



The Pelican Post

Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation Newsletter

Fall 2002



Rosie Fox's photo showing a variety of glorious blooms in the pitcher plant bog at the Reserve captured First Place in the Open Division, Flora Category, as well as the Best of Show award. To see all the winning entries as they were submitted (color or black and white) visit the Foundation's website at www.weeksbay.org.

Outstanding Group of Entries Highlights 2002 Photo Contest

Winners in the Third Annual Photography Contest co-sponsored by the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation and the Reserve were honored at a reception August 16, held at the Faulkner State Community College Fairhope Campus. Another outstanding group of more than 80 entries was received this year, according to Reserve Manager L. G. Adams. "We continue to be so pleased with the quality and variety of the entries," Adams says. "I think the contest

creates excitement about the incredible beauty to be found within the Reserve boundaries and the entire Weeks Bay watershed, both for the photographers and the general public who view the pictures. We hope the contest helps increase everyone's commitment to preserving this unique and fragile habitat."

Dr. John Borom, representing the Foundation Board of Directors, presented cash awards to the first and second place finishers in each of six categories, as well as T-shirts for those receiving honorable mentions.

"Participating in the photo contest is an excellent way to support the work of the Reserve and the Foundation by helping increase public awareness about the wonderful natural resources we have right here in Baldwin County," says Borom. "We also encourage everyone to consider joining the Foundation as a member or making a tax-deductible contribution."

Foundation memberships range from \$10 per year for students to \$30 for individuals, \$50 for families and \$250 for businesses. As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, the Foundation can accept donations of stocks, bonds, real estate and equipment, as well as cash donations. For more information, call 990-5004.

Plans are already underway for the Fourth Annual Photo Contest, which will accept photographs taken beginning July 16, 2002. Get out your camera now and start recording the year-round beauty at the Reserve for next year's entries!



Rosie Fox of Foley displays her top-winning photograph and enjoys congratulations from Reserve Manager L. G. Adams (left) and Foundation Board member Dr. John Borom at the reception for this year's contest winners.



Open Division - Fauna - First Place
Rosie Rox of Foley



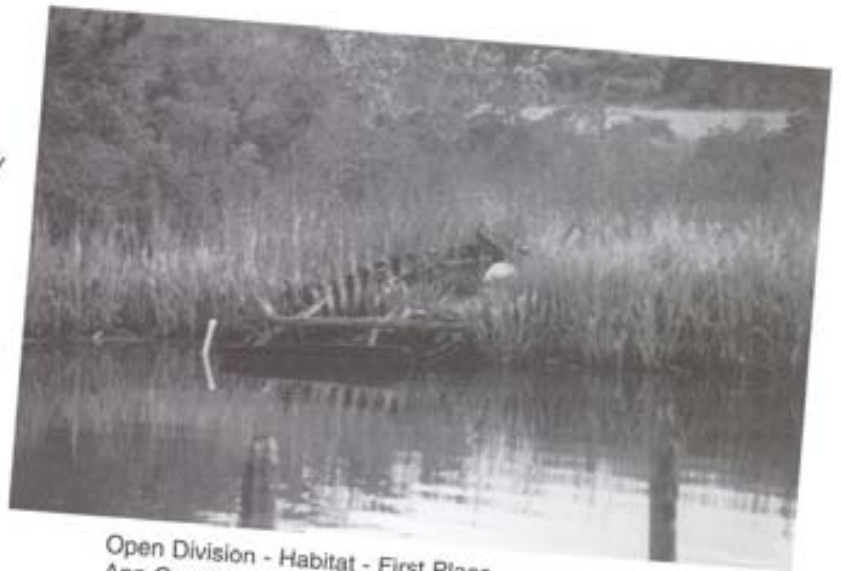
Junior Division - Fauna - First Place
Nathan Smith of Robertsdale

Third Annual Photo Contest

First place winners in the Third Annual Photography Contest sponsored by the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation and the Reserve are highlighted here. Watch for additional photographs in future issues of The Pelican Post.

Special thanks to our panel of judges, representing a variety of professions from fine art to journalism and the natural sciences, for donating their time. Also thanks to Maureen Nation and the Weeks Bay volunteers for preparing refreshments for the reception.

Visit the Foundation website for more photos at www.weeksbay.org.



Open Division - Habitat - First Place
Ann Crenshaw of Chickasaw



Junior Division - Habitat - First Place
Edie Dyas of Foley



Junior Division - Flora - First Place
Nathan Smith of Robertsdale

Winners in the Third Annual Photo Contest gathered for a reception in Fairhope on August 16 to see the winning entries and collect their prizes. (Right) Pictured are (front row, l - r) Nathan Smith of Robertsdale and Andrea Fox of Foley; (middle row) Yvonne Leigh of Fairhope, Ann Crenshaw of Chickasaw, and Rosie Fox of Foley; and (back row) A. Lee Swetman of Daphne, Kim Metz of Robertsdale, and Paul Sevening of Magnolia Springs.



Open Division

Fauna: First Place, Rosie Fox; Second Place, Paul Sevening; Honorable Mention, Rosie Fox.
 Flora: First Place, Rosie Fox; Second Place, A. Lee Swetman; Honorable Mention, A. Lee Swetman.
 Habitats: First Place, Ann Crenshaw; Second Place, Kim Metz; Honorable Mention, Yvonne Leigh.



Junior Division

Fauna: First Place, Nathan Smith
 Flora: First Place, Nathan Smith; Second Place, Nathan Smith
 Habitats: First Place, Edie Dyas; Second Place, Andrea Fox

(Left) Junior Division winners Nathan Smith of Robertsdale and Andrea Fox of Foley display their winning entries.

Backyard Birding Tips

Birding is a great way to stay in touch with the natural world. The following tips will help you provide a safe, healthy habitat for birds as well as hours of enjoyment for you and your family.

Position bird feeders in locations that do not provide cover for cats to wait in ambush! Cats are a significant source of mortality among birds that come to feeders.

Make sure your bird feeder is at least three yards away from windows. Birds cannot distinguish windows until it is usually too late, causing millions of bird deaths each year.

Clean your bird feeder frequently. Disinfecting feeders by scrubbing with a solution of 1/4 cup of

bleach and two gallons of warm water every few weeks will minimize the spread of disease to visiting birds.

Rinse out your bird bath daily in summer. Once a month, scrub with a solution of 1/4 cup bleach and two gallons of warm water, rinse thoroughly and refill.

Bird baths should be about one to three inches deep, dull or neutral in color, and not easily tipped. Small birds can drown in water deeper than three inches. A roughened bottom will give birds a foothold.

Bird baths can be placed on the ground or elevated a few feet. It is best to place them in an open area, but with cover to retreat to within about ten to twenty feet.

Happy backyard birdwatching!

May - August 2002

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DONORS AND NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

Dr. Michael Agron
 Linda Baker
 Ruth Beasley
 Alan Belcher, DVM
 Dr. & Mrs. Galen Brey
 Milton & Margaret Brown
 Marie Caffey
 Curt Chapman
 Dr. Barry Corona
 David C. DeLaney
 Gary Dennis
 Kelly Family
 James Faulkner
 Bernie Fogarty - Alabama Power
 Fred & Blair Garth

John Glaze
 Charles Harper
 Xavier Hartmann - Hartmann,
 Blackmon & Kilgore, PC
 Dr. Doug Haywick
 Alice & George Holmes
 Merton & Doris Jacobs
 Bucky Jakins - Baldwin EMC
 Tom Joiner
 Mayor Tim Kant
 Larry V. Meese
 Carol Ann Merrell
 W. R. Miller
 Glenn Moyer - Moyer Ford
 Patmarie Nedelka

Wilhelmina Nonkes
 Ellis Ollinger -
 Flowerwood Nursery
 Mr. & Mrs. John Parker
 Cliff Pitman
 Barbara & Jay Pryor
 Allyn Ramsey
 Thomas Rothaar
 Mayor Tim Russell
 Erica Seiden
 Peter Shuba
 Hector & Martha Sutherland
 Millicent Tallard
 Leonard & Pamela Turner
 Laurel Wilson

NEWS BRIEFS

On-site Wasterwater Management Workshop Coming September 26

A one-day workshop open to homeowners, contractors, septic tank installers, engineers and others interested in on-site wastewater options has been scheduled for September 26 at the Reserve. Part of the Coastal Decision-makers Workshop series, the day will include lecture topics such as treatment options, conventional and alternative systems, and current rules and licensing requirements, as well as a field trip.

The fee of \$25 includes lunch and materials. CEU credits are available. For more information on workshop content, call L. G. Adams at the Reserve at 928-9792. To register, call Sandra Pate at Faulkner State Community College, 990-0420.

Reserve Hosts Nonpoint Source Pollution and Watersheds Workshop

Participants from throughout Alabama and coastal Mississippi gathered at the Reserve in June to learn more about the tremendous pollution that results from stormwater runoff into our creeks, rivers, lakes and bays. New regulations mandated by the EPA and enforced in Alabama by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) are creating new interest in this important topic of "nonpoint source" pollution.

This year a large audience of municipal officials, public works staff and regulatory personnel as well as educators came together to discuss how watershed boundaries, as opposed to political boundaries, need to be used in developing effective stormwater management plans. Participants were given information and resources to help them educate everyone from their students to landowners, farmers, and elected officials on techniques for reducing and eliminating runoff and the ensuing problems it causes. Speakers also provided information on writing local ordinances that regulate activities including residential and roadway construction, commercial development, and agriculture.

Many regional and national studies have demonstrated the high value that Americans place on natural areas and their willingness to pay for preservation, especially when it results in increased property values. For more information on the workshop or these important topics, call Mike Shelton at the Reserve at 928-9792.

Summer Highlights

POND CELEBRATION The Reserve and Auburn University Marine Extension hosted a "Pond Landscaping with Native Flora" workshop" on June 7, which also celebrated the first anniversary of construction of the Reserve's demonstration pond.

Cliff McCreedy and the **South Alabama Pond Society** were recognized with a permanent marker near the pond for their role in design and construction.

RIVER CLEAN UP Braving rain, wind and cool conditions, an intrepid 114 volunteers descended on the Reserve for the Sixth Annual River Clean on May 18. A record 6,150 pounds of debris were removed from area waterways and bridge-crossings. Plan now to join in Coastal Clean Up on Saturday, September 21!



(Top) Patti Hurley, ADEM, presents the Nonpoint Source Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) program. (Middle) Michael Shelton, Mike Mullen and Patti Hurley instruct participants on the use of stormwater best management practices. (Bottom) Michael Shelton, Weeks Bay Watershed Coordinator, and Mike Mullen, Troy State University, demonstrate "erosion in a bottle."

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Volunteer Margaret Weeks greets visitors at the reception desk.

Though her accent sets her apart from the visitors, staff and other volunteers at the Reserve, her last name unites them all. Meet **Margaret Weeks**, a volunteer at the Reserve who hails from just outside of London, England.

When Margaret moved south to Foley from St. Paul, Minnesota more than five years ago, she was drawn to the Reserve because she shares its name - Weeks. "Weeks is actually an Irish name," Margaret points out, "and I was drawn to the Weeks Bay Reserve not only for the name but also because of my background in science." Margaret has a strong science background with a career spanning from freshwater research at the University of Minnesota to product research in the medical products division at 3M.

Margaret enjoys volunteering her time at the Reserve where she often fills in for Betty at the front desk. She is frequently the first person visitors see on their visit to the Reserve. "Everyone is so nice here from the staff and volunteers to the public," she says, "but I do have trouble sometimes with that Southern accent!"

In her spare time Margaret keeps quite busy. She gardens and has a great love for art. Recently, she even added an art studio to her home. Here she enjoys painting watercolors, making jewelry and doing embroidery and tapestry. A big project for her now is painting scrolls on shields for a volunteer project in Elberta - Citizens for the Preservation of Elberta. She also looks forward to a challenging new project that involves painting a mural for the farmers market in Elberta.

White Pelicans Enjoy Summer Sunset Over Weeks Bay

By Celeste Hinds

On a cool evening of June 10, six White Pelicans *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos* sat gracefully in a semi-circle while we six birders enjoyed the setting sun and munched on steamed shrimp. We had joined them in the middle of Weeks Bay, cut off the motor as we savored the silence, and sat in awe as the great meatball in the sky slipped down the western horizon.

Brown Pelicans *Pelecanus occidentalis* are permanent residents along the Alabama coast. Not the white ones. They normally migrate north and northwest to their breeding grounds, leaving us about middle or late March. In cool months the white beauties are easily seen along the Causeway on Mobile Bay. But seeing them in June was a rare treat. I've never before observed them on Weeks Bay, much less in mid-June.

White Pelicans are slightly larger than their brown cousins and are typically found in fresh water, where they consume perch, chub, trout and carp, as well as crayfish and large salamanders. The brown guys mostly occur in more salty habitats where they consume anchovies, menhaden and sardines.

Brown pelicans are solitary feeders and dive for fish, often with a great splash of water as they hit head first. White Pelicans employ highly coordinated feeding strategies, usually fishing in groups. They often form a semi-circle and "herd" the fish to the center of their group, where they scoop their prey with huge bills.

Just last Saturday a group of birders were treated to the sight of about 5,000 nesting Brown Pelicans on Gaillard Island. I told the group that the last of the white ones went north near the end of March. Not so! Six remained on Weeks Bay to delight us as night fell over South Alabama.



White pelicans observed in flight and then resting together at sunset in Weeks Bay were a rare treat for June birdwatchers this year!

CALENDAR

The Weeks Bay Reserve Interpretive Center is open to the public Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., and Sunday 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. The Interpretive Center is located at 11300 US 98 just west of the Fish River bridge. For more information call the Reserve at (251) 928-9792, or fax to (251) 928-1792.

SEPTEMBER

Brown Pelicans (Pelecanus occidentalis) are floating over the estuaries.

- 2 Holiday. The Interpretive Center will be closed. All trails and boardwalks will remain open.
- 10 Citizens Advisory Committee meeting, Tuesday 6 p.m. at the Reserve. Public is welcome.
- 10 Guest Lecture series. "Birds of Coastal Alabama" presented by **John Borom**, Director Faulkner State Community College Fairhope Campus. 7:30 p.m. FSCC, Centennial Hall. Bring a friend.
- 12 Weeks Bay Advisory Committee meeting, 2 p.m. at the Reserve. Public is welcome.
- 18 Discovering Alabama Film Series - "**Southeast Alabama/Wiregrass Region**" Where: Faulkner State Community College - Centennial Hall Auditorium 990-0420, Time: 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Open to General Public, No Charge, Refreshments Provided!
- 21 16th Annual National Coastal Cleanup. Register first at the Weeks Bay Marina under the US 98 bridge. 8 a.m. - 12 noon, followed by a free lunch. Contact Bob McCormack or Mike Shelton at the Reserve, (251) 928-9792. For an Alabama Cleanup Zone in your area you can also contact Amy King at the Alabama Coastal Programs Office at (251) 990-0900.
- 21 Field trip to the 104-acre Crosby Arboretum in Picayune, Mississippi to observe native plants and wildlife. A "civilized walk in the woods" with pathways and boardwalks through pine forests and grassy savanna. Pitcher plant bog exhibits. Meet at Shoney's parking lot at Tillman's Corner off I-10 7:30 a.m. There will be a \$4.00 per person fee for adults, and children under 12 will be \$2.00. Lunch at a local restaurant. Return to Mobile around 4:30 p.m. Bring a friend. For reservations call **John Borom** at 990-0423.
- 25 Discovering Alabama Film Series - "**Coastal Alabama, Part I: Natural Diversity**" Where: Faulkner State Community College - Centennial Hall Auditorium 990-0420, Time: 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Open to General Public, No Charge, Refreshments Provided!
- 26 Onsite Wastewater Management Workshop, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Faulkner State Community College, Fairhope campus. Contact FSCC for registration and information at (251)990-0420.

OCTOBER

Broad-winged Hawks (Buteo platypterus) soar over estuaries as they migrate from North America to spend the winter in Central and South America.

- 1 Citizens Advisory Committee of the Weeks Bay Watershed Project meeting, Tuesday 6 p.m. at the Reserve.
- 2 Discovering Alabama Film Series - "**Coastal Alabama, Part II: Environmental Issues**" Where: Faulkner State Community College - Centennial Hall Auditorium 990-0420, Time: 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Open to General Public, No Charge, Refreshments Provided!
- 4-6 Annual Native Plant Sale, hosted by the Weeks Bay Reserve Volunteers, Friday through Sunday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., across the road from the Reserve at Safe Harbor RV Park. Contact **Maureen Nation** at the Reserve for more information, (251) 928-9792.
- 5 National Estuaries Day. Contact the Coastal Section Office at 990-0900 for more information and activities.
- 8 Guest Lecture Series. "Marine Reserves, Not A Panacea" presented by **Dr. Bob Shipp**, Chairman, University of South Alabama Department of Marine Science and Director, Alabama Center for Estuarine Studies. 7:30 p.m. Government Street Baptist Church in Mobile. Bring a friend.

- 9 Discovering Alabama Film Series - "**Red-cockaded Woodpecker**" and "**Wildlife History**" Where: Faulkner State Community College - Centennial Hall Auditorium 990-0420 Time: 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Open to General Public, No Charge, Refreshments Provided!
- 14 Holiday. The Interpretive Center will be closed. All trails and boardwalks will remain open for your walking and sightseeing pleasure.
- 16 Discovering Alabama Film Series - "**Black Warrior River**" Where: Faulkner State Community College - Centennial Hall Auditorium 990-0420 Time: 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Open to General Public, No Charge, Refreshments Provided!
- 18-25 Annual National Estuarine Research Reserve Conference, Waquoit Bay NERR, Massachusetts. Some of the Weeks Bay staff will be out of their offices during this week attending the meeting.
- 18 National Water Quality Monitoring Day. For more information contact Mike Shelton at the Reserve, (251) 928-9792.
- 19 Field Trip to Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve aboard the Estuarine Queen to observe wildlife and wildflowers. Meet at Lulu's Marina at 8 a.m. Lunch on your own at Lulu's Sunset Grill around noon. Bring a friend. For reservations call **John Borom** 990-0423.
- 23 Discovering Alabama Film Series - "**Horse Pens 40'**" Where: Faulkner State Community College - Centennial Hall Auditorium 990-0420 Time: 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Open to General Public, No Charge, Refreshments Provided!
- 27 Standard Time begins, set clocks back one hour.
- 30 Discovering Alabama Film Series - "**Fort Toulouse/Jackson**" Where: Faulkner State Community College - Centennial Hall Auditorium 990-0420, Time: 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Open to General Public, No Charge, Refreshments Provided!

NOVEMBER

White Pelicans (Pelecanus erythrorhynchos) are riding air currents over estuaries, rural areas and towns.

- 5 Citizens Advisory Committee of the Weeks Bay Watershed Project meeting, Tuesday 6 p.m. at the Reserve.
- 11 Holiday. The Interpretive Center will be closed. All trails and boardwalks will remain open for your walking and sightseeing pleasure.
- 6 Discovering Alabama Film Series - "**Alabama Soils**" Where: Faulkner State Community College - Centennial Hall Auditorium 990-0420, Time: 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Open to General Public, No Charge, Refreshments Provided!
- 11 Guest Lecture Series. "Marine Resources Division Activities" presented by **Steve Heath**, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. 7:30 p.m. Faulkner State Community College Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall. Bring a friend.
- 13 Discovering Alabama Film Series - "**Forest History**" and "**Forest Issues**" Where: Faulkner State Community College - Centennial Hall Auditorium 990-0420, Time: 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Open to General Public, No Charge, Refreshments Provided!
- 22 Field trip to the Mobile Tensaw River Delta to observe waterfowl, wildlife and bottomland hardwood wetlands aboard The Delta Explorer. Meet at the dock at Blakeley State Park at 8:30 a.m. There will be a \$1.00 per person fee to enter the park and a \$17.00 per person fee for the boat. After the tour there will be a bring your own picnic lunch at the park. Limit 50 people. Bring a friend. For reservations call **Marilyn Craig** 438-3060.
- 28 Thanksgiving Holiday. The Interpretive Center will be closed. All trails and boardwalks will remain open for your walking and sightseeing pleasure.



NINTH ANNUAL
WEEKS BAY
NATIVE PLANT SALE!



FRI, SAT & SUN

OCTOBER 4, 5, 6
8 AM - 4 PM



SAFE HARBOR R.V. PARK
ACROSS U. S. HIGHWAY 98
FROM WEEKS BAY RESERVE

- BUTTERFLY PLANTS
- HUMMINGBIRD PLANTS
- PERENNIALS
- SHRUBS
- TREES
- WETLAND PLANTS
- DUNE PLANTS



Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
11300 U.S. Highway 98
Fairhope, AL 36532
Phone: (334) 928-9792 FAX (334) 928-1792



16th Annual National Coastal Clean Up

Weeks Bay Marina
Saturday, September 21, 2002

WHEN: 8am—12pm, Saturday September 21

WHERE: Register at Tent at Weeks Bay
Marina parking lot by Lulu's Sunset Grill
under Fish River bridge.

WEAR: Old clothes & shoes, sunscreen

WHAT TO DO: Register at Marina first, we
will supply you with bags, gloves, and a
site to clean if you need one. We also
encourage boaters to participate !

FOOD: We will be providing a free lunch to all
who volunteer to keep our environment
clean and healthy !

See You Then !

Crouching Tiger Beetles Hidden Larvae

by John Borom

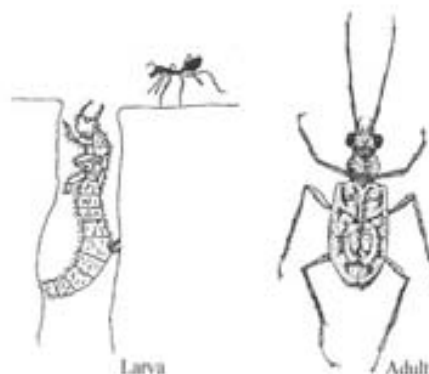
Beetles (*Order Coleoptera*) can be easily recognized by the armorlike fore wings that cover the softer membranous hind wings used for flying. When the fore wings are folded, they meet in a neat straight line over the middle of the abdomen. Beetles go through complete metamorphosis which means the egg hatches as a worm-like larva, and all growth is attained in this stage. Then the larva encases itself in a secreted cover and goes into the pupa stage. During this time the insect completely changes body form from the worm-like larva and the fully developed adult emerges.

There are over 1,500 species of tiger beetles worldwide, about 240 in North America and more than 30 species are known from the Gulf Coast. Members of the genus *Cicindela* are the most widespread. Tiger beetles are among the most obvious of beetles, and can be recognized by their large pointed mandibles, antennae that arise from the top of the head, long spindly legs which hold the body off the ground, narrow thorax and broad, almost oblong wings.

As their name implies these are active, agile insects, quick to take flight, possessing good vision, and in many cases having colorful patterns which are quite attractive. They range from one half to about one inch in length. Most are more or less shiny and metallic-looking, and many species are brightly colored with white spots or stripes. Colors range from green, violet or orange to black and white. Species tend to match the soil color. Some species occur only on open sandy habitats, including estuarine beaches and edges of marshes above the high tide line.

When approached, tiger beetles first run rapidly and then fly a short distance if you get too close. They sometimes burrow into sand at night or on hot

Tiger Beetles
(Order
Coleoptera)



days. Adult tiger beetles ambush and consume other insects and small creatures. From a crouching perch, they wait for their prey. When prey passes by, the camouflaged beetles lunge and grab their target and devour it on the spot. Their hunting skills and ferocity are why they are called tiger beetles. However, like the big cats, some species of tiger beetles have been pushed out of much of their original habitat.

Tiger beetle larvae are S-shaped, with dorsal abdominal hooks which are used to hold position in their vertical burrows. They are highly predaceous waiting for prey to venture close enough to be grasped. Any insect not larger than the larva is potential prey, but ants seem to make up the majority of their food.

In some areas, tiger beetles are listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Some species have disappeared from many beaches because of excessive development, off-road vehicle use and excessive human trampling. Since tiger beetles spend nearly two years as larvae in burrows in the sand before emerging as adults, an undisturbed sand environment is crucial. As humans take away more of their habitat, tiger beetles have less places to live where they are able to survive.

from **The Cousteau Almanac**
© 1980 Jacques Cousteau

The protection of the environment, of course, is intimately connected to the quest for happiness. When we perceive our oneness with humanity, it is easy to perceive humanity's oneness with the environment. Even the salinity of our bodies is a legacy of our marine origins, as the first living cell took shape from ocean waters. Safeguarding the environment, then, is a way of extending ourselves in every way possible—by love, by sharing, by creation. We can find happiness in protecting the world around us not only because we cherish it for its awesome beauty, power, mystery, but because we cherish our fellow humans, those who live today and those who will live tomorrow, living beings who, like ourselves, will increasingly depend on the environment, for happiness and even for life itself.

Guest Lecture Series Resumes

After a brief summer break, the popular Weeks Bay Foundation Guest Lecture Series resumes in September. Check the calendar on page 6 and plan now to attend a session this fall.

The lectures are a great "free" evening activity for people of all ages. Some teachers even offer "extra credit" for attending! For more information, contact Dr. John Borom, series coordinator, at 990-0423.



Dr. David Yeager of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (NEP) addresses the May lecture audience.

Alabama's Official State Reptile

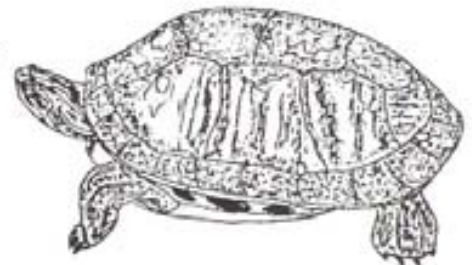
by John Borom

The Alabama red-bellied turtle (*Pseudemys alabamensis*) inhabits the fresh to brackish waters of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, Mobile Bay and rivers and creeks with an abundance of submerged aquatic vegetation, the turtle's principle food. It is found nowhere else in the world.

Adult turtles are approximately one foot in length. Females are slightly larger with a carapace (upper shell) length reaching 13 inches. Carapace color may be greenish to dark brown or black with reddish, orangish or yellowish vertical markings along the sides. The plastron (lower shell) may be pale yellow to red with or without dark markings. Colors and markings are usually more intense in young turtles. The head and soft parts are olive to black with yellow striping. A unique feature is the terminal notch on the upper jaw flanked on each side by a distinct tooth-like cusp.

Males and females reach maturity at four and six years of age, respectively. Nesting occurs from May through July. Females leave the water and venture onto dry land to lay their eggs. A shallow nest is excavated in sandy soil where four to nine eggs are deposited. Hatchlings usually emerge during the summer. However, hatchlings may overwinter and emerge the following spring from eggs deposited in late July.

The species has declined noticeably within the past 20 years. It was placed on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Endangered Species List in 1987. The turtle was designated the "official state reptile" in 1990. The Alabama Natural Heritage Program has given it a rank of S1. This means that it is critically imperiled because of its extreme rarity making it especially vulnerable to extirpation. The turtle is protected under the Nongame Species Regulation by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Reasons for the turtle's decline include a decrease and disturbance of suitable nesting areas, illegal trapping for food and the pet trade, and entrapment and drowning in fishing nets. Fish Crows take a high proportion of the eggs, and there is a high rate of egg predation by the imported fire ant. In addition, alligators have increased and may be contributing to the decline. Look for a photograph of the Alabama red-bellied turtle on the Foundation's website.



Alabama Red-bellied Turtle
Pseudemys alabamensis

DID YOU KNOW?

Several estuarine fishes have parasites which can cause coastal residents to lose their appetite. The larval marine tapeworm (*Poecilancistrum caryophyllum*) is about six inches long, white, delicate and is frequently entwined in a fillet of spotted seatrout and other members of the drum family such as silver seatrout, sand seatrout, silver perch, red drum, spot, Atlantic croaker and black drum. They usually go unnoticed, and people merely think the stringy pieces of "fish" are veins or nerves, as they enjoy a tasty meal of fresh fish.

The adult tapeworm is about eight inches long and attaches to the intestine and spiral valve walls of a bull shark or other related sharks. Eggs are produced in segments and are voided with feces into seawater where they disperse.

After about a week, tiny spherical ciliated larvae pop out of the eggs. If eaten within two days by an appropriate crustacean, another stage develops, and the crustacean becomes infective for fishes. When eaten by an appropriate fish, usually a spotted seatrout, the larva will penetrate the intestine of the fish, develop into the last larval stage, and become infective for sharks.

Parasitologists tell us that this tapeworm is not dangerous to humans when eaten, even if not cooked. All of the above stages of the tapeworm will be digested and fail to develop if eaten by an improper predator such as man. Humans are usually infected by a parasite that includes mammals in its life cycle. As a general rule, fishes from salt water are safer to eat than those from fresh water. This is because in nature there are more mammals that feed on fishes in fresh water than in salt water. Cooking any fish kills the parasites.



Marine Tapeworm
(*Poecilancistrum caryophyllum*)

A Brief History of the Weeks Bay Reserve: Part II

(Continued from the Summer, 2002 issue of *The Pelican Post*.)
by John Borom

Editor's Note: Frequently we are asked questions about the history of the Reserve, how it began, who purchased the land in the original boundaries, who owns the Reserve today, etc. This series will recap the history of the Reserve. Many volunteers were actively involved in the creation of the Reserve, innovatively using both private contributions and the resources of federal and state programs to make the Reserve a reality. Fortunately for all of us, a group of volunteers had the foresight many years ago to preserve these incredible natural resources for future generations.

The Foundation continued its land acquisition efforts for the Reserve with the purchase of a 20-acre tract at Turkey Branch in 1992. In 1993, the Foundation acquired a 2.94 acre tract on Mobile Bay and in 1994, the Foundation purchased a 64-acre tract on Fish River.

Construction of a Boardwalk Trail and the Interpretive Center started in 1993. The Grand Opening Ceremony was held in 1994 and the 32-foot pontoon boat *Estuarine Queen* was purchased. In 1995, the Foundation funded the addition of a live animal display room to the Interpretive Center, developed new exhibits and increased the specimen collection.

In 1996, the 3,200 foot Boardwalk Trail was completed as a result of a grant to the Foundation. The opening event for the Boardwalk Trail was included in the Tenth Anniversary Celebration of the Reserve.

In 1997, the Foundation purchased at auction 106.4 acres on Fish River that included the Bay Watch Marina and the Safe Harbor RV Park, a significant acquisition made possible through private donations and collaboration with several other organizations and agencies. Also in 1997, the Research and Education Building was completed, and the Kurt G. Wintermeyer Boardwalk Trail over the carnivorous plant bog was started as a result of both a grant and a major gift to the Foundation.

In November 1998, the Reserve Management Plan was approved by NOAA and the State of Alabama. The Reserve and Foundation also hosted the Annual Meeting of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, with representatives from 27 Reserves around the country, as well as federal, state and local officials participating in the week-long educational event.

Also in 1998, a 684-acre tract on Bayou Sara in Mobile County was donated to the Foundation and the 2,000 foot Kurt G. Wintermeyer Boardwalk Trail was extended to Fish River as a result of a major gift to the Foundation. In 2000, the Foundation acquired a 10-acre tract on Fish River.

Also in 2000, the state agency responsible for management of the Reserve was changed from ADECA to ADCNR State Lands Division Coastal Section. The 6,016-acre Reserve presently includes 1,310 acres of state-owned land and 4,706 acres of state-owned water bottoms.

In 2001, the Foundation purchased a 100-acre tract and an additional 49-acre tract on Fish River. To date, the Foundation has acquired approximately 1,036 acres of environmentally sensitive land. Some of this will eventually be sold to the state at cost and will expand the boundaries of the Reserve.

A mission of the Foundation is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and coastal biological diversity. Direct experiences in nature have the power to enrich our lives and inspire us. By providing opportunities for families, students, teachers and others to enjoy and learn about the natural world, the Foundation and the Reserve are promoting stewardship and developing the next generation of conservation leaders.

(to be continued)

from **King Solomon's Ring**

© 1952 Konrad Lorenz

A man can sit for hours before an aquarium and stare into it as into the flames of an open fire or the rushing waters of a torrent. All conscious thought is happily lost in this state of apparent vacancy, and yet, in these hours of idleness, one learns essential truths about the macrocosm and the microcosm. If I cast into one side of the balance all that I have learned from the books of the library and into the other everything that I have gleaned from the "books in the running brooks", how surely would the latter turn the scales.

Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation T-Shirts and Caps

are for sale at the Weeks Bay Reserve Information Desk. Several designs available, including pelicans and pitcher plants. Ask for your discount as a Foundation member!



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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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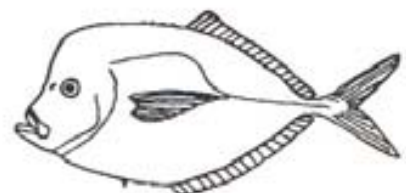
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"Examine each (land-use) question in terms of what is ethically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

Aldo Leopold



Atlantic Moonfish
(*Vomer setapinnis*)

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