



NFWF

HOTSPOTS MAPPING INITIATIVE

Gulf Coast Shrimp Fishery

MARCH 4-5, 2024 WORKSHOP



MARCH 2024 WORKSHOP SUMMARY

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Hotspots Mapping Initiative team met with a diverse group of Gulf coast shrimp fishery industry and science representatives in Baton Rouge, LA in early March 2024. The workshop concluded with recommendations on how the industry can initiate low-tech and low- to no-cost communications networks led by captains and supported by initiative partners.

NFWF HOTSPOTS MAPPING INITIATIVE PURPOSE

Our goal is to support fishers in establishing communications networks to improve catch and reduce unwanted catch. We're reaching out to a wide array of fishing communities in and around the Gulf coast to help them develop voluntary plans for their own fisheries.

The initiative is non-regulatory and designed to be useful to participants, and improve their bottom line.

There is funding available to support the initiative so participating should be at no extra cost of doing day-to-day business.

Partners heard from the industry that there are existing, informal networks already in practice among some shrimp fishers.

This is an opportunity to formalize them and show that the industry continues to be actively engaged in supporting protected species conservation and restoration.

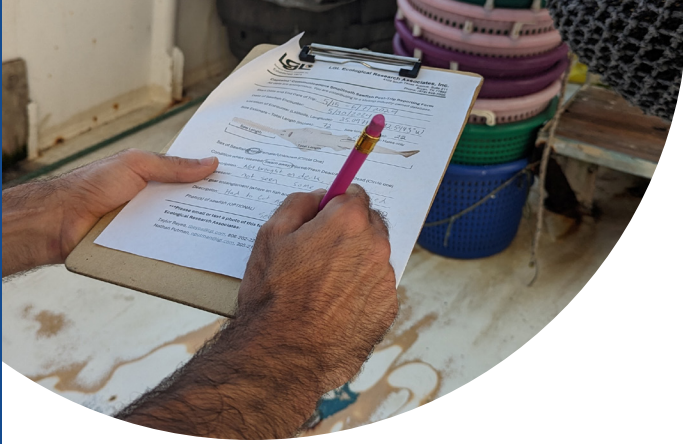
CRITICAL BYCATCH ISSUES IN THE SHRIMP FISHERY

New information on population sizes and bycatch estimates of Smalltooth Sawfish and Giant Manta Rays has raised concerns about impacts of shrimping on these two species protected under the Endangered Species Act. This triggered a revision of NOAA's Shrisemp Biological Opinion, which sets allowable take limits for protected species. Proactive efforts to gather information on and reduce interactions and mortalities of these species will directly benefit the shrimping industry by minimizing the need for greater regulatory oversight.

HOW YOU CAN VOLUNTEER: CAPTAINS' COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

These Captains' Communication Networks are a voluntary, industry-led initiative to gather and share information among shrimpers on protected species interactions. Gathering the facts for your industry will help make your voice more impactful in management discussions. [Contact us to participate!](#)

nfwf.org/programs/bycatch-hotspots-initiative



POST-TRIP RECORDING NETWORK FOR SMALLTOOTH SAWFISH

Shrimping captains and boat owners can contribute to a confidential, industry-owned data repository by filling out an anonymous one-page form on interactions that occur with Smalltooth Sawfish while shrimping.

1. Sign up to participate in the Sawfish Captains' Communication Recording Network.
2. Receive one-page form to fill out on the boat or at the docks.
3. Text or email a picture of the completed form after each trip to LGL Ecological Research Associates to be anonymized and compiled for industry use.

REAL-TIME TEXTING NETWORK FOR GIANT MANTA RAYS

Shrimping captains can send and receive alerts in real-time from a group text about where schools and individual Giant Manta Rays are on the water and use that information in deciding where to shrimp.

1. Sign up for the Giant Manta Ray Captains' Communication phone texting service by sending us your phone number to add to the group list. Instructions to use the service will be sent later.
2. Receive real-time alerts from fellow shrimpers when they see or interact with Giant Manta Rays, so you can know where catching one is more likely.
3. Alert data will be anonymized and compiled by LGL Ecological Research Associates for industry use.

“Getting the facts for ourselves has always helped our industry, and this Captains' Communication Network will help us going forward.”

Bobby Nguyen
Shrimp Industry Member

TO SIGN-UP, OR FOR MORE DETAILS, PROVIDE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION TO:

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ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCE LINKS:

NFWF Bycatch Hotspots Initiative:
nfwf.org/programs/bycatch-hotspots-initiative

Smalltooth Sawfish NOAA Overview:
fisheries.noaa.gov/species/smalltooth-sawfish/overview
Safe Handling Procedures: [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Vietnamese](#)

Giant Manta Ray NOAA Overview:
fisheries.noaa.gov/species/giant-manta-ray
Safe Handling Procedures: [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Vietnamese](#)

NOAA Fisheries Shrimp Advisory Panel Presentations on Shrimping Interactions:

OCTOBER 2023 [Giant Manta Ray and Smalltooth Sawfish Biological Opinion](#)

MARCH 2024 [Smalltooth Sawfish Population Viability Analysis](#)

