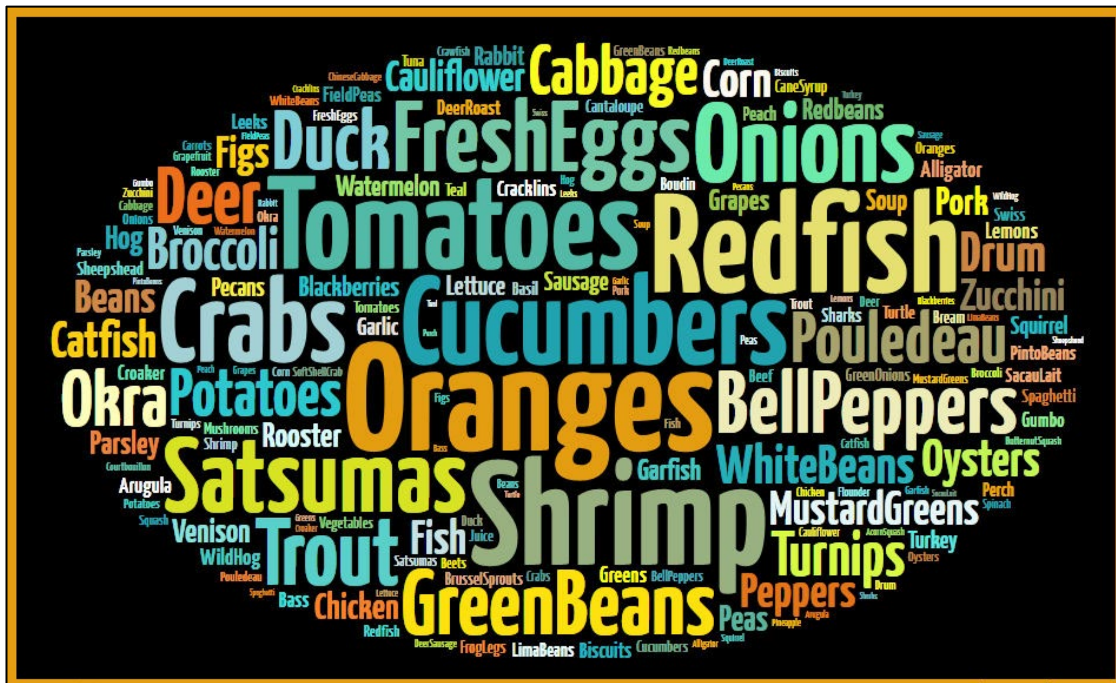
OCS Study
BOEM 2022-063

Subsistence in Coastal Louisiana

Volume 1: An Exploratory Study



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Subsistence in Coastal Louisiana

Volume 1: An Exploratory Study

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ABOUT THE COVER

Relative frequencies of items harvested in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes. See Figure 2.

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Preface

In the aftermath of the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill of 2010, the largest oil spill in US history, some people filed claims for subsistence losses, due to damages to wild resources they could no longer access–resources they would have acquired through their own labor or through gifting and sharing. Federal officials were faced with the problem that subsistence had never been studied systematically in the Gulf of Mexico Region. Our project was then tasked with a preliminary study of subsistence in coastal Louisiana.

The objectives of this study were 1) to explore the range of subsistence activities (including production, exchange sharing, barter and small-scale informal sales); 2) to identify key dynamics in the overlapping activities of commercial and household consumption; 3) to field test research methods to study subsistence; and 4) to produce preliminary data about subsistence harvesting, exchange and consumption.

Our study centered its efforts on two coastal Louisiana Parishes, Terrebonne and Lafourche (located southwest of New Orleans). Working through personal networks and prior community connections, and working with community researchers, we talked with people who participated in all areas of subsistence, including duck-hunting, deer-hunting, fishing, gardening, frogging, alligator hunting, shrimping, crabbing, oystering, dog-training, raising chickens, weaving nets, and crafting duck decoys and palmetto baskets. Some were commercial shrimpers, fishing guides or professional alligator hunters, while others had professional jobs and hunted or fished on the weekends. Participants included men and woman, ranging in age from college students to retirees.

We conducted 10 oral histories, 37 in-depth conversations (semi-structured interviews), dozens of less formal interviews, three focus groups, and two feedback sessions. We set up two festival booths where festgoers could participate in harvesting and sharing storytelling sessions. We also conducted more than 100 drop-in interviews and made 10 observation trips of roadside fishing, crabbing and farm stands. We worked with 26 participants who kept logs of their hunting and harvesting, and sharing activities. These logs documented over 2,500 instances of hunting, harvesting, or sharing. Two project PIs worked with four graduate students, six community researchers, and 62 undergraduate students.

We found that in spite of popular media accounts that portray subsistence as exotic, in Coastal Louisiana it is both ordinary and pervasive. Hunting and harvesting pervade everyday life in coastal communities. Some of our general findings, elaborated in the report, include:

- Participants worry that rapid environmental change threatens hunting and harvesting;
- People may not see what they do (gardening, hunting, crabbing, or shrimping and sharing their harvest with family or neighbors) as one single system ("subsistence");
- Harvesting and sharing are connected to family and community in complex ways;
- Commercial activities and wage labor often support and underwrite subsistence activities, making them possible;
- Subsistence activities are central to personal, cultural, and regional identity;
- Degree of participation in subsistence activities varies across a lifecycle;
- Subsistence foods are highly valued and fuel family and community celebrations; and
- Loss of access to hunting and harvesting can have environmental justice implications with poorer families impacted most heavily.

Volume 1 of this study is dedicated to discussion of these findings. Volume 2 offers a selection of field reports from researchers who worked on the project. At the end of our project, all team members were invited to create two products for inclusion in this report: “field reports” and “ethnographic profiles.” In this setting, the two are distinct only by their focus or emphasis. In our usage, a field report is a general report created by a team member about a subsistence practice that he or she documented in one or multiple fieldwork excursions, based on a condensed or more polished version of already-submitted field notes. An ethnographic profile, as we are using the term, also is a condensing of field notes, but focused more narrowly on a subsistence practitioner, rather than the larger field experience. Both types of writing are presented simply as field reports in Volume 2. In Volume 3, the field reports take the form of photo essays. In both volumes, the goal is to give readers a glimpse into the details of subsistence as well as to see the range of subsistence activities. Volume 4 includes a selected, annotated bibliography on subsistence.

1 Project Scope and History

1.1 Introduction

Harvesting wild foods for household use and informal exchange among relatives, friends, and neighbors was widely reported as an important activity in Louisiana's coastal communities both in terms of household economics—particularly as a source of food resources—and in terms of how people define themselves, their sense of well-being, and their concepts of meaningful activities. For some families in low-income and minority communities, subsistence may provide a significant portion of the household diet and income. However, because subsistence use is essentially non-commercial, it generally goes unreported and unrecorded in the coastal Gulf region, as in most of the US, although portions of these activities may be identified in reports as, for example, recreational activities. Subsistence involves production, consumption, and exchange; to date, no systematic social scientific research addresses all sides of this equation for Coastal Louisiana. This is an information gap for any consideration of the interaction of impacts to local ecosystems, the regional economy, and the human population, given our understanding of the importance of subsistence in the economic and social lives of many households.

1.2 Background

South Louisiana is often regarded as a paradise for traditional lifeways, yet wild harvesting itself, as a subsistence strategy, has rarely been broached as a research topic in Coastal Louisiana. One reason for this may be that subsistence is usually associated with "traditional," "non-Western," "non-market," "pristine," "indigenous," and/or "isolated" societies. Far from a pristine or isolated way of life, subsistence food gathering and harvesting in Coastal Louisiana operates in close interaction with commercial fishing, wage-based employment (including the oil-and-gas industry and other blue-collar trades), and entrepreneurship. Non-commercial household consumption of fresh-caught shrimp may often co-exist with commercial sales, gift exchange, and barter. However, the amount harvested each year for subsistence is undocumented and estimates vary. Louisiana Sea Grant Director of Marine Extension, R. Glenn Thomas, estimated that as much as 50% of seafood harvest is unrecorded (Thomas 2012). To date there have been no systematic studies of this deeply-rooted economic activity and life way. In consequence, researchers have no real understanding of the role wild harvesting plays in the lives of coastal residents, the exttent to which extent families are dependent on wild harvesting, what portions of their diets or budgets wild harvesting represents, and how subsistence foods circulate among community members.

The subject of subsistence was given new importance in the summer of 2010 as thousands of coastal residents were barred from fishing and shrimping activities (that might have had both commercial and subsistence components) and as many hesitated to exchange or consume wild catch in the wake of the largest oil spill in US history. The *Deepwater Horizon* explosion, blowout, and spill was a watershed event. According to government figures released in August 2010, about 4.9 million barrels of oil were spilled; less than one-third of that was recovered (National Commission 2010; Allen 2010). In short, the spill was enormous. The specific amount spilled and recovered and where the oil went will be debated for years to come. What can be determined now is that the spill has had tremendous impact on the Gulf Coast–not only environmental, biological, and physical impacts, but also social and economic.

After the blowout on April 20, 2010 that took the lives of 11 men, the rig sank two days later and the oil flowed unchecked for 87 days. Oil quickly fouled coastal areas from Florida to Texas, resulting in oil-soaked and/or killed birds, marine mammals, and sea turtles. Areas dependent on tourism saw an instant drop in visitors at beaches and recreational areas and in hires for charter services. The fishing industry was stalled by the closing of fisheries, and a temporary moratorium on drilling stunned the regional economy. A spill of this magnitude, with impacts this varied, will continue to have both direct and indirect effects on onshore, near shore, and interior communities for years into the future.

Of immediate paramount importance have been the biological and environmental impacts, but the social, economic, and cultural impacts are continuing beyond the immediate shocks to the economy. Even after beaches and fisheries reopen, the communities continue to be reshaped by the oil spill. In the short run, people are suffering immediate economic consequences, which affect family decision-making on everything from buying consumer goods to paying tuition or having to default on a mortgage. Communities likewise have suffered great economic changes as incomes and tax bases declined, resulting in changes in community and/or municipal services and school budgets. Even when people have returned to fishing, concerns about seafood safety may have affected whether they consumed seafood. Beyond those immediate impacts, the longer-term social and cultural shifts may include outmigration from the region, shifts in traditional occupation, and even changes in how people see their relationship to the region or foodways. The possibility of long-term impacts makes the study of subsistence even more compelling at this critical time.

Researchers argue that the discovery of oil has shaped the identity of the region profoundly, perhaps as much as the more traditional fishing and seafood industries (Henry and Bankston 2002). Without a doubt, culturally, the region has become linked to both seafood and oil. Ethnic groups, such as the Cajuns of South Louisiana, and Native American groups like the United Houma Nation, take a portion of their identity in large part from traditional occupations, which now include oil work. In addition, the people of the region have a long tradition of identification as self-reliant and independent. That self-identity rests, in part, on the large role that wild harvesting of food plays in residents' lives. Wild harvesting not only provides needed calories and reduces the need for outside pay-based employment, but these activities also frame identities and cement relationships in ways that researchers do not fully understand. Oil has also shaped the form of wild subsistence activities themselves, because much of the land where coastal people hunt and/or fish is leased from oil and land companies. In that way, the rights to participate in harvesting activities become part of a family's annual budget.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is responsible for leasing the nation's outer continental shelf (OCS) petroleum resources in an environmentally safe fashion. BOEM's Environmental Studies Program (ESP) provides the bureau with information and analyses in support of its environmental assessments and resource management decisions. ESP is mandated to consider the human environment in all decisions concerning leasing and development of offshore tracts. "Human environment" was broadly defined in the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) of 1953 to mean "the physical, social, and economic components, conditions, and factors which interactively determine the state, condition, and quality of living conditions, employment, and health of those affected, directly or indirectly, by activities occurring on the Outer Continental Shelf." OCSLA established ESP to support federal decision-making, particularly as relates to the human environment. ESP develops Environmental Impact

Statements and Environmental Reviews, which are guided by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, requiring federal agencies to consider the environmental consequences of their decisions. ESP also supports decision-making related to other laws and directives, such as the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, the Clean Water Act of 1977, the Clean Air Act of 1977, and Executive Order 12898 Federal Action to Address Environmental Justice.

Understanding the scale and dynamics of subsistence can fill an important gap in previous studies of the onshore impact of offshore oil. It can also contribute to an assessment of the cultural and social impacts of the oil spill for onshore, near shore, and interior communities tied economically, socially, and culturally to the off shore oil industry, with the goal that the research findings will provide future support for BOEM in its environmental assessments and resource management decisions. The information and analyses of this study will support:

1. environmental justice assessments, as directed by Executive Order 12898 and other laws and orders; and
2. NEPA environmental assessments considering the distribution of benefits and burdens among groups affected by agency decisions and very broad questions of benefits and impacts on groups.

In larger terms, this study supports and deepens existing BOEM-funded work designed to: 1) establish a baseline of conditions or trends resulting from past federal off-shore decisions and 2) evaluate the cumulative effects of those decisions with particular attention to the differential impacts of the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill across the Gulf of Mexico (GOM). As part of a cooperative research agreement, BOEM contributed resources, including staff expertise and research. This study was designed to provide an assessment of wild harvesting, one of the most important but least studied economic and cultural activities, with particular attention to changes set in motion by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. This analysis relies on qualitative data gathered in direct contact with affected community members. This assessment will be used in federal decision making, as well as for federal interaction with state agencies and the general public.

1.3 Objectives

Our initial proposal outlined a field-based, small-scale, ethnographic research project to investigate the role of subsistence in the region by developing descriptive materials and research methodologies and collecting and reporting preliminary data. The practice of harvesting, gathering, and fishing for household consumption is often said to have a central role in the social relations, diet, and household economies of coastal communities. Yet because such activities are unrecorded, they have also been beyond the reach of traditional surveys and economic studies. Because of this, though the non-commercial and largely unrecorded dimensions of subsistence seafood harvesting were likely impacted by the spill, it has not been possible to assess the magnitude of this impact on diverse communities. Our specific objectives were as follows:

A. Explore the full range of subsistence activities related to production, exchange, and use of wild resources, including such activities as sharing, gift exchange, barter, and small-scale informal sales from the harvest.

B. Identify key dynamics in the overlapping activities of commercial harvesting, household consumption, gift exchange, barter, and small-scale informal sales from the harvest. How does the relative importance of these activities shift with changing economic environment (i.e., price), seasonal demand, fluctuating supplies, environmental concerns, and other

considerations?

C. Field test and develop research methods that can produce valid, reliable, and quantifiable data on subsistence in coastal Louisiana.

D. Produce preliminary data about subsistence harvesting, exchange, and consumption. How much food is being consumed off the record? How much of the harvest is being exchanged through informal networks of trade, barter, and gifting? What is the meaning of these activities to participants?

This report addresses these objectives in four volumes: 1) a narrative analysis of findings arranged thematically, 2) field reports and ethnographic profiles focusing in detail on particular aspects of subsistence, 3) photographic essays and mapping of specific subsistence practices, and 4) an annotated bibliography of additional resources on subsistence along the GOM coast, in other parts of the US, and abroad.

The project fieldwork began in 2011 and ended in 2013. The total numbers of interviews and types of data collected are tallied in Chapter 2, Project Methodologies. In all, this pilot project involved 26 participants who maintained logs; six community scholars; four graduate students; two undergraduate classes at Nicholls State University with a total enrollment of 37 students; five focus groups; two community presentations; two festival booths; multiple presentations to academic audiences, and thousands of conversations with colleagues, co-workers, hunters, shrimpers, crabbers, and folks fishing on the side of the road.

2 Project Methodologies

2.1 Background

The field methods for this study evolved over the course of the project. This chapter covers the methods and the types of results each method produced. One of the project goals was to develop appropriate, effective, and replicable methodologies, so review, evaluation, and alteration of methods was built into the study design. The original plan leveraged resources by drawing on methodologies, contacts, community partnerships, and preliminary findings developed in ongoing Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) studies. After six months, we conducted an extensive review of the methods used with BOEM staff, outside experts, and community consultants. That review pointed to methods that should be discontinued or modified and to areas that should receive greater or lesser research effort. In this chapter, we present and evaluate each method, offering recommendations for future studies.

2.2 Study Area

The study is centered on Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes. These parishes were selected for a number of reasons. They are noted for their extensive commercial and recreational fisheries industries, as hunting and trapping areas, high harvests of wild resources, and many residents who had claims for "subsistence losses" after the *Deepwater Horizon* spill. BOEM has related ongoing research and community contacts in these areas, and Regis and Walton were able to draw on extensive community networks established during previous research. History and demographics of the area are described in Chapter 3.

2.3 Overview of Methods

Key to implementing our methods was incorporating community researchers. People who resided in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes were recruited through personal networks, word of mouth, and referral to participate as community researchers. We specifically sought out individuals whose personal networks were involved in subsistence practices and prioritized community knowledge. The community researchers had varied academic credentials, but they all had extensive knowledge about the communities in which they lived. Among these community researchers were those with previous field work hours, experience writing about their communities, and others with a strong motivation or desire to document their communities. In addition, we looked for people who were able to come to group meetings, work collaboratively and independently, who valued varied forms of knowledge (including traditional, community, scientific, and academic), and who could move fluidly across communication modes–in person, phone, email, online documents, and file sharing systems.

In some cases, we had an overlap between the categories of student researcher and community researcher. Undergraduate and graduate students who were themselves involved in subsistence or family subsistence networks served as community researchers. For the most part, however, graduate students were chosen, not because they themselves were in the community, but because they had previous experience studying the region, studying subsistence in other contexts, or had an interest in participating in the project.

Community researchers were paid for participation, compensating them for fieldwork hours, writing reports, and administration, and team meetings. Participants kept a work log, submitting the logs and monthly invoices. Because, for the most part, they were living in the communities, we did not reimburse for mileage.

The team meetings were held monthly or bimonthly in a publicly available space in either Lafourche or Terrebonne parish. Ultimately, we found that the public meeting room at the Terrebonne Parish Library was the most convenient location.

Community researchers were not merely passively collecting data. They had multiple roles in the project. Community researchers:

- were involved in piloting and/or field testing research methods and giving group feedback on the efficacy of the methods;
- recruited participants to the study, i.e., people who would keep a log or do an oral history;
- contributed aspects of their own experience with subsistence to the research team's understanding of the practices;
- reported on fieldwork at group meetings and in reports;
- helped interpret findings in research team discussions, which was key to helping shape the ideas presented in this report.

At the end of our project, all team members were invited to create two products for inclusion in this report: "field reports" and "ethnographic profiles." In this setting, the two are distinct only by their focus or emphasis. In our usage, a field report is a general report created by a team member about a subsistence practice that he or she documented in one or more fieldwork excursions, based on a condensed or more polished version of already-submitted field notes. An ethnographic profile is also a condensing of field notes, but focused more narrowly on a subsistence practitioner, rather than the larger field experience. Both types of writing are presented under the title "field reports" in Volume 2.

This project adhered to the ethical principle of informed consent for study participants. That is, people had the right to know the research project's goals and methods before deciding whether or not to participate. The general goals of the project andprincipal investigator names and contact information were printed on flyers given to participants. All researchers were trained in the process of gaining informed consent. Any participant in the study could choose to withdraw at any time without penalty. Those who contributed oral histories to the study signed written informed consents and deeds of gift to the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History at LSU. Other participants, whose identities are confidential, consented orally. They either are not named in this report or are given pseudonyms. Consent was ongoing, for the duration of someone's participation in the study, allowing them to withdraw at any time without penalty.

In all, this study used 13 approaches to studying subsistence, though these categories also overlapped in practice. As we progressed in our research, and based on an evaluation of the first six months of work, some methods emerged as more productive and new methods presented themselves. We focused our research efforts on what was working and ceased our efforts with some methods, as described below. Table 1 summarizes the methods.

Table 1. Methods Used in the Study

Method	Productivity
INTERVIEWING	
Oral history	10
Unstructured interviews	37
Informal conversations	Dozens
Drop-in observations & short interviews	More than 100
NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION	
Windshield assessments of fishing, crabbing, and roadside vending	10 trips
Photographic essays	12
PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION	
Fieldnotes	More than 200 pages
STORYTELLING / PERSONAL NARRATIVE	
Undergraduate essays	20
Festival booths	2
LOGS	
Subsistence activity and food sharing logs	26 participants More than 2,500 log entries
Freezer inventory	1
FEEDBACK	
Feedback sessions and presentations	9
Focus groups	5

The Personal Narrative methods were those in which the participants crafted their stories without guiding questions from the interviewer, whether orally or in writing. The Feedback category has sessions or presentations during which one goal was to have community members provide specific advice or guidance on the project itself as well as to comment on specific findings. Logs were tallies recorded on paper. Below we discuss each method and evaluate the results produced.

2.4 Interviews

In this project we used multiple interviewing techniques. These are distinguished from other methods that involve interaction between researchers and participants, such as festival booths or focus group sessions, because questioning was an integral part of the approach. Oral histories, unstructured interviews, short interviews, and drop-ins varied in length and level of engagement of the participant. Each is described below.

2.4.1 Oral History

These interviews were recorded, with the intention of being fully transcribed and placed in two public repositories, the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History at Louisiana State University and the Bayou Studies Center at Nicholls State University, where they will be available to the public. To this end, contributors signed permission forms to allow their interviews to be made available to future generations. Oral history interviews lasted between one and multiple hours and took place between one and multiple sessions.

As part of this research, this team conducted 10 oral histories. Those oral histories, the communities from which the person comes, and the major area or areas of subsistence in which the person is involved are listed in Table 2:

Table 2. Oral History Interviews

Name of person interviewed	Name of Interviewer	Date of Interview	Involvement	Location
Al Guarisco	Chris Adams Shana Walton	September 26, 2013 September 27, 2013	gardening	Lafourche Parish, Raceland
Arthur Bergeron	Shana Walton	August 9, 2013	gardening, shrimping, and hunting	Lafourche Parish, Chacahoula
John Serigny	Annemarie Galeucia	July 12 and 16, 2012	duck hunting	Lafourche Parish, Larose
Joe Autin	Annemarie Galeucia	February 9, 2012 July 16, 2012 Sept. 22, 2012	hunting (alligator, deer, duck, goose, turkey, pheasant)	Lafourche Parish, Cut Off
Jerome Soudelier	Audri Hubbard	July 25, 2013	shrimping, duck and deer hunting	Terrebonne Parish, Chauvin
Mary Ann Griffin	Audri Hubbard	July 25, 2013 November 20, 2013 July 30, 2014	gardening	Terrebonne Parish, Chauvin
Glynn Trahan	Audri Hubbard	July 25, 2013	shrimping, alligator farming, hunting (duck, deer)	Terrebonne Parish, Chauvin
Richard Borne	Mike Saunders	January 19, 2012 Feb. 26, 2012 June 11, 2012	hunting (deer, rabbit)	Lafourche Parish, Labadieville
Bo-Glo	Mike Saunders	Feb. 26, 2012	deer hunting	Lafourche Parish, Labadieville
Troy Parras	Shana Walton	April 9, 2011	shrimping, duck hunting	Terrebonne Parish, Dulac

Oral histories are a rich source of information, but require considerable investment. Full-length oral histories, to be thorough and robust primary documents, must be conducted by trained interviewers working with participants willing to take the time and have their interviews made

publicly available. They are also time consuming to record and require transcription, adding to the cost. The small number of these interviews employed in this project indicates the time-intensive nature of this method, which should be taken into consideration when planning future research.

Though some in-depth interviewing may be necessary, another way to access these perspectives is to draw on the many oral history archives that exist. For example, BOEM oral history archives recorded to document the history of the offshore oil industry were a rich source of material for this project. Though most of the interviews were not specifically about subsistence, the topic is so common that references abounded. Other oral history repositories not used for this project include: the history of the two parishes, recordings by the United Houma Nation and the Pointe-au-Chien tribe, and a series funded by the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Preservation and Restoration Act. Future projects should survey these archival recordings.

2.4.2 Unstructured Interviews

Lengthy, unstructured interviews were interviews with one person that lasted from 30 minutes to more than an hour. They were very similar to oral history interviews, however, the person did not want the interview placed in a public repository and wanted to remain anonymous. Often the interview was recorded, the interview was transcribed for the purposes of the report only, then the recording was destroyed. In cases where the interview was not recorded team members made extensive notes during the interview.

We conducted 37 lengthy, unstructured interviews for this project. Table 3 lists each lengthy interview, with major area of subsistence, gender of the person, approximate age, and parish and/or location for each of these sessions. We note whether the subsistence activity is recreational, commercial, or both. In some cases, not all categories of information were collected from all participants. The chart descriptions show that we talked with people in all areas of subsistence, from alligator hunting and frogging to commercial shrimpers. We included participants at all levels, from those who held full-time jobs and were "weekend warriors" to people who earned their living from wild harvest, from families who ate an occasional wild-caught dinner to people who filled freezers every year and depended on those stores to supply meals weekly.

Table 3. Interview Participants

Sex	Age	Parish and/or Town	Primary Occupation	Other subsistence
M		Terrebonne, Houma	Charter fishing guide	
M		Lafourche, Larose	Mechanic, commercial alligator hunter, crabbing	Duck hunting
F				Deer hunting
F				Deer hunting
F				Deer hunting
M	40s	Baton Rouge	Government official	Waterfowl hunting, dog training
M		Terrebonne, Dulac	Shrimper	Duck, deer hunting (in Miss.)
M	40s	Terrebonne, Dulac	Community organizer	Fishing, gardener
M	50s	Terrebonne, Pointe-aux-Chenes	Shrimper, crabber, oysterman	Fishes, duck hunts, gardens
M		Terrebonne, Chauvin	Shrimper, alligator hunting for tourists	Duck hunting
F	20s	Lafourche, Thibodaux	Student	Fishing–some hunting, but mostly her dad duck hunts
F	20s	Lafourche, Thibodaux	Student	Fishing, duck hunting
M	36	Terrebonne, Dulac	Shrimper, carpente, electrical work	No time
M	30s	Terrebonne, Dulac	Shrimper, fishes flounder for extra wages	
M	54	Terrebonne, Chauvin	Fishing guide, shrimper	Duck hunting
F	50s	Terrebonne, Chauvin	Fishing guide, shrimper (wife of, also works in the business)	Helps with trapping
M		Terrebonne, Chauvin	Shrimper, retired	Duck hunting, fishing, frogging, alligator hunting
M		Terrebonne, Chauvin	Shrimper	Duck hunting, fishing, frogging
F	50s	Lafourche Parish, Thibodaux	College professor	Fishing–built own camp on Lake Verret
M	60s	Caddo Parish		
M		Terrebonne Parish, Houma	Shrimper	
F	70s	Terrebonne Parish, Dularge	Retired	Gardener, keeps chickens
M	70s	Terrebonne Parish, Dularge	Retired, tried greenhouse business, but it did not work. LSU cooperative extension	Gardener
M		Terrebonne Parish, Chauvin		Fishing, shrimping

Sex	Age	Parish and/or Town	Primary Occupation	Other subsistence
M		Terrebonne Parish, Houma	Seafood marketing	Fishes
F	60s	Terrebonne Parish, Pointe-aux- Chenes	Retired, wife of shrimper	Fishing, crabbing, gardening
F	40s	Terrebonne Parish, Pointe-aux-chenes	Wife of shrimper	Gardening, raising chickens
F	70s	Terrebonne Parish, Point-aux-chenes	Retired, wife of shrimper	Gardening, fishing
F	70s	Terrebonne Parish, Dularge	Housewife, now-retired husband was in oilfield	Gardening
M	30s	Terrebonne Parish	Fire house worker	Shrimp, fish, duck hunt
F	50s	Terrebonne Parish, Pointe-aux-chenes	Shrimp factory worker	Fishes
M	60s	Terrebonne Parish, Pointe-aux-chenes	Retired, oilfield worker	Crabbing, fishing, duck hunting, raises chickens and ducks
M	50s	Bossier Parish		Hunting, duck and deer
M	80s	Calcasieu Parish		Hunting and fishing
M	60s	Calcasieu Parish		Hunting and fishing
M	50s	Bossier Parish		Hunting, duck and deer, fishing
M	50s	Bossier Parish		Hunting, duck and deer, fishing

This method was one of the most productive we used. We would ask permission to take notes or record, and most people willingly gave their consent. These interviews generated many of the quotes in this report, as well as led to further interviews. We recommend use of this method in future research.

2.4.3 Short Interviews

Short interviews were casual conversations that lasted from 10 to 30 minutes, were seldom recorded, and all participants are anonymous. Many of the short interviews were unstructured and conversational. We do not have a tally of total drop-in and short interviews, but they numbered in the dozens. The venues were varied. For instance, the team members often took notes from conversations during participatory events. Team members participated in hunts, crab boils, community festivals, sportsmen's meetings, end-of-year dinners, camp parties and celebrations–basically any event to which we were invited or could attend–where they spoke with other attendees. One of the Principal Investigators, Shana Walton, works at Nicholls State University in Lafourche Parish, where talk in the halls or elsewhere on campus would often touch on subsistence issues.

Notes were taken when possible. When notes were not recorded, memories from these informal conversations became the building blocks for a deep understanding of the region. Everyday conversation, in community, over time, is the foundation of ethnographic understanding. In

casual, short conversations, people relay not only specific information but, more importantly, an understanding of how pervasive the topic is, how important in their lives, how tied to their own identities. Though very revealing, this method is time consuming: the only way to have participated in a multitude of these kinds of conversations is to be in the region for long stretches of time.

2.4.4 Drop-ins

Drop-ins were short, structured interviews used to collect data for this project. This method was developed by members of the subsistence research team and was modeled in part on the drop-in interview methods employed by the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology (BARA) as part of an effort to document the socio-economic impacts of the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* disaster on coastal communities (Austin et al. 2014). In that study, drop-ins provided a rapid assessment to gauge the socio-economic impacts of the spill on a wide variety of residents and businesses in coastal communities. Researchers walked or drove through an area (down a linear street or bayou) or crisscrossed a neighborhood, stopping to enter businesses or other public place and speak with people there. In the BARA study, residents, business owners, and community members were asked how they were impacted by the oil spill and aftermath.

For this study, the method was modified to focus on known fishing spots or transects of road known to often attract fishers (see below for a discussion of transects). Conversations typically began in the way of an ordinary conversation about fishing (using informational conversational style) and then the researcher would introduce herself or himself and explain why he or she was interested and ask for permission to take hand-written notes. At this point we gave our university affiliation(s), briefly related the nature of the research project and the funding agency, and explained that names would not be used in our notes, but we would like their permission to share what we learned from them about their experiences fishing. Conversations were not scripted, but often included the following questions or topics, phrased differently by each researcher:

- Are you catching anything today?
- What are you fishing for?
- What are you going to do with your catch (cook it tonight, freeze it, share it with family/friends).
- How do you prepare it? (for example, fried garfish balls).
- How often do you fish?
- Do you usually come to this spot or other places?
- Do you live in the area?

These questions were often followed by efforts to estimate the length of their drive, as many fishers who spoke with us drove a fair distance south down the bayou. We found roadside fishers reporting that an hour or two of driving is not unusual and some were driving even further. People often spontaneously volunteered information about their connections to this fishing spot, or to other places where they usually fished, their place of residence, and how they first came to be introduced to this fishing spot (for example, fished here when growing up, first came with a friend). An exploration of those roadside produce stand and fishing assessments can be found Volumes 2 and 3.

Where possible, age, gender, and ethnicity were noted (from observation). We found this method worked especially well for those involved in roadside fishing because they were often waiting and had time on their hands (See Figure 1). One elderly African-American man in his 70s who was fishing with a similarly aged friend was ministering to members of his congregation on his cell phone while fishing. We talked to grandfathers fishing with their grandsons, a mother fishing with her son, and, friends and age-mates fishing together and, of course, lots of people fishing solo (mostly men).

Figure 1. Roadside fishing.

A man takes an alligator gar out of his net in Pointe-aux-chênes Bayou. Photo by Shana Walton.

This field method was not used until later in the study. It proved to be a valuable way of meeting a wide variety of people, most of whom were very willing to share basic information about their fishing or crabbing activities. We suggest its adoption in future studies.

2.5 Non-Participant Observation

The Non-Participant Observation category includes two methods: transects and photography. Though distinct, these methods share the fact that the researcher or community partner could interact minimally or not at all with other people. Of the methods in this study, these were the most experimental.

2.5.1 Transects

A method employed in summer and fall of 2013 to identify the embeddedness and saturation of subsistence activities throughout the community involved highway transects to measure the density of roadside farm stands, both active and latent. The method consists of driving a stretch of road and noting all roadside stands, identifying the products sold and, where possible, reporting a short observation or conversation with the vendor and/or clients. Though these observations are preliminary and small scale, they provide useful information about the distribution of subsistence activities and small scale food harvesting, processing, and exchange.

This method was developed in conversation with team members in the spring of 2012. Four fieldworkers participated in recording transects. Their multiple backgrounds and range of familiarity with the region produced reports that varied greatly in the type of stands recorded. Of the fieldworkers, two were anthropologists and two were community members, one with a background in science and conservation and the other with a background in oral history.

Chris Adams's roadside stand transect took place in October of 2013. Adams's fieldnotes include no names, and, though his original fieldnotes have GPS coordinates, these are not included in the report. He recorded and logged both active and inactive roadside stands. Roadside stands may be seasonal but the signs often stay up year round. For example, a citrus box may sit on the side of the road, even when citrus is not in season. Adams decided to log all stands as an indication of the saturation of household-based sales. Audriana Hubbard's roadside stand transect took place in June 2013 and yielded fewer instances, in part because she focused on larger stands and operations and limited her count to those involved in active sales. In the summer of 2014 Duet approached her transect by starting in a community where she knew the owner of a roadside stand, and concentrated her fieldwork on a group of stands in one community, Raceland. Shauna Walton's roadside stand transects, run in October 2012 and May 2013 accounted for both active and inactive sites but were limited to one road.

Because of the differences in the four approaches, the conclusions reached by each fieldworker in debriefing sessions varied as to the frequency and importance of such stands. Fortunately, the range of reports provided complementary information that allowed us to draw important conclusions. For example, though the transect by Adams showed the pervasiveness of micro-entrepreneurship in the communities, the transect by Hubbard revealed the lack of local produce in the larger stands on Highway 90.

For more uniform results, fieldworkers can be trained first by accompanying a researcher or community member who is familiar with the area in order to learn to identify the visual cues for what might constitute a "produce stand." For example, it might be only a sign taped to a mail box that says, perhaps, "Mustard Greens." When there are no greens, the person in the house might turn the sign toward the mailbox. The sign turned toward the mailbox in June (when mustard greens are out of season) would be logged as a "produce stand." Walton did this kind of training with Adams, thus shaping the results of that transect.

We found that transects produce invaluable information on the density of gardening and subsistence activities in the region that allows us to make inferences on the importance of these practices to small household economies. As used in this project, none of the researchers used identical approaches. This was useful because it produced observations on a wide range of phenomena and allowed us to evaluate these different approaches. In future studies, fieldworkers could be trained to all follow the same method, which would produce more directly comparable data and facilitate database creation.

2.5.2 Photography

The use of photography in this study arose organically, from the interests of the fieldworkers and participants. Some community researchers found photography to be their favorite method of documentation, providing a way to capture what they saw as important or interesting. Our project resulted in dozens of photographs, many of which are reproduced in photo essays in Volume 3. These essays were composed by both graduate students and community researchers.

Photography is a method that could be expanded in future studies. Its use is facilitated by the ubiquity of cell phone cameras and the comfort people have with recording for social media. Photography, with appropriate permissions, could serve as a form of log or diary for participants. Hunting and gardening participants could be encouraged to photograph meals and hunting or fishing trips or projects with youth or college students might be particularly well suited.

2.6 Fieldnotes and Field Reports

As part of our study design, fieldworkers and community researchers were requested to keep notes of their experiences and impressions, recording information beyond responses to interviews about subsistence activities or factual information about the communities. The experiences discussed in the fieldnotes range from step-by-step processes of a particular subsistence activity and noting relationships or interactions among study participants to emotional reactions to events and personal experiences remembered by the fieldworkers of their own histories with subsistence. The result was more than 200 pages describing participation in hunting, fishing, and harvesting activities. Many of the fieldnotes were quite lengthy. We sampled the richness of these notes in Volume 2, which consists almost entirely of the field reports and ethnographic profiles generated specifically for this project from raw field notes.

For the purposes of this study, we were more interested in exploring how the community researchers approached the work and seeing what they identified as important than in having consistent approaches. Because of this, we did only minimal training on the requirements for fieldnotes. As was to be expected, our fieldworkers and community researchers came from disparate backgrounds, so their approaches to fieldnotes varied. One community researcher from a science background has precise detailed notes about locations and items seen. Other community researchers have less detail and focus more on their own reactions and knowledge about the area. The notes by anthropology graduate students were quite uniform in the type of information included, reflecting their ethnographic training. All of these forms are valid approaches to the task, depending on the requirements of a specific project. As with transects, to obtain more uniform results, future researchers could offer more training in fieldnotes.

As noted in our overview, our fieldworkers and community participants were invited to use their fieldnotes to create two types of final products to include with this report: field reports and ethnographic profiles. Both are condensed from field notes, made into a more readable narrative, and presented with the goal of being readable by a wide audience. Most of our community researchers wrote either a field report or an ethnographic profile, and all of the graduate students contributed such products. In all cases, we sent the profiles and reports to the people we wrote about. Some chose to review them and offer comments. For example, not only did Richard Borne read the field reports about his deer camp and his family's rabbit hunt, but the report was circulated to other members of his hunting club and all of his grandchildren. He actually has kept the reports as a gift to pass down to future generations. His corrections included a small revision to the size of the boat used in the deer hunt and a request to omit a curse word. Many reviewed the reports as thoroughly as Richard; others chose to review only cursorily or declined to read what they saw as a lengthy write-up.

2.7 Storytelling and Personal Narrative

As part of the methodology for this project, we included opportunities for participants to present their narratives on subsistence practices as they chose. This included festival booths inviting people to tell their stories and college student essays. We found both to be productive methods for eliciting personal details on subsistence practices.

2.7.1 Festival Booths

Festivals are important in the social life of South Louisiana. Louisiana has more than 400 festivals per year, and the state calls itself the "Festival Capital of America" (Dept. of Culture, Recreation & Tourism 2016). For two years, 2011 and 2013, we set up a booth at the Chauvin Folk Art Festival, with a sign inviting people to tell us their stories of the oil spill or hunting and harvesting. The small festival, located on the grounds of the Chauvin Sculpture Garden on the banks of Bayou Petit Caillou, coincides with the annual Blessing of the Fleet. Most of the people who attend are local; many come because the Sculpture Garden provides a good view of the boats passing. The festival has a music stage, locals provide food for sale, and area artists sell their work. In addition, some nonprofits, including Bayou Grace and the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, set up educational tables. We were offered a free booth space both years by the festival organizers, who are affiliated with Nicholls State University, which manages the Chauvin Sculpture Garden.

Both years more than a dozen people stopped to chat and tell their stories and many volunteered to participate in follow-up interviews. The response to the project was overwhelmingly positive. The booth allowed us researchers an opportunity to talk about the project to the general public in a comfortable setting. In addition, we gathered general information about the pervasiveness and importance of subsistence activities. For instance, one man who had a full-time job explained that hunting and harvesting activities were the foundation of his yearly round. He said, "We hunt in the winter, fish in the summer, and sometimes we go to Houma to work." He emphasized that his interests and energy were focused on subsistence, not his job. When he said this at the booth his friends all laughed and agreed, as did others, who all said, "That's the truth!" We recommend that future research on the topic employ this method as a way to publicize the study and gather basic data from the general public.

This experience also exposed another avenue for research not explored in this study: material culture. Festivals are sites where researchers can see the importance of subsistence through subsistence-themed material culture. For example, when we attended the Shrimp and Petroleum Festival in Morgan City in 2012, we noted multiple booths that catered to subsistence sensibilities: Christmas ornaments and house decorations made from oyster shells, fish scales or crawfish bodies (preserved in shellac); baby clothes and toddler dresses in camouflage; and signs and carvings with quips or sayings about hunting and fishing. These festivals show the degree to which subsistence practices are commodified in material objects not directly related to harvesting. When we talked to people in the booths, we found that many of them were former shrimpers or hunters who were now able to make either a full-time or part-time income from the aesthetics of hunting and harvesting practices. All of the booth operators said the demand for such objects is high. Future research could explore the relationship between this market for decorative objects and the pervasiveness of subsistence practice.

2.7.2 College Student Essays

One method we found to be unexpectedly productive and beneficial was working with local university students within a college course. For this reason, we describe the process at length here, including background on the participants. Walton, one of the PIs, teaches at Nicholls State, a four-year university located in Thibodaux, Lafourche Parish. At Nicholls, many undergraduates are first-generation college students. Walton adapted a freshman English Composition course to train her students to do ethnographic research and writing with projects on their own communities. It was the first time anyone had ever assigned an ethnographic project in that course. The students were provided with basic training in ethnographic methods and concepts and asked to document and analyze their family's subsistence practices. To do this, Walton drew on her long apprenticeship in public folklore and community-based oral history methods and, specifically, her work in partnership with the state folklore program in teacher education. Maida Owens developed The Louisiana Voices project out of the office of the Division of the Arts, Folklife Program, a state initiative within the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism. Owens chronicled the history of this project to produce *Louisiana Voices: An Educator's Guide to Exploring Our Communities and Traditions* (2011). This made decades of folklore research available to educators and provided learning objectives in accessible lesson plans. A major aspect of the project is to make students aware that everyone has folklore (Owens 2011). Or, as anthropologists would say it**:** everyone has culture.

Most Nicholls students come from bayou towns and communities, or had parents who moved out of those areas into the larger towns of Houma and Thibodaux. Therefore, many are only one generation removed from the subsistence activities that have permeated coastal live in this region. They are, in many ways, immersed in subsistence heritage without knowing it. By encouraging them to talk to parents or grandparents about their culinary practices and subsistence harvesting, this project created an opportunity for undergraduates to become aware that they had a culture and a cultural heritage. It also gave them a chance to listen to their elders—especially their grandparents—and to become more conscious and articulate about cultural lessons that had until then only been transmitted tacitly or implicitly.

In practice, students were initially resistant to the project. They claimed not to know anything about subsistence and or anyone involved in subsistence. Apparently, for many Nicholls students, the whole reason for going to college was to get away from the occupations of their family and neighbors: to get away from crabbing and shrimping and to create other opportunities for themselves. Basic training in ethnography enabled them to push past their initial denials that they "knew nothing" about subsistence lifestyles. For many of them, connecting with older siblings, parents, and especially grandparents (either their own or those of their classmates) created an opportunity to see their own personal networks' deep involvements in food harvesting and sharing and the links between these practices and the ability to maintain important social relationships of family and community. Themes of place attachment, regional pride, and spiritual-psychological well-being emerged repeatedly in many of the student papers. We draw on the student papers for examples throughout this report and discuss them in some detail in our essay on community identity. Some of them are reproduced, with permission, in Appendix B.

We recommend this method to future scholars of subsistence in coastal Louisiana or other regions. We found incorporating a subsistence unit into students' coursework to be beneficial on multiple levels: as a venue for technical education on writing and research, as an outreach strategy to educate students about their own cultural heritage, as an introduction to the value and

relevance of ethnographic methods, and as a contribution to data collection and analysis for the research project. If the PIs were not teaching, or taught outside the study area, many of these ends could also be achieved by partnering with faculty and instructors in four-year and community colleges within the study area who were willing to participate in the study and add an equivalent unit to their courses.

2.8 Logs

A number of diaries and logs were used in this project, including food diaries, hunting and fishing journals, and freezer and pantry logs, all of which are discussed here. Through community feedback, internal discussion, and trial-and-error, we revised our plans for the diaries and logs, and, by the end of the study, the methodology had been considerably refined. Here we discuss how these logs were initially planned, how they were used in practice, and one method that we discarded as unsuitable for this project but that could be productive in other circumstances.

2.8.1 Food Diaries as Planned

Study participants to participate in food diaries would be selected by the PI and co-PI in consultation with the community researcher. Participants in this part of the project would be selected for a diversity of relationships to subsistence foods and activities. Participants would write down what they eat daily and which of these foods are: store bought, grown in a backyard garden or harvested (such as shrimp or oysters), hunted, or received from an independent harvester and/or vendor as gifts, barter, trade, or purchased. These diaries would be collected weekly by a member of the research team or in an online space created for the participants to log on and submit their records. The researchers would check in frequently, either to collect diaries or elicit more in-depth responses. They would also monitor the process, asking, for example, if people had any difficulty in filling out their diaries and whether there is anything significant they did not record. The collector would note these remarks and make recommendations for improving the forms and methods, which would be incorporated recursively into the study. Our goal was to have four to five families keeping diaries in each of the communities where we have established community partnerships: a minimum of 20 food diaries by the end of the study. At least half of the diaries would be long-term, while the other half may be kept for a shorter number of weeks.

2.8.2 Hunting and/or Fishing Journals as Planned

It was intended that study participants be selected by the PIs with consultation with the community researchers. They would keep a hunting or fishing journal for the length of the study. The intent was to have between 10 and 15 journals. Each month, participants would record all activities related to wild food harvesting, with whom and where the events took place, and the harvest amounts. The journals would be confidential in order to encourage candor. They would be collected monthly by a research team member, one of the cooperative organizations or uploaded to an online site. Some hunting clubs, such as the Brule Hunting Club of Labadieville, already keep similar journals and had informally agreed to share their journals with the PIs at the end of each season.

2.8.3 Diaries and Journals in Practice

To develop these logs we worked with a community scholar and a focus group consisting of members of the Little Caillou Volunteer Fire Department in Chauvin, Louisiana. Originally, we used separate logs to capture hunting and harvesting activities as distinct from sharing and cooking. However, as we continued to discuss the logs in team meetings, enter the data into a spreadsheet, and try to analyze the emerging data, it became clear that the separate activities were linked and would be captured and represented better by inclusion in a single log. The log forms themselves asked people what they hunted or harvested, how much, whether or not they shared, with whom, and then what they ate. There was also space to record a narrative descriptions about what happened. The resulting, combined log is included in the appendices (see Appendix A).

The PIs found it challenging to recruit participants who were willing to complete the logs. Initially, we anticipated that we would primarily recruit hunters, fishers, or shrimpers. In practice, we found that, on the whole, the gardeners in the region were more eager to participate in log keeping, while hunters, fishers, and shrimpers were less eager. This is likely due to the fact that gardening is not regulated by Wildlife and Fisheries, reducing potential concerns over surveillance. As one member of the study team reflected that the physical, visual aspect of the garden also worked to facilitate conversation:

> I think the garden is the real key here, and I was missing it. All I have to do is ride up and down here and … if I don't have a that personal connection, I can at least ride up and down and see the gardens and then go knock on the door. And I find that for the most part anybody who keeps a garden, they're just very warm, proud of their work, and they're very sharing people.

We dealt with this challenge by engaging participants' social networks. Because gardeners overall were more interested in keeping logs, we worked through their networks to identify hunters and fishers who were also willing to participate. A total of 26 individual people participated in keeping logs. People's names and addresses were not attached to the logs or to information from the logs. Instead, the information from each log was recorded under a unique code referencing the fieldworker or community researcher, not by the name of the participant.

In practice, participants had varied levels of engagement with the logging process. It became clear that some people were happy to share with community scholars what they had harvested or hunted, shared or exchanged, cooked or preserved during a week, but did not want take the time or did not feel they had the time to complete a log. Most people did not write the information down themselves, but reported it to a researcher who wrote it down for them. Other people were willing to keep a log for a few weeks only. Others were not only willing to keep the logs themselves, but kept them for months. In summary:

- 26 people recorded more than 2,500 instances of individual subsistence actions between October 2001 and October 2013.
- The average (mean) length of time a person kept a log was 2.8 months, and the modal time was 1 month.
- The individual with the longest participation kept a detailed log for 10 months.
- Two participants kept logs for seven months each.

- Most people did not keep their own logs. Instead, community scholars would call them two or three times a week and ask them what they had harvested, eaten, or shared and would then make notes, filling out the logs for them.

In an optimistic hope of running some analysis comparing different practices, we coded all of the activities. Coding initially seemed straightforward, but we realized later that it was often problematic. For example, the logs show about 844 separate instances of sharing in more than 2,500 entries. However, in looking over several days, we noticed that people often only recorded each food item only once even if the item went through several interactions: harvesting, sharing, re-sharing. For example, a person reported catching a fish that they coded as "hunting." In the narrative they noted that they then gave away the fish. However, they did not code that they shared the fish. So, many instances of sharing did not get coded. Or, conversely, if someone coded something as shared, they might not have coded the fact that they harvested it first.

Though the narrative section created difficulties for coding, in writing this report and in our team meetings discussing the logs, we have often found the narratives to be the most enlightening. For one thing, people often leave information out of the lists. For instance, lists of food harvested might not include all of the foods discussed in their narrative. Something about the logs encourages brevity and points to quantification as the goal. However, the stories offer space for participants to describe the meaning of subsistence foods, their role in a meal, and the quality of the relationships among people who are sharing from the garden, the hunt, or their fishing trips. For example, here is one of Evelyn's narratives from a self-recorded journal:

> We killed a rooster that our neighbor no longer wanted and cooked him in a chicken stew. Delicious! Also harvested parsley and satsumas this day. Homemade satsuma juice.

Though all of her harvesting activities were recorded separately, in those short sentences, we gain significant information about her relationship with her neighbor, the cooking method for an older rooster, and her enjoyment of the meal.

In analysis we edited out items of food shared, and compiled a word list of harvested foods in the region. To make a stronger visual impact of their relative importance, we display the results below in the form of a word cloud. The relative size of the words represents the relative frequency of the item harvested or hunted, according to our logs, as illustrated in Figure 2.

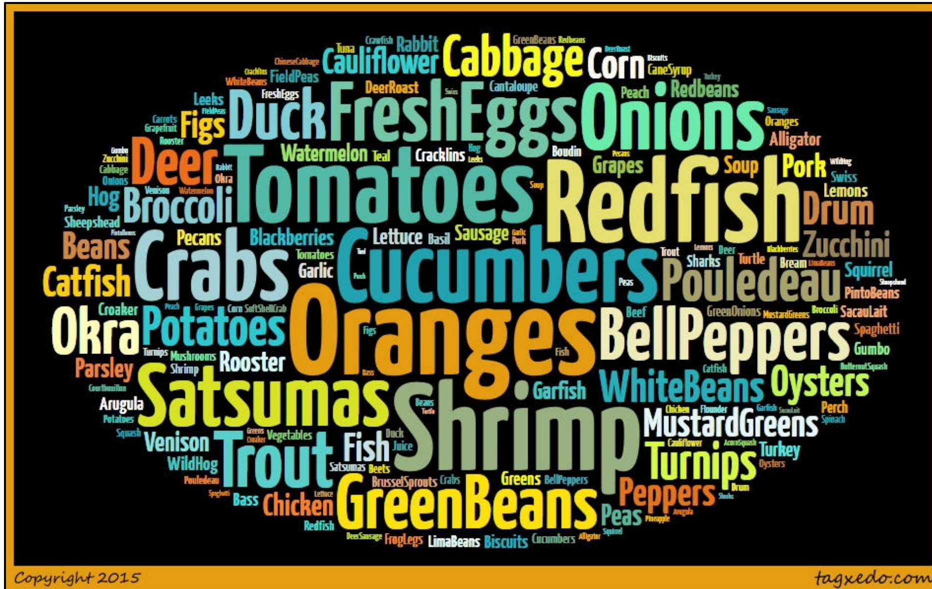

Figure 2. Relative frequencies of items harvested in Terrebonne and Lafourche.

In this report, we present some preliminary information from the logs. We expect to analyze them more fully in the future, and we anticipate that future studies can combine our efforts with theirs to form more robust images of subsistence in the region or across regions.

Our evaluation of the logs is that they did provide useful information. Although it was interesting to have families keep them for multiple months, it was seen by some to be a burden. It might be more useful to have a wider variety of participants keep them for one or two months. The most effective approach we found was for the community scholar to talk with the participant two or three times a week, recording the information and capturing the narratives with hand-written notes. Once-a-week calls were, for most people, too seldom. Individuals could not remember meals. Calls every day were too intrusive. As an alternative to the calls, one participant suggested that we develop a mobile app, and that might be something for future studies to explore.

2.8.4 Freezer and Pantry Inventories

The final kind of food log investigated by this project was inventories of freezers and pantries. Freezer and pantry inventories were used early in the study but were dropped after preliminary efforts proved them to be difficult to implement. The logic for including these inventories was this: much wild food is harvested in quantities too great to consume at one sitting. Families often own one or two freezers to preserve their harvests. In some cases, with some garden foods, items are canned and stored in pantries. Freezers and pantries, then, can contain a record of up to a year's harvest. In addition, freezers and pantries reveal patterns of gift exchange as they often hold the excess harvest of neighbors and friends. Some elderly people in the bayou communities no longer participate in wild harvesting but keep a freezer, which is filled by the harvesting of children and neighbors. Documenting the contents of pantries and freezers, therefore, should capture these patterns of distribution and seasonal variation.

Also, freezer inventories are not foreign to people in South Louisiana. Participants told us that they have inventoried the contents of their freezers on insurance claims. This illustrates that the contents are seen as valuable. The publication of these freezer inventories is also not entirely foreign. In a cookbook that features stories and recipes from 33 neighborhood cooks from Orleans, Jefferson, and St. Bernard Parishes, Hahne (2008) asks the cooks to list what had been lost in their refrigerators during Hurricane Katrina. The 33 cooks list many food items that had been procured through harvesting and hunting, including fish, shrimp, venison, duck, blueberries, figs, and stuffed mirlitons (Hahne 2008:207-208).

As originally designed, freezer and pantry inventories would unfold this way: the participants in the study, working with researchers, would document the contents of their freezers and pantries once a month for the length of the study. The monthly changes in the freezer contents would show consumption patterns as well as fluctuations in surplus over time. The inventory could be made by a research team member or by the families themselves and either collected by the research team or uploaded to an online space. Our goal was to have inventories of at least 20 freezers, at least half of those over the course of a year.

Initial conversations with community contacts, including two focus groups, found enthusiastic support for this method. Those consulted were certain that these inventories would reveal important dimensions of wild harvesting and sharing practices. However, when we moved from talking about freezer inventories to attempting to implement them, participants' level of interest fell. Notes from a research meeting to evaluate our research methods for inclusion in an interim report provide this evaluation of the freezer inventories:

> Freezer inventories are a concern–clearly some participants are worried about visibility. Our methods are just too weird or too intrusive. Two gardening groups are participating. Some are willing to do logs, but not freezer inventories. (02/30/2012)
>
> We believe that freezer inventories could provide useful data for a study of subsistence.

However, for future research we suggest that this data would best be collected from sources that had already built trust in working with a researcher or community partner. When we tried to recruit community members to begin their participation in the project with the freezer or pantry inventory, people found the exercise burdensome and intrusive. Instead, people who had developed trust with the researchers over the course of interviews or who had kept a log for a month or two might be prime candidates for participating in a freezer or pantry inventory.

2.9 Feedback

This project included multiple opportunities for participants or the interested public to provide feedback. These took the form of focus groups and feedback sessions. In total, feedback opportunities spanned the length of the project, helping researchers refine their approaches and analyses.

2.9.1 Focus Groups

Focus groups included discussions about subsistence among a group of three of more people, facilitated by a researcher. The discussion was documented through notes or voice recordings. All participants were anonymous.

Five focus groups were held from 2011 through 2014. The first focus took place in 2011 in the conference room at a local fire department. The chief, who invited the researchers to hold the even there, and several fire department members, discussed what they felt were the most important issues for us to focus on, what data we should be collecting, and how we should collect it. The second focus group, held in 2013, was in the home of a community researcher in Pointe-aux-Chênes who gathered a group of avid gardeners around her dining room table. There, we discussed the project, how to document gardening, and participants' histories of gardening. Three additional focus groups took place with a group of Louisiana state employees, a civic association, and parish church volunteers. In each case, we generally discussed the topic and our approach, seeking 1) feedback to refine or expand our methods, 2) review and critique for our logs, and 3) their support for or problems with our observations to date and tentative conclusions. The idea of specific focus groups was not a method outlined in our original proposal. In practice, its execution was often fairly impromptu, in that we would learn a group of people were willing to meet and we would grab the opportunity and schedule a session. In each case, the sessions were insightful and worthwhile. We highly recommend that future researchers work with community scholars to schedule regular, small community focus groups as a form of structured feedback apart from the feedback sessions with larger community groups.

2.9.2 Feedback Sessions

The researchers discussed preliminary results of the project with multiple audiences, including two formal presentations scheduled with community members and seven presentations to scholarly audiences who had an interest is subsistence–either because they documented the topic or lived in the state. The two community sessions took the form of short presentations followed by audience feedback and responses. Research team members took notes of feedback and responses, which were also, at times, digitally recorded. All participants were anonymous.

On the invitation of a women's civic and charitable organization in Lafourche Parish, the PIs presented preliminary findings at a monthly meeting in March 2014. Also in March 2014 we were invited to present to a group of graduate students at Nicholls State University. Many of these students were natives of the region and others who worked with subsistence issues in the region. Comments from both these audiences were documented and incorporated into the report.

Our feedback into the report included information gleaned from academic presentations, which, in Louisiana (and at national meetings) often included subsistence practitioners. We presented at meetings in the state that included the Louisiana Folklore Society, the Louisiana Academy of Sciences and the Nicholls Bayou Studies program, as well as to graduate students at LSU in French and in Geography and Anthropology. National presentations included ones the Society for Applied Anthropology, and American Anthropology Association, and the American Folklore Society. In each case, we fielded many questions and had colleagues critique our methods and conclusions.

In all of these sessions, we consistently received one response that was the same from all of the audiences, whether academic or community: several audience members would always rise to tell us their own subsistence practice experiences and how important it was to their identity, heritage, or culture. They would often tell us that they felt this area of study was neglected and urge us to complete our work.

2.10 Team meetings

Due to the volume and breadth of information gathered and analyzed in this project, we found it useful to have team meetings. During the height of the fieldwork, members of the research team met monthly or bi-monthly around a seminar table. Members took turns reporting on their fieldwork as others listened and asked questions. The research team was diverse, including both members of the communities being studied and outsiders and novices and experts in subsistence practices. Because several members of the research group are themselves participants in subsistence harvesting, processing, and sharing networks, these meetings sometimes took on the tenor of a focus group. Those with the most experience with harvesting, sharing, and preparing specific foods would explain these processes to others. This practice was especially helpful over the course of the project because it created a situation where different forms of knowledge and expertise were valorized and questions could be answered.

2.11 Ethnicity

As an exploratory study, this project was not designed to compare the subsistence practices between different social, cultural, or ethnic groups. Though our research team members spoke with members of many different social, cultural, ethnic, or racial communities, we did not systematically attempt to create representative samples. Rather, tasked with exploring the range of subsistence activities in the region, we attempted to note, where possible, the identities (expressed or ascribed) of people with whom we were in conversation. Many, if not most, of our study participants are Coastal Louisiana residents of Cajun, French, and/or Native American heritage. Some explicitly claimed such identities, and others expressed cultural affinities to these groups through language, humor, storytelling, or other expressions. Asian Americans, Latina/os, Hispanics, and African Americans appear in our fieldnotes, several of the drop-in conversations, and anonymous conversations during fieldwork. We include mentions of ethnicity or group identity when people note it as important or connected to their subsistence practices. However, this work does not tease out those connections explicitly. Future studies focusing on subsistence practices in the region may seek to explore whether and how those practices operate differently within specific social, ethnic, and cultural communities, will likely make special effort to recruit participants within those groups.

2.12 Recommendations

1. Expand drop-in interviewing. Future studies could consider using drop-in methods to include marinas and docks where duck hunters put in their boats to access their leases. As one researcher said during a team meeting:

> Most people just talk, and if they don't they're in an awful big hurry. People talk at that landing. They want to talk about what they're doing and where they've been and what they shot and whether it was a good day or a bad day, or what they caught as far as fishing goes. Cause the landing, you've got to launch your boat to

go duck hunting. To get to the leases, [this also holds for some] deer hunting some people.

2. Conduct freezer and pantry inventories with participants who already have substantial participation in other parts of the project. We believe that freezer inventories could provide a tremendous amount of detailed information. People who are already participating in the study would more likely have sufficient trust to be willing to engage in freezer inventories.

3. Recruit people to keep logs for one month. Most participants in this study only wanted to keep a log for one month. Future studies should be designed to incorporate that as a strength and not a limitation.

4. Recruit graduate students and community researchers to keep logs and fieldnotes about their own participation in subsistence activities.

5. Widen the focus to include more information about consumption: cooking, food preparation, and food consumption; the aesthetics of hunting, fishing, and gardening; and subsistence-themed material culture. Over the course of this study it became apparent in listening to people talk that they wanted to talk as much about cooking as about hunting, and about the beauty of their gardens. Subsistence-themed material culture was commonly purchased and used. To separate out harvesting from consuming is artificial: all parts are value-added dimensions of subsistence activities.

6. Work with more college or high school students. This portion of the project was especially productive and brought multiple secondary benefits. In future research it could be expanded to teach students to document the local culture or develop auto-ethnographic writing projects about subsistence.

7. Expand community partnerships. Working with community researchers was a highly effective research strategy and should be a considerable portion of any budgeting consideration.

8. Consider whether and how subsistence practices occur differently across social, ethnic, and cultural communities.

3 Terrebonne and Lafourche: A Brief History of the Region

3.1 Native American Land Use and Early Colonization

Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes have been occupied by humans for as long as humans have been in this region, which is at least 12,000 years (Kniffen and Hilliard 1988). The coastal and birdfoot delta regions that now form the southern end of Plaquemines, Lafourche, and Terrebonne parishes were likely inhabited intermittently or seasonally by groups exploiting the food resources. Evidence of this activity is visible today in shell and bone middens at sites where clams, oysters, and turtles were gathered and processed to eat. Year-round settlements were more likely located closer to rivers (Kniffen and Hilliard 1988).

Despite the de Soto expedition and maps dating to the 1500s, nothing definitive can be said about where specific Native American tribal groups were before the expansion of the French colonization effort. By 1700, surviving documents place groups labeled by the French as Chawasha, Washa, Chitimacha, and Bayougoula in what are today Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes. The Houma village was located on the bluffs between the Mississippi River and the Red River, roughly where Angola Prison is now (Kniffen et al. 1987). Between 200 and 300 Washa and Chawasha occupied the area around Bayou Lafourche (Davis 2010). The Chitimacha had settlements on the Mississippi River, upper Bayou Lafourche, and on Bayou Teche. European maps of Bayou Lafourche from the era referred to it as “Lafourche de les Chitimachas” or the Fork of the Chitimachas (Galloway 2004).

During the Early Colonial Period, the Terrebonne and Lafourche areas were sparsely settled. Most permanent settlers were native people, who mostly exploited the region for game, but some Europeans did prefer the marshlands (Davis 2010) and settled in what was called Lafourche at the time. By the early 18th century, settlement patterns were beginning to shift rapidly. As more Europeans arrived and as warfare, slavery, and disease decimated populations, native people were on the move. Almost every tribe in Louisiana shifted location. After 1700, only the Chitimacha were able to hold on to any of their ancestral lands. The Houma relocated to the Bayou Lafourche and Bayou Terrebonne area, driven there after an attempted massacre by the Tunica. By 1800, the Washa and Chawasha disappeared as independent groups. Some moved to villages along the Mississippi River where they were sold into slavery, others amalgamated with the Attakapa or Houma (Kniffen et al. 1987). During this time of European in-migration and movement of indigenous populations, the Houma began using the coastal areas of Bayou Lafourche and Bayou Terrebonne as year-round settlements.

Early European colonizers recognized Louisiana as a paradise for fish and game. In his history of Louisiana, La Page du Pratz described no fewer than 11 types of fish commonly eaten by people living in the colony (1748:40). Historian Charles Gayarré (1854) recorded the famous Baron Pontalba’s report that “every sort of game and fish is so plentiful that they scarcely fetch any price at all.” Despite plentiful game, the colony attracted few colonists, other than a few Germans immigrants who arrived in the early 1700s and some trappers. Much of the areas south and southwest of New Orleans remained primarily in the hands of Native people, including the regions now known as Terrebonne and lower Lafourche.

When the Spanish gained control of the region in 1762, they began more intensive efforts at colonization. Starting in 1764 Spain granted land settlements to Acadians. Those first Acadian settlements, including some in northern Bayou Lafourche, were on prairie land not marsh or swamp. By 1769, 17 Acadian families had settled between Donaldsonville and Labadieville and, by 1785, some 600 Acadians lived between Labadieville and Lafourche Crossing (Brasseaux 1985). In 1794, another 297 Acadians were given land along Bayou Lafourche (Brasseaux 1985). This land, however, had not been uninhabited. As Acadians moved in, they displaced the Native inhabitants who were pushed "down the bayou," meaning toward coastal areas less suited to year-round habitation.

3.2 The Louisiana Purchase and the Nineteenth Century

By the time of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, Acadians were the dominant cultural group along Bayou Lafourche, most living as peasant farmers with small landholdings. For cash crops they first grew indigo, turning to sugar cane as the process for granulating was improved. In the 1820s, sugar production surged, and most small Acadian landholders along upper Bayou Lafourche were bought out by Americans and Creole planters, though a few Acadians consolidated landholdings.

At the time of the Louisiana Purchase, the area that was to become Terrebonne Parish had only a few hundred inhabitants, but the area was suited for sugar cane. In 1822 Terrebonne Parish was separated from Lafourche Parish, by 1851 it boasted 110 plantations (Wurzlow 1985) and a population of more than 4,000 people (US Census 1850). As the sugar plantation economy took shape, Acadians moved south along Bayou Terrebonne, pushing Native people further south down the bayou and marshlands where they settled Bayou Pointe-aux-Chênes, Bayou Grand Caillou, the community of Dulac, and the island of Isle de Jean Charles, which at that time had no road connecting to the mainland (Brasseaux 1992; Kniffen and Hilliard 1988; Guidry 1980; Bazet 1934). As part of the sugar plantation economy, hundreds of African American slaves were brought into the parish. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade had ended in 1808, meaning the people brought in as slave labor on the sugar plantations were purchased through the domestic slave trade, usually through the New Orleans slave markets.

In the early years of Terrebonne Parish, people hunted game, including wild hogs and wild cattle. In 1824, the newly formed police jury passed a resolution allowing that free ranging, unbranded cattle were free game to be shot on sight and another anti-poaching resolution that allowed anyone to hunt wild cattle after taking an oath before a judge that they intended to do so (Cenac et al. 2013). Other game hunted in the parishes included rabbit and squirrel. Although deer were plentiful in the larger state of Louisiana, there were few in Terrebonne and Lafourche. Before Europeans drained the swamplands and built levees to prevent annual flooding, the deer population did not usually live in the cypress-tupelo marsh and/or swamp. Instead, the deer preferred the pine-hardwood forests (Duffy 1969). That did not change until the levees were built and many of the swamps were drained in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

During this period, land use in Terrebonne Parish changed dramatically. Land that had primarily served as a seasonal game resource began to be used intensively–for both agriculture and subsistence. While the plantations to the north planted every inch of land in sugar cane, to the south the Acadians and Native Americans lived as subsistence farmers and fishers, providing important support services and food supplies to the plantations and for sale in the New Orleans markets (Davis 2010). Some planters had Native families live on marshland bordering their

plantations in exchange for provisions of fish and game (Dardar 2007; Kniffen, Gregory and Stokes 1987). In addition, enslaved people depended on hunting to provision themselves with food during slavery and in the years following emancipation, as confirmed by slave narratives and archaeological research (Young et al. 2001; Scott 2008; see also Hall 1995). From this, we know that the back areas of coastal plantations may not have been suitable for agriculture but were active areas of subsistence practices by both Native and enslaved people. Also, although upper areas of Terrebonne Parish were transformed by the plantation economy, because so much of the lower parish was marsh or swamp, subsistence activities remained a large portion of the economy.

Along Bayou Lafourche the pattern was much the same, though sugarcane and plantations were to have a much larger role. Well into the 1820s, small farms dotted the upper part of the bayou. In fact, until 1825, cotton, corn, and rice were the primary crops (Ditto 1980). That changed as sugar cane became increasingly dominant in the 1840s. By 1860, sugar was the most important agricultural crop in Lafourche or Terrebonne (Davis 2010), and remains so in both parishes today (US Dept. of Agriculture 2012).

In the 1800s, Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes had a mix of nationalities (Davis 2010). By 1788, Bayou Lafourche had attracted Acadian, Creole French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish migrants, and, by the 1800s, Chinese, Italians, Sicilians, Irish, Yugoslavians, and Americans added to the diversity (Brasseaux 1992). By the end of the 1800s, immigrants from Portugal, Cuba, Denmark, Greece, and Russia were living wetland enclaves, often in lands that were for all intents and purposes uncharted (Davis 2010). From 1800 until 1840, New Orleans was one of the most ethnically diverse and largest cities in the US. It was a magnet for immigrants, some of whom relocated to adjacent parishes further south to the marshes (Campanella 2008; Davis 2010). Despite this diversity, French was dominant, be it Acadian, French Canadian, or West Indian. While the Acadians had faced a forced expulsion from Nova Scotia in 1755 and arrived in Louisiana after a generation of displacement, some French Canadians in the 1800s saw Louisiana as a business opportunity and voluntarily immigrated to buy land and become sugar cane planters. Other francophones immigrated and made their way to the Lafourche region to recreate their planter lifestyle after the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) (Campanella 2008; Davis 2010). Up until the Civil War, most of the communities were Gallicized. This was visible in changes to surnames. To cite only one example, the Spanish Placencias became the Plaisance family.

Both Houma and Thibodaux, the capitals of the two parishes, grew as cities during the 1800s. Thibodaux grew large enough to attract steamboat entertainers (Ditto 1980). Both featured outdoor markets where down-the-bayou wetlands dwellers came to sell game, fish, and vegetables (Wurzlow 1984).

With the disruptions of the Civil War, land changed hands and many plantations went bankrupt. However, many of the surviving plantations continued to grow and produce sugar cane, seeing opportunity in others' bankruptcy. Some families, like the Minors of Terrebonne Parish, were able to hold on to their plantations after the war. Other families, like the Ellenders, were able to expand their sugar plantations and land holdings by purchasing plantations in financial trouble (Cherry 2015).

After the Civil War, the South saw the rise of hunting as a form of recreation. Hunting was the single most popular sport of the late 1800s and early twentieth century among Southern men (Ownby 1990). In addition, hunting became a form of tourism in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Giltner 2008). In Louisiana, this led to the beginnings of the out-of-town people establishing hunting camps in coastal marsh towns.

The transition to a lifestyle based around trapping and fishing took place during the latter years of the nineteenth century. By the beginning of the twentieth century this would be well established as the traditional Houma lifestyle and continues to be so today. Davis (2010) asserts that all wetland communities at the turn of the century in Louisiana relied on fishing, trapping, and hunting as occupations. In addition to subsistence use, much of this activity was market driven. Davis writes:

> Tons of catfish were shipped to the Midwest to be sold as tenderloin of trout. Large turtle pens enclosed herds of diamond-back terrapin being raised by the thousands for the restaurant trade.… In winter, market hunters regularly shipped more than 1,000 brace of ducks a week to New Orleans's markets. Oysters and shrimp were harvested by the boatload… In the 1920s...Louisiana's marshes became North America's preeminent fur producing region. (2010:137)

Toward the end of the 19th century, prices for fur increased, resulting in a boom in the fur industry and an expansion of trapping. This was particularly significant in Terrebonne Parish. Ruth Underhill, a former official with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, wrote a report of trapping among the Native American population that described the situation around the turn of the 20th century:

> Trapping is the most remunerative [of occupations], but takes place only for three months when hunting is permitted, November, January, and February. At this time a whole family moves into the marshes, having their shanty boat towed, if they have one, or otherwise camping. The man has about two hundred traps which he visits, the women and children clean the skins. Until 1924, anyone could trap anywhere, and the bayou people made a good living from their winters work. Just after the war, when fur prices were high, some cleared three or four thousand dollars. The swamp land, however, was private property (bought from the levee district of Atchafalaya in 1895) and the owners, noting the high fur prices, decided to charge for trapping permits. This reduced the profits of all who had not saved enough to buy permits which, of course, included the Indians. Permits were bought by middlemen who either hired trappers at $2 a day or took a percentage of the furs, leaving the trapper to sell the rest. Most of the Indians work on a percentage basis and are in decided need of help with their sales. (Underhill 1938)

The explosion in fur prices led to some of the first precise mapping of the region as businessmen began to try to lease specific areas for trapping rights. Often local trappers found themselves having to pay fees to hunt or trap on property they had habitually used (Davis 2010). Conflicts over access to land for trapping of muskrats led to intense struggles, known in nearby St. Bernard Parish as "the trappers war" (Gowland 2003). The trapping boom, however, would not last long.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the economies of Terrebonne and Lafourche were mixed. Residents of the northern, farmland, portions of the parishes were engaged mostly in sugarcane, cattle, and other agri-business production. Residents in the southern, wetland, areas engaged mostly in a subsistence lifestyle, supplying the majority of their own household food needs from what they grew, caught, or hunted themselves, or exchanged with neighbors. Regardless of ethnic background, these residents were not remote or isolated, but, rather, their subsistence lifestyles were often connected to market forces and wage economies, and they engaged in truck farming, trapping, and selling fish, game, or vegetables to raise cash.

3.3 The Twentieth Century

The life patterns established in the eighteenth century continued seamlessly into the early part of the twentieth century. For at least the first few generations, people living in the lower part of the parishes were mostly trappers, fishers, and small farmers. Trapping remained particularly lucrative. A local newspaper, the Houma *Courier*, estimated, in a story published in 1925, that Terrebonne Parish produced more fur than any other county in the US, and helped Louisiana lead the rest of the US in fur production. In another story published in December of 1925, the newspaper said that $350,000 had "passed through three Houma banks last week for the purchase of furs, breaking the record for any one week" and went on to say that the estimate was that more than $2,000,000 worth of furs would be caught in the parish that winter (Ellzey 2006). One person interviewed for a study documenting the offshore oil and gas industry (McGuire 2008; Sell and McGuire 2008), Esmiel DeHart, was born in 1931 and was raised in lower Terrebonne Parish. He started trapping when he was a child and described the process:

> Since I was 10 year old, I'd go trapping muskrats. .. . We would go trapping during three months in the winter. We'd go to school until the first of November and then get out of school from November until the end of February. And we had to bring our homework and everything on it to do out at the trapping camp. Because we would only come in every month to get groceries. We would mostly live on the land, eating ducks and rabbits and trapping muskrats and everything – minks, otters, you name it. Now, I was raised up like that until I was age 16. (2001)

Trapping, of course, was always more of a commercial than a subsistence practice, with most furs sold to dealers. But as Mr. DeHart's narrative shows, working in the fur trade went along with living in camps and self-provisioning for drawn-out periods of time–a key dimension of contemporary subsistence activities. It also extended an earlier pattern of having a more permanent house to the north of the bayou and a seasonal camp to the south of the bayou, a trend noted in Underhill's report (1938), about the Native American population and in earlier discussion of recreation hunting after the Civil War, with the advent of out-of-towner camps in coastal communities. By the Great Depression, most of the mink, otter, and muskrat in South Louisiana were depleted, and prices fell as the world economy crashed. People continued to trap, but the occupation was not as lucrative or popular. Some people, mostly Native Americans, continued to trap into the 1980s (Dardar 2007).

This decline of trapping would have created a significant economic problem for wetland households, but as trapping was becoming less lucrative, the oil industry arrived in the area and began hiring local workers. The changes began in the 1920s when Texaco began drilling wells in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes, but were not apparent until the 1940s for many in the

wetlands. At first the company relied mostly only their own workers ("Texiens"), but soon job opportunities opened up for people living in the area. Both the entry of the oil industry into southern Louisiana and World War II brought tremendous changes to the area as roads were built and returning soldiers were offered new educational opportunities (McGuire 2008; Sell and McGuire 2008). For example, Pat Landry was the sixth generation to live on Grand Isle. His father and grandfather were oystermen. When the time came for him to decide whether he would finish high school and go to college or whether he would take over the business, he chose school:

> He wanted me to take over. This was 1954. This was hard, back-breaking work. But he loved it. He told me, "Pat, I tell you what, if you want the business, take it over from me, I'll stay in the business and we'll build another big boat." And we were really going to get a nice boat. And it will be yours. But I had worked there as a little kid, and I said, "Man, there had got to be a better way to do that." It was cold and muddy and the gnats would get to you and, man, this is not for me (Sell and McGuire 2008).

As wetlands residents continued to enter full-time wage occupations–particularly in oilfield work–they continued to practice subsistence activities. This, along with increases in sports tourism and recreation use of the wetlands throughout the early twentieth century and the rise in the conservation movement in the US, led to the development of some of the first hunting and fishing regulations across the South and the creation of state-funded enforcement agencies (Giltner 2008). During the first 20 to 30 years of the twentieth century, Louisiana began to enforce the first limits on hunters, for instance, on how many ducks a hunter could kill or what techniques they could use. Eddie Henry, who was born in 1924 and raised in Montegut, Terrebonne Parish, remembers duck hunting strategies from when he was a child:

> I remember my daddy used to hunt ducks, and there was no limits on the ducks. In those days you could hunt with live decoys. My dad had some little yard ducks. And they had a little female duck. And what we'd do is he'd go hide her behind the bushes, and the other ducks couldn't see, the other ducks they keep, "Quack, quack, quack," constantly. And of course that brought in the ducks (Sell and McGuire 2008).

Despite limits, the characteristics of new types of work, like the week-on week-off rhythm of offshore oilfield work, have allowed many Louisiana coastal wage workers to remain involved in regular subsistence activities, like shrimping (Marks 2012). In boom times, workers were always in demand, which allowed many people in the wetlands to have both wage jobs and continue subsistence activities. "In the season, I shrimp. When the season closes, I'd go to work in the oilfield," explained Magnus Voisin (McGuire 2008). For many Native Americans in the region, their history of subsistence practices remains key to identity:

> Houma existence is tied to the bayous that are the foundation of our community. Our very identity is tied to that sense of place recognizing that we are a Houma from Bayou Lafourche, or Bayou Grand Caillou, or whatever bayou your family is from. Most Houma families are directly involved with the commercial fishing industry or are no more than a single generation removed from it and only the crash of the fur industry in the 1980s separated most families from that form of livelihood (Dardar 2007).

By the early twenty-first century, the region remains home to one of the most important commercial fisheries in the US. What is more, the people who fish commercially also fish casually, as do the neighbors. One history of the region claims, “Few residents today are without some sort of boat [for fishing]” (Ditto 1980:37). Though that claim might be exaggerated, clearly, fishing, crabbing, shrimping, hunting, fragging, gardening–all have long histories of both subsistence and commercial practice in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes.

3.4 Current Population, Income, and Health Statistics

At the 2010 US Census, Terrebonne Parish had a population of 111,860 people. The focus of fieldwork for this project was in southern Terrebonne, which is all assigned under one Census Designated Area. In 2010, this area had a population of 1,540, most of whom (86.4%) described themselves as White, not Hispanic. Another nine percent of the population described themselves as Native American and one percent described themselves as Black or African American. The median household income in lower Terrebonne Parish was $47,784, which was similar to the median household income of $49,545 for all of Terrebonne Parish. That median income does not set the parish off as particularly poor. However, the wealth in the parish is unevenly distributed. The poverty rate among the Native American population is 56.6%, and almost 10% of households in lower Terrebonne earn below $15,000 per year. Solet (2006:90) notes that “Louisiana’s coastal periphery [including southern Terrebonne] has been a large underclass of poor people living on the fringe of capitalism.”

Lafourche Parish is similar in population to Terrebonne Parish, with 96,318 total residents on the 2010 US Census. Lower Lafourche is more heavily populated than lower Terrebonne. In fact, due to the population density along Bayou Lafourche, the lower part of the parish is not considered by many as traditionally rural, despite residents’ emphasis on subsistence practices (Ditto 1980; Davis 2010). Southern Lafourche includes the Census Designated Places of Larose and Golden Meadow. Larose had a population of 7,400 people on the 2010 Census, and Golden Meadow recorded 2,101 people. The ethnic breakdowns were similar. In Larose and Golden Meadow, respectively, 83% and 82% of the population described themselves as White, not Hispanic, 3.8% and 6% identified as Native American, 7.7% and 7.3% identified as Latino, and 5% and 1.6% self-identified as Black. In Larose the median household income was $52,411, above the median household income for the parish of $50,574. The median income in Golden Meadow was much lower at $38,348. In Larose, 7.5% of all households lived below the poverty line (US Census 2010).

Overall, these are parishes that identify on the Census as White, and, by Louisiana standards, as middle class. However, the lower portions of both parishes, the coastal portion show two common trends: higher percentages of Native American populations and poverty levels. For example, the distance from Larose to Golden Meadow is only 10 miles, but per capita income in Golden Meadow is $14,000 a year lower. More than 40% of White, Black and Native Americans over 25 in some census tracts of lower Lafourche do not have a high school education (La DHH 2014). The Native American population rises from less than 4% to 6%. And the highest poverty areas in Lafourche are areas most heavily occupied by Native Americans, those census tracts bordering Terrebonne Parish (La DHH 2014). In Terrebonne Parish, the changes are even sharper. Upper Terrebonne Parish has less than 4% Native American, but that percentage rises to 9% in lower Terrebonne, with, as noted, half of those people living below the poverty line (US Census 2010).

The number one cause of death for people in these two parishes is heart disease, usually due to congestive heart failure. The rate is more than 212 per 100,000 people. This is unusual: the number one cause of death for people in Louisiana overall is cancer. People in these parishes also suffer from obesity at a slightly higher rate than the state overall. In Terrebonne Parish, more than 37% of the population has a BMI over 30 or greater. In Lafourche Parish, 31.7% of the population has a 30 or greater BMI, which is only slightly more than the state average. Diabetes is a critical problem. The overall rate of diabetes in Louisiana is 12.3% of the population, in Lafourche Parish, the overall rate is 17%, and the nonwhite rate is 25.9%. In Terrebonne Parish, the nonwhite diabetes rate is 18.1% (LA DHH 2014). Overall, the parishes vary from middle-class households to households of deep poverty and have staggering numbers of people, many of whom are in poverty-prone demographic profiles, suffering from chronic conditions such as obesity and diabetes.

3.5 Agriculture, Fisheries, and Oil

In 2012, Lafourche Parish had more than 27,000 acres in sugarcane cultivation, making it the 11th largest sugar cane producing parish (county) in the US, with a total crop value of $27 million annually (US Dept of Agriculture 2012). Sugar cane's economic importance was eclipsed by oil for the parish in the mid-20th century, but agriculture remains important. One-third of land in Lafourche Parish remains cropland (US Dept. of Agriculture 2012).

Although shrimping has declined in numbers of people participating, fisheries remain a key economic sector for both parishes. In 2010, Terrebonne Parish fishers landed 26.2 million pounds of shrimp worth $28 million, the most shrimp landed in the state, while Lafourche fishers landed $14.8 million in the same year (Oyunginka et al 2011). Combined, the two parishes account for one-third of all shrimp landed in the state. Both parishes have seen a decline in the number of fishers who are selling fish. Between 2001 and 2008, the number of fishers selling shrimp declined by 58%. In 2008, there were 675 fishers selling at least a pound of shrimp commercially in Terrebonne Parish and 322 in Lafourche Parish (Oyunginka et al. 2011). Shrimping is, of course, not the extent of the fisheries value of either parish. In addition, people work in oystering, crabbing, and fishing, particularly charter fishing. Despite an array of challenges facing the industry, the primary occupation in the study area is still commercial fishing, and this fact helps explain why an estimated one fifth of all seafood harvested in the US for human consumption comes from coastal Louisiana, with shrimp and blue crabs the most coveted species (Gramling and Hagelman 2005).

Although agriculture and fisheries are important, oil has been the most economically significant industry for generations. Officials in Terrebonne Parish estimated that 75 percent of all workers were employed in some way in the oil and gas industry before the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill (Gilbert 2006). Although those figures have likely declined since that time, the oil and gas industry remains the major economic driver of the region.

Sherwin Guidry, an unofficial historian for Terrebonne Parish, recounted how the communities shifted from agriculture to oil in telling the story of Montegut, a town that sits south down the bayou from Houma.

> The sugarhouse, across the bayou, was built in 1893. This town here [Montegut] was built because of the sugarhouse. …. Unlike most towns down the bayou, it was built around the sugarhouse, and not scattered down along the bayou.

> It [Montegut] was more plantation. There was fishing, but it was not the primary source of income, for the particular village itself. Further down the bayou, there was more fishing. Even so, during the grinding season, some of the fishermen would come up and make the grinding. Then in the 1930's you had oil, Texaco, the Texas Company, came down here and built boatways and warehouses and a yard for the pipes and everything. Montegut turned into an oil town. It has been oil ever since (Guidry 1983).

Today, agriculture remains important only to the northern end of the parishes, and predominantly in Lafourche Parish. To the south of the bayous today–unlike in the past–the economy is focused on fisheries and oil. However, the subsistence practices rooted in an agricultural and fisheries background remain widely spread and deeply rooted.

4 Framing Subsistence

4.1 What is Subsistence?

We are charged by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) with exploring the meaning of subsistence in coastal Louisiana, how it is understood and what activities comprise it. BOEM's request came in the aftermath of *Deepwater Horizon* (DWH), the largest oil spill in US history. BP, the responsible party under the Oil Spill Pollution Act, established a process for paying spill damages. Some people filed claims for damages to their subsistence harvest, namely, lost access to wild resources that would have otherwise been acquired through their own labors or through activities such as gifting and sharing. In other words, claims were based on loss of harvest that circulated not through commercial markets, but through families and communities.

The importance of wild resources to Louisiana's coastal inhabitants is no surprise to those who know the area, nor is the existence of non-market distribution mechanisms. However, in the context of the DWH claims process, these claims were unexpected because the term "subsistence" had not been part of the local idiom or academic discourse.[1] DWH subsistence loss claims underscored the scarcity of any information, be it popular, statistical, academic, or other, on subsistence harvest, distribution, and consumption of wild resources in Coastal Louisiana. The problem of Gulf Coast subsistence that emerged with DWH, the unfamiliar questions concerning what it is, who does it, and why, are evident in a *Times-Picayune* article headlined: "Ken Feinberg reaches deal to pay subsistence claims for commercial fishermen who consume a portion of their catch." It reads, in part:

> Commercial fishers and American Indians -- but not recreational anglers -- can finally be compensated for expenses they incurred when last year's oil spill took away their ability to feed themselves and their families using the seafood they would have caught in fouled Gulf waters. […] So-called "loss of subsistence" claims have befuddled Kenneth Feinberg's Gulf Coast Claims Facility since he took charge of BP's $20 billion oil spill damages fund last August. In that time, the operation has paid more than 170,000 claimants for loss of income or profits due to the spill, but just 23 of the more than 16,000 subsistence claims filed. […] Subsistence claims are specifically allowed under the Oil Pollution Act, which governs oil spill damage compensation, but Feinberg's operation had trouble calculating losses for something that isn't generally well documented.
>
> Feinberg's team developed a new method for calculating subsistence claims March 28 and, after negotiations with nonprofit lawyers and community advocates, it was finalized late last week. […] "The GCCF will pay documented subsistence claims for Native American tribes and commercial fishermen -- including Vietnamese fishermen and others who live off a portion of their catch," Feinberg said. "We will not pay recreational fishermen claims if the claims simply involve 'loss of enjoyment.' Such claims cannot be documented. The

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[1] To date, we have identified only one pre-DWH academic paper that discusses Louisiana wild resource harvests in terms of subsistence (Gramling et al. 2006).

> sticking point has always been developing a credible, workable formula for determining damage in subsistence cases."
>
> The impasse was broken when GCCF said it would use scholarly studies to determine the amounts typically consumed by different groups of commercial fishers and by so-called "true subsistence fishermen," namely affected Indian tribes like the United Houma Nation. […] After initially planning to pay the wholesale, or dock, price of the subsistence portion of a claimant's catch, GCCF also agreed to pay for the pre-spill retail costs of replacing that seafood. For those claiming losses for seafood they bartered, however, the price at the dock will be used. […]
>
> "The GCCF Revised Subsistence Methodology is vague and, depending on how they interpret some of the key concepts, could either be promising or problematic for proper interim compensation," said May Nguyen, an adviser for Mary Queen of Vietnam Community Development Corp. "Importantly, we defer to the court(s) for final adjudication of subsistence claims." (Hammer 2011)

The uncertainty surrounding subsistence claims process continued. As of July 2015, the GCCF had made 10,015 subsistence payments for a total of $79,219,007, which is an average of $7,910 per claimant. The Administration Center noted that each of those payments were to unique claimants. More than 4,500 other offers were rejected and in appeals in July 2015 (Public Statistics 2015).

BP paid settlements to claims from what became labeled the economic loss zone. This is generally described by the GCCF as stretching from Port Arthur, Texas east to Lafayette, Baton Rouge, and Slidell, including all the regions in Louisiana south of those cities, the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Mobile and Baldwin counties in Alabama, the coast of the Florida panhandle and south down the Gulf Coast of Florida to Naples. People living in those areas were eligible to apply for economic losses from the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. The process allowed for 12 types of claims. The two largest categories were individual economic loss and business economic loss. Those two combined accounted for more than half of all claims filed. Subsistence was the third highest category of claim filed.

Two claims centers operated in the research area for this study: one in Cut Off, Lafourche Parish, and another in Houma, Terrebonne Parish. There was also a claims center further down Bayou Lafourche in Grand Isle, which is in Jefferson Parish. At these three centers, people filed 1,088 claims, for a total of 5.5% of all claims filed in the BP settlement area. In the public statistics (2015) offered by the Deepwater Horizon Claims Administration Center, the types of claim from each center are not listed. Therefore our report of subsistence claims for the DWH oil spill includes claims from the entire economic loss zone.

By July 12, 2015, the CGGF reported that it had received 53,162 subsistence claims, or slightly more than 15% of all claims filed. Ultimately, most of those claims did not receive a payment. Statistics made public by the GCCF list that of the total filed, only 14,524 claims for subsistence were declared both "eligible to file" and "payable." Other claimants were either deemed ineligible or the files were not sufficiently complete to process, meaning some paperwork was missing. Of the files processed, however, 6,468 of the subsistence claims were denied because they were "incomplete" (Public Statistics 2015). The designation "denied-incomplete" for those

claims originally accepted as sufficiently complete to be processed may signal that GCCF did not consider the application to have adequately documented the existence of subsistence.

To be able to file a claim, the loss had to fall within the GCCF definition and vision of subsistence. The word subsistence appears in the DWH context as a quasi-legalistic term, and it was borrowed from literature on Native Alaska.[2] In Alaska, the category subsistence includes, under a single rubric, all harvest, exchange, and use of wild resources for non-market purposes. However, as noted by May Nguyen (Hammer 2011), the term can hold many meanings which have direct implications for policy and loss claims. In the next section, we give an overview of how researchers and policymakers have approached defining subsistence.

4.2 Conceptual Approaches to Subsistence

In popular parlance, subsistence has many valid and varied meanings. These include: a minimal diet, an impoverished lifestyle, the cost of a traveler's room and board, how people lived in the past, living off the land, or harvests intended for one's household. We will touch on several of these meanings salient to an understanding of coastal Gulf subsistence, including the idea of a subsistence pattern or system that is current in social science literature on Native Alaskans.

Historically, the concept of subsistence has been defined in contrast to other forms of production and exchange, for example, in opposition to commercial fisheries, industrial-scale farming, or in some cases global capitalist marketplaces. In this sense, subsistence is part of the informal economy, in other words, areas that are outside the formal economy, invisible to government and therefore not subject to taxation. Other related phrases or terms include artisanal food production (artisanal fisheries), vernacular food production and food culture, self-provisioning, foraging, gathering, folk foodways, culturally embedded harvesting, sharing, and customary food gathering (Robbins et al 2008, Poe et al 2013, McClain et al 2014, Teitlebaum and Beckley 2006, García-Quijano et al 2015, Emery and Pierce 2005, Poe et al 2015, Jehlička et al 2008, Collings et al 2009, Hurley et al 2013, Hurley and Halfacre 2011; Brown et al 1998, Brown and Toth 2001, Menzies 2010; Collings 2011; Collings et al 2009; see also: Annotated Bibliography, Volume IV). These distinct but overlapping terms all refer to a constellation of activities that produce food and livelihoods through methods that differ in some significant way from industrial, technologically intensive, or market-based approaches. Not all of the terms reference the systems of exchange–including gift, barter, and reciprocity–that produce and sustain specific social relations as well as redistribute food and other resources.

Subsistence can also mean someone eking out a living, something needed for survival. Collecting aluminum cans, babysitting, or raising vegetables to supplement welfare or Social Security income has been described as a subsistence strategy. Before roads and rails were built, the American frontier was characterized by what researchers term subsistence farming. Sharecroppers lived by subsistence. Not all examples are historical; subsistence fishers are found on today's ocean coasts; subsistence agriculture continues, along with cash crop production and wage labor, in much of Africa and parts of the Americans. Many of these areas are described as having dual economies, one organized to meet household and community needs and one

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[2] We conclude this from a review of documents (e.g., MQVN 2010) and did not pursue this point in our discussions.

organized to sell in the marketplace. These economies, in other words, are often defined in opposition to or as if operating as distinct from each other.

4.3 Subsistence in Alaskan Literature

Because the word "subsistence" that appears in the DWH context was borrowed from literature on Native Alaska, we give an overview of that usage. In this literature, the idea is nearly exclusively used to mean an economic system separate from the market or "cash" economy, with its own organizing structures and principles. The idea goes by various names. Examples include: subsistence economy, subsistence mode of production, subsistence-based economy, or wild resource-based economy. This literature rests heavily on the idea of domestic mode of production as articulated by Marshall Sahlins (1974). A representative definition reads:

> The term "subsistence economics" refers to a specific mode of production. It comprises the organization of labor that is required to extract, process, and store naturally occurring resources; the organization of distribution required to share, gift, or reciprocate those resources; and the patterns of consumption of those resources… (Jorgensen 1990:75)

The scholarship on Alaskan subsistence is the most extensive exploration of the topic in the US. Here we present and contrast the three most prevalent uses of the term as applied to Alaska and employed by the GCCF. In Alaska, subsistence is used in a legal sense, a cultural one, and an economic or socioeconomic one—as a right, as acts that give meaning, and as a system of production and exchange—that are often wrapped together.

4.3.1 Legal

As discussed, the GCCF's current use of subsistence got its start in the DWH context as a quasi-legal term; during our study, this was the primary sense in which it was used. In Alaska, subsistence is a legally recognized right. Both state and federal law accord "subsistence uses" of wild renewable resources (sometimes called "customary and traditional uses") priority over other uses. In addition, some federal laws—such as the Endangered Species Act—grant Native Alaskans specific rights beyond those accorded to Alaskans generally.

Although we draw our comparisons with Alaskan legal definitions because they are well-established, we note that problems with the Alaskan definition of subsistence have long been noted, focusing on how current policy trying to capture actual practice relies on outdated anthropological theory:

> As an ideal type, the subsistence mode of production may be useful in assessing differences among various communities. However, the roots of this mode of production rest in anthropological concepts of primitive societies (non-state or non-market based) rather than in the realities of present-day Alaskan village life. (Luton 1986: 521)

In Alaska, "traditional uses" are strongly associated with native peoples and certain rights are limited only to them, such as to the harvesting of bowhead whales. Similarly, the GCCF agreement to compensate for the "loss of subsistence" emphasized ethnicity. As discussed above and reported by the *Times-Picayune*, Kenneth Feinberg said, "The GCCF will pay documented subsistence claims for Native American tribes and commercial fishermen–including Vietnamese fishermen and others who live off a portion of their catch" (Hammer 2011).

In Alaska and the GCCF, need is also implied but is not explicit or definitional. For the GCCF, the issue of need is clear in the above passage from the *Times-Picayune* and it is made more clearly in other passages:

> Commercial fishers and American Indians—but not recreational anglers—can finally be compensated for expenses they incurred when last year's oil spill took away their ability to feed themselves and their families using the seafood they would have caught in fouled Gulf waters. […] Most of the claims have come from Vietnamese fishers and other fishing communities with a tradition of setting aside large portions of their catch for their families to consume and for gifts and bartering. But large numbers of claims also came from recreational fishers who wanted to be compensated for what they called 'loss of enjoyment,' something Feinberg decided not to honor. (Hammer 2011)

In Alaska, the subsistence priority is accorded to rural residents and Natives in recognition of the unique needs of persons with limited access to the state's urban areas.

The GCCF usage of the term borrows from the Alaskan one so, unsurprisingly, they have much in common. Nevertheless, the foundations are fundamentally different, and the differences go far in explaining why Alaskan subsistence is more easily seen as a single system than what was compensated for by GCCF process. Subsistence in Alaska allocates legal rights to rural Alaskans and Native Alaskans. Their subsistence harvesting of wild resources has priority over all other harvesting, such as commercial or recreational. The laws that allocate this right also define subsistence, essentially, as harvest for non-commercial, customary, traditional, and non-wasteful uses. The definitions incorporate, in a single category, most locally available flora and fauna and an extremely wide variety of practices for taking and using these species. At the same time, the definitions draw a boundary between these activities and any commercial ones. Alaskan literature on subsistence emphasizes cultural and social characteristics (such as long-term residence or ethnicity, and tribal tradition) that draw well-defined boundaries around the system, but the separation might not be so clear if not encoded in law.

The GCCF situation differs in three significant ways. First, the term is a quasi-legal one; there are no legislative rights to subsistence harvests. The Feinberg quotations above are representative of other uses of the term that emerged after DWH. They recognize: 1) that some commercial fishers set aside "portions of their catch for their families to consume and for gifts and bartering;" 2) that DWH prevented some fishers from "using the seafood they would have caught in fouled Gulf waters" for this purpose; and that 3) this loss of forgone use should be compensated under the language of the Oil Spill Pollution Act.

Second, while the Alaskan usage draws a line between commercial and subsistence activities, the GCCF usage sees no distinction among activities themselves, only in the use of wild resources after harvest. The only losses recognized by Feinberg—and the losses habitually referenced by this quasi-legal term—were suffered by commercial fishers from damages to their commercial

activities. The subsistence resource is the portion of commercial catches that are removed for domestic use before a sale. In this instance, the harvesting itself is not construed as a subsistence activity; subsistence is determined later as the harvest is allocated to various uses. The distinction here is not how, when, where, or who catches or harvests the seafood but rather how it is distributed.

Third, the GCCF usage identifies a very narrow range of resources as subsistence: they derive only from commercial harvests. Though most loss claims identified shrimp, removed portions of commercial harvests of oysters, crabs, and finfish can also become subsistence. Resources derived from recreational harvesting are not subsistence, and this distinction effectively excludes all other fauna and flora as well as shrimp, oysters, crabs, and finfish not harvested under a commercial license, regardless of the use. In the Alaskan usage, the term subsistence also excludes recreational harvesting. However, in Alaska, subsistence is defined as customary and traditional practices of rural Alaskans and Native Alaskans, and this definition covers a wide range of harvests of various species of fish, birds, and marine and terrestrial mammals. No such traditional practices were recognized for the Gulf by GCCF.

4.3.2 Cultural

Alaskan and GCCF concepts of subsistence differ greatly in terms of their legal and socioeconomic status. In Alaska, subsistence is made up of a wide range of harvest practices that are legally protected, and market-oriented practices are virtually excluded from these. In the GCCF usage, subsistence is made up of portions of commercial harvests that are removed for domestic use and subsistence is not recognized in law.

4.3.3 Economic and/or socioeconomic

The fundamental differences between Alaska and the GCCF usage revolve around concepts such as domestic mode of production or subsistence compared to cash economies that are commonly applied in Alaska. The idea is that Native households (and extended kinship groups) participate in dual economies.

> In subsistence-based economies, the major economic firms are these domestic groups. Production capital, labor, and community use-areas are controlled or accessed by these kinship groups. Production levels are determined by the needs of the family group, which are typically at levels below production capacity. (Wolfe 1984: 4)
>
> The socioeconomic system of Shishmaref is characterized by a dual economic strategy which incorporates both a subsistence component and a cash component…The foundation of the socioeconomic system is the harvest and use of wild resources supplemented or underwritten by cash income. (Sobelman 1985: no page)

Though the Alaskan literature is extensive, in the last two decades there has been a resurgence of studies on self-provisioning, foraging, and wild-harvesting as part of a renewed interest in local foods, culinary heritage, and subsistence heritage, and food justice (see Emery and Pierce 2005, Gibson-Graham 2008, McLain et al. 2012, Matsutake Worlds 2009, Menzies 2010, Poe et al. 2013, Poe et al. 2015, Robbins et al. 2008).

4.4 Other definitions

The definition of subsistence as used in Alaska is distinct and developed out of a particular history of environmental disaster and a specific political process of rights and regulations. This means that it may not be representative of subsistence practices in other areas. Nonetheless, discussions of subsistence in Alaska continue to dominate discussions of the term. Writing in 2007, Schumann and Macinko note that:

> The little attention that subsistence fishing receives on a global scale has been concentrated geographically in Alaska and other areas of the Arctic, and almost exclusively associated with the practices of native inhabitants of that region. We adopt the stance that subsistence fishing may be equally prominent in other areas of the globe, and warrants comparable attention. (2007:706)

We recognize Alaska's unique situation with regard to subsistence. To broaden the discussion, in this section we review research from other areas to illustrate the breadth of variation possible what could productively be thought of as subsistence.

Some of this variation is inherent in how the concept of subsistence is employed. It has been used by practitioners and scholars alike to address diverse problems and situations (Schumann and Macinko 2007). For example, a marine fisheries manager has a different set of problems than a terrestrial park manager, or a claims administrator. The research goals of anthropologists, geographers, sociologists, and economists seeking to analyze human social practice are no less diverse. Some aim to understand human evolution by extrapolating from contemporary foragers (hunter-gatherers) (Washburn 1951, Ingold et al. 1988), or to describe strategies for making ends meet after the collapse of socialist economies in East Europe (Jehlička et al. 2008). Others intend to explain the role of race and masculinity in the southern US in shaping hunting (Ownby 1990) and fishing (Brown and Toth 2001). More recent studies have attempted to rethink economic systems as hybrid, multiple, and fragmented (Halperin 1998, 2012; Gibson-Graham 2008; Hardin 2011) or explore how human and animal worlds are intertwined (Matsutake Worlds 2009, Kirksey 2014, Tsing 2014, Hardin and Remiss 2006).

In Schumann and Macinko's (2007) discussion of competing (and often divergent) definitions for subsistence, they note a schism between those who emphasize material or cultural dimensions. They identify four main ways of defining subsistence in scholarship: 1) practices specifically to sustain life in general; 2) economics based on sharing not selling; 3) a "way of life" in which cultural institutions are supported by the practice; and 4) activities conducted primarily for "lifestyle considerations," which can range from wanting higher quality food, supporting social structures, or creation of personal identity.

In their case, Schumann and Macinko seek to inform fisheries policies, and they argue for a definition that adheres to material considerations and material survival, rather than "lifestyle" and cultural survival, because "The danger of defining subsistence too broadly is that subsistence fishing policies will fail to benefit the people requiring management most urgently" (2007: 715). Rather than "diluting" the term or dissociating it from survival, the authors argue for the creation of new terms. For example, New Zealand created designations for ''non-commercial'' and ''customary food gathering'' fisheries to recognize categories of fishing that lie between "recreational" and "commercial" fishing (2007:715). However, Schumann and Macinko (2007) aim to improve fisheries policies and do not suggest one definition be applied universally.

Instead, they suggest that different definitions are needed to address different situations, defined locally for specific purposes.

In contrast, Murton and colleagues (2016) argue for a broad definition of subsistence. They critique many traditional definitions for ignoring exchange in existence before capitalist markets. They write that the term historically indicated a "collective, locally based activity that rested on a bundle of individual and collective rights of access to particular parts of nature" (2016: 6). Murton and colleagues present case studies of existing subsistence practices. They argue that, when considered together, the findings from these studies trace out an understanding of subsistence. These authors find that 1) subsistence practices are not just material but "also always connected to wider ideological and political processes including assertions of sovereignty, human rights and dignity and ideas about how persons ought to dwell in relation to nature and to others" and 2) "subsistence practices are intrinsically connected to place with distinct interlockings of particular histories and state-society relationships," which leads the authors to 3) "challenge the idea that the market is or should be everywhere as well as the idea of a 'natural' or inevitable transition from subsistence to capitalism and from 'isolation' to modernity" (2016: 143).

In the same volume, Samuel (2016) argues for the use of the word "vernacular" to describe subsistence practices, which he believes will allow researchers to more easily capture the essence of activities. Asserting that the word subsistence has "connotations [that] are narrow and uncouth" (2016: 329), he posits that "vernacular," referring to homebred and local, restores a dignity to the activities and refocuses on use-value rather than exchange-value, although exchange is allowed (see also Hathaway 2016). Like "subsistence," or "artisanal," "vernacular" is also defined by its opposite–that is, it is something not imposed from outside the group but rather the community-taught, community-shared practice of a people in a particular place, whether referring to vernacular language, architecture, or hunting practices. The vernacular is never the canonical or top-down. Instead, the vernacular points to what people actually do in specific places. In South Louisiana, a prime example of vernacular architecture is the shotgun house, not designed by architects but built by artisans who learned house building through apprenticeships (Edwards 2011).

The concept of a pure vernacular or folk is compelling, as is the notion that community practices are whole and authentic. However, in practice, the line between folk and modern, vernacular and formal is not as sharp as definitions imply (Bauman and Briggs 2003). In fact, as Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs (2003) have shown, they are conceptually intertwined and historically co-produced. For example, traditional quilts sewn today in Louisiana using patterns passed down in families for several generations were sometimes originally introduced through patterns cut from national ladies magazines in the 1920s and 1930s. Popular culture became folk culture. At some point, formally trained architects began to design, build, and restore shotgun houses. Folk culture became popular culture.

Other researchers of subsistence practices have employed alternative terms. Researchers seeking to make visible a wide array of foraging practices not typically recognized by managers of urban parks who were predisposed to see the parks as a site of recreation and enjoyment of nature described those who engage in subsistence practices in Seattle's urban forest as a "community of practice" and employ the terms "gatherer," "forager," and "harvester" interchangeably (Poe et al 2013: 413). Garcia-Quijano and coauthors (2015) also chose to use the word "foragers" in their ethnographic study of fishing communities in Puerto Rico, including small-scale commercial

fishers and subsistence fishers in the term "coastal resource foragers." Jehlička and coauthors (2008) chose the term "self-provisioning" to describe people who were gardening, raising domestic animals, or participating in wild harvests in Czechia. This term is also widely used in studies of post-socialist societies (e.g., Nelson and Smith 1999) and has been applied to rural Canadians who are involved in hunting, fishing, gardening, or participate in sharing networks for wild food (Teitlebaum and Beckley 2006).

Some authors argue that terms and definitions used to describe subsistence phenomena must take into account the motivations for subsistence harvesting. Jehlička (et al 2008) provide evidence from a nationwide survey to suggest that the prevalence of subsistence activities, what they call self-provisioning, in the former Soviet republic of Czechia has multiple motivations, including desire for a healthy food or interest in a hobby. They find that it is more common in Eastern Europe than in Western Europe, but does not correlate with unemployment or other indicators of income in a simple way. Similarly, Teitlebaum and Beckley (2006) found no correlation between poverty and subsistence activities in a national survey, but they did find pervasiveness, with 4 of 5 rural Canadian households participating in some subsistence activity annually. They conclude that economic gain is not the prime motivating factor for participation. In their study of Puerto Rican fishing communities, Garcia-Quijano et al (2015) found that a crucial element of subsistence work was quality of life. For example, 94% of all coastal resource foragers (CFRs) responded that if they had to live their life again they would choose to earn their living the same way, compared with only 57% of nonforagers. The CRFs surveyed also had higher rates of life satisfaction overall. Some researchers assert that for some groups, subsistence is a critical part of identity:

> Subsistence harvesting and Inuit culture, even from the perspective of occasional hunters, are viewed as intimately intertwined. For this reason, subsistence should be understood not from the perspective of formal economic models using only benefit-cost comparisons to justify… subsistence harvesting, but from the perspective of what hunting and sharing mean to the people who do them. (Condon et al 1995:44)

Others stress that participants in subsistence activities also identify those actions as providing rest and relaxation, with benefits to mental health, and opportunities to strengthen social networks (Brown and Toth 2001; Brown et al 1998). These multi-faceted motivations fall outside some definitions of subsistence. To be representative, any definition adopted must accommodate these parameters.

Despite a long legal trail and much academic publishing, the definition of subsistence remains contested, sufficiently so that academic articles and books often feel the need to tackle what their usage means (Poe et al. 2013; Murton 2016). Researchers and practitioners adopt and argue for definitions that solve particular problems. Before exploring a specific definition to apply to our research, we examine some of the underlying reasoning regarding economic systems pertinent to definitions of subsistence.

4.5 Multiplicity of Systems and/or Hybridity

A faulty assumption–stemming from models of social evolutionism–was that one economic system (capitalism defined by markets and wage labor and long-distance trade) would replace

another (food production and exchange occurring primarily within social relationships, through gifting, barter, and reciprocity with a small role for markets) and subsistence appears merely as a holdout, a remnant, or an isolated pocket that has somehow escaped the forces of evolution (see, for example, Bauer 2000). The assumption is that as markets grow, subsistence declines. Subsistence farming in the American West declined as Chicago—the great agricultural marketplace—grew and as transportation systems penetrated the hinterland (Cronon 1991). When Richard Lee (1968) wrote his classic study of subsistence practices in the Kalahari and helped redefine the concept of hunter-gatherers, the people he documented were not considered as part of the world economic system. Those studies were widely read as if they represented practicing timeless lifeways that were outside of modern history. Such a picture of isolation was never accurate. Researchers have since shown that foragers of the Kalahari have been involved in global trade for centuries, including selling ivory and ostrich feathers to Europeans in the 1700s (Wilmsen 1989; see also Lee 1978, 1988, 1992).

Yet, historians have shown that subsistence and market systems can and do co-exist (Wolf 1982). And research reveals that foraging (hunting, fishing, and gathering) is not necessarily a remnant of history or an activity of last resort but can be a preferred livelihood as opposed to, for example, being assimilated into an agrarian underclass (Sahlins 1974; Grinker 1994). Or it may be retained as a complex portfolio of livelihood practices that include wage work, micro-entrepreneurship, and foraging (Jehlička et al 2008; Johnson and Robert 2016). For example, anthropologists working in equatorial Africa remark how members of historic forager communities work as guides and trackers with researchers and ecotourists, as well as in commercial logging or doing conservation work with international NGOs, but may still return to the forest to participate in harvest cycles (Hardin and Remiss 2006; Hardin 2011).

4.6 Informal Economy

Often implicit in discussions of "the economy" is the idea of the formal economy that is visible in official reports–such as employment statistics and GDP–and is associated with a nation-state. This is contrasted to the informal economy: "enterprises and activities that generate income 'off the books,' that is, outside the legal system of normally reported income" (Browne 1995, 23; cf. Hart 1973, Roitman 2004). Subsistence, the vernacular, or foraging reaches into the informal economy. Though most studies to date focus on participation by the poor in the informal economy, Browne's (1995) work found that middle class people also participate, but their participation was often less visible to researchers. Browne noted that what she labeled as undeclared economic activities served as survival strategies for the poor and as upward mobility strategies for the middle class participants, people who had steady work but were looking to improve their situations. Informal economies are often assumed to operate by optimizing economic behavior.

In the modern world, subsistence systems and the market coexist. However, subsistence systems must be understood in terms of their own structures and motivating principles. They may or may not stand in opposition to markets or may explicitly overlap with market systems, but a lack of markets or the existence of poverty is not sufficient to explain the existence of subsistence systems.

4.7 Gulf Coast Subsistence in the Wake of the *Deepwater Horizon* Spill

Within the literature presented thus far, authors use the term "subsistence" to refer to multiple practices, in competition with or as synonyms of other terms, and motivated by varied assumptions about economies, progress, and how people make a living. To have a coherent conversation about subsistence, then, the term must be defined. In this section, we take on this challenge.

It is no longer possible to use the term "subsistence" to describe different kinds of economies or different kinds of people (Robbins et al. 2008, Poe et al. 2013). Instead, subsistence might most usefully describe a diverse array of activities (or practices) that are governed by non-market logics, have goals other than generating profit, and, while contributing to food needs, also contribute to the pleasure of producing fresh, flavorful, valued foods and sharing those with friends and family. Most important, those who participate in subsistence activities are themselves embedded in households and social networks that involve multiple livelihoods or hybrid economies. In Louisiana, for example, this could mean working the alligator hunting season to earn enough cash to buy a commercial shrimping license or taking a job offshore because pay and the intermittent schedule allows for disposable income for hunting leases and the time to use them. Household economic strategies are also mixed, and may involve members who shrimp, garden, or work full-time in the wage economy. For many of those who participated in our study, the significance of crabbing, shrimping, gardening, fin-fishing, or hunting is not only material. Though nearly everyone we talked with eats or shares what they produce, the food represents much more than the calories and the nutritional content. It creates and strengthens social ties to family, neighbors, and coworkers. It underwrites extended family gatherings and community feasts. It provides harvesters an opportunity to be outside, to teach children and grandchildren skills and values, and to enjoy and transmit meaningful connections to subsistence heritage. This heritage is often understood as linked to family, place, ethnicity, and region.

Many coastal Louisiana residents participate in hybrid economies characterized by multiple livelihoods (Collins 1995) and are motivated by goals other than those typically recognized by classical economics (maximizing individual self-interest). Even a retired professional, who rarely engaged in self-provisioning activities, told us he rarely bought a tomato or a cucumber, squash, or zucchini at the store. During citrus season, he had more satsumas, navel oranges, and grapefruit than he and his family could eat. He was immersed in what he called "sharing" networks motivated by friendship, neighborliness, and a moral economy of gardeners growing more than they could eat and not wanting food to go to waste. This hybridity includes practices like buying shrimp or crabs from someone you know, often at a price below market price. It is worth underlining that this cash transaction involves money without being governed by rules of classical economics, which would require you to maximize utility and individual interest. In another conversation, a resident of St. Bernard Parish expressed her confusion at the recent creation of a "Seafood & Farmer's Market" in town. "They have a shrimper there selling shrimp!" she exclaimed. She wondered why a person would go to that market and pay top dollar when everybody can go down to the dock and buy shrimp from someone they know. The idea that some area residents might not personally know a shrimper they could buy from directly at the docks was inconceivable to her.

In light of the complexities of food procurement in southern Louisiana, we suggest a more nuanced approach to thinking of subsistence. We propose that subsistence is composed of a diverse array of practices across a landscape of harvesting and sharing: foraging for wild resources; retaining a portion of a commercial catch for use by the household, extended family, and neighbors; small-scale cultivation of domestic plants and animals with or without some commercial sales; sharing harvests with neighbors; and organizing the year in terms of a seasonal round of fishing, hunting, and gardening. There is no bright line of contrast between subsistence and other activities or economies. Rather, we argue that a definition of subsistence must rely on a pattern of activities specific to the region. At times, any one of these activities could look like recreation, but can also coalesce into a pattern of harvesting, use, and sharing that clearly show an alternative system of economics, value, and cultural meaning for people in Terrebonne and Lafourche. Subsistence, like markets and identities, is emergent and visible in context. However, this does not mean it is too slippery to approach for policy. The patterns of subsistence in Coastal Louisiana have historical weight, regional understanding, and similar patterns of practice, which can be made visible and clear. In the next sections, we discuss the semantic domains and discourse around these patterns of practice among locals in Terrebonne and Lafourche.

5 Exploring Local Concepts of Subsistence

5.1 Introduction

Although scholars often worry that they are not communicating with the general public, our fieldwork shows that academic definitions of subsistence have, in fact, been adopted by the people we interviewed, particularly the pre-1968 definitions that focused on an image of a pre-industrialized or basic-needs society. When we used the word "subsistence," one of our community scholars said, "You mean like poor people?" People also saw the word in terms of "backwardness" or lack of modernization. More than one person reacted to the word "subsistence" by referencing a popular reality TV show: "You mean, like *Swamp People*?"

Almost to a person, study participants rejected the idea that they participated in any subsistence activities. One person assured the researcher that he had a "regular job." Nobody could think of anyone who totally "lived off the land." Some conceded that some people, particularly Cajuns or French speaking people, did fact live off the land, but then began speculating about how one would have to flout existing laws and regulations in order to do so. In other words, catch limits, tags, permitting and licensing requirements, and harvesting seasons were perceived as making total subsistence lifestyles either impossible or illegal, particularly if a person had to feed a family. Thus "true" subsistence practitioners, that is, those who were imagined to be living almost wholly from foods caught, hunted or harvested, were suspected to be outlaws and marginal people.

We realized that asking about subsistence was encouraging people to point us toward the socially marginal. So, instead, we started asking a series of questions geared towards specific practices (see Appendix A). We asked:

- Do you hunt, fish, harvest, or collect food that your family eats on a regular basis?
- Do you share this food with neighbors, friends, church members, others?
- Do you have a freezer full of food or a pantry full of canned goods that you have received from other people or that you put up yourself? Do you eat regularly from this?

When we adopted this new approach, practically everybody we talked to said they participated in these practices. What is more: people began telling us how important these activities were to them, to their diets, heritage, and identities. For example, even non-hunters and gardeners told us that they kept two deep freezers at their houses. In Coastal Louisiana, one freezer is traditionally used to hold frozen seafood, mostly fish and shrimp. The other freezer is primarily for vegetables and fruits preserved from gardens, but might also have game such as duck. In other words, even some people who were not themselves harvesting were so embedded in subsistence exchange networks that they had to have two freezers to store the food they received. Among the foods they were harvesting or sharing, were:

- 12 types of fish
- All common seafood (crabs, shrimp, oysters, and some crawfish)
- Game, including deer, wild hog, rabbit, and squirrel
- Ducks and other water birds
- Domesticated animals and animal products, specifically, chickens and eggs
- More than 52 different types of vegetables, herbs, nuts, and fruits

- More than a dozen types of processed or cooked food (grape juice made from grapes they grew, eggplant casserole, stuffed peppers, homemade salsa), or a mixture of harvested and store-bought foods

With such high rates of these practices and interest in talking about them, we had more willing participants than we could handle. We documented more than a thousand instances of harvesting, collecting, or sharing of food among only a half dozen families. Every family was logging a subsistence activity every week. Some families were logging activities almost every day. Clearly, these are activities central to the way their lives are organized, but they use terms other than "subsistence" to describe these practices.

5.2 What Subsistence Indexes and Frames

When people are engaging in hunting deer, squirrel, duck, fishing, occasional shrimping trips, growing a garden year round, swapping food with their neighbors, are they engaged in subsistence? We know, as discussed above, that they do not identify with the term "subsistence" itself. What is the word "subsistence" framing for people such that they reject a term that at least partly describes what they do and what terms do they use instead?

Based on dozens on conversations and the contexts of statements, we have drawn conclusions about the indexing and framing of the term "subsistence" and compared that to how local people explained how they frame their practices. Though the concept of subsistence indexed a time of necessity or backwardness, as well as poverty, local people saw themselves as involved in a completely different type of activity. We summarize our findings in Table 4.

Table 4. Framing of the Term Subsistence within Local Understanding

Subsistence	Compared to	Hunting, fishing, and/or gardening
Poverty	compared to	Abundance
Food necessity	compared to	Food choice – Highly valued food linked to recreation and family bonds
Ethnic or indigenous	compared to	Place-based, community-based, includes everyone
Primitive, backwards or isolated	compared to	Skilled ability; can be expensive
Images conjured: *Swamp People*, photographs of 1930s-era poverty	compared to	Images conjured: Families fishing together or a photograph of a grandmother teaching a child to garden

- These distinctions are stark. When no longer couched in terms of subsistence, participants framed their activities in positive terms associated with social values. The contributions of these activities and the values with which they were associated varied.Wealth: Homegrown and home-caught food are more highly desirable.
- Self-sufficiency and hard work: The ability to provide by skill, key values for life.
- Tradition and culture: Particularly those who identified as Cajun saw their activities not necessarily racially or ethnically aligned, but regionally shared, while members of Native American groups viewed practices as part of a group heritage.

- Training and expertise: Not a lack of choices or a pre-industrial pursuit, but something that at times requires expensive and high-tech gear and years of training to master.

Additionally, these practices, while productive, are often associated with recreation. For example, Nicholls State University students collected interviews with family engaged in subsistence practices. One student whose family is crabbers wrote about her father, grandfather, and friends:

> Some people enjoy crabbing purely because of the outdoor, secluded, peaceful environment that allows people to simply "get away from it all." Others do it plainly for the fun of going out into the open waters, catching crabs, and soon boiling their catch for the entire family to enjoy.

This student's grandfather made his living from crabbing and her father supplements his income this way. Nevertheless, when the student writes about this, she writes about it as a form of entertainment. She writes about "getting away from it all," the fun of the open waters, and the joy of being able to provide food to loved ones: a crab boil for the family. Later in her fieldwork report, she writes about how her family chose this way of earning a living, in part, to be their "own bosses." Her framing of their practices is one of choice and independence, not necessity, but also key to her understanding is that these activities are fun and relaxing. This theme is discussed in more detail below, on terms of one particular form of recreation: sport.

Subsistence practices are also framed as culture and family. Another Nicholls student documented his family's weekend tradition:

> The meals at my grandparents' house often vary, but on this day we are having a very familiar dish for our particular family and for South Louisiana in general. The meal, consisting of fried shrimp and homemade French fries, is made possible due to my grandfather's connections here in South Louisiana. As the games start winding down and people begin to make their way out the door to resume their usually busy Sunday afternoons, everyone stops by my grandpa's freezer. Even after a large lunch consisting of shrimp, the freezer is still almost at the point of overflowing with bags of cleaned and deveined shrimp. The families take as much as they want to prepare for the week and make their way home, after saying the usual goodbyes to everyone. It may seem strange to people of other cultures that someone would store this much food to just give it away, but this is a picture of a usual Sunday afternoon.

One couple in a roadside drop-in fishing interview said they fished every weekend, froze the fish and once a month all their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, about 50 people in all, come home for a fish fry. This reunion can be monthly because the cost is so low.

In these examples, we see that subsistence practices tie in to social, not caloric, necessities. Subsistence is about the need to sustain cultural systems through expensive communal meals or distributing food through networks of relationships. These networks are not trivial. Indeed, in a recent analysis of socioeconomic impacts of the BP oil spill, the research team from the University of Arizona concluded that networks of relationships had mitigated some of the oil spill impacts by giving individuals and families access to additional resources (Austin et al. 2014). The networks are maintained, in part, by the circulation of high-value subsistence foods.

In the rest of this chapter, we consider how locals discuss and understand these sets of practices that they choose not to call subsistence.

5.3 Components of Local Views

5.3.1 Subsistence as a Sport

Louisiana residents commonly frame their subsistence activities, particularly hunting and fishing, as sport, one form of recreation. As a form of recreation, then, subsistence has competition. Representatives of the Louisiana Women in the Wild program, for example, explained that hunting is a voluntary, not necessary, experience. This has ramifications for continued participation by novices:

> We want that positive experience from the start to the end. Because, I always say to my hunter ed classes, if you're not successful at some, as far as a recreational sport, if you're not successful, you're not going to want to continue doing it. We want to see people want to continue this.

Here, the organizer is clearly categorizing these activities as recreational sport. Were they required, such positive feedback would not be required for continued participation.

Others framed choices around participation in similar terms. For instance, duck hunter John Serigny viewed the choice to deer hunt rather than duck hunt as a choice between sports, not a choice between types of provisioning for a household:

> And [then] the seasons were reduced from 60 days to 40 days or something like that and people go involved in deer hunting and spring turkey hunting. And they were spending their money on those sports instead of duck hunting.

In this understanding, value is found in the sport's intangibles, not in hunting as a source of food. For Serigny:

> People used to tell me, I don't even duck hunt anymore, it's not worth it. I don't understand what 'worth it' means. Sure, yeah, you get more sausage in your freezer if you kill a deer for gumbos than you do when you go duck hunting. But it's not, you can't look at it as purely return-on-investment-type situation. It's a lifestyle, you know.

While subsistence practices are consistently discussed as sport, they remain a special category of sport. For example, Serigny emphasizes that, though his personal practice focuses on the sport aspect of hunting, it is also a food-producing activity.

> Every year at the end of the season we have a get-together here with about 40 people and we cook–sometimes I smoke them, last year we roasted them, pot-roasted them, had duck gumbo, duck and oysters, stuff like that. So I mean nothing that we take out there is wasted, whether it's fishing or hunting.

5.3.2 Subsistence as Family or Cultural Heritage

Another common frame for subsistence is as a family activity tied to cultural heritage. Specifically, it is recognized as something that parents or community members teach children. As one woman told us at a festival, “Hunting is all about families.” The time spent teaching and practicing the subsistence activity with children also provided a space and time for other kinds of education to occur. This feature of subsistence practice is illustrated in the following quote from an essay a student wrote about his brother’s subsistence activities, in which he highlights the connections between learning a subsistence activity, being a member of the family, and becoming an adult:

> Ryan, is a former shrimper who started shrimping when he was four years old. “My Paw Paw taught me,” he says, “and I learned so much from him.” He grew very close to him as he learned not only to catch shrimp, but all the life lessons that came along with it. He remembers the hard work of pulling up the nets and separating the catch, but he explained that it was so much more than that. His grandpa taught him how to provide for his family and the art of self- reliance. There were tough lessons learned, too, like “If you didn't catch anything, you didn't eat anything,” Ryan said. The conversations on the boat for Ryan mostly led to a lesson being learned. He remembers his grandpa always telling him how to live right. “He was teaching me how to be a man,” Ryan said. He believes that is why he is the person he is today, a person with a traditional mindset.

5.3.3 Subsistence as “What We Do”

People seldom seem to have one word or set of words to describe these activities. And, as discussed above, they often rejected phrases like “living off the land,” pointing out that this is not true. They eat out at restaurants and like fast food and pizzas, are avid fishers but buy all of their produce, or one person in the family will not eat game meat. No one used the word “subsistence” in connection with their own lives except in connection with BP subsistence claims. Yet, this does not mean that these practices are not important. This is illustrated in the phrases participants used, including:

- What we do
- How we live
- Our culture
- Our way of life

One person explained that shrimping was “daily life,” as opposed to the oilfield, which was “city life.” Though participants rejected or did not use the term “subsistence,” through the use of these terms they emphasized the centrality of these practices in their lives.

5.3.4 Complexity of Subsistence Practices

Some study participants did not frame their subsistence activities as one category, instead focusing on the specific practices and the complexity of how they fit into their lives. To illustrate this we offer examples of two interviews. One man, an older crabber and hunter in Larose, explained his lifestyle in a recorded interview: “I used to–well, fish crabs, alligators, frogs, and all that, catfish–just about anything you could eat–for a living.” Later he was asked again about the range of what he or his father, who was also a well-known hunter, would hunt, and he

replied, “Anything to make a dollar or put food on the table.” And still later he added to the list with “I’ve hunted rabbits, coots, ducks, deer, loggerhead turtles, whatever you could eat.” When he was asked how he would have fed his family without his extensive hunting and fishing, he replied, “Rob a bank, I guess!” Here he engaged the frame of hunting and fishing as a necessity, central to survival. But then he backtracked and said that because of his crabbing income his family was not “poor,” and, in fact, they always bought supplemental meat–beef and pork–from the grocery store. Although they filled two freezers a year with game and seafood, they had never solely relied on his hunting or fishing to supply all of their meat. He also specified that some of his hunting was driven by recreation and that his siblings did not hunt or fish to the extent that he did. “I was, how you call that? A hunting fiend? Hooked on hunting? I’d hunt. A lot.” He noted that during the 1960s, when he was doing a great deal of hunting that “most of the people, they weren’t doing it because it was a pleasure, they needed the food.” He saw himself as an exception. He gained both food and deep enjoyment.

Looking back over his narrative, we can see that his idea of what he is doing is driven by economic need (to earn spare cash), by caloric need (to feed his family), and by personal interest. His siblings presumably have some of the same skills and needs but did not choose to hunt as often. To this extent, subsistence is a choice, but it becomes complexly woven into his family’s needs and economic strategies. For him, there is not one word that captures what he does.

In a recorded interview, a charter boat captain and fishing guide, who is a native of Terrebonne Parish and also a hunter and avid fisherman himself, explained his understanding of what motivates interest in hunting and harvesting:

> Let me just say this. Speaking for the male gender, there are always, 9 out of 10 males either play golf, they hunt, they fish, they participate in sports, it’s an outlet for us. It’s a hobby for some. And for many it’s a passion. South Louisiana is so blessed in that we have so much available in that respect. … And I do believe it’s the culture. That show that is aired on the History Channel, about the *Swamp People*, the alligator fishermen, my wife won’t let me watch it. She says it’s degrading, just the way they pick the ones that, I don’t know if any of them finish high school, [laughs] or ever went to do, and that bothered her. It is something that, that’s our culture here, we hunt, we fish, we shrimp, we trap, as a way of living. You grew up that way. You don’t live here and decide to, at age 40, oh I think I’m going to start fishing. Most people grow up fishing. Their parents have, their aunts, uncles, or whatever have helped them.

Later he says: “It’s a way of life.” In this long explanation for why people engage in these activities, he first classifies them as a sport, an explicitly masculine, recreational “outlet.” He then focuses more specifically on why people in South Louisiana fish. He labels this behavior as cultural, while carefully distinguishing it from the “degrading” versions depicted in popular culture. No longer are these activities coded as male. Rather, this is a “way of living” which women participate in and promote: he explicitly notes that people learn from their “aunts.” This is an integral part of family and community transmitted cultural heritage. Later in his interview he adds that fishing is important for parents to bond with their children. He says, “Memories are made out of water, fishing.” Later in that same interview, in discussing taking fishermen out on trips, he returns to references that code fishing as sport. To this charter fisherman, fishing holds multiple meanings. Depending on the context, he engages with all of them, illustrating the complexity of how these practices are integrated into daily life.

Local conceptions of subsistence are complex. To fully explore or describe them is beyond the scope of a pilot study, such as this one. We have begun such a description here, and explore these ideas further in other chapters of this report, including Chapters 7, 8, 9, 11 and in the student essays included in Appendix B of this volume and Volume 2, Field Reports. For a more complete understanding, additional research would be necessary.

6 Economic Dimensions of Hunting and Harvesting: Production, Exchange and Consumption

6.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the economic characteristics of hunting and harvesting as practiced in Coastal Louisiana. We begin by providing snapshot profiles of three participants to illustrate how residents use hunting and harvesting practices in their lives. The bulk of the chapter focuses on subsistence practices specifically in terms of production, exchange, sharing, and consumption. In the final section, we comment on the complex ways that study participants understand and discuss their choices surrounding subsistence activities.

6.2 Profiles of Subsistence

As an introduction to the economics of subsistence, we provide subsistence profiles, or snapshots, of people and how they approach hunting and harvesting: their investments and what they receive. Many working households in the region have a mixed economy and rely on subsistence as part of their way of life. They work wage jobs during the week and go to their camps or perhaps the camps of friends or families on the weekends. Often they garden, hunt, and harvest, filling freezers with game, seafood, and vegetables. A few meals each week, or parts of meals, come straight from the garden, the bayou, or the freezer. This general subsistence profile was very common. Here, we offer snapshots of three profiles to exemplify what subsistence looks like.

6.2.1 Do-it-yourself Camp

One exemplar of the professional wage worker is an area resident featured in Tiffany Duet's field report "Felicia's Fishing Camp." Felicia, not her real name, owns a camp where she fishes. She is notable for what might be called a low-cost do-it-yourself approach to her fishing camp. It is a simple houseboat, which was mostly hand built by herself and others. She has equipment specific for fishing, which is a mix of items she purchased or built for the purpose. Each has advantages and disadvantages, and these strategies co-exist and intermingle. For example, "jug lines," or floating lines usually left overnight, can be constructed using an empty milk jug as a float, which sits on top of the water to mark the line. People often set these lines at night with bait and check them the following morning. Although she makes her own jug lines from recycled jugs, she must buy the PVC pipe, Styrofoam noodles, hooks, and weights to make them. Though this technology is relatively simple and this approach is financially advantageous, it requires personal labor to construct and maintain.

With other technologies that would be more time-intensive to construct herself, Felicia has chosen to purchase items. She purchased four boats over the years: a canoe; a party barge; an aluminum hull, which she built into a houseboat; and an aluminum skiff. New or used, these remain monetary transactions for manufactured goods. This is in contrast to those who carve pirogues (a type of canoe traditionally constructed from a cypress tree) or weave houses from palmetto bushes. Over the years, she has also bought crab traps and fishing poles, electric knives for filleting, and freezers to store food.

Built on the base of a purchased hull, the houseboat includes repurposed or recycled and purchased materials. She used her own and volunteer labor for much of the construction and paid professionals to install electrical wiring and a bulk head and to construct the roof. In other words, the houseboat required investments of money, materials, personal time, paid time, and gifted time. Though some people gifted their time, it is likely that they will receive gifts of fish caught off the houseboat in turn, based on the experiences of other participants and the researchers themselves.

The camp plays a complex role in the economic and social life of the owner. It is important to note that her ability to fund the houseboat is supported by her wage job. The camp also pays back by providing, over time, a significant amount of food for her, her family and friends. The camp itself also serves as a circulating good. Its owner is able to invite friends and family to spend time there, providing a venue for hospitality and a free vacation spot and access to wild foods for guests. In turn, these guests will provide the owner with other kinds of gifts, such as free labor or foods grown in their gardens. Beyond tangible benefits, she also receives intangible ones, including: fulfillment, enjoyment, and pride of accomplishment. Finally, the camp is connected deeply to her personal identity, to her earliest memories of who she is as a person, to her family ties, and her sense of place and belonging.

Some of the things the camp provides (like the fish), the costs of production (like the PVC pipe) or the exchanges of services (like the free help in working on the houseboat) could be converted into a dollar value. Other parts of this system (like the time spent learning to make a proper jug line, or the value of the camp to a person's sense of identity or sense of well-being) would be a challenge to any system of economics. For this reason we do not quantify these systems. This is discussed further in the following profiles.

6.2.2 Avid Fisher and Hunter

In this snapshot, we focus on a person who has a different relationship to subsistence. Jerome is a 50-year-old former commercial shrimper who now works a 7-on-7-off shift offshore on an oil rig. He is featured in the field report "Petit Caillou: Profiles from a Shrimping Community" in Volume 2. He liked commercial shrimping, but he now enjoys the 7-and-7 schedule that gives him more time to hunt, fish, and garden because he can provision food for his family. He is an avid hunter, fisher, and gardener, filling his freezer (and other family members' freezers) and using the food for more than just a few meals a week. He also receives and exchanges food with friends, for example, fresh eggs. Jerome said growing up that his grandparents had a garden big enough to feed their entire family, and he tries to carry on the tradition, for example, he makes sure to have enough tomatoes for his family and the neighbors. In this he is successful: Jerome said that he seldom buys vegetables or meat on his grocery trips.

Jerome sold his large shrimp boat after Hurricane Katrina, when he gave up full-time shrimping. He then purchased a smaller boat and keeps his commercial license so that he can harvest more than the 100-pound limit placed on recreational shrimpers. He continues to trawl during the two shrimping seasons. Jerome taught himself how to make his own trawl nets and trawl boards. He enjoys making them and he says it's a productive way to spend any free time. He freezes shrimp for his family's use or dries it as a snack. He also shares a lot of his harvest, including giving to many shrimp boils or sharing shrimp with people in the community.

Jerome is a big fan of hunting, both waterfowl and deer, noting "We eat duck like crazy." He is also an avid deer hunter. He hunts with friends on their leases in northern Louisiana and in Mississippi, and has been invited to hunt in Alabama but has yet to go. He tries to kill the limit every season (three does and three bucks). He processes all of the meat himself. He butchers all of the cuts and makes all of his own sausage. Because of this, he does not have to buy meat at the store, though he will purchase some pork chops from time to time.

While he is duck hunting or trawling, Jerome will also go "fish fishing," as he calls it. Preferably he catches speckled trout, redfish, bass, or white perch (bream), but no catfish. Sometimes he keeps his catch, but often, he will trade his fish for crabs with his Vietnamese neighbors who are commercial crabbers. For small amounts they make a straight trade, and if he is asking for enough crabs for a party he makes sure to also pay them some money.

Exchanges with others are also an important part of Jerome's subsistence practices. He engages in trades with neighbors, such as the crabber. He also has twice-weekly all-male community dinners, where the men bring a shrimp, crab, or deer dish they like to cook or the fresh vegetable they have proudly grown and share a meal together. These acts of communal sharing form the networks that make it possible for him to have an even wider range of harvested foods: people might leave baskets of crabs under Jerome's porch or call him up and let him know there are extra figs ready on their trees if his family wants to make some preserves.

In this example, Jerome and his family have a mixed economy where they use his subsistence work–hunting, shrimping, gardening, and exchange–for meals on a daily basis. Like other people we met, they are eating from their freezers, their gardens, the bayou, or the Gulf, almost every day. Their equipment, including the shrimping boat, fishing gear, and guns, is constantly in use. Nevertheless, Jerome is weighing the cost of those investments.

> When I was young we always had a pirogue, you'd have to go buy a pirogue for us to hunt. Now, I've got a mud boat. Instead of me paddling the pirogue, I crank the motor up and go. But the cost is a lot different.

For the people discussed in this profile, hunting and harvesting takes on economic value. But even so, there are value-added portions that cannot be overlooked. For example, when the researcher asked Jerome what his favorite part of hunting is, he replied, "Bragging rights." Here again, we see hunting and harvesting as central to personal identity and, perhaps, social status. Jerome is a good hunter. He is also a good shrimper, a good fisherman, and a good shot. He takes pride in these abilities, as can be seen in this story:

> I know one morning I went hunting, it was the opening of the big season and I went back there, I put my decoys out in the water. I shot twice. I went and picked my ducks up, picked my decoys up, and come right back home. Within about 15 minutes I was finished. I had the limit. I come in. I passed by a few of them, and they said, "Where you going?" I said, "I've got to go. I'm finished." He said, "You're finished?" I said, "Yeah, I got my six. I'm going home." That's about right.

He bagged his limit in 15 minutes on opening day with two shots. How much is that story worth? He also values the objects he uses to hunt and fish, in part for the memories they contain: he still has the first rod and reel he owned when he was 10 years old, the first cast net he made for his daughter, the first boat he owned as a teenager, and the first gun ever given to him, a gift from

his godfather. In fact, he has kept every single gun he has ever owned. He has stories about all of them: stories about the fishing tackle from his childhood, stories about the toy boat he made for his daughter to play with during long hours aboard the shrimp boat when the family was trawling. In this case, hunting and harvesting are not only about the food, but also about the stories, the skills, and the pride.

6.2.3 Mixing Business and Family

Our third snapshot is of Debra (a pseudonym), a participant in many aspects of subsistence. Her profile, based on field notes, illustrates that commercial and recreational interests and subsistence activities do not always have clear dividing lines. Debra is a woman who makes her income working in the professional fisheries industry on the Coast, but she is also an avid fisherwoman. She has two children at home, one child and her husband are both disabled. Debra fishes on her own to provide fish for her family freezer, filleting the fish herself. Over the years, she fished and hunted with her four sons until they were old enough to go on their own. Her youngest son, a teenager, hunts duck and rabbits in the winter and fishes and crabs for food. He and Debra also go frogging (frog hunting) together. Sometimes, while Debra is working at her job in professional fishing, she may also catch a fish or two for her own use. This blurs the line between "commercial" and "subsistence" fishing, depending on who is catching what, and where its final destination was.

Debra also gathered other wild resources. For example, during our study, Debra discovered a wild blackberry patch. Not wanting the berries to go to waste, she made several trips to the patch. The result: six jars of blackberry preserves, six jars of blackberry jam, six jars of blackberry filling for cobbler, and two batches of blackberry cordial. She also made blackberry dumplings twice, blackberry cobbler once, put nine quarts of blackberries in the freezer, and gave one quart away. She also gardens some, and she regularly shares with her neighbors who garden more.

Debra regularly provides food to people outside her family. She provides fresh fish fillets for two older women who do not fish. Their husbands, who once provided fresh fish for them, have died. She reported that the women were always happy to see her coming. Debra recognizes that she has training not all women have, and she likes to share her knowledge and her passion for fishing with others whenever she can. She has even taken women of all ages on fishing trips–including some as old as 72 and 88. She also fishes to bond with her family. She told us this story about fishing with her cousins:

> We were sport fishing for fish they could clean and take with them to eat later on. We caught red drum, speckled trout, channel catfish, lady fish, largemouth bass, and a two and a half foot black-tipped shark. Talk about variety!
>
> On the way back from our fishing trip, we checked two crab traps I had in the water. We caught about a dozen and a half nice blue crab. We went back to the camp, and [Name] and I cleaned the red drum and the speckled trout for him and his wife to take back with them. After that, my cousin boiled the crabs, and we ate them for our lunch. They were delicious.

Debra also shares food outside her friends and family. Sometimes, if she catches a fish she cannot use in her own freezer or that she does not have time to clean, she will keep the fish on ice and then later drive down to a local fishing area looking for families fishing alongside the road. She offers them the fish and reports people have always been grateful–even if the fish are not cleaned.

Debra has talked to many older people in her community about traditional ways of making a living, about shrimping, fishing, and cooking. She regularly works on perfecting her recipes for game dishes and making traditional bayou treats that, she tells us, only older people know how to make, like blackberry dumplings and she shares these freely. She has a great depth of knowledge about the region, and people respect her efforts to learn, her skills, and her attention to detail. In her story about fishing with her cousins, Debra uses the word "sport," but her usage complicates the term as it is typically used because we know that, for her, all fishing trips can result in food on the table and those "sport" trips produce a large portion of her family's diet.

Like Jerome, Debra is an example of a person whose family is eating from the freezer, garden, and Gulf almost daily. She also works in the fishing and/or shrimping industry, which provides wage income and some food. She also depends on non-commercial fishing and hunting activities to feed her family, along with her son's hunting, her own gardening, and exchanges with neighbors. Notice that a key to her subsistence pattern is having a surplus, so that she can share food around and receive gifts in return. The gifts are what anthropologists call "generalized" (Sahlins 1974), meaning that Debra doesn't expect a direct gift in return for anything she might give away. Some neighbors will never fish or hunt and offer her surplus (for example, an elderly shut-in neighbor). Rather, she is in a system of gift giving, with gifts flowing from those who have the resources to share. The elderly neighbor who only receives gifts now was, at one time, a person in the community who shared her surplus.

In this example, as above, we see that neither the production, the exchange, nor the consumption can be reduced to a monetary value. At each stage, Debra tells us about added value. At the level of production, she talks of her pride in knowing the region well enough to spot the wild blackberry bushes and satisfaction in being able to prepare a duck breast well or knowing that you have trout in the freezer and blackberry cordial "ready to go." At the level of exchange, she tells us about how a person, who is living on limited income, can gain self-respect by being able to provide her neighbors with highly desirable food. And she shows us how she forms networks of obligation and involvement. At the level of consumption, what is the value of fresh-boiled blue crabs? She says, "They were delicious." Further, "Anyone will tell you food you catch yourself just tastes so much better."

Quantifying the value of foods themselves, as well as the experience of harvesting and sharing these foods with others, is a complex task. The national and international local food movement puts a dollar value on what they call "storied foods" (Pollan 2001, Pollan 2007). In other words, food acquires meaning and value from being embedded in narratives about people and places that produced it. We draw on the work of writers such as Pollan (2001, 2007) to understand our observations in which we witnessed how foods with known (and short) chains of custody gained value to the consumers. In larger markets this may involve local purveyors charging boutique prices for artisanal foods they sell directly to consumers who are often willing to pay top dollar for knowing who caught, raised or harvested their food and how. In our study, such added value can be seen in essays such as the one by Nicholls undergraduate Rory (Appendix B), who asserts: "The hard work and passion put into catching and cooking this food makes it taste all the

better and everyone appreciates it more. It gives a whole different edge compared to just buying food from the grocery store." Subsistence practices (including harvesting, exchange, and consumption) are linked to personal, cultural and regional identity, family and community feasts, learning valued skills, pride in provision for oneself and others, aesthetics, taste, social status, generosity, and the pleasure of bragging rights. Placing a specific monetary amount on the value added by subsistence practice and narrative could be useful for policymakers and community advocates. For instance, the economic value of safeguarding access to subsistence resources and preserving the landscapes, thus ensuring a community's capacity to participate, or compensating for loss of access in the wake of environmental damage. Our study was not designed to produce a formula for quantifying these values. We did not seek to create an algorithm for calculating dollar values for subsistence practices. To have integrity, such a calculation would need to include not only the nutritional value, superior taste, and replacement costs, but the joy people take in a good story, the role subsistence plays in creating and sustaining social ties, the serious work of inculcating children into the values and behaviors of a community or culture, the links to work, patronage, and the key role of gifts in maintaining good relationships, and even the role of maintaining community and family ties through feasting, celebration and recreation, and sustaining meaningful relationships to place, region, and community. What we can assert is that our observations suggest that the value of subsistence foods is greater than its nutritional and/or caloric value and greater than the replacement cost from commercial markets. In this report, we offer snapshots into the practices of production, exchange, and consumption and reflections on the research process. We hope that future research will expand our understanding of these topics in a complex, multi-dimensional, and thoughtful way.

6.3 Production

Subsistence activities are productive: participants gain food products for their use or to barter or share. In the study areas, these products are varied. To produce results from a hunt or harvest, however, people make investments. This can include getting equipment, learning skills, preparing soil, or maintaining camps or hunting areas. In this section, we detail what is produced, then discuss the investments necessary to enable that production.

6.3.1 Subsistence Foods Produced

Our data on the kinds and proportions of subsistence foods produced come from participants' logs. Collectively, they recorded subsistence practices throughout the year, with seasonal variation. Participants harvested vegetables or fruits every single month of the year, although August and September are the slowest months. For hunting and fishing, while the seasons when particular species can be hunted or harvested are set by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, game and fish are so varied and plentiful that people can, and do, harvest animal protein every month. Winter is for deer and waterfowl, spring and fall are for shrimping, and people fish and crab year-round.

In the logs, people recorded 168 different types of game, seafood, fruit, vegetables or nuts that were hunted or harvested in Coastal Louisiana. The top 10 most frequently mentioned subsistence foods, either harvested or shared, (listed by decreasing frequency, with numbers of mentions in parentheses) are:

1. Oranges (124);

2. Shrimp (119);
3. Redfish (104);
4. Tomatoes (91);
5. Cucumbers (88);
6. Crabs (87);
7. Eggs (66);
8. Satsumas (64);
9. Green Beans (50);
10. Bell Peppers (43).

Deer was mentioned 42 times. If oranges and satsumas, common trees in many yards in coastal Louisiana, were deleted from the list, then both deer and beets would make the top 10.

By category, there were a total of 421 mentions of uncooked seafood and fish in the logs, from a total of 2,458 entries. Some of these entries were for harvesting; many were for sharing. Other entries that mentioned cooked seafood or fish dishes, including shrimp gumbo and courtbouillon. The breakdown by percentage of uncooked fish and seafood is provided in Figure 3. There were more than 50 total fruits, vegetable and nut or fruit-based or vegetable-based items mentioned (for instance, grape jelly or tomato sauce). The breakdown by percentage is listed in Figure 4. Wild game was mentioned less frequently. There were approximately 120 mentions of sharing uncooked game out of the 2,458 entries. However, there were many additional mentions of sharing cooked game, particularly venison sausage and duck gumbo that are not calculated in Figure 5.

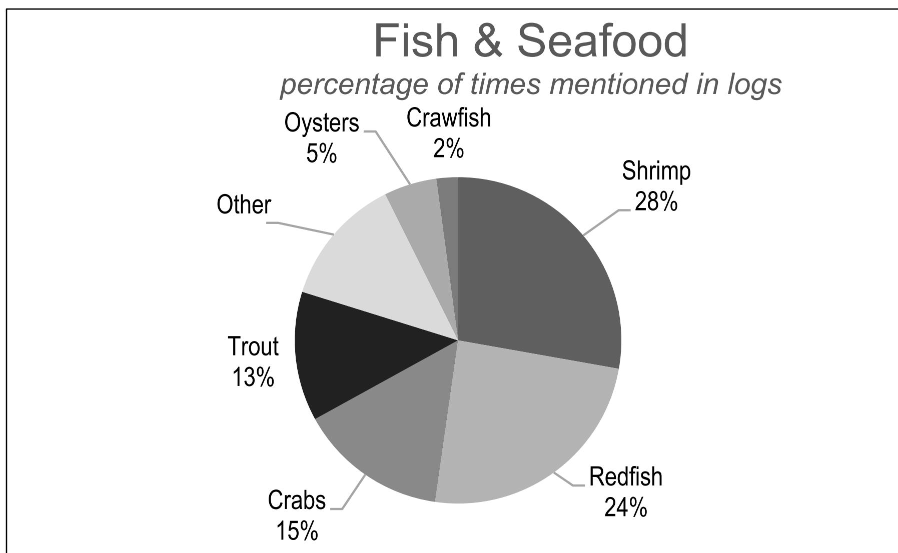

Figure 3. Fish and seafood harvested.

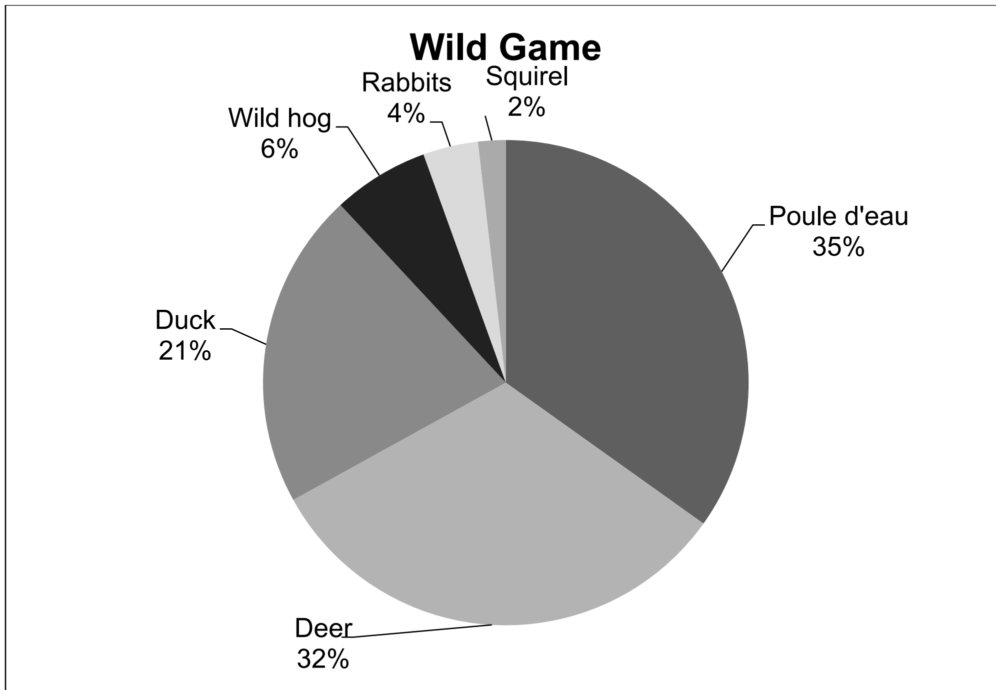

Figure 4. Wild game harvested.

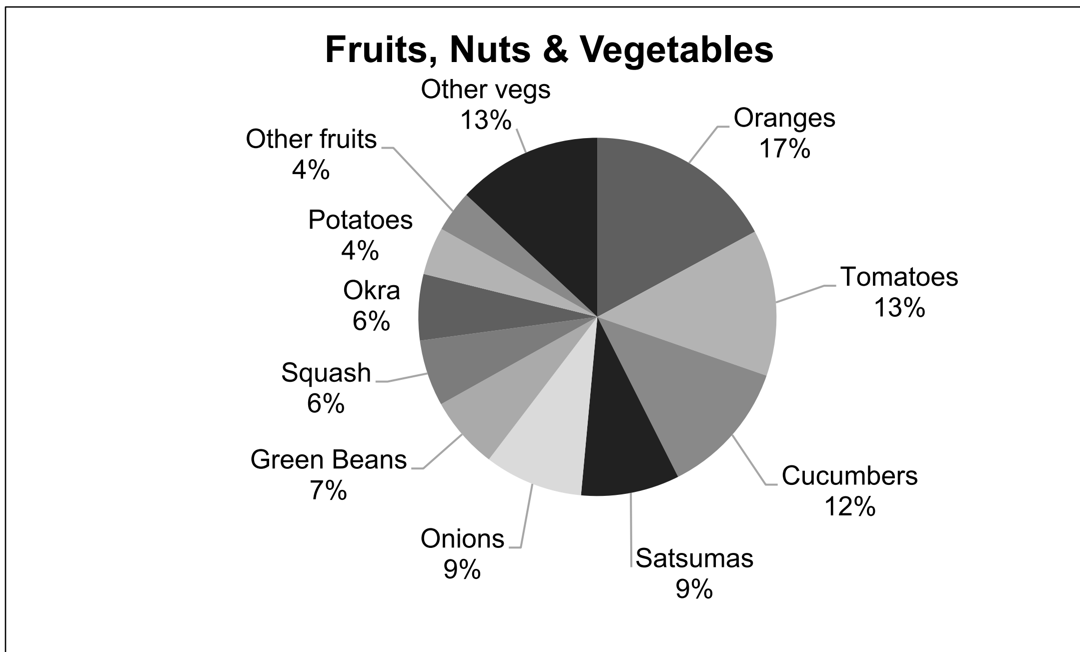

Figure 5. Fruits, nuts and vegetables harvested.

6.3.2 Investments in Subsistence Production

Production investments are often slow, incremental investments. People start young. In an interview, a Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries agent said that most people who hunt and fish learn before age 20. Nearly everyone we interviewed started as a child or teenager. The equipment is typically acquired gradually. For example, a godfather purchases a first gun for a birthday gift. Then somebody hands down an old rod and reel when they get a new one. Buying some used crab traps may happen when someone has some extras they aren't using. A small tackle box gets started with just a few lures and then a few more. Christmas and birthdays are times to acquire a few more items–duck decoys, rifle scopes, or waders.

People frequently discussed the investments they had made. For example, duck hunter John Serigny explores the idea of whether duck hunting is worth the time. He rejects the idea of duck hunting being measured by "return on investment." That said, he notes that hunting requires investment. He says, for example, that he cannot walk into a sporting goods store without charging $100 on his credit card. Even fishing, an activity that holds less personal importance for him, has involved an expenditure of money over time:

> Fishing is exactly the same. I've got a bunch of rods on the wall in my garage right here. I have 5 or 6 rods, and each of those, you're going to spend anywhere from $20 to $40 on a good spinning reel and $40 on a good solid graphite spinning rod, so you know, that $80 times 6, that $500 worth of fishing [gear]. And then I have a tackle box in the boat with at least $200 worth of fishing hooks, lures, floats, stoppers, bobbers, all the stuff you need to fish with.

Despite resistance to a monetary calculation of value, ideas of what experience is "worth it" to hunt or fish is discussed. In the following interview, Carl, a North Louisiana resident who hunts in North Louisiana and on the coast, and Mitch, another North Louisiana hunter, discussed the waterfowl point system and why some people might quit hunting, when duck hunting is not "worth it."

> Mitch: About three years back, a lot of people quit duck hunting.
>
> Carl: Well, they gave us… three ducks, wasn't it?
>
> Mitch: And it actually went from not that long ago, in the late 70s, you could kill ten if you killed the right amount of ducks.
>
> Carl: You were on a point system.
>
> Mitch: But because of regulation, the duck count was down nationally and it got all the way down to where you couldn't kill but three. And a lot of people quit duck hunting. Now it's back up to six and we're pretty content with six. It's worth the trouble and the expense. If you can kill six a piece, it's worth going through it.

Carl explained that for him, "going through it" means paying to be part of a duck hunting club that leases 300 acres. Their lease costs each member $500 a year. With 18 members, the club pays a total cost of $9,000.

Some people we met had abandoned a form of hunting because they calculated that it was no longer worth the investment of money or time. When people at the Coast cited a form of harvest that might not be "worth it," it was usually either duck hunting or deer hunting. In the following excerpt Charles, a shrimper, explains why he stopped duck hunting:

> My brother-in-laws go hunting. I don't. I used to go. I don't go anymore. They like to hunt. I don't. I used to but it was too much trouble. You know the Wildlife and Fisheries put your quota so low that going hunting became expensive by the time you got all your gear and the gas for your boat and you launched it and you come back and you can only kill two ducks or three ducks or something. It costs you the same amount to go out and kill 15 or 20. So when they start limiting you down to just a couple ducks it's kind of really expensive. It's not worthwhile.

This description does not include the fact that many times hunters have to pay to hunt on leased land. This is in comparison to fishing and crabbing which, later in the interview, Charles decides are worth it. "We went crabbing because like $2 [for bait] and the cost to get there, you can catch a bushel of crabs, and the crabs cost $35/$40 [a bushel]." Here, cost per unit of food produced is taken into consideration.

Richard, a deer hunter, said he calculates each year about how much deer meat he needs to bring in to recover the cost of paying for his deer club membership. Though this appears to be a straightforward calculation of value of investment compared to value of product received, he considers only part of the money spent. He noted that the membership fee does not cover the cost of the ammunition or the gas for the boats to get to the deer camp, all beyond the initial investment in guns, hunting gear, or boats. So this calculation of worth is not strictly financial. Some people drove considerable distances to hunt, and in our drop-ins with roadside fishers, we found that an hour or two of driving is not unusual and some were driving even further. This transportation comes at a cost.

Production investments are not just about physical things. One participant explained: "You need more than a gun and bullets and a license to go deer hunting. You have to know what you're doing." Most people serve an apprenticeship of sorts by learning from older people. Their parents, godparents, grandparents, older friends and older cousins, took them out and showed them how to hunt. Jerome explained his own apprenticeship and how he is now teaching others:

> I used to go with a man that had the lease, he owned the NAPA store up the road. And he'd bring us, since I was a little boy, he'd bring us over there. We'd go hunting and all, but we was mostly their gophers. You know, "Go for this" "Go get that" "Go help him make that blind." But we were still able to hunt throughout the year with them. They'd still bring us. One day I was going out to the camp, out on the water that they own, and I had his grandsons with me, and I told them, "See how young you all are? And how old I am?" They said, "Yeah." I said, "That's how I used to be with your Papa." I said, I was the little boy then, and your Papa would bring us hunting. We'd go to the camp and help them build up blinds and whatever. And I said, "Now I'm taking y'all."

Here, there is an investment of time in the community's children. That time is spent teaching the children a valuable skill, but Jerome and others have told us that the time does more than that. He joked and said that he always "did hang around older people, you know. […] And I guess that's why I'm not in all that kind of trouble today." He attributes this experience to why his life has

turned out so well. Others told us the same thing. Part of the training is not only about the skill set of hunting, but about life training, the appropriate approach or attitude toward life. For example, here is a portion of an interview by a Nicholls student, Cory, with his brother about the role their grandfather played.

> Ryan, is a former shrimper who started shrimping when he was four years old. “My Paw Paw taught me,” he says, “and I learned so much from him.” He grew very close to him as he learned not only to catch shrimp, but all the life lessons that came along with it. He remembers the hard work of pulling up the nets and separating the catch, but he explained that it was so much more than that. His grandpa taught him how to provide for his family and the art of self- reliance. There were tough lessons learned, too, like “If you didn't catch anything, you didn't eat anything,” Ryan said. The conversations on the boat for Ryan mostly led to a lesson being learned. He remembers his grandpa always telling him how to live right. “He was teaching me how to be a man,” Ryan said. He believes that is why he is the person he is today, a person with a traditional mindset.

In addition to life lessons learned during the production—the harvesting itself—hunters, fishers, and gardeners create social relationships through these activities. People told us that their strongest and closes relationships, outside of their families, are with their hunting friends.

Any assessment of the value of production would have to account for all of these complex and interrelated factors. This includes the quantities of food produced, the financial cost of the investment in instruments for production, the time invested in apprenticeship, the value of that apprenticeship, and the value of the social relationships created by hunting and harvesting. The value derived from these practices is monetary, dietary, social, and emotional, among others, as is discussed throughout the report.

6.4 Exchange

There are multiple forms of exchange. Although some idealized views of subsistence exchange reject the idea of any monetary involvement at all (see the discussion in Chapter 5.2: Conceptual Approaches to Subsistence) we think that such an approach is not productive in the case of Coastal Louisiana: it denies the complexity of the relationships and exchanges that we saw and consider to be within a subsistence framework. Rather than looking to money as the ultimate and only consideration for a measurement of whether or not a transaction is within a subsistence system, we find it more productive to consider whether a transaction’s price point is market driven or driven by social relationships or networks. Here are some examples of exchanges we documented that are clearly linked to subsistence practices:

- At Arthur Bergeron’s annual corn picking, (profiled in Gardening, Volume 2), friends and neighbors are called from a list, compiled over years by word of mouth, to come and help. Some do help, and most are sold bags of fresh corn at a good price. The money from the sale of the corn is used to fund the rest of Arthur’s gardening projects and cover the cost of the corn crop.
- Many shrimpers reported having multiple prices: one for the dock, one for the shrimp factory, lower prices for the elderly, and a special price for certain neighbors and friends.

- A crabber also works a wage job, but he gives his supervisor free crabs in exchange for flex time or time off to hunt or harvest at key times. That flex time is important for allowing him to keep his freezers full.

In each case there is either actual money or a money substitute represented here (time at work). And yet the key to understanding these interactions is not by focusing on the money. The price in these cases is determined by social considerations. These below-market cash exchanges are about social networks, and the value in these exchanges is about more than the money. This interrelation of money and non-monetary factors is illustrated in the following excerpt from a student essay. Jacob interviewed his best friend's father, David, who is a barber by trade, but also a key figure in area crab networks. Jacob explains:

> He [David] also receives and distributes crabs to several people in the Thibodaux area. Through an extensive interview, he explained to me where the crabs come from and how they get to my family. An old man by the name of Sterling catches the crabs in Flat Lake in Morgan City. David is very good friends with Sterling and that is where his crab connections come from. Sterling is a 70-year-old man who learned how to live off the land from his father and became a hunter, trapper, and crabber. He always had another job to support his family in case times became hard with the crabs, and he is an expert crabber and knows much about crabs' patterns and habits. David says that catching crabs is Sterling's pride and joy, and he does not do it for monetary gain. He is a very popular man in Morgan City, and he sells his crabs to show off his hard work.
>
> Every Monday, David travels up to Morgan City to get the crabs from Sterling. He said that the Monday trip is always an adventure. He sometimes brings a friend to ride with him up to Morgan City. He said the conversations usually consist of crazy childhood memories and stories. This is a time for him and his friends to recall and relive their past. David told me that he thinks the ride is sometimes more fun and important than actually getting the crabs themselves. He said this is how he met some of his closest friends. Once David obtains the crabs, he throws a huge crab boil for his family. David said that most people in Louisiana cook more than they can eat, and "Their eyes are bigger than their stomachs." For this reason, people in Louisiana invite their family to take part in eating the enormous amount of food.

Here, Jacob tells us, your job does not define you**,** it is your food harvesting, distribution, preparation (cooking), and the relationships you build through those activities that define you. There are layers of meaning: these transactions combine aspects of gift exchange or cultural values with the sales. A sale of corn is intermingled with a gift of labor. Crabs gifted to a supervisor help to maintain positive relationships at work. Sales and purchases of crabs are more about reputation and social networks than monetary gain. While sales may be needed to meet expenses (seed, gas, boat repairs, and other bills), they are also shaped by ethical and moral values that are socially and culturally grounded: these gift-sales are also about doing the right thing and being a good person.

Another example of these kinds of overlap between market and other types of exchange are roadside stands. These are a visual reminder that subsistence practices and foods are widely dispersed in coastal communities, rather than being the singular purview of a small number of subsistence practitioners or specialists. Many of these stands represent micro-entrepreneurship, which blends food harvesting, preparation, and exchange as part of the seasonal production cycle, and represent supplemental income for the vendors. If you are a regular driver on a specific road and you know the rules of exchange, you can purchase, often at below-market price, a wide variety of foods that are harvested and/or prepared by a household producer. Stands come in varying sizes, and some larger ones can be associated with businesses or bring in foods from outside: there is no bright line. In the description of these stands we rely heavily on data collected by fieldworkers on transects (see Chapter 2 Project Methodologies for a full description).

Some stands are a simple sign hung from a mailbox or attached to a stake. The markers are often "little tiny signs" as one researcher put it, small and weathered, in yards or by the roadway. One stand announced it had "Satsumas for sale, $1/dozen, Blow Horn." The sign had an arrow pointed toward the house. Adams noted a sign for "Rabbits," that was spray painted onto plywood board, set upright on ground, but mostly hidden behind overgrown prickly pear cactus on Highway 308. Another sign he saw said "For sale, Rabbits." But the word "rabbits" was crossed out with duct tape and below it was written "Fresh Eggs, Scented Candles" with an arrow pointing down a side road and a phone number. Some signs are left up year round, though the produce is only sold in-season. Another stand may have an empty wheelbarrow perched at the end of the driveway with blank signage, indicating a seasonal stand may be in operation at this location at some time of year (even if not in operation at the time of the transect). Hand-painted signs may accompany produce baskets and a simple money box or bucket, for purchases made on the honor code, as such small stands are often untended, though the owners may live nearby and check in frequently.

Other stands are larger, more formal, with small sheds or buildings, as seen in Figure 6. For example, a more established stand with a "pavilion type roof and open air walk-in stand enclosed with chicken wire fencing," as it was described by a fieldworker, announced "Diamond Produce. We only sell it if we grow it." In this way, it was distinguishing itself from farm stands that resell food grown or harvested elsewhere. Another stand had a hand painted sign for each item that was for sale (okra, cucumbers, gumbo filé, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, satsumas, bell peppers, sweet potatoes, garlic, pumpkins). Another fieldworker found larger produce stands, connected through family and social networks, that sell local produce.

Figure 6. Year-round roadside produce stand.

Most produce is grown by the sellers. Even though this is a full-time business, the signage is hand-lettered. Photo by Tiffany Duet.

Others brought in produce from outside the area. For example, several farm stands were owned by a larger area farm located in the Northshore-Hammond area. Another produce stand was located in a permanent building with two vendors, and contained items “most likely purchased from store or distributor” (for example, bananas). Though most items sold in roadside stands were edible food items, researchers also recorded other farming related sales, such as hay, or artisanal crafts, such as candles.

Small stands were common. For example, one fieldworker identified 44 roadside stands selling 27 products on a 10-mile stretch on two bayouside roads, offering items ranging from hay and honey to tomatoes and rabbits. This indicates a high saturation of food harvesting, production, and exchange taking place in small scale sites in this area. When the findings from the other three fieldworkers were added, we documented a total of 37 items for sale from people’s yards listed in Table 5. This does not include the range of vegetables, fruit, and preserved goods for sale in the larger produce stands.

Table 5. Items for Sale on Yard Signs in Terrebonne and Lafourche, 2013

bell peppers	garlic	jack o’lantern pumpkins
scented candles	gumbo file	pumpkins
carrots	hay	rabbits
Choupic (live)	honey	satsumas
crab traps for sale	mirlitons	shallots
live crabs, soft shell crabs, spillway crabs	mustard (greens)	sweet potatoes

creole pumpkin	okra	tomatoes
cucumber	onion	turkeys
cushaw squash	oranges	winter squash
eggplants	orchids	
eggs (“yard eggs”)	peaches	
field peas	persimmons	
fig tree	potatoes	

Other kinds of exchange do not involve money.

Barter is another kind of exchange. Many people told us that their parents or grandparents had paid for ammunition or other essentials in furs or ducks, thus implying that this kind of exchange no longer took place. However, the practice of bartering is alive and well. For example, one shrimper told us that he paid for a child’s haircuts in shrimp. One of our researchers, Mike Saunders, was engaged in multiple kinds of barter while working on the project. He was renovating a house in exchange for rent and placed a broken air conditioner on the sidewalk. A truck drove by and the driver asked if he wanted the air conditioner. Mike said it was broken, but they could have it. They said they had just been fishing, and they could give him some catfish from their cooler. He said he was only a single person, but he would certainly take one catfish, the results of which are pictured in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Researcher Mike Saunders holds up the catfish he swapped for a broken air conditioner.

Photo courtesy of M. Saunders.

Another participant told us about getting part of a house rewired in exchange for shrimp. Charles told a common story, a swap of docking space in exchange for seafood.

I have a guy that parks his shrimp boat at my house. When he comes home [from shrimping] there's some things that the families over the years have said they like, and it's not necessarily shrimp. It might be squid. My sister in law ends up getting all the squid. He picks it up for her. . . . Ice chests full of squid. Me, if I got to visit him at his boat when he comes he may give me a bucket of shrimp. Just enough to make a gumbo or a jambalaya, spaghetti, whatever it is that I want to cook with it, but it'll be a meal. In effect, this shrimper uses his shrimp to trade in exchange for securing a docking space.

6.5 Sharing

Sharing is a significant part of subsistence practice in coastal Louisiana. The logs show about 844 separate instances of sharing in more than 2,500 entries documented by 26 people. Sharing likely occurred more frequently, as we have reason to think our data is underreporting both food circulation in general and sharing in particular (see Project Methodologies for a full description). This suggests that sharing is a frequent and regular part of household culinary practice. Charles, a retired shrimper, explained how important sharing is in his community and in his way of life:

> The sharing of food is not necessarily something that you do on an exchange. It's something that you do because there's an abundant amount of seafood or something like that. If I go and I don't feel like cleaning my fish today, I'm stopping by your house and you can have it. And when I was shrimping with my father, we used to have my great aunt who lived by herself, barely making it on the money that she was receiving from the government. And every time we passed in front of her house coming home from shrimping, we stopped and put something at her house. Every time. Never expecting anything in return. It was just, you take care of the elders. And my father in law called me and tells me that the lady next door has pears falling out of her trees and she don't want them, go get them. My father, he eats Japan plums [Japanese plums, loquats, *Eriobotrya japonica*]. I'll meet somebody in the grocery store. "Tell your daddy to come get the Japan plums out of my tree." It's kind of like, whoever has an abundant amount of something and doesn't want to mess with it, you just give it away . . . . So for me to look back at some of the things that we take for granted – that somebody will stop by your house and say "Look I've got an ice chest full of fish" and just leave them for you, under your house[3]. Or call you up and say "Look I've put a box of crabs underneath your house."

As this account from Charles makes clear, many sharing activities are portrayed as "no big deal." They are an ordinary part of social life in coastal communities. Even as people told us about them, they often understated their importance. Sharing as a feature is assumed in subsistence communities, as observed in Alaskan fishing communities among the hunters and fishers:

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[3] Houses in the lower parts of Terrebonne and Lafourche Parish are often raised, sometimes by as much as 10–12 feet from the ground because of frequent flooding. People use this under-house space for various uses. Some people park cars or have picnic tables in the shady areas. Some people use the space to process harvested animals–plucking ducks or filleting fish.

> Normal social etiquette entails the behavior among fathers, sons, and brothers-in-law and encourages, to differing degrees, the sharing of subsistence foods and money with those who need it. (Luton 1986: 536)

Sharing is widespread, but usually does not circulate randomly. The information gleaned from the logs and from our conversations suggests people are circulating food within networks, which include family members, as well as neighbors, friends, and fellow church members. Mapping out these networks systematically would offer added insight to how these relationships function, but is beyond the scope of this project. Our analysis of the sharing logs suggests that some people seem to be key circulators within the exchange networks. That is, some people take in raw materials, like garden vegetables or shrimp, and either recirculate it to others, or process it into cooked or preserved food before sharing it. Often these people are retired people or people who are working from home.

Retired people can often give significant aid to their children who are working full-time or demanding wage jobs, allowing the children remain connected to a subsistence lifestyle by supplying them with food items, including: fresh fish, seafood boils, vegetables from a garden, and homemade preserves and pickles.

The role of older relatives first came to our attention in a series of student essays in which students in freshman composition at Nicholls State regularly cited grandparents as their connection to subsistence. For example, Tyler Sothern wrote:

> The meals at my grandparents' house often vary, but on this day we are having a very familiar dish for our particular family and for South Louisiana in general. The meal, consisting of fried shrimp and homemade French fries, is made possible due to my grandfather's connections here in South Louisiana. As the games start winding down and people begin to make their way out the door to resume their usually busy Sunday afternoons, everyone stops by my grandpa's freezer. Even after a large lunch consisting of shrimp, the freezer is still almost at the point of overflowing with bags of cleaned and deveined shrimp. The families take as much as they want to prepare for the week and make their way home, after saying the usual goodbyes to everyone. It may seem strange to people of other cultures that someone would store this much food to just give it away, but this is a picture of a usual Sunday afternoon.

The specialized role of elders sharing and maintaining social networks also routinely appeared in other forms of data collection. Another example comes from notes from a drop-in interview with people fishing on Island Road in August 2012:

> On a late August afternoon, a husband and wife are fishing near the island end of Island Road. They have a van and are sitting in two lawn chairs with canopies and a cooler between them. The couple are retired and now live in Bourg (Terrebonne Parish). He self-identifies as Cajun and called the local newspaper by its French pronunciation (the Houma Courier). They come down the bayou to fish Island Road 2 or 3 times each week. Often they eat the fish that night, but if they catch a lot, they will freeze it and have a fish fry. This couple married after spouses passed away, and between them they have 8 children, 25 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren. They said the fishing supplies their supper about twice a

> week and they have fish fry at least once a month, if not more often. That day they had caught one redfish and three drum.

The couple fish often enough so that they can have plenty of fish for the monthly fish fry. Part of the story is that they will give away any extra fish they have.

Elders are often on the receiving end of sharing. In his oral history, Glenn Trahan outlines their place in a network of sharing:

> I give it to the elderly people around here. A lot of people that I lease land with or use their property, I'll bring them stuff. Just people in general who, one day we may just be having a conversation in the store or something and say—like just now a lady was telling me how much she likes soft-shelled crab. Well if I go shrimping and I catch soft-shelled crab I'm going to bring that lady soft-shelled crab. I know she desires it. She don't get much of it, and she would like to have some. So just recently in the last hour and a half this lady showed me a desire for wanting. She's a lady about her sixties I've been friends with all my life. Just gave me this hint that she likes soft-shelled crabs. So I'm going to bring her. It's things like that. My family, my boys, they get their share of shrimp, crab, fish, ducks, deer, whatever. They'll come and use the property, and they'll hunt. But if we get extra we'll give it to them.

In Trahan's sharing network, as described here, are

1) people with he has whom relationships of reciprocity, including people he leases land with or who let him use their property;

2) people who are older, particularly elderly women, who may not have other access to seafood; and

3) his family.

In other places in the history he mentions that he also shares with friends, fellow hunters, and other neighbors.

Another example of a typical sharing pattern was provided by a pair of shrimpers we talked to. Field notes from the discussion note their sharing habits:

> This couple is in their fifties, and they go shrimping together for days at a time. From the shrimp they caught, they shared ice chests of shrimp with family members. They shared with her sister who lives in town, because when they need to evacuate [because of flooding, an incoming hurricane, or storm], she lets them stay at her house. She also shared an ice chest of shrimp with her nephew who owns an equipment rental business. Anytime they need to rent some kind of equipment, he does not charge them anything, so it is a good trade as far as they are concerned.

The couple shares shrimp with their family, in part because it strengthens these bonds and creates reciprocal obligations. Here, these obligations cover both what might be considered normal family hospitality (visiting a sister in times of need) and what is typically seen as a contractual relationship (renting equipment from a business). Some scholars discuss sharing as separate from wage labor. As illustrated in the above example, we find that sharing and wage work often go hand in hand. We have had many conversations with people who share food with their bosses or employees, in both cases the action seems to establish relationships.

As is clear in this discussion, sharing is not one specific, defined activity. Sharing can be done to avoid waste, to cement a relationship, it can serve as a guise for what is really an exchange, it can be spontaneous (like Debra's sharing of a fish), it can be routinized (like always bringing a cooler of shrimp to someone's house after a trawl), or it can be ritualized (like family Sunday crab boils and holiday feasts). Sharing can be almost involuntary, and some things are shared more than others. For someone with a satsuma tree that is producing heavily, to not share those satsumas around would be noticed as unusual; to share them would be considered normal. In this cultural context, not sharing would be seen as atypical or even strange. Unpacking the structures and layers of meaning in these sharing relationships will be a complex task for future studies.

6.6 Consumption

In the snapshots at the beginning of this chapter, we offered a profile of subsistence consumption patterns in which people involved in wage work also incorporated food from hunted or harvested sources. We included profiles where the food that was self-provisioned, shared, or bartered was used from one or two times a week to as often as daily. This range of practices is typical of the consumption profiles recorded from study participants. Here we provide example lists of hunted or harvested foods consumed by three people for comparison. The following items were consumed or shared by one man between May 5–11, 2013.

- **Eggs:** for breakfast daily
- **Grapefrui**t: squeeze for juice daily
- **Asparagus**: picking daily, eating daily as part of lunch or dinner (also shared with friends)
- **Speckled trout**: Wednesday a friend came by and dropped off a speckled trout, which they had for dinner
- **Green beans**: part of lunch or dinner most days
- **Honey**: extracted 15 pounds (sold 3 lbs to friends) and used some daily in tea and lemonade
- **Lemons**: used to make lemonade daily; drank every afternoon
- **Blood oranges**:given a batch by a friend; ate one but saved most to make wine
- **Tomatoes**: picked and ate daily with lunch and dinner

Most of the foods above were harvested from the man's own garden; some were shared by relatives, friends, or neighbors. For comparison, here is a week of consumption and sharing in January 2012, documented in a narrative log by a woman. Items harvested or hunted have been bolded:

- Jan. 23: Today we had leftover smothered **cabbage** and yogurt I made. Harvested **eggs, cabbage, satsumas**. Homemade **satsuma** juice. Also gave 1 **cabbage**, 8 **beets**, 12 **carrots** to friend on this day.
- Jan. 24: Today I made **cabbage** casserole. I also harvested **cabbage, beets, satsumas**. Made homemade **satsuma** juice. Ate **venison** sausage from hunting, and **arugula** from my sister.
- Jan. 25: Today I made **broccoli** soup with things from garden. And we ate some **soy beans** out of our freezer that we grew. We also had homemade **satsuma** juice. Harvested **broccoli, satsumas, turnips, snow peas** from our garden.

- Jan. 26: Harvested **cauliflower** and **satsumas** this day. Homemade **satsuma** juice.
- Jan. 27: Today I fried fresh **fish** from my sons. Also harvested **cauliflower** and **satsumas.** Homemade **satsuma** juice. Also gave 1 bag of **kumquats** to neighbor on this day and also gave 5-gallon bucket of **oranges** to neighbor on this day.
- Jan. 28: Harvested **eggs**, **satsumas**. Homemade **orange** juice. Made **venison** burgers from **deer** hunting (son).
- Jan. 29: Harvested **satsumas**, made **satsuma** juice. Cooked harvested **brussell sprouts** from the freezer, made a **venison** roast from hunting. Shared a **cabbage** with my daughter.

Finally, we offer a week consumption and sharing from January 2012 as documented in a man's consumption log:

- Jan. 16: Ate an Indian taco and leftover birthday cake (he had caught 3 redfish and 1 black drum the week before and fried the fish and served it with white beans, shared with daughter and grandkids for a birthday party).
- Jan. 17: Had a second birthday party. Boiled **crabs** for a crab boil with 22 people this day. Bought the crabs from a local fisherman.
- Jan. 18: Fried **shrimp** from the freezer and cooked red beans from the store this day.
- Jan. 19: Caught 4 **redfish** this day, shared some with another fisherman. Also had dinner with granddaughter this day. She cooked turkey burgers and salad.
- Jan. 20: Caught 1 **speckled trout** and 1 **redfish** this day. Fried the **fish** and ate it with white beans [and rice].
- Jan. 21: Gave some **shrimp** to daughter, grandkids, niece and a friend this day. Cooked **shrimp jambalaya** from some shrimp give to him by his cousin at an earlier date.
- Jan. 22: Fried **fresh water fish** from the freezer.

This log is interesting because while this man is harvesting and eating a great deal of fresh food (fish he caught, locally bought crabs, and shrimp his cousin caught), his log also makes it clear that a great percentage of his calories are coming from non-self-provisioned sources, like white beans, red beans, turkey burgers, and Indian tacos (Indian fry bread topped with some combination of ground beef, chili, lettuce, tomatoes, and cheese).

As noted above, gardens produced edible food every month of the year. With this, participants logged some type of self-provisioned consumption from their gardens every month of the year, although consumption dropped in August and September. In addition, because of freezers (and canning to a lesser degree), people were eating stored fish, seafood, game, and vegetables year-round, in and out of season.

One other point of interest from these logs is that the value of consumption is not only the caloric value of these foods, but also the type of food. These harvested and hunted foods are what might generally be called healthful: lean, low-fat, rich in nutrients, low in additives, and free from additional ingredients that come with processed foods. Access to healthy foods is significant in terms of both economics and health. The population of Louisiana on the whole faces particular challenges in this respect because of high rates of poverty and nutritionally linked diseases (obesity, diabetes, heart disease). Chauvin, Dulac, Pointe-aux-chênes, Theriot, Dularge, Isle de Jean Charles, and other small communities could be classified as "food deserts," because of the distance to large grocery stories, particularly stores actually stocking fresh vegetables, and because of the low density of grocery stores in the region (Walker et al. 2010). Our surveys

through the local shops showed that there was no local seafood available in down-the-bayou stores, very few fresh vegetables (usually only "seasoning" vegetables—onions, bell peppers, etc.) and potatoes. The situation gets worse as the stores get smaller the further south down the bayou you travel. That is, there are fewer stores, prices are higher, and there are fewer fresh foods, more processed foods. Given the food deserts that exist in many down-the-bayou communities, subsistence foods may play a critical role in people's diets. Though this study did not focus on health and nutrition issues, we expect that there would be significant health impacts if subsistence foods were lost. We would urge future studies to consider the importance (and value) of subsistence consumption to the health of the community. While a loss of access to subsistence foods would impact everyone in coastal communities, people with lower incomes and those living closer to the coast would be disproportionately impacted.

As discussed above, year-round consumption of subsistence items entails costs. These are mostly in the form of time spent preserving food and in learning preservation skills. In the following excerpt from Mike Saunders' fieldnotes from a rabbit hunt he describes how Richard Borne and the other hunters were watching as his grandson was struggling to learn to clean a rabbit properly:

> Back at trucks, we sit while grandson cleans his rabbits. He knows the basics but keeps getting advice from those gathered around but takes it well without looking too embarrassed. They also tease him about the amount of grass sticking to the cleaned rabbits, saying that they don't need a salad with it, it already has one and also don't need to garnish it with parsley.

In Figure 8, Richard Borne, along with another group of men, is showing a teenage boy how to skin a deer. Cleaning a rabbit is something you have to learn, just as you have to learn how to skin a deer, fillet a fish, peel and devein shrimp, shuck corn, can tomatoes, make jelly, butcher hogs, and the hundreds of others skills necessary to preserve food. Canned food must have appropriate seals to prevent spoiling. Food to be frozen must be properly stored so that it doesn't get freezer burn. Some foods can be thrown in the freezer, and others must be prepared. For instance, blueberries will store better if you wash them and dry them carefully. Then spread them out on a cookie sheet, without the berries touching each other, and place that in the freezer to freeze. They will freezer fairly quickly in a chest freezer. Then, once they are frozen, put them in a quart freezer bag and label them for easy storage. You need to use them within a year.

Figure 8. Learning to skin a deer.

Two older men show a teenager the ropes. Photo courtesy of Richard Borne.

Another aspect of consumption is the value of having food you yourself provided. Here is an excerpt from an essay written by a Nicholls student, Rory, about the meals at the camp his family visits, owned by a long-time friend of his father:

> For most families in South Louisiana, our meals comprise of [sic] animals and fish native to our area. Much of the responsibility for collecting these prized Cajun delicacies is laid upon the males of the family. In order to have the food supply ready when gatherings come around, the men must either go out into the wild to hunt wild beast and water fowl or travel by boat in search for fish or frogs. The food brought together at the parties isn't necessarily limited to these items, but they are the usual prospects. Rory Eschete, Sr. mentioned in his interview, "Everyone brings their own piece to pitch into the party." This means early mornings and missions out into nature to bring back fresh meat for the evening. For many men, like my father and his close friend R. T., fishing and crabbing are something they've been doing most of their lives. My father will go down to Grand Isle before the weekend and fish all around the island catching various fish such as speckled trout, red fish, and flounder. He commented in his interview, "Being able to eat what you catch brings pride and appreciation of work." Fishing can be one of the most difficult hobbies known to man. "Fishing takes a lot of work because it's a man's sport," according to Rory. The fish can be biting in one spot and be gone within no time.
>
> Usually by the time the weekend comes around and the rest of the family arrives at the camp, there's a promising amount of fish and crabs for everyone to share. The close friends of my dad and R. will bring hunted game such as deer, frog, or hog in exchange for the fresh seafood being shared. R. T. likes to call it, "Living off the land." That is basically how a normal weekend is prepared. The hard work and passion put into catching and cooking this food makes it taste all the better

> and everyone appreciates it more. It gives a whole different edge compared to just buying food from the grocery store.

For Rory and his family, part of the worth of that meal is knowing that his father and their friends, men who work full-time in the oilfields, dedicated their labor to bringing that food to the table. Of course, there will be other food, such as potato salads, vegetables, chips, and typically soft drinks and beer. A photo essay included in Volume 2: Field Reports shows the range of foods offered at a game dinner. However, the only foods worth mentioning in Rory's essay are the ones his father and his friends hunted or harvested. Those foods have the "different edge," and that is the added value.

6.7 Layered Calculations

As outlined in this chapter, decisions and discussions surrounding consumption are layered and complex. We end this reflection on consumption with an excerpt from a recorded conversation with a North Louisiana hunter, Carl, who also hunts and fishes on the Coast, talking to researcher Jamie DiGilormo.

> Carl: See, I eat fish three times a month, maybe four. But I'm going to have deer meat–like I say, last night we cooked a big pot of spaghetti. Well, that's deer burger that we took out [to make the spaghetti sauce]. And I have deer sausage and deer burger, and we mix them together a little bit and make spaghetti or meatloaf, anything. There's nothing we cook that does not have wild game.
>
> Jamie: So you think that this lifestyle of hunting and fishing has significantly impacted your grocery shopping and the amount of money you spend at the store.
>
> Carl: Oh yeah! Tremendously! If I had to go buy meat–I mean, I love beef steak, don't get me wrong. I love a rack of ribs, but when you got to go and buy all that stuff? Your grocery bill will go up dramatically. Now, let's turn this around. Did I say that deer I killed saved me money? Probably not. I might have $2,000 in that deer stand that I killed him out of. I got another $1,000 in the rifle. I got another $1,000 in the deer leases every year. It's a no-no to try to put a price on it.

Carl makes a complex point. He both does and does not "save" money. He both does and does not see his hunting in terms of economics. When the interviewer draws a conclusion, he points out that the situation is complex. True, he's not spending money at the grocery store, but he is spending money in other ways. How much money you spend on harvesting and hunting depends, we have learned, on your family history and your connections, and the type of hunting or harvesting you do. Some people, like Carl, who live in North Louisiana and have to drive all the way to the Coast to duck hunt or fish for flounder, spend a great deal in transportation. People in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes, on the other hand, might make very small personal investments, over time, to be able to maintain a subsistence lifestyle. Investments in subsistence might be part of their gifting system from the time they are children or teenagers. They might have older relatives who enculturate them over many years. People from those areas might have key members of their families that help them participate in subsistence activities even when they have to hold demanding 40-hour-a-week (or more) jobs and have to move up the bayou, farther from the coast, or even to cities like New Orleans or Baton Rouge. In other words, the costs vary widely. And the benefits can range from low-cost food sources to health and nutrition to family ties, personal identity, self-respect, and "bragging rights." Subsistence activities produce highly

valued foods that cannot be purchased at the store. These foods fuel family gatherings centered around feasting on crabs and shrimp as well as finfish, duck, and produce from the garden. More importantly, through harvesting and sharing, people are creating themselves as persons. They are learning to be people who contribute something meaningful to the world. As Carl is telling us, the bottom line is that a simple balance sheet cannot handle this type of accounting. The calculations people make are complex.

7 Camps, Leases, and Clubs

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we explore the social, collective and institutional foundations that support much hunting and fishing. While subsistence activities in Louisiana can sometimes be celebrated as individual acts of self-reliance, in reality these are just as often group-focused, institutional, or even corporate. Though some people in our study prize hunting or harvesting for the opportunity for solitude and individual accomplishment, many of the people who participated in this project harvest animals (hunting or fishing) in groups and see it as a time of socializing. Sometimes these groups are based around a nuclear family. More often they are composed of either multi-generational extended families or separate groups linked by friendships acquired in school or work. Despite their pride in self-reliance, the reality is that most people in South Louisiana do not have the option of walking to the closest woods to go hunting. Fishing is simpler because there are a multitude of free, accessible fishing spots, but the activity is still licensed and closely regulated. And even fishing is not permitted in some places. Hunting and fishing are state regulated and require access to where the animals are–land, water, marsh–and most land and many inland waterways (often canals) in South Louisiana are owned by individuals or corporations. Some of the favorite fishing waterways are privately owned because they are canals that were originally dug by private industry or individuals. This is partially due to their omnipresence: Don Davis counted 661 named canals in coastal Louisiana but noted there are hundreds more without the word "*canal* officially incorporated into the place name" (2010:161) adding up to thousands of such waterways. In earlier work, Davis (1973) estimated more than 8,000 miles of canals crisscross the coastal region. Many of those canals remain owned by private interests. Outlets from lakes will have locked gates to prevent boats from entering, and companies will sell rights to hunters or fishers to enter those waterways. This raises a question: Given that land is at a premium, how do people get access to good hunting and fishing spaces?

7.2 Land Access and Hunting Clubs

Hunting brings the greatest problems of access. Two free options are to hunt on your own land or to use a state-owned Wildlife Management Area. In the coastal region we documented, the largest is the Pointe-aux-chênes Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Accessed from Island Road, the WMA is 33,000 acres of marsh and wetlands managed by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, set aside for hunting and fishing. Much of the area is marsh or water, so people need boats to get access to prime hunting and fishing areas. The Pointe-aux-chênes WMA has special hunting lotteries for hunters with physical challenges or mobility limitations as well as youth lotteries for deer hunting. People can and do use this and other WMAs. For instance, in his oral history, John Serigny mentions how he submitted his name for a state WMA lottery and was chosen to participate in a goose hunt in another part of the state.

Other people feel less favorably about WMAs. Paul Hingle, a resident of Port Sulphur, was interviewed in 2002 by Tom McGuire (2008) as part of a BOEM cooperative project to document the history of the offshore oil industry. He explains that if you don't lease land, you don't have any place to hunt.

> As far as going on public land, I ain't hunting public land. It's too dangerous. You got too many people that, that don't know what they're doing. Them hunter education courses to me, they're not, they're not teaching you know–I mean they

> try to teach you something in two days that you gotta learn about guns and stuff like that. You gotta learn that from the time you're a little kid growing up. … Well, if they had more public land it might not be bad, but you know there's a lotta people that don't want to pay the money. . . . The last couple of times I've hunted game reserves and all that was open to the public, you know, I've seen people hunting out there that was drinking. I've seen people to where they look like every tree you look behind there was somebody. I even had a friend of mine that was in a tree stand, jacked up a tree, and he heard some noise right at day—before it got daylight. And when he looked down like that there was a guy climbing the same tree he was in. So, where we hunt at, we got maps where everybody's gonna be, and I feel more safer in the woods. (2008:7)

Some people in our study, like Richard Borne, own property where they hunt or fish. Richard organized a rabbit hunt on his property during this study. He often takes his children and grandchildren back on the property to hunt, with success. For example, in 2011 he shot a 10-point buck. Richard has said that even though his property is privately owned, he tries to be cooperative with neighbors who might be, for example, tracking a deer. He told researcher Mike Saunders a story he remembered about a time when he was building a deer blind, and some hunters came through who were tracking a deer who crossed into his property. He let them continue following the deer. After they got the deer, they came back by him and stopped to help. The blind, needless to say, was built a lot more quickly. Richard told this story because he believes this spirit of cooperation is how it should be and because it represents the general attitude of hunters and property owners, although he knows there are exceptions. Though people may be understanding enough to allow a hunter to continue an in-progress chase begun on other property, they seldom allow hunting on posted private land without express permission.

A great deal of open, forested land, suitable for deer hunting, is owned by corporations. Corporations often sell leases to hunt on their property, a tradition dating back to the early 1900s (see Chapter 3). At that time, the clubs that bought such leases catered only to very wealthy clients, usually businessmen from the North (Davis 2010). These hunts, comprised almost exclusively of men, were famous for their luxuries and servants. One of the oldest was established after the turn of the century by A.E. McIlhenny, famous for producing Tabasco hot sauce. Access to his club cost elite corporate executives back in the 1920s the equivalent of more than $100,000 in today's dollars (Davis 2010). Certainly elite clubs still exist. Community members have told us about a corporate deepwater fishing club that is basically a ship out in the Gulf where people are helicoptered in and are entertained lavishly, by day landing enormous fish and by night making powerhouse deals. We did not meet many people who had participated in those exclusive clubs, but we met lots of people who were members, or had been members, of some type of hunting or fishing club.

Clubs have become common among folks of all walks of life. A "club" can simply indicate a group of friends and neighbors who have organized to be able to afford access to a leased property. For example, one of our participants belongs to a group of several family members and friends who chip in together to purchase a duck hunting lease from one of the larger corporate landholders in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes. Collectively they pay more than $5,000 a year to have access to land for duck hunting and fishing in some canals. They have formed a hunting club so that they can lease the land together. This situation is typical. Deer hunters we have interviewed pay from $700 to more than $1,000 a year to belong to a club, which gives

them access to a certain number of acres and often the right to set up a camp or a stand. Sportsman websites like the ones maintained by Louisiana Sportman and the sporting goods store Big Bucks are full of people advertising places in hunting clubs or seeking to buy into a lease or a club. A hunting lease gives the purchaser (or group of purchasers) the right to hunt for specific game on the property at specific times of the year. A property owner might lease his land out to one group of people for duck hunting and to an entirely different person or persons for alligator season. Hunting clubs are formed so that individuals can pool their money to have access to these leases. Or a hunting club can be formed by a corporate entity in order to develop a profitable recreational facility or simply to entertain or cultivate relationships with potential clients. Property owners will advertise their land as available to be leased. Hunting leases advertised on 2012 the Louisiana Sportsman website ran between $5,000 and $10,000 per year for deer or duck (sometimes both) for access to anywhere from 500 to 1,200 acres. One person advertised that he was leasing 700 acres for $12,000 a year. Of course, the value of the land would vary depending on where the land was located. Once clubs are formed, they need to keep a certain number of members to keep individual prices down. Larger clubs advertise for new members on hunting websites. We saw one particular hunting club advertising for a new member; they were leasing 1,600 acres and charging members $700 to hunt and an additional $150 to bring a camper onsite.

Although clubs advertise for members from time to time, we also heard of clubs whose memberships are less open. People explained that people who hunt together need to know each other. Smaller clubs, like Richard Borne's, usually find their members through family and community networks. And, although more members the lower the price, too many people also can overuse the resource: people explained that clubs should not have too many members. Sometimes people have to wait for an opening to be a member in a club. There may also be other restrictions. Once a club has formed, memberships are often handed down in a family. One hunter mentioned that people have approached her about possibly "getting in on" her family's hunting club, but they were disappointed: admitting an additional member would not be possible. The smaller clubs often cannot allow additional members because of agreements with the land corporation, which is concerned about knowing who is using the land.

Cost is one factor in these decisions surrounding club participation and hunting in general. For example, Richard says he always has a rough idea of how much deer he and his family have to kill (and how much meat needs to go in the freezer) in order to get the cost back for the hunting club membership. But he says that he doesn't add in other costs to that calculation–rifles, ammunition, gasoline, miscellaneous hunting gear, or time spent building deer stands. John Serigny, a duck hunting enthusiast, put it this way in his oral history:

> If I had to compute the cost of a pound of duck meat, for me, I'd just quit. I mean, I can buy ribeye steaks way cheaper, even at $7.99 a pound, which I think is ludicrous. Even at $7.99 a pound I can buy ribeye steaks cheaper than I can get duck meat.

As we saw in Chapter 7, others have stopped duck hunting because of the combination of cost and restrictions on catch. People disagree about cost effectiveness. One thing is agreed on: hunting is more cost effective when people are able to put away and use more meat. For instance, as discussed above, Jerome reported that he and his family rely almost entirely on wild harvests for their meat protein. They buy no meat at the grocery store, except for an occasional pork chop. And in their eating and cooking logs, the family we are calling the Dupres relied almost entirely

on wild harvest provided by their son and grandson for their animal protein, including deer, wild hog, squirrel, and fish.

Some people's investments are low because parents, grandparents, or *parrains* (godparents) paid for the camp building already. In John's case, his camp is near Leeville, and his father and a group of friends bought it in 1964. His father and all but one of the friends had died at the time of the interview, the camp was in his care, and the lease to hunt was signed over to him. He has costs for upkeep and maintenance on the camp, the hunting lease, boat maintenance, dogs, gasoline, ammunition, and rifles. He does not have the added difficulties of locating new property to hunt on, buying into a new lease, or purchasing or building a new camp.

People can also be creative at finding additional ways to make their hunting season productive. For example, John and his other camp members pay a portion of their yearly hunting lease fees by trawling for shrimp. They rigged a trawl net to one of their boats and use it during the spring and summer trawling seasons to earn extra money. In 2000, John wrote in his camp log: "The trawling brought a couple hundred dollars in the coffers. We've paid the lease and are now part of the landed aristocracy" (Camp Log X: Entry August 19, 2000).

Some explain that deer hunting will come closer to paying for itself than duck hunting. They often point to their freezers full of deer meat as justification for the expensive season. Others, like Richard, note that hunting often costs more than it has to. He notes that while a hunter can spend a fortune on camouflage clothing, automatic insulating gloves, fancy rifle scopes, and more, a hunter like himself just hits the woods in jeans, his old Army jacket, and a rifle that he's had for more than 20 years. His stand was built years ago and requires little maintenance. Now, his cost investments are almost always for his grandchildren: new rifles and the membership to Club Brule, a hunting club.

Physically, hunting clubs vary. Club Brule's camp house was built on top of what was originally a trapper's hut. All 47 members must have access to a boat because it is accessible only by water. Researcher Mike Saunders describes it this way:

> Behind the docks I saw a fairly large structure with various screened and unscreened porches jutting from it. A walkway of metal grate ran about thirty feet from the bulk-headed docks to the higher ground on which the structure sat; a foot of so of water was under the grate between them. We tied up at the docks, unloaded, and carried our gear up the grate to the back porch of the building. I noticed pens behind the house that held at least fifteen hunting hounds. When we entered the building I was surprised to see not only televisions tuned to local morning news shows, but a very well-equipped kitchen (with a large island and counters along all sides save for a large commercial oven and grill unit, a smaller range, and a large sink). Two poker tables and even an alcove with a pool table completed the common area. There were homemade biscuits and a huge pan of sausage on the kitchen island; six or seven men stood or sat as they drank coffee, ate, and made various comments about the news.

At this camp, there are private sleeping areas, reserved for the older members, and bunk rooms. A few younger members have small trailers that they park on the property for hunts

Through these descriptions of hunting, we began to see how important networks are to people in securing access and the role camps can play. For example, people often mention in interviews

that they hunt or fish in Northern Louisiana, Alabama, or Mississippi. Sometimes they pay into a lease in these places or sometimes they are part of a swap. For example: you have a fishing camp. Your friend (maybe someone you met in college, in the oilfield, or who married a cousin) has a deer camp in Mississippi. So, during deer season, you go to his camp and hunt on his lease. Most clubs will let you bring one guest. Richard was allowed to bring a guest to hunt, which is how our researcher, Mike Saunders, was able to participate (see Volume 2). At a later time, your friend will come to your fishing camp. This way, through reciprocal exchange, you get access to two camps for the price of one. These arrangements are common. For instance, Jerome told us that he has been invited to hunt in North Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, but has not found time to get over to Alabama. Richard's son belongs to a club in North Louisiana. He and his dad swap hunts at their clubs. Joe Autin has swapped alligator hunting trips for deer and pheasant hunting in Kansas.

The internet has made such swaps easier. In some cases, the swaps involve pure barter, as in this Craigslist ad posted by a deer club member in Minnesota hoping to exchange access to leased land for shrimp. The ad included a photo of a man posed with a 10-point buck.

> **Whitetail bow hunt for Shrimp - $2500 (Minnesota)** I'm looking to TRADE an Oct. or November 5 day archery whitetail hunt for shrimp 400 lbs.
> Deer hunt Minnesota. We are located near Buffalo County Wisconsin and boarder northern Iowa! Our deer hunts produce! We specialize in guided whitetail deer hunts. We harvest 125" to 180" class bucks each year. Let us know if you are interested and I will be glad to get you more information. We have excellent deer leases for our clients. Trophy Bucks!
> Minnesota is a sleeper state!
> I need shrimp, prefer peeled and deveined, will consider tail & head on, prefer 16/20 count. I will need by August 15th...will have to figure out shipping logistics. I can use frozen....
> Looking for long term relationship! (Craigslist.com June 15, 2014)

As discussed in the chapter on methods, for this report we conducted 42 interviews that were either oral histories or in-depth conversations. In the chart outlining those discussions, we note the primary areas of hunting and harvesting for each person and additional areas of interest (see Table 3). Many people were involved in multiple hunting and harvesting activities, and we made an effort to meet people who were interested the widest range possible. However, the chart and list make it clear that more people (in our study) are involved in duck hunting than in deer hunting and fewer still are involved in activities such as dove, pheasant, or goose hunting. Although many people expressed an interest in deer hunting, financial realities block many people's participation. Deer hunting is something that people in a coastal region may move in and out of, as their networks shift. Deer, unlike ducks, require mostly solid land to live on, a habitat which is in short supply in Coastal Louisiana. Though there are deer hunting clubs, like the one to which Richard belongs, in the upper parts of Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes, hunting in the parish usually requires buying into a lease or waiting to get into a lottery on public land. And the clubs sometimes set limits on their members. Otherwise, men tend to go into Mississippi or North Louisiana to deer hunt. Duck hunting is more accessible for coastal people because the environment is richer for waterfowl and networks are usually closer to hand, and, in many cases the camp or lease access was often set up in earlier generations. And, in addition, there are some free access areas for hunting, like the Pointe-aux-chênes WMA.

7.3 Coastal Community Camps

Though hunting clubs and leases may be perceived as the most expensive for providing access to land, in part because of the leases required, fishing camps can often represent as large a financial investment. Fishing costs can be highly variable. For example, rods and tackle can range from a set of simple equipment that is practically free (if already owned, purchased used, or borrowed) to sets of complex or sophisticated equipment that cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars. We spoke with people who had made some significant investments in fishing, and others for whom fishing was a low-cost, out-of-the-backyard activity. We discuss the equipment costs more in Chapter 7. For many families, one of the most significant investments is in a fishing camp, as discussed here.

Coastal communities like Pointe-aux-Chênes, Cocodrie, Dularge, Dulac, and Grand Isle are full of fishing camps. Like with hunting clubs, the word "camp" has a range of meanings. Some people described small trailers they have stuck onto a patch of land in a swamp or marsh, a houseboat docked to the shore, or they might have a small building, built over time by friends. Others described four-bedroom raised houses with boat launches and a Jacuzzi. For example, dozens of camps are crowded on the seven-mile stretch of Grand Isle. These are premium fishing camps, which in 2013 cost from $400,000 to more than $800,000 for three-bedroom camps with up-to-date kitchens and baths. One professor at Nicholls, whose family are avid fishers, told us that, for her family, the ability to buy a camp at Grand Isle was a "lifelong dream." Even in a less crowded community, like Dulac, a camp can cost between $80,000 to $200,000, depending on the amenities. In some areas, lots of land alone cost about $45,000. In other areas camps can be cheaper; in 2013 we found an online listing for a boat dock with a one-room, rough board shelter attached for $30,000. So, some type of shelter space with a place to fish is available to a range of people.

Camps can be affordable because people share access, join together in groups to buy them, hand them down in families, or just buy land and slowly build up the camps over years. Almost everybody that we talked to had a camp or participated in going to camps. We met janitors and doctors, dentists and college professors, oilfield workers, firefighters, local government officials, hair dressers, workers at the shrimp factory, students–all went to camps or had camps or had friends or family members with camps or used to have a camp. (For more stories about camps, see Appendix B, student essays). The memories of Felicia, who built her own DIY camp, illustrate the importance of networks and relationships in access to camps. Tiffany Duet wrote in her field report about Felicia:

> Her family didn't own a camp in Grand Isle but stayed with friends as often as they liked. Her father had helped a friend wire his trailer around 1965. With later improvements, a shower was added to the camp so that they didn't have to clean up outside with a hose. (See Volume 2.)

Though her family did not own a camp, they had access to one. Later, Felicia, like others, was able to have a camp because she built her own largely by hand. She started hers in her 30s.

> She purchased a 55-foot aluminum hull and soon got to work. Although she paid for help with wiring and roof construction, she built the rest of the structure nearly single-handedly. On occasion, family and friends would perform small jobs in order to help her finish the boat before she was 50—and to win a bet that she would do so. She did, and with a few family and friends, they sailed the boat to its current location. (See Volume 2)

John Serigny's duck camp in Leeville is representative of a family-based duck hunting camp. The lease for the camp goes back to John's grandfather. His family's camp is a simple wooden building with a fishing pier and with bunk beds to accommodate a few friends and family. After Hurricane Isaac in September 2012, the camp was left mud-filled, moldy, and with some structural damage, requiring cleanup.

Though "camp" in some areas of the US might imply a house located in a remote location, far from major roads, or nestled in the wilderness, this might or might not be the case in Coastal Louisiana. Certainly the Brule Hunting Club is off the beaten path. Here is how Mike Saunders describes his trip there:

> After meeting Richard at 6:00 a.m. in Labadieville, I followed him a few miles to a boat ramp to begin the next leg of the trip to the camp (a term that can apply to sizable structures or even beach houses in southern Louisiana) in his grandson's boat. At the launch we loaded our gear and guns into a small boat and headed out. At his age Richard's grandson only owns a fourteen foot johnboat (a steel or aluminum flat-bottomed boat) with a 9.9 hp motor .… The ride out was fascinating if a bit eerie (the moon was barely a sliver, and the night clear, which only added to the mood). We had running lights on the boat, but otherwise only Richard's hand held flashlight lit the way. Trees draped with Spanish moss hung over the canal, creating the effect of a tunnel through the darkness. With only the flashlight swinging back and forth across the water to light our way–variously illuminating the Spanish moss hanging from above, partially submerged trees, and floating logs and other vegetation–the ride took on an almost ghostly atmosphere, as if from a horror movie set in the swamps of Louisiana. It was about twenty-five minutes on the water (proceeding from the smaller canal onto a larger one) before we arrived. Aside from a camp near the launch we had passed only one derelict camp thus far, but now a boat dock (or, more specifically, an amalgamation of docks) with several boats secured to it appeared. (Volume 2, Field Reports)

Other camps are less isolated. Coastal Louisiana settlements are composed of linear communities built along roadways and levees. Marsh land is seldom suitable for supporting a building, so solid ground for building is at a premium the closer you get to water. In coastal communities, like Pointe-aux-chênes, Dularge, and Dulac, many "camps" sit right across the road from similarly looking single-family residences. For instance, community researcher Lora Ann Chaisson owns a house in Pointe-aux-chênes that sits across the road from a "camp" owned by a couple who live in Belgium and visit twice a year. The "camp" is actually slightly larger than Lora Ann's house. Like Lora Ann's house, the camp is located on the same road as the local school and grocery store. Not off the beaten path, this camp is on the main drag.

Camps are also a business, a source of income for some people in coastal Louisiana. Community researcher Wendy Billiot bought a camp in Dularge (her "camp" was quite near her "house") and spent many hours restoring it to rent it to out-of-town fishing customers as a small business. Another couple we spoke with work for a company that owns charter fishing boats and camps in Cocodrie. The husband acts as a fishing guide, and his wife offers visitors breakfast, packs them a lunch, and for dinner makes them her specialty, gumbo. As a former shrimper said, "We call them *camps* but it depends on your caliber of lifestyle to what you call them." He and his wife reported that the out-of-towner renters often called them cabins or summer houses. And most people stayed only for long weekends.

The numbers of these camps for part-time residents are increasing throughout bayou communities.

> In 1979, there were 244 housing units in Terrebonne Parish that were classified as "for vacant seasonal and migratory use," according to the 1980 census. In 2005, there were 2,500 fishing camps on the tax rolls, consuming about 328 acres of parish land. That represents a 924 percent increase in twenty-six years (Solet 2006:55).

Some of the newer camps for out-of-town residents are built as gated communities. Solet (2006) reports that for the most part the out-of-town residents do not participate in the social and sharing networks of the full-time resident community. Solet's report on camps notes a growing division between community member housing and out-of-town camps, where out-of-towners build their "camps" among residential housing, rather than in swamps or backwoods areas and often have much nicer raised housing. In fact, the camps of out-of-town residents are more likely to fare well in storms and hurricanes than the full-time housing of community residents (Solet 2006).

7.4 Cultural and Recreational Significance of Camps

As discussed above, hunting and fishing camps take a variety of forms, represent a range of investments, and are commonly used by people of all income groups. What they share, other than the purpose of providing access to wild resources, is intangible. As one student, Rory, put it in his student essay: "The camp is a very essential piece to our culture." In Rory's case, the camp he visits almost every weekend is owned by a friend of his father's.

> Located on the Bay side of the island, rather than the beach side, this camp is where I go along with my family and friends to immerse myself in our culture. The camp has everything a Cajun could need. There is a fryer, barbecue pit, smoker, boiling pot, boat, crab traps, and most importantly the twenty-by-forty-foot deck. It's on this deck where people can either get together, socialize, cook, eat, or simply gaze at the stars. With these essentials, we can do the activities that we were raised up doing as a part of our Cajun culture. … The camp isn't anything fancy or extravagant. It offers a place for one to enjoy himself by simply relaxing and having a good time with no stress or worries. After all, that's what everyone goes to the island for. It's a retreat from reality for us to collect our thoughts and focuses in life without having the pressures of work, business, and school. Just like us, there are thousands of others in South Louisiana who leave for the camp on the weekends to do the same thing. It becomes a ritual to all of the natives. The camp life may seem easy and peaceful for most outsiders;

> however, there is much work and tradition that goes into putting on the get-togethers that consist of the South Louisiana food everyone loves (Appendix B, Student Essays).

Rory goes on to describe how people, among them his father, have to go down in advance to catch sufficient fish to feed the crowd, and how others bring deer or other game to grill. He emphasizes that the main dishes are all self-provisioned. Elsewhere in the essay, Rory writes that the camp is where men learn to trust each other deeply, which allows them to form efficient working teams for their demanding and dangerous oil-field jobs.

> An amazing aspect that was brought to my attention at [name deleted] camp was a term they called "team-building." … Working off-shore is rough labor and requires hours of long stressful work. By fishing, cooking, and socially drinking on the island, these men endure the hard pressure put upon their shoulders by the real world. …They use this time "team-building" as a way to bond and overcome the anxieties brought upon them by their job. These events at the camp consist of long nights with storytelling and moral support. It's this camaraderie formed by working together that holds the men firm and able to live their lives moving in a positive direction (Appendix B, Student Essays).

During the fall semester at Nicholls, it is not unusual for students to say that they hardly see home anymore because when they visit their parents on the weekend, they are at the camp. Nor is it unusual for people to rush home on Fridays to pack for the camp. Like Felicia, quoted above, many children grow up with camp at the center of their memories, and adults hold significant events there. For example, John Serigny pointed out that his daughter was married at his camp.

Camps serve as critical social institutions: these are the places where children are socialized, colleagues bond, and community members share resources and talents. There are differences, of course, between the luxury camps and the camps enjoyed by most of our participants. All camps require upkeep, but some organizations hire help to perform that work. The camps we documented are usually kept going by communal labor supplied by family and friends or by the members. For example, at Richard Borne's camp, a fairly large place located on spot of land surrounded by swamp, the ever-growing vegetation must be cut back and snakes cleared from the area, which happens at work days for club members during the off season. We noted earlier that John Serigny's duck camp flooded and one of our researchers helped clean it out. These less elaborate camps often flood and are subject to shores degrading. Students report some of their earliest family work duties are participating in camp upkeep, clearing growth, painting, or shoring up wooden piers. With their sweat equity, the students often feel they have a stake in the camps in a way they do not have in their family homes.

Despite the growth of designer camps in bayou communities, camps of some sort are common among people in coastal Louisiana among all income groups. Some camps are owned by a single family; others are collectively owned by a group of friends. Sometimes people hunt at the camp itself (meaning the camp is on the leased or owned property); for others the camp is a base near their leased hunting land or on water for fishing and crabbing. These structures range from ramshackle one-room shacks, sometimes eroding into the water in remote locations, to centrally-located, elevated, multi-bedroom houses with 1,800 square feet, kitchen with stainless steel appliances, car patios, boat launches, central air and heat and more. Despite these variations, for

the residents we spoke with, the camp is a key feature in both their subsistence practices and their social and cultural lives. The role of camps in the lives of out-of-towners and the impact of their presence on local subsistence, society, and culture was not investigated in this study, but should be included in future research on subsistence patterns in coastal Louisiana. For additional information on camps, see Chapter 7 and Chapter 11 and Volume 2.

8 Family Ties and Community Feasts

"Look closely at a crab shell under a microscope and you might just see my family tree."

—Jacob, Nicholls State University student, 2011

8.1 Families That Hunt Together

Harvesting activities are connected to family ties in multiple, overlapping ways. Subsistence functions not only to satisfy a caloric need or provide personal enjoyment, but also as a social and family glue. These activities in and of themselves and through their products bind people and families together.

Louisiana has been labeled as a "sticky state" (Pew 2009), meaning that residents are likely to have been native born. Family ties are strong, and there are many bonds holding people together, such as strong religious ties. During our research it became apparent that for many people subsistence practices, products, and feasts play a significant role in the state's stickiness. In fact, many people defined hunting or harvesting in just those terms. At the Chauvin Folk Festival in 2013 we talked to one woman in her 30s, who did not hunt at that time, but fished with her dad and had gone hunting with him for many years. She said, bluntly: "Look, hunting is all about family. That's it." Even when participants did not describe the connection in such stark terms, family was often the subtext in discussions of hunting and harvesting.

In his oral history, Lafourche Parish crabber and alligator hunter Joe Autin was one of many people who talked to us about not only his commercial harvesting career but also his recreational harvesting of deer and waterfowl. We ran one of those interviews through a language corpus analysis program, Voyant. The interview we analyzed was explicitly focused on hunting. However, after analysis, a second focus emerged from Autin's interview: family. The interview analyzed was some 6,000 words long.[4] Deer came up 41 times, fish 13, alligators 30 times, with scattered references to other game. But when you combine codes for family members (e.g. "my girl," "my boy," "son," "daughter," "kids," "wife," "mom," "grandmother," "parents," "daddy") what emerges is that in an interview that appears to be focused exclusively on hunting he mentions family more than 60 times. In an interview about his experiences hunting, he spoke about his kids, his wife, and his grandparents almost as much as the animals. Family is the running subtheme: few paragraphs in the interview are entirely without a mention.

The language corpus analysis reveals a common pattern: hunters describing their experiences often talk about family and friends. Like the woman at the Chauvin festival, many hunters tell you explicitly that hunting for them is about family and friends, and others indicate the importance because the subject just keeps coming up. For example, John Serigny is a devoted duck hunter, who told us that most of his important friendships have been formed around his hunting. In one of his interviews he explained that the purpose of hunting and the camp itself had become centered around keeping friends and family together.

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[4] Voyant is a web-based analysis for digital texts that provides limited corpus analysis, including word frequency counts. The data was filtered for stop words using the TAPoRware list before processing.

> So when we go to the camp on Thanksgiving and the others, which is usually the traditional beginning of the first split of the season, my wife and my two daughters would come. My friend [name], who's been duck hunting with me since '69, he would bring his wife and his two daughters, another friend of mine [name] who's been duck hunting with me since the same time, would bring his wife and his sons, and we would fish and we would duck hunt. I'd bring the girls duck hunting, sometimes I'd bring [name]'s boy duck hunting. He'd take them. I brought [name]'s youngest daughter duck hunting. I mean, we'd go out on the youth weekend and the kids would hunt. **And it doesn't matter whether you'd kill anything, whether you catch the game bird or not.** That's not important. It's the experience of going out there, riding in a pirogue, sitting in a blind, you know. My children, my oldest daughter, is 37 years old. And she still talks about the time at the camp. And she loves going to the camp. That's where she got married. [Emphasis added.]

For John, it no longer mattered if he actually killed any game on the hunting weekends. That purpose was secondary to the experience of being with family, outdoors. This perspective is shared, we discovered, at the other end of the generational span. As part of a freshman composition class, we asked a group of college students at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux to write essays about subsistence in Coastal Louisiana and their own lives. Many chose to focus on how hunting and harvesting practices act as bonding mechanisms for their families. Two of the students focused on this, naming their essays, "Bonds on the Bayou," and "Everlasting Bonds" (Appendix B, Student Essays). In his essay, Rory wrote that, for him, formative experiences with family bonding had been at camp get-togethers. He explained that almost all weekends in his family were set aside for trips to the camp, for not only his family, but friends to relax and socialize, and the centerpiece was always self-harvested food. "Much of this socialization is done at the camp in the form of barbecues, fish fries, seafood boils, and holiday parties."

Harvesting connects to families in many ways. First, people in south Louisiana connect harvesting to things we are collectively calling culture or tradition, which are usually learned in a family setting and which they feel give meaning to their lives and help shape their identity. Second, people connected harvesting activities to generations of family behavior. Again, people see this as shaping identity, often family identity or personality as much as a larger cultural identity. Finally, people see harvesting activities as permitting families to stay connected. They stay connected in order to learn skills, and it is those skills that allow for large gatherings around food. These large gatherings provide an important sense of belonging and well-being. They also ensure that extended families see each other frequently.

8.2 Extended Family and Friends

While for many, hunting is connected to family relationships, the practice also relies on and strengthens other kinds of social ties. In his ethnographic description of a deer hunting camp in Labadieville (Lafourche Parish), for example, Mike Saunders notes that many of the camp members are socially connected. In some cases, they are related by kinship: though descent or marriage. In many cases they have other connections, they might attend the same church, be neighbors, or have served in the military or worked in the oilfield together.

Some learned hunting or fishing outside their immediate family. We heard stories from John Serigny, Richard Borne, Arthur Bergeron, and Al Guarisco in their oral history interviews about how college friends, in-laws, or older cousins and uncles were the people who helped them fall in love with fishing, hunting, or gardening. Although he knew some hunting basics, Richard Borne told us that his wife's grandparents, who were trappers on Bayou L'Ourse, taught him to really learn to love the outdoors. Arthur Bergeron's father was a country doctor, and Al Guarisco's father ran a restaurant and bar. Neither had much time to spend teaching their children to hunt, so both of them learned from older friends. We have already heard from John Serigny about how connected hunting is to family for him. Interestingly, though his family has always hunted, and his father is known in Louisiana as a folk craftsman for his prized carving of duck decoys, John himself did not learn a love of hunting through his family.

> When I used to go hunting with those men [his father and his friends who originally owned the camp], I really didn't enjoy it. I enjoyed duck hunting. But the rest of the time around the camp I just sat around. I'd just sit around the camp and fish, stuff like that. Basically it was a long weekend for me. Then I went to college, and one of my friends who I used to play cards with in the game room and shoot pool with in the student union was a fellow by the name of [name] from Lockport. So he and I started talking about duck hunting one day, and he says, "You have a camp?" I said, "Yes, I got a camp in Leeville." He said, "Man, I'd love to go hunting." And I said, "Fine, man." . . . He said, "Well, why don't you call somebody with a boat and invite them to go hunting? We can go in his boat." So I called [name], I said, "Would you like to go duck hunting?" And he says, yeah. I said, "Can we use your boat?" [laughter] And he says, yeah. So we took off to the camp. We spent two nights out there. We really roughed it. I don't think we brought anything to eat even. […] We caught a few fish and fried some fish and stuff like that. But what we did do, we would sit up at night and talk about hunting. Talk about guns, dogs we had, and times we went hunting, and things that happened to us when we went hunting. And that's when I really fell in love with hunting. And I don't remember how many ducks we killed. … And those are some of the best friends I have. I have really good golf friends. And I have really good duck hunting friends. (Serigny 2012)

In these cases, people came of age in a community where if there were no immediate family members to teach you, then there were plenty of cousins, uncles, and friends who could. As with John, those peer relationships were and can remain important throughout life. More than one community has a weekly or monthly dinner, where friends (usually just the men) gather to talk, as well as show off their hunting and cooking skills by bringing game or fish. (Jerome Souderlier and Glenn Trahan describe their community dinner in the Petit Caillou profile in Volume 2.) Those peer bonds can be seen in several stories reported above in Chapter 8 and in the stories we heard from Arthur Bergeron and Al Guarisco about learning to fish and hunt from older friends. Arthur Bergeron has a picture hanging on the wall of his house showing him as a child proudly holding a catch of fish, standing next to an older teenaged friend who taught him many of his hunting skills (Figure 9). Arthur said he and the man remain good friends to this day from those bonds formed when they would spend the entire weekend camping out to hunt and eating only what they could catch or shoot.

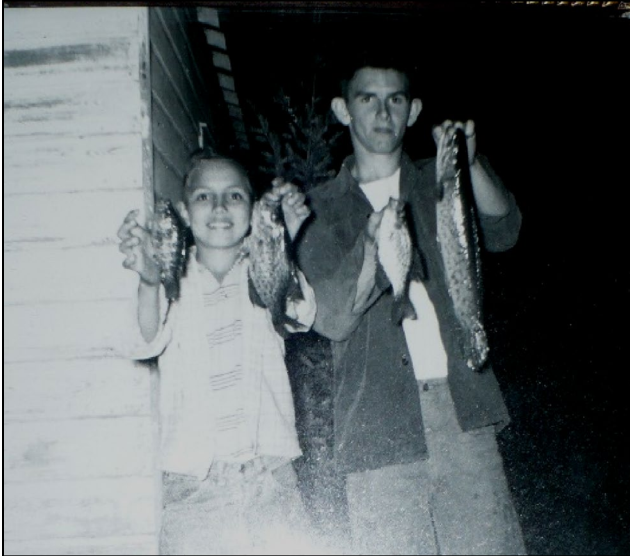

Figure 9. Arthur Bergeron (left) and teenage mentor with a catch of fish.

Photo courtesy of A. Bergeron.

Harvesting and feasting provide reasons for friends to socialize. While documenting roadside fishing in Grand Isle, Mike Saunders spoke to a group of five retirement-age men and one woman who were from Lafayette, Baton Rouge, and Breaux Bridge, who had all driven down together to Grand Isle to fish.

> They were old friends who gathered together whenever they could to fish, at least once a year, making a trip like this, to stay on Grand Isle at a camp of a friend. When I asked if the crab run was the reason they were here now, they said, "No, not the main reason, just good timing." They explained that they tried to get together in the general time period surrounding August. They were in particular there for the crabs (and other fishing) because they were all "big crab-eaters." And tonight they were going to "eat the shit out of them" (Volume 2, Field Reports)

8.3 Facilitating Family and Community Gatherings

Families in South Louisiana are famous for their large size and for their closeness. The documentary "Happy," a 2011 film made by New Yorker Roko Belic (Belic 2011), presents Louisiana's Blanchard family as exemplary of people who have found happiness. In the documentary, Roy Blanchard, Sr., a crawfish farmer who lives in the Atchafalaya Basin, is shown first talking about the peace and serenity of the swamp, and then in a pirogue crabbing to get enough for a family crab boil. Then at the family gathering: Roy's siblings and their spouses, feasting on crab, laughing, and telling jokes. Roy says that to have this weekly gathering without being able to catch the crabs for free, "you'd have to be rich." This sequence is shot in such a way as to encourage the viewer to see that these close family ties and routine togetherness, combined with a love of nature, are what enable the Blanchards to be "happier" than most Americans. And people got the message. Living-off-the-land advocate Paige Yim writes about the scene from the movie:

> Crabs = happiness. It's true. The documentary *Happy* said so. In the movie the Blanchard family sums up the key to happiness best—Live off the land, catch crabs and have tons of crab feasts with family and friends. Beer helps too. (Yim 2014)

While the film makes this connection through art and visual poetry, in our fieldwork we found many others share this opinion. Specifically, they connect their ability to harvest delicious, low-cost food with their ability to maintain family ties and close relationships. Those ties, in turn, allow them to have a better quality of life or sense of well-being.

Jacob, a Nicholls State University student from Thibodaux, wrote an ethnographic essay about his family's twice-weekly crab boils. Jacob, who has attended crab boils for his entire life, wrote that the crabs "allow families to come together and bond." Jacob describes a table scene in detail, including the discussions that allow the family to develop strong connections.

> As I pull into my grandma's driveway, I can already here the commotion and loud screaming coming from my family inside. As soon as I step through the doorway, a rush of sights, smells, and sounds enter my body. My whole family is sitting at a long plastic table, and I already know crab season is here. Grandma kisses me on the cheek and tells me to get a tray and sit down. As I approach my seat at the table, I notice the unique habits and rituals practiced by the family while eating crabs. My grandma is viciously beating her crab with a knife to try and crack the shell. Finally, when she succeeds, she opens the crab and picks the meat to give to the children who cannot peel for themselves. Down on the other end of the table, my older cousins compete to see who has the best crab peeling method and who can peel their crabs the fastest. Some of them even use nutcrackers to crack the claws and speed up the process. The old men, who have assembled themselves on the other end of the table, proceed to hold detailed conversations about sports and politics, some of which result in heated arguments and flaring tempers.

On another occasion, Jacob recounts:

> After the crabs are boiled and ready to eat, the whole family including grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins sit down to enjoy. … While the whole family is enjoying the crabs, diverse conversations take place. Topics for these conversations range from how good and full the crabs are to exciting sporting events. My grandma also begins to tell her own story about a man she used to know who died recently. She was astonished at his death and could not stop talking about it the whole meal.

Jacob goes on in the essay to describe crabs as being "sacred" for the role they play in family life. "Just the simple task of boiling crabs brings the whole family together." When interviewing his father, Jacob learned that crabs play a central role specifically because of their low cost:

> According to my father, crabs are more accessible to people in Louisiana than any other seafood. He says they can be easily caught in ditches and small canals. You also need very few of them to feed yourself and others. This is one reason why crabs are more special than any other seafood in Louisiana. Most family gatherings in Louisiana are caused from a large catch of seafood in which the whole family needs to enjoy. That is why crabs are so cherished and special. We

> take what nature has given us and use it to the full extent. Once the crabs are caught and brought in, the whole family knows it is time for some quality bonding and great food. My father says people in Louisiana love to share, and this is demonstrated fully at family crab boils.

Interestingly, his family members are not themselves crabbers, but buy the crabs at cost from a friend (who also sometimes gives them some). Jacob reports that this lowers the cost enough that his family can afford to buy enough to feed their group of cousins, uncles and aunts twice a week. "Without the crabs, we would not have as many family gatherings," Jacob said in a classroom discussion about his research.

Although Jacob identified crabs as unique, other low-cost harvested foods permit gatherings as well. We offer this example from Shana Walton's fieldnotes of a drop-in interview with a retired couple fishing on Island Road (Terrebonne Parish) in August 2012:

> On a late August afternoon, a husband and wife are fishing near the island end of Island Road. They have a van and are sitting in two lawn chairs with canopies and a cooler between them. The couple are retired and now live in Bourg (Terrebonne Parish). He self-identifies as Cajun and called the local newspaper by its French pronunciation (the Houma Courier). They come down the bayou to fish Island Road 2 or 3 times each week. Often they eat the fish that night, but if they catch a lot, they will freeze it and have a fish fry. This couple married after spouses passed away, and between them they have 8 children, 25 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren. They said the fishing supplies their supper about twice a week, and they have enough for a fish fry at least once a month, if not more often. That day they had caught one redfish and three drum.

Here, the couple connects their fishing activity to their ability to socialize. They emphasize that having a freezer full of fish that they can catch for only the price of bait and gas helps them to be able to feed almost 50 people every month.

This connection between food and socialization was also noted of other kinds of harvesting. In an ethnographic essay on frogging, Nicholls student Lanney interviewed Pop, a man who grew up in the Mississippi River town of Vacherie, a frequent frogger and harvester. In a presentation of her research to the composition class, Lanney explained that she had assumed going into the project that frogging would be primarily about the fun of going out at night with friends. But she was surprised to learn that the activity had an economic impact. In her paper she wrote that Pop hunts deer, duck, turkey, and squirrels, as well. She wrote: "He explained to me that the food he brings in helps him feed his family. The food he kills and brings home saves money out of his family's budget, which makes it easier to be sure other things are taken care of." In her presentation, she made it clear that the food was going not only for nightly meals of a single household, but sponsoring large gatherings of friends and family: "You can catch a lot and have a party." Another student, Victoria, in her ethnographic essay on deer hunting, noted how the harvested food facilitated gatherings and social connections: "Family gathering always entails one thing here—food. Hunting turns into food, food turns into gatherings, gatherings turn into bonding."

In writing about his experiences growing up going to a camp on Grand Isle, Roy, another Nicholls freshman, explained that the camp is a place to bond with family. He points specifically to the role of food, in particular items his family harvests or receives from friends who harvest: "We have fried speckled trout, boiled shrimp, boiled crabs, barbecued deer, fried shrimp, and the list goes on." His family is also likely to bring many store-bought items like soft drinks, snack food, potatoes and corn for the crab boil, and more. In discussions, students said they or their parents spend a lot of time packing coolers and grocery bags as part of their preparation on Friday afternoons to go to the camp. Yet, Roy mentions only the harvested food. His extensive and detailed discuss illustrates that self-harvested food at the camp is a key part of the family gathering and bonding.

Cory, another student, used his paper to reflect on what his older brother, Ryan, learned from shrimping with his grandfather compared to what he as a younger sibling has learned. In this, he emphasizes the role these gatherings play in community bonding.

> Ryan and his grandfather sold shrimp also, but Ryan remembers keeping a lot of the shrimp and throwing occasional shrimp boils. He told me, "Everyone was invited." He really meant everyone, too, because new people always attended. He remembers people laughing, children running, and his cousins jumping into the bayou. Some of these shrimp boils had so many people that extra space was needed, so they used their neighbors' yards. These times were so important because they kept his community connected. "We shared, because that is what you did back then," Ryan said. Having this close environment allowed the whole neighborhood to give freely to one another.

8.4 Parent-Child Bonding; Passing on Skills and Values

For many people we interviewed, hunting or harvesting food is a set of skills that are community bound. The natural unit for transmission of this knowledge is the family or close members of the community. Several people we interviewed, like Arthur Bergeron and Al Guarisco, learned most of their skills from older friends or age-mates. Most people who participated in the study idealized the family as the proper source of instruction. Cory, a Nicholls student, wrote in 2011 about his parents teaching his older siblings to shrimp:

> Alton and Lou Ann have taught four of their seven children to shrimp. "We taught them so they can learn to do it on their own and be able to make a living from it," Alton said. They feel that if they teach them how to shrimp, they have fed their children for a lifetime. Shrimping was so embedded into their lifestyle that they felt the need to pass this knowledge to their kids. Teaching children how to shrimp is a very important aspect of the shrimping culture because it not only passes down the knowledge, but it continues that part of their lives.

He also wrote about his older brother, Ryan, learning to shrimp from their grandfather.

> He learned not only to catch shrimp, but all the life lessons that came along with it. He remembers the hard work of pulling up the nets and separating the catch. … His grandpa taught him how to provide for his family and the art of self-reliance. … He remembers his grandpa always telling him how to live right. "He was teaching me how to be a man," Ryan said.

Ryan talked about hard work, play, and connection to other people all as parts of what his grandfather was passing down to him by teaching him to shrimp. Cory reflected that he had a different experience:

> before I can remember our family moved into the city. My mother established education, religion, and recreational activities as priorities. These are important values; however, none of them included shrimping, so I am upset to see that I missed out on such a huge part of my family's culture.

In writing about his experiences at a duck hunting camp, Nicholls student Trey said that the camp is an important site for transmitting knowledge. In Trey's experience, the camp was specifically for fathers and sons, in large part to transfer knowledge. For instance, he notes that after supper the men sit and tell stories. The children are the primary audience: "The kids stand around their fathers with their soft drinks, listening to the stories, knowing one day that will be them with a beer in their hand." In the morning, when "the real teaching will begin," Trey writes, "fathers dress their sons, show them how to hold the gun, and so on." The morning shoot is followed by lunch, and again the children are the important objects, the learners. "Lunch is cooked by the adults as the kids watch and learn; one day that will be them standing over the grill showing their children."

What comes across in Trey's narrative is his deep affection for the camp, such that his writing is romantic, almost dreamy, and certainly idealistic. In almost all of the student narratives, they write about the camps in glowing terms, through rosy lenses. We interpret these writings as not only literal descriptions of their own personal experiences, but also as representations of a larger cultural narrative of how camps and feasts are seen by people in the region in general. Camps as sites for hunting, fishing, crabbing and feasting (on subsistence food in particular) have the power to transform family, friends, and neighbors into a real community.

Another striking aspect of these student essays is the recurring confidence about their own future transmission of these cultural practices to the next generation. In such a vein, another student who wrote about his love of duck hunting and training dogs said in his discussion of his research that he was learning hunting skills because he was imagining the times when he would teach his own children. We are struck by the power of an 18-year-old college freshman who can see the future so clearly. He feels confident and assured that not only will he have children someday, but he knows exactly what he wants to teach them and how he wants to spend his weekends. His confident writing reminded us of meeting a 25-year-old firefighter who, over the course of a long discussion, talked about the loss of the wetlands and what it would mean for him personally. The discussion brought tears in his eyes as he told us that his young toddler son might never be able to hunt and fish as he had growing up. The loss was overwhelming when he realized that the two of them might never have the bonding experiences he had with his family.

Grant, also a Nicholls freshman, wrote in his essay about duck hunting that for him the practice is "more than just killing ducks." In particularly, he said hunting has a special place in father-son relationships. Grant said the man he interviewed for his essay said, "I know some of the best memories I will have with my son will be out here hunting side by side with him."

Fieldwork observations of Richard Borne show him and his friends teaching a grandson how to clean a rabbit. Mike Saunders, who was on the rabbit hunt with Richard, noted that after the hunt, they returned to the trucks and all the adults sat around and watched the grandson skin the rabbits.

> Back at trucks, we sit while grandson cleans his rabbits. He knows the basics but keeps getting advice from those gathered around but takes it well without looking too embarrassed. They also tease him about the amount of grass sticking to the cleaned rabbits, saying that they don't need a salad with it, it already has one and also don't need to garnish it with parsley.

Youth who have been raised with such training can have considerable skill. One set of field notes recounted a participant's story of how her 16-year-old son, called John in this story, provided a meal for his family.

> One Sunday in March, he and a buddy launched their little shallow draft boat and set out to go fishing with rods, reels, and artificial bait. The fish weren't biting and John caught only one bass. Since that would feed neither him, his fishing buddy nor his family, he decided to turn that fish into a meal.
>
> He motored his boat to the local crab dam, banked the boat, and scavenged the area for abandoned strings. After finding several, he then used his pocket knife to cut the bass into several pieces and tied each piece to the end of a string. The strings were then tied to pilings, and left to hang in the water. Shortly, blue crab took the bait, and John scooped them up using the fish-dip net from the boat. They put the blue crab on ice and brought them home for supper.
>
> Another Sunday, John and the same buddy went fishing again—same boat, same tackle, same place. This time, they caught no fish at all, so they returned to the crab dam. Having nothing to use as bait, they used to their cast net to catch bait. They caught a mullet and a croaker. Having dropped their pocket knife into the water earlier, they found a broken bottle and used it to cut the fish into pieces to bait the crab strings. This time, they netted about two dozen crabs.
>
> John returned to his family's camp where his mother was entertaining company. He gathered the necessary items to boil the crab to perfection and then served them to her company.

This story was a source of great pride. Her son had learned some skills and, just as important, and learned to independently make some choices–like boiling up the crabs and serving them to her guests. Self-reliance, ingenuity, and perseverance produced a delicious meal.

Nicholls student Victoria wrote that one hunter she talked to mentioned the importance of hunting with his son, father, and friends, but the other man she interviewed placed even more emphasis on family and the hunting camp as a site of family bonding. "He said having the family together is one of the main reasons he still hunts, and that it is how his children got to know their family." Clearly, he does not mean that his children do not know who their parents or siblings are. When this hunter says "got to know their family," he is referring to knowing other people in a deep and meaningful way, what one of our student called "everlasting bonds." Hunting or shrimping together, people have explained to us, creates a deep connection, as does building a camp together, maintaining it, and simply spending almost every weekend interacting over something enjoyable.

Subsistence practices–whether harvesting or consuming–are embedded in how many coastal Louisiana people structure their family time, how they bond with their children, and how they socialize children to be adults. The loss of wetlands or access to hunting and affordable camp space threatens coastal kinship and child rearing structures. There are additional discussions of the importance of family ties and feasting in Chapter 7, and in Volume 2 and Volume 3.

9 Personal, Cultural, and Regional Identity

9.1 Introduction

People may identify with subsistence activities in complex ways. Some see it as inseparable from any other parts of their identity; others view it as part of their ethnic or regional identity, cultural heritage, gendered knowledge, or a political stance. In this chapter we detail six connections between subsistence practices and identity expressed by study participants.

9.2 It's Just Who We Are

Several people, many of whom made their living from activities that for them were both subsistence and commercial, saw hunting, fishing, and harvesting simply as definitions of who they were. In fact, one person we talked to simply said, "It's just who I am."

Like many shrimpers we talked to, Louis (a pseudonym) saw himself as destined to be in the shrimping industry. Born in Houma, Louis moved to Dulac as a young child and has lived there for 33 years. He iss a third-generation shrimper, and he's been in this work for over 20 years. In an interview with Hubbard, he said, "I always knew my destiny." Louis said he believes that shrimpers "have an inner feeling" about being in the fisheries industry and that he's had that feeling all of his life and never questioned his career choice.

Louis is a full-time commercial shrimper, but still he must take small jobs in electrical work, plumbing, and carpentry to make ends meet. He worked once as a tug boat captain and made more money but was not happy and said it was "almost like a prison term." His love of shrimping is so strong that he wants to see it carry through to the next generation. He has three children, one daughter and two sons. One son is disabled, and he does not want his daughter working in the industry. However, he very much wants his other son to follow in his footsteps. He wants shrimping to remain a part of the family. Another shrimper simply told us: "It's in your blood."

Sometimes people come back to subsistence-related work after working in other areas. A charter fishing guide we interviewed had started working as a guide after many years working in other fields. Now he said was finally "coming home." He told researcher Annemarie Galeucia that he had identified himself as someone who, from a young age, was defined by subsistence activities:

> I guess I've been fishing 52 or 53 years. I remember, as a kid, my father, whenever we had time we'd go out fishing for perch or whatever. I remember one time my father, he had sent three of the nine brothers and sisters–there 13 of us–to the camp for eight weeks in North Carolina. And I was supposed to go with them. But because I had been ill–I'd had a kidney infection and mononucleosis [I didn't go]. I fell in the bayou and drank some bayou water, they think maybe that's where it got it from. So he took me by myself and we went fishing. And we caught fish until we ran out of bait. We caught a lot. We even went into the middle of the lake and we started picking out the big lily pads. He said he had always heard that little worms grew at the base of them. So we went out there and we got these white grubs at the base so we could fish some more. He won't remember that, my dad, but I do. As a kid. Memories are made out of water, fishing. It's a bonding time for parents.

It took him, he said, many years to find his way back to his subsistence roots. He considered becoming a charter fishing guide a way of "coming home."

As this fishing guide's story shows, the centrality of subsistence activities to identity is not limited to people who make their living from these activities. Fishing was central to his identity first. It was later that he decided to, and succeed in, earning a living from these activities. The guide explained the centrality of these practices as not arising from the job, but rather the job as arising from the activities, which he saw as embedded in the culture:

> It's something that's our culture here, we hunt, we fish, we shrimp, we trap, as a way of living. You grew up that way. You don't live here and decide to, at age 40, "Oh I think I'm going to start fishing." Most people grow up fishing. Their parents have, their aunts, uncles, or whatever have helped them.

9.3 The Real Deal: Subsistence and Masculinity

Hunting and harvesting are tied to masculinity in complex ways in many variations of Cajun (or the popular, affectionately used, local term "coonass") as well as Native American cultures. Harvesting as masculinity is not new to the region (Ownby 1990). Much of the time, the label "Cajun" serves as an ethnicity marker: referring to people who are descendants of Acadian immigrants. In another reading, Cajun and its counterpart "coonass" are associated with a particular stance of masculinity (Dorman 1983). For example, in Galeucia's interviews with alligator hunters, a man in his 60s is referred to by many other participants, as a "true Cajun," living off the land, and the other, a Cajun man in his 40s, if referred to as "the real deal" by other community members. In one case the ethnicity marker "a true Cajun" and in the other case "the real deal," both serve to point not toward birth origins, but toward affinities, abilities, and a type of respected masculinity. We are aware that ideals of Cajun femininity exist and are related to subsistence activities, but that was outside the scope of this project to investigate.

In another example of ethnicity being shorthand for skills and masculinity, Richard Borne shared a story about his son's experience in survival school with the US Marines. Richard explained that when his son was left on an island for survival training, he taught the other recruits how to survive. When asked how he knew so much about living off the land, the son replied: "I'm a coonass from Louisiana."

In our discussions, we found that masculinity was constantly being assessed. The shrimper Louis had a son who was a teenager at the time of the interview with our researcher, and Louis told our researcher that the teen wanted to play summer ball but it wouldn't be permitted. Instead, Louis was going to insist the teen worked on the boats to learn the trade. He explained, "I'd like to see him be a man." As pervasive as the ideas are in mainstream American culture that sports teach good values and teach masculinity, for Louis a ball team could not teach his son the lessons he needed to grow up to be a good man.

Another dimension of that evaluation is the idea of failing to be socialized properly or being suspected of having the wrong values. A Wildlife and Fisheries professional with a master's degree told us that he hunts primarily because discussions about hunting offer some "bayou credibility" in coastal communities. In a team meeting, Hubbard reflected, "He fears what folks would think of him if he didn't hunt." We met other people, including many male students, who felt isolated from the community because they did not hunt or fish. In contrast, we also met many

women in Coastal communities who did not hunt or fish and suffered no identity worries because of their lack of participation.

9.4 Individual Preferences

Subsistence activities can also be seen as a personal affinity, rather than associated with group membership. Several people pointed out that, among their siblings, not everyone participated in hunting or fishing, though all were raised in the same household. Glenn Trahan, a shrimper and sometimes alligator hunter, noted that none of his siblings or children were interested in earning a living the way he does. Some are not even particularly interested in hunting for sport:

> I have three brothers. I probably am the only one that went into it. The younger ones kind of tended to go out in the oilfield and stuff like that. I'm the oldest. I have three boys. One's a machinist. One runs a shipyard. …. But he does the alligator thing with me. And my oldest son he works at a shipyard too.

When Hubbard asked Glenn if he had taken all of his sons out equally hunting alligators, he replied: "Yeah, I took them all out. Just like anything else, you know. Some will take the ways and some won't."

9.5 Subsistence Heritage

Decisions around hunting and provisioning were often couched in terms of heritage, above and beyond the caloric value of the food. Even if the number of ducks shot per year, for example, makes up an infinitesimal portion of a family's food budget, hunters often seem to identify duck hunting with self-provisioning and with subsistence heritage. As Trey writes, some hunters, "use the animals they harvest as their main food source, without it they would not survive. They see it as something to teach and pass on to their children and grandchildren as it was learned from their ancestors." So even though the ducks may be eaten rarely, with great relish, the symbolic importance of duck hunting as an activity points to a time when their ancestors provisioned their families almost entirely from hunting. Contemporary duck hunting thus makes up a part of subsistence heritage.

Writing about duck hunters, another student, Grant, reflects on how important this activity is to most of those who are involved in duck hunting; it is more than a hobby; it is a lifestyle: "They live and work just to hunt in the fall." The season structures their entire year, and is a touchstone even when they are not doing it. He writes, "The whole year prior to duck season is spent fantasizing about the cold wind blowing on their face, the sound of empty shotgun shells hitting the deck of the boat, and the sight of a dog diving into the water to retrieve their kill." He goes so far as to say, "Duck hunting is just as serious as their jobs. Some of these people even work around duck season. They take off for the whole season because they love it that much."

9.6 Values and Identity: Sharing and Generosity

Sharing is an important part of harvesting. In her fieldwork with duck hunters, Annemarie Galeucia found that almost everyone talked about sharing their bounty. This is demonstrated through multiple examples in her fieldnotes:

> Many duck hunters I spent time with reported that they shared their catch with older members of community, those that previously hunted but were now physically unable to do so. One participant reported that he brought his catch to

> his grandparents' elderly neighbor because she has the traditional knowledge of plucking and preparing the bird. He, in turn, visits with her and they eat the catch together after she's prepared it. In addition to these informal sharing networks, the popularity of sport hunting and subsequently high numbers of catch, have led community organizations to develop more formal sharing networks. I met with South Louisiana representatives from Hunters for the Hungry, a national organization that develops annual sharing events for hunters who have no one to share their catch with.

In southern Louisiana, hunters participate in an annual "Clean Out Your Freezer Day" in late summer and donate their previous season's catches to local food banks. These catches include deer and various forms of water fowl, including duck and coot. This event provides hunters the chance to share their catch with those in need, and also to clear out their freezer space in preparation for the teal, general duck, and deer seasons starting in the fall and heading into the winter. Almost every hunter from this project emphasized the importance of making sure the caught animal does not go to waste, and many hunters, particularly the older men, reported self-regulating below the legal limit to minimize their impact on the populations and reduce waste. This reduced catch and sharing of successful catches reflects the emphasis most hunters place on the importance of advocating for conservation of animal habitats.

For many hunters, the love and appreciation for animals and their environments also extended to their hunting dogs. The importance of the hunting dog cannot be understated. Finding, training, and establishing a solid relationship with a hunting dog become a primary focus of many duck hunters' lives, both in and out of hunting season.

The same approach was also common among harvesters. Shrimper Glynn Trahan says sharing part of the catch is built into his ethos, particularly with the elderly:

> I give to the elderly people around here. A lot of people that I lease land with or use their property, I'll bring them stuff. Just people in general whom one day we may just be having a conversation in the store or something and say… Like just now I was talking, when you called me, a lady was telling me how much she likes soft-shelled crab. Well if I go shrimping and I catch soft-shelled crab I'm going to bring that lady soft-shelled crab. I know she desires it. She don't get much of it and she would like to have some. So just recently in the last hour and a half this lady showed me a desire for wanting. She's a lady about her sixties I've been friends with all my life. Just gave me this hint that she likes soft-shelled crabs. So I'm going to bring them to her. It's things like that.

Mary Ann Griffin grows a small garden, distributing the food to friends, family, and neighbors. She casually says: "We all give to each other." This attitude is illustrated in her oral history interview, where she described her most recent food processing event. "He [my brother-in-law] brought me some figs, and I made some preserves with them. Right now is the season for the figs. So I give some to all my neighbors" (Griffin, Oral History). She feels this is an integral part of what it means to be in a shrimping community:

> It's part of our community, the sharing. When I have something, I make sure I have enough and I give it to all different ones. I cook and I give it to my neighbors and all. And then, like Jerome, if he has extra crabs he'll bring them to

> [Name]. Or he brings them to [Name]. All cooked and ready to eat. And all of my son-in-laws do that. They're all sharing.

Processing is often a key part of the sharing network. Some people are key in networks for sharing and redistribution. Often raw harvests are brought to people like Mary Ann or the Dupres and are processed and redistributed, as favorite dishes or preserves. We interviewed three women who are members of the United Houma Nation, for example, who raised a garden whose produce was distributed annually to almost 50 people. Another woman, Patty, who has a garden in Pointe-aux-chênes, devotes almost all of her growing space to peppers, which she neither likes nor eats, for the sole purpose of distributing them to her children and grandchildren (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Patty's garden.

In this garden, each planted row consists of pepper plants despite the fact that the gardener, Patty, does not eat them. She grows them only to distribute to family, friends, and neighbors.

Subsistence practices were routinely associated with the cultural values of generosity and attention to others. Caring for others, including the elderly members of the community, sharing with those less fortunate, and taking care of animals, both those hunted and those assisting in the hunt, were prominent themes in the interviews.

9.7 Values and Identity: Environmental Stewardship

A common sentiment among coastal subsistence practitioners is that they are the true stewards of the environment. Conservation issues and environmental knowledge were frequent hallway conversation topics between Walton and hunter Richard Borne. Richard pointed out that his hunting club set their own limits on does, a lower limit than the state, in their role as good stewards. Richard also said that one of the reasons he wants his grandchildren to learn to hunt is in order to learn how "teach them conservation." Learning how to hunt is, for him, inextricably

connected to learning how to take care of the environment. Here is how Mike Saunders documented it in his fieldnotes:

> Richard also talks about marsh deer being pushed up into the swamp. This is important not only for showing how hunting is deeply connected to environmental knowledge, but also for showing how–in part–the meaning of subsistence practice today in coastal Louisiana is tied up with this knowledge of wetland loss and land loss and saltwater intrusion.

Richard's sentiments are common and representative of most of the hunters, fishers, and gardeners we met. People were in agreement that, while there are some harvesters who are ignorant of wildlife problems and land loss issues—such as reckless youths or people from out of state who have no investment in the region—the majority are passionately concerned about the environment, animal welfare, and sustainability. The people we spoke with generally agreed that in order to have a right to make rules or even statements about the environment, a person should have deep knowledge, such as the knowledge that comes from living in the region and learning to hunt or fish.

10 The Importance of Subsistence in Coastal Communities: A Summary of Preliminary Findings

"If the ecosystem is lost, this way of life will be lost, and the effects will be felt far beyond the borders of the state." (Gramling and Hagelman 2005:129)

10.1 Introduction

The goals of this cooperative project were to explore the range of subsistence activities; identify key dynamics in how these activities articulate with other household practices; develop, test, and make recommendations on appropriate methods for documenting subsistence practices; and produce findings about subsistence in coastal Louisiana. This report represents exploratory research on the topic: a launching pad for future explorations. In this final chapter, we offer initial observations about subsistence that can be drawn from this preliminary research and suggestions for further study.

10.2 A Routine Part of Life

Though popular media depictions of subsistence activities in south Louisiana show sensationalized, rather exotic events, we are struck by the ordinariness of hunting and harvesting, by their pervasiveness, and by their density in the everyday life in these coastal communities. This was evident across methods of data collection. For example, in 2012, Walton asked two classes of freshman Nicholls students, "How many of you are involved in (or have family members involved in) hunting or harvesting?" All of them raised their hands. With 25 students per class, this was a total of 50 students. These college freshmen were full-time students, but they also all knew people or were themselves involved in food production (harvesting, gardening, or hunting). In the spring of 2014, when Walton asked the same question from a feedback civic group in Thibodaux, every single woman raised her hand. There were 45 women in the room. When Hubbard and Regis met with a civic group in Dulac in 2011, again, all those in attendance either kept a garden, participated in fishing or hunting, or had friends, family, or neighbors who did and who shared with them a portion of their production. The pervasiveness of roadside stands, as discussed in Chapter 7, and the density of subsistence practices in the community members' harvest and sharing logs, as discussed in Chapter 7, 8, and 10, also point to the same conclusion. The sharing logs captured more than 2,500 instances of harvesting, collecting, or sharing of food. Every family logged a subsistence activity almost every week. Some families logged activities almost every day. The variety of foods harvested or shared ranged widely and included

- 12 types of fish
- Seafood (including crabs, shrimp, oysters, and some crawfish)
- Game (including deer, wild hog, rabbit, and squirrel)
- Ducks and other water birds
- Domesticated animals and animal products (specifically: chickens and eggs)
- More than 52 different types of vegetables, herbs, nuts, and fruits
- More than a dozen types of food that had been processed or cooked (including grape juice made from homegrown grapes, eggplant casserole, stuffed peppers, homemade salsa).

People also expressed the centrality of hunting and harvesting though humor. One man we spoke with at the Chauvin Boat Blessing told us, "We fish in the summer, hunt in the winter, and sometimes we go to Houma to work." This statement humorously reveals the centrality of hunting and fishing, and his need to work to earn a living to pay for it. Another participant told us his son was "addicted to hunting and fishing." When we spoke to him, "He just got a job working full time in the oilfield, so he's busy now, but he spends every waking second that he's not at work, always has, in the woods or on the water. Just completely."

10.3 Urgency of the Project

Though hunting and harvesting are pervasive, this does not mean that people take them for granted. We have been overwhelmed by the response to this project. More people wanted to participate than we could possibly accommodate in a pilot program of this type. This desire was spurred by interest in the topic, but also by a sense of urgency on the part of these subsistence practitioners. Many were incredibly aware of the rapid land loss, salt water intrusion, and loss of habitat for animals–all processes accelerated by hurricanes and human action which pose a threat to coastal harvests. Others were very aware of the risk in decline of subsistence activities, for example, the need to introduce young people to fishing and hunting so that the practice could continue.

The specific reasons given for the decline in these disparate practices were diverse. In a focus group held with firemen in a coastal town, one man expressed tremendous concern that he would not be able to fish and hunt with his son because of the dramatic environmental changes happening rapidly on the coast–specifically land loss. He thought he would be the last generation to hunt there. Land loss also came up in interviews with members of a deer camp, who were afraid the next generation would not be able to hunt deer because of habitat loss. The decline in shrimping lifeways was attributed to rising fuel prices, declining shrimp prices in the global marketplace, and environmental change. This was also widely discussed by participants. Some remembered their parents trapping and lived to see the disappearance of this practice. Another participant who is passionate about fishing and loves to eat fresh-caught fish expressed her sense of loss when in the aftermath of the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* disaster, she had to stop eating Gulf seafood during the period of our study. This participant did not replace those fish with purchased fish from elsewhere. Another shared his concern in this way:

> I grew up in it and I'm afraid that there's not as many people doing it now as there ought to be. I'm into lots of organizations that help kids. I mean, you got to have your kids growing up hunting and fishing or it's going to stop.

Others who spoke with us discussed specific concerns that their children would have to move out of the area to seek economic opportunities and would consequently lose their ability to participate in fishing, hunting and harvesting as a regular part of their life. Even relocation that outsiders might see as minor, such as moving an hour or two "up the road" (or up the bayou, i.e. farther from the coast) to go to college are perceived as cutting off access to regular and frequent subsistence activities because those activities would now only be practiced on weekends or holidays.

As we worked, people often told us that we were functioning something like salvage folklorists, capturing what they fear are dying community practices. They felt a great urgency to help us document their hunting and harvesting lifeways and showed a tremendous willingness to participate in documenting these practices though interviews, less formal chats, teaching fieldworkers about subsistence practices, and filling out logs. Though some would-be participants were understandably reluctant to keep detailed notes on their harvesting activities, others dedicated considerable amounts of time to the pursuit, illustrating their commitment to the research.

10.4 Importance in People's Lives

Considering the ubiquity of subsistence practices and the urgency and distress expressed by coastal residents at the thought of having these practices limited, one of our most general observations is that hunting and harvesting activities are important to people. What specifically do we mean by "important"? Subsistence is central to many facets of people's lives, outside the details of production, exchange, and consumption described above in Chapter 7. What we have seen is that people set their annual calendars around dates for hunting and harvesting. People teach these activities to their children and grandchildren. People make monetary investments – sometimes quite large–in equipment that allows them to participate in these activities. Items related to hunting and harvesting–perhaps a fishing pole or a nicely wrapped box of hand-shelled pecans–are seen as special gifts. These are the activities people use to create social events. People invest these activities with meanings, asserting that correct performance shows that a person has appropriate values. People practically (and literally, at our festival booth) lined up to tell us stories about hunting and harvesting. In short, we found that people in South Louisiana find subsistence activities to be important on multiple levels, including personal, aesthetic, family, community, social, cultural, and economic. We detail multiple key aspects in the sections below.

10.4.1 Teaching

As discussed in Chapter 9, the act of teaching family and friends to participate in subsistence activities is highly valued as a transmission of cultural heritage and as quality time spent together. This is illustrated succinctly in an example from an oral history interview. Richard Borne spoke with us at length about the importance of teaching his sons and daughter to hunt. And after he had a heart attack in 2012, his motivation to recover was, in part, so he could continue hunting with (and teaching) his grandson and granddaughter. He reflected that it's the primary reason he's going out these days.

10.4.2 Investment

The significance of subsistence is illustrated by the investments of money and time that people are willing to make to continue the practice. These investments are discussed at length in Chapters 7 and 8 and incidentally throughout the report. One deer hunter related "I might have two thousand dollars in that deer stand . . . I got another thousand in the rifle. I got another thousand in the deer leases every year. Economically, you're not coming out, but if you could eat deer meet all year, at least you're getting a pretty good chunk of it back." Another, an avid duck hunter, spoke of his investments in his boats, his hunting dogs, his freezers, his guns and most of all, his investment in time to train his dogs, taking them out every day and practicing, as well as his time spent learning the art of taxidermy. John Serigny explained that though you might think

of only duck or deer hunting as being expensive, that "fishing is really the same." He said, "I've got a bunch of rods on the wall in my garage right here… I have five or six rods and each of those–you're going to spend anywhere from twenty to $40 on a good spinning reel. And $40 on a good solid graphite spinning rod. So you know that's $80 times six. So that's $500 worth of fishing stuff. And then, I have a tackle box in the boat with at least $200 worth of fishing hooks, lures, floats, stoppers, bobbers–all the stuff you need to fish with." As discussed in Chapter 7, the financial investment can be considerable. Additional research would be necessary to understand how subsistence practitioners think about and make decisions surrounding these types of investments.

10.4.3 Meaning and Values

Participants associated hunting and harvesting with positive values and life experiences. One participant told us they believed that kids who were exposed to hunting and harvesting early on would become better people: "A kid that spends time in the woods, on the lake, early in life, whether it be with his parents, with his friends, whoever, those kids are less likely to get in trouble because they're not on the streets in town." Part of what you learn when you are learning about hunting, fishing, or shrimping, is not only about the skill set of hunting, but about life training, the appropriate approach or attitude toward life. A young mother spoke of her desire to take her son away from video games and television. Participants also often spontaneously spoke of the psychological benefits and de-stressing qualities of fishing and the value of getting away from routine activities and worries. One young man explained that his friend had just come back from Iraq, "So he needs this." Our fieldnotes provide several additional instances of people associating subsistence activities both with development of positive life experiences and habits or of recovery from negative experiences.

10.4.4 Taste and Aesthetics

The value attributed to subsistence practices goes beyond practicalities and touches on aesthetics and taste. As one hunter put it in a conversation with fieldworker DiGilormo, "God almighty, that wild hog is better than any you'd buy in a grocery store." Here, subsistence food is valued because of its aesthetic qualities. It also allows the hunter to showcase other skills. This hunter made it a point to emphasize that he could cook as well as hunt and fish. He boasted about his cooking skills, countering one interviewer's tentative suggestions that perhaps his wife was more involved in the cooking. "I enjoy cooking any wild game, and I can cook it good as she can." He added, "Tomorrow, my kids are going to come over, and there will be meat all over my grill, and every bit of it comes from behind the woods."

Rory, a Nicholls student, wrote about how the meaning of fresh-caught foods, knowing the hard work that went into catching it and having it caught by a family member made the food all the more tasty. The following except from his freshman composition essay on feasts at his family's camp makes this abundantly clear.

> For most families in South Louisiana, our meals comprise of [sic] animals and fish native to our area. … In order to have the food supply ready when gatherings come around, the men must either go out into the wild to hunt wild beast and water fowl or travel by boat in search for fish or frogs. . . . This means early mornings and missions out into nature to bring back fresh meat for the evening. . . . My father will go down to Grand Isle before the weekend and fish all around the

> island catching various fish such as speckled trout, red fish, and flounder. He commented in his interview, "Being able to eat what you catch brings pride and appreciation of work." … The close friends of my dad and [name] will bring hunted game such as deer, frog, or hog in exchange for the fresh seafood being shared. [His friend] likes to call it, "Living off the land." That is basically how a normal weekend is prepared. The hard work and passion put into catching and cooking this food makes it taste all the better and everyone appreciates it more. It gives a whole different edge compared to just buying food from the grocery store.

Jacob, another Nichols student, wrote about his family's weekly crab boil gatherings, as cited above. He reflected on the connection between these dinners and the bonds that tie families together, noting that the low price of crabs made this kind of event accessible in a way it would not be were the food more expensive. Jacob clearly sees the connections between the food and the way it is harvested to the social relationship that are fostered by shared family meals. Part of the meaning of crabs, for Jacob's father, is that they are still used for subsistence–easily accessible by the side of the road and by people with scarce resources.

Nearly everyone we met talked about what they cook, how they cook it, and what their favorite foods are. LSU students from other parts of the country were surprised by this aspect of Coastal Louisiana culture. As one student's fieldnotes illustrate:

> The guys spent a good portion of the lunch talking about food, how to cook it, where to eat it, and what was good. They talked of their favorite ways to cook up shrimp or fish and spent an incalculable amount of time discussing steak they got over in Cocodrie.

10.5 Subsistence: A Set of Profiles

In this report we have discussed subsistence as a total pattern of behavioral culture, however, the term "subsistence" itself may not cover all of the activities adequately. Also, the people we worked with did not necessarily see subsistence activities as forming an intuitive group or taxonomy. In other words, what we as researchers use the term "subsistence" to describe, our participants saw as belonging to many different categories. Conversely, anthropologists or environmentalists may make distinctions between groups of practices that community people may not make. After many conversations with practitioners, we observed that there are multiple categories of hunters and harvesters, several "subsistence profiles," or types of participation in hunting and harvesting activities. In this section, we trace out some of the ways these distinctions are drawn–or not–in practice.

Social scientists often distinguish between "commercial," "subsistence," and "recreational" hunting or harvesting activities. But when we spoke to shrimpers, for example, lines between these categories were fuzzy. They know that they have a commercial license and understand the requirements of being a commercial shrimper. But they simultaneously engage in subsistence activity, the total amount of which is not always predictable. For instance, in one story, a shrimper who was out on a shrimping trip called home. His teenage daughter told him that her high school band was having a fundraiser. He had had a good trip and decided, on the spot, that when he came in he would donate 200 pounds of his shrimp catch instead of selling it. At the fundraiser, the shrimp was fried and sold for $10 a plate. So, in the space of a single phone call, a portion of his catch went from being "commercial" to being part of a network of community

sharing. In the language of economic anthropology, you could say the shrimp went from potential commodity to gift and back to commodity (or at least cash exchange) at the band sale (cf. Kopytoff 1988). The same physical action on the same boat resulted in portions of the catch ending up in different categories because of a decision made in a moment, not because of an original intent, differences in equipment, changes in participants, or distinctions between individual shrimp.

Fuzzy or shifting distinctions like these make any assertion of a "dual economy" (subsistence or commercial) problematic because, as noted of Alaskan fishing villages:

> The division into what is subsistence and what is not in no way derives from how production is organized at the level of the community. Rather, it derives from legal distinctions which are made by intuitions that exist outside of the community altogether. One pull on the net brings in subsistence red salmon; the new pull brings in commercial reds? (Luton 1986: 523)

Other narratives from our oral histories reflect the blurry lines between wild harvests as self-provisioning and as a commercial activity and between being on vacation or at leisure and doing what many would consider work. For example, a Lafourche Parish professional, Felicia, remembered her life as a young child. When she was 5 or 6, she would go to Grand Isle with her parents, grandparents, and siblings on vacation. They taught her to crab and fish for flounder. She said she and her siblings often sold the flounder to restaurants on Grand Isle and sold those crabs to people on the side of the main road. Here, the activity can be simultaneously leisure, self-provisioning, and economically lucrative. Alternatively, leisure spent in subsistence activities can be harder work than employment. Another professional spoke of how much work maintaining a duck hunting camp could be, further blurring the lines between work and leisure, or sport and hard labor. "I had a duck camp for about six years in Cameron [Parish] and had a fishing camp for a while in Hackberry. You go down there, you know, and you end up working a weekend. You go down there to relax, and all you do is end up working."

Other people drew distinctions between varieties of non-commercial hunting and harvesting that resulted in home-based use. Participants spoke of subsistence activities as divided along gender lines. Although we found men and women who participated in all forms of hunting and harvesting, their participation was not evenly distributed. We talked to more men who were deer hunters and duck hunters and shrimpers, and we talked to more women who were avid gardeners. Again, it was not clear to us in these conversations that the people saw their activities—gardening, duck hunting, crabbing—as being the same "thing," and further research would be needed to understand these gendered divisions.

Others divided different kinds of hunting and harvesting by the investment required, either in time or money. For example, some saw deer hunting as very different from fishing, shrimping, and crabbing, or even duck hunting. Deer hunting and duck hunting often require access to specific lands that can cost a good deal of money. Many people told us that, at one time or other, they had had to forego deer or duck hunting because of the expense. For people in lower Terrebonne and Lafourche, deer hunting often requires travel to someplace else–often Mississippi or Alabama–or belonging to a deer club in upper Lafourche or upper Terrebonne. Many people participate, but these are seen as expensive activities. Even waterfowl hunting in lower Lafourche or lower Terrebonne requires lease fees for many. In addition, guns and ammunition cost money, and in coastal Louisiana getting to camps can require boats. Duck

hunting nearly always requires building (or buying) a blind. The financial requirements can cause some to worry how they will be able to pay for hunting, and those who hit hard times stop participating. However, fishing in bayous, shrimping with a cast net, and crabbing with a string or a few cages costs almost nothing. Anyone can participate, many do because of the low cost, and most people we talked do at least one of these activities or have family members who do. This is seen by some as being a totally different sort of activity.

Subsistence activities were also differentiated by the time required to learn. One of the organizers of the Louisiana Women in the Wild program put it this way:

> Fishing is a little bit easier and safer to get started than actual hunting, as well as an economic thing. It's cheaper. It's not as expensive to buy a fishing pole, and then you have more access to locations–you can fish off of banks, you can sit by a pond, you can go to a state park. But hunting is a little bit more difficult as far as equipment, knowledge of your equipment, safety aspects, and things you need to be well aware of and understand before you just decide to go out there.

We note that she referred to hunting as "actual hunting," seeing a distinction between types of harvesting.

Others differentiate activities based on their reliability in terms of food production. A hunter compared duck and deer hunting in this way:

> I don't depend on duck in my freezer. I love to eat duck, but I don't depend on them. A lot of people don't like duck. I do. I depend on that deer and I depend on that elk, or I depend on that hog. That's right. I depend on those every year.

This hunter points out that some activities are closer to having regular caloric importance than others. We talked to many people who count on filling their freezer with fish and shrimp for weekly meals or for regular feasts. Other kinds of subsistence products are not reliable enough, or the people do not plan to participate in those activities enough to plan around. This means that for many, shrimp and fish have a central role in the diet that venison or wild hog do not. Depending on the relative importance a person assigns to fishing, deer hunting, and duck hunting, they will not see them as the same type of activity.

Another reason people might not always see these activities as being the same "thing," is the divide between commercial and recreational harvesting. Some people, in particular some hunters who focus on a single species–like some duck and deer hunters–regarded their participation in subsistence much like their participation in other recreational activities. They saw hunting as being more like watching football, or playing golf, than about harvesting food. Of course, they ate the food. But in these conversations they were much more focused on the sports, leisure aspect of the activity. Others are much more focused on the production.

10.6 Identity, Daily Meals, Feasting, Values, and Social Ties

We note that in our observation, hunting and harvesting are connected to identity in complex ways. People talked about regional identities, personal identities, racial identities, ethnic identities, and value-based identities (i.e., a "good person"). Subsistence practices are also linked to family, household, and regional economies by providing supplemental income and food that is highly valued for being fresh and flavorful and is associated with celebrations.

Hunting and harvesting have a key role in celebrations at both the family and community levels. Many celebratory feasts feature food that is hunted or harvested. Hunting and harvesting provide a focal point for celebration. Communities have annual Blessings of the Fleet at the start of the shrimping season: their annual community festivals center on a harvesting activity. One of the largest festivals in the area is the Shrimp and Petroleum Festival, a combination of the region's two largest industries. Traditionally, shrimpers have a shrimp boil each time they bring the boat back in. In the home, families often have weekly or monthly crab boils. People who have camps, often have huge crabs boils each weekend, sometimes both Friday and Saturday nights. The numbers of get-togethers can seem staggering to people who are not from the region. For instance, it is not at all uncommon for a young family to have a shrimp boil on Friday afternoon with, say, their child's team (soccer, little league, dance team), then to drive to the husband's family's camp and spend the night visiting with one set of grandparents and cousins, spend Saturday fishing and have a fish fry Saturday night. They get up on Sunday, drive back to town, go to mass, and then attend the wife's family's crab boil Sunday afternoon, where they will eat and play cards until evening. At each of these gatherings–which can happen weekly–the centerpiece is freshly harvested food. Approximately 1,500 students live on-campus at Nicholls, yet most organizations cannot hold weekend events because social obligations with family and friends pull many students to homes and camps on the weekend.

Our conversations lead us to conclude that harvested food is highly valued: seen as worth the cost of time and labor required to produce. It is often said to be better than anything you could buy in a store. This food is also highly meaningful, invoking ideas of self-sufficiency, simplicity, and upright values. Even when food for crab boils may be purchased, it is often purchased from someone the buyer knows, and whom they trust for the crabs' freshness and quality. They buy at a fair price, often below market prices, and many state that knowing the crabber is important to them.

10.7 Lifecycle and Family Structure

We observed that harvesting and hunting are intertwined with lifecycle and family structure. Although we met people of all ages who participated in almost all hunting and harvest activities, categories of people clustered around some activities. For instance, many older people told us that much of their hunted protein was provided by grandchildren who were avid hunters, because they, themselves, no longer cared to get up at 4 a.m. to go wait in a cold duck blind or crouch and wait for a deer. Professionals told us that they had stopped fishing as much because they simply did not have enough time, in contrast with retired people who told us that they were fishing more than ever. In addition, we discovered that some people were key harvesting providers and that allowed others (friends and family) to stay connected to a subsistence lifestyle even when they were not able to participate. For example, people told us that retired parents often kept the freezers of working professional children full of produce from the garden and fish from the bayous. Three older women in Pointe-aux-chênes kept a large garden together and helped fill the freezers of 50 of their relatives. Often these key providers did more than just pick the tomatoes or catch the fish: they peeled, fileted, and even made, for example, figs into preserves. In fact, the subsistence lifestyle of the larger community seems to rest, in part, on the over-participation and heavy sharing of some key providers.

One New Orleans resident told us that he kept a commercial shrimping license and trawled on weekends during shrimping season while holding down a full-time job as a butcher for an area grocery store. He bought a new boat when he retired. This investment highlighted his intention to do more fishing and trawling rather than less, in his retirement. Never his primary occupation, shrimping was something he did to fill the family freezer. He was proud his family never bought shrimp to make a jambalaya or a gumbo.

Though "retirees" or older members of social networks often have anchoring roles, it is also evident that people may move into more central harvesting and sharing roles in their youth or at mid-life if they experience sudden transitions (such as losing a job or a divorce) that free up their time and create opportunities for greater involvement in fishing, shrimping, hunting, or crabbing. We learned, in conversations with community members, that when family members experienced a period of extended unemployment, they used the time (and had the desire) to provide for their extended families through hunting, fishing, and other wild harvests.

10.8 Environmental Justice

Environmental justice considers the uneven effects of environmental change on different human groups through the disproportionate exposure to nuisances, such as pollution, or differential access to amenities, such as natural resources, parks, and wilderness areas. This is a major concern for studies of environmental impacts. Because our study is an exploratory study and did not attempt to compare subsistence practices between groups, by race and/or ethnicity, income, wealth, or other variables, environmental justice is a dimension of subsistence that remains largely unexplored in this study, yet is nonetheless clearly implicated in our findings.

Subsistence foods are often high in nutritional value, whether we are talking about shrimp, finish, crab, or produce from the garden. Subsistence losses—if the resource were to become unavailable or unhealthy to harvest—would have dramatic and far-reaching impacts in coastal communities. Everyone who loves fresh seafood would be impacted, but there can be no doubt, that families with lower incomes and families living closer to the Gulf and thus farther from full-service grocery stores would be disproportionately impacted.

Every dimension of the importance of subsistence outlined in this section–nutritional value, social, cultural value, value as a foundation for regional and personal identity, role in fostering closely connected families and building solidarity across social networks–would impact residents of coastal communities who participate in these subsistence practices. However, families with less money, as well as those most involved in subsistence, would be impacted in more severe ways. And we already know that the average annual income of full-time residents is substantially less in the lower portions of both parishes. We also know that full-time residents of Terrebonne and Lafourche suffer from high rates of heart disease, obesity, and diabetes (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4).

Without easy access to the products of hunting and harvesting, we can posit that lower-income families would be less able to replace subsistence foods with equally healthy foods or the same quantity of healthy food. It is likely that fresh seafood would be left out of family freezers, rather than being replaced with expensive store purchases. It would likely be replaced with other, less expensive, animal protein or other less healthy foods. We urge future studies to explore these dynamics.

10.9 Further Study

This was a pilot project; therefore these observations are preliminary. The findings are based on interviews, harvesting and sharing logs, and participant observation, among other research methods, and our review of previous studies in the region. To ensure that our findings can be presented in as accessible a form as possible while losing as little complexity as possible, and to provide other researchers with a closer look at our methods, we offer a robust section of field reports and ethnographic profiles, which can be found in Volumes 2 and 3. These provide a look at some of our experiences, observations, and conversations with participants in subsistence practices in Coastal Louisiana. Further and more expanded study is needed and to expand our understanding of subsistence practices along the Gulf Coast.

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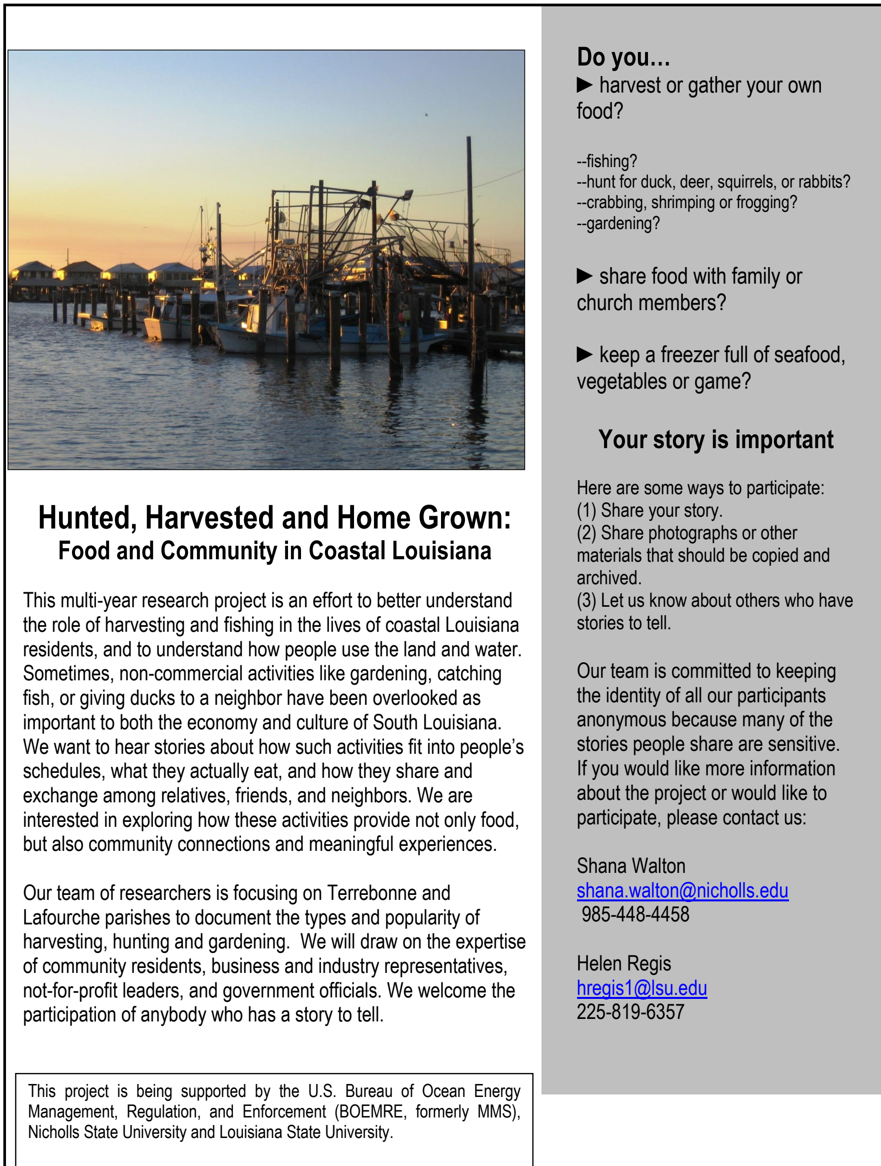
Appendix A: Log Forms, and Flyers

The first document in this appendix is the flyer we used to recruit participants or to give participants additional information about the project, including contact information for the researchers. The second document in this appendix is the combined log we used to record hunting, harvesting, and sharing information. As discussed in Chapter 2, while we initially used three separate logs, we ultimately discovered that a combined log worked best, it is that form that is reproduced here.



Hunted, Harvested and Home Grown:
Food and Community in Coastal Louisiana

This multi-year research project is an effort to better understand the role of harvesting and fishing in the lives of coastal Louisiana residents, and to understand how people use the land and water. Sometimes, non-commercial activities like gardening, catching fish, or giving ducks to a neighbor have been overlooked as important to both the economy and culture of South Louisiana. We want to hear stories about how such activities fit into people's schedules, what they actually eat, and how they share and exchange among relatives, friends, and neighbors. We are interested in exploring how these activities provide not only food, but also community connections and meaningful experiences.

Our team of researchers is focusing on Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes to document the types and popularity of harvesting, hunting and gardening. We will draw on the expertise of community residents, business and industry representatives, not-for-profit leaders, and government officials. We welcome the participation of anybody who has a story to tell.

This project is being supported by the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation, and Enforcement (BOEMRE, formerly MMS), Nicholls State University and Louisiana State University.

Do you…

► harvest or gather your own food?

--fishing?
--hunt for duck, deer, squirrels, or rabbits?
--crabbing, shrimping or frogging?
--gardening?

► share food with family or church members?

► keep a freezer full of seafood, vegetables or game?

Your story is important

Here are some ways to participate:
(1) Share your story.
(2) Share photographs or other materials that should be copied and archived.
(3) Let us know about others who have stories to tell.

Our team is committed to keeping the identity of all our participants anonymous because many of the stories people share are sensitive. If you would like more information about the project or would like to participate, please contact us:

Shana Walton
shana.walton@nicholls.edu
985-448-4458

Helen Regis
hregis1@lsu.edu
225-819-6357

Hunted, Harvested and Home Grown Log Log covers days from ________ to __________

Hunting / Fishing / Shrimping / Crabbing / Frogging / Gardening?

Date	Activity? Where?	Caught or Picked? How much?

Sharing?

DATE	Food given?/Food received? (please indicate)	Given to?/Received from? (brother, sister, friend, etc.)

Cooking and Eating – What did you eat this week?

Date	Dish/ Food	**Where was it from?** Ex: I caught it, Somebody gave it to us, I bought it off the dock, restaurant,

		grocery store

Write any additional stories on the back

Appendix B: Student Papers

A total of 62 freshmen students at Nicholls State University wrote essays about some aspect of subsistence. The quality of the writing, as well as the dedication to the topic, varied as much as any group of freshmen will. Included in this appendix are 10 student papers selected to represent topics the students wrote about. The titles were chosen by the students. These essays include eight from an honors level English 102 class, which only had 12 students. (Honors level English 102 classes are coded as English 112, which is what the students have as a label on the top of their papers.) Those students signed a group release allowing all of their essays to be used in this project in whole or in part. The other two are from a general population 102 class; those students signed express permissions to use their essays in whole or in part.

Hardships of a Crustacean (Perry Adams)

Perry Adams
English 112 – Nicholls State University
November 10, 2011

It's morning, although one glance at the still dark sky would have you believe otherwise. The various sounds of nature are continuous, from the sound of fish leaping in and out of water to a small flock of birds looking for an early meal. The faint rumbling of engines can be heard complimenting shining lights pinpointing their locations in an otherwise obscure area. Several vessels, both massive and small, are spaced out among the calm, quiet waters that just seem to stretch out for miles. Fishermen and deckhands in these boats, if not deploying wired traps one-by-one in hopes of obtaining many of the residing crabs here, can be seen collecting their traps from previous trips that have captured some of these unlucky crustaceans. The unfortunate crabs are emptied into an onboard ice chest to ensure their longevity throughout the remainder of the trip.

As the hours continue to pass, vessels can be seen roving from point to point, retrieving numerous traps and replacing them within minutes. By noon, these vessels become sparser as most of them head back to the dock, with their captains going their separate ways. The docks eventually empty by night, awaiting a similar cycle for the day to come. This is an ordinary day for a crab fisherman.

When I first chose to do my ethnography on crabbing, I knew what to expect, but at the same time, I didn't. As someone who's grown alongside a community where crabbing is a major staple, I have never actively taken part or learned beyond the basics of the industry. I knew many of the what's, like crabs, traps, and ships, but didn't know many of the why's, such as "Why wake up at three in the morning to depart into the waters?" or "Why are selling prices for crabs so low compared to their prices years ago?" I also knew that I'd have many sources to gather information about this industry, as I have several family members who enjoy crabbing. By conducting only a couple of interviews with relatives who have great ties to crabbing, I discovered that the crabbing industry isn't as clear-cut as it seems. It's an evolving culture that is rapidly experiencing changes as the years go by. Throughout this essay, I'm going to explain what attracts people to this culture and why so many people enjoy participating as crab fishermen. First, I'll briefly introduce both interviewees and tell how they became members of this growing culture. Next, I'll present both of these crab fishermen's perspectives on the industry, as well as their thoughts on many aspects of this culture. Finally, I want to summarize the reasons of exactly why people continue to crab and how the culture has changed over the years, for better and for worse.

I knew exactly where to begin gathering information for my ethnography. As someone who has lived with a family surrounded by the seafood industry, I have two family members who have taken part in crabbing culture throughout much of their lives. My grandfather, Jasper Cheramie, is a commercial crab fisherman who got into the crabbing culture by teaching himself how to crab. For the past thirty-five years, he has been catching crabs to sell to people by taking advantage of his growing experience. When he first began all of those years ago, he started off with a small number of crab traps that complimented a small eighteen foot boat that was used to set them. He's used this initial investment to begin his crabbing career and, over the years, has

used the money gained from this into buying more traps. He eventually bought a bigger boat and has only expanded from there. Over the years, Jasper Cheramie became a well-known crab fisherman to those around him and has grown relationships with many of his customers.

My father, James Adams, on the other hand, is a recreational crab fisherman. He started crabbing in 1993 and was actually taught by my grandfather when he first began learning the ropes. During the major crab seasons, he'll go out into the waters some days to catch crabs to sell to a local crab shack. On other days, crabs will be caught with the sole intention of being boiled at home. Although my dad is someone who enjoys crabbing during its best seasons, he usually leaves it to the commercial crab fishermen during other times of the year. Seeing as both of these people take part in the same industry, but for completely different reasons, it would be beneficial to get both of these perspectives on a culture that is shared by such a wide region as southern Louisiana.

My first valuable source of information was my own grandfather, Jasper Cheramie. He has been fooling with crabs since he was eight years old and has created a living for himself out of crabbing daily for over thirty-five years. He was also an active participant in the industry throughout the many changes that it's undertaken in the last few decades. Although not necessarily the best job salary-wise, he says that crabbing is by no means a job without its benefits. According to him, he's enjoyed the time that he spent crabbing ever since he's started. "It's made me healthier;" he told me. "It's definitely great exercise and good for your health. Out in the open, fresh air, it's a great life." On an average day of crabbing, he will usually leave around five in the morning to get gas, traps, bait and anything else needed to be on the boat for seven o'clock. My grandfather also mentioned that he finishes right before lunch, although most crab fishermen, according to him, will finish around two in the afternoon.

Crab fishermen like him collectively know of the industry's ins and outs. Its common knowledge among crab fishermen that crabs will pop out whenever it is either windy or raining. This is because the cooler atmosphere motivates crabs to un-burrow themselves from the sand. If it is a very hot day, crabs are rarely subject to being captured. "It greatly depends on the time of year," he mentions. "For half the year, crabs are good and plentiful. Other half, they aren't as plentiful and income isn't as great," Because of this annual rise and fall of profits, he will spend money wisely all year long, as to keep a healthy surplus of funds in the winter months when the profits of crabbing aren't as high.

My dad, James Adams, although a recreational crab fisherman, shares many of the same traits as my grandfather. As someone who participates mainly for recreation, however, his perspective on certain aspects of crabbing differs in comparison. When asked what his motivations were for crabbing, he replied, "I love to be on the water. You're your own boss. You can go to work when you want and if you don't want to go, you don't have to." He also says that crabbing has made him want to be on the water more in part due to these advantages. My dad's days of crabbing are similar to my grandfather's. He'll get up early, get gas and bait, launch his boat, find and empty his already-placed cages before re-baiting them, and head back to the boat launch after hours of collecting his catch. Like many crab fishermen, he leaves early in the morning to retrieve and place his traps. "Try to leave at daylight," he mentioned. "It's against the law to pass any crab cages at night,"

In retrospect, this makes sense, as crab traps can be stolen, and this rule keeps thieves from having the advantage of a near pitch-black shade to hide under. "They have a lot of people that

steal your crabs and your traps, so you are constantly buying new traps," he mentioned. Any crab fisherman who tries stealing other people's traps carries heavy risks. As many crabbing communities are very close-knit, anyone caught stealing will be penalized, in more ways than one. Along with paying a hefty fine for tampering with someone's catch for the day, these people become labeled as thieves, making it difficult to crab again. Other crab fishermen will likely ostracize the thief and boat launches can refuse to let these people launch off of their docks. Stealing traps is a serious offense, and it is one that the crabbing culture takes very seriously.

Both Jasper and James share similar concerns on how crabbing culture has evolved over the years. "They have a lot more regulations, lot more people doing it and the prices that you get for the crabs are a lot less," my father mentioned. "You have more expenses now, too." Although the number of crabs taken in will likely be much less in the winter months, the pricing is just as likely to increase rapidly throughout all parts of the year due to the much lower ratio between the supply of crabs and the demand of consumers during this time. "Price of crabs go up during the wintertime when crabs are scarce," my grandfather told me, "but goes down around the summer when they're more plentiful," Even with the annual fluctuating prices, both the summer and winter months have seen major cuts in the prices of crabs taken in from crab fishermen. I had figured that the rapid decrease in prices had something to do with the economy's ongoing inflation, as it seemed logical in my opinion. After asking my grandfather he was able to give me a much simpler explanation that still answered this question in full. "Much more people crab now than when I first started. The crab population has been declining though because they are caught much more now." He believes, along with my father, that there should be a limit set on the number of traps that can be used by a single person, as the crab population has been steadily declining as a result of the influx of crab fishermen. I can personally agree with this reasoning, as the continuation of these statistics can eventually mean the demise of crabbing in southern Louisiana.

I feel that these interviews helped me understand the crabbing culture more than ever. Crabbing is a social culture at its core, one that is friendly toward its members and willing to assist its crab fishermen, new and experienced. This welcoming atmosphere draws many different people into this growing culture. Some people enjoy crabbing purely because of the outdoor, secluded, peaceful environment that allows people to simply "get away from it all." Others do it plainly for the fun of going out into the open waters, catching crabs, and soon boiling their catch for the entire family to enjoy. There are also others that basically crab to put food on the table and make a living out of doing this, whether they enjoy it or not (although most commercial crab fishermen choose to make a living by crabbing because they enjoy it). Crabbing is also an activity that bonds its culture together in many aspects, whether it's a seller growing relationships with his buyers or a captain and deckhand helping each other and crabbing together. I can certainly see why so many more people crab now compared to so many years ago, although this same influx of crab fishermen can cause the industry to take a major turn for the worse if left unchecked. I agree with both my dad and my grandfather when they say that something needs to be done to limit the number of crabs caught; otherwise, one of southern Louisiana's most well-known cultures could eventually become nothing more than history.

Crabs Under the Microscope (Jacob Clement)

Jacob Clement

English 112 – Nicholls State University

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As I pull into my grandma's driveway, I can already here the commotion and loud screaming coming from my family inside. As soon as I step through the doorway, a rush of sights, smells, and sounds enter my body. My whole family is sitting at a long plastic table, and I already know crab season is here. Grandma kisses me on the cheek and tells me to get a tray and sit down. As I approach my seat at the table, I notice the unique habits and rituals practiced by the family while eating crabs. My grandma is viciously beating her crab with a knife to try and crack the shell. Finally, when she succeeds, she opens the crab and picks the meat to give to the children who cannot peel for themselves. Down on the other end of the table, my older cousins compete to see who has the best crab peeling method and who can peel their crabs the fastest. Some of them even use nutcrackers to crack the claws and speed up the process. The old men, who have assembled themselves on the other end of the table, proceed to hold detailed conversations about sports and politics, some of which result in heated arguments and flaring tempers. In the middle of the table sits the ladies of the household. Much of their time is spent tending to their young children, but when they find a moment to speak, it mostly consists of gossip about other women. The whole table is exploding with noise from every direction. Cajun and zydeco music is playing softly in the background. A few of the children are singing and dancing in a circle adjacent to the table. The smell of freshly seasoned and spicy crabs fills the air. The smells are so strong that they burn my nose, and my eyes begin to water. Enough of this observation, it is time to eat.

As I stared at my big and delicious red crabs, my mind began to wonder for a few seconds about where these crabs came from and how they entered my family. I also wondered why these crabs were so important to bring about this whole celebration. When I awoke from my day dreaming stupor, I realized that supper was over and my family had begun cleaning up. My mother was washing the dishes, and my father was picking up the table. The rest of the family was saying their good-byes and sending each other off. After I told everyone good-bye, I walked to my truck and began heading home.

Family crab boils are a very familiar scene to me. I have participated in them my whole life. During the past few weeks, I have been interviewing and observing different members of Louisiana's culture who are affected by crabs in their everyday lives. By understanding their lifestyle and habits, I have surmised that family crab boils and crabs in general play a significant role in Louisiana's culture. In Louisiana, crabs do not only serve as another source of food. They create unique relationships between many people in society, and they allow families to come together and bond. They serve as the backbone to many relationships and family ties. In this essay, I will first discuss where the crabs come from and how they affect the people who catch and distribute them. Secondly, I will show how the crabs affect my family and provide for the basis of what we do. Finally, I will analyze all of the observations and research given and deeply explain how crabs influence the culture in southern Louisiana.

Fortunately, I know a man by the name of David who knows a great deal about the crabbing industry in Louisiana. David is my best friend's father and a barber in Thibodaux. He also receives and distributes crabs to several people in the Thibodaux area. Through an extensive interview, he explained to me where the crabs come from and how they get to my family. An old man by the name of Sterling catches the crabs in Flat Lake in Morgan City. David is very good friends with Sterling and that is where his crab connections come from. Sterling is a 70-year-old man who learned how to live off the land from his father and became a hunter, trapper, and crabber. He always had another job to support his family in case times became hard with the crabs, and he is an expert crabber and knows much about crabs' patterns and habits. David says that catching crabs is Sterling's pride and joy, and he does not do it for monetary gain. He is a very popular man in Morgan City, and he sells his crabs to show off his hard work. David defines Sterling as, " Honest, friendly, and enjoys helping others. He is the type of individual you want to be around." Sterling does not have to go crabbing to survive, but as his father taught him, he still lives off of the land and provides for himself and others. He loves to see the smiles on people's faces when they lay eyes on the huge blue crabs he catches.

David shared with me the secret of how Sterling catches these monster crabs. He said that only one night out of the year, Sterling goes out and catches baby eels with a huge net. He uses these eels as bait which the huge blue crabs seem to love. Sterling says that for every baby eel he puts out, he is guaranteed a big crab. David thinks that these crabs are the biggest and most delicious crabs in southern Louisiana. Once Sterling catches his crabs for the week, half are sold to distributing companies and sent throughout the United States, and the other half he sells to close friends. By selling his crabs to close friends, he gains a sense of pride and accomplishment. Basically, the smiles and appreciation of his friends are the reward for his hard work. David said that this reward is much more important to Sterling than any other gains.

Every Monday, David travels up to Morgan City to get the crabs from Sterling. He said that the Monday trip is always an adventure. He sometimes brings a friend to ride with him up to Morgan City. He said the conversations usually consist of crazy childhood memories and stories. This is a time for him and his friends to recall and relive their past. David told me that he thinks the ride is sometimes more fun and important than actually getting the crabs themselves. He said this is how he met some of his closest friends. Once David obtains the crabs, he throws a huge crab boil for his family. David said that most people in Louisiana cook more than they can eat, and "Their eyes are bigger than their stomachs." For this reason, people in Louisiana invite their family to take part in eating the enormous amount of food. According to David, another reason people in Louisiana host crab boils with their family is because seafood is a perishable item. Once the seafood is not fresh anymore, it is no longer good to cook and eat. So to make sure none of the precious crabs go to waste, people in Louisiana cook all of the crabs right when they get them and invite all of their family to come eat. He only sells his crabs to his close friends when he has a surplus. David says he also does not sell the crabs for monetary gain. He sells them to friends for the same price that he bought them. He sells the crabs for reasons of close friendship. He wants his close friends to be able to also experience these great crabs that he gets from Morgan City.

Luckily, my family and I are very good friends with David, and the crabs get passed further down the chain to us. The instant my father receives the crabs; he begins the preparation for the feast. He cuts onions, potatoes, and garlic to be put into the pot. He adds lots of salt and hot sauce to the water so that the crabs taste perfect. Dad says that you must put the crabs into the boiling water while they are still cold from the ice chest because if not their claws will instantly pop off. After the crabs are boiled and ready to eat, the whole family including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins sits down to enjoy. Newspaper is then placed along all the tables. This soaks up all of the excess juice and makes cleaning easier. While the whole family is enjoying the crabs, diverse conversations take place. Topics for these conversations range from how good and full the crabs are to exciting sporting events. My grandma also begins to tell her own story about a man she used to know who died recently. She was astonished at his death and could not stop talking about it the whole meal. After everyone has finished eating, the leftover crabmeat is picked up by my mother and used the next day to make a gumbo. It is part of Louisiana culture to not waste anything that comes from the land. Just as the Native Americans used every piece of the buffalo, we use everything from the crabs and throw the shells back into the bayou to be eaten by other animals. One must respect the land and the gifts it gives you. After everything is cleaned up, my whole family piles into several cars to go get ice cream from a small shop in Napoleonville. My mom says that it is nice to have something sweet after eating the salty crabs. Our night then comes to an end, and we go to bed with full stomachs.

Throughout Louisiana's history, crabs have played an important role in relationships between people and families. They are sacred to the people of south Louisiana. It is very important to know where the crabs come from and how they come into the family so that one can understand more deeply how Louisiana's culture functions. Sterling is a prime example of a man who takes part in Louisiana's rich culture everyday. He lives off of the land as many southern Louisiana natives do. He does not sell his catch for only monetary purposes, but for social status and friendship. He is more driven by the praise and respect from his friends than by money. He feels good inside because he catches the best crabs there are in southern Louisiana. Since they are receiving the best product, every one walks away from him exceptionally happy. He is a very honorable man who represents Louisiana's culture immensely. Without crabs, his way of life would be taken away from him. It would be one less way he could practice living off the land. His pride would be reduced and many relationships between him and good friends would be lost. David also represents Louisiana's culture in ways very similar to Sterling. He does not put money above all. He cherishes friendship more than anything else. He does not comply with today's society, which says that money is everything. David puts the bonds of friendship, moral values, and hard work above money and uses those values as his reward. Both of these great men's attitudes and beliefs are connected in many ways. Without the crabs, they might think very differently about society. It would also affect the way they act towards their family and friends. Most importantly, if not for the crabs this amazing relationship would have never been created between these two men. They might have never even known each other. Crabs play a main social and economic role in both of these men's lives. Crabs influence their habits and morals, which are specific to southern Louisiana culture. They help shape the social and economical status of many people in the South.

Besides affecting relationships and conduct in people that catch and distribute them, crabs also are very important to family life. Just the simple task of boiling crabs brings the whole family together. People in southern Louisiana are always searching for the smallest reasons to hold family gatherings. Whether it be crab boils, crawfish boils, shrimp boils, fish fries, or boucheries, the people of southern Louisiana desire to be and have close relationships with their family members. Notice how these close family ties are all connected together through the seafood industry, especially crabs. According to my father, crabs are more accessible to people in Louisiana than any other seafood. He says they can be easily caught in ditches and small canals. You also need very few of them to feed yourself and others. This is one reason why crabs are more special than any other seafood in Louisiana. Most family gatherings in Louisiana are caused from a large catch of seafood in which the whole family needs to enjoy. That is why crabs are so cherished and special. We take what nature has given us and use it to the full extent. Once the crabs are caught and brought in, the whole family knows it is time for some quality bonding and great food. My father says people in Louisiana love to share, and this is demonstrated fully at family crab boils. Nothing and no one is left out. It is a time to put behind all of the chaos and distractions of life and just focus on what is most important, and what a better way to do it than to celebrate with the catches made off the land. This ties together Louisiana's culture of living off the land and close family bonds. The crabs are taken from the land, they affect how many relationships are formed, and they influence family life. This is why Louisiana's culture is so unique. A trivial organism, such as a crab, plays a huge role in our society's culture and dictates how we live in many ways. Look closely at a crab shell under a microscope and you might just see my family tree.

Everlasting Bonds (Coery Duplantis)_

Coery Duplantis

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As I sit at the dinner table, the constant movements in the kitchen are the only things grabbing my attention. My mother passes plates around the table like poker cards, disappears into the next room and returns with a glass for everyone. My grandmother sets the rice onto the table while my aunt brings in the platter of shrimp. Six feminine hands fill all the plates with food and then my grandfather prays over our meal. When he ends with "Amen," laughing and talking erupt in the quiet room. I can smell the rice, but the strongest scent is coming from the shrimp. The sensation of biting into it reminds me why I proclaimed it my favorite food. While savoring the sugary, yet spicy, flavor of the shrimp, I shovel two mountains of white, moist, fluffy rice into my mouth. My family has always treated shrimp as a delicacy, and I have always wondered why. I never thought, though, that maybe it was conserved because it was so difficult to obtain. I never inquired on how the shrimp made it onto the dinner table, and I was not aware that getting the shrimp required hard labor and a considerable amount of preparation. I did not appreciate it as much as I should have because it was just another food to me. Little did I know some of my family members that sat at the same table with me did know what it took to catch and cook shrimp; in fact, they were the ones who caught the shrimp sometimes.

As I looked closer into the shrimping culture, I noticed its process has great impacts on how people spend their time with one another. First, we will explore the hard work of shrimping that can sustain a family financially. Next, we will discover how shrimping can bring priceless bonds with all the people involved. Finally, we will end up back at the familiar dinner table.

It is difficult to keep his balance while pulling up the nets because the boat is rocking back and forth. He is straining to get them all the way up, which means he has a lot . . . he hopes. "Harder," his father says. Sweat begins to descend to his eyes, but he has a tight grip on the nets with both of his hands. The nets are already too high to drop, so the perspiration burning his eyes must be tolerated. With the veins in his arms bulging out, he finally pulls the net in. He slips across the floor as he brings the net to the table. Shrimp and fish fall onto the table as he flips the net upside down and shakes it. It is now time to put the shrimp in a container with the rest of the catch. The table is filled with shrimp and fish of all different types and sizes. He sorts the shrimp according to size as a variety of fish jump all over the table with some ending up on the floor. He has to be extra careful when transporting these shrimp into their particular containers because now the deck of the boat is full of fish and water. After separating all the shrimp and throwing the fish back into the water, the nets are placed back in the water so that this process, called trawling, can be repeated.

Alton, a shrimper since 14, knows the trawling process very well and summed it up for me: "Leave about six in the afternoon, put the nets down, and pick up about every half hour." He now shrimps with his wife, Lou Ann, who has been shrimping since age 15. Alton mentioned that his wife did all the work and then laughed with her. She explained how she picks out all the fish to

throw back in the water and separates the shrimp into different containers. It is then important to put the shrimp on ice so they do not spoil. They stay busy the entire time.

Alton and Lou Ann have always shrimped during shrimp seasons, but not always as a sole income. When they were younger, "That was the living," Lou Ann said, meaning that shrimping was their primary way to make money. Over the years, it became more than a job, though. They still sold most of their shrimp, but it became the normal way to do things. Even after Alton grew up and started working, he and his wife insisted on getting out on the water and catching shrimp about five days out of the week. These two shrimp for the same reasons today, but their introduction to the trade was a little different.

Alton was taught by his older brother, but he was only used to crabbing before. He told me that he used to be scared of boats because the first boat that he went on would always lean and get a little too close to the bank. He also said he was only able to eat potted meat while on the boat, so now he cannot stand it. "It was good at the time," he said, "but never again." Lou Ann was taught by her father, and though she had eight brothers, her father always took her instead. She was a hard-worker and showed an interest in shrimping, which are skills needed to do the work. Her dad always made sure to have chopped ham for her because he knew it was her favorite.

Alton and Lou Ann have taught four of their seven children to shrimp. "We taught them so they can learn to do it on their own and be able to make a living from it," Alton said. They feel that if they teach them how to shrimp, they have fed their children for a lifetime. Shrimping was so embedded into their lifestyle that they felt the need to pass this knowledge to their kids. Teaching children how to shrimp is a very important aspect of the shrimping culture because it not only passes down the knowledge, but it continues that part of their lives.

Another person I interviewed, Ryan, is a former shrimper who started shrimping when he was four years old. "My Paw Paw taught me," he says, "and I learned so much from him." He grew very close to him as he learned not only to catch shrimp, but all the life lessons that came along with it. He remembers the hard work of pulling up the nets and separating the catch, but he explained that it was so much more than that. His grandpa taught him how to provide for his family and the art of self- reliance. There were tough lessons learned, too, like "If you didn't catch anything, you didn't eat anything," Ryan said. The conversations on the boat for Ryan mostly led to a lesson being learned. He remembers his grandpa always telling him how to live right. "He was teaching me how to be a man," Ryan said. He believes that is why he is the person he is today, a person with a traditional mindset.

Cooking and having fun were also on his grandfather's lesson plan. Ryan and his grandfather loved eating shrimp and fish, which is pretty much all they ate while on the boat. His grandpa taught him how to clean and cut the fish they caught; moreover, he taught Ryan how to cook the shrimp and fish without an oven. As a form of entertainment, they threw the fish into the air for the birds to grab them. "The seagulls would snatch them right out of the air," he said. Ryan will always project these lessons to everyday life by working hard and never forgetting to play as well.

When shrimpers get back, the boat must be cleaned and the shrimp must be peeled. In this part of the process, "You find out who your real friends are," Ryan said. Most people involved in the shrimping process love to eat shrimp, but peeling the shrimp is not the most desirable step. Someone is instantly connected with someone else when a person offers to help peel shrimp. Because almost no one likes to do it, anyone willing to help is doing a selfless act for someone else. Ryan referred to the peeling as "crap work" but said, "People did help when they were around." After the peeling has started, it is like a contract has been signed, and the people involved will usually keep peeling until all the shrimp in a particular container have been peeled. Since the peelers will be sitting together, with their hands constantly grabbing into freezing cold water and shrimp, the only normal thing to do is talk. The bonds grow even stronger as they talk about whatever interests them. It is common to talk about the catch, something that happened while on the water or something not even shrimp related. Being stuck peeling shrimp might sound bad, but it allows connections to be built.

Alton said that they have always brought their catch to a shrimp factory right after peeling. He tells of how shrimp used to sell at 10 cents a pound. "When the price went up to 15 cents, this was a big deal," he said. Ryan and his grandfather sold shrimp also, but Ryan remembers keeping a lot of the shrimp and throwing occasional shrimp boils. He told me, "Everyone was invited." He really meant everyone, too, because new people always attended. He remembers people laughing, children running, and his cousins jumping into the bayou. Some of these shrimp boils had so many people that extra space was needed, so they used their neighbors' yards. These times were so important because they kept his community connected. "We shared, because that is what you did back then," Ryan said. Having this close environment allowed the whole neighborhood to give freely to one another. Being so close to a large group of people was great, but the most intimate bonds were made at the dinner table.

Both Alton and Ryan had large families, and their favorite part of the shrimping process is eating. Alton's scenario of eating shrimp with the family is having his wife cook it, everyone being served, and finally eating. Ryan's scenario is exactly like mine from the beginning of the essay because he was sitting at that table with me. Ryan is my older brother, and we almost always sat next to each other. The bonds I built with him and anyone else at that table can never be broken. I believe that shrimping has contributed in making my family as close as it is today.

Although I am very thankful for everything that the shrimping culture has brought, I do not believe I will participate in anything other than the eating part of it. I said that Ryan is a former shrimper because before I can remember our family moved into the city. My mother established education, religion, and recreational activities as priorities. These are important values; however, none of them included shrimping, so I am upset to see that I missed out on such a huge part of my family's culture.

After doing research on the shrimp culture, I have discovered that there is way more to it than hard work and eating. The work that it takes to catch the shrimp gives the shrimpers a sense of pride that they are providing for their families. It can also bring the workers closer together. Even peeling the shrimp can bring people together. When the shrimp is cooked, whether for the entire neighborhood or just the family, this can lead to bonds that last a lifetime.

The Bayside Getaway (Rory Eschete)

Rory Eschete

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As I walk up the steps to the deck of my good friend's camp, the distinct smells of boiled seafood, fried fish, and barbecue creep their way to my senses. The anticipation of the atmosphere forces me to speed up my pace because I can't wait to be a part of it. Once I get to the top, I'm greeted by every person at the party either by a hug, handshake, or kiss, and the warmth of everyone never ceases to amaze me. In every corner of the deck and all inside the camp there is an insurmountable amount of energy that just flows through every being. On the end of the deck, all of the men are either telling deep interesting stories, talking about work, or cracking jokes. Of course, my dad and his close friend Rodney Tregre are preparing the food for the large amount of endless appetites surrounding them. Inside the camp, the women are either tending to their young children or gossiping about what goes on back in town. All around, everywhere I look, the children are running around or playing games without a worry in the world. It seems as though not a single bit of negativity sprouts from this garden of life. All I see yielded from this get-together are never-ending friendships, eternal bonds, favors, and something they like to call "team-building." I just try to make my rounds and get as much out of the party as possible. I talk to the older men and soak in experience and wisdom from all of the old stories. I watch my dad cook and learn his culinary skill, so I can one day share a similar experience with my family.

Once the food is finally finished, everyone gathers around to share the bountiful harvest. I wait a little while and let the women and children go first. Then, I begin to feast on the delightful meal. We have fried speckled trout, boiled shrimp, boiled crabs, barbecued deer, fried shrimp, and the list goes on. I make sure I eat till I can't anymore because it isn't every day that people get to have such extravagant celebrations. When my stomach finally alerts me of how full it is, I begin my resignation to the couch. On the couch, I begin to dwell upon the idea of how lucky we are to have these occasions. But then, I wander into the questions of why do we have these get-togethers and how did they come to be. The camp has become such a large part of our lives, but why? And then I begin to wonder about all of the work and energy it takes to put on these festivities. What becomes of these social gatherings and how do they benefit everyone? In this ethnography, I will explain the importance of the camp not only to me and my family, but to families all around South Louisiana. The camp is a very essential piece to our culture which brings together all of our Southern ways to one location. The camp life involves gatherings, fishing, hunting, Cajun cooking, and all of the things our social group can be known for.

Grand Isle, located off the most southern tip of Lafourche Parish in Louisiana, is known as a warm, welcoming destination for summer family retreats. Many families, like my own, have camps on Grand Isle where we stay on weekends. Down the street from our camp is what I call the largest center of cultural explosion. Rodney Tregre, a good friend of my father, has owned this camp for over six years. Rodney used to own a portion of the camp. Back when Hurricane Katrina wiped out the Southern coast, half of the camp was completely obliterated. So, Rodney bought the entire camp from the other two owners and completely restored it. Located on the Bay side of the island, rather than the beach side, this camp is where I go along with my family and friends to immerse myself in our culture. The camp has everything a Cajun could need.

There is a fryer, barbecue pit, smoker, boiling pot, boat, crab traps, and most importantly the twenty by forty foot deck. It's on this deck where people can either get together, socialize, cook, eat, or simply gaze at the stars. With these essentials, we can do the activities that we were raised up doing as a part of our Cajun culture. Rodney says, "I love to just go fishing with my sons during the day then get back to the camp in the afternoon, drink a few cold sarsaparillas, and begin cooking dinner." The camp isn't anything fancy or extravagant. It offers a place for one to enjoy himself by simply relaxing and having a good time with no stress or worries. After all, that's what everyone goes to the island for. It's a retreat from reality for us to collect our thoughts and focuses in life without having the pressures of work, business, and school. Just like us, there are thousands of others in South Louisiana who leave for the camp on the weekends to do the same thing. It becomes a ritual to all of the natives. The camp life may seem easy and peaceful for most outsiders; however, there is much work and tradition that goes into putting on the get-togethers that consist of the South Louisiana food everyone loves.

For most families in South Louisiana, our meals comprise of animals and fish native to our area. Much of the responsibility for collecting these prized Cajun delicacies is laid upon the males of the family. In order to have the food supply ready when gatherings come around, the men must either go out into the wild to hunt wild beast and water fowl or travel by boat in search for fish or frogs. The food brought together at the parties isn't necessarily limited to these items, but they are the usual prospects. Rory Eschete, Sr. mentioned in his interview, "Everyone brings their own piece to pitch into the party." This means early mornings and missions out into nature to bring back fresh meat for the evening. For many men, like my father and his close friend Rodney Tregre, fishing and crabbing are something they've been doing most of their lives. My father will go down to Grand Isle before the weekend and fish all around the island catching various fish such as speckled trout, red fish, and flounder. He commented in his interview, "Being able to eat what you catch brings pride and appreciation of work." Fishing can be one of the most difficult hobbies known to man. "Fishing takes a lot of work because it's a man's sport," according to Rory. The fish can be biting in one spot and be gone within no time.. Usually by the time the weekend comes around and the rest of the family arrives at the camp, there's a promising amount of fish and crabs for everyone to share. The close friends of my dad and Rodney will bring hunted game such as deer, frog, or hog in exchange for the fresh seafood being shared. Rodney Tregre likes to call it, "Living off the land." That is basically how a normal weekend is prepared. The hard work and passion put into catching and cooking this food makes it taste all the better and everyone appreciates it more. It gives a whole different edge compared to just buying food from the grocery store.

Living in South Louisiana isn't something that should be taken for granted. We live among a unique people whose attitude and personality about life make it easy to come together and be one unified culture. A major part of our amazing southern culture is the bonding and socializing which can be found at camp get-togethers. For many people, including Rory, Rodney, and their families, much of this socialization is done at the camp in the form of barbecues, fish frys, seafood boils, and holiday parties. It's at these events when people come together to find new friends, make new connections, and form stronger bonds that will last a lifetime. Everyone helps one another out and takes care of each other. An amazing aspect that was brought to my attention at Rodney Tregre's camp was a term they called "team-building." Rodney has been working for Chevron off-shore for most of his life and has met many friends through the business. Working off-shore is rough labor and requires hours of long stressful work. Most of these men work shifts consisting of fourteen days offshore then fourteen days home. These

fourteen days home are the most appreciated periods of time. Rodney and many of his friends use his camp as a way to get together and bond by enjoying the outdoors, relaxing, and relieving stress from the duties of their jobs. "We've got men from Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana who work with me at Chevron all at the camp," says Rodney. By fishing, cooking, and socially drinking on the island, these men endure the hard pressure put upon their shoulders by the real world. They use this time "team-building" as a way to bond and overcome the anxieties brought upon them by their job. These events at the camp consist of long nights with storytelling and moral support. It's this camaraderie formed by working together that holds the men firm and able to live their lives moving in a positive direction. For many people this is considered socializing and making new friends, but in our Cajun culture and at the camp, it has a much higher meaning that holds close to our hearts. Another great example of friendship made by the camp is the relationship between Rory Eschete and David Kramer. They met through Rodney at the camp and have done each other many favors ever since. Rory explained, "David Kramer, an electrical engineer, helped rewire the electrical equipment on my boat, so now I know how the power works and can fix it on my own." This is just one of the examples of their unique favors. My father takes David fishing and does other things for him which is all part of the giving in a friendly relationship. These examples of favors and exchanges can be found in every corner of our culture and they make our way of life so rewarding. It is at that camp where most of these bonds, connections, favors, and friendships are made which last a lifetime.

So now that I look back at the research that has been done, my attention has been brought to the fact that we have an amazing culture that not too many others around the world can compete with. For many people in our area, the camp is one of the primary locations for the sharing of our culture. It offers a place to relax and escape from reality. At the camp, we can fish, hunt, cook, eat, socialize, and rest. All of these activities define our culture. The camp in South Louisiana culture is a symbol of unity and escape for many people because we rely on it to meet new people, to enjoy our weekends, and to forget about the pressures of reality long enough to catch our breath. For us, social gatherings bring together families and friends to a level unique to this area. The most important aspect of our culture would have to be how resourceful it is. At the camp, all family and friends come together and work to make it an enjoyable time. The camp has proven in life and on paper to be one of the most essential and enjoyable keys to our life and Cajun culture.

Dogs and their Hunters (Jamie Hymel)

Jamie Hymel

English 112 – Nicholls State University

November 9, 2011

It is 5:00 am. Excitement is the only thing that holds heavy eyelids open for two men as they shuffle around the kitchen to get coffee. Sitting at the dining table, I can feel myself catching the men's as I anticipate our morning's activities. Ever so patiently, the elder man slips on camouflage coveralls over a matching thermal shirt. On this winter morning, the chill of the air sinks down to his bones, making his already aching legs all that more painful. Nevertheless, this does not hinder his excitement.

Through the closed patio doors, I can hear the muffled barks of three Beagle pups that seem to share our excitement. As we get closer to our departure, I aid the younger man in squeezing the squirming dogs into homemade metal transporter kennels that we secure into the back of his truck. Then, we load the cab of the truck with rubber Lacross boots, three shotguns of various gauges, backpacks filled with basic supplies, and multiple boxes of ammunition. Now we are ready. We make our way through the thick fog of the still dark morning down the ever-winding River Road. What seems like an eternity later, but in reality is only about thirty minutes, we unload everything from the truck onto two all terrain vehicles. As we secure our supplies, our excitement is still growing. You can hear it in the dogs' bark. You can feel it in the brisk air as the wind hits your face. You can see it on the worn faces of the two men. The feeling is unexplainable and undeniable.

On one of the all terrain vehicles, we load the transporter kennel that is housing the dogs along with a backpack filled with supplies. With the gun carefully slung over his strong back, the old man carefully climbs on. On the other all terrain vehicle, there are two backpacks secured with bungee cords. The younger man's gun is secured in the gun boot mounted to the right side of the all terrain vehicle. I drive the all terrain vehicle with my shotgun slung over my shoulder as the younger man sits side-saddle behind me. We lead the way to open the gates onto our private property so the elder man does not have to struggle with the locks.

After another thirty minutes and what, in Louisiana ,is considered a freezing four-wheeler ride, we arrive at our hunting spot, a somewhat manicured area along power line poles in the middle of the woods. Our excitement is now at its peak. We let the dogs out and the excitement of their bark mimics the excitement in the men's faces. Then, you can see it. The instant bond between several dogs and two grown men.

This evident bond sparked my interest. The two men I was hunting with were my dad and grandfather; two people I see on a regular basis. However, the excitement we share during a hunt, and the bond they share with these dogs is something many people, even other family members, cannot seem to comprehend. For this reason, in the following paper, I will further explore the bond between South Louisiana hunters and their dogs. I will nterviewed a few avid hunters who own dogs, and I will be participated in the training of some of these dogs to see what builds these bonds.

All the most important things about life in South Louisiana are different than that of any other culture. Many residents would argue that it is all around better. Our culture puts its unique touch on every aspect, from our landscape, to our food, traditions, people, and even our relationships. An online dictionary defines a relationship as "an emotional or other connection between people" ("Relationship"). In South Louisiana, like everything else, our definition of a relationship differs. We believe that a relationship can go past that of human to human contact. To us, a relationship can be the special bond shared between a person and his or her dog. Dogs have a very significant role in Southern Louisiana culture. While we are not the only culture that has close bonds with animals, this bond is obvious in residents' yards, homes, and even artwork. Dogs can be pets, hunting companions, or according to some hunters, if they are trained well enough, they can be both. Either way, when you observe a hunter and his or her dog, the bond is apparent. Like any other relationship, the dog and hunter show the highest respect for one another. This respect is taught from when the dog is very young.

A hunting dog's behavior is a direct correlation of how the dog is trained. One of the hunters I interviewed was Leroy, a seventy- six year old resident of a small town in South Louisiana, who has been rabbit hunting since the age of twelve. I know Mr. Leroy personally, and usually he is a man of few words. However, he was beyond eager to talk about hunting dogs. There was a passion in his eyes, a spark in his voice, and an eagerness as he offered me an abundance of information. The first thing Mr. Leroy told me was, "The trick to successfully training a rabbit dog is encouragement." He said, "It is important to bring the dogs out as often as possible to a spot where you are positive they have rabbits. Then, encourage them." Mr. Leroy stressed the important wrong word of encouragement as I interviewed him. According to him, Beagles are already bred to hunt. It is in their blood. Over time, their senses have adapted to make them able trackers. Mr. Leroy added, "It is the hunter's job to let them know what they are supposed to be hunting." As mentioned before, Mr. Leroy has been hunting since he was twelve, and over the last few decades, he has had over twenty-five dogs, training half of them. At any given time, including presently, Mr. Leroy will own a pack of rabbit dogs. According to him, a good pack can be made up of three very good dogs. He described a "good dog" as, "A dog that will run the rabbit until you either kill it, it goes into a burrow, or you take the dog off the trail to go home. Each dog will possess qualities that positively affect the pack overall. A healthy rabbit dog can live a life span of approximately ten years, assuming there are no accidents." By "accidents" Mr. Leroy referred to accidental shootings and dogs getting lost. While there is not much you can do for a fatally wounded K-9, if a dog is lost, Mr. Leroy said, "A dedicated hunter will spend the night looking for their dog. No hunter ever wants to lose a good dog." Not only is losing a dog a monetary loss, hunters are also losing a companion, and good dogs are hard to replace. When you replace one dog from a phenomenal pack, it very seldom works out the same. Even if the new dog is a really good hunter, the pack has already learned to work together, and the differences between dogs can negatively affect their performance.

According to Beau, Mr. Leroy's forty-year-old son, training rabbit dogs is more of a practice. He supported his dad's thoughts about Beagles being bred to track, and since they are already able to do this, you need to practice. Practice makes perfect. Although they make this process seem very simplistic, it can also be challenging. Beau said. "The most challenging part is that you donate a lot of time to your dogs. You will not know if all of your efforts are worth it until the season opens and you can actually take the dogs along on a hunt." Likewise, there is a huge pay off. Beau believes that a rabbit hunter can measure his success in how well his dogs are able to run rabbits during a hunt.

After discussing the training process, Beau went on to tell be the basics of hunting dogs. Beau has been rabbit hunting with his father, family, and friends since the ripe age of five. He has been using dogs all of this time. "All of the dogs were bred with some Beagle in them, but not many of them were full bred. Most would consist of a mixture between Beagle, Black and Tan, and Blue Tick Hounds," Beau said. "At the time, this was all we had access to, and like a pure bred Beagle, these dogs were bred to track, too." In the past thirty-five years, Beau has had approximately eighteen to twenty rabbit dogs and has trained at least five of those.

Beau's co-worker, Paul, has been rabbit hunting for the last thirty-three years. He started hunting with his grandpa when he was about eleven years old. He says, "I always loved rabbit hunting and continue this tradition even today." He, like many other hunters, has always hunted with dogs. However, unlike the interviewees prior to him, Paul is very specific about the type of dogs he uses. "I use full bred Beagles to rabbit hunt. They also have a mild temper. I mostly use female Beagles over the years because they tend to handle and listen better than males," adds Paul. In addition, he says the advantage of using the short-legged Beagle is that they are able to easily navigate under the Briar to find rabbits that are nesting. In the past three decades, Paul has had close to one hundred rabbit dogs and has trained all of them. He says that he can usually get about six or seven seasons out of a healthy dog, which is six to seven years. In addition, Beagles have a strong nose and are able to track rabbits that many other breeds cannot.

Paul was able to describe his version of the training process for me. He said, "I start taking the puppies to the training pen around six months old to let them play while I entice them to walk up on the rabbits in the nest. When the rabbit takes off, a lot of the time the puppy will tend to run the other way because it is scared. I keep doing this until the puppy realizes what she is looking for. Once her Bubble has popped, which means she will bark a few times and trails the rabbit, it gets easier. I keep taking the puppy to the pen until she is running with her nose down and not looking by sight for the rabbit. When she does this, I remove her from the pen and she never goes back. Then I take the one puppy, along with one or two other dogs to track until she learns what she is doing. It is never a good idea to put dogs in a pack of four or more dogs. When you do this, it puts too much pressure on a young dog. She will have a tendency to bark out of place when the older dogs are barking. This is called 'me too.' If this happens, it means she is just running with the other dogs, mimicking what they do, instead of tracking on her own. She will not really grasp the concept. The most challenging thing about this process is keeping young dogs focused and not letting them engage in bad habits, such as running off the trail." To Paul, the rewarding part of this process is not how many rabbits he "bags." To him, the reward is hearing a good pack of dogs "sing sweet music" until they are almost out of hearing then knowing they have the ability to circle the rabbit and bring it back to his direction.

Paul's opinion on packs reflected Mr. Leroy's. He said a good dog is very hard to replace. "It is like links in a chain, when the strand is broken, it takes time to fix," Paul said, "Each dog becomes dependent on the other over time. They learn each other's habits." Sometimes it may take him a whole season to get his pack back once he loses one of his best dogs.

I had the privilege of accompanying Beau on one of many trainings of a potential hunting pack. While in the Bonnet Carre Spillway, there was one thing that really caught my attention. Beau brought along three dogs for a training session, two young hunters, Roux and Copper, and one more experienced dog, Pepper. I assumed that Roux and Copper would get the most attention because of the encouragement that Mr. Leroy had talked about. This, however, was not the case. It seemed to me that Pepper consumed the majority of Beau's attention. I later learned

that the division of attention during training is completely strategic. Pepper already knows what she is doing. For that reason, Beau encourages her in hopes that the puppies would learn by example. While this tactic can potentially be very beneficial, like Paul said, there are some downfalls. I was able to witness these as well. Roux began barking for the simple reason that she heard Pepper barking. The only time a dog should bark is when they are following the trail of a rabbit. A dog barks to let the hunter know that they are tracking a rabbit. It was obvious to Beau that Roux's barking was just a "me too" like Paul was talking about and with this he would scold her with a, "Hush Roux!"

While Beagles are used by the majority of rabbit hunters, when it comes to duck hunting, Labrador Retrievers are the dog of choice. Labrador Retrievers, or Labs for short, are substantially larger than Beagles but are still bred for tracking. Labs have an approximate shoulder height of two feet and weigh anywhere from fifty-five to eighty pounds (American). According to one duck hunter, Curtis, this preference proves to be true. Duck hunters tend to have a smaller number of hunting dogs in their lifetime because unlike rabbit hunters, they only use one dog at a time. Curtis has been hunting for eighteen years and has only been using dogs for half that time. In the past nine years, he has had two dogs including his current companion. When asked why he used Labs, Curtis told me, "The lab because they are very loyal, easy to train, and born to retrieve." He has trained both of his hunting dogs.

Tracking, like Beagles, and retrieving, like Labs, are two different concepts. Therefore, the training process is different as well. When asked, Curtis said, "To train a duck dog, all one really has to do is train the basics: sit, stay, and heal. The dog, by nature, knows how and wants to fetch. Once you have the basics down, the dog will listen to you while you hunt." To get them used to fetching birds, Curtis attaches the wing of a bird to the dog's favorite fetch toy. Once the dog is able to fetch that with ease, they are ready. He, like the other hunters I have interviewed, knows a dog is not a necessity to hunting. However, he says, "Using a dog makes me a more ethical hunter." In the past nine years using dogs, he has had a substantially smaller amount of lost game. He estimates that he is now able to retrieve about ninety- seven percent of the game he kills. He also goes on to say that the company of a dog when hunting is unmatchable.

As you can see, each South Louisiana hunter has his own set of standards and beliefs when it comes to hunting with dogs. One common aspect I have noticed though is that the relationship between each of these men and his dog goes past that of a work relationship. There is a respect there, a companionship, a bond. While hunting in numbers is enjoyable, each hunter has a special place in his heart for his best hunting companion. The relationship is irreplaceable, and any hunter in South Louisiana can tell you several stories about their best dog.

As their noses hit the ground, the bond between these working animals and my dad and grandpa who are standing next to me is almost tangible. The dogs are off, dodging left and right through the briar patches occasionally whining with excitement. On either side of the briar, my dad and grandpa stay parallel of the dogs as they slowly drive the all terrain vehicles down the power line. My dad stands with one foot on the footrest and his other leg curled on the seat, encouraging his companions in a language all their own. In the distance, I can hear my grandpa echo these words of encouragement and one of the dogs begins to howl, almost as if she is replying. Adrenaline starts rushing, because I know this is the very reason we are out here. And there, about fifteen yards in front of the all terrain vehicle, a rabbit is frantically making its way back to the woods after being jumped by the ever-excited pup. Pow! The dogs come scurrying out of the brush, tails wagging as fast as ever. As my dad goes to retrieve his kill, the dogs

follow. When he bends down to pick up the rabbit, he pats the dog on the head, and I hear him say, "Good job, Pep!" Both he and the dog are completely satisfied. Now, I am assured, the online dictionary was wrong. Bonds go further than that of just human to human contact. One of the most important bonds in South Louisiana is between a hunter and his dog.

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Bonds on the Bayou (Lanney McMann)

Lanney McMann
English 112 – Nicholls State University
November 14, 2011

Deep in the Louisiana bayou, in the late summer and fall, a special kind of hunter can be found in the bayous, swamps, and marshes. As I sit on the deck of a boat, I don't panic as another boat paddles by during a dark night on the bayou; it is only froggers trying to catch Louisiana bullfrogs during this short-lived season. I can faintly see them as they slowly creep up to where they hope there is a large number of frogs. Battery-powered light produces a sea of golden glowing frog eyes on the bank; this is exactly what he is looking for. As I continue to watch the two froggers, the man with the light begins reaching on to shore to grab a blinded frog. There is only movement for a second as the fishermen returns his body to the boat with a frog in hand. This game of hide-and-go-seek is a special combination of hunting and fishing that some Louisiana natives enjoy thoroughly. If someone is not from this area, catching frogs may seem like an odd, or far-fetched, ritual but, here they are caught and eaten like fine cuisine.

I am studying the relationship of frogging and natives in the Louisiana culture. Frogging is not a widely practiced method of catching food, but here, going out on a dark boat with close friends or family is a tradition that many still carry on, but it is not just the sport involved with catching this green hopping game that lures in froggers; it is also the chance to spend valuable time with the ones they love.

My main focus here is about people bonding while catching, handling, and cooking frog. Everyone that I interviewed mentioned the importance of people around them when frogging; what caught my attention was how they all explained the difficulty of frogging but said time passed carelessly when talking to a buddy or an old friend. Not only do people catch frogs together, but they also clean and cook them together. This is all a part of the bonding process; families learn how to work together and appreciate what they do for each other more readily.

On a great night of frogging, the numbers may reach up to three hundred frogs. Pop is a veteran game chaser; he says his favorite part about going out frogging is going with an old buddy and catching something you're going to eat together. "You talk about all kinds of stuff," he says when I asked why bringing an old friend was fun. He also said that someone can go frogging on their own, but it is harder, and he doesn't know why someone would pass up the opportunity to go out with one of your close friends.

As I talked to three unique people, I learned that there is a love of nature in Louisiana natives. Nature is large part of these people and they cherish it as much as they can, but they also use it to show how much they appreciate people around them. If you are not good to someone, they normally will not invite you to go out and fish with them, nor will they invite you to eat the food that they have worked so hard to catch and prepare. This is a rich culture, and frogging is a rich bonding ritual in all phases of the activity.

I have three interviewees who are all different ages who were more than willing to talk about their experiences with frogging . Pop is an older man who grew up in Vacherie, Louisiana. He is an easy going man who loves his game and fishing. PJ is a younger man around the age of

twenty-one who also is a true game chaser; he was born and raised in Vacherie as well. The last person on my interview list is a man by the name of John who is not near as much of an animal chaser, but will go with his friends to have fun on these adventures.

As I listened and watched all three of these people talk, I knew they had each experienced this unique activity in different ways. Even though every story happened more than six or seven years ago, he can remember them almost perfectly. These trips have had such an effect on them, that they may never forget. The people who accompanied them were their best friends on the trips. I cannot see any better way to spend time together because you do not have to get caught up in modern fast-paced life. It is a break from reality like a breeze of fresh air.

I sat down to have a talk with the man I knew could tell me everything I needed to know about frogging. This man's name is Mr. Eric, or Pop. He is a Vacherie native who is in love with the outdoors and who told me all about his family outings as a child and about his own trips as he got older. Pop was between the age of six and ten when his father took him out for his first frogging trip. He always stayed in the Vacherie area when he went out to catch frogs, so the first time he went was no different. When I asked Pop if he likes to go frogging in many areas, he said, "Mostly the Vacherie area, within ten miles of the house or less."

Pop says he catches frogs “very carefully,” because at night on a canal bank there are bushes, and animals live under these bushes but not all of them are safe. He said another difficult part is "other times in a canal you have to use a jig and reach under the briars." He explained to me how close someone must be to the bank in order to catch a frog by saying, "You have to be right up close to them."

After a long four to five hours of searching for frogs, catching them, and killing them, Pop calls it a night. Pop collects his equipment and heads back to land. The frogs are counted up and iced to keep them fresh until it is time to skin and clean them, but what does one do with frogs after they are cleaned? Well as Pop would say, "Eat it of course."

He is not only an avid frogger, Pop is a deer, duck, turkey, and squirrel hunter, but he is most dedicated to deer hunting. He knew what he was saying did not have much to do with my particular topic, but he explained to me that the food he brings in helps him feed his family. The food he kills and brings home saves money out of his family's budget, which makes it easier to be sure other things are taken care of. I see this as a crucial reason he chases all these types of game. Family affects almost everything behind what he does.

My next interviewee is called PJ. The first question for PJ was what is the hardest part about frogging, "There's actually catching the frogs, and then there is fighting the bugs," he said.He added that the most frogs he ever caught was 100-150 frogs, but what would he call a bad night? He said trying to fish your friend out the water is a bad night.

PJ will sometimes ask his girlfriend and friends if they want to go out frogging with him because he loves spending time bonding with the people close to him. He tends to go to the camp as much as possible and bring as many people as he can. He told me he loves it out there (Referring to the Louisiana bayou areas and his families camp).

PJ likes frog, but he does not know if he prefers to eat frog over other animals that he can hunt and kill. He does not eat the whole frog all the time because he believes trying to eat the back and the breast of a small frog is a waste of time. PJ does not sell the frogs that he catches. He saves them in the freezer to eat later in the year because frogging season is only a month long

in the summer and fall. (There is no special license required to frog, but you do have to have a standard Louisiana fishing license to legally catch them.)

PJ decided to explain to me the strangest thing that happened to him out on a boat. He said, "well, I almost sunk a boat.." One of his friends had fallen out of the boat, and someone in the boat grabbed his friend to stop him from falling in the water, but made the boat off balance and fill with water. Another time, he said he had mistaken a very large spider for a frog, "Turns out big spiders look just like frogs."

Big John is not much like my last two interviewees because he does not mind frogging at all, but he does not eat frog meat. He is an example of the hit-or-miss opinion towards frog meat. He is in it for the fun with his friends and family when he goes frogging. Big John said he went on his first frogging trip when he was seventeen with his close friends from school. They fished in an area near home because there were plenty of areas areas to fish in.

It was time to move on to the question he was waiting for: what is the hardest part about frogging? "You have to get right on top of them, and watch out for snakes and alligators." I probably couldn't have said that better myself because he totally agrees with Pop about watching out for Louisiana's natural inhabitants.

He remembered his first frogging trip well and decided to tell me about it. He said that night they went out and caught about fifty frogs. "That was a bad night, see on a good night you can catch a hundred and something frogs." He also told me they had never sold any of the frogs they caught. He said he can't understand how a frog can get that big "I mean, what do [frogs] eat? Flies." He never explained to me why he did not care to eat frog, but maybe it is just one of those things to him.

What part of these amphibious creatures does one eat? Well, most people here in Louisiana eat the legs only. My oldest interviewee said he eats the frog's breast, back, and legs, but PJ, a younger man, says it really all depends on the size of the frog he is looking at when he decides what to keep.

Here in Louisiana there are two types of people: people who hate eating frog meat and the individuals who love eating it. I have never seen someone who said they only liked it, or did not care for it but would eat it. Two of my three interviewed volunteers love to eat the frogs they catch, but one, John, said no, he did not enjoy eating "something like that."

Cooking a frog is normally done in an environment surrounded by people that are close to you. The reason being, the fishers who caught the frogs are now sharing their catch with family and friends. This preparation of food turns into a sort of festivity with music and laughter.

Louisiana restaurants are also known for serving fried frog legs, but all of the people I interviewed agreed that the frog legs in restaurants would not be the same as a home cooked meal. I asked a food provider for a Louisiana restaurant where they get there frogs; they said they sell Florida Everglade frogs by the case. They are $300 per case for restaurant use. Overall, wouldn't a gathering of a whole family around a freshly caught and prepared meal be better?

Why Are Alligators Hunted? (Nicole Perry)

Nicole Perry

November 27, 2012

Dr. Walton / English 102 2T

It was a hot September morning and I was sitting on a blue 5 gallon bucket just waiting to see what size alligator would be on this next line. Alligator hunting was a scene that I never imagined myself in, ever. I came home exhausted from having to wake up so early that day, and uploaded the pictures to Facebook from my first alligator hunt immediately. Not even fifteen minutes later a girl commented on one of my pictures. Her exact words were "Why kill and skin an alligator? For what good purpose does it serve killing an animal?" I sat there trying to think of something smart enough to say back to her, but nothing came to mind. So then, even I wondered why people hunt and kill alligators.

As far back as 200 years ago alligators were being hunted down and killed. Back then though, not only was their skin a major reason for killing them, the oil from these animals were used to grease the cotton mills and steam engines. People eventually started complaining and saying that the alligator leather was not durable, so the demand for the skin went down. In the beginning of the 1900's New York, New Jersey, and Europe began using commercial tanning processes which made the alligator skin more durable, therefore, increasing the demand again. With the demand so high, the alligators started disappearing and the population decreased dramatically. Soon after the decrease in population, the alligator seasons were closed, but only to be reopened in all parishes in 1982. Still today, there are many reasons that people hunt and kill 'gators.

The valuable skin is the main reason that alligators are hunted.. The fishermen have to be very careful with the alligator skin making sure not to poke any holes in it while skinning. After the alligator is skinned, it is put back inside the boat and is covered up with something so the sun does not hit the hide directly. The same thing is done while the alligator skin is in the back of the truck being transported to the alligator farm. Alligator skin has to be very well taken care of to be able to make leather products and accessories because it is worth so much. This year, though, alligator prices went down because the demand is not high, especially for wild alligator hides. The wild alligator hides are damaged and are not perfect so they are worth a lot less. 5 footers sell for about $5 per foot, 6 footers sell for about $8 per foot, and 7-10 footer sell for about $12-$15 per foot. "The average wild gator is about six feet long, which brings in $48 to the hunter" (Rosa).You need to make sure people know where the information in the earlier parts of the paragraph are coming from.

There are many things that alligator skin can be made into, with shoes being the main accessories. A pair of natural alligator boots on amazon sells for about $4,000. CITE – how do you know this? They come in many different colors and styles. Handbags are another example, but are very expensive. Wallets can be less costly and come in many different styles and colors also. On Amazon there are ipad cases made of alligator leather that run around $600. Briefcases, jewelry, jackets, watch bands and even some furniture can be made from alligator leather. The list can go on and on. Even though the skin is the main reason, it is not the only.

The adrenaline rush the hunters get when they kill such a huge, powerful animal is also a big reason. Groups like. Louisiana Hunters Inc. will take adverturers on wprivate land to

alligator hunt for about $6,000 (CITE). Jason Streeval thinks it's worth the cost: "With the high numbers of alligators in the Southeast, I would recommend alligator hunting to any sportsman looking for an adrenaline rush" (Streeval, 1). New paragraph I was even able to witness this first hand. For an observation I had to do for my last writing assignment, I took it upon myself to get into a boat with a fisherman and went alligator hunting myself. The anticipating feeling that I got whenever we pulled up to an alligator line was unexplainable, having no clue how big of an animal was on the other end of the line. Whenever the fisherman would pull up the line and the alligator would be jumping and fighting was such an adrenaline rush. He would take his gun out and point it at the alligator waiting for the perfect moment to shoot it right in the special spot. While the alligator is a very huge animal there is only one spot that can really kill him, "behind the head and in front of the shoulders" (Clemons, 1). I even got to witness the fisherman and his wife skin the alligator. After it was skinned, the fisherman's wife started to take all of the meat off.

The meat of an alligator can also be used, although it is illegal to sell personally, it is worth about $10/kg (Heykoop). In a Texas Monthly article, alligator hunter Donnie Broussard says that to him "it always tastes like a thousand pound lizard that lived in the mud" (Morthland, 4). Many people that I have asked whether or not they like 'gator meat have said no, but some people love it. Alligator meat can be put into many things, including sauce picante, casserole, and gumbo. Frying the alligator meat seems to be the most popular, though. The skin and meat are the main reasons these animals are killed, but mostly everything else on the alligator can be used.

For example, I learned firsthand about alligator souvenirs. The first weekend of October 2012 I had family come down to visit from Massachusetts and of course they wanted to see the famous Louisiana swamps. We took a tour at Zam's Swamp Tours in Kraemer, Louisiana. During the tour, the tour guide was saying how he was an alligator hunter, and when he is finished skinning the alligators and taking off the meat, he makes souvenirs with the leftovers. For example, he takes the teeth of the alligator and he drills holes in them to make necklaces and earrings. In the gift shop there were alligator feet made into backscratchers and key chains. Also, in some Cajun stores you can go into and see big alligator heads. The "estimated revenue from miscellaneous alligator parts to be $4 per head, 50 cents per foot, and one cent per tooth (at 50 teeth per alligator), with 35% of all such parts sold" (Heykoop). I also have about 20 teeth from one of the alligators that the fisherman had caught when we went alligator hunting.

Finally, alligators are killed to protect humans and domesticated animals. especially in Louisiana and Florida where the population is so large.. "Alligators range from central Texas eastward to North Carolina. Louisiana has the highest alligator population currently approaching 2 million" (General Alligator Information). They like to stay in lakes, ponds, canals, bayous, rivers, and swamps, but t but when alligators are found in people's yards, they pose a huge threat to those who have small animals and children. While it is very rare to get attacked by an alligator it sometimes happens. In an article written by Julienne Gage, she says Agent Lindsey Hord stated "I think you are more likely to be killed by a falling vending machine than by an alligator" (Gage). The alligator's jaws are more powerful than a hyena, a lion, or even a shark! They also do something called the death roll. "When it grabs very large prey the alligator has to drag it into the water and drown it so the alligator will use its advantage in the water and it's own body weight to roll over and over again to drown its prey. ?CITE" The death roll is "also how an

alligator will separate limbs from the torso of large prey twisting and turning until it can rip off the limb or chunks of its victim into the section the alligator can swallow" (Crocket).

There were two teens from Florida who were attacked within a 5 day span. One teenage boy was swimming with his friends when an alligator came out of nowhere and attacked him. He put up a big fight and survived the attack, but he did lose the bottom half of his right arm. The other teenage boy came out with both arms, and barely any marks, but the alligator jumped out of the water and left scratches on his chest (Dolac). Some Most victims survive, but not all.

On November 13, 2007 a man running from the police was killed by a 9-foot 3-inch alligator, the police even heard the man scream before he was taken under the water. An 82 year old male was attacked on September 11, 2001 while walking his dog, and bled to death after his leg had been bitten off in Florida. Alexandria Murphy, a two year old who had "wandered away from her fenced in backyard was killed 700 feet from her home on Lake Cannon in Polk County, Florida. " These are just a few examples, but in the 2000's there were 13 deaths total due to alligator attacks, in the 1990's there were 3, in the 1980's there were 4, and in the 1970's there were 3.

For every alligator hunted down, there is always a reason behind why they are being hunted. Whether it is for the meat, the skin, for protection, or just to say it was done, the leftovers of the alligator can always be used. Do they use the leftovers when an alligator is killed for protection? I don't think so.

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A Day in the Blind (Grant Rodrigue)

Grant Rodrigue

English 102 2T

Dr. Shana Walton

10/4/2012

There is a common misconception that hunters' only goal is to kill something every hunt. Duck hunting is more than just getting the kill, it is a way of life. Hunting is something that can be taught and passed down from generation to generation. For the people I interviewed and observed, hunting season was the highlight of their year. The whole year prior to duck season is spent fantasizing about the cold wind blowing on their face, the sound of empty shotgun shells hitting the deck of the boat, and the sight of dog diving into the water to retrieve their kill. Some of these people even work around duck season. They take off for the whole season because they love it that much.

Freezing cold weather, tiny boats, guns, and dogs are all things you will find on a duck hunt. A vast majority of people duck hunt yearly. There are even televisions shows about duck hunting. Getting ready for hunting starts way before the season starts. Many people go scout where they will be hunting. They also start preparing everything for the hunt. This is not an easy task. There are many things that must be done. I observed a group while they were preparing for the season. It's pretty amazing to watch them prepare for it. They all have a certain job they do. One person gets the decoys together while the other one makes sure the boat has everything it needs in it.

There is literally a boat load of decoys. Most of them are mallards or hens, but there are some other types of birds mixed in. "It helps lure in more ducks," said one of the hunters while he fixed a decoy. As I am looking at the boat I see that is totally camouflaged. It is painted green, brown, and black. They also have some branches and other vegetation to help further camouflage it. I asked why there is a need for so much camouflage, and the eldest hunter replied, "Ducks aren't stupid. When they migrate through here they know were out to get them. They can pick up even the smallest glint from the boat. So we have to make sure everything is covered up."

They are very meticulous about all of this. When they put together their blind bags it is like a life or death situation. In a way it really is. A blind bag carries basic survival items like a flashlight and some matches. It also carries the hunters' ammunition that they will use during the hunt. Another thing that they really care about is cleaning their guns. It is one thing every hunter must learn to do.

Cleaning your gun is crucial part of preparing for a hunt. Since most of the hunting is done on the water the gun must be cleaned regularly. If the gun is not cleaned regularly it will begin to rust very quickly. The more experienced hunters know little tips and tricks that make cleaning it easier. They are more than happy to show their fellow hunters these tricks to help them out.

As I was watching the gun getting cleaned, a loud noise startled me. It sounds like there is a duck in the room with us. I turn around to see one of the young hunters testing out his duck calls. He has a lanyard around his neck with five or six calls hanging from it. He blows in each

call one by one testing them. To me, I find it almost annoying. It sounds loud and is obnoxious. But the other hunters love it. They are giving him tips on how to get the perfect sound out of each call.

As I'm listing to them give tips to their friends and talk about previous hunts, I begin to realize that they do not just go out there to kill ducks. They would rather make great memories and take in all of the outdoors than kill their limit of ducks... Also, it is a great bonding experience between a father and a son. One person I interviewed said most of his most fond memories were hunting with his father. "I know some of the best memories I will have with my son will be out here hunting side by side with him," he said.

To some people, hunting is just a hobby. But for most of the duck hunters it is a lifestyle. They live and work just to hunt in the fall. They attend banquets for the conservation of duck hunting. They pass on what they learn to others who want to enjoy it too. Duck hunting is just as serious as their jobs.

"See You Later, Alligator!" (Hannah Waguespack)

Hannah Waguespack

English 112 – Nicholls State University

November 7, 2011

The sun was out, yet the air was brisk, not humid as it usually is in south Louisiana. The warmth of the morning sun beat down on the young hunter's face, beginning what would eventually become a sunburn. He didn't notice though because a light, cool breeze caressed his cheeks. During alligator season, putting on sunscreen was the very last thing on the young hunter's mind. No other word but perfection could be used to describe the weather for the father-son adventure that the hunters were about to uphold.

Not one ripple dared to upset the water, except for where the boat was passing. Being surrounded by the green and brown mossy trees felt better than home. As the motor of the boat paddled on with a rhythmic beat, so did the hunters' heart rates as they were getting closer and closer to hopefully the first big gator of the season. The boat reached the destination of the line, and the father grinned with a sense of pride as he saw that the once baited line was now in the water. The boat crept slowly, getting close enough to the line so that the father could grasp it. Tugging on the line, the father felt that the gator was a big one. The son's adrenaline told him to prepare to aim with his 9-millimeter gun. He needed to hit a quarter-sized spot on the back of the gator's head. Finally, the anticipated moment arrived when the father pulled the line to the surface. The beast was slow moving at first, but the second it met eye to eye with its predators, it forcefully sank back into the water. It was now time for the father to use all of his physical strength to force the gator back to the surface so that his son would be able to shoot the scaly, seven and a half foot guest. The sound of the gun could have made a turtle jump, but these men were used to it. Together they pulled their first catch into the boat and attached a tag onto the tail of the alligator. The father and son celebrated with a firm handshake, and they moved right along because they knew they still had a long day ahead of them.

After fulfilling their goal of seven tags for the day, preparing for tomorrow was the hunters' new incentive. As the son reached into the ice chest, the rotten smell of green chicken saturated the air surrounding the boat. The repulsiveness of the green chicken is indescribable with only words. The manliest of hunters are hesitant to touch it with bare hands. Although the chicken can trigger gag-reflexes in an instant, it is the hunters' best friend. To the gators, the chicken is the sweetest smelling, most mouth-watering treasure that they can sink their teeth into; however, it is their worst enemy. As the men ride around in the boat setting out each line, the son looks at his father with hopeful eyes, praying that tomorrow will be a day filled with big catches and filled tags.

When I first chose my subject, I thought alligator hunting was something Louisianans do just for fun, similar to hunting, fishing, or shrimping. Little did I know, alligator hunting is very different from any other outdoor recreation. I assumed that after catching alligators, hunters could do with them what they pleased; however, I was wrong. After interviewing two people, a nineteen-year-old alligator hunter named Alex and his father Mr. Carl, I discovered that alligator hunting is a major money making business. Although hunters and alligator companies take it very seriously, alligator hunting is also a form of bonding for most. In my field research, I

learned many different aspects of the culture that surprised me. In my ethnography, I will first describe the process of alligator hunting and the facts that every experienced alligator hunter knows. Second, I will talk about what happens to the alligator once it is caught since the hunters cannot keep their catches. I will also discuss the competiveness of alligator hunting and how members of the culture view other members. Finally, I will disclose why people hunt alligators throughout their lives and the common motivations of the group.

Alligator season has always been from August 31 to September 30. The climate at this time of the year is neither too hot nor too cold. If the weather is at either of these extremes, the alligators will hide out and will not bite as frequently. The slightest cool front after a tropical storm is perfect for alligator hunting, and this type of weather is usually when hunters catch the biggest alligators.

Before any hunting takes place, alligator hunters must either own or lease land to hunt on; it is not legal to hunt wherever you want. Mr. Carl said that most of his acquaintances lease land from an oil field company. Apache is the company he personally leases land from. Mr. Carl and Alex hunt mostly in Lake Boudreaux near their home in Chauvin, Louisiana. Every alligator season, hunters must get their licenses renewed by Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. To obtain a license in Louisiana, the hunter must provide his basic information, proof that he owns or leases property, and his hunting route. The license costs $25 for residents of Louisiana but $150 for non-residents ("Alligator Hunting in Louisiana: Alligator Hunting"). Depending on the lease, the company gives him a certain number of tags. Immediately after the alligator is caught, tags are to be attached approximately six inches from the end of the bottom side of the tail, and the tags must be locked in place. If tags are lost or stolen, they cannot be replaced; therefore, the hunter must take extra precaution to keep track of the number of tags he is given. If he cannot fill each tag by the end of the season, he is required to return the tags to the company within fifteen days ("Alligator Hunting Regulations Overview"). Mr. Carl and Alex usually receive seventy to eighty tags per hunting season. They drive out on the lake everyday until they fulfill their amount of given tags.

Once the legal business is complete, hunters can finally begin to do what they do best. To catch the gators, they put out lines with bait, which is usually green chicken. Green chicken is literally green chicken. It is rotten, smelly, extremely old chicken that is so vile that it is green in color. Alex said, "It's so gross that the worst part of hunting for me is hanging the bait. I don't like touching that stuff with my bare hands...the smell makes me gag." How high above the water the green chicken should hang can vary. The average height to hang the bait is approximately two and a half feet above the water. "My dad says it's better to hang the bait higher because the bigger alligators are able to reach it, but I think it's better to hang the bait lower because the big ones are too lazy to jump that high," Alex chuckled. He said it seems as though every time he hangs the bait low, he catches a big alligator. Alex and Mr. Carl will set anywhere from thirty to fifty lines everyday, but they will only expect to catch six to fifteen alligators in one day.

On the next morning, they come back to find the alligator attached to the line. They slowly pull the line and aim the gun to shoot the alligator on the correct spot—the back of the head, in the middle of the alligator's eyes. If they do not hit this spot perfectly, the skull can shatter, and pieces of it can fly in every direction, which is very dangerous. To shoot the alligator, Mr. Carl uses a 22-millimeter gun and Alex uses a 9-millimeter gun. Either of these guns can do the trick. After shooting and carrying the gator into the boat, they tape the alligator's mouth shut and attach

and lock a tag on its tail.

After the day is complete, they bring all of the alligators caught that day to Dularge, Louisiana, where the gators are sold to an alligator company. In Dularge, the buyers check for gender and length of the alligator. The longer the alligator, the more money one receives for catching it. For an alligator that is five to six feet long, Mr. Carl can receive $15 per foot. For a seven-footer, he can receive $18 per foot; therefore, as the size of the catches increase, the price of each foot increases. Mr. Carl and Alex completed their goal of seventy tags in seven days this year, so it was certainly a successful season for them.

After the hunters sell the alligators, the company skins the alligator, cuts the alligator, and sells the parts the different parts to the people of south Louisiana. Almost every single part of an alligator is used in some sort of way; therefore, not much of the alligator goes to waste. Alligator skin is remarkably valuable. The company must skin the alligator hide perfectly. Any holes or tears in the hide can lower the value of the skin. The skins are used to make boots, hats, vests, pants, purses, etc. Alex said that one time he met a man who was dressed in real alligator skin from head-to-toe. He laughed and said, "It was a sight to see." Other parts of the alligator such as the head are mounted and hung in people's homes, and the meat is sold for food. One might ask, why can't a hunter just keep the alligator and sell the parts himself? Keeping an alligator is illegal; the hunter makes an agreement to sell the alligator to an authorized company when he purchases his license. If a hunter wants to eat alligator meat or have a head mounted in his home, he has to buy these products just like everyone else.

Another aspect of the culture I found interesting was the competitiveness of the alligator hunting. Hunters tend to be extremely competitive towards other local hunters. They do not form camps like deer hunters and fishermen. Not too many people associate with each other inside the alligator-hunting world. Alligator hunters stay within their families. Mr. Carl and Alex have never hunted with anyone else but each other, uncles, and cousins. Mr. Carl's cousins were the people who first taught him how to hunt alligators when he was fourteen years old. Mr. Carl showed Alex the ropes when Alex was only ten years old. Recently, Mr. Carl allowed Alex to spread his wings and hunt without him. "I felt proud of myself...like my dad was trusting me to take on his job," Alex said. Each family wants to have the biggest and the best alligators. The biggest alligator that Alex and Mr. Carl have ever caught was 12 feet and 6 inches. The sport gets so competitive that some hunters do not want others to see what they catch, and they will even hunt on another hunter's property. Mr. Carl said, "There is a man that I always see trying to peek at the size and number of the gators we have to see if he is keeping up. He actually hunted on our land when he thought we weren't looking." Mr. Carl could actually call the police if he was competitive enough, but he said, "I don't like to cause trouble, and calling the police on him would only be stooping to is dirty level...I just let it go." Mr. Carl is not one of those competitive hunters; he is one of the few who prefer to hunt out of pure enjoyment.

The practical purpose of alligator hunting is to keep the alligator population under control; however, this is not the only thing that drives people to make alligator hunting one of the biggest parts of their lives. In the past, alligator hunting was not just a hobby; Mr. Carl "did it for a living...to survive." For most people today, it is still a way to make money, but not the main source of income. Mr. Carl works on boats at Lumcon, a research center, and Alex works at a machinery in Houma. Both say that alligators bring them together. Alligator hunting for Mr. Carl and Alex is a form of father-son bonding. It is a way for grandfathers, fathers, sons, daughters, uncles, and aunts in Louisiana to spend time together, and it usually runs in the family. If your

dad alligator hunts, you most likely alligator hunt too.

After completing my research, I have come to the realization that alligator hunting plays a bigger role in Louisiana culture than I previously assumed. Alligator hunting is vital in our economy because it gives money to individuals and various companies due to myriad products an alligator can provide. I also learned that the processes of alligator hunting, tagging, and selling are very in depth. Moreover, hunting is what keeps alligators from roaming around in people's backyards. Hunters are needed in our swampy area to keep the alligator population under control. Families of the south genuinely take pleasure in bonding through alligator hunting, while making extra money that benefits them too. I finally fully understand what alligator hunting means to people inside of the culture and, more importantly, to the people of south Louisiana.

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The Prize of the Hunt (Megan Yates)

Megan Yates

November 8, 2011

English 112 – Nicholls State University

It's 4 A.M. Big Tommy is shaking his son, little Tommy, awake. Little Tommy opens his eyes, and after a night's sleep on the cot at his hunting camp in Mississippi, he is extremely tired. He throws on his camouflage clothes, looking like a spitting image of his father. He grabs his gun, a 410 pump shotgun and follows his father to the four-wheeler outside. It's early January, and they are about to go on the first hunt of the season. They've spent numerous weekends prior to this day fixing up their stands and preparing the fields; they've planted seeds of grass and poured out piles of corn, trying to lure in the deer.

Geared up, but still freezing, the pair hop on the four-wheeler and prepare to follow the trails through the woods to their stand. They park behind a few trees and bushes and are forced to walk the rest of the way for fear of scaring away the deer with the roar of the four-wheeler. As they approach the stand, which rests high in the tree above, they slowly climb the ladder. When they reach the top, it is time to sit and wait. They have to be extremely quiet, or they will scare away the potential deer.

Sitting in a wooden stand for over an hour, the pair begins to watch the sun rise. After what feels like an eternity, the two hear a rustling of leaves. They look to their left and right, and finally spot it- a buck. Unsure of how many points it has, their adrenaline begins to rush. Twelve-year-old Little Tommy has never shot a deer before. He does as his father has taught him, lifts his gun and looks through the scope. When he's sure that he's going to hit the deer, he pulls the trigger and BOOM.

They watch the deer run off, and after a few minutes of looking around, they climb down from the stand. Neither is certain if the bullet has hit the deer or not. When they arrive at the spot where the deer was standing, they smile as they find the puddle of blood. They follow the trail, and sure enough, laying there is the biggest deer that either of them has ever seen, a 200 pound, 12-point buck.

As the two carry the deer to the four-wheeler, nothing can wipe the smile off of Little Tommy's face. Not only is he excited that he has shot his first deer, but he can't wait to have its head stuffed and mounted in his room. Little Tommy is thinking about all of the questions his friends will ask and all of the stories he will be able to share. Not only will this mounted deer be a way to tell his story but it will also be a sort of trophy for him to hang in his room. This mounted deer will forever be a trophy, or a prize, that every time Little Tommy looks at, he can remember the time he went hunting with his father and shot his first deer.

For my ethnography, I decided to write about exactly that -- the prize of the hunt. I wanted to find out what the point of mounting a deer and keeping it in your living room is. In order to do so, I needed to understand the point of hunting; why did people start hunting and what is so special about it. In this paper, I am going to talk about the many different reasons people have for starting and continuing to hunt. I'm going to briefly discuss a few reasons for

hunting, such as for recreation and for the meat. Besides that, I am going to talk about the art of taxidermy and how it is actually done. Lastly, I am going to talk about what the purpose of having a mounted deer in someone's home is and what mounting a deer means to the hunter. Before discussing the tradition of mounting one's kill, I want to outline briefly the three main reasons my interviewees had for hunting at all: for the tradition that it holds, for the peace of it all, and for the food that it can provide.

Why hunt? Most hunters struggle to find an adequate answer for this. They say it's just a part of their lives. For many hunters, it is a family tradition. A father takes his son hunting, and then when that son has children of his own, he takes them hunting, and this goes on for generations and generations. When I asked my eight-year-old cousin why he hunts, he responded, "Because Uncle Johnny showed me how." Children grow up following the leads of their parents, uncles, cousins, etc. And in South Louisiana that "following" is all about hunting for most father-son combos.

When I asked the hunters why they enjoyed hunting, almost every one gave me the exact same answer -- for the peace and quiet. One hunter, Colby, said, "I can get away from everything that is on my mind and just enjoy myself." Another hunter, Lydia, said with all smiles, "It's like meditating. And the anticipation of the buck as your prize is like a thrill, a rush." To these and other hunters, hunting is very peaceful. While an outsider might see it as getting up at an insane hour of the morning to sit in a freezing cold stand in the middle of the woods and waste your time, true hunters see it as not only a time to be by themselves and think but also a time to enjoy the peace and quiet, and possibly get to see and kill a huge animal.

Besides enjoying the activity of hunting, some people hunt for the actual meat. After speaking with all of the hunters that I did, every single one of them said that they eat the meat. Lydia talked about how she cooks many of the animals that she kills, although mainly deer and rabbit. She went on further to talk about the recipes that her Pawpaw gave her for rabbit stew. Colby also said that he eats all of the food he kills. Louis, another local hunter, said that his family cooks everything that they kill as well. When asked about the wild game meat, Louis said, "We don't waste nothin' in my family!"

Eating the meat off the animal is not all that deer or other wildlife are good for, though. Any animal can also be stuffed and mounted, which is the art of taxidermy. Taxidermy, according to Kurt, who actually performs it, is the art of taking something dead and making them appear alive again. Taxidermy can take up to several months at a time because of all of the drying out and minute details that need to be done. Kurt, who enjoys performing taxidermy as a hobby, talks about the actual art of taxidermy. On average, Kurt has about 16 taxidermy projects a year. When asked whether or not he enjoys doing taxidermy, he said, "I enjoy the finished project and seeing a once lifeless piece of flesh become a work of art."

What struck me as I talked with Kurt was that the art of taxidermy and hunting had similarities: relaxation and the handing down of techniques from one generation to the next. Kurt started taxidermy after his father did it. Kurt's father only knew how to do a few things, so Kurt went to books to learn more advanced and difficult techniques. He enjoys taxidermy because not only does he enjoy seeing how his finished product comes out, but the act is also a stress reliever. His favorite animal, and most common, are the whitetail deer, but he also enjoys doing waterfowl, which include ducks, geese, swan, and so on, because they are more artsy. He does, however, refuse to do fish.

Mounting an animal not only takes a lot of art and detail, it also takes an enormous amount of time just to prepare the animal. The act of mounting an animal can take from twelve hours to a few weeks to get a specimen to the drying stage and then months after that for the proper drying of the animal. This, though, is not all that must happen. First, you have to skin the animal with a knife, which can take from thirty minutes to five hours. After that, you have to wash the hide and preserve it. You must make sure to have a form, which is a foam block shaped in the way of the animal. After the hide is completely finished drying, you must put the hide on the form and glue and sew everything tight. Next, the minute steps come in, such as painting and tucking on the skin and feathers. It's these last few minute details that really bring the animal to life. Kurt said that he just wishes that people would see taxidermy as less disgusting and more of an art.

Although taxidermy seems gross at first because you have to skin the animal and dry it out, it is actually very interesting, and as Kurt points out, very artistic. Once everything begins to come together and the finishing touches are being added, it's very interesting to see something that was once shot and dead appear as though it is still alive. Why would someone want this animal that they just shot, though, to be hung on their wall at home? I asked Kurt, who not only has the perspective of the taxidermist, but also has many animals mounted on his own wall at home, including three ducks and five deer. "Why do you think that anyone wants to mount something that they've killed?" I asked Kurt. In response, he said, some people might do it for memory sake. Another reason, Kurt said, could be for pride, or to show off. Although the idea of showing off a dead animal didn't really make sense at first, after talking to hunters who had mounted animals, as well as hunters who wanted mounted animals, it all began to make sense.

The first group of people that I talked to were hunters who had mounted animals. Colby, for instance, has a total of ten mounted animals: five deer, three turkeys, one duck, and one gator gar fish. Colby said that he killed all of these animals himself. When I asked him why exactly he would want to have a bunch of dead animals in his home, he said it was more than just "keeping dead animals". Colby said, "It's to remember the hunt, to remember the experience of shooting the animal." Colby said that he would like more animals in his home, if they were bigger and better. When Colby says that he would like "bigger and better" animals, it shows that he is obviously showing these animals off as a prize. Not only is he trying to keep the memory of the actual hunt by preserving the animal, but he is also bringing home a trophy that he can show off and tell stories about.

Louis, another hunter with mounted animals in his home, has one mounted deer that he killed himself. Although there are four deer mounted in the home, only one of the animals is his own. When Louis talked about his mounted deer, which he named Mr. Prez, he was overflowed with excitement. Nothing could wipe the smile off of his face. Louis was talking about hunting, which he loved very much, and about his biggest prize from hunting: his mounted deer. When I asked Louis why he made the decision to get his deer mounted, he said it was because it was the largest buck that he had killed, and he wanted to be able to see it every day and be proud of the fact that he had killed a very large buck. Louis said that he would like to get more animals mounted, but they would have to be bigger than anything he's ever killed, which shows that the mounted animals are like trophies to hunters. Not only do the mounted animals give the hunter something to brag about and show off, but it's also like a first place trophy to a hunter. If you won a first place championship in soccer, and then the next year you won third place, you would probably have the first place trophy in the center, while the third place trophy hides in the back.

Getting and choosing an animal to mount is just like this; the hunter wants bigger and better animals. Each time a hunter mounts an animal, it is more than likely because the newly shot animal is bigger or has something unique about it. Some hunters don't have mounted animals in their home due to the fact that they feel as though they can get a better animal for their first "real" mount.

Lydia, who is forty-four years old and has been hunting since she was twenty-eight, doesn't have any mounted animals in her home. Her entire home, however, is covered in hunting, deer, and camouflage. In the living room, there is a huge mural of a buck. In both bathrooms of the house, they have camouflage shower curtains, trash cans, etc. Being such crazed hunters, you would think Lydia and her husband would have numerous different mounted animals. However, all they have are two pairs of antlers on one wall in the living room. When I asked Lydia why she didn't have any mounted animals, she said that she didn't feel like she had shot "the one" yet. When she gets her first mounted animal, she wants it to be huge, like nothing she has ever seen before. Lydia wants everyone to be amazed by and jealous of her mounted animal.

Although Lydia technically doesn't have any mounted animals, her ideas about mounting are basically the same as hunters who have ten mounted animals. To the hunter, a mounted animal is more than something they killed. Hunting is more than just a pastime to these people. Although hunters admit to enjoy the peace and quiet and the time to themselves, as well as the food that they get out of it, the hunters really enjoy the thrill.

From a hunter's perspective, everyone should hunt because it's so relaxing and fun. Not only do you get to have time to yourself, but you also have an adrenaline rush if you see an animal. I asked each hunter what they would tell someone who didn't hunt in order to persuade them to hunt. One person said, 'I don't know, because it's fun?" while another person said, "It's an experience like no other and I think that everyone should give it a try!" Although these answers may not seem very descriptive about why exactly someone should try hunting, that is just the point. These hunters enjoy and love the sport of hunting so much that they can't even think of one reason alone as to why other people should try it.

Every hunter that I interviewed had a story to share. All of the hunters got excited when talking about the animals that they've killed and the experiences that they've had. To hunters, mounting an animal means "remembering the hunt." Mounting an animal is a trophy to show off to friends and family. But most of all, mounting an animal is a personal prize to remember that thrill when they saw the deer walk out. To feel that excitement when they raised the gun and saw the animal through the scope. To feel the gun kick as they pulled the trigger, and to feel the weight of the animal as they carried it to the four-wheeler and brought it back home.

Appendix C: Entries from a Duck Camp Journal (John Serigny)

John Serigny shared copies of the journal he keeps of activity at his duck camp. In the journal, he records the days the family goes to the camp, any visitors, what they hunt, whether or not the fish or shrimp, what they eat, and what the weather is like. He also records additional past-times (like watching sports together), future plans, and other general activities, as well as sometimes documenting the general mood of the camp. Here we have attached the log book entries he shared, covering dates between February 1985 and January 2012. They appear as he shared them, the only edits made were to rotate pages to improve readability and to delete blank pages.

The Department of the Interior Mission

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island communities.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Mission

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) works to manage the exploration and development of the nation's offshore resources in a way that appropriately balances economic development, energy independence, and environmental protection through oil and gas leases, renewable energy development and environmental reviews and studies.