

How will last week's winter storm affect Louisiana's crawfish season?

By Dillon Lowe



Last week's historic winter storm may limit the supply of crawfish and drive mudbug prices up—but only in the short term.

That's according to Mark Shirley, a crawfish expert with the [LSU AgCenter](#).

Shirley tells *Daily Report* that the cold weather slowed the crawfish catch "quite a bit" because crawfish don't move when water temperatures drop as low as they did last week, meaning they don't make their way into harvesters' traps.

Even so, Shirley still expects a strong crawfish season this year. The winter weather has no bearing on crawfish population or size, and harvesters will get back to business as usual once water temperatures begin to rise.

“The water is starting to warm up now, so I expect the catch to pick up this week and next week,” Shirley says. “And in the spring, as we get some sunshine and a little bit of rain, crawfish will continue to move and grow. Things look good for the season.”

This season is poised to be especially strong when compared to last year’s season, [when a drought caused supplies to plummet and prices to soar](#).

And while prices may remain high for the next few weeks, Shirley expects them to come down as the weather warms up. He is careful to note, however, that crawfish farmers have seen their costs of operation rise this year. Some of those inflated costs may be passed on to consumers.

“Their expenses—bait, labor, pumping costs and all of that—are higher than in past years,” Shirley says. “You can expect to see a little bit higher average prices for the whole year.”

In Baton Rouge, boiled crawfish can currently be purchased at prices ranging from \$6.99 to \$9.99 per pound, according to [The Crawfish App](#). Live crawfish, meanwhile, can currently be purchased at prices ranging from \$5.50 to \$7.99 per pound.

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