

Never Use Non-Gulf Shrimp as Bait in Texas



TEXAS
PARKS &
WILDLIFE

Shrimp is a popular choice for bait when fishing in fresh and salt water.

**ONLY USE SHRIMP NATIVE
TO THE GULF OF MEXICO.**

Never use imported or foreign shrimp as bait in Texas waters.

Why shouldn't I use imported shrimp as bait?

If you use imported shrimp as bait, you could be introducing one of several deadly viruses to native shrimp, crab and crayfish populations. Many of these viruses—like the white-spot syndrome virus—can survive the freezing process and do not die when the imported shrimp is packaged. Though not harmful to humans, **if a virus is introduced, native shrimp, crab and crayfish populations could quickly die** which would have devastating consequences for the entire ecosystem and the Gulf shrimp food industry.



Photo: Dr. Lightner

What is imported shrimp?

Imported shrimp includes all shrimp species not native to the Gulf of Mexico, like shrimp from other countries and non-Gulf states.



The most common imported shrimp species is the Pacific white shrimp which is found in food stores.

Is it against the law?

Yes. Introducing imported or non-native shrimp to the aquatic environment is illegal under Texas law, regardless of whether it is alive or dead, whole or in pieces.

How do I know if shrimp is native to the Gulf of Mexico?

If you're buying bait shrimp, ask if its Gulf shrimp. Common shrimp species native to the Gulf of Mexico include pink shrimp, white shrimp, brown shrimp and mantis shrimp or sea lice. You can also check the label of frozen packaged shrimp for place of origin.

If shrimp is not from the Gulf of Mexico, then it is illegal to use it as bait.

Where can I learn more?

www.tpwd.texas.gov/baitshrimp
or texasseagrant@gmail.com



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