



# THE PELICAN POST

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF  
THE WEEKS BAY RESERVE FOUNDATION  
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WEEKS BAY RESERVE  
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The 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.

Memberships  
Students \$10 /year  
Individual \$30/year  
Family \$50 /year  
Business \$250/year

Weeks Bay Reserve  
Foundation  
Post Office Box 731  
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251-990-5004  
[www.weeksbay.org](http://www.weeksbay.org)

From the Executive Director Summer 2006

2006 is a historical time for the Foundation. We are celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reserve, and have recently completed the sale of the 684 acre Bayou Sara property in Mobile County to the State of Alabama's Forever Wild Land Trust. The Foundation's Board of Directors also recently adopted the Land Trust Standards & Practices. This means that high ethical standards will continue to be met. Weeks Bay Day was very successful, and Kids Fishing Day had over 200 children catching catfish. We restored a second pitcher plant bog in Marlow, and are working to complete our first conservation easement on Fish River. In addition to these great achievements, I am pleased to announce the birth of my baby daughter Elizabeth Michelle Ernest. She was born on May 30, 2006, and I am looking forward to teaching her about conservation.



Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation's newest Jr. member  
**Elizabeth Michelle Ernest**

Enjoy the Summer Issue of *The Pelican Post* and remember to enter the Photo Contest, entry forms are on the website, and the entry deadline is Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Working for Conservation,

Walter Ernest, IV



Ernest Named to NERRA Board of Directors

The National Estuarine Research Reserve Association (NERRA) has named Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation Executive Director Walter Ernest as a member of their Board of Directors. NERRA is the national friends group of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. NERRA is based out of Washington DC and has a representative from each of the 27 reserves as a board member. NERRA added a board seat to represent all of the Reserve's friend groups. Ernest will fill this seat. There are 19 friends groups in the Reserve system that represent over 5,000 members. For more information about NERRA visit their website [www.nerra.org](http://www.nerra.org)

## Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation New Board Member

Dr. Rick Wallace was elected as the newest member of the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation Board of Directors at the Annual Membership Meeting on April 8. Originally from Toledo, Ohio, Rick graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University with a BA in Zoology. He also graduated from the University of Puerto Rico with a MS in Marine Sciences and Auburn University with a PhD in Fisheries.

He has lived in Alabama for 30 years and moved to Baldwin County in 1983 and has worked for Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Auburn University and Sea Grant for 23 years. Rick is the Director of the Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center in Mobile and the Auburn University Shellfish Laboratory on Dauphin Island.

Rick lives on Fish River and has a strong interest in conserving water quality through watershed management and land preservation. He enjoys fishing in Fish River, Weeks Bay, Mobile Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. His experience and knowledge will be of great benefit to the Foundation.



## Ancient fish roam the waters of the Weeks Bay watershed Rick Wallace

Have you seen any dinosaurs in Fish River lately? Well, maybe not dinosaurs, but if you see a gar, then you are looking at a fish that hasn't changed much from its fossil ancestors that date back to the Jurassic period some 200 million years ago.

Gar fossils are known from North America, Europe, and India but the seven living species of gar only occur in North America and south to Costa Rica. The Fish and Magnolia Rivers have three of the four gar species that are found in Alabama.

Our most common gar is the spotted gar. As you might expect, spotted gar have spots on the head, body, sides, and fins. Spotted gar reach three to four feet in length and may weigh over eight pounds.

A less common species is the longnose gar. It also has spots but not as many as the spotted gar. The main difference between the two is the long, narrow snout found in the longnose gar compared to a shorter, wider snout in the spotted gar. Longnose gar reach four to six feet in length and over 32 pounds.

Last, but not least, is the alligator gar. This gar has spots on some of its fins and has a very wide and short snout. Alligator gars are one of the largest North American fresh water fish. They grow to six to ten feet and may weigh up to 300 pounds. The Alabama record is 151 pounds.

Alligator gars are probably rare in the Fish and Magnolia rivers with only occasional reports. I saw a six-foot carcass in Fish River a few years ago.

Almost everyone who has spent any time on either river has probably seen a gar even if they did not realize it at the time. If you are in a boat or on a dock and see a large fish roll up to surface, it's probably a gar. You rarely see more than just a flash and the surface disturbance, but chances are it's a gar taking a gulp of air. That's right. Gars regularly come to the surface, swallow some air, and store it in their swim bladder to supplement the oxygen their gills are removing from the water. This adaptation allows gars to survive in stagnant waters where most other fish could not.

The elongated snout of gars is full of sharp teeth. They slowly stalk smaller fish and when their long mouth is next to the prey, they slash sideways and clamp the fish between the jaws. I've seen spotted gar catching minnows like this and then watched them take their time to reposition the minnow for swallowing.

Gars are not highly regarded for food in our area but are commonly eaten in some communities in Louisiana. Sport fishermen generally avoid gar but there is always interest in trying to catch a fish that grows to the size of an alligator gar. The limit on alligator gar in Alabama is one fish per person per day.



## Weeks Bay Day Gets National Recognition

As many readers are aware, the Reserve recently continued recognition of the 20<sup>th</sup> year since designation at Weeks Bay Day held April 8<sup>th</sup> at Safe Harbor. This was a festive occasion with many activities, special guests, and lunch. Demonstrations using live exhibits were on-site from Auburn University's Southeastern Raptor Center and the University of Alabama's Amphibian & Reptile Program. Several awards were given recognizing Reserve Partners in Conservation over the last two decades and Congressman Jo Bonner presented the Reserve with an American flag having been flown over the Capitol in Washington DC. Program Specialist Matt Chasse from the Estuarine Reserve Division (ERD) in Washington DC presented Reserve Manager L.G. Adams with framed congratulations from ERD. This among other historical recognitions is



Matt Chasse, Program Specialist from the Estuarine Reserve Division of NOAA recognizes the 20 Year Anniversary of the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve; L.G. Adams, Reserve Manager, accepts the recognition plaque on behalf of the Reserve

found on the National Website for the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at [www.nerrs.noaa.gov/WeeksBay/anniversary.html](http://www.nerrs.noaa.gov/WeeksBay/anniversary.html).



Congressman Jo Bonner (left) presents Partner in Conservation Award to the State Lands Forever Wild Program; accepting the award for the program is (l to r) Lands Division Director Jim Griggs with representatives of the Forever Wild Board, Dr. George Crozier and Dr. John Borom



Congressman Jack Edwards, Chairman of the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation Board, and Foundation President Skipper Tansmeire (l to r) look on as Congressman Jo Bonner recognizes the continued stewardship efforts of Otilie Halstead



Weeks Bay Reserve recognizes the Baldwin County Commission as a Partner in Conservation at the Commission meeting held April 4, 2006, in Bay Minette. Commission Chairman Albert Lipscomb (r) views Public Invitation to the Reserve Weeks Bay Day with (l to r) Walter Ernest, Foundation Executive Director, and Reserve Manager L.G. Adams.



# KIDS FISHING DAY



The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Kids Fishing Day was conducted at the Weeks Bay Reserve Safe Harbor pond. Over 210 children were treated to a day of family fun and fishing. The pond was stocked with 1,200 pounds of freshwater Catfish. Volunteers cooked hot dogs and served Coca Cola products. The event allows children and adults a way to enjoy the beautiful natural resources of the Reserve. Some



Children caught their creel limit of 4 catfish and others did not, but all had fun! Children 15 years and younger were invited, and over 300 people attended. There was no charge to register, but a parent or guardian was required to accompany each child.

The event was sponsored by the Foundation, the Reserve, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, State Lands Division Coastal Section, Baldwin County Commission, Danny's Fried Chicken, and Coca Cola Bottling Consolidated. It would not have been possible without the support of our event volunteers and sponsors. Thank you!



## The Conservation of Weeks Bay

The people who make up the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation have played a key role in protecting the natural resources of the Weeks Bay watershed since the inception of the Reserve, and this effort continues. A two phase grant to the Foundation from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Shell Marine Habitat Program has been helpful and productive. Phase one involved the hiring of an executive director, and phase two continues that funding and also involves the restoration of an increasingly rare pitcher plant bog.

In 2003, a 13.5 acre tract on Fish River was donated to the Foundation by a willing landowner. This particular piece of property included a pitcher plant bog. The bog was overrun with invasive exotic plants, and it was not a very productive bog. The Foundation applied for a NFWF Shell Marine habitat grant and also applied for additional grants to help fund this restoration. The Foundation entered into a partnership with the US Fish & Wildlife Partners Program on the restoration of this bog.

The Foundation had to apply for a U.S. Army Corp of Engineers permit to allow the construction of an access road. This road was utilized to remove an existing debris pile and to provide safe access to the property. Over 200 cubic yards of debris was removed from the site. The Foundation removed exotic plants as well as overcrowded native trees and planted bald cypress and longleaf pines. A successful prescribed burn was conducted in March.

The Foundation will continue its role in removing exotic invasive plants from the site, and a native plant inventory will be conducted. This project would not have been possible without the assistance of the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Shell Marine

Habitat Program, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Partners Program, Gulfstream Natural Gas Pipeline Gert Program, the Weeks Bay Volunteers, the willing land donor, and the membership of the Foundation. Your membership is important, and by working together we can promote conservation one project at a time.



### Alabama Coastal BirdFest 2006

If you are a birdwatcher, welcome to the beautiful and diverse Alabama

Gulf Coast! A major winged migration corridor, this region provides prime stopover habitat for many shorebirds, raptors, waterfowl, and passerines. More than 379 species of birds have been seen here.

The fastest growing passive sport in America, birdwatching is an activity that can be enjoyed by indi-

viduals, families, and groups. Easy and inexpensive, it requires minimal equipment, physical fitness or skill. With its diverse habitats and favorable climate in October, the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail is among the best birdwatching locations in North America.

Alabama Coastal BirdFest 2006 will be held October 19 through 22. Birding experts will conduct guided trips on Mobile Bay, Weeks Bay, the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta and along the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail, a 240-mile route known for its diversity of habi-

tats. It will also include two exciting evening events in Mobile and Fairhope and a free day-long Bird and Conservation Expo on the Faulkner State Campus in Fairhope. All proceeds will be used to protect critical stopover habitat for birds.

From herons to loons, plovers to peeps, and tanagers to warblers, the fall migrations make the journey for birdwatchers a memorable experience. Check out the website and register today. You might be surprised at what you might find.

[www.alabamacoastalbirdfest.com](http://www.alabamacoastalbirdfest.com)



## Volunteer Spotlight

Carolyn Anderson has always loved children, and she has always cared about the environment. She successfully brought those two interests together during the 30 years she spent teaching elementary

school children in Durango, Colorado. Now that she is retired, Carolyn is continuing to pursue her lifelong passions here at Weeks Bay Reserve.

Carolyn was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and grew up in Denver, Colorado. She has a degree in Education with a Masters in Literacy and Education. Her interest in science and love of the environment, along with her desire to share this enthusiasm with her students, led her to develop a field trip program in her school. In fact, the day she retired, she started volunteering at her school and continued to organize the field trips.

Carolyn and Dave decided to move to Baldwin County after a visit here for a friend's wedding. Carolyn wanted to be close to her family in New Orleans, and they both wanted to escape the harsh Colorado winters. True to her nature, while still in the process of moving to Magnolia Springs, Carolyn spotted the Reserve and came in and said she wanted to volunteer. She has been a tremendous asset to our education program and is currently working as Margaret Sedlecky's education assistant. Carolyn is the 2006 recipient of the Gaynor McCown Environmental Education Fellowship, established by the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation, which enables her to spend more of her time at the Reserve. Carolyn now conducts the field trips for thousands of school children who visit Weeks Bay Reserve each year! "I really enjoy working with the kids!" Carolyn says about working at the Reserve. "The volunteers are treated very well. I am especially enjoying the lecture series being offered to us and, of course, the good food." When not volunteering, she and Dave have been busy exploring Baldwin County. They enjoy canoeing and hiking and are very accomplished dart players. Carolyn is such a caring person that she has taken in a neglected horse with a lot of health problems. She and Dave are tenderly nursing the horse back to health.

Both Carolyn and Dave are wonderful volunteers, giving generously of their time and talents. Weeks Bay Reserve and Baldwin County are indeed fortunate that they decided to move east!

## Weeks Bay Area River Cleanup

Nearly 30 volunteers opened Mothers' Day weekend by cleaning up the waterways around Weeks Bay. An estimated 1500 lb of wood, plastic, bags



and other junk filled the dumpster provided by the Baldwin County Commission. Cowpen Creek at CR33 yielded a couple of tires and a boat battery. Jennifer Vaughn, and three AmeriCorps kids brought a water-logged church pew from Waterhole Branch. All of the participants did a great job and donated their valuable time to a good cause. Support for the Tenth Annual River Cleanup came from the Baldwin County Soil and Water Conservation District, Fairhope Single Tax Corporation, Greer Radcliff, Big John's Tree Service, Bay

Animal Clinic North and the Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation. As he has for each of the last five years, Tom Schlinkert donated part of a kayak for the annual raffle. Dillon Rees was the lucky winner .



The event could not have been successful without the culinary exploits of Joan and Randy Bentz and Joyce and Al Rochford who cooked lunch. Caroline Anderson, Dave Berwald, Harry Anderson, Carey Bentley and Fred Jordan helped pickup, unload and work the registration tent. River Cleanup begins its second decade on a good foot with success of 2006. Start getting prepared for next year!



## Reserve Hosts Water Festival

Protection of drinking water supplies and the health of local waterways are vitally important to the people and economy of Baldwin County. Fourth grade students and teachers from 11 area schools were reminded of that fact at the Third Annual Water Festival held at the Daphne United Methodist Church on March 13 and 14, 2006. Over 720 students and teachers examined the structure of aquifers, the pollution contained in storm water runoff and the behavior of pollutants in water. All the events at Water Festival are designed to instill a general environmental awareness and stewardship ethic in students and to educate them and their families about aspects of ground and surface waters and other related natural resources. Also, additional information and activities are provided to teachers to adapt and use in their classrooms.



## Water Watch Annual Meeting

Wolf Bay Watershed Watch and Weeks Bay Water Watch hosted the 2006 Alabama Water Watch Annual Meeting and Picnic at the home of Mary Crawford, overlooking Wolf Bay at the mouth of Hammock Creek. Over 75 people from all over the state of Alabama and six countries from South and Central American were in attendance. The annual event is an opportunity for water quality monitors from around the state to celebrate their success, exchange ideas and to present awards. Mike Shelton, Watershed Coordinator, was given the coveted "Trainer of the Year" awarded for training the most volunteer water quality monitors in 2005. The group highlighted the area with a boat tour of Wolf Bay and some of its tributaries on Friday evening followed by a seafood dinner at Wolf Bay Lodge. The organizations held business meetings, awards, water activities and auction on Saturday. Locals prepared fresh fried mullet and dishes featuring locally grown produce of the area. Members of Global Water Watch went to the beach and toured Weeks Bay Reserve on Sunday before returning to Auburn for another week of classes.



Global Water Watch members from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Argentina, Spain and Brazil pose with their counterparts of Alabama Water Watch and Wolf Bay Watershed Watch at the 2006 Alabama Water Watch Annual Meeting held on Wolf Bay.

## Education Update



Students, teachers and volunteers have been extremely busy conducting education programs in the field and at the Interpretive Center.

Baldwin County High School students assisted Reserve staff by manually removing invasive common reed *Phragmites australis* and replanting approximately 200 one gallon containers of black needle rush *Juncus roemerianus* along the Fish River shoreline at the pitcher plant bog. They were planted approximately one foot apart between existing black needle rush plants in an area nearly 400 feet x 12 feet.



Fairhope High School students assisted Bon Secour Wildlife Refuge staff by planting approximately 2,500 dune plants in a

restoration site on Refuge property. Approximately 700 one gallon plants (*Panicgrass* & *Cordgrass*) were supplied by Fairhope High School from their nursery and the other one inch plants (*Sea Oats*, *Beach Morning Glory* & *Beach Elder*) were purchased with funds from The Nature Conservancy.

Gulf Shores High School students were set to plant Tape grass, *Vallisneria americana* in Barner Branch on April 19<sup>th</sup>, but due to high water the students were unable to access the area.

However, the students brought the plants to the Reserve and placed them in a wetland bed constructed at Safe Harbor, to be held until Reserve staff and/or volunteers can plant them in the restoration site. As an alternative activity, the Gulf Shores High School students assisted by planting an additional 150 Black Needle Rush plants along Fish River.



## Managing Visitor Use in Coastal Areas

As more people choose to live, work, and play along our nation's coasts and waterways, resource management professionals are challenged with balancing the changing demands of the public with the management of resources under their care. A two day workshop was held May 31-June 1 that provided an overview of the human dimensions of protected area management, offered examples of visitor use and associated impacts to natural resources and visitor experiences, and demonstrated applications to help managers address the people side of resource management. The workshop included training sessions and presentations by community leaders and regional natural resource managers, and field excursions.

Who Attended? Natural resource managers and staff, elected and appointed officials, city managers and environmental staff, parks & recreation officials and staff, coastal law enforcement personnel, coastal developers and realtors, resort managers, eco-tourism managers, and other interested individuals. More information on upcoming workshops can be found at [www.coastaltraining-al.com](http://www.coastaltraining-al.com).

## Hydric Soils Workshop

Wetland professionals and regulators participated in this exclusive training program focusing on the interrelations of hydrology and hydric soils and identifying hydric soils as part of the wetland delineation process. Morning lectures addressed soil hydrology, definition and criteria of hydric soils, morphologies of hydric soils, instrumentation and data analysis. Afternoons included field trips to a variety of wetland types to demonstrate the techniques outlined in the classroom and to give students hands-on experience.

Wade Hurt, course instructor, is the national leader in Hydric Soils science with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture and an editor of *Field Indicators of Hydric Soils in the United States: Guide for Identifying and Delineating Hydric Soils*.



## Imagine: A Region with Thriving Mixed Use Cities



(l-r) Chad Emerson, Jones School of Law; Wendy Allen, Smart Coast; Tom Murphy, Urban Land Institute; Charlene Lee, Smart Coast; John Lambie, Florida House Institute; Mayor Jay Jackson, Eufaula, AL; Judy Culbreth, Mobile Bay Monthly; and Keynote speaker, Charleston Mayor Joseph Riley.

Over 350 area citizens and professionals attended the "Imagine: A Region with Thriving Mixed Use Cities" conference held at the Arthur Outlaw Mobile Convention Center on April 18. Regional speakers provided case studies from successful cities like Charleston, SC, and transformed towns like Eufaula, AL. The focus was on "smart growth" in our coastal region.

## Foundation conveys Bayou Sara tract to Forever Wild Land Trust

The Foundation transferred the 685 acre Bayou Sara tract to the State of Alabama in March of 2006. Dr. Thomas M. Roush of New York, NY, donated this property to the Foundation in 1998 with the hope the Foundation could sell the property and utilize the funds to purchase additional property in the Weeks Bay watershed. Dr. Roush utilized a charitable remainder trust as a landowner conservation tool. It is located on Bayou Sara in Mobile County and is suitable habitat for black bears. The Bayous Sara tract is located adjacent to the Jacintoport tract that the State of Alabama purchased in 2005.

Dr. Roush hopes this property can be utilized as major part of the Alabama Black Bear corridor. Forest Legacy and Forever Wild funds were utilized to fund this purchase. For more information about the Foundation's role in land conservation visit [www.weeksbay.org/pastprojects/land](http://www.weeksbay.org/pastprojects/land).



## Foundation adopts the Land Trust Alliance Standards & Practices

The Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation Board of Directors voted to adopt the Land Trust Alliance Standards & Practices during their April 8<sup>th</sup> 2006 meeting. Land Trust Standards and Practices are the ethical and technical guidelines for the responsible operation of a land trust. There are over 1,500 non profit land trusts that have conserved millions of acres of wildlife habitat and other important lands.

Implementing these Standards & Practices helps a land trust uphold the public trust and build strong and effective conservation programs. The Foundation is a sponsor member. Membership shows a commitment to



upholding public trust and the credibility of the land trust community as a whole. It will allow the Foundation to continue to play a critical role in land conservation throughout Baldwin County. For more land trust information visit [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org).

## Research Report

Frequent visitors to the Reserve may have noticed a new face lately. Jennifer Vaughn was hired in January 2006 to carry

out the System-Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP). Jennifer is a graduate of the University of Alabama with a BS degree in biological science and a minor in chemistry and marine science. This education has



prepared her very well for her work here at the Reserve. Her duties include the maintenance of electronic water quality monitoring equipment and weather monitoring equipment as well as the chemical determination of various non point-source pollutants. In addition to her SWMP work, Jennifer will also be assisting visiting researchers and participating in research projects initiated by the rest of the research staff here at the Reserve. Please join us in welcoming Jennifer to the Weeks Bay family!

## AmeriCorps Helps the Reserve

From April 24 to May 16 an ambitious and dedicated team of AmeriCorps members assisted the Reserve staff with a variety of projects. Each weekday members arrived at the Interpretive Center eager to work. Team members took turns helping among the many projects, allowing each member the opportunity to have new experiences. Dr. Just Cebrian used the team's resources to help with a *Juncus sp.* restoration experiment. Mike Shelton employed members to help reduce water hyacinth infestation. Beckwith Camp and Conference Center received assistance with a brush fence rebuilding project, and Eric Brunden worked with the team to recover storm debris and lumber from the fringes of Weeks Bay. Under the guidance of Mark Cooper, the team completed the most visible of the projects, rebuilding the dock slips at Safe Harbor. This project was completed using lumber recovered from the fringe marshes of Weeks Bay, an economically and environmentally friendly effort which now provides staffers with a safer boat launching and docking facility.

## Calendar

- JUNE**  
13-14 Baldwin County Grasses in Classes Teacher Workshop, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Auditorium.
- 15 Weeks Bay Advisory Committee Meeting. 2:00 p.m. in the Weeks Bay auditorium.
- 17 Cultural History and Use of Local Flora. Fred Nation presents at the Weeks Bay Auditorium, 10:00 a.m.
- 20 Community Leader Training: Wastewater Management Alternatives – functional models & infrastructure costs - Coastal Training Program event. To be held at the Jon Archer Extension Building, Mobile. Cost is \$15 for training materials, refreshments, & transit to the field site. Contact Cheryl McClary at 251-928-9792 for reservations.
- 22 Alabama's Forever Wild Land Trust Board of Directors Meeting, Faulkner State Community College, Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall, Giddens Auditorium 10:00 a.m. The public is invited to attend and make comments at this important conservation meeting.
- 22-23 Weeks Bay Watershed Wonders Teacher Workshop, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Auditorium.
- JULY**  
4 Independence Day. The Interpretive Center will be closed. All trails and boardwalks will remain open for your walking and sightseeing pleasure.
- 8 Alabama Water Watch Certification, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Volunteer Activity Center
- 1 Citizens Advisory Committee for the Weeks Bay Watershed Project, 6:00 p.m., Auditorium.
- 18-19 Stormwater, Watershed and Nonpoint Source Pollution Workshop, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Auditorium.
- 24-27 Science and Sports Camp, 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Daphne United Methodist Church.
- AUGUST**  
1 Citizens Advisory Committee for the Weeks Bay Watershed Project, 6:00 p.m., Auditorium.
- 3 Wetland and Realtors Workshop, 8:00a .m.-12:00 p.m., Auditorium

## New and Renewing Members

- ADCNR State Lands Coastal Section  
Alabama Power  
Baldwin County Commission  
Verona Beiser  
Clarence & Sandra Bishop  
William D. Bridges  
Frances M. Cantrell  
Cello Parker  
Curt Chapman  
Jacqueline Chastain  
Linda Chavis Baker  
Dr. Miti Childs  
Suzanne D. Corrington  
Sam Crosby  
Gary Dennis  
Elizabeth Doggett  
Dominion Farms Property Owners Association, Inc.  
Mr. & Mrs. J. Bradley Donaghey  
Carol Ann & John Dorgan  
Paul J. Dawsey  
Isabelle & Paul Dreher  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Earle  
Eastern Shore Children's Clinic  
Dr. Thomas & Judith Ellis  
Estate of Peter Wiese  
Dr. & Mrs. Robert G. Eubanks  
ExxonMobil  
Fairhope Garden Club  
Les & Martha Farmer  
Flor Fallers  
Mary Finger  
Tom Fleming  
Flowerwood Nursery, Inc.  
W. E. & Sara Fountain  
Fred Soas  
Jim & Nancy Gaines  
Carol Gengo  
George & Mary Skipper  
Norma B. Gray  
Bill & Daniela Hagan  
Winthrop M. Hallett  
Kenny Hanak  
Elaine Hanson  
Ray & Barbara Harbrecht  
Dr. & Mrs. C.D. Harrell, III  
Hartmann, Blackman & Kilgore  
Gary Hellmich  
Joe Hocklander  
Sheila Hodges  
George & Alice Holmes  
Robert & Mary Shannon Hope  
Charles & Janie Houser  
Bernie Hutchinson  
Ken & Dotty Johnson  
Neil & Ashley Johnston  
Mayor Tim Kant  
Carl Klein  
John & Neno Ladd  
Russell Ladd III  
Michael & Elizabeth Langston  
Frank Laraway
- Jim & Gail Loughner  
E. Rob Leatherbury  
Virginia Link  
Dr. Brenda Litchfield  
Frank & Marianne Lott  
Thom Lott  
"Raymond, Nadine & Judy Lovell"  
Jessica McCawley  
Mac & Libby McCawley  
Archie & Maxine Miraldes  
Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium  
Abe Mitchell  
Roger Dale Moore  
Tom & Fran Morley  
Edward Morris  
Mary Murchison  
Lisa Myers  
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation  
Paul T. Nawrocki  
Patmarie & Andrew Nedelka  
John Ray Nelson  
George & Abigail Panayiotou  
Frank & Robin Parquette  
Ed Perry  
Melissa Pershina  
Donald, Noel, Jared & Breanne Peyton  
Cliff Pitman  
Patricia A. Portier  
Guy & Sarah Rankin  
Riviera Utilities  
Randy & Kay Roach  
Steve & Cindy Ross  
Andrew & Carolyn Saunders  
Richard Schuettnr  
David Schwartz  
Trey Simms  
Joan Sliman  
Hattie Smith  
William O. Stephen, III  
Hector & Martha Sutherland  
Douglas Taylor  
Lisa Terrell  
Mr. & Mrs. Hall Thompson  
Tonsmeire Development Corporation  
David Tunstall  
Sylvia Walding  
Dr. Rhett Walker  
Charles W. Weinacker Jr.  
Curt Wilson  
Laurel Wilson  
Patrick & Claire Wilson  
Robert Wilters  
Dr. Hollis & Teko Wiseman  
Dr. Thomas & Jeanne Yancey
- Fish River Clean-up Donors:  
Baldwin County Soil and Water Conservation  
Bay Animal Clinic North, LLC.  
Big John's Tree Service, Inc.  
Fairhope Singe Tax Corporation  
Greer Radcliff



## 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Photography Contest

The categories are Adult Flora, Fauna, Open Habitat & Jr. Division Flora, Fauna, Open Habitat

Submission deadline: Friday, June 23, 2006, 4:30 p.m.

Entry forms are available at the Weeks Bay Reserve Interpretive Center, 11300 US Hwy 98 Fairhope, AL or the

Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation Website, [www.weeksbay.org](http://www.weeksbay.org)

For more information contact the Foundation at (251) 990-5004

## NATURE'S CALENDAR

by John Borom

Royal Terns (*Sterna maxima*) are common all year along the Alabama Gulf Coast, but are rare further north and inland. They feed on small fishes such as menhaden and anchovies along with a small amount of crustaceans. Flocks of these and other terns and gulls, feeding on small fishes driven to the surface usually indicate to fishermen that there are larger fishes directly below. Birds often follow fishing boats in quest of scraps.

They breed in huge, dense colonies, sometimes containing thousands of birds on isolated, flat, sandy islands, and this begins in Alabama in June. Nests are simple scraps in the sand, and the whitish eggs are blotched with dark brown and lavender. The nests are often so close together that, when the birds are incubating, the



Royal Tern colony on Gaillard Island in Mobile Bay. Photo by Marlene Cashe

sand is barely visible. Both parent birds incubate the eggs for around four weeks. The Royal Tern tolerates only its close relative, the Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*), in its nesting colonies. After hatching, the young chicks are gathered together into large groups until they begin to fly three to four weeks later. They may stay with the parent birds for several more weeks.

The juvenile (July-November) is gray-white above, white below, with a dark crown, streaked white forehead, and yellow legs. The non breeding adult

(June-March) is white except for light gray wings, a wispy black crest on the back of the head, thick orange-red bill and dark legs. It is slender and streamlined with a shallow forked tail. The black crest begins behind its dark eyes, and the forehead is white. The breeding adult (March-June) has a black cap that covers the forehead.

## Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation

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[www.weeksbay.org](http://www.weeksbay.org)



photo by Marlene Cashe

Cattle Egret  
(*Bubulcus ibis*)

[www.weeksbay.org](http://www.weeksbay.org)

WEBSITE UPDATE: logon today and take the new virtual tour

During the past twelve months, the website has been viewed 803,073 times.

"The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction."

— Rachael Carson 1954