

Key West hold up, the independent owner will not concern himself with snapper fishing except on a casual basis.

On the East Coast the fishermen have barely scratched the surface of the marine resources, although some species have been fished almost to extinction. On any good fishing day when a hundred miles of coastline has two hundred boats at sea, hardly a boat can be found more than 5 miles off-shore. The boats plow up the narrow strip along the beach and ignore the off-shore waters. No one knows what schools of menhaden, herring, tuna and other pelagic species may exist there. Ten miles off shore the shrimp could be lying in solid beds and would never be encountered except by accident.

The independent boat owner who can keep his boat and crew busy all year round will enjoy the greatest advantage. A menhaden boat which can also engage in the off-shore shrimp fishery should be profitable.

We plan to fish our vessel *Barbet* this winter on the Gulf shrimp. With a weeks time required for the change-over, we feel we can profitably operate for three or four months when we would otherwise be idle.

To sum up the status of the independent boat owner, his continued survival depends largely upon the discovery of new grounds and fish populations, the improvement of menhaden fishing methods and the exploration of our fishing waters as far as the hundred-fathom curve. This can only feasibly be accomplished by the Fish and Wildlife Service with the cooperation of the fishing industry.

The Outlook For Continued Shrimp Production In Louisiana

A. B. CHAUVIN, *President, Chauvin Brothers, Inc., Chauvin, Louisiana*

THE SUBJECT is one that is rather difficult to handle because it is very controversial. The writer's opinion about continued production of shrimp in Louisiana might be challenged by others in the industry, and here it is approached from practical experience with no knowledge of biology whatsoever. It is possible that opinions expressed here are contrary to the belief of the men of science who have made a study of the shrimp fishery. These opinions are given from results of many years of experience in the shrimp business, and operating exclusively in Louisiana.

The outlook for continued shrimp production in Louisiana is as good at this time as it has ever been at any time in the past. Only two factors could change the outlook at this time. First, serious damage to the vast nursery grounds, whether the damage be from natural or artificial causes. Secondly, overfishing. Since there appears to be no serious damage to the nursery grounds at this time, let us consider the fishing effort.

Is there overfishing in Louisiana waters? It appears not, for the following reasons: The industry is divided into two important groups, the inshore fishermen who, with the use of small boats and light equipment, produce small and medium shrimp, and the offshore fishermen who, with the deep sea trawler, fish in the Gulf and produce large or jumbo shrimp. From childhood the writer has watched the development of the fishery, starting first with the castnet, then the seine and then the otter trawl, on the inside lakes and bays, down to the

Recent development of the offshore fishery. Since 1923 the writer has been in active charge of the operations of Chauvin Brothers, Inc. and for the past 27 years, then, has listened to and participated in the arguments of what was best for a continued production of shrimp in Louisiana. The man with the small boat, operating the inshore fishery, argues that if closed seasons are necessary for him, they should also be extended to the offshore fishery for protection of the breeding stock. The man with the big boat, fishing offshore, contends that catching of small shrimp is the problem to be controlled; therefore closed seasons should only apply to the inshore fishery. This problem has been argued since the fishery began, and it is doubtful if there has been one single regular session of the state legislature without the battle of a shrimp bill. And what has actually happened? We have fished extensively both the inshore and the offshore fishing grounds, and the writer frankly sees no serious decline in the total production of shrimp in Louisiana. By no serious decline is not meant maintenance of production to the peak figures of the very best years, but fair average production. If then, for the past many years, with extensive fishing both inside and outside, no serious decline in total production is apparent what other conclusion can be arrived at other than that the outlook for continued production is good?

To supplement the production of white shrimp there is very good outlook for development of the fishery for grooved shrimp, or "brownies." Some fishermen have been fairly successful, but since the brownies are found far offshore most of the time large boats and the use of depth finding equipment will be necessary. These requirements are being provided and the fishing for grooved shrimp being rapidly developed.

It is generally felt that to maintain good production in Louisiana certain closed seasons must be imposed. There are presently two such periods governing the inside fishing. The current law is not too far out of line with the recommendations made by the biologists to the Gulf States Fisheries Commission. The recommendations as submitted recently would close our inside fishing for an additional two months, and this would create a hardship on the small boat operator who plays an important part in maintaining the total Louisiana production. If all parties concerned will give this matter careful consideration, looking at the situation on a live and let live basis and all be willing to compromise the issue, it should be possible to bring about better and enforceable regulations which would help distribute in a more equitable way our Louisiana production.