



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
February 24, 2026

**Contact:**  
Glenda Beasley  
Media Relations  
512.750.5199

[Media Kit Link](#)

For photos, B-roll, SME interviews, resources, and report information

## Genetic Testing Reveals Majority of Myrtle Beach Restaurants Serving Imported Farmed Shrimp; Advocates Urge Greater Transparency

**MYRTLE BEACH, S.C.** — A renowned Southeastern family vacation destination, the [Myrtle Beach area](#) boasts 60 miles of beaches, with more than 2000 restaurants. According to [recent industry research](#), 18.2 million visitors spent \$13.2 billion in the Myrtle Beach area in 2024, with dining being a major contributor. As a premier seafood destination, with a regional Calabash style of seafood, many of those tourists are expecting to savor the taste of local seafood. Murrell’s Inlet in the area is also touted as the “seafood capital of South Carolina.”

However, genetic testing from February 6-10, 2026, using SeaD Consulting’s [RIGHTTest™](#), of shrimp dishes at 44 randomly selected seafood restaurants in the Myrtle Beach area shows that most establishments are likely serving farm-raised imported rather than American wild-caught shrimp.

### Key Findings

The analysis found that only **25% (11 of 44)** of restaurants tested were serving authentic American wild-caught shrimp, while **75% (33 of 44)** were serving farm-raised imported shrimp.

Among the 33 restaurants serving imports, transparency to consumers remained inconsistent. Researchers found:

- **45% (15 of 33)** of all restaurants tested verbally acknowledged serving farm-raised imported shrimp when asked.
- **55% (18 of 33)** of restaurants verbally claimed or the menu reflected they were selling American wild-caught shrimp when genetic testing showed they were not.

Similar findings were [released last week in Charleston, S.C.](#), during a retest of the market. This year, the inauthenticity rate there was **77% (17 of 22 restaurants tested were serving farm-raised imported shrimp; while implying it was U.S. wild-caught shrimp)** vs. last year when the inauthenticity rate was **91% (40 out of 44 restaurants tested)**.

## Economic and Consumer Impact

Advocates say the findings highlight ongoing confusion for consumers attempting to support the American shrimp industry and make ethical, quality food choices. With Myrtle Beach restaurants being so close in proximity to several fishing communities, one might expect the results to be the opposite.

“Tourists may seek to enjoy shrimp from American fishermen when visiting the coast, but most Myrtle Beach restaurants rely on imported shrimp. Even when consumers ask directly about the source of their shrimp, explicitly wrong information deprives them of making informed decisions,” said **Blake Price, Director of the Southern Shrimp Alliance**. “Mandatory disclosure and labeling standards enable choice by creating a transparent market that benefits consumers, hardworking shrimping families, and honest restaurants.”

Local industry representatives emphasized the economic stakes for South Carolina’s commercial shrimp fleet. “People come to the Grand Strand — and all along South Carolina’s coast — expecting local seafood, not imported pond grown shrimp passed off as something it’s not,” said **Bryan Jones, Vice President of the South Carolina Shrimpers Association, Captain of Vessel Pamela Sue and Owner of Heron House Seafood in McClellanville, SC**. “If you’re eating shrimp at the beach, you deserve to know whether it came from our waters or halfway around the world. Bringing awareness to this issue is creating real, positive momentum in Columbia to hopefully enact the change needed to empower consumers, support honest restaurants, and protect the working fishing families, like mine, who depend on our coastal waters.”

[South Carolina House Bill 4248](#), sponsored by Representatives Herbkersman, Bradley, Erickson, Hixon and Pope, would require restaurants to include country-of-origin labeling of shrimp on menus. [Five other southern states](#) passed or strengthened similar labeling and disclosure legislation in the past two years, driven by restaurant testing and growing public awareness of the frequent, widespread false advertising of shrimp. The SC House Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Environmental Affairs Committee scheduled a hearing on the bill [February 24, 2026, at 10 AM](#).

**SeaD Consulting Founder and Commercial Fishery Scientist Dave Williams** noted the broader national implications. “Restaurant purchases account for the majority of U.S. seafood spending,” Williams said. “Accurate menu labeling is essential so consumers can choose between sustainable American wild-caught or imported shrimp.”

## Restaurants Confirmed to Be Serving Authentic American Wild-Caught Shrimp

While not every restaurant was tested, the following Myrtle Beach area establishments were verified through genetic testing to be serving authentic American wild-caught shrimp:

1. **Cape Fear Seafood Company**  
1386 Highway 17 N, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582
2. **Chesapeake House (Steaks, Spirits & Seafood)**  
9918 US-17, Myrtle Beach, SC 29572
3. **Crab Catchers**  
4474 Waterfront Ave, Little River, SC 29566
4. **Drunken Jack's**  
4031 US-17 Business, Murrells Inlet, SC 29576
5. **Flying Fish Public Market & Grill**  
4744 US-17 S, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582
6. **Flynn's Irish Tavern**  
421 Main St, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582
7. **Graham's Landing**  
5225 US-17 Business, Murrells Inlet, SC 29576
8. **Groupers at the Pier**  
9700 Kings Rd. Myrtle Beach, SC 29572
9. **LuLu's North Myrtle Beach**  
4954 Hwy 17 S, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582
10. **River City Cafe**  
4742 CD Hwy 17 S North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582
11. **Tupelo Honey Southern Kitchen & Bar**  
3042 Howard Ave, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

The Myrtle Beach findings are part of a broader multi-state investigation into shrimp mislabeling and substitution funded by the Southern Shrimp Alliance. Industry groups say the [data](#) adds to growing evidence that clear state disclosure laws and enforcement mechanisms improve marketplace honesty and consumer confidence. Bringing awareness to this issue allows for legislation and enforcement to protect both diners and the American shrimp industry.

### About Southern Shrimp Alliance

The Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) is an organization of shrimp fishermen, shrimp processors, and other members of the American shrimp industry in the eight warmwater shrimp-producing states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas. SSA has

funded SeaD Consulting's genetic testing at restaurants, with [results available here](#). The list of restaurants found serving American wild-caught shrimp across all tested markets is [available here](#).

### About the South Carolina Shrimpers Association

The South Carolina Shrimpers Association (SCSA) is a non-profit organization that represents the interests of South Carolina shrimpers. The SCSA works to promote the sustainability of the shrimping industry, to advocate for the rights of shrimpers, and to educate the public about the importance of the shrimping industry to South Carolina's economy.

### About SeaD Consulting

SeaD (Seafood Development) Consulting works with diverse stakeholders—seafood producers, academia, governmental agencies, and environmental organizations—to foster innovation and sustainability throughout the sector, bridging commercial fishery science with testing and processing technologies to combat seafood mislabeling and substitution fraud. SeaD Consulting currently holds the patent, in partnership with Florida State University, for the portable rapid ID high-accuracy genetic test RIGHTTest™, which is being used in a multi-state study to determine shrimp species being served at seafood restaurants. For more information about the investigation and how you can support ethical seafood sourcing, visit [www.seadconsulting.com](http://www.seadconsulting.com).

**Disclaimer:** SeaD's testing and reporting is intended to be used as an investigatory tool to assist the restaurant industry's fight against seafood mislabeling and is not intended for use in any legal proceedings, nor may SeaD's data, testing, or reporting be used in any legal proceeding without the express written authorization of SeaD.

###