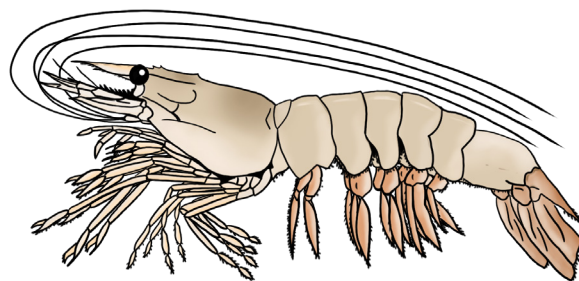


SPECIES SNAPSHOT

A 2022 status update for South Carolina's saltwater species

SHRIMP

Shrimp are South Carolina's favorite seafood and support its most valuable fishery. South Carolinians can generally buy or catch fresh, local shrimp from May through the end of the fall, depending on water temperatures. Shrimpers target two main shrimp species: white shrimp (*Litopenaeus setiferus*), of which there are two 'crops' per year, and brown shrimp (*Farfantepenaeus aztecus*).



AGE

Shrimp seldom live more than a year. Depending on water temperatures, white shrimp spawn in the spring and early summer, while brown shrimp spawn during the fall. A single female can produce up to 1,000,000 eggs at a time.

SIZE

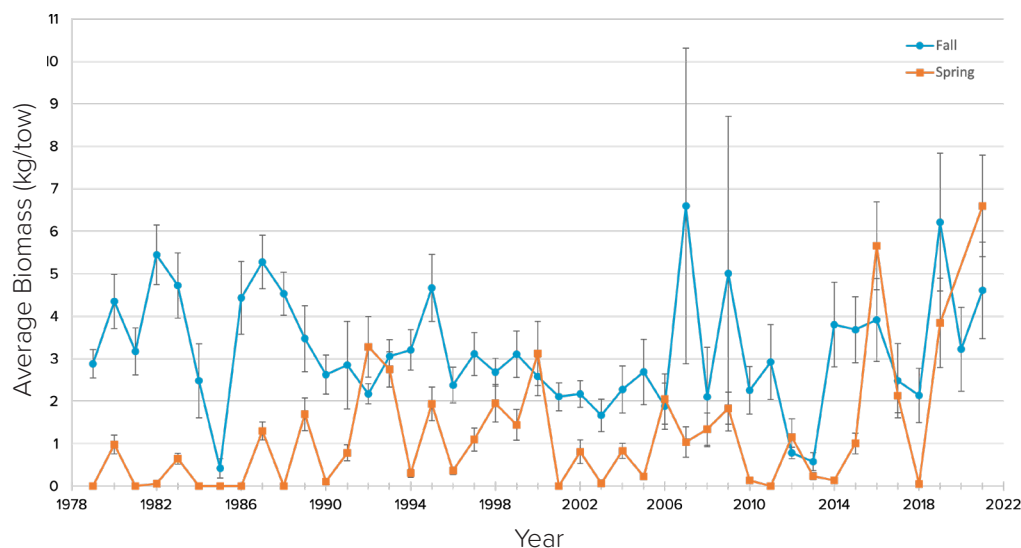
Spring white shrimp, or roe shrimp, are typically the largest of the year, reaching up to six inches from head to tail. Shrimp numbers can fluctuate drastically in response to environmental conditions, but they also bounce back quickly.

HABITAT & LIFE CYCLE

Adult shrimp primarily live offshore. Adult females spawn close to shore, and their larvae will go through as many as ten stages before migrating to salt marsh tidal creeks, where they will spend two to three months growing to maturity.

Shrimp Numbers Have Remained Stable in SCDNR Surveys Over Time

How to read this graph: South Carolina has two main shrimp seasons per year, which are shown here in orange and blue, with variability shown in gray. Although average shrimp numbers (measured here in weight or biomass) can vary widely from year to year, the long-term averages have remained stable or increased since 1978.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Marine Resources Division | marine@dnr.sc.gov | 843-953-9300

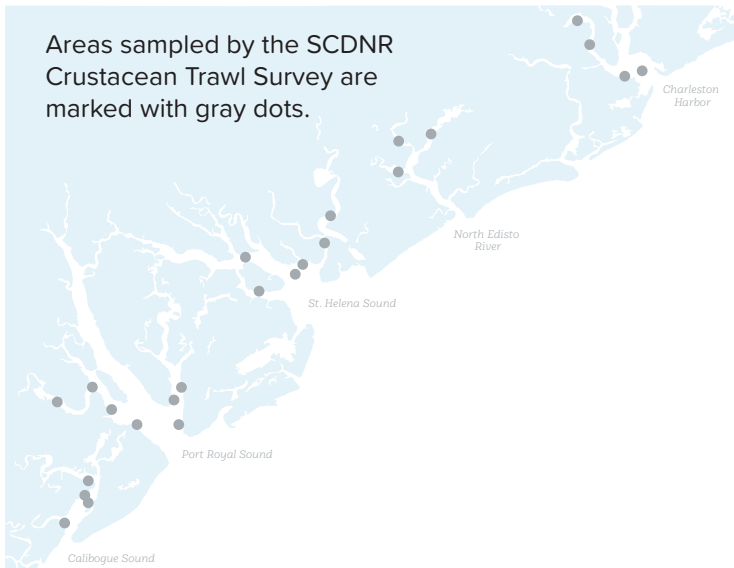


SPECIES SNAPSHOT

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SHRIMP

How do we get these numbers?



- Since the late 1970s, SCDNR biologists have trawled in South Carolina's five largest estuaries to monitor abundance, size, reproductive status and disease/parasite load of the shrimp they catch.
- Today, aboard the R/V *Silver Crescent*, the team samples Charleston Harbor and the Ashley River monthly and other estuaries quarterly.
- Each spring, biologists look at the progress of shrimp reproduction to help officials determine when it's safe to open the commercial shrimp harvesting season.

Many factors impact shrimp numbers



DISEASE

Black gill syndrome first appeared in the late 1990s. Caused by a protozoan, it does not kill shrimp directly but darkens their gills (an immune response) and makes them more vulnerable to predators. It poses no risk to humans.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Shrimp are highly susceptible to temperature extremes and salinity levels. Their population numbers can fluctuate dramatically based on weather events such as cold snaps and drought.



HABITAT AVAILABILITY

Young shrimp need clean water and high-quality habitat (tidal creeks and saltwater marshes) to survive to adulthood. Coastal development increases runoff and freshwater influx, which can harm shrimp nursery areas.

You can help shrimp in South Carolina

EAT LOCAL SHRIMP

Shrimpers in South Carolina are subject to environmental regulations that make their product far more sustainable than imported shrimp. Support this homegrown industry.

USE RIGHT MESH SIZE

Marine resources should never be wasted. If you are catching shrimp too small to eat or use, switch to a larger net mesh size to give younger shrimp time to reach maturity.

BUY A FISHING LICENSE

Even if you don't fish, consider purchasing a fishing license. Saltwater license fees help fund research and education on shrimp and other saltwater species.