



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES



News Release

Contacts: Robbie Wilbur, MDEQ, 601-421-5699
Lauren Thompson, DMR, 228-219-5226

August 6, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MDMR and MDEQ Reopen All Mississippi Territorial Waters to Commercial and Recreational Finfish and Shrimp Fishing

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), in coordination with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), have ordered the **reopening of all Mississippi territorial waters, including those south of the barrier islands, to all commercial and recreational finfish and shrimp fishing activities** that were part of the precautionary oil spill closures. This order takes effect at 5:00 p.m. today. **All commercial and recreational crab and oyster fishing will remain closed in the affected areas.**

The reopening is being implemented after the completion of extensive sampling and testing conducted by the MDMR, MDEQ, NOAA and the FDA. The FDA has advised that, following extensive sensory testing and chemical analysis, tissue samples tested indicate that seafood from these previously closed areas north of the barrier islands remains safe for consumption.

Due to a more complex testing process for crab and oyster, these fisheries will remain prohibited in the closed areas. Crab and oyster tissue samples are currently being tested, and as soon as data indicates they are safe for consumption, additional areas will be opened for these fisheries.

All waters north of the barrier islands that are normally open to shrimping will be open. However, MDMR reminds shrimp fishermen who use skimmer trawls that a 30-minute tow time is in effect, unless they have a properly installed turtle excluder device.

All other regulations specific to each particular fishery will remain in full force and effect. Anglers are asked to avoid disturbing boom and oil spill-related activities.

More information and links about MDEQ's and MDMR's roles in oil spill response are available at www.deq.state.ms.us/oilspill and www.dmr.state.ms.us/DMR/oil-spill.htm. Water sampling information available at: <http://opcgis.deq.state.ms.us/oilspillmap> and air monitoring data at: <http://gulfcoast.airnowtech.org>.

Join MDEQ on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/MDEQ/118172664880239?v=wall>. Follow MDEQ on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/MDEQ>.

—MORE—

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality safeguards the health, safety, and welfare of Mississippians by conserving and improving our environment and wise economic growth through focused research and responsible regulation.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.

Map shows areas of Mississippi territorial waters that reopen at 5 p.m. Aug. 6 to finfish and shrimp fishing activities. Waters north of the barrier islands were reopened July 30 to those activities.

—END—