



Boats seek haven at Port of Brownsville

July 22, 2008

[By Aaron Nelsen, The Brownsville Herald](#)

Carlton Reyes and his crew on Tuesday morning busily prepared his boats, the Miss Ivy and Miss Alexandra, for Tropical [Storm Dolly](#).

The owner of Reyes Marine and president of the Brownsville-Port Isabel Shrimp Producers Association were tying down his boats and offloading the first catch of the season as storm clouds crowded blue skies.

"Oh, it's a little busy, but nothing big," Reyes said. "This happens almost every year. Sometimes it happens two or three times a year."

With boats expected to roll into Brownsville's shrimp basin throughout the day, it was difficult to get an exact number of boats expected to return, Reyes explained.

That's because it is up to the individual companies to decide which boats in their fleets would return and which would remain in the Gulf of Mexico.

Reyes expected two more of his boats would return and two boats in his fleet of six would remain in Gulf waters around Port Aransas.

The 2007 shrimp season began July 15 with approximately 170 boats heading out to sea, down from approximately 220 boats last year.

Many companies had cut a portion of their fleets in response to high fuel prices and difficulty securing H2B visas for temporary workers.

In a typical year, the first trip lasts as long as a month and is usually considered the make-or-break voyage.

"These boats have only been out seven days," Reyes said. "I guess we'll see what kind of money it brings."

anelsen@brownsvilleherald.com