Outlook on Crawfish Crop
Gloomy in Southwest La.

By ROCCO MUSEMECHE
(Special to The Times-Picayune)

NEW IBERIA, La. — Folks in Southwest Louisiana who rely on a crawfish harvest at this time of year, gloomily predict a possible repeal of the disastrous 1959 season this year.

With only two months left in which to reap benefits that usually run into the millions of dollars annually, the fervent prayer is for water and plenty of it.

The lack of water is blamed for the misery around the Atchafalaya Basin and the communities of Catahoula, Henderson and Breaux Bridge.

Some crawfishers say the recent hard freezes in the northern part of the nation have slowed down the usual beneficial cascade. The basin needs now that surging tide that spills over the banks of the Atchafalaya River and inundates the surrounding swamplands, thus providing ideal conditions for the crawfish to come to the surface to feed and get fat.

The lack of water at this time forces the crustaceans to burrow some eight feet underground where there is an amount of water.

WATER CHANNELED

Other crawfishers claim the water has been channeled to other areas by the United States Corps of Engineers. The result if true, old timers say, will make conditions worse every year.

So grave is the situation that Rep. Patrick T. Caffery of New Iberia has written a letter to Rep. J. Burton Angelle of Breaux Bridge requesting a meeting be scheduled to seek an answer to the problem. The New Iberia solon stated in the letter that several people have come to him for aid in the matter. Rep. Caffery said these people stated “unless we get water in the basin, the crawfish industry could be in serious danger.”

Residents of “Crawfish Country” say that at the present time, the crawfish are selling for 30 cents a pound and the peeled variety are $2.75 a pound. In contrast, crawfish in March of last year were 16 cents a pound with the peeled ones selling for $2.25.

With the sparse conditions existing in the basin, a few crawfish ponds are the only places where harvesting is taking place. Pirogues ply the 4-foot ponds and cages are checked.

POND TYPE SMALL

Andre Dugas of Henderson whose ponds cover 125 acres, describes most ponds as rice fields in which the rice has been cut. He said after the rice harvest, the field was flooded to the banks, making excellent conditions for the crawfish. Dugas maintains however, that the pond variety does not measure with only two months left in which to reap benefits that usually run into the millions of dollars annually, the fervent prayer is for water and plenty of it.

The lack of water is blamed for the misery around the Atchafalaya Basin and the communities of Catahoula, Henderson and Breaux Bridge.

Some crawfishers say the recent hard freezes in the northern part of the nation have slowed down the usual beneficial cascade. The basin needs now that surging tide that spills over the banks of the Atchafalaya River and inundates the surrounding swamplands, thus providing ideal conditions for the crawfish to come to the surface to feed and get fat.

The lack of water at this time forces the crustaceans to burrow some eight feet underground where there is an amount of water.

WATER CHANNELED

Other crawfishers claim the water has been channeled to other areas by the United States Corps of Engineers. The result if true, old timers say, will make conditions worse every year.

So grave is the situation that Rep. Patrick T. Caffery of New Iberia has written a letter to Rep. J. Burton Angelle of Breaux Bridge requesting a meeting be scheduled to seek an answer to the problem. The New Iberia solon stated in the letter that several people have come to him for aid in the matter. Rep. Caffery said these people stated “unless we get water in the basin, the crawfish industry could be in serious danger.”

Residents of “Crawfish Country” say that at the present time, the crawfish are selling for 30 cents a pound and the peeled variety are $2.75 a pound. In contrast, crawfish in March of last year were 16 cents a pound with the peeled ones selling for $2.25.

With the sparse conditions existing in the basin, a few crawfish ponds are the only places where harvesting is taking place. Pirogues ply the 4-foot ponds and cages are checked.

POND TYPE SMALL

Andre Dugas of Henderson whose ponds cover 125 acres, describes most ponds as rice fields in which the rice has been cut. He said after the rice harvest, the field was flooded to the banks, making excellent conditions for the crawfish. Dugas maintains however, that the pond variety does not measure with only two months left in which to reap benefits that usually run into the millions of dollars annually, the fervent prayer is for water and plenty of it.

The lack of water is blamed for the misery around the Atchafalaya Basin and the communities of Catahoula, Henderson and Breaux Bridge.

Some crawfishers say the recent hard freezes in the northern part of the nation have slowed down the usual beneficial cascade. The basin needs now that surging tide that spills over the banks of the Atchafalaya River and inundates the surrounding swamplands, thus providing ideal conditions for the crawfish to come to the surface to feed and get fat.

The lack of water at this time forces the crustaceans to burrow some eight feet underground where there is an amount of water.

WATER CHANNELED

Other crawfishers claim the water has been channeled to other areas by the United States Corps of Engineers. The result if true, old timers say, will make conditions worse every year.

So grave is the situation that Rep. Patrick T. Caffery of New Iberia has written a letter to Rep. J. Burton Angelle of Breaux Bridge requesting a meeting be scheduled to seek an answer to the problem. The New Iberia solon stated in the letter that several people have come to him for aid in the matter. Rep. Caffery said these people stated “unless we get water in the basin, the crawfish industry could be in serious danger.”

Residents of “Crawfish Country” say that at the present time, the crawfish are selling for 30 cents a pound and the peeled variety are $2.75 a pound. In contrast, crawfish in March of last year were 16 cents a pound with the peeled ones selling for $2.25.

With the sparse conditions existing in the basin, a few crawfish ponds are the only places where harvesting is taking place. Pirogues ply the 4-foot ponds and cages are checked.

POND TYPE SMALL

Andre Dugas of Henderson whose ponds cover 125 acres, describes most ponds as rice fields in which the rice has been cut. He said after the rice harvest, the field was flooded to the banks, making excellent conditions for the crawfish. Dugas maintains however, that the pond variety does not measure with only two months left in which to reap benefits that usually run into the millions of dollars annually, the fervent prayer is for water and plenty of it.

The lack of water is blamed for the misery around the Atchafalaya Basin and the communities of Catahoula, Henderson and Breaux Bridge.

Some crawfishers say the recent hard freezes in the northern part of the nation have slowed down the usual beneficial cascade. The basin needs now that surging tide that spills over the banks of the Atchafalaya River and inundates the surrounding swamplands, thus providing ideal conditions for the crawfish to come to the surface to feed and get fat.

The lack of water at this time forces the crustaceans to burrow some eight feet underground where there is an amount of water.