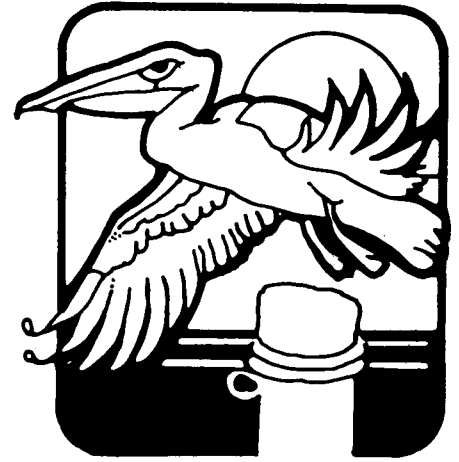


# THE PELICAN POST

Weeks Bay  
National Estuarine Research Reserve Newsletter  
Spring 1992



## Meet The Reserve's New Staff

Welcome to Brenda Spivey and Thomas McAlpin, the Reserve's newest employees!

Brenda transferred to Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. She has been employed with the State since 1973. Brenda's duties with the Reserve include office administration, coordination of the Reserve's volunteer program, visiting groups and tours, and assisting staff with specific reserve programs and activities.

Brenda has an associate degree in business administration and is focusing on a degree in business communication from the University of South Alabama. Married to Dr. Henry Spivey and mother of three daughters, she resides in Bon Secour.

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Coastal Programs Office welcomes Thomas McAlpin as the new Estuarine Reserve Manager of Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. His parents are natives of Anniston, Alabama, and he is from Santa Rosa County, Florida.

Thomas was most recently employed as the senior ecologist working for the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands. In that position, among other duties, he was responsible for all major permitting activities in the coastal zone of the Virgin Islands. His career background is in coastal zone management and water pollution control.

Thomas' academic background includes a degree in biology from the University of Alabama and a degree from the University of West Florida specializing in coastal zone management. Thomas' duties as Manager of the Reserve include coordinating with the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Advisory Committee, the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation, developing and implementing educational and interpretive programs, coordinating research activities and management of the Reserve's properties.



## Water Quality of Weeks Bay Receives National Recognition Designated Outstanding

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management held a public hearing on February 6, 1992, at 7:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers at Foley City Hall. The purpose of the hearing was to establish standards of water quality in Weeks Bay. The hearing was held to receive data, views and arguments from interested persons regarding the proposed rules for the designation of Weeks Bay as an Outstanding National Resource Water (ONRW).

High quality waters that constitute an Outstanding National Resource, such as waters of national and state parks, wildlife refuges and waters of exceptional recreational or ecological significance may be considered for designation as an ONRW. This designation insures that the existing water quality of Weeks Bay will be maintained and protected. On February 26, 1992 the Environmental Management Commission adopted the designation of Weeks Bay as an ONRW. In the next issues of Pelican Post we will discuss what this designation means for Weeks Bay.

If you would like to schedule a group or be added to the WBNERR mailing list, please call Weeks Bay Reserve office at 205-928-9792. WBNERR wishes to serve anyone interested in learning and all programs are free of charge, so do not hesitate to call! Suggestions and comments from readers on future topics of interest are welcomed by Weeks Bay Reserve staff. If you know of others who would be interested in receiving this newsletter, please have them send their name and address to the address shown on the panel above so they may be added to the mailing list.

# Manatee

A rare marine mammal, a manatee, which had previously been spotted in areas around Fish River and Weeks Bay, washed ashore in Point Clear on January 13, 1992. Concern developed among wildlife officials following sightings of a live manatee in Fish River during December.

Larry Engel of Foley and his brother were fishing in Fish River on December 13 when they spotted a manatee, believed to be the same mammal that washed ashore in Point Clear. "He broke the water about 10 feet from my boat," Engel said, following the incident. "He was swimming shallow and you could see him the whole time. I saw his big, flat tail." Engel added that the manatee appeared to be about eight feet long.

After that spotting, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service brought in individuals who were familiar with locating manatees, Larry Goldman, Field Supervisor at the Daphne office, said. "Our greatest fear was that the creature had stayed too long in an area that is okay only in spring and summer." Goldman told a group of citizens he addressed during the first meeting of the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Lecture Series. "We tried to capture it in order to take it back to southern Florida, but we were unsuccessful." Goldman stated the areas around Weeks Bay are good habitat for the creatures, which are herbivores.



## Migration: Facts and Fantasies

**MIGRATION:** What is it? Where do they go? Why do they leave and others come? How do they know when to go? How do they know where to go? These are some questions you hear about migration.

Migration is defined as a regular, seasonal movement from one place to another and then back again to the first place. Speculation as to the reasons for this vary. Some scientists suggest that most environments cannot supply all of the resources required year round to support permanent residents. Those resources could include nesting habitats, safe places for breeding or availability of food. The insect eating birds migrate south when cooler weather

begins to set in because the insects they depend on either die or migrate themselves. It was during the 1970s that birds were becoming more widely recognized as good indicators of the quality of the environment.

Whales, salmon and caribou are some of the other animals who migrate very long distances. Fascination with the timely appearance and disappearance of certain species of birds has been documented for centuries. Some people thought birds flew up to the moon. Others theorized that birds buried themselves at the bottom of lakes. Still others thought birds flew to the top of mountains to shed their feathers and hibernate. Bird migration is also mentioned in the Bible. Even Aristotle, with his keen observation of natural history, thought that the European Robin transformed into a Redstart and then to a Robin again. As long as man has inhabited the earth he has been aware of the comings and goings of animals.

How birds know when to leave and where to go has been widely discussed. Some of the suggestions being offered as to the timing of departure are that hormonal changes could occur which cause birds to get restless. Other possible suggestions include: Changes in daylight hours, hearing voices of others as they are migrating, and changes in availability of food.

Mountain ranges, rivers and coastlines seem to be a big factor in orienting birds on their routes. Birds who fly in the day time and do not fly the entire distance at one given time, probably use these topographical features to keep them flying in the right direction. Not all birds fly in daylight but even if they do, these topographical features can be obscured by clouds and fog. When this occurs the birds may become disoriented and migration may be interrupted.

Compass direction, using the sun, moon and stars, is another type of navigation used by birds. This is mainly used by birds who fly at night and complete their migration without stopping. Using a planetarium where seasons of the year and time of day can be modified easily, researchers have been studying the effects of these indicators to determine timing and direction of migration. By removing the entire southern sky and even part of the northern sky, birds were able to orient themselves in the right direction for their fall or spring routes. Not all birds use the same stars for direction. However, all birds in this experiment always oriented themselves in the actual season they were being shown.

True navigation is a term reserved for birds who have the ability to return to a specific site from an unfamiliar area. Tests involving Manx Shearwaters showed that when they were removed from burrows in England, flown to Boston and released, they were back in their nests 12 days later. Terns were also tested and performed in much the same manner.

We have all wondered how homing pigeons know where to go and how to return. Even during some of the worst weather racing pigeons perform without the slightest difficulty. This is a most amazing feat because these birds have nothing visible to guide them. In studying Robins, Pigeons and Sparrows it has been revealed that they are acutely sensitive to magnetic impulses and light. When a magnetic device was placed near a Robin, it became disoriented and confused. Before the device was used, the Robin could orient in the right direction. Traces of magnetite have been found in the skulls of Pigeons leading some to believe that they home in on a magnetic field.

Investigations involving all mechanisms of migration are really just beginning. There are many questions which are unanswered and may go unanswered for a long time. One that is currently being

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

researched involves birds passing over the Gulf Coast and migrating further north in search of acceptable breeding grounds. The habitat found in the lower Coastal Plain appears to be ideal from all standards, yet some birds continue to reject this area for breeding. Not all birds display this tendency; however, the majority of the passerines nest north of the Coastal Plain. Weather conditions and hunger may cause them to stop over, but eventually they will move on. One of the suggested answers to this question states that this area was once covered with ice and they were forced to keep flying to find a suitable habitat. If this is true, then the birds today are following a behavior that is learned or passed down in each generation. Findings on this subject will be of special interest to those who watch birds in this area.

## Help Us If You Can

In the past you have given very generously of your valuable time, your talent, your materials, your expert know-how and countless other gifts. We are trying to catch up on many tasks that need to be done, and keep up with day to day operations, and prepare for construction to begin.

We are looking forward to opening our Interpretive Center in the fall. There are some ways now that you may want to become involved. We are planning to have new elevated trails with benches and outdoor exhibits. Inside the building, we will have a reception area, a laboratory, a library, office space and exhibit areas. If you are interested in volunteering to assist in any of the needs listed below, please call Brenda at the Reserve office 928-9792.

1. Reconstruction of pier (on the east side of Fish River bridge.)
2. Visitor Center guides and nature trail guides.
3. Trail maintenance and construction.
4. Writing and art work, for the quarterly newsletter, etc.

## The Sad Fax Facts

The Reserve needs a FAX machine. If you have one or know of one that is not being used, you could recycle it with us. You will reclaim space the unused FAX was occupying, and we will gain quicker access to the world outside.

## Lend-A-Hand

Alabama is very fortunate to have one of the designated National Estuarine Research Reserves in the United States and is proud to host this education and research site. Weeks Bay is enjoying "growing pains" in planning the construction of an Interpretive Center which will house a laboratory, library, classroom, exhibit space and space for community sponsored activities and meetings. The Center will serve as headquarters for all of the estuary's activities including education, research and public awareness.

All of this exciting expansion means new opportunities for volunteer jobs. Brenda Spivey is coordinating the volunteer program and already has a long list of varied activities to interest everyone from the construction oriented person who enjoys building new trails to the artist who likes to design exhibits. Tour guides (who will be trained) are needed to escort people along the nature

trails, and someone with writing skills might like to assist with newsletters. There's no limit to volunteer jobs at Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve - both indoor and outdoor.

The future of our estuaries lies with an informed and interested public. Volunteers participating in Reserve activities help tremendously in broadening public view of nature and our environment. If you're interested in lending-a-hand, contact Brenda at 205-928-9792.

## Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation Grows By Leaps And Bounds

Our very first membership drive is now underway and already we are welcoming close to 100 new members. These new members have received their membership cards and their WBRF decals. Now all members can be proudly identified by displaying the decals on their automobiles. If you want to join our growing family of supporters, just fill out the form in this issue and send it to us. If you are a member and have not received your card and decal, please call our office so we can check our records.

Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation was established in 1990 for the purpose of supporting the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. The Foundation is a non-profit corporation, therefore donations of money, goods, or services are tax deductible. By joining the WBRF you will become part of an organization dedicated to education, research and protection of our nation's coastal resources.

We would like to give a hearty welcome to the following new members of the Foundation.

### LIST OF NEW FOUNDATION MEMBERS

Alabama Power Company  
W.L. Bowers  
Mr. & Mrs. C.P. Armbrrecht, II  
Harry C. Anderson  
Connie Aune  
Mr. & Mrs. Chas. A. Baumhauer, III  
Pamela Bashab  
Ann Bedsole  
Verona Beiser  
Tom & Jerre Bilbo  
Norman Berger, D.D.S.  
Robert S. Berglin  
R. Michael Booker  
Taney & Iris Brazeal  
Mr. & Mrs. P. Grey Cane, Jr.  
C. E. Cantrell, Jr.  
Paul H. Carlson, Ph.D.  
Paul & Muriel Cherney  
Rebecca C. Coggeshall  
Celia & Michael DeLaney  
A. Gary Dennis  
Mike Dorriety  
Art Dyas  
George C. Dyson, Jr.  
Dorothy L. Eckman  
Mrs. Albert Elebash  
Eugenia L. Emmett  
Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

Mrs. Robert G. Eubanks  
Martha Farmer  
Jimmy Faulkner  
Dr. & Mrs. Paul Fellars, Jr.  
Walter A. FrickeFellars, Jr  
Mark Greenslit  
Gulf States Paper Co.  
Jack W. Warner  
Mr. & Mrs. Winthrop Hallett, III  
Robert W. Hohl  
Robert H. Hollis, Jr.  
Fob James, Jr.  
J. Ralph Jordan  
Virginia Julavits  
George W. Kingston, CDR USN  
Elvie Lutze  
Carol Ann Merrell  
Norm & Marge Moore  
Clyde E. Morris  
Thomas C. McAlpin  
John Ray Nelson  
Carlos F. Parkman  
Ester Pond  
Dr. Sherold Pope  
Jamie C. Praytor  
Marion A. Quina, Jr.  
R. H. Radcliff, Jr.  
Jack & Gay Rich  
George Roberds  
James T. Robson  
Carolyn & Andrew Saunders  
Gus Schultz  
Craig Sheldon  
Frank D. Sandoz  
Shell Offshore Inc.  
Wendy Jacobs  
Dr. H.B. Shepherd  
Mrs. Garland E. Sims  
Opal & David Smith  
Linda Skupian  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Smyth  
Mr. & Mrs. John Snook  
Wes Strauley  
Dr. & Mrs. John Stump  
M. Mort Swaim  
Tartt Antiques  
Innes & Ouida Tartt  
The Gas Works Antique Mall  
Rita McNair  
Peyton C. Thetford  
The University of AL System  
Dr. Philip E. Austin  
Wayne & Celia Trawick  
Jerry Turner  
Vulcan, Inc.  
Robert W. Lee  
Richard K. Wallace  
Dr. & Mrs. William Warren  
Linda E. Waselkov

George Waters  
W.P. Whiddon  
Taylor Wilkins  
Esther W. Young

## Foundation Update A Double Dipper

In just over one year The Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation is gaining support from around the state of Alabama, and from our neighboring states as well. We have received donations from EXXON, USA; and BP Oil Companies. We are also encouraged by a donation from INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINES Corporation Matching Grants Program from its employees, retirees, directors, and their spouses. Many companies and businesses are anxious to participate in this way because they feel it is an opportunity to support organizations that have a significant impact in the community where their offices or businesses are located. Many businesses like the idea of the challenge that this program provides, and are supporting of the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Funding for The Foundation is also coming from individual memberships and contributions. The Weeks Bay Foundation was incorporated in 1990 as a not-for-profit organization to support Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve financially through memberships, donations of equipment, and services.

Dr. Jim Jones of Mississippi/Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, located in Ocean Springs, Ms., donated 50 teacher packets, which represented many hours of work to produce. These packets have been distributed to teachers attending a Science Teachers Workshop in Baldwin County this summer and thers who were interested. The packets contain information that would be most helpful for educators planning field trips or classroom lessons on various aspects of wetlands, beaches, and estuaries. Thank you Dr. Jones!

This Summer we were able to build benches on the observation deck through a generous donation of all materials from Mr. Will Newberry of NFL Building Center in Daphne. Dick Cain and Bill Corwin of Volunteer Action, and Boy Scouts from Troop # 54 did the actual construction. Thanks to all of you and our thanks also go to Mr. Skipper Tonsmeire for his help in this endeavor.

The Exploreum, Museum of Discovery, in Mobile also donated to the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation this summer. Thanks Explorer!

And not least of all, thanks to you for your joining effort and for continuing to support The Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation by renewing your memberships. In the very near future the Board of Directors of the Foundation will be conducting a membership drive. The purpose of this drive will be to encourage individuals and businesses around the state to join with us in the commitment of providing a place for Estuarine research and education.

Some of you have received your membership cards and decals identifying you as members. All members who have renewed or will be renewing in 1992 will receive these also. Renewal notices have been sent out. If you have not received a notice and think you should have, please contact Brenda at the Reserve Office. We do not want to leave anyone out.

## Gulf Coast Educators Attend Conference

Marine environmental science educators from Texas to Florida gathered at Gulf State Park Resort Hotel in Gulf Shores in December to discuss a variety of marine science education concerns. The workshop, titled "Marine Environmental Science Education for the 90's and Beyond" featured a plenary program, a discussion period, and a field trip to Weeks Bay.

Sponsored by the Mississippi/Alabama Sea Grant Consortium under the direction of Dr. James I. Jones, the workshop was the first of its kind in allowing educators to exchange program ideas and experiences. There were 40 participants representing each of the Gulf Coast States. On Sunday, the group travelled to Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve for a nature trail walk and a boat tour of the estuary. All of those attending expressed a desire to make this an annual meeting as they felt this was a very worthwhile event.

## Kid's Fishing Day

April 18 was a fun day for young and old alike at the "Kid's Fishing Day" sponsored by Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Approximately 32 children in grades 1-6 gathered at View Point Park on Weeks Bay to participate in the event. This recreational fishing event featured local fishermen demonstrating fishing techniques with lures, cut bait and live bait, as well as a demonstration on the art of fly fishing. After the children fished the waters of Weeks Bay, everyone enjoyed a fish dinner with all the trimmings. The Reserve staff would like to thank volunteers and sponsors whose contributions were invaluable in making this event possible.

## Winter Spring Speaker's Program

The Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve has begun a special Guest Lecture Series to help educate local residents about Weeks Bay.

In an effort to promote public awareness, a speaker's program is now being implemented by the Reserve. The Reserve is extremely fortunate in scheduling speakers highly knowledgeable in the Reserve's plant and animal life, chemical and physical processes, estuarine ecology, and archaeological history. Dr. John Borom of Faulkner State Community College is greatly assisting the Reserve by arranging for the programs to be held on the second Tuesday each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Bell Building, Faulkner Campus, Fairhope, Alabama. For further information, contact Brenda Spivey at 205-928-9792.

## Coastal Cleanup

The Coastal Programs Office and Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve participated in the keep America Beautiful Spring Cleanup on April 11, 1992. Volunteers in the coastal area picked up over 2,500 lbs. of trash. Over 400 lbs. was collected around the Weeks Bay Reserve.

Plans are in the works for the 5th Annual Fall Coastal Cleanup to be held September 19, 1992. Citizens in Mobile and Baldwin Counties will clean over 80 miles of beach and estuary areas. This year's cleanup will be international and part of the "Year of the Gulf" and "Coastweeks" celebrations. Persons interested in participating in the cleanup are urged to call Phillip Hinesley with the Coastal Programs Office at (205) 928-3672.



**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION  
WEEKS BAY RESERVE FOUNDATION  
10936-B U.S. Highway 98  
Fairhope, AL. 36532**

NAME

DATE

COMPANY NAME IF CORPORATE MEMBER

COMPANY CONTACT

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NUMBER

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT \$5/YR         | <input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY \$30/YR       | <input type="checkbox"/> DONATION \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR CITIZEN \$10/YR | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL \$100/YR  | <input type="checkbox"/> NEW MEMBER        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> INDIVIDUAL \$15/YR     | <input type="checkbox"/> CORPORATION \$250/YR | <input type="checkbox"/> RENEWAL           |

Funds for the publication of this newsletter provided by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Ocean Service, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, Marine and Estuarine Management Division; and Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Planning and Economic Development Division, Coastal Programs Office.

Published by Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Planning and Economic Development Division.

Editors  
Weeks Bay Reserve Staff  
and  
Coastal Programs Staff  
Illustrations  
Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve  
10936-B US Highway 98  
Fairhope, AL 36532

**Bulk Rate  
Non-Profit  
US Postage  
PAID  
Permit No 109  
Montgomery AL  
36125**