

Charles H. Bronson
Commissioner of
Agriculture

Florida Department of
Agriculture and
Consumer Services

Florida Aquaculture

[Donate to the Hurricane Charley
Relief Effort](#)

Florida Volunteer Foundation
Hurricane Charley Relief Effort
1-800-FL-HELP-1 (1-800-354-3571)
<http://www.MyFlorida.com>

Highlights:

- 100+ mph winds and waves decimate hard clam farmers in Lee and Charlotte Counties.
- Power outages kill and stress tropical and bait fish in widely distributed farms.
- Damage to Florida aquaculture may not be measurable for several weeks.

Inside this issue:

- Aqua. WQ/
Weather Stations
Survive Charley **2**
- Consumer Services
offers Consumer
and Business Assist. **2**
- Important USDA
NAP Insurance
Reminders **3**
- Alligator Harbor
Aqua. Signage In-
stalled **3**

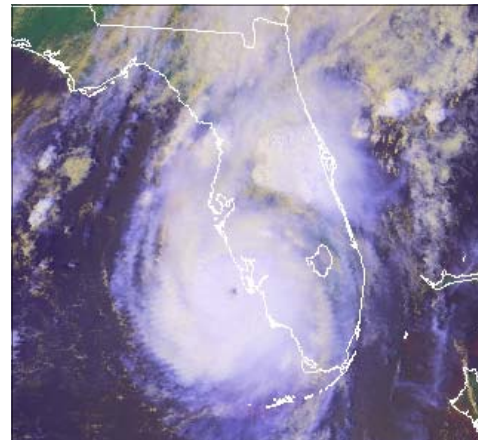
August 2004, Issue No. 34

Division of Aquaculture

Hurricane Charley Hammers Clam and Fish Farms

Hurricane Charley, packing 145 mile per hour winds in its northeast quarter, came ashore on Friday, August 13th, and traveled through North Captiva Island, the small town of Bokeelia at the tip of Pine Island, Punta Gorda, Port Charlotte, and then followed the Peace River on through Arcadia to cross the state and exit via Daytona Beach. Wind damage was extreme to homes and businesses in a narrow swath of destruction.

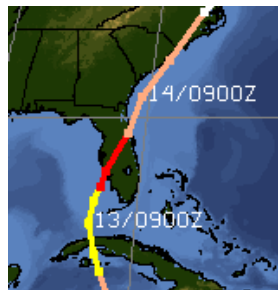
eight to 10 feet high. The mangrove debris, tons of leaves and branches, smothered planted clams. Addi-



reach the lease areas and find, clean and replant clams and cover netting has been hampered by difficulty in acquiring gasoline and navigating waterways filled with structural debris.

Weather and water quality data collection units maintained by the Division survived the storm and recorded wind speeds of 119 mph and 107 mph at Charlotte Harbor and Pine Island Sound, respectively (see page two for more information).

Three Aquaculture Use Zones and two private aquaculture leases in Charlotte Harbor and Pine Island Sound that are worked by 54 farmers, encompass 265 acres, and were planted with an estimated 30 million hard clams were severely damaged. Dan Leonard, a hard clam farmer with a lease in Bull Bay outside the Charlotte Harbor Aquaculture Use Zone, reported extensive mangrove destruction. Leaves and branches were sheared off by the storm leaving standing tree trunks



tional lethal effects included extensive wind and wave scouring that flipped clam bags and redistributed sediments to smother clams not covered by woody debris and an influx of freshwater that reduced salinity to 20 ppt.

Pine Island Sound clam farmers reported a five to six foot tidal surge and huge inshore waves that flipped clam bags, ripped up cover nets that protect growing clams from predacious crabs and fish, and the smothering effects of redistributed bottom sediments and mangrove debris. Efforts to

Tropical fish farms in Hillsborough and Polk Counties reported little to no damage. Fish farms, ornamental and bait, located along the storm path (Charlotte, Desoto, east Polk, Hardee, and Osceola Counties) reported extensive structural damage. Farms lost small buildings, trailers, and roofs. The prolonged loss of power shutdown aeration, and combined with summer temperatures, killed or stressed fish in production. Stressed fish will suffer higher than normal mortality that will be observed over the next several weeks.

Charlotte Harbor/Pine Island WQ and Weather Equipment Survives Hurricane Charley

Hurricane Charley peak winds occurred at the Pine Island Sound station at 3:00 PM with 107 mph and at the Charlotte Harbor station at 4:30 PM with 119 mph.

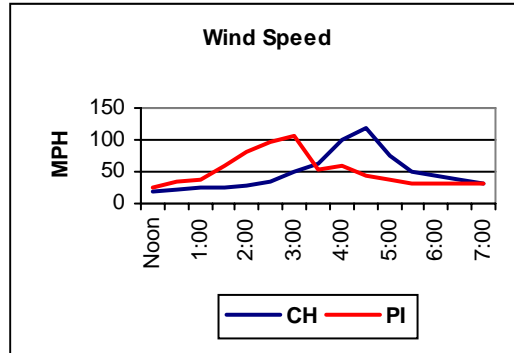
Two water quality and weather recording stations installed and maintained by the Division since the summer of 2002 continued to partially function during Hurricane Charley.

The equipment, located in Charlotte Harbor (CH) and Pine Island Sound (PI), recorded wind speed information as Charley passed. Wind direction and certain water quality data functions stopped prior to the storm or during the storm.

The CH station is located approximately four miles northwest of Charley's path and the PI station is located roughly nine miles south of the track. Peak winds occurred at the Pine Island Sound station at 3:00 PM with 107 mph and at Charlotte Harbor at 4:30 PM with 119 mph.

Wind speed picked up quickly over a two hour period for both stations. The CH station recorded wind speeds between 9 mph and 40

The PI station recorded wind speeds between 8.5 mph and 43 mph between 1:00 AM and noon with an average speed of 21 mph for the



morning. At noon the speed was 24.6 mph and at each 30 minute interval thereafter was: 33.4, 38.7, 59.1, 80.4, 98, 107.4, 52.3, 58.9, 43.6, and 37.3 mph at 5:00 PM.

mph between 1: 00 AM and noon with an 18 mph average speed for the morning. At noon the CH speed was 18.5 mph and began increasing at roughly 3 mph at each 30 minute reading until 3:00 PM when the speed was recorded at 48.93 mph. At 30 minutes thereafter the speed was recorded at 63.6, 99.7, 119.4, 75, 50.01, and 43.74 mph at 6:00 PM.

A clam farmer that passed by the CH station on Monday, August 16, reported the wind cups to be turning but the directional arrow missing as well as the lightning protector.

Weather data recorded by the stations may not be accurate due to normal wear-and-tear and higher wind speeds that may have occurred between readings.

Consumer Services Empowers Florida Citizens and Businesses

The Division of Consumer Services serves to protect, inform, and empower Florida's consumers and businesses, while promoting a positive business environment in Florida.



During the hurricane emergency declaration, the Division is handling price gouging com-

plaints. If you feel that you have been charged an exorbitant or excessive price for goods or services, please contact the Division immediately.

The Division is Florida's clearinghouse for consumer complaints. They assist consumers with information, protection and complaints, regardless of whether they directly regulate an industry.

Consumer Assistance Specialists make every possible

effort to assist consumers by directing them to appropriate federal, state or county agencies and to help consumers resolve disputes; however, the Division does not have the authority to offer legal advice.

Use a toll-free Florida only hotline, 1-800-HELP-FLA or 1-800-FL-AYUDA for Spanish speaking consumers.

Consumer information is available, and complaints can be filed on-line, at <http://www.800helpfla.com>.

USDA-NAP Reminders by Leslie Sturmer, UF Aquaculture Shellfish Extension

For most aquatic producers, the only financial assistance available to them in the event of a catastrophic crop loss is the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). This program, administered through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), covers crop losses associated with damaging weather (drought, freeze, excessive wind, and hurricanes), or natural occurrence (e.g., flood).

The NAP program underwent major revisions in 2000. Today, loss benefits are based on individual producers as opposed to area designations. Also there are application deadlines to sign-up for crop coverage. **For 2005 aquaculturists must apply for coverage at their county FSA office by September 1 in North and South Florida and by**

November 30 in Central Florida. The service fee per crop per county is \$100. Crop acreage information must also be reported annually. Uninsured farmers should set aside time to sign-up for the 2005 NAP program.

Producers must report crop losses within 15 calendar days of the natural disaster or the date damage to the crop becomes apparent to the producer. The FSA office in Ft. Myers has been affected by hurricane damage, but staff are anticipating reopening the office by late August. Since the deadline for 2005 coverage is approaching, clam growers in Southwest Florida who have previous NAP coverage can automatically rollover their policy by mailing their service fee to the county office.

Clam growers in Brevard, Dixie, Indian River and Levy Counties are among the first aquaculturists to be eligible for federally subsidized crop insurance. This pilot program, administered by the USDA Risk Management Agency, is undergoing its fifth year of evaluation. However, neither land-based nursery nor field nursery clam seed are covered under the pilot program. These crops are then eligible for catastrophic risk protection through the NAP program.

For more information, contact a local FSA office. To find out where the nearest office is located, go to the FSA website, www.fas.usda.gov/pas/ and click on "Offices" in the left-hand menu.

NAP Claim Reminder

Producers must report crop losses within 15 calendar days of the natural disaster or the date damage to the crop becomes apparent to the producer.

Clam Farming Signs Installed at Alligator Harbor

The Commissioner of Agriculture asked the Division of Aquaculture to design and install hard clam aquaculture educational signs on the shores of Alligator Harbor. At a later date, the Department of Environmental Protection will add a panel that describes the importance of the aquatic preserve program.

The aquaculture signage recognizes the contributions of Franklin County Board of County Commissioners, Florida Representative Will Kendrick, Florida Senator Al Lawson, and the Governor and Cabinet to establish the

Alligator Harbor Aquaculture Use Zone in 2002.

A second sign provides a brief overview of hard clam farming in the Big Bend region emphasizing the positive economic impact generated by shellfish farming to rural, coastal communities; the delicious and healthful qualities of hard clams; the importance of clean water to hard clam farming; and the contribution of the Florida Sea Grant Program. Recreational boaters are



also advised to respect working clam farmers, lease boundary markers, and the vulnerability of planted clams to anchoring and fishing.

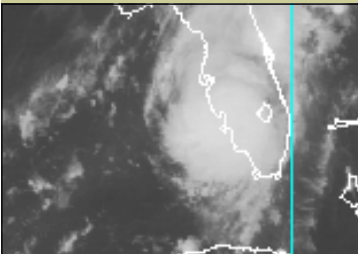
For additional information, please contact Sherman Wilhelm at 850-488-4033

Deadline for the 2005 NAP is September 1 in North and South Florida and November 30 in Central Florida. The service fee per crop per county is \$100. Crop acreage information must also be reported.

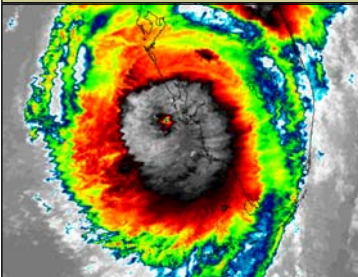
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We're on the Web!
www.FloridaAquaculture.com



Charley over Charlotte Harbor
on August 13th at 4:15 PM.



Charley near Sanibel Island as

The Division of Aquaculture's responsibilities include certifying all legitimate aquaculturists through an annual registration, implementing on-farm Aquaculture Best Management Practices to meet the State of Florida's environmental goals, managing 1.4 million acres of coastal waters for the harvest or culture of wholesome shellfish, implementing the National Shellfish Sanitation Program through periodic inspection of shellfish processing plants and product, and managing submerged sovereign land leases for aquacultural purposes.



Additional information about Florida aquaculture or Division programs can be obtained from the following offices.

Apalachicola Shellfish Center:	850-653-8317
Bartow Field Office:	863-519-8459
Cedar Key Field Lab:	352-543-5181
Murdock Field Lab: (no local phone service)	850-488-4033
Palm Bay Field Lab:	321-984-4890
Panama City Field Lab:	850-236-2200
Tallahassee Office:	850-488-4033 or 488-5471

*Benefiting Commercial Aquaculture,
Protecting Natural Resources*

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