

US closes shrimping near oil spill as 'precaution'

November 25 2010



White shrimp caught in a bayou in August 2010. US authorities Wednesday closed to shrimping a section of the Gulf of Mexico near the area of a massive oil spill this year as a precautionary measure after a commercial shrimper found tar balls in his net.

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The National Oceanographic and Oceanic Administration said the area closed to royal red shrimping is 4,213 square miles (10,000 square kilometers) of [Gulf of Mexico](#) federal waters off Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

"The precautionary measure was taken after a commercial shrimper,

having hauled in his catch of the [deep water](#) shrimp, discovered tar balls in his net," the agency said in a statement.

The action marked the first closing after more than 99 percent of Gulf waters had reopened to fishing, with the area recovering from the huge BP oil spill capped in July.

NOAA said it was taking the action "out of an abundance of caution" and due to the nature of this type of shrimp fishing.

"Fishing for royal red shrimp is conducted by pulling [fishing nets](#) across the bottom of the [ocean floor](#). The tar balls found in the catch may have been entrained in the net as it was dragged along the seafloor," NOAA said.

"Other fishing at shallower depths in this area has not turned up any tar balls and is thus not impacted by this closure. The fisherman who reported this catch had trawled for brown shrimp in shallow waters in a different portion of the area to be closed earlier in the day without seeing tar balls."

Over 88,000 square miles (229,000 square kilometers) were once closed to fishing due to concerns over the devastating spill, which continues to impact the Gulf's environment and economy.

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Citation: US closes shrimping near oil spill as 'precaution' (2010, November 25) retrieved 29 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-11-shrimping-oil-precaution.html>

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