



## National Seafood Impact from Gulf Oil

Posted By [Molly Line](#) On June 9, 2010 @ 9:21 AM In [U.S.](#) |

As oil continues to spew from the ocean floor, further impacting the fragile ocean eco-system and the Gulf Coast's fishing industry, the repercussions for the nation's seafood supply chain are just beginning.

Federal officials have shut-down roughly a third of the Gulf of Mexico to fishing and more than 100 miles of coastal oyster beds have been closed. Gulf Coast shrimpers, who provide 70 percent of the nation's catch, fear the oil will move into their fishing grounds.



Still, the effect on the rest of the country's seafood trade may not be as great as many would expect. More than 80% of the seafood consumed in America comes from overseas and quotas, put in place to prevent overfishing in America's waters, limit the catch fisherman can bring in on many products.

"It doesn't mean a whole heck of a lot for the New England fisherman," said Richard Stavis, CEO of Stavis Seafoods, a major seafood distributor based out of Boston, Massachusetts.

Stavis says shrimp and oysters are the two key products being effected in the Gulf, forcing his business to seek alternative sources.

"Oysters... we've seen prices go up by about 25% and we've seen a real shortage of product coming out of the Gulf. And on shrimp, we've seen prices go up between 10 and 50% based on the size," said Stavis.

The higher price points are not turning into profits. Cold water oysters from the north that could help fill any void left by a lower Gulf harvest are more expensive to produce.

Greg Silkes of American Mussel Harvesters, a long-established mussel company out of Rhode Island, says it's unlikely anyone will make big bucks by shipping south.

"The consumers down their might not be able to handle such a drastic increase in price."

Plus, regional tastes and menus play a role in where seafood is shipped and eaten by Americans.

"A lot of the products coming out of the Gulf are market specific, are geared toward those markets down south," said Silkes. "Most of the products harvested here in the Northeast stay in the Northeast markets or in some of the big national markets across the country."

Fisherman in the Gulf are scrabbling to harvest before oil reaches further, effecting delicate wetlands and bays where oysters and shrimp are nestled. For now, many are still bringing in a catch but they're facing a public relations nightmare as many restaurants and distributors fear contamination.

---

Article printed from Liveshots: <http://liveshots.blogs.foxnews.com>

URL to article: <http://liveshots.blogs.foxnews.com/2010/06/09/national-seafood-impact-from-gulf-oil/>

URLs in this post: [1] FoxNews.com: <http://video.foxnews.com/>