



Happy National Seafood Month!



**Celebrating Seafood Sustainability and
Training the Next Generation of Gulf
Fishermen**

As we mark the beginning of National Seafood Month, many Gulf fishing communities (as well as our friends and neighbors in states across the Southeast) are still grappling with the aftermath of [Hurricane Helene](#), which left widespread damage in its wake. The resilience of these communities, however, is on full display as friends and neighbors work together to rebuild, supporting one another through these difficult times. In the face of these challenges, National Seafood Month carries extra significance this year, reminding us of the vital role the seafood industry plays in our community, our economy, our culture, and our daily lives.

National Seafood Month honors the contributions of the U.S. seafood industry, celebrating sustainable fisheries and the hard work of fishermen who provide nutritious seafood to communities across the nation. Each October, it highlights the importance of ensuring the long-term sustainability of our fisheries, the economic well-being of fishing communities, and the pride that commercial fishermen have in harvesting fresh, wild, sustainable seafood to help feed this great nation.

To celebrate this year's National Seafood Month, the [Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance](#) (Shareholders' Alliance) is proud to announce the launch of the Gulf Commercial Fisherman Program (GCFP), a groundbreaking initiative aimed at recruiting and training the next generation of commercial fishing deckhands in the Gulf of Mexico.



This year marks the first year of the GCFP in partnership with [Texas Sea Grant](#), [Florida Sea Grant](#), and [Katie's Seafood Market](#). The GCFP is designed to train deckhands in commercial fisheries and equip them with the skills and

knowledge needed to succeed in this vital sector while continuing the long-standing tradition of Gulf fishing.

Fishery leaders are driving the success of the GCFP, guiding trainees and offering real-world experience on commercial fishing vessels. With a successful start in Galveston, TX, the program plans to expand to additional fishing ports across the Gulf.



“We need bright young men and women to step into roles that have been held by hardworking fishermen for generations,” said **Buddy Guindon, Executive Director of the Shareholders’ Alliance and owner of Katie’s Seafood Market**. “The GCFP is about preparing these future leaders with the skills they need to thrive in an industry that requires grit, passion, and deep respect for the ocean. This program will ensure the future of Gulf fishing remains in capable hands. And what better month to start this new program than National Seafood Month?”



"I've always been fascinated by the Gulf fishing industry," said **Mitchell Burns, part of the inaugural GCFP class.** "The GCFP has given me a firsthand look at how this industry works, and I've learned so much already. The mentorship from experienced fishermen has been incredible, and I'm excited to start my journey in the industry."

"We need more people who are passionate about this work and understand its importance," said **Rachal Hisler, a multigenerational seafood producer from Anahuac, TX.** "Training the next generation is essential to keeping our fishery strong and preserving this tradition."

The GCFP embodies the spirit of National Seafood Month: sustainability, resilience, and tradition. As the seafood industry continues to face workforce shortages, the GCFP provides a community-based solution by training future generations to continue the proud tradition of Gulf fishing while supporting sustainable growth.

For more information about the Gulf Commercial Fisherman Program or to get involved, visit gulfcommercialfishing.org or contact Ashford Rosenberg at ashford@shareholdersalliance.org.



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