FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 24, 2026

Contact:
Glenda Beasley
Media Relations
512.750.5199

[Media Kit Link]
For photos, B-roll, SME interviews, resources, and report information

NEW RESEARCH FROM SOUTHERN SHRIMP ALLIANCE SHOWS SEAFOOD AUTHENTICITY IN NEW ORLEANS HAS DECLINED DESPITE EXISTING LAWS AND PENALTIES

Findings Suggest Truth-in-Menu Violations Persist and May Be Worsening Despite State Enforcement Efforts

NEW ORLEANS, La. — New genetic testing results conducted by SEAD Consulting on behalf of the Southern Shrimp Alliance indicate that seafood misrepresentation remains a significant problem in New Orleans restaurants despite the existence of Louisiana truth-in-menu laws, regulatory oversight, and financial penalties for violations.

The findings emerge from a comparison of two independent DNA-testing initiatives conducted in New Orleans over the past two years and suggest that seafood authenticity in the city may be moving in the wrong direction.

In **February 2025**, testing conducted by SEAD Consulting on behalf of the Louisiana Shrimp Task Force found that 21 of 24 randomly selected restaurants across neighborhoods throughout the New Orleans area were truthfully serving American wild-caught Gulf shrimp as advertised, an **authenticity rate of 87 percent**.

By comparison, randomized testing **conducted May 27–31, 2026** on behalf of the Southern Shrimp Alliance found only 33 of 44 restaurants, **or 75 percent**, were serving authentic American wild-caught shrimp in the dishes tested. **Nine restaurants, representing 20 percent of the sample, were found to be explicitly inauthentic, serving imported shrimp while representing the product as local, domestic, Gulf, or otherwise implying American wild-caught origin.**

The decline in authenticity rates comes despite Louisiana's truth-in-menu requirements, existing enforcement authority, and civil penalties intended to deter seafood fraud.

"Louisiana has enacted laws and established penalties to protect consumers and support our domestic seafood industry, yet these results indicate that seafood misrepresentation remains far too common," said **Blake Price, Director of the Southern Shrimp Alliance**. "When 82% of sampled restaurants serving imported shrimp are falsely advertising it as local or domestic product, it raises serious questions about whether current enforcement efforts are sufficient."

The findings also raise concerns about the economic consequences of shrimp substitution for Louisiana fishermen. **Restaurants included in the 2026 sampling operate in some of New Orleans' busiest and highest-value dining markets, where seafood dishes often command premium prices and generate substantial sales volumes.** When imported shrimp is substituted for American wild-caught shrimp in those settings, the economic value associated with those sales is diverted away from Louisiana shrimp harvesters, processors, and coastal communities.

"Consumers should be able to trust that when a menu says 'Gulf shrimp' or 'Louisiana shrimp,' that is exactly what they are receiving," said Erin Williams, Founder and COO of SeaD Consulting. "If restaurants want to serve farm-raised imported shrimp, that's ok, but they are required by law to say that is the case, and that is still not happening in 20% of the restaurants we randomly tested. Those nine restaurants out of 44 who were found to be serving farm-raised imported shrimp through our testing, flat out told us to our faces that they were serving Gulf/Louisiana/American wild-caught shrimp."

The Southern Shrimp Alliance believes these findings reinforce the need for continued genetic testing, stronger enforcement of truth-in-menu requirements, increased inspections, and greater consumer awareness regarding seafood sourcing claims.

COMPARISON OF FINDINGS

February 2025 Louisiana Shrimp Task Force / SeaD Consulting Testing

- 24 restaurants randomly sampled across the New Orleans area
- 21 restaurants served authentic American wild-caught shrimp (87%)
- 3 restaurants inauthentic, serving farm-raised/imported shrimp while portraying American wild-caught shrimp (13%)

May 2026 Southern Shrimp Alliance/ SeaD Consulting Testing

- 44 restaurants randomly sampled throughout New Orleans
- 33 restaurants served authentic American wild-caught shrimp (75%)
- 11 restaurants served imported shrimp (25%)

- 18% of these restaurants correctly disclosed imported shrimp (2 of 11 restaurants)
- 82% of these restaurants explicitly misrepresented imported shrimp (9 of 11 restaurants)

Taken together, the findings suggest that seafood fraud remains an ongoing and potentially worsening challenge in New Orleans despite existing laws designed to prevent menu misrepresentation. The results highlight the need for stronger compliance efforts to ensure consumers receive the products they are promised and that Louisiana shrimpers receive the market benefits associated with their catch.

The following 33 restaurants were found to be serving authentic American wild-caught shrimp in the sampled dishes tested:

1. Basin Seafood & Spirits – 3222 Magazine St, New Orleans, LA 70115
2. Blue Bayou Restaurant & Oyster Bar – 717 Canal St, New Orleans, LA 70130
3. Boil Seafood House – 3340 Magazine St, New Orleans, LA 70115
4. Bourbon House – 144 Bourbon St, New Orleans, LA 70130
5. Café Maspero – 601 Decatur St, New Orleans, LA 70130
6. Cajun Seafood #3 N. Claiborne – 1479 N. Claiborne Ave, New Orleans, LA 70116
7. Clesi's – 4323 Bienville St, New Orleans, LA 70119
8. Creole House Restaurant & Oyster Bar – 509 Canal St, New Orleans, LA 70130
9. Curio Bistro – 301 Royal St, New Orleans, LA 70130
10. Deanie's Seafood – 841 Iberville St, New Orleans, LA 70112
11. Desire Oyster Bar – 300 Bourbon St, New Orleans, LA 70130
12. Down The Hatch – 1921 Sophie Wright Pl, New Orleans, LA 70130
13. Ernst Café – 600 S. Peters St, New Orleans, LA 70130
14. Felix's Restaurant & Oyster Bar – 739 Iberville St, New Orleans, LA 70130
15. Grand Isle Restaurant – 575 Convention Center Blvd, New Orleans, LA 70130
16. Irene's – 529 Bienville St, New Orleans, LA 70130
17. Italian Pie – 417 S. Rampart St, New Orleans, LA 70112
18. Katie's – 3701 Iberville St, New Orleans, LA 70119
19. Kingfish Kitchen & Cocktails – 337 Chartres St, New Orleans, LA 70130

20. Le Bayou – 503 Bourbon St, New Orleans, LA 70130
21. Legacy Kitchen's Tacklebox – 817 Common St, New Orleans, LA 70112
22. Liuzza's Restaurant & Bar – 3636 Bienville St, New Orleans, LA 70119
23. Mahony's Po-Boys – 3454 Magazine St, New Orleans, LA 70115
24. Mandina's Restaurant – 3800 Canal St, New Orleans, LA 70119
25. Maria's Oyster & Wine Bar – 752 Tchoupitoulas St, New Orleans, LA 70130
26. Mid City Seafood & Deli – 2526 St. Bernard Ave, New Orleans, LA 70119
27. Mother's Restaurant – 401 Poydras St, New Orleans, LA 70130
28. Olde NOLA Cookery – 205 Bourbon St, New Orleans, LA 70130
29. Red Fish Grill – 115 Bourbon St, New Orleans, LA 70130
30. Royal House Oyster Bar – 441 Royal St, New Orleans, LA 70130
31. Rue Royal Antoine – 741 Royal St, New Orleans, LA 70116
32. Superior Seafood & Oyster Bar – 4338 St. Charles Ave, New Orleans, LA 70115
33. Vessel – 3835 Iberville St, New Orleans, LA 70119

About Southern Shrimp Alliance

The Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) is an organization of shrimp fishermen, shrimp processors, and other members of the domestic 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 throughout their region. The list of restaurants found to be serving American wild caught shrimp in the samples taken by market can be seen here.

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. They currently hold the patent, in partnership with Florida State University, for the portable rapid ID high-accuracy genetic test RIGHTTest™, 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, please visit 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.

###