



June 1, 2007  
(MASGP-07-001-06)

#### LICENSE REMINDER

Recreational fishermen are reminded that your current Mississippi recreational fishing licenses (both salt and fresh water) expire on June 30, 2007. The licenses are widely available from area bait shops, sporting goods dealers and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. They can also be purchased on-line from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks web page <http://www.mdwfp.com>. Just go to the home page and click on "license" in the left-hand column. Mississippi coastal anglers are reminded that the \$5.85 salt water license is valid for waters south of Interstate 10 and required for waters south of the CSX railroad tracks. North of Interstate 10, you must have the \$8.00 fresh water license. A combination license is also available. A new law passed by the Mississippi legislature stipulates that these licenses are valid one year from the date of purchase. For example, a license purchased on October 1<sup>st</sup> would be good through September 30<sup>th</sup> the following year.

#### ABOVE AVERAGE HURRICANE SEASON PREDICTED

Experts at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center are projecting a 75 percent chance that the Atlantic Hurricane Season will be above normal this year. For the 2007 Atlantic hurricane season, NOAA scientists predict 13 to 17 named storms, with seven to 10 becoming hurricanes, of which three to five could become major hurricanes of Category 3 strength or higher. An average Atlantic hurricane season brings 11 named storms, with six becoming hurricanes, including two major hurricanes. The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30, with peak activity occurring August through October.

Climate patterns responsible for the expected above normal 2007 hurricane activity are warmer-than-normal sea surface temperatures in the Atlantic Ocean and the El Niño/La Niña cycle. NOAA's Climate Prediction Center will issue an updated seasonal forecast in August just prior to the historical peak of the season. Last year, seasonal hurricane predictions proved to be too high when an unexpected El Niño rapidly developed and created a hostile environment for Atlantic storms to form and strengthen. When storms did develop, steering currents kept most of them over the open water and away from land.

#### NEW LEGISLATION PROPOSED FOR CORAL REEF PROTECTION

On May 8, 2007, the Bush Administration delivered proposed legislation to Congress calling for greater protection for the nation's coral reefs. The bill, the Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Amendment Act of 2007, reauthorizes the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 and adds greater protections for coral reefs while enhancing marine debris removal and increasing the government's ability to work through cooperative partnerships. In order to address threats that have continued to increase since the original legislation was passed in 2000, this bill explicitly focuses implementation and management on better understanding issues associated with climate change such as coral disease and bleaching. The proposal will also mandate the establishment of consistent guidelines for maintaining environmental data, products and information allowing for more effective management approaches.

Corals reefs, a critical part of the ocean's ecosystem, teem with fish, lobsters, sponges, sea turtles and thousands of other creatures that rely on them for their survival. Coral reefs also are important to the economy, providing millions of people around the globe with food, coastal storm protection and jobs. Nearly a quarter of the world's reefs are under imminent risk of collapse from human pressures and a fifth have already been effectively destroyed and show no immediate prospects for recovery. Major causes of reef decline are land-based pollution, disease, habitat destruction, over fishing, climate change, vessel groundings, and coastal development.

Seeking to address vessel impacts to reefs, the legislation establishes a new emergency response account to fund emergency response, stabilization, and restoration following incidents that injure coral reefs. The bill also makes it unlawful to destroy or injure any coral reef and allows the government to recover response and restoration costs from responsible parties. It provides for the removal of abandoned fishing gear, marine debris, and abandoned vessels from coral reef ecosystems in

federal waters and allows for assistance to states for removal of marine debris. The proposed legislation would for the first time establish a damage recovery process for the coral reefs in National Wildlife Refuges, and increase the effectiveness of the current authorities for recovering damages to reefs in National Parks and National Marine Sanctuaries. It also provides statutory authorization for Department of the Interior coral conservation activities, which are now conducted under general conservation authorities that do not mention coral reefs.

#### LOUISIANA SAMPLES WILD CRAWFISH FROM ATCHAFALAYA BASIN

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries personnel collected samples of wild crawfish from consenting crawfishermen at various locations in the Atchafalaya Basin on May 15, 2007 to assess the presence of white spot syndrome virus (WSSV) in these populations. The samples will be delivered to the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine for analysis.

These samples were taken to determine if the virus is present in wild populations following the discovery of WSSV in a crawfish pond in St. Martin Parish. The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry along with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the LSU School of Veterinary Science are the lead agencies that will be working to further investigate and control the spread of WSSV in managed pond populations.

Crawfish with the WSSV pose no health risk to humans when consumed, but is a serious threat to the crawfish resource. Shrimp with the disease exhibit prominent blotching and spotting; however, crawfish do not. The only clinical signs seen in crawfish are lethargy, weak behavior and high mortality. The LSU AgCenter will continue to develop Best Management Practices for crawfish growers to address and prevent the spread of the disease. For more information, contact Charlie Dugas at 225-765-2332 or [cdugas@wlf.louisiana.gov](mailto:cdugas@wlf.louisiana.gov).

#### BOAT AND WATER SAFETY CLASSES IN JUNE

Many more people are out boating on Mississippi's coastal waters. With more than 300,000 boats registered in Mississippi, and about 25 percent of those operating in coastal waters, it's important to know the rules of the waterways. The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Boat and Water Safety classes are free and open to all ages. The DMR Marine Patrol-sponsored courses have been designed to effectively introduce topics such as boat registration, navigation rules, trailering, first aid response and weather watch into a comprehensive one-day class.

Since the inception of the DMR's Boat and Water Safety program in March 2000, the Marine Patrol Officers of the DMR have taught over 300 courses and have certified over 3,000 students in Boating Safety. These programs and certification courses are conducted in the three coastal counties year-round for the public and in the school systems. In the DMR's Boat and Water Safety presentation program, students learn the history of boat and water safety, the duties of the DMR's Marine Patrol, what to expect in the certification course and why there is a need for it. Topics covered include registration, safety equipment, negligent operation, who has the right of way, boating accidents, no wake zones, weather and navigational aids.

Here are the dates and locations for courses scheduled in June. All run from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.. To register call the Marine Patrol Dispatch at (228) 523-4134.

Bolton State Office Building Room 205  
1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, MS

Saturday, June 16, 2007  
Saturday, June 30, 2007

Mississippi Power Company Auditorium  
300 Highway 90, Bay St. Louis, MS

Saturday, June 9, 2007

Mississippi Power Company Auditorium  
2326 Telephone Road, Pascagoula, MS

Saturday, June 23, 2007

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This information was compiled by Dave Burrage, Peter Nguyen and Benedict Posadas. For more information, contact our office at 1815 Popp's Ferry Road, Biloxi, MS 39532 or telephone (228) 388-4710.

Sincerely,



Dave Burrage  
Extension Professor  
MSU Coastal Research and  
Extension Center