



## **Seafood Sourcing: Perspective on the Gulf**

The oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is an ecological and human disaster that will surely effect not only the fragile habitats where shrimp and oysters are harvested but the very core of the community that brings these iconic delicacies from the waters of the Gulf to the tables of America.

It is important to support fishermen, shrimpers and oystermen by letting consumers know the safe healthy seafood sourced from these waters continues to be just that, safe and healthy. Already the seafood community has spoken out in support of the precautionary closure of the federal waters along parts of the coast. Ensuring consumers continue to have access to seafood maintained with the level of quality and safety expected from the Gulf of Mexico is paramount.

Perspective on the Gulf, in relation to seafood sourcing and the overall U.S. seafood supply, is also important because only 2% of the seafood most Americans consume is harvested from the Gulf.

Fears of shortages and wild price fluctuations are unfounded and often based on misreporting. This [USA Today](#) article goes a long way to dispelling some of the myths that have begun to propagate.

The report accurately notes the following about the U.S. seafood supply:

1. "Louisiana produces only about 1% of the seafood Americans eat."
2. "About 83% of the seafood consumed in the United States comes from overseas."
3. "Shrimp are the most popular seafood Americans eat, but only 4% come from Louisiana, according to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration numbers from 2008" and explains that, "of shrimp consumed in the USA, 90% comes from overseas, mostly Thailand, Indonesia, Ecuador, China and Vietnam."

USA Today also accurately reports that, "oysters are a different matter because almost all the oysters Americans eat are harvested here, 67% in the waters off the Gulf states." But it goes on to declare, "so far, only a small proportion of the state's oyster beds have been closed because of the spill."

While Gulf seafood remains safe and healthy, the potential impact of the spill on this region, its resources and its community should not be minimized. However, the broad impact on sourcing should also not be exaggerated. Wholesale shortages and exorbitant price fluctuations are not expected as a result of this spill. The mix that is the U.S. seafood supply is sourced from all over the world, a structure that ensures disruptions in production does not cut consumers off from seafood because of one event.