



SOUTHEASTERN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

H O T L I N E S

NOVEMBER 2005

OLD BAY JOINS WITH NATIONAL AQUARIUM TO BASH SEAFOOD

Old Bay, one of the many seafood seasonings on the market has joined forces with the Ocean Wise program telling consumers which seafood they should eat and which they should avoid. Many environmental groups, some quite radical, have been trying to persuade consumers to stop eating one type of seafood or another over the years. They boycotted swordfish in the US at the same time the US fishermen were practicing major conservation on this species. It seems they are more after publicity than valuable information. The trouble with these enviro-seafood guides is the real agenda is not always known. It's a shame the McCormick Company; maker of Old Bay has fallen prey to the "fish police activists." Chances are the Old Bay folks never even talked to a commercial fisherman or their representatives prior to coming out blasting certain fisheries. Many people in the fishing industry are taking Old Bay

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

out of their cabinets at home and off the shelves at their places of business.

NO DISASTER ASSISTANCE YET FOR FISHERMEN AND DEALERS

As far as it can be determined there has been a lot of talk but no dollars given to the fishermen who have suffered so badly from the spate of hurricanes that savaged the Gulf States this year. The Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission has given the trap fishermen extra time to pay for their tags and has allowed them to continue fishing with the few traps that weren't destroyed even if new tags have not been received as yet. There has also been cooperation in allowing the fishermen to pick up their traps from closed areas and sanctuaries, which helped. Many fisheries have been declared a disaster, there seems to be money within the government for help but it just sits in the banks in Washington waiting for some agency to take the lead and start helping those who need it.

SFA PAST PRESIDENT BOB GILL APPOINTED

Past President Bob Gill, Shrimp landings, Crystal River, has been appointed to the FWC Boating Advisory Council. Bob Gill will add a very experienced voice to this Council as they wrestle with maintaining Working Waterfronts in the coastal areas of

Florida. Access to water for both commercial and recreational fishermen is in the best interest of Florida for the marine enterprises add billions of dollars to the economic engine of Florida. Congrats Bob on the appointment and congrats for whoever made this fine choice.

WILD CATCH MAGAZINE LAUNCHED

Wild Catch magazine is a new magazine about wild caught seafood, here and abroad. The editor is Doug Sipes who has an extensive career in many facets of the fishing industry. It will explore the myths and misinformation sometimes transmitted to the consumers by special interest groups who's real goal might not be in the best interest of the seafood consumer. The magazine will feature new products and technology. It will be an educational tool consumers can read to learn the real story about wild catch. Bob Jones, Ex. Dir. Southeastern Fisheries Association, has been selected to serve on the editorial advisory board along with Jim Humphreys, Marine Stewardship Council, Ray Riutta, Executive Director Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute; Jennifer Hall, Executive Director Chef's Collaborative; Carl Rebstock, Executive Director Passionfish; Greg Atkinson, Consult-

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ant Northwest Essentials: Ewell Smith, Executive Director Louisiana Seafood Promotion & Marketing Board and Michael Boots, Director, Seafood Choices Alliance.

ARE YOUR HACCP PLANS UP TO DATE?

For many wholesale dealers who were certified for HACCP 2 or 3 years ago, many things have changed concerning the way records are to be kept for FDA and DACS. If you handle histamine type fish and don't have the latest HACCP Plan you could come under more scrutiny the next time you are inspected. There is more emphasis on sanitation, prevention of listeria and other pathogens in the normal operations of your facilities. All members should consider a refresher course and certifying more of your employees on the concept of HACCP. Please call the Tallahassee office for more information. 850/224-0612.

FWC FISHERIES SUMMIT SUCCESSFUL

The Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission held a Fisheries Summit in Orlando on November 1, 2005. Dr. Jerry Ault, University of Miami, gave the presentation for the scientific/environmental community, Ted Forsgren, CCA, gave the presentation for the recreational fishing industry and Bob



Jones, SFA, gave the presentation for the Florida seafood industry. FWC Chairman Herky Huffman attended the meeting as well as several law enforcement officers and fisheries staffers who operate the day-to-day

activities of the FWC. Attendees commented that the meeting was probably the most civil and best moderated meeting in many years. Kudos for FWC for finding a forum capable of getting all points of view on the table for further discussion. There should be more meetings using this protocol in order to move forward on several important but highly controversial action items.

MAGNUSON RE-AUTHORIZATION HEARING SCHEDULED

This revision is based upon review of member comments, nearly 700 sets of outside group comments on the bill, as well as information gathered in staff meetings and listening sessions with representatives from industry (harvesters, processors, and suppliers), environmental groups, sportsmen and recreational groups, regional councils, federal and state government, communities and the U.S. Ocean Commission. The bill will be heard Wednesday, November 16, 2005 at 10 a.m. in SD-562. The bill is 144 pages in length and is full of interesting changes.

FLORIDA CORPORATIONS THANKED FOR HELPING SHRIMPERS

Southeastern Fisheries Association sent letters to the editors of many Florida newspapers thanking them and Florida shrimp buyers for

Thank you!

continuing to support domestic harvesters. It is vital to protect America's ability to produce food, including seafood. There are interests who would like to see all domestic seafood harvesting stopped. Many opponents to the domestic harvester are

competitors who look at our fishermen as "something from out of the past whose days are gone." That is pure rubbish and such remarks reflect a hidden agenda 99% of the time. SFA particularly salutes Publix Supermarkets for their continued support of domestically harvested seafood, especially our shrimp products.

FORT MYERS FEDERAL DISTRICT JUDGE RULES AGAINST NMFS

The National Marine Fisheries Service published a rule closing recreational fishing for ALL groupers during November and December of 2005. Angler groups filed a lawsuit alleging NMFS was arbitrary and capricious to close fishing to anglers for the two months in questions as the data used to base the closure on was flawed. The anglers wanted all grouper fishing reopened. The Judge ruled in favor of the anglers' concerning all grouper species except red grouper. Anglers can still catch gag and other shallow water grouper but they cannot keep ANY red grouper until January 1, 2006. The Federal Decision was very interesting and an argument could be made that the commercial fishermen should also be allowed to catch gag and other species. With this ruling there should be ZERO Gulf of Mexico red grouper offered for sale until January 1, 2006 so if you see anyone selling or buying red grouper, please contact the nearest FWC officer and provide them with the details of this poaching.

SHERATON BEACH RESORT KEY LARGO SITE OF 2006 SFA CONVENTION

Mark your calendars for June 7th-10th, 2006, for a trip to the fabulous Florida Keys.

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The last time SFA met in the Keys there was a great turnout and hopefully this will be the pattern for the future. President Tom Hill, Director Gary Graves, and all the south Florida members promise a trip to remember. This is a great location and a good time of the year to take care of business and have lots of fun while doing our work. Fishing trips and a seafood banquet better than any in the past is promised. Items on the agenda include:

- ◆ Amending Florida Wholesale Seafood Dealers license to tighten down on requirements,
- ◆ an official SFA position on the use of carbon monoxide on seafood products,
- ◆ co-meeting with other groups to develop a fisheries disaster plan of action,
- ◆ reports on all aspects of fisheries management in the region.

Please mark the dates on your calendar and make plans to be there.

SEAFOOD RESTAURANT ALLIANCE PROGRESS

Over 85 Florida seafood restaurants have signed the Petition to our Congressmen asking their support in protecting and improving their ability to purchase domestically harvested seafood. In the past very little attention was given the seafood restaurants need to furnish fresh caught seafood to their customers. Many governmental fishery managers are not aware of the size of the seafood restaurant constituency nor are they aware how important

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having fresh fish on the menu is to the welfare of these businesses All anyone has to do is visit their local seafood restaurant and see if they serve domestic seafood. Except for some major restaurant chains that purchase 99% imported products, most family owned restaurants tout the fact they serve fresh Florida seafood. Some of the major seafood restaurant chains could be a great help in preserving the domestic shrimp industry but that doesn't seem to be part of the corporate thinking at this point in time.

The Seafood Restaurant Alliance is certainly not opposed to imported fishery products for they would not be able to operate without using many high quality items on their menu. Most imported seafood products come under HACCP and other inspection guidelines and only a handful of countries use chemicals such as chloramphenical as a way to take a shortcut instead of implementing good sanitation practices. Serving domestic fishery products, as part of the menu is vital to the well being of many independent restaurants.

SFA invites all independent seafood restaurants to become part of the SRA and join the efforts to keep domestic seafood available to non-boaters and others who depend on the restaurants and retail markets for their portion of seafood.

HIGH PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS HURT FISH BUSINESSES

In many parts of Florida and the region, property assessments that are based on what the fish house property could be used for as opposed to what it is used for is financially draining income of many shoreside facilities. The exceptionally high increase in assessment translated into property taxes is reaching the confiscatory stage for some dealers. Fish houses that unload vessels must be on the water but by being there they can be assessed the same as condo's unless the county has some kind of zoning ordinance to prevent such assessment. If there is going to be a program to save working waterfronts, then this aspect of ever increasing taxes has to be addressed.

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!

A Reminder

All members who are behind on their dues are encouraged to please bring your account up-to-date as soon as possible!



**HAPPY THANKSGIVING
TO ALL FROM SFA**

UPGRADE YOUR SFA MEMBERSHIP



Retail and HACCP

members are urged to upgrade their membership in SFA to either to **Associate** members status but preferably to **Corporate** member status. It only takes *four monthly payments* of \$200 each to upgrade. Thanks for helping.

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