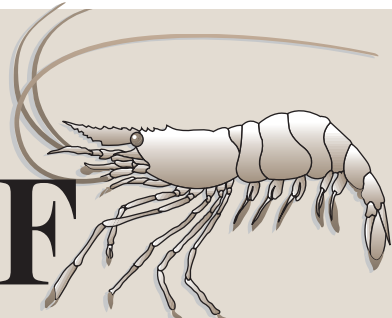


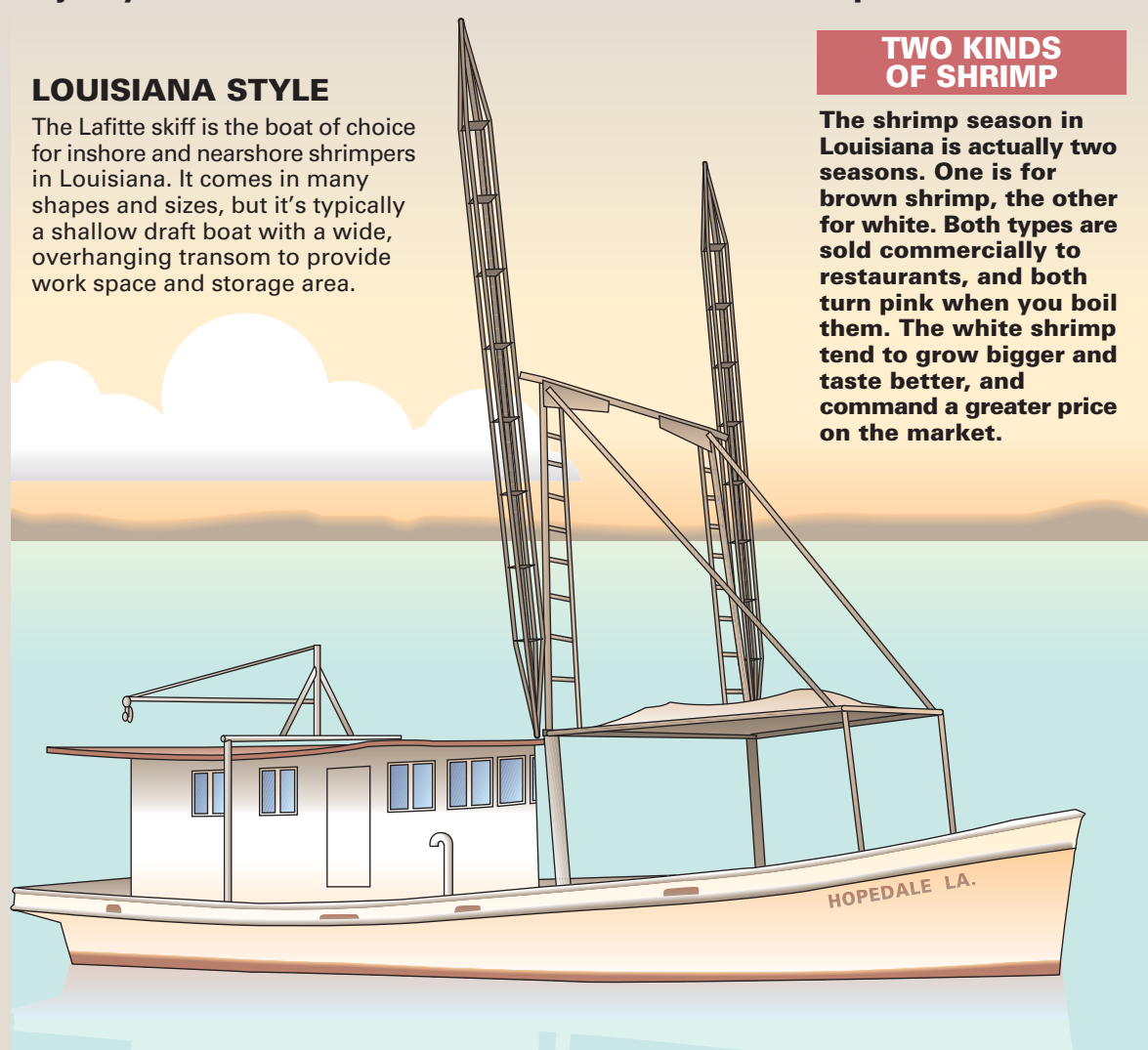
# SHRIMPING IN THE GULF



The Gulf shrimping fleet is the largest commercial fishing fleet in the nation. An estimated 32,000 vessels are registered as commercial fishing boats in the Gulf. Economists say the actual number is probably higher. The vast majority — the exact number is not known — are shrimpers.

## LOUISIANA STYLE

The Lafitte skiff is the boat of choice for inshore and nearshore shrimpers in Louisiana. It comes in many shapes and sizes, but it's typically a shallow draft boat with a wide, overhanging transom to provide work space and storage area.



## TWO KINDS OF SHRIMP

The shrimp season in Louisiana is actually two seasons. One is for brown shrimp, the other for white. Both types are sold commercially to restaurants, and both turn pink when you boil them. The white shrimp tend to grow bigger and taste better, and command a greater price on the market.

## TWO KINDS OF SHRIMPERS

There are many different designs for a shrimp rig, but most conform to one of two basic designs, depending on where they operate.

## INSHORE SHRIMPERS

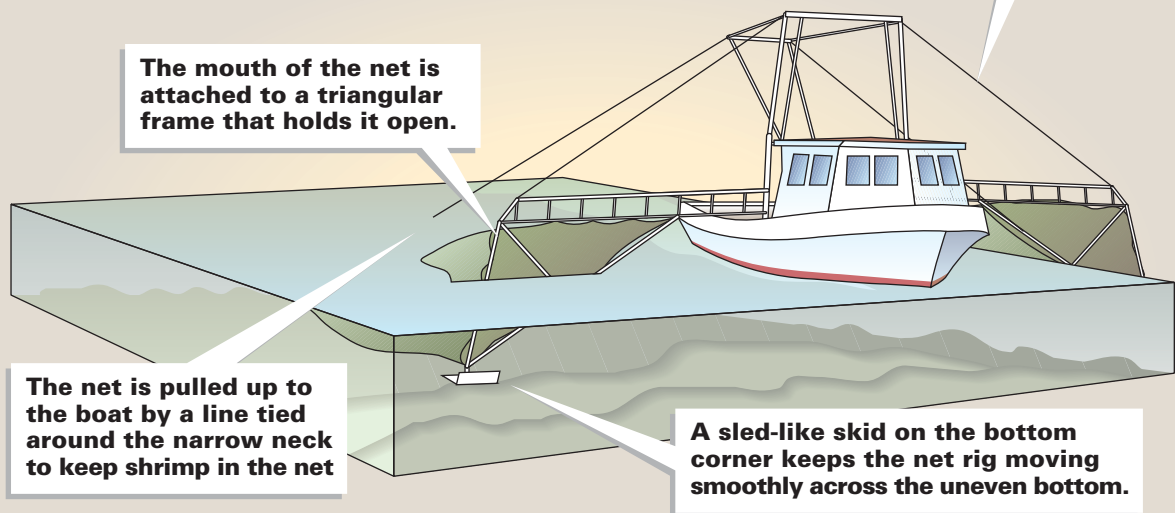
Operating in shallow waters and marshy areas with uneven bottoms, they use a skimmer rig, an invention of Venice shrimper Will Rojas. Since its introduction in the early 1980s, the skimmer revolutionized inshore shrimping because it allows the use of large shrimp nets in shallow water. What it didn't do was make Rojas rich. "Believe it or not, I never patented it," Rojas said.

A line attached to the top corner of the frame allows the rig to be raised and lowered.

The mouth of the net is attached to a triangular frame that holds it open.

The net is pulled up to the boat by a line tied around the narrow neck to keep shrimp in the net

A sled-like skid on the bottom corner keeps the net rig moving smoothly across the uneven bottom.



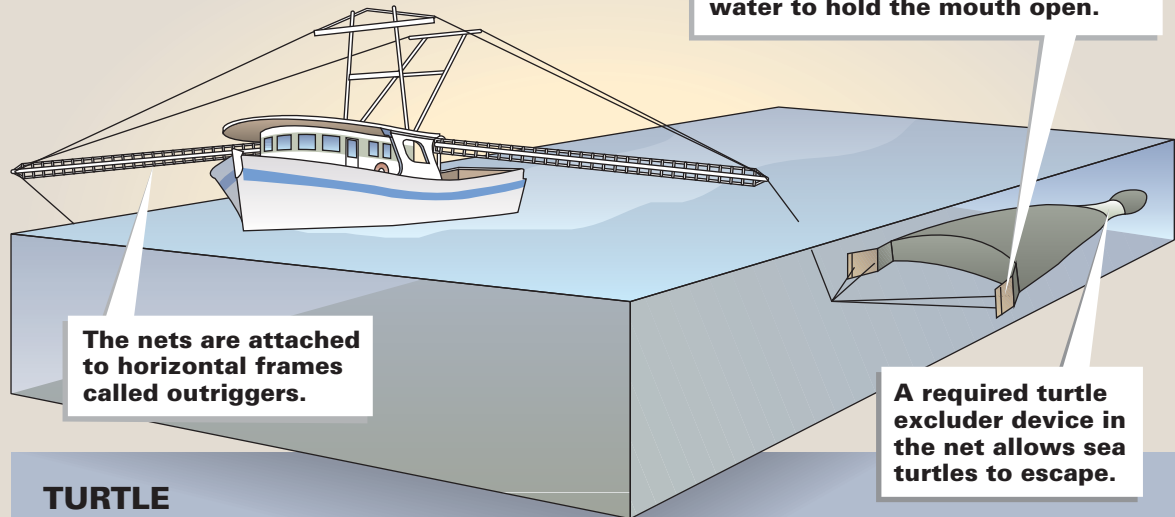
## OFFSHORE SHRIMPERS

Offshore rigs are usually much larger, cost more to operate, stay out longer and catch more shrimp.

Offshore rigs are equipped with two paddle-like panels that use the force of the net moving through water to hold the mouth open.

The nets are attached to horizontal frames called outriggers.

A required turtle excluder device in the net allows sea turtles to escape.



## TURTLE EXCLUDER DEVICES

Shrimpers hate them. Biologists love them. Known as TEDs, the devices are designed to allow endangered sea turtles to escape drowning in shrimp nets. Fishery scientists tout them. Shrimpers say they reduce shrimp catch more than the government claims. In any case, they are the law.

A TED, consisting of a tube of net and a metal grill, diverts turtles and larger fish up and out of a trapdoor flap.

The wide mouth of the net sweeps up everything from tiny shrimp to larger fish and turtles.

Loggerhead turtle

Shrimp and smaller fish flow into the bag and are hauled on deck.

