

THE Pelican Post

A quarterly publication - Weeks Bay Foundation



Spring 2008
Vol. 23, No. 1



"Wild beasts and birds are by right not the property merely of the people who are alive today, but the property of unknown generations, whose belongings we have no right to squander."

- Theodore Roosevelt

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


Cover Photo:
 Green tree frog
 by Reserve Staff

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From the Executive Director...

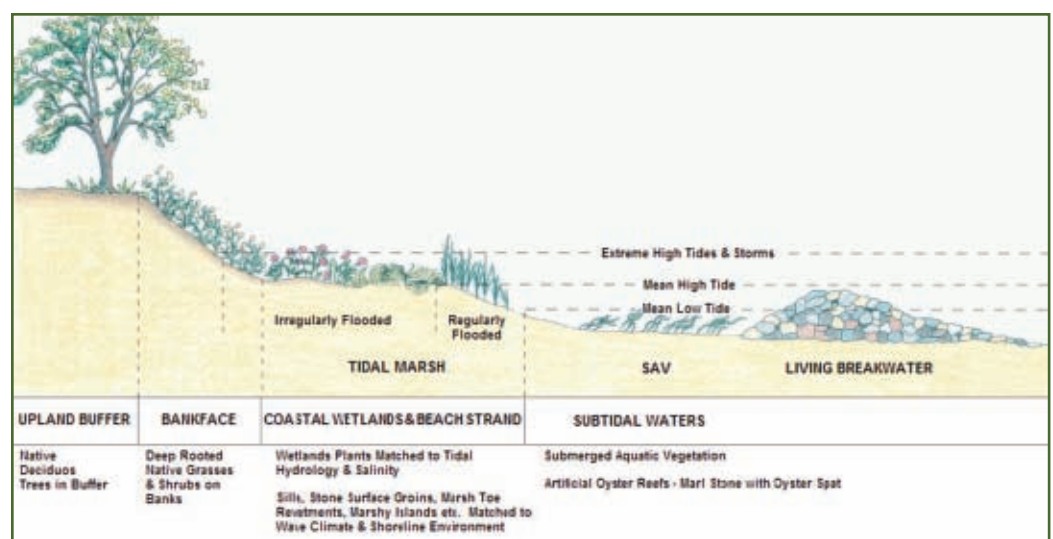


It is hard to believe that it is time for the spring issue of *The Pelican Post*. We have begun preparations for the Kid's Fishing Day on Saturday, May 3, and the Weeks Bay Photography Contest (entry deadline June 14), and the office renovations are close to completion. The Foundation received two additional land donations in December 2007, and we are very grateful to both donors. One parcel is located on Bailey's Branch. The second parcel adjoins the Juniper Tract on Fish River which was previously donated by the same landowner. We also received a pickup truck donation. It will be used to assist with the Baldwin County Grasses in Classes Program as well as the Foundation's stewardship work. As we continue to work toward Land Trust Alliance accreditation, we know that we could not accomplish any of our environmental work without the support of our membership and friends.

Working for Conservation,

 Walter

Living Shorelines

Living Shorelines was the subject for a workshop on November 29, 2007. The workshop introduced alternative shoreline protection methods to homeowners and contractors. These alternative methods, part of the Living Shorelines Initiative, use plants and other natural materials to prevent shoreline erosion while promoting and preserving habitat. These practices are ecologically better than hardened structures like vertical bulkheads. Over 90 participants including property owners and marine contractors were shown the results of alternative shoreline projects which have been in place for several years. Additional information on the need for innovative shoreline protection practices, their cost and ecological benefits, the permitting process and funding opportunities were discussed. The workshop was sponsored by the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, Grand Bay Reserve, Mississippi State University, Weeks Bay Reserve, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program and Florida Sea Grant Extension.



Make a Difference

Your contributions to the Foundation can make a difference. Please consider making a donation designated to one of the following funds:

Land Acquisition Fund: This is designed to assist in the costs associated with land acquisition activities.

Stewardship Fund: This is designed to assist with the costs associated with long-term stewardship of properties.

Gaynor McCown Environmental Education Fellowship Fund: This was established to assist with the educational outreach activities of the Reserve and Foundation. (This currently funds Education Assistant, **Casey Stephenson**, at the Reserve.)

Scott Ireland Water Quality Fund: This is designed to assist with water quality monitoring and testing activities.

Office Renovation/Landscaping Fund: This is designated to help with the renovation and landscaping of the Foundation office.

Operating Fund: This is utilized to help with the day-to-day activities of the Foundation.

As a 501(c)3, the Foundation can accept gifts of real estate, stocks, and life insurance in addition to donations of cash. If you have questions regarding any of these funds, or other ways to support the Foundation, please contact **Walter Ernest** at (251) 990-5004.

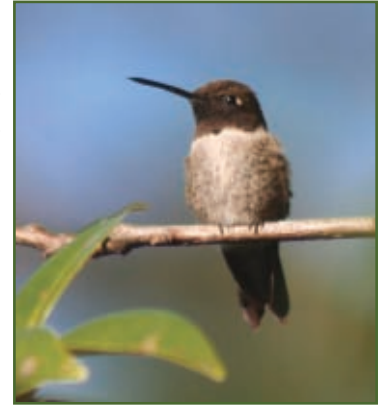
Did You Know?

by *John Borom*

The Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*) is a tiny bird. Adults weigh 3 to 4 grams and can nearly double their mass prior to migration by putting on extra fat. (A nickel weighs 5 grams.) Adult females are 15 to 20 percent larger than adult males. The length is about 3.5 inches from the tip of the bill to the tip of the tail. They are metallic green above and white below with green flanks. The adult male has a black face and chin, and a glossy purple throat band called a gorget. Female hummingbirds do not have a gorget.

Unlike other birds, a hummingbird can rotate its wings in a circle. Because of this ability, they are the only

bird that can fly both forwards and backwards. They can also fly up, down, sideways, hover in one spot, or fly upside down for short distances. Normal flight speed is about 25 miles per hour, but they have been clocked at speeds in excess of 50 miles per hour during their courtship dives. Their wings beat about 60 to 80 times per second during normal flight and up to 200 times per second in their courtship dives. They are named for the humming sound they make through the rapid movement of their wings when they are in flight.



Hummingbirds have the highest metabolic rate of any animal on Earth. A hummingbird heart beats about 250 times per minute while at rest and about 1,220 times per minute while flying. A human heart averages 72 beats per minute. A hummingbird takes about 250 breaths per minute while at rest. A human takes from 15 to 18 breaths per minute.

Black-chinned Hummingbird breeding habitat is open semi-arid areas near water in the western United States, northern Mexico and southern British Columbia. The nest is spun by the female from spiderwebs and plant material, camouflaged with bits of lichen and lined with plant down. The eggs are about the same size as a whole coffee bean. The incubation period is about 16 to 18 days, and the brood period is about 21 days. The nest can expand as the nestlings grow.

Black-chinned Hummingbirds are migratory and spend most of the winter in Mexico, but a few linger at feeders around the Gulf of Mexico and in the Southeast, a recent pattern of occurrence. They are rare around Mobile Bay in the fall and winter.

Torpor is a hibernation-like state that an animal can enter to help conserve energy. On cold nights, a hummingbird can lower its body temperature and can even lower its heart rate to as few as 50 beats per minute. To conserve energy, it may even stop breathing for periods of time. The next morning the bird can raise its metabolism and get its body temperature back to normal usually within a few minutes.

It is always interesting to observe and think about the other creatures that share our world with us. This photo of a male was taken in my yard in Fairhope in December.

Angela Underwood



Angela Spano Underwood recently joined the Reserve staff as an Education Specialist. She will assist with education and outreach programs including the Baldwin County Grasses in Classes Program. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to assist in ongoing educational programs at the Reserve.

Angela holds a B.A. degree from Huntingdon College with a double major in Biology and Psychology. She will complete graduate studies and receive her M.S. degree in Biological Sciences from Auburn University in May of 2008. Her thesis focused on the interactions of white-topped pitcher plants with their insect associates. She is passionate about her love of nature and enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband. They reside in Magnolia Springs and spend their free time botanizing, photographing nature, and bird watching in the area.

The Reserve and Foundation welcome her and anticipate that she will inspire many people with her love of nature by her involvement with coastal education and outreach activities.

Bailey's Branch

The Foundation received a donation of 18.54 acres of high quality wetlands from **Len and Pam Turner**. The property is adjacent to the Boardwalks at Bailey's Creek subdivision in Point Clear. It is also adjacent to Bailey's Branch, a small stream that feeds into Bailey's Creek which feeds into Mobile Bay. A plant inventory and a management plan will be developed because the property has a high conservation value.



This may include an educational kiosk that can demonstrate the important functions of wetland ecology. The Foundation is very grateful for the Turners' generous donation.

Photography Workshop

A Digital Photography Workshop has been planned for April 25-27, 2008. The instructor will be **Julie E. Brent** who became an amateur naturalist when she was very young, bringing home tadpoles, watching ants work, and learning about trees and plants in her native northern Kentucky, not far from the Kentucky River. When she moved to the Gulf Coast in 1994, she fell in love with the Weeks Bay area. She wants to offer a



learning experience designed to photograph nature and leave only footprints behind.

This workshop will also be an opportunity to learn first-hand from a local native plant expert, **Fred Nation**, while taking digital images. Students will learn about conservation of our natural resources as well as how to use a digital camera, compose great photos, and download, crop and edit pictures. To learn more about this workshop and registration details visit www.weeksbay.org and click the link for Photography Workshop.

Reserve Tour

Fred Nation, author of *Where the Wild Illicium Grows*, will be offering the first of a series of guided tours at the Reserve on Saturday, May 3, 2008. Fred, an expert on native plants, always provides an interesting, fun, and educational time. Tour participants should meet at the Interpretive Center at 10:00 a.m., ready for a relaxing walk. The tour will last approximately two hours and transect a variety of habitats and ecotones. Cost is only \$10.00, and the number of participants will be limited. Contact **Eric Brunden** at (251) 928-9792 or by email at eric.brunden@dcnr.alabama.gov to reserve your spot.



Volunteer Spotlight

If you have visited the Reserve lately, you may have had the good fortune to be greeted by **Mary Anne Miller**. Although new to the front desk, she and her husband **Bob** have been volunteering at the Reserve for many years.



Mary Anne was born in Minneapolis, and attended the University of Minnesota School of Nursing. It was there that she met Bob, who, as a soldier during World War II, had been discharged in Minneapolis. They were married in 1947 and moved to Auburn, where Mary Anne worked as a nurse while Bob attended the Auburn University School of Veterinary Medicine. After he graduated, they lived in Baldwin County before he took a position at Auburn.

After twenty five years at Auburn, and a five-year stint in Washington D.C., Bob retired in 1988. Mary Anne and Bob returned to Baldwin County where they had kept in touch with the friends they had made. When one of those friends, **Frances Cleverdon**, told them about a house that was available “on the river,” they jumped at the opportunity. After moving back to Baldwin County, Mary Anne worked as a Home Health Nurse for a couple of years, visiting patients from Little River to Gulf Shores. As a result, very few people know the by-ways and highways of Baldwin County better than she does.

Mary Anne is a Baldwin County Master Gardener and volunteers at the Weeks Bay plant sales. When she volunteered at the Reserve to work in the gardens, she also expressed a willingness to help with the front desk. Mary Anne says that she enjoys all the people she meets and always looks at the guest book to see where the visitors are from. She was once asked by a Reserve visitor from New Zealand where he might go “for the experience of picking-up pecans,” and she was able to direct him to a place where he might be able to fulfill this unusual request.

With her friendliness and willingness to help, Mary Anne is one of our greatly prized volunteers, one who is willing to do whatever needs to be done. We are fortunate to have her greeting our visitors, where she is a wonderful ambassador for the Reserve.

Summer Camp

During the weeks of June 9th and June 16th, Reserve staff will be working with **Nancy Raia**, Project Director of the Eastern Shore Art Center, to host an intensive summer camp for special needs students. They will visit Weeks Bay and be introduced to the varied habitats found within the Reserve’s boundaries. A variety of excursions are planned for the students, such as a late evening cruise spent listening for and identifying nocturnal fauna. Field trips to marshes, beaches and woodlands will allow students to experience the rich textures, scents, and rhythms of nature while learning about habitat function. The students will use their reactions and understanding of these habitats to express themselves through assorted mediums of art, including painting and three dimensional works, as well as creative writing. The culmination of the students’ efforts will be an exhibit at the Eastern Shore Art Center held in conjunction with the exhibit of the Weeks Bay Photography Contest winners during July. Please show your support for these efforts by attending the exhibit. For more information see www.esartcenter.com or call (251) 928-2228.



Mobile Bay Oysters

“I forgot in my last to tell you what a time for oysters we have had over in Cedar Point on the west side of the bay a man could roll up his breeches and walk in and get as many as he wanted. I got some vinegar in my canteen and sat down to a pile with my screwdriver and opened and eat till I could eat no more.”



Letter from **F. F. Audsley**, Company A. Forty-Fourth Infantry Missouri Volunteers (Union), to his wife April 7, 1865 in camp at Spanish Fort, Alabama.

Western Historical Manuscript Collection
University of Missouri
Columbia, Missouri

Northern Raccoon

by John Borom

The Northern Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) is abundant and widespread in Alabama, occurring in every county. It occurs in a variety of habitats from woodlands to swamps and estuarine marshes. The specific name *lotor* is the New Latin word meaning washer and refers to the misconception that raccoons always wash their food before eating it. Their dens are often in hollows in trees 30 or 40 feet above the ground. Raccoons produce only one litter a year. Mating apparently occurs in December and January, occasionally later in females less than a year old. The young are generally born in late April or early May after a gestation period of 63 days. The babies at birth weigh between two and three ounces and are blind. Their eyes do not open until they are about two weeks old. They show the characteristic black facial mask that is typical of the species almost from birth. The photo shows one foraging in water on a December afternoon at Meaher State Park.



New Phase at Reserve

The Coastal Training Program (CTP) at the Reserve has entered the second phase of its evolution. A new document outlining strategies for implementing the program over the next three years has been submitted to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration after initial review and revision. CTP at the Reserve has been in its implementation phase since 2004 and has matured under the tenure of three coordinators. **Mike Shelton**, current CTP Coordinator, is overseeing the program into the second phase.

Since the program inception, the population in the coastal area has increased, development continues to progress, two major tropical events have impacted the area and new people are in elected and regulatory positions. Weeks Bay Reserve has collaborated with the Grand Bay Reserve in Mississippi on the joint analysis of training needs on the Gulf Coast. Both Reserves often share opportunities for collaborative projects in stewardship, training and research because the geographical areas serviced by the two Reserves overlap at the Alabama and Mississippi border. **Marian Dicas**, CTP Coordinator at Grand Bay, and Mike have developed a market analysis to investigate what other training is available in the area and who is offering it. The survey is underway and results are being compiled as they return.

In addition, CTP audiences will be surveyed for their training needs. Both studies will aid the CTPs in providing meaningful workshops and training on topics audiences want. CTPs along the Gulf (Weeks Bay, Grand Bay, Apalachicola Bay NERR, Florida, Rookery Bay NERR, Florida, and Mission-Aransas NERR, Texas), are developing partnerships to host workshops on floodplain management, coastal resiliency, harmful algal bloom modeling, conservation planning and other topics. The CTPs at the five Reserves are being sought by researchers and resource managers to help them get science-based information to decision makers all along the Gulf.

New Buildings



The research and educational buildings overlooking Weeks Bay are starting to take shape. This capital improvement project is scheduled to be completed by June of this year. The waterfront

facility will be incorporated into the ongoing programs associated with education and outreach and will provide a focal point for the Coastal Training Program. Keep your eye on this project as this new addition to the Reserve facilities will soon be used for many activities.

Did You Know?

by John Borom

Gulf Coast estuaries would not be the same without the far-carrying call of Laughing Gulls (*Larus atricilla*). The species is common all year around Mobile Bay, and they breed in colonies on salt marshes and on Gaillard Island. Sometimes they build a substantial nest of grasses and seaweed, but more often they settle for a grass-lined hollow in the sand. Usually three or four olive, brown-spotted eggs are incubated by both adults. The juvenile bird takes three years to reach mature plumage, but by its first winter has gray sides and back, a whitish head and neck with a gray wash on the nape, brownish wings, a white belly and a black bill. By the second winter, it is gray above and whiter beneath with a gray wash on the nape. In summer the adult has a black hooded head with narrow white crescents around the eyes, white neck and underparts, a dark gray back, black wing tips and a reddish bill. In winter, the black hood fades to leave gray streaking to the rear of a white head. The wings are slate-gray above, with white along the trailing edge and black wing tips touched with white, with a white rump and tail. They have adapted well to humans and often frequent parking lots, agricultural fields, and garbage dumps. As opportunistic foragers, they can adapt rapidly to environmental changes, a quality that sets them apart from many other birds.



Foundation Funds Research

As many readers may recall, fish kills and harmful algal blooms have been a topic previously explored in the fall 2007 issue of *The Pelican Post*. This article followed a series of



Violet Goby showing hemorrhaging characteristic of karlotoxin exposure.

photo by
Lucie Novoveska

events through the spring and summer months whereby fish kills had occurred intermittently with algal blooms. The blooms are from naturally occurring unicellular algae that live in Weeks Bay and the Fish and

Magnolia Rivers. Over the last year much investigation on this topic has taken place by estuarine scientists. **Dr. Hugh MacIntyre** of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab has taken a lead in investigating the relationship between the blooms and their impact on fish populations. Dr. MacIntyre received financial support from the Weeks Bay Foundation to conduct preliminary research and will make a presentation of his work on Thursday, March 13, at 1:00 p.m. in the Weeks Bay Auditorium. His presentation will overview these investigations in Weeks Bay over the past year and is open to interested parties. Seating is limited so come early.

Foundation Sponsors GreenCoast 2008



The Foundation is a sponsor of the GreenCoast 2008 & Green Expo scheduled for April 9 and

Wetland Rapid Assessment Procedure

Because the training was requested by many agency personnel and private consultants, Weeks Bay Reserve Coastal Training Program (CTP) brought back **Boyd Gunsalus** of the South Florida Water Management District to conduct a second *Wetland Rapid Assessment Procedure* (WRAP) workshop. The workshop conducted on November 27-28, 2007 on the same topic in September 2007 had a waiting list as numerous as the list attending the class. (Highly technical workshops like WRAP have limited registration to ensure that all participants have adequate opportunity to receive detailed instruction in field and classroom activities.) The two-day workshop highlighted several tools to identify ecologically sensitive areas, assess their function and plan for their protection. The method is designed to rate wetlands based on a series of functional criteria including habitat, wildlife utilization, plant types and hydrology. The twenty-two participants included private consultants and federal, state and local government officials.

10. This will be the premiere green building conference on the North American Gulf Coast. GreenCoast will feature interactive educational sessions on commercial and residential design and construction as well as public topics related to sustainability. Green Expo is free to the public on April 10 from 1-4 p.m. Visitors can check out the latest products and services and have their questions answered by company professionals. In addition, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) will offer a workshop on April 8 featuring in-depth information on LEED® New Construction, and a LEED® Commercial Interiors Workshop on April 11.

For more information go to www.greencoastonline.com.

Business of Nature

by Joanne McDonough

Registers are ringing for businesses as they cash in on tourists' fascination with Mother Nature, a growing trend known as Nature Tourism.

Nature Tourism is big business. If wildlife-related recreation were a company its revenue of \$45 billion, as stated in a 2006 national survey, would place it on the Forbes Global 2000 list alongside some of the most influential companies in the world (formerly the Fortune 500 list).

The latest figures from the 2006 National Survey of Wildlife Related-Recreation, conducted by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service every 5 years since 1955, show that nearly 90 million Americans (38% of the population 16 years and older) hunted, fished or watched wildlife in 2006. They spent \$120 billion on wildlife-related activities. Thirty million Americans (13%) fished, 12.5 million (5%) hunted and 71 million (28%) watched wildlife. Sportspersons spent \$75 billion and wildlife watchers spent \$45 billion.

Alabama's Travel & Tourism Industry contributed more than \$8 billion to our economy in 2006 and sustained more than 160,000 jobs. Nature tourism is one emerging sector with enormous growth potential. Our vast natural diversity spans wetland and earthy habitats from the Gulf beaches to the lower Appalachian Mountains. In fact, the Mobile-Tensaw Delta is known as one of the most significant and valuable delta complexes in the nation.

In 2007, Alabama's coastal beaches attracted more than four million visitors who spent over \$2 billion dollars. While everyone recognizes that our natural resources-beaches, waterways and seafood-are a primary reason those visitors come, effectively communicating with local businesses about the economic value of healthy ecosystems and educating them about the sustainable use of those natural resources is a challenging task.

There are expanding opportunities to create new nature tourism jobs in Alabama as the state's population grows: especially in the coastal areas of Mobile and Baldwin counties. A recent survey conducted by the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau revealed that nearly 300,000 tourists (23% of our annual visitors) listed bird watching or wildlife-related recreation as activities they enjoyed here, up from 100,000 visitors in 2002.

Visitor spending increased from \$37 million in 2002 to over \$100 million in 2006. The Alabama Coastal Birding trail website has experienced a 91% increase in traffic since 2002.

Alabama's natural assets rank among the top 3-5 states in terms of overall biodiversity and ranks first among certain species such as mussels, but we also have the unfortunate honor of ranking second, only after Hawaii, in the number of species lost to extinction. (The Nature Conservancy 2002)

Ever-increasing human population growth is effectively shrinking our natural resources. Economic development and growth can occur without creating extreme negative consequences for our natural assets. The more we understand about the habitats and species that make our state so unique, the better we will be prepared to accommodate our living library of wildlife. It is important to continually create opportunities for the public to enjoy the wildlife in our state and to become educated about the requirements for healthy ecological communities.

In the field, well-planned and managed nature tourism businesses have proven to be one of the most powerful incentives to conserve and protect biodiversity. However, tourism in key biodiversity areas can pose a threat, in other words, tourists could "love a resource to death" through overuse. For Alabama to realize the economic potential of nature tourism, significant baseline issues must be addressed that will lead to a trained workforce for an expanded nature tourism industry.

The Auburn University Marine and Extension Center in partnership with the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium has launched a Nature Tourism Initiative to expedite the expansion of the coastal nature tourism industry through applied research programs, education, marketing and promotion to improve the economic return of existing nature tourism businesses and facilitate the development of sustainable new businesses. A survey of existing nature tourism businesses is currently being conducted to determine the specific economic impact this sector represents apart from the current data that monitors revenue in a variety of sectors including accommodations, food service, retail shopping and attractions.

Positive progress is already taking place here on the Gulf Coast through the Nature Tourism Initiative. The

Alabama Gulf Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau is coordinating the process of designating a state and national scenic byway along the Gulf Coast, including Mobile Bay; this will offer a marketable entity for showcasing the area's nature tourism assets and provide a venue for promoting good stewardship of them. The potential for new businesses along the byway is a viable solution to the demographic changes our working waterfront communities are experiencing as their traditional maritime jobs are displaced by service and factory jobs.

For the nature tourism industry to become sustainable in local communities a wide cross-section of Alabamians must be fully engaged and should involve cooperation among private citizens, industries, municipalities, business, private organizations and the whole spectrum of governments from the local to the federal level.

It is crucial that we all work together to protect and preserve our natural heritage and assure that future generations inherit an environment in which green is not only the color of money.

Joanne McDonough
Nature Tourism Specialist
Auburn University Marine Extension & Research Center
Sea Grant Extension
Alabama Gulf Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau

4th Annual BirdFest

by D. Fran Morley

Now looking toward its fifth year in October 2008, the Alabama Coastal BirdFest is making a significant impact on the economy of the area and drawing visitors from all over the Southeast and beyond.

According to a study conducted by **Semoon Chang**, Ph.D, Professor of Economics at the University of South Alabama, nearly half of BirdFest's paying participants (those who registered for a guided tour or evening event) traveled here from outside of the immediate area, which Dr. Chang considered to be Baldwin and Mobile counties, Jackson County in Mississippi, and Escambia County in Florida. "Those coming from outside that area included 20 from the rest of Alabama, seven from the rest of Florida, seven from Georgia, seven from Louisiana, seven from Texas, and many others from Arkansas, California, Kentucky, Michigan, other parts of Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, and Canada."

John Borom, chairman of the BirdFest steering committee, said this emphasizes the wide appeal of birding on the Gulf Coast. "People appreciate the wonderful opportunities we have for watching birds and other wildlife here. And it emphasizes how important it is that we continue to work to preserve our natural environment."

Dr. Chang's survey also highlighted the buying power of birders. "Of the paying participants, no less than 72.4 percent had household incomes of \$50,000 or more and nearly a quarter of the participants had household incomes of \$100,000 or more."

According to John Borom, all of the survey results reflect national trends. "A survey by the National Forest Service found that in 2003, 39.8 percent of the U.S. population went bird watching, and these people are very likely to travel a great distance for a chance to see a particular bird. Other studies have indicated that people who participate in bird watching come from households with higher than average incomes, and they are willing to spend money on their hobbies. We're more than happy to welcome them to do that here."

Organizers are already making plans for the 2008 Alabama Coastal BirdFest, scheduled for October 16-19. Details as they are announced will be posted at www.alabamacoastalbirdfest.com.

BirdFest could not take place without the dedicated support of many sponsors and supporters. These include Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Lands Division, Five Rivers-Alabama's Delta Resource Center, Alabama Power, The Forum, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, Faulkner State Community College, Degussa, Baldwin County Commission, Mobile County Commission, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary, Weeks Bay Foundation, Weeks Bay Reserve, The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, The Talking Phone Book, City of Fairhope, Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce, Gulf Shores Convention & Visitors Bureau, and Mobile Bay Convention & Visitors Bureau.



Ottilie Halstead and Foundation Chairman Jack Edwards at the Reserve's Holiday Open House

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Join us by returning the enclosed membership envelope or look for the link on our home page at www.weeksbay.org.

Annual Memberships

Student \$10 Individual \$30 Family \$50
 Business \$250 Lifetime \$1000

Spring 2008 Calendar

March

- 4-6 **Marsh Bird Monitoring Protocols Workshop.** Weeks Bay Auditorium. For more information, call (251) 928-9792.
- 11 **Guest Lecture Series “Antarctica Adventure—Following Shackleton’s Footsteps”** presented by **Chester McConnell.** Five Rivers-Alabama’s Delta Resource Center, 7:30 p.m. Bring a friend.
- 13 **Fish Kills and Harmful Algal Blooms.** Presentation by **Dr. Hugh MacIntyre.** Weeks Bay Auditorium, 1:00 p.m.
- 13 **Weeks Bay Advisory Committee Meeting.** Weeks Bay Auditorium, 2:00 p.m.
- 14-16 **Alabama Rivers Alliance Watershed Leadership Conference.** Camp Beckwith. For more information, go to www.alabamarivers.org.

April

- 8 **Guest Lecture Series “Caves In South Alabama”** presented by **Steven Carey.** Five Rivers-Alabama’s Delta Resource Center, 7:30 p.m. Bring a friend.
- 9-10 **GreenCoast 2008.** Green Building and Low Impact Conference. Outlaw Convention Center, Mobile, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, go to www.greencoastonline.com.
- 19 **Annual Membership Meeting – Weeks Bay Foundation.** Weeks Bay Foundation office, 11401 U.S. Highway 98 (across from the Reserve), 8:30 a.m. Open to the public. For more information, contact **Walter Ernest** at (251) 990-5004.

19 **Earth Day Mobile Bay.** Fairhope Pier, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Free admission.

25-27 **Digital Photography Weekend at Weeks Bay.** Nature photography workshop taught jointly by **Julie E. Brent** and **Fred Nation.** For more information, go to <http://moonsunearth.com/weeksbay.htm>.

May

3 **Kid’s Fishing Day.** A project of the Foundation and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Safe Harbor pond, 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. For more information, contact **Walter Ernest** at (251) 990-5004.

3 **Tour of Pitcher Plant Bog.** Meet at the Interpretive Center, 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Reservations are required; fee \$10. Contact Eric Brunden at (251) 928-9792 or eric.brunden@dcnr.alabama.gov for reservations.

10 **Weeks Bay Area/Renew Our Rivers Cleanup.** Fish River Marina, 8 a.m. to 12 noon. For more information, call (251) 928-9792.

13-15 **Hydric Soils Workshop.** Location to be announced, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information, call (251) 928-9792.

13 **Guest Lecture Series “Get To Know the Local Spiders”** presented by **Roger Clay.** Five Rivers-Alabama’s Delta Resource Center, 7:30 p.m. Bring a friend.

30 **Field trip to Gaillard Island** in Mobile Bay to observe nesting Brown Pelicans as well as gulls, terns, and Black Skimmers. Meet at Beachcomber Marine Supply at Dog River in Mobile County. Going south, take the first left at Dog River Bridge. There will be a \$15 per person fee. Limited to 20 people, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. For reservations, contact **John Borom** at (251) 990-0423.

Photo Contest



2007 Winner

*1st Place - Open Fauna
Orchard Oriole
Dorie Parsons
Fairhope, Alabama*

It's that time of year again... start preparing your pictures for the 9th annual Weeks Bay Photo Contest!

This year's entry deadline is Saturday, June 14, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. All entries must be delivered to the Reserve by this date. Entry forms and contest rules will be available on the Foundation website.

For more informaton, please call (251) 990-5004 or visit www.weeksbay.org.

Kid's Fishing Day

Join us for the 8th annual Kid's Fishing Day, free of charge to all participants!

**Saturday, May 3, 2008
8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Weeks Bay Reserve
Safe Harbor Pond**

For more information, contact the Foundation office at (251) 990-5004 or visit www.weeksbay.org.



Weeks Bay Foundation

11401 US Highway 98
Fairhope, Alabama 36532
(251) 990-5004
www.weeksbay.org

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photo by John Borom

Southern Toad
(*Bufo terrestris*)

*"Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you."
- Frank Lloyd Wright*