for business checks from your bank have printed just above the signature line **"Commercial Fishing makes this payment possible"**

(Continued from page 1)

The listening session will be held in Orlando, Florida on May 14, 2003 from 1 to 4 PM at the Orange County Administration Building, Board of Commission Chambers, 201 South Rosalind, Orlando, Florida 32801. Any member interested in this issue should be there to listen and speak.

SFA RECEIVING COMPLAINTS ABOUT HACCP INVESTIGATORS

Not since the FDA implemented the HACCP regulations has the association office received so many complaints about FDA investigators. The feeling is the FDA is not trying to help firms making honest efforts to comply with the regulations. Instead, many firms now see the FDA investigators as the enemy who will do anything they can to find something wrong so they can write the firm up and create stress on the management.

Additionally, FDA seems to be selecting only certain firms to check while ignoring others. One seafood company has asked for statistics on the number of firms checked in its particular county under the Freedom of Information Act. There are about 1246 wholesale dealers in the state of Florida.

Every firm needs to receive the same professional treatment from FDA. SFA hopes the FDA will meet with the seafood industry to listen to our legitimate complaints and work with us and not against us to keep safe seafood on the market.

ANNUAL CONVENTION APPROACHING

Mark your calendars for May 28-31 to be in Cocoa Beach for SFAs 51st annual



meeting. An outstanding array of speakers has been lined up to talk about ALL the pressing issues of the day including: Financial grants to shrimpers, Southern Shrimp Alliance programs, country of origin labeling, artificial reefs, grouper status, methylmercury, antibiotics in fishery products, HACCP, Gulf Council highlights and much more. SFA plans to come out of the meeting with a recommended standard for the use of tripolyphosphate. If you are interested in participating in this discussion, you need to be there. Agendas and registration forms will be in the mail again very soon.

Please sign up to be a sponsor and register to attend so SFA can continue to provide professional representation for the seafood industry.

We thank the sponsors already committed:
Gold – Leavins Seafood, V. J. O'Neal & Company, Aylesworth Family, Cox Wholesale Seafood
Silver – Half Hatch Tackle, Triar Seafood
Bronze – Paul Barnett, Shrimp Landing, Eastern Seaboard Packaging

FLORIDA SHELLFISH MONITORING TO REMAIN INTACT

Both the Senate and House have restored most of the cuts proposed by Governor Jeb Bush pertaining to the oyster and clam industry. The original proposal from the Governors office would have totally decimated the shellfish Bureau, precluding Florida oysters and clams from interstate

commerce. It was never the intention of Governor Bush to destroy the oyster industry, but to try and find ways to reduce the Florida budget due to a shortfall and his pledge of no new taxes.

SFA is grateful to Commissioner Charles Bronson for his efforts to save the industry, as well as to the leaders in the House and Senate who fought to restore the 53 jobs and \$4 million dollar budget item. The oyster and clam industries are worth much more than \$100 million dollars a year to the state and when it comes to water monitoring and processing plant inspection, only the state can do this job.

PHOSPHATE PLANT WASTE A TICKING TIME BOMB

There are 500 million gallons of toxic waste stored in the Piney Point Phosphate Plant on the shore of Tampa Bay that will be dumped in the Gulf of Mexico according to plans outlined by the Department of Environmental Protection. This acidic waste will sink to the bottom and nobody really knows what to expect in damages from this proposed dumping.

SFA has suggested if the toxic waste is to be dumped into the environment, it should be dumped in the deep waters of the Gulf Stream instead of the shallow waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Better yet, some other option should be developed to prevent this waste being dumped in any waters. There has been very little news coverage of this proposal, although the St. Petersburg Times did a worthy story on its potential damage in early April.

If you are opposed to dumping this waste where you fish, please call the Governors office and also reach out to any environmental organization you know and ask them to get involved with this today. There is no telling how much coral and how many species of fish will be destroyed by this proposed action.

GULF FISHERIES FOUNDATION TO HOLD WORKSHOP

The Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation has scheduled a Working

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Group Meeting beginning at 1:00 PM on April 15th and ending at 1:00 PM on the 16th to discuss "TEDs, Sea Turtles and the Shrimp Fisheries of the Southeastern United States. The meeting will be held at the Tampa Airport Hilton. Status reports and information on the new TED requirements will be discussed.

FDA SET TO LOWER CHLORAMPHENICOL TOLERANCE

A letter sent to Gulf Council Chairman Jim Fensom, stated FDA was in the process of reducing the limit levels in chloramphenicol from 1 part per billion to 0.3 parts per billions, which would align the US with Europe and Canada. The Gulf council had written FDA pushing them to enforce the ban of this dangerous drug. Kudos to the Gulf Council for their support of the domestic shrimp industry.

Southeastern Fisheries Association will customize your company's HACCP Plan!

FDA trained consultant with over 39 years experience in all levels of the seafood industry.

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850/224-3180
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850/222-FOOD

D. W. WILSON PASSES AWAY

Longtime Apalachicola businessman Donnie Wilson died last month very unexpectedly. Donnie was in the process of rebuilding his business and was working too many hours a day according to his friends. He had been a loyal member of SFA for many years and headed the oyster section on several occasions. All those who loved him, especially Amanda and the kids, will miss him very much. His smile and quiet humor will be especially missed in these times of great turmoil within the industry. May he rest in peace. Semper Fi old friend.

VOLUNTARY ASSESSMENT 2003

The Board of Directors of SFA would like to thank the members below who have responded to the Voluntary Assessment Request for this fiscal year as of April 7, 2003.

- ◆ Cox's Wholesale Seafood – Steve Cox
- ◆ Cedar Key Fish & Oysters – Bob Gill-upgrade to Full Corporate Membership
- ◆ Key's Fisheries, Inc. – Gary Graves
- ◆ Leavins Seafood – Grady & Alice Leavins
- ◆ St. George Packing – Larry Shafer
- ◆ Seafood Shoppe, Inc. – John Weeks
- ◆ Water Street Seafood – Steve Rash
- ◆ Robert P. Bell – Bob Bell
- ◆ Safe Harbor – Gerald Pack
- ◆ Standard Marine Supply/Tampa – Jimmy Hardee
- ◆ Beaver Street Fisheries – Harry Frisch & Darrell Glover
- ◆ Lee County Fisherman's Co-op – John Patrick
- ◆ Phoenix Trading Corp. – Ira Pfeffer
- ◆ Paul Barnett Seafood – Paul Barnett

- ◆ Southern Seafood Market, Inc. – Mark Easterling
- ◆ Half Hitch & Bait & Tackle – Tom Putnam
- ◆ Gary's Seafood Specialities – Michael Reed – Mitchell Rice
- ◆ Capt. Mike's Seafood – Mike Abrams
- ◆ Bowditch Insurance – Jim Clary
- ◆ N. J. Ross & Assoc. D/B/A Blue Horizons – Rossanna Soto
- ◆ L & M Seafood – Larry & Mary Pentel
- ◆ Pine Bay Seafood, Inc. – Craig Rice
- ◆ Howard Rau
- ◆ Ed Felton

For those of you not participating up to now and would like to contribute, we enclose a form in this newsletter for your convenience.

We sincerely appreciate your financial support on behalf of the association in these tough economic times.

We invite anyone receiving this newsletter, who is not already a member of SFA to join us and become an activist for your business. We are here to respond to your business needs in the state capital and around the Southeast Region. We can help you only if we know you and correspond with you regularly.....We would look forward to serving you and your company!

Welcome to SFA New Members: SFA is proud to welcome the following new members into its growing family of successful seafood companies. We encourage each member to support one another for the overall good of maintaining an economic and cultural presence for commercial fishing in America as well as providing marine protein to the people.

Full Corporate Member

Gulf Partners Ltd—John L. Williams, Tarpon Springs FL

Special HACCP Member

Bay Harbor Seafood—Martin E. Arnold, Panama City FL

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