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LETTER

Editors:

In an otherwise profusely referenced article, Boehlert stated (*Oceanography* 9(3), p. 30) "one of the best . . . of by-catch is in the Gulf of Mexico, where shrimp fisheries cause mortality . . . several . . . marine fish species, affecting dynamics of those stocks." Not referenced, no doubt, because it is not true.

The historically important species, spotted seatrout, red drum, and flounder are very rarely taken in trawls, and there is no evidence of damages to these species' stock dynamics, despite the blackened redfish debacle. Croaker, a minor species, probably has been affected, although it does not show up in their juvenile Louisiana populations. As a member of the Statistical and Scientific Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council I just reviewed the evidence about trawl catches of red snapper. It is too complex to put in a brief note, but I am still looking for the proof that this has impacted snapper dynamics. Even if it has, this is not several species.

I am still reading your interesting volume, but have to say that if you want to be taken seriously, don't highlight the "world itching." I have been in the world for a long time, and have yet to observe this. That article (Carlton—Marine Bioinvasions) seemed to conclude that diversity is good, exotic invasions do not change the total diversity, but that is still bad because that is not the same. That is called nativism which is generally placed as religion. An interesting paper is Shafland, Exotic Fish Assessments, An Alternative View. Rev. Fisher. Sci. 1996, 4(2):123–132.

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