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Genetic Testing Finds Strong Authenticity Rate Among Covington Restaurants, With Compliance Concerns Remaining

SeaD Genetic Testing Reveals Majority of Covington Restaurants Serving Authentic Local Shrimp

Covington, La. — February 24, 2026 — SeaD Consulting today announced the results of genetic testing using its Rapid ID Genetic High-accuracy Test (RIGHTTest™) conducted on shrimp dishes served at restaurants across Covington, Louisiana. Testing revealed a high rate of authentic domestic wild-caught shrimp being served, though compliance and disclosure issues persist at a small number of establishments.

Covington, located on Louisiana's Northshore, is known for its strong culinary scene and proximity to Gulf seafood supply chains. Consumers frequently expect restaurants in the region to serve authentic Louisiana wild-caught shrimp.

Between recent sampling dates, SeaD teams conducted random genetic testing at **24 restaurants throughout Covington**. Samples were analyzed to determine whether shrimp marketed or implied as local wild-caught Louisiana shrimp were authentic.

Key Findings

- **21 of 24 restaurants (87%)** were confirmed to be serving authentic American wild-caught shrimp
- **3 of 24 restaurants (13%)** were found to be serving imported, farm-raised shrimp
- Among the three restaurants serving imports:
    - **One** displayed signage stating some items may contain imported seafood; however, staff verbally represented the shrimp as Gulf shrimp and the restaurant website claims only local Louisiana seafood is used

- **One** listed Gulf shrimp on the menu line item but testing revealed imported product
- **One** listed imports on the menu and verbally stated the shrimp was Ecuadorian

These findings show a **strong overall authenticity rate in Covington**, while highlighting continued inconsistencies between menu claims, staff representations, and verified sourcing at a minority of locations.

Louisiana Labeling Law Compliance Concerns

Louisiana law requires restaurants serving imported shrimp to clearly disclose that information to consumers through signage or menu language.

SeaD's findings indicate **partial but insufficient compliance** among the restaurants found to be serving imports. In multiple cases, consumer-facing messaging conflicted with genetic results, potentially creating confusion for diners seeking local seafood.

Andrew Blanchard, Head of the Louisiana Shrimp Task Force, said, "We are happy to share all the results of the genetic testing with the Louisiana Department of Health, upon their request, for investigation and enforcement. When local shrimp is so abundant, transparency remains critical for maintaining consumer trust and supporting Louisiana fishermen."

Restaurants Confirmed to Be Serving Authentic American Wild-Caught Shrimp

The following Covington establishments were verified through genetic testing to be serving authentic domestic wild-caught shrimp:

1. Abita Roasting Co — 1011 Village Walk, Covington, LA 70433
2. Bayou Boil N Geaux Covington — 1512 N Hwy 190, Covington, LA 70433
3. Bergeron's Boudin & Cajun Meats Covington — 1102 N Hwy 190, Covington, LA 70433
4. Buster's Place Restaurant and Oyster Bar — 519 E Boston St, Covington, LA 70433
5. Copeland's of New Orleans — 680 US-190, Covington, LA 70433
6. Del Porto Ristorante — 501 E Boston St, Covington, LA 70433
7. DiCristina's Italian and Seafood Restaurant — 226 E Lockwood St, Covington, LA 70433
8. Don's Seafood — 126 Lake Dr, Covington, LA 70433
9. Gallagher's Grill — 509 S Tyler St, Covington, LA 70433
10. Garcia's Famous Mexican Food — 200 River Highland Blvd, Covington, LA 70433
11. Habanero's — 69305 LA-21 #600, Covington, LA 70433

12. Half Shell Oyster House — 70367 LA-21 Ste 100, Covington, LA 70433
13. LOLA Restaurant — 517 N New Hampshire St, Covington, LA 70433
14. New Orleans Food & Spirits — 208 Lee Ln, Covington, LA 70433
15. New Orleans Style Seafood — 1536 N Hwy 190, Covington, LA 70433
16. Pat's Seafood — 1248 N Collins Blvd, Covington, LA 70433
17. Rusty Pelican — 482 Myrtle Dr, Covington, LA 70433
18. The Chimes — 19130 W Front St, Covington, LA 70433
19. The Greyhound — 705 E Boston St, Covington, LA 70433
20. Valencia — 315 N Vermont St, Covington, LA 70433
21. Vazquez Restaurant Seafood & Po-Boy — 515 E Boston St, Covington, LA 70433

Context and Consumer Impact

SeaD's Covington testing demonstrates encouraging progress in shrimp authenticity compared to some previously tested Louisiana markets. However, the presence of undisclosed imports at a subset of restaurants underscores the continued need for:

- Clear menu transparency
- Accurate staff communication
- Consistent compliance with Louisiana seafood disclosure laws, especially at seafood restaurants where consumers assume they are receiving American wild-caught shrimp
- Ongoing consumer awareness

Maintaining trust in Louisiana's seafood brand depends on alignment between what restaurants claim and what is actually served.

About the Louisiana Shrimp Task Force

The Louisiana Shrimp Task Force advises the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and related agencies on protecting and promoting the state's wild shrimp industry. The group works to strengthen transparency, local economies, and seafood quality for consumers.

About SeaD Consulting

SEAD (Seafood Development) Consulting blends science and policy to defend seafood authenticity. Its RIGHTTest™ program is transforming how consumers, restaurants, and regulators verify species in real time to combat mislabeling and protect coastal community livelihoods.
Visit www.seadconsulting.com to learn more or report suspected mislabeling.

Disclaimer: SeaD's testing and reporting is intended 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.

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