



The Pelican Post

Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation Newsletter

Fall 2000



Commissioner Riley Boykin Smith (left) visits with Brenda Spivey, Assistant Manager, and L. G. Adams, Reserve Manager, during his recent tour of the Reserve.

Conservation Commissioner Smith Visits Reserve

The Reserve was pleased to host **Riley Boykin Smith**, Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, for a site visit in October. Commissioner Smith spent time touring the Reserve facilities, talking with the staff, and becoming more familiar with the many research and education programs underway at the Reserve.

As one of 27 sites in the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, the Weeks Bay Reserve is a federal-state partnership and is operated in Alabama under the authority of a state agency. The Reserve and other Coastal Zone Management programs were transferred on October 1 to Commissioner Smith's department, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR). Previously, the Coastal Zone Management Office, including the Reserve, was located in the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA).

Foundation Announces Significant New Land Acquisitions

Thanks to the continuing generosity and support of Foundation members, the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation has announced the purchase of two significant parcels of land in environmentally sensitive areas.

In August, your Foundation was able to purchase a 9.5 acre parcel of land adjoining the north

boundary of the Reserve on the east side of Fish River. This purchase was made possible through your support and with the continuing generosity of **Ottillie Halstead**.

Designated as "Parcel 1" on the map below, this property has 565 feet of frontage on Fish River and 1,345 feet on the tidal creek known as "Poplar Head Branch" adjacent to the Reserve. This tidal creek and its wetlands area are of great ecological significance to the water quality of Fish River and Weeks Bay. Spotted sea trout and red drum fish are abundant where the creek flows into Fish River.

As part of the Foundation's plan to pay a portion of the remaining balance owed from the purchase of this property, a one acre, restricted use residential lot may be sold. The total price for the 9.5 acre property was \$350,000.

Earlier this year, the Foundation purchased an 11 acre track located adjacent to and south of the Fish River bridge on Highway 32. Designated as "Parcel 2" on the map below, this property includes 540 feet of frontage on Fish River. With the purchase of these two significant tracts, your Foundation has acquired a total of 1,105 feet of frontage on Fish River and 20.5 acres in the Weeks Bay watershed this year.

As you consider your year-end financial giving, we encourage your contribution to the Foundation's land acquisition fund. Remember, as a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization, the Foundation can accept your tax-deductible gifts of cash, appreciated stocks, and other property. You can also make donations in memory or in honor of individuals.

The Foundation's Land Acquisition Committee has identified a number of tracts which are considered vital for protecting the Weeks Bay watershed and the Bay's receiving tributaries. For more information, call the



Parcels 1 and 2 show the new land acquisitions made possible by your Foundation contributions.

Foundation office at (334) 990-5004.

Congressman Callahan Honors Reserve's Legacy Project

Reserve staff members **L. G. Adams**, **Brenda Spivey**, and **Bob McCormack** received special recognition from U. S. Congressman **Sonny Callahan** during a recent awards ceremony for participants in the Library of Congress Bicentennial Legacy project. Held on the battleship *USS Alabama*, the ceremony acknowledged contributions from organizations throughout south Alabama who were selected as "Local Legacies."

As part of the Library's Bicentennial celebration, this nationwide project encouraged each state to choose places, programs, and events of historical, cultural, and natural importance that helped create each state's unique legacy. A 50-minute videotape program about the Reserve, its habitats, people, events, and programs will be housed at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The Internet address for viewing these Local Legacy projects is <http://www.loc.gov/bicentennial/>.

Special thanks go to Congressman Callahan for selecting and recognizing the Reserve as a tremendous asset for the people of Alabama.



A record-breaking crowd helped set new sales records at the Weeks Bay Volunteers' Native Plant Sale.

Native Plant Sale Another Big Success

New sales records were set as more than 4,000 native trees, shrubs and perennials were purchased by area homeowners during the Seventh Annual Weeks Bay Volunteers' Native Plant Sale. Held the first weekend in October, the sale received excellent local publicity and generated more than \$7,000 in proceeds after expenses. As in past years, these funds will be used by the volunteers to purchase equipment and support a variety of educational and research projects at the Reserve.

Special thanks go to **Roger Plemons**, Manager of the Safe Harbor RV Resort, and his staff for their assistance and support during the entire plant sale, including providing evening security. The Safe Harbor RV Resort, located across Highway 98 from the Reserve's Interpretive Center and managed by the Foundation, was once again a wonderful location for the sale, providing ample parking and

bringing many area residents to the Reserve for the first time.

Thanks to everyone who volunteered and who purchased plants. Mark your calendars now for next year's sale!



Invasive, exotic species like the familiar kudzu can be attractive yet incredibly destructive to natural ecosystems in Coastal Alabama.

Invasive Plant Workshop Helps Identify Problem Plants

More than 75 nurserymen, landscapers and homeowners gathered on September 23 for a full day workshop on invasive, exotic plant species in Coastal Alabama. The second in a series of three workshops on this serious topic of growing concern, the workshop agenda included both identifying and learning control techniques for some of our area's most destructive "invaders" including kudzu, popcorn trees, Chinese privet, and air potato.

Held at the Auburn University Research Experiment Station on County Road 104 in Fairhope, the workshop was co-sponsored by the Reserve, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and the Baldwin County Master Gardeners.

For more information on identifying and controlling invasive, exotic plant species, contact the Auburn University Extension Service office in Bay Minette at 937-7176.

A third workshop focusing on invasive aquatic plants is planned for early next year.

Alternative Wastewater Treatment Information Now Available

Thanks to significant funding from **Legacy, Partners in Environmental Education**, a new brochure on Alternative Wastewater Treatment Systems is now available at the Reserve.

The informative brochure covers five types of systems that are alternatives to traditional septic tanks, including the benefits for particular areas and comparisons of treatment efficiencies.

The Reserve has hosted several successful workshops on alternative wastewater treatment systems, which were attended by varied audiences, ranging from homeowners to realtors, developers,

septic tank installers, engineers, contractors and public officials. Speakers at the September workshop included **Dr. Kevin White** from the University of South Alabama, **Allen Tartt** from the University of West Alabama, **John Paul O'Driscoll** from the Alabama Department of Public Health, **George Davis** from the Baldwin County Planning and Zoning Department, and **Teddy King** from the Baldwin County Public Health Department.

For more information, or a copy of the new brochure, call the Reserve at 928-9792.



Participants in the Reserve's Alternative Wastewater Treatment System Workshop study a residential example of a constructed wetland system. Inclusion of a flower garden in the system can enhance the home's landscaping and property value.

International Coastal Cleanup Comes to Weeks Bay

More than 90 countries around the world participate in the International Coastal Cleanup that kicks off "Coastweeks" each year. Held the third weekend in September, Coastal Cleanup is sponsored by the Center for Marine Conservation. Literally thousands of volunteers collect millions of pounds of trash from our coasts worldwide. Reports are tallied, published and studied. The Reserve serves as a cleanup zone each year. Mark your calendar now and consider volunteering next year.



Reserve Zone Captain Bob McCormack (center) helps unload bags of debris collected by volunteers on International Coastal Cleanup Day at Weeks Bay.

Coast Guard Auxiliary Hosts Boating Safety Course at Reserve



Instructors Bob Burton (left) and Kathy Long (right) demonstrate proper fit of PFDs for class participants Julius Wall and James Adams.

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary taught a Boating Safety Course in the Reserve Auditorium on Estuaries Day. Many local residents, young and old, received training on the proper use of watercraft. This certified course provided an opportunity for obtaining the

certificate now required by all boaters in Alabama. Another course is planned at the Reserve for next spring on Saturday, March 3, 2001. For more information contact **Bob Gibson** at 990-5534.

Research Focus at Weeks Bay Symposium

Another successful Coastweeks event, the Weeks Bay Symposium was held on September 27 at Faulkner State Community College's Fairhope Campus. Scientists presented information from a wide variety of research projects in the Weeks Bay area. Scientists, students, government agency representatives, environmental enthusiasts, and concerned citizens attended the free Symposium. Subjects ranged from historical geology and sedimentation processes to nutrient dynamics, natural history, and monitoring efforts in the watershed.

Scientific research in and around Weeks Bay has increased, especially in the last few years. The graduate fellowship program, private funding of summer projects, new funds available at the national level, and the hiring of new Reserve staff member **Scott Phipps** as Research Coordinator have all helped increase research activities. The Weeks Bay Symposium was an exciting day, with many researchers coming together, contributing to the body of knowledge and efforts to understand more about our estuary at Weeks Bay.



Many student groups utilize the excellent educational facilities at the Reserve. This group of students from the Baldwin County Home Educators Association donated hand-made stepping stones to the Reserve following a series of biology lab classes led by Gene and Trinka Brabston.

WAYS YOU CAN PROTECT ESTUARIES

At Home...

Use lawn fertilizer sparingly - or not at all. Follow product directions carefully. You'll keep it from washing into our streams and waterways.

Leave grass clippings on the lawn. Clippings decompose and are efficient, natural fertilizers.

Cut grass to proper height. A little more height is healthy, leading to a deeper root system and less erosion.

Use native plants. Gardening and landscaping with plants native to your area reduces the need for watering and fertilizing your garden.

Think before you pour. Too many hazardous products flow from drains through sewage plants into coastal rivers and estuaries.

Keep septic systems working properly. Pump out every three years to assure proper working condition.



On the Trail and in the Great Outdoors:

Fish respectfully. Follow "catch and release" practices - and keep more fish alive.

Respect life on the rock. If you turn over rocks at the beach, remember to put them back so that animals that live on top, like barnacles, stay on the top and those that live on the bottom stay on the bottom.

Have fun at the beach, but leave it clean. When you leave the beach or park, your trash should too. Be sure to bring enough bags to take all trash with you.



On Your Boat:

Keep it friendly. Waves destroy shorelines and increase erosion. For environmentally friendly boating, observe posted speeds and "no wake" signs.

Secure loose items. Don't let items blow overboard and add to marine debris.

Watch out for leaks. Be vigilant about oil leaks from boat engines. Not only are leaking engines harmful, but it's also illegal to leave a slick on the water.



Along the Waterfront:

Protect waterside trees and shrubs. Forests, salt marsh plants and sea oats are a

protective gift along the water's edge and should not be cut, pruned or altered in any way.

Plant buffers strips. Restore riverside grasses, shrubs and trees to filter pollutants, sediments and excess nutrients from ground and surface water.



In Your Community:

Share your knowledge. Spread the word about America's estuaries.

Share what you know about protecting them - with your family, students, community leaders and others.



Take action! Volunteer for a stream or beach cleanup. Encourage your local newspaper to write a story. Ask an expert to speak at your community organization or local school.

Estuary Conservation Begins With You

by John Borom

Estuaries are brackish-water areas influenced by tides, where the mouths of rivers come to the sea. Freshwater run-off brings food and other nutrients, which tend to be trapped and concentrated. Aquatic plants use the nutrients to grow and add to the productivity. Aquatic animals use estuaries as nurseries. As a result, estuaries are among the most productive ecosystems on Earth.

For the northern Gulf Coast, estuarine productivity means wide open waters and narrow, quiet tidal creeks. It means bottomland hardwood swamps, deltas, fringing marshes, sandbars and mudflats. It means Great Blue Herons, Brown Pelicans, Black Terns, Red-breasted Mergansers and Green-winged Teal. It means blue crabs, white and brown shrimp, oysters, spotted sea trout, red drum, striped mullet and southern flounders, harvested for fun and profit. It means spawning and nursery grounds for these same creatures. It means a whole host of others-phytoplankton, zooplankton, worms, jellyfishes, barnacles, snails and the like-that make up the estuarine food web.

Estuaries are worth seeing because they are beautiful and they are worth understanding and protecting because we need them. *It is our pleasure to enjoy nature and utilize the living resources, but it is our responsibility to be good stewards and to leave as much intact for future generations as possible.*

If you are an advocate of habitat protection, environmental science education and the improvement of water quality, or if you enjoy fishing, crabbing, birdwatching, natural history and photography, *membership in the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation is for you.* Your membership helps preserve critical habitat and helps fund educational and research efforts that increase our understanding of estuaries. When you join, we all win! We thank you. And so, in their own way, do the creatures who inhabit the beautiful and important coastal environment.

Concern Grows for Regional Environmental Issues

Environmental concerns for our area are abundant and residents seem to have a growing appreciation and understanding that the air and water know no county or state lines. The recent announcement that the highest ozone levels recorded in our area this summer were at the Fairhope ozone monitor "brought the issue home" to many Eastern Shore residents, who savor Baldwin county's beauty and had not been aware of a potential ozone non-attainment status for the entire Mobile metropolitan area. Unfortunately, the greater Mobile area has also ranked high in the Environmental Defense Fund's Toxic Release Inventory Scorecard.

In balancing the needs of our growing population with environmental concerns, difficult decisions are faced daily by municipal and county governments, as well as state and federal legislators and regulatory agencies. What can you do? Get involved and let your individual voice be heard. Remember that conservation efforts begin with simple, individual actions, from following tips like those on page 4, to membership and active involvement in environmental organizations.

In addition to your Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation, a number of organizations are actively involved in conservation efforts, water quality monitoring, research, and volunteer activism. Find your niche and get involved -- your individual effort can make a difference in preserving our beautiful land, water and air.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Archie and Maxine Miraldes

Meet Archie and Maxine Miraldes, Weeks Bay Volunteers who are models of their favorite motto, "the key to life is keeping busy." Whether they're assisting with the Reserve's booth at area festivals or cooking lunch for volunteers at Coastal Cleanup, the Miraldes are always "on the go."

At the Reserve, Archie can usually be found outside helping Mark maintain the nature trails or on the water serving as first mate to Bob for a tour group aboard the Reserve's *Estuarine Queen*. "I love to volunteer," says Archie with a smile as he describes his volunteer duties. "I was hooked the first time we visited the Reserve." This love of volunteerism led Archie to a second volunteer opportunity with Fairhope's Nix Center, where he serves as a part-time manager.

Archie and Maxine are fond of the Gulf Coast and decided to enjoy retirement here after visiting the area during a cross-country

motorhome trip. The Miraldes bought a home in the Rainbow Plantation community in 1997. Spending time with friends at Rainbow Plantation, visiting the beach, and playing "pickle ball" (a game similar to woofle ball) are among the many activities Archie and Maxine enjoy together in their free time.

The efforts of volunteers are essential to the Reserve's work. Thanks, Archie and Maxine!

CALENDAR

The Weeks Bay Reserve Interpretive Center is open to the public Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, call the Reserve at (334) 928-9792. Trails and boardwalks are open until sunset, even on holidays.

December

Slender, transparent Gulf menhaden less than 1 1/2 inches long are moving into the estuary from offshore.

Carnivorous plants are dormant along the Kurt G. Wintermeyer Boardwalk.

- 5 Tuesday. Citizens Advisory Committee of the Weeks Bay Watershed Project meeting, 6 p.m. at the Reserve.
- 14 Thursday. Weeks Bay Reserve Advisory Committee meeting, 2 p.m.
- 15 Friday. Christmas Party for Reserve Volunteers, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- 16 Mobile-Tensaw Delta Christmas Bird Count 2000 Contact: **Roger Clay** at 626-5153 for more information. A Foundation event.
- 23 Dauphin Island Christmas Bird Count 2000 Contact: **Dr. John Porter** at 861-2120 for more information. A Foundation event.
- 25-26 The Interpretive Center will be closed for Christmas. Trails will be open.
- 30 Fort Morgan Christmas Bird Count 2000 Contact: **Laurie Bailey** at 344-3452 for more information. A Foundation event.

January

Sea nettle polyps are attached to oyster shells in the estuary.

Juvenile striped mullet about 1 inch long are abundant in the estuary.

- 1 Monday. The Interpretive Center will be closed for New Year's Day.
- 9 Guest Lecture Series. "Delta Dawn: The History and Ecology of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta" presented by **Dr. John Valentine** of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. 7:30 p.m. at Faulkner State Community College, Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall. A Foundation event. For more information call **Dr. John Borom** at 990-0423.
- 9 Tuesday. Technical Advisory Committee meeting, 3 p.m. at the Reserve.
- 9 CAC and TAC Social 5 - 6 p.m.
- 9 Tuesday. Citizens Advisory Committee of the Weeks Bay Watershed Project meeting, 6 p.m. at the Reserve.
- 15 Monday. The Interpretive Center will be closed for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Trails will be open.
- 23-24 Needs Assessment Workshop sponsored by the Weeks Bay Reserve. For more information call **Margaret Holcombe Sedlecky** at 928-9792.
- 27 Saturday. Field trip to Choctaw National Wildlife Refuge to observe waterfowl by boat. Meet at

Springdale Mall in Mobile at 7 a.m. Go to the southwest corner of the parking lot past Morrisons. Bring warm clothes and a lunch. For more information call **Dr. Elizabeth French** at 452-1121. A Foundation event.

February

American White Pelican, Lesser Scaup and Double-crested Cormorant are abundant in the estuary.

Royal fern and cinnamon fern are dormant along the Interpretive Center Boardwalk.

- 6 Tuesday. Citizens Advisory Committee of the Weeks Bay Watershed Project meeting, 6 p.m. at the Reserve.
- 13 Guest Lecture Series. "Dissolved Oxygen Dynamics, Jubilees in Mobile Bay" presented by **Dr. Tina Miller-Way** of the University of Mobile. 7:30 p.m. at St. John's Episcopal Church in Mobile. A Foundation event. For more information, call **Dr. John Borom** at 990-0423.
- 15 Thursday. South Alabama Senior Travelers tour of the Reserve.
- 16 Monday. The Interpretive Center will be closed for the Presidents Day holiday.
- 27 Tuesday. The Interpretive Center will be closed for Mardi Gras.

Safe Harbor RV Resort Open for Fun

The Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation invites you to visit the new and improved **Safe Harbor RV Resort** located directly across Highway 98 from the Weeks Bay Reserve Interpretive Center.



CALL TODAY TO MAKE RESERVATIONS FOR YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS. DAILY, WEEKLY OR MONTHLY RATES

Safe Harbor RV Resort
11401 U.S. Highway 98
Fairhope, AL 36532
(334) 928-2629 or (800) 928-4544
New Manager: Roger Plemons

Estuarine Zooplankton

Among the most exotic animals in northern Gulf Coast estuaries are two species of tiny, planktonic shrimps of the family Sergestidae. *Acetes americanus* and *Lucifer faxoni* live, grow, reproduce and die in an



endless cycle that help make estuaries biologically productive. *Acetes* has minute claws on the last three pair of legs on the

first body section and is most abundant in low salinity bays from May through July. *Lucifer* has a minute claw only on the last pair of legs and is most abundant in inshore waters from August through September.

Alligator Snapping Turtle

Adult males of the alligator snapping turtle (*Macrolemys temminckii*) are the largest freshwater turtles in North America. Several specimens of more than 200 pounds have been found, and believable reports exist of at least one that exceeded 300 pounds. Adult females usually weigh less than 55 pounds. They have long lives. One in captivity has lived for more than 60 years, and there are even reports of some big, old turtles with Civil War bullets lodged in their shells. The species is confined to the United States in



Alligator Snapping Turtle
(*Macrolemys temminckii*)

river systems that drain into the Gulf. They can inhabit estuaries for considerable periods as indicated by barnacles attached to their shells.

Most of their time is spent lying quietly on the bottom, where its dark, rough body is well concealed. It is the only reptile in the world known to have a predatory lure in its mouth. It waits patiently, holding its mouth open and wiggling the small, pink, wormlike appendage on its tongue to lure passing fish. Its diet includes fish, crawfish, mussels, snakes, small alligators, turtles, amphibians, snails, crabs, water birds, small mammals as well as acorns, wild grapes and roots.

Sexual maturity is attained in from 11 to 13 years for both males and females. Breeding occurs in the early spring, and egg laying begins a month or so later. Only nesting females are known to leave the water, and the species lays only one clutch per year. Up to 52 eggs are produced per female per season. Incubation is somewhat more than three months. Sex is determined by temperature with females produced

under warmer temperatures. Hatching success for unprotected wild nests is unknown. Nests are preyed upon by raccoons and juveniles and hatchlings are eaten by fish, alligators, birds and otters.

Humans are the only predators on adults, as the species is heavily exploited for its meat, which is consumed in both domestic and international markets. In recent years, the species has declined drastically throughout its range, due to overcollection for the meat trade. A 100 pound turtle can produce 30 pounds of meat. The Louisiana market for meat is very demanding. In 1993, the meat was selling for \$3.25 with bones and \$4.25 deboned, at wholesale prices. Their meat was commonly sold in a popular brand of soup in the United States.

The species is not on the brink of extinction, but it is heavily depleted in most of its range and in need of protection and management. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature lists it as "vulnerable", that is, a taxon that will likely move into the "endangered" category in the near future. The World Wildlife Federation lists it in the top 10 most endangered species because it is quickly being depleted due to increased shipments to many international markets including Asia. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considers it a "candidate species" for listing as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The Alabama Natural Heritage Program has given it a rank of S3. This means that it is rare and vulnerable to extirpation. They may no longer be commercialized in Alabama and are protected by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Did You Know?

When salt water is swallowed, it causes dehydration of body tissues as the kidneys pull reserves of water from the body to excrete the excess salt. In many terrestrial vertebrate animals, this causes eventual death. But thanks to specialized glands, sea birds can survive on fresh water or salt water and are able to escape such a briny fate.

Cormorants, ducks, gulls and pelicans among others have a pair of salt glands nestled in depressions of their skull, just above the eye sockets. Salt glands are many times more efficient than the kidneys in removing salt from body fluids. Excess salt in the body is carried by the blood to these glands and is filtered through the capillaries and cells to form a clear liquid that is eliminated through the nostrils. When this clear salty liquid is seen dripping from their bills, the birds appear to have runny noses. This ability allows sea birds to live far from fresh water and still maintain their health.

Salt gland activity varies in response to the concentration of salt in the blood and body fluids. Sea birds that live near estuaries or rivers will consume fresh water and have less active salt glands-as well as less clear salty liquid dripping from their bills-than their oceanic counterparts.



Ring-billed Gull
(*Larus delawarensis*)



PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

More of the beautiful winning entries from the Open Division - Flora category in the Foundation and Reserve's 2000 photo contest: (left) Second place, **Porter Marco McKnight, Daphne**; (above) Honorable Mention, **Shannon Leigh Anderson, Daphne**. First place winners were featured in the Summer issue of *The Pelican Post*. Watch future issues and our Web site for additional images, as well as details about next year's contest. Remember, you can begin taking your photos now to enter next year's contest!

**THE WEEKS BAY RESERVE FOUNDATION THANKS OUR
NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS AND DONORS - FALL 2000**

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Cannonball Jellyfish

A cannonball jellyfish (*Stomolophus meleagris*) may be more than seven inches in diameter, and has the general appearance of a large half-egg shaped mushroom, an illusion attained by its thick tough substance. The color is milky bluish or yellowish, showing brown reticulations over its entire surface. The margin is densely pigmented brown with distinct spots. Eight short mouth arms are joined together to form a stem like mouth tube. For a jellyfish, the cannonball is a fast swimmer, and feeds on microcrustacea. The stinging cells are too weak to endanger man. The descriptive Latin name means "many-mouthed hunter".

Cannonball jellyfish sometimes occur in swarms of millions of individuals in the Gulf. They are common along the Alabama coast during the summer and seem to be most common in Mobile Bay from September through December.

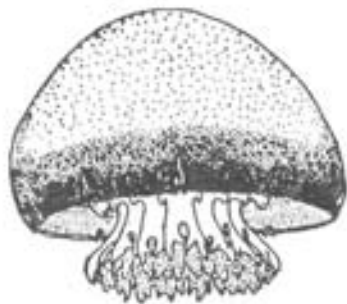
The species has a potential value as a health food item in the world market because it is rich in collagen. The human body needs collagen to build connective tissue. For more than 1,000 years, Asians have been eating jellyfish for medicinal reasons to treat high blood pressure, arthritis, bronchitis, gout and even some cancers. Research continues. Jellyfish is an ideal diet food because it is low in fat, protein, cholesterol and calories.

At least one commercial fishing company in the Florida Panhandle is already making semi-regular shipments of cannonball jellyfish to Asia and South America which have offered to buy as much as 500 metric tons. In addition, Asian food stores and restaurants sell approximately 14 million pounds of jellyfish in the United States annually.

Cannonball jellyfish can be efficiently caught with surface trawls. Because they spoil quickly, processing must occur soon after harvest. Jellyfish are mostly water and must be dehydrated to obtain products of desirable structure and texture. They are dried and pickled in salt and alum-a process that takes about ten days. They are usually cut into small brown strips and mixed with cucumber slices to make a crunchy, salty salad.

To prepare cannonball jellyfish at home, soak in water overnight in a refrigerator, drain and rinse. Cut into thin strips, and quickly blanch in boiling water.

Marinate in a mixture of seasonings and add to vegetables or salads. Jellyfish have a crunchy texture Asians describe as "music to the teeth."



Cannonball Jellyfish
(*Stomolophus meleagris*)

SPECIAL THANKS

NOAA Grant: Thanks to the efforts of **Gil Gilder** of ADECA and Reserve Manager **L. G. Adams**, the Foundation was awarded a grant of \$200,000 which was used to pay off the mortgage owed on the 20 acre Marina Property located at the mouth of Fish River, purchased at auction in 1997.

Coastal Cleanup Volunteers: This year's Coastal Cleanup in the Weeks Bay Zone included 77 volunteers, who collected 2,066 pounds of trash by boat and by walking! Special thanks to returning group volunteers **Boy Scout Troop 406** from Montgomery, **Shell Chemical** from Saraland, **Boy Scout Troop 47** from Silverhill, **Fairhope Boys and Girls Club**, **CIBA Corporation**, and numerous volunteers from the **Weeks Bay Watershed Project**, the **Weeks Bay Volunteers** and the **Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation**, as well as **Reserve staff**. Thanks also to the many new, individual volunteers who participated.

New Speaker System for Auditorium: The Foundation has provided funds for purchasing a high quality speaker system, including wireless microphones and a multi-frequency speaker, which greatly improves the acoustics for workshops and large meetings in the Reserve Auditorium.

Color Laser Printer: Special thanks to **International Paper** for a grant which assisted in purchasing a new, high speed, color laser printer for producing educational materials at the Reserve.

You Can Make a Difference!

We share our estuaries with many other creatures, so our actions have far-reaching impact. You can help the conservation of Brown Pelicans in the following ways:

- Never cast a baited line when a pelican is close by.
- Never leave unattended fishing tackle out in the open, especially when baited.
- Try not to foul fish hooks or lines on telephone or electric lines.
- Do not discard monofilament line into the water.
- Most important - never feed the pelicans in an area where people are fishing.



Brown Pelican
Pelecanus occidentalis

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Skipper Tonsmeire

Suggestions and comments from readers on future topics of interest are welcome. If you know of others who would be interested in receiving this newsletter, call the Foundation at 990-5004. *The Pelican Post* is produced quarterly by PRADCOM, Inc. of Fairhope, AL. Karen McGuire Moore, President. Funds for publication are provided by members of the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation.

JOIN US!

Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation

Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation is a non-profit organization whose members provide assistance and support to the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve's goals and programs.

As a member, you will be joining a group of people with similar interests and concerns for natural resources. You can become directly involved with the Reserve's research and educational programs by volunteering to help with field trips, seminars, cultural events, newsletters, and special projects.

You will be regularly informed of Reserve activities through newsletters, special mailings, and meetings. The opportunities for involvement are unlimited. Whatever your talents or interests, the Reserve can use your support. You, the environment, and your community will benefit as a result of your membership. If you are not a member and would like to join, please mail this form along with your tax-deductible donation.

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-Stuart Udall*

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American Coot
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