

Crawfish and Tilapia Culture in Texas **Compiled by Granvil D. Treece***

There are approximately 20 crawfish producers in the state on 1,500 acres, producing around 800,000 lbs/yr., worth \$1 million.



Red Swamp crawfish above (Photo from Dr. Ray McClain)

Crawfish Pond and aeration (Photos from Ray McClain)



Harvested crawfish on ice (Photo from Ray McClain)



Boiling Crawfish

Boiled crawfish (Photo from Dr. Ray McClain)



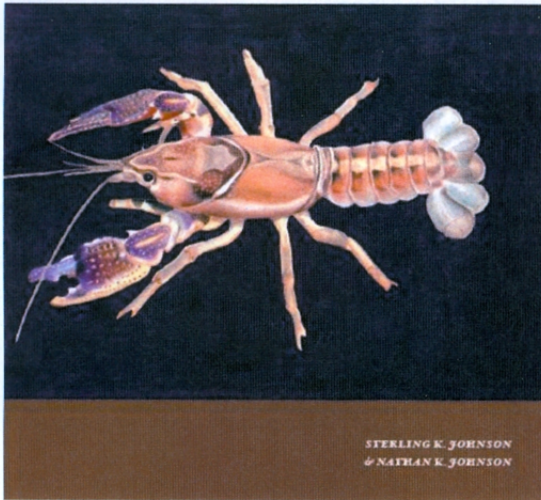
Boiled crawfish platter (Photo from Dr. Ray McClain)

"Texas CRAWDADS", by Dr. Ken Johnson and Nathan K. Johnson.
<http://www.texascrawlads.com/>

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Texas CRAWDADS



Texas Crawlads

by Sterling K. Johnson and Nathan K. Johnson

ISBN 978-0-9801103-0-2

\$24.95

Texas Crawlads is written for mentors of young people interested in aquatic life, youngsters with experience in crawfishing, naturalists, biologists, and anyone with an interest in nature.

Readers learn about the life and habitat of Texas crawlads and how to identify, locate, catch, show, grow, collect, photograph and draw them.. The text reviews thirty seven species and several varieties found in Texas and gives a synopsis of how the present understanding of them developed.

The book depicts animals that are likely to be caught along with crawlads Color photos present Texas crawlads in actual size. Species are presented individually and as recognizable groupings. Multiple photos of each species help readers better understand the potential for variation of appearance in an individual species.

There is an Internet link to the Louisiana Crawfish Production Manual, produced by LSU. This manual covers many important aspects on the culture of crawfish, located at: http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/crops_livestock/aquaculture/crawfish/. The publication is free and the direct link to the manual is: http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/crops_livestock/aquaculture/crawfish/Crawfish+Production+Manual.htm

There is a publication entitled "Projected Commodity Costs and Returns, Crawfish Production in Louisiana" from the Farm Management Research & Extension Department of Agricultural Economics & Agribusiness, LSU Ag Center, A.E.A. Information Series No. 257 - by Robert W. Boucher and Jeffrey M. Gillespie. This publication provides the projected costs and returns for crawfish production in Louisiana.

Tilapia

Texas Tilapia farms have produced as much as 600,000 lbs./yr. worth \$1.1 million in 2010, and those farms had a 1 million pound production capacity. The tilapia farm-gate value of \$1.85/lb went down as low as \$1.10/lb, but is coming back up. However, after 2011, and Simaron almost closed their doors, the state production has dropped to about 150,000 lbs./yr. More than 18 million pounds of tilapia were produced in USA annually in the same period. Simaron Fresh Water Fish, Inc., outside Hempstead, Texas, produced approximately 460,000 lbs. of tilapia annually in outdoor ponds during the summer and in raceways, tanks and covered ponds during the winter months. But this all changed in 2011. Simaron was put up for sale and in 2011 and since then Texas only produced 150,000 lbs of tilapia. Charlie Chan at Austwell was a producer in the state but moved into catfish culture. There have recently been other producers enter the production arena. Consult the TAA availability list to see whom the present producers are and how to contact them.





Large *niloticus* male



Red tilapia in pond under a greenhouse at Simaron in Hempstead, Texas



Red tilapia in raceway at Simaron Fresh Water Fish





Fish filleting machine (above)



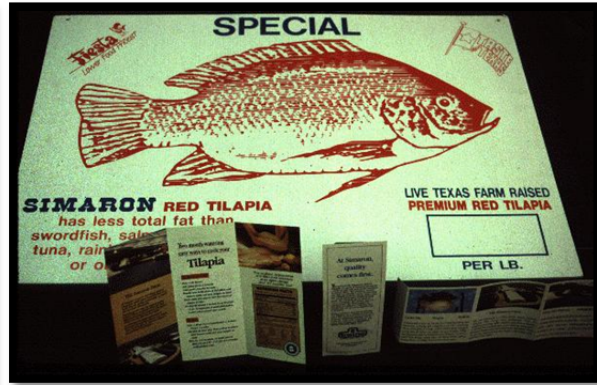


Tilapia fillets.



Tilapia are considered exotic species in Texas, but 3 species are permitted for aquaculture in Texas. Tilapia demand is growing but imports are also growing. Texas tilapia producers cannot compete with imports and domestic production continues to decline.

Description: Simaron Fresh Water Fish is an intensive, indoor recirculating and outdoor summer production Tilapia facility. Simaron is also in the live fish distribution business, selling to the Asian and Hispanic markets in Texas. They also produced 80,000 stocker fish for ponds in 2011. After that, their production declined and they produce about 100,000 lbs/yr. total.



Past Tilapia Culture in East Texas (photos from Ken Hale)

Tilapia (*mosambique*) was grown by Ken Hale at Boatcycle as forage and for vegetation control in Henderson, Texas. In 2006 they produced 16,000 lbs. for sale in 2007, and in 2007 they produced 12,000 lbs for sale in 2008.



Tilapia Culture Outside Texas

World tilapia production grew from about 250,000 mt in 1984 to 2.6 million mt in 2007. In contrast, the capture of tilapia has been flat, at about 600,000 mt, over the past several years. The key tilapia producers are China, with an estimated 45% of total production, followed by Egypt, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. Of the top 16 producers of tilapia, the United States ranked last. The rapid growth in production is primarily in response to the increasing popularity of the fish in countries such as the United States. Tilapia increased from tenth in popularity in 2001 to fifth, behind shrimp, tuna, salmon and Pollock, in 2007. Domestic (US) consumption increased from almost zero as recently as 1990 to over 453,000 mt live weight in 2008. Of this amount, over 95% was imported. This equates to 29,213 mt of fresh fillets, 100,603 mt of frozen fillets, and 49,648 mt of whole frozen. The value of these imports was, in 2008, \$734.5 million dollars. Whereas US domestic production of 20 million lbs. is very small relative to imports, it earned producers \$50 million in farm gate sales in 2008.

With the goal of ensuring the increasing popularity of tilapia while maintaining overall demand, the industry has been aggressive in meeting certifiable standards in its production practices. Various producers have or are in the process of obtaining NGO certifications ranging from the Aquaculture Certification Council to the World Wildlife Fund. Both of these organizations, as well as Whole Foods, have web-posted their draft guidelines on sustainability to the public for comment. Dr. Kevin Fitzsimmons, President of the US Tilapia Assoc., stated that global farm-raised tilapia sales were over \$5.0 billion by 2010. This was done by improving production systems to ensure sustainability, by enhancing food safety and environment-friendly production and by continuing to develop new products forms and packaging.



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