

Louisiana reopens fishing grounds after spill closure

July 30 2010



Ships assist in clean up and containment near the source of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill on July 27, 2010 in the Gulf of Mexico. Louisiana has reopened wide swaths of state fishing grounds that were closed in the wake of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill after seafood testing, the state said.

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Working in coordination with the federal Food and Drug Administration, the state's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries said "[commercial fishing](#) will reopen for finfish and shrimp in portions of state waters east of the [Mississippi River](#)."

Other areas remain closed to Louisiana's fishing and shrimping

community, which has been devastated by the closure of state and federal waters fouled by crude spilling from a ruptured well off the state's coastline.

The closures were ordered to prevent potentially oil-contaminated seafood being caught and served, but the state and the FDA said "extensive sensory testing and [analytical chemistry](#) results" showed "the [fish](#) samples tested from previously closed areas are safe for consumption."

FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg said the agency was "confident all appropriate steps have been taken to ensure that seafood harvested from the waters being opened today is safe."

She said fishermen in the area had stressed the importance both of getting back to work, but "also a real commitment to protecting the health of their customers."

"We look forward to continuing to work closely with our partners in all of the Gulf states to reopen affected waters as quickly and safely as possible."

In the wake of the spill, up to a third of federal [Gulf of Mexico](#) fishing waters were closed. A portion of the closed area was reopened July 22, leaving some 7,539 square miles (149,026 square kilometers) of federal fishing waters off-limits.

The [oil](#) spill, sparked April 20 by an explosion aboard the BP-leased Deepwater Horizon rig that killed 11 workers, is the worst environmental disaster in US history.

Engineers have now placed a temporary cap over the leaking well, and are working to implement the first of two permanent capping measures

early next week.

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