

# FLORIDA AQUACULTURE

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## USFWS RECOGNIZES FLORIDA BMPs FOR BELUGA STURGEON

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recognized the effectiveness of the Florida Aquaculture Best Management Practices (BMP) program by providing a special rule exemption under the Endangered Species Act for U.S. farmed-raised beluga sturgeon sold as meat or caviar.

On October 21, 2004, the beluga sturgeon, *Huso huso*, was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. That listing prohibits all trade in beluga sturgeon, except as provided in a special rule.

On March 4, 2004, a special rule became effective under Section 4(d) of the Act. Without this special rule, all commercial trade in beluga caviar and meat, unless authorized with a threatened species permits and appropriate CITES documentation, would be prohibited.

Facilities in the U.S., like those in Florida, wishing to obtain such an exemption, must submit a written request to the USFWS-Division of Management Authority, Branch of Permits--International and provide to the USFWS-Division of Scientific Authority, at a minimum, the following information:

- (i) The facility is using BMPs to prevent the escape of beluga sturgeon and disease pathogens, as certified by the relevant regulatory agency. In the case of the U.S., the relevant regulatory authority will be the state agency with jurisdiction over aquaculture.
- (ii) The facility has entered into a formal agreement with one or more native range countries to study, protect, or otherwise enhance the survival of wild beluga sturgeon.

(iii) The facility does not rely on wild beluga sturgeon for broodstock.

(iv) Exemptions granted under this paragraph shall not apply to trade (import, export, re-export, or interstate and foreign commerce) in live beluga sturgeon, and may be revoked at any time if the USFWS determines that any of the criteria shown in paragraphs (i) through (iii) of this section are not met.

The USFWS will publish an information notice if it grants a programmatic exemption to any aquaculture facility, and announce such actions through the USFWS's website and posting notices at its wildlife ports of entry.

For additional information, contact Mark Berrigan, 850-488-4033, [ber-rigm@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:ber-rigm@doacs.state.fl.us) or visit <http://www.fws.gov/international/>.

### Special points of interest

- Shellfish farmers please complete your annual audits
- Submerged land and water column fees may increase in 2007.
- Shellfish processing plant food safety workshops to be held in April and May.

## FEES FOR AQUACULTURE LEASES TO CHANGE

On February 1, 2005 the Governor and Cabinet, sitting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, approved adding new language to sovereignty submerged land leases.

This new language must be inserted into new leases, transferred leases and renewed leases.

The new language reads: Lessee understands that from time to time the lease fee will be increased by the Lessor, and the Lessee agrees to pay the increased lease fee, as adopted by the Board of Trustees.

The Board's action took effect immediately. Initiation of this action was prompted by the Trustees not wanting the lease program to run a budget deficit.

The Board of Trustees directed staff to review and evaluate the fee structure for aquaculture leases in other states as well as leases issued by the Department of Environmental Protection. A review showed that states charge anywhere from \$500 per acre in Maine to \$1.50 per

acre in Virginia. Florida's marina fees range from \$3,900 to \$11,400 per acre and upland agricultural leases range from \$9.05 per acre for an old grazing lease to \$3,630 per acre for new crop land.

After a thorough review of the information gathered, the Board determined that current aquaculture lease fees and surcharges did not produce sufficient funds to pay for the aquaculture leasing program and, as there is only one staff person in the lease program, additional cuts were not possible.

The Board then requested a fee amount that would cover program costs. The Division of Aquaculture calculated fee amounts to be \$35 per acre for bottom leases and \$70 per acre for water column leases to provide the revenues needed to meet anticipated costs. The Board subsequently requested staff to increase the per acre fee to \$35 for bottom leases and \$70 for water column leases.

Commissioner of Agriculture, Charles Bronson, recommended that the new fees not be considered until 2007, because clam farming businesses had sustained substantial damage from the passage of the 2004 hurricanes. He argued that there needed to be time for farmers to get back into business before any lease fee increase could be considered. Commissioner Bronson added that any increase in lease fees at this time would place an additional financial burden on clam farmers and would slow the recovery of clam farming statewide.

Based on Commissioner Bronson's request, and the desire of the Board for the lease program to pay for itself, the Board directed staff to modify the lease documents and to increase the lease fee amount in 2007 unless otherwise directed by the Board.

It is currently anticipated that the new fees will appear on invoices beginning in 2007. Please direct questions to Mark Berrigan, 850-488-4033 or [berrigm@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:berrigm@doacs.state.fl.us).



## FOOD SAFETY WORKSHOPS PLANNED FOR APRIL AND MAY

The Division of Aquaculture is planning a series of five training workshops for Shellfish Processors to be held at various locations throughout Florida during the months of April and May, 2005.

These workshops will include a review of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), key sanita-

tion items, Good Manufacturing Practices, and HACCP records requirements and maintenance. The target audience will be supervisors/managers responsible for HACCP record keeping and review, and personnel assigned HACCP coordinator duties in Shellfish Processing Facilities.

Training will be conducted by Dan Cavins and Ernest 'Buddy' Levins. Turn to page four for dates, times and locations.

Contact Buddy Levins for additional information at 850-488-5471 or [levinsb@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:levinsb@doacs.state.fl.us).

# GOING BEHIND THE SCENES: SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT

Shellfish harvest (clams, oysters and mussels) is an important component of aquaculture in the state of Florida. The Division of Aquaculture monitors the quality of the water that shellfish live in by establishing management plans for Shellfish Harvest Areas (SHAs). These plans prescribe environmental sampling of 1,490,000 acres of state waters within 37 SHAs on a routine basis to insure that the shellfish sold by Florida producers is free of marine toxins and disease causing bacteria and viruses.

How does the Division manage the SHAs? It is an exhaustive effort that requires continuous data collection and analysis.

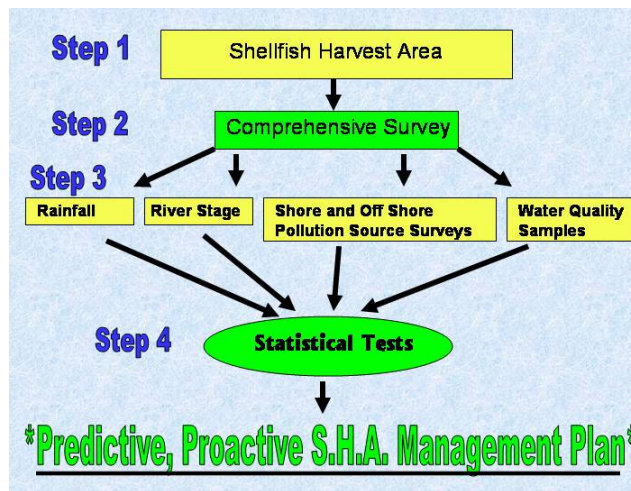
Every 12 years the Shellfish Environmental Assessment Section (SEAS) completes a comprehensive survey for each harvest area, looking for sources of fecal coliforms, pathogenic organisms, poisonous substances and marine biotoxins. At this moment, SEAS staff are busy editing new surveys that are due in September. Next, rainfall is examined on a daily basis using gauge stations throughout the drainage basin. River stage or dis-

charge are likewise recorded daily. Shoreline surveys are conducted, looking at soil suitability for domestic waste disposal systems. Fishing and hunting camps, silviculture, agriculture, domestic animal farms, wildlife populations, boat traffic, marinas, septic systems, canal sys-

allows the accurate, predictive closing of shellfish harvesting waters before any pollution reaches our bays. If rainfall amount and/or river stage/discharge exceed a SHA's management plan, the area is closed. Staff resample as quickly as possible and reopen the area on good sample results. There is a delay of a few days as the samples must generally be delivered by overnight courier, processed by the staff at the lab, and enumerated after a 24-hour incubation.

Future articles will describe day-to-day SEAS operations, such as how they continue to collect water quality, rainfall and river stage/discharge data, reevaluate management plans every three years and annually review data. And we will provide an in-depth look at the Shellfish Laboratory's busy work day, processing thousands of samples in test tubes and performing quality checks.

For additional information, contact Chris Brooks, 850-488-5471 or [brooksc@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:brooksc@doacs.state.fl.us).



tems and waste water treatment plants are examined and enumerated.

After gathering water samples from multiple sampling stations on numerous excursions, SEAS staff analyze the massive data file using statistics. The goal of this effort is to find a relationship between fecal coliform densities and rainfall and/or river stage/discharge. This

## A REMINDER: COMPLETE YOUR LEASE AUDIT

The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is currently performing its annual audit of all aquaculture leases which have been in effect for one year or more.

Annual audits provide the Department with production-based information and are used to determine compliance with the terms and con-

ditions of the lease agreement. The request for this information is in conformity with the provision in the lease, which states "Lessee shall maintain complete and accurate production documents and provide same to Lessor upon request."

If you have not returned your audit, it is important that you do so

promptly in order to be in compliance with your lease agreement.

If you have not received your audit, or need another copy, please contact Anne Cerwin at the Division of Aquaculture by calling 850-488-5471 or [cerwinp@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:cerwinp@doacs.state.fl.us).

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COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE**

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*Benefiting commercial aquaculture,  
Conserving natural resources*



*Visit our web site,  
[www.FloridaAquaculture.com](http://www.FloridaAquaculture.com),  
for aquaculture, shellfish, and Division  
program information*

## Shellfish Processing Food Safety Workshops

<u>Date/Times</u>	<u>Locations</u>
April 12, 2005 6:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.	City Hall, Panama City 9 Harrison Avenue Panama City, Florida
April 13, 2005 6:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.	Apalachicola Nat'l Estuarine Reserve Apalachicola, Florida
April 18, 2005 6:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.	George G. Kirkpatrick Marine Lab 11350 SW 153 <sup>rd</sup> CT Cedar Key, Florida
April 19, 2005 6:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.	Brevard County Agriculture Center 3695 Lake Drive Cocoa, Florida
May 4, 2005 4:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.	Pine Island Public Library 10700 Russell Road Bokeelia, Florida

Shellfish processing plant supervisors and managers responsible for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) record keeping and review, and personnel assigned HACCP coordinator duties in Shellfish Processing Facilities are invited and encouraged to attend. Topics will include a review of HACCP, key sanitation items, Good Manufacturing Practices, and HACCP records requirements and maintenance.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE AND  
CONSUMER SERVICES

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