

Coastal Markers



NEWSLETTER OF THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

Volume 9, Issue 1

Summer 2005

Clear skies, fair seas welcome shrimpers

■ Shrimp Season opens to more than 600 boats

Shrimp season, which officially opened in Mississippi territorial waters at 6 a.m. June 21, brought with it fair weather and reports of below average catches of shrimp due to late cold fronts in spring and large amounts of rainfall in early April. More than 600 shrimp boats came out to work on opening day.

“This year the majority of boats counted on opening day consisted of larger vessels,” said DMR Shrimp and Crab Bureau Director Mike Brainard. “This reflects the Gulf-wide trend of fewer small shrimp vessels and vessels over 45 feet dominating the fishery.”

The Department of Marine Resources' (DMR) marine fisheries staff completed an aerial survey of the shrimp boats on opening day and observed an increase in the number of shrimp boats: 603 shrimp boats this year compared to 538 shrimp boats last year. The majority of boats were congregated near Petit Bois, Horn and Cat islands.

As of June 20, the total number of commercial shrimp licenses sold this year was



DMR Marine Patrol Officers Scott Chatham, pictured, and Paul Grote approach a shrimp vessel at the east end of Horn Island June 21 during opening day of shrimp season in Mississippi.

688—consisting of 512 resident and 176 non-resident. In addition, 137 resident recreational shrimp licenses were sold.

The DMR's Marine Patrol was out in full force starting at 5:30 p.m. on June 20 and worked 'round the clock to ensure a smooth shrimp season opening. This

included 27 officers and four dispatchers. Marine Patrol officers conducted patrols from 10 patrol boats throughout the Mississippi Sound. During this time Marine Patrol made seven arrests, six for shrimping during closed season and one for washing nets in closed waters.

Volunteers build boardwalk at Davis Bayou Preserve

Volunteers built a 40-foot public walkway at the Davis Bayou Preserve in Ocean Springs. Turn to page 7 for details on this partnering effort.



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Coastal Markers is a publication of the

**Mississippi Department
of Marine Resources**

1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101
Biloxi, MS 39530
(228) 374-5000

www.dmr.state.ms.us

State of Mississippi

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**Mississippi Commission on
Marine Resources**

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Richard Gollott
Commercial Seafood Processor

Oliver Sahuque
Commercial Fisherman

William W. Walker, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Fred Deegen, Ph.D.
Deputy Director

**Coastal Markers is produced by
the Office of Public Affairs**

Lauren S. Thompson
Editor-in-Chief

Susan Lepoma Perkins
Writer/Editor/Graphic Designer

Marti Schuman
Writer/Editor

This publication was funded through a federal grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended.

Thanks to those DMR employees who contributed to this issue of Coastal Markers: Lauren Bass, Mike Brainard, Jennifer Buchanan, Richard Cooley, Dorothy Daniel, Dr. Fred Deegen, Dale Diaz, Marian Dicas, Traci Floyd, Stanley Hamilton, Irvin Jackson, Joe Jewell, Grant Larsen, Ruth Posadas, Amy Taylor, and Frank Wescovich.

Director's Notes

Dr. William Walker

Another steamy summer along the Mississippi Gulf Coast is quite literally blowing by us. First there was Tropical Storm Cindy, then Hurricane Dennis, and as we go to press with this issue of Coastal Markers, Hurricane Emily appears also to be churning its way in our direction – all in little more than three weeks time.



Despite all the fuss, Mississippi's 2005 shrimp season got under way without any problems; and, while landings to date have not been much to get excited about thanks to all the stormy weather, tourists should have no problems ordering up a plate of freshly boiled shrimp or a seafood platter at any one of our many fine coast eateries.

In between storms, recreational fishermen are enjoying yet another great year of fishing as quite a number of new state records have been established so far. And while the Granddaddy of all fishing tournaments, the Mississippi Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo, has come and gone for another year, there are still plenty of other fishing tournaments to keep anglers entertained for the rest of the fishing season.

The sea trout population enhancement cooperative, or SPEC as it is more commonly known, is a pilot project to stock speckled trout (*Cynoscion nebulosus*) into local waters to help ensure a bright future for nearshore anglers who like to pursue this popular species. The process for rearing fingerlings in a closed system is currently being tested in preparation for an expected late summer hatch of fish from our own broodstock. Further news on this exciting project and other agency initiatives will follow in future newsletters.

William W. Walker
Executive Director

**Boat and Water Safety
Course Schedule
(July-Aug. 2005)**

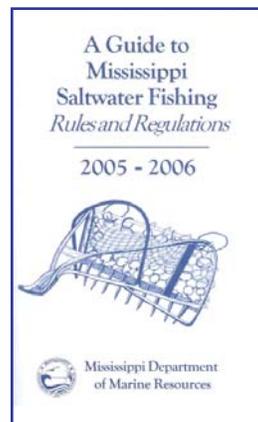


All classes are free. Preregistration is required. Class dates are subject to change. For details, call the DMR Boat and Water Safety Bureau at (228) 435-1332. Class schedules are posted monthly on the DMR's Web site at www.dmr.state.ms.us. Click on Marine Patrol, then select Boat and Water Safety and click on Schedule for Classes.

- **July 23**, Bolton Building Auditorium, 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- **July 25-26**, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 300 Hwy. 90, Bay St. Louis, 6-9 p.m.
- **Aug. 6**, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 300 Hwy. 90, Bay St. Louis, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- **Aug. 8-9**, Bolton Building Auditorium, 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, 6-9 p.m.
- **Aug. 13**, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 2326 Telephone Road, Pascagoula, 6-9 p.m.
- **Aug. 22-23**, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 2326 Telephone Road, Pascagoula, 6-9 p.m.
- **Aug. 27**, Bolton Building Auditorium, 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- **Aug. 29-30**, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 300 Hwy. 90, Bay St. Louis, 6-9 p.m.

NEW

**Fishing Rules and
Regulations Book**



*Get
your
FREE
copy
today!*

Stop by our office, located at 1141 Bayview Ave., Suite 101, Biloxi, or call Public Affairs at (228) 374-5000 for your free copy. The cover illustration was designed by DMR Staff Officer Joe Jewell.

Miss. River towboat becomes fishing reef



The *Kay A. Eckstein*, a 150-foot Mississippi River towboat, slowly sinks into the Gulf of Mexico to become an artificial fishing reef.

The DMR, in cooperation with Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks and Marquette Transportation Company, Inc., deployed a three-deck level, 150-foot Mississippi River towboat, onto a permitted reef site off Horn Island on May 20. The towboat, *Kay A. Eckstein*, was sunk at Fish Haven 13, an area about 30 miles south of Pascagoula.

On May 23, 1999, an engine room fire erupted on the *Kay A. Eckstein*, as the vessel was proceeding upbound in the Mississippi River, near St. Francisville, La. All 10 crew members aboard the vessel were safely evacuated. Due to the 40,000 gallons of diesel fuel onboard at the time of the incident, the fire continued for 12 hours, and the vessel sank near the bank of

the river as a result of the water burden created during fire fighting. The vessel was re-floated, and after completing an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the fire, Marquette Transportation agreed to fund the expense associated with cleaning and preparing the hull as a reef donation and the cost of transporting the vessel to the deployment site.

“John Scialdone, with Balch and Bingham, the law firm representing Marquette Transportation, played an integral role in making this tugboat deployment happen,” said DMR marine fisheries biologist, Kerwin Cuevas. “John is an avid fisherman here on the Coast and understands the importance of our artificial reef program to the future of sportfishing in

Mississippi. The tugboat will provide hard bottom habitat for fish species, which will increase fishing opportunities for Gulf Coast fishermen.”

“The *Kay A. Eckstein* fire was the largest casualty Marquette Transportation had ever faced,” said John Scialdone of Balch and Bingham LLP. “Their teamwork and advance planning resulted in all of the crew members safely evacuating and virtually no environmental impact despite the tremendous amount of fuel onboard at the time of the fire. With this donation, Marquette brings to a close the enormous challenge faced in responding to the fire, by creating an environmental resource that will benefit our state’s fishery habitat for decades to come.”

DMR attends shrimp alliance meeting

CMR member Richard Gollott and DMR employees Corky Perret and Mike Brainard presented information about hydrological and biological factors that may impact Mississippi’s spring brown shrimp season at the 2005 American Shrimp Processors Association conference, held April 21-23, 2005 at the Grand Casino Gulfport Oasis Hotel. The objective and purpose of the association is to act as the collective voice of the American shrimp processing industry, to protect and promote the interests of the shrimp processors, and keep the membership currently informed on problems industrywide, statewide, regionwide, and nationwide. Some of the topics discussed at this year’s meeting ranged from the “Economic Impact of 2004 Tsunami in the Domestic Shrimp Fishery,” “Update on the phenomenal response to Wild American shrimp’s marketing” and updates on the shrimp season outlooks for Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas.



CMR Commissioner Richard Gollott (left) and Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commissioner Robert Samanie take a break from the busy schedule at the 2005 American Shrimp Processors Association Meeting.

GMFMC celebrates 200th meeting



DMR Marine Fisheries Director William Corky Perret (right) presents Wayne Swingle, Executive Director of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC), with a plaque commemorating the 200th meeting of the GMFMC. The meeting was held May 9-12 at the Palace Casino Resort in Biloxi. The Mississippi representatives for the council William S. Perret, Kay Williams and Philip Horn hosted a seafood social commemorating this milestone of council activities. The seafood social was held May 10 at the J.L. Scott Marine Education Center.

DMR enhances oyster reefs after Hurricane Ivan

The DMR distributed approximately 13,000 cubic yards of cultch material (oyster shells) on two sites near the Henderson Point and the Telegraph reef areas south of Pass Christian, June 1-14, 2005. The sites were selected after gathering input from oyster harvesters in addition to on-site investigations of bottom types and other environmental factors.

Cultch plants consist of spreading oyster shell, unwashed limestone or concrete rubble over the water bottom, giving oyster larvae a clean surface on which to attach and grow. These plants are intended to enhance oyster productivity and increase fishing opportunities in south Mississippi through the continued development of existing reefs and the creation of additional new reefs.

Funding for this project is provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric



The DMR deployed approximately 7,600 cubic yards of cultch material (oyster shells, limestone, crushed concrete) on a site near the Telegraph reef area south of Pass Christian June 1-3.

Administration through an award of \$1,551,876 from the National Marine Fisheries Service in support of Mississippi's Hurricane Ivan Shellfish Restoration and Enhancement Project. A portion of this award was spent on the June cultch plant and the remainder of the funds

will be spent over the next two years. The grant awarded to Mississippi is a share of the \$9 million appropriated by Congress to assist the states of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana in recovering from the damage to oyster reefs caused by Hurricane Ivan.

"These funds will help enhance approximately 300 acres of Mississippi oyster habitat," said Steve Breland, DMR Marine Fisheries Technician. "Once these shell plants are completed, the DMR will have created or enhanced more than 1,300 acres of oyster habitat in Mississippi since 1997. Cultch plants are one of the

best methods we have of helping to ensure the continued success of the oyster fishery. We have been fortunate to have had great support from our elected officials, fishermen and processors who recognize the value of this industry."

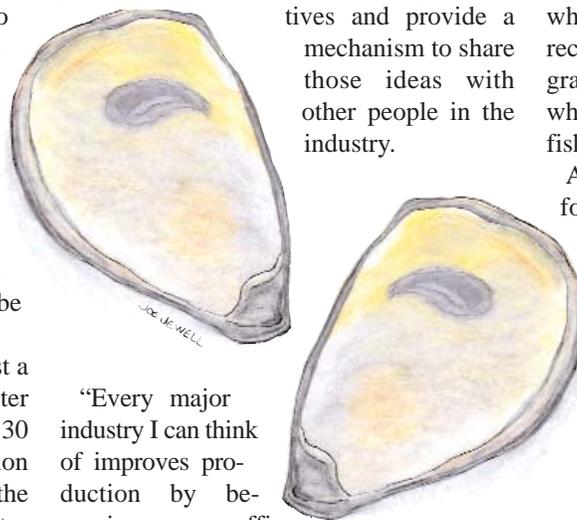
DMR launches oyster stewardship program

The oyster stewardship program is a program with a very simple goal, to get professional oyster fishermen, oyster processors and people in the oyster business to share their ideas about things they can voluntarily do in the process of running their commercial oyster businesses to improve the public oyster reefs. The DMR wants to help commercial oyster fishermen harvest more oysters and make more money. Therefore, their input is needed about this program and how fishermen can be convinced to participate.

The DMR's Shellfish Bureau will host a meeting for licensed commercial oyster fishermen on August 3, 2005 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Depot on Union Street in Bay St. Louis. At the meeting, the DMR will provide a meeting facilitator who is not associated with the oyster industry to help oyster fishermen develop a prioritized list of everyday actions that they can use as professional oyster harvesters to promote the wise use of

Mississippi's valuable oyster resources.

The DMR wants to collect ideas from professional oyster industry representatives and provide a mechanism to share those ideas with other people in the industry.



"Every major industry I can think of improves production by becoming more efficient," said Dale Diaz, DMR Marine Fisheries staff officer. "This industry is made up of individual fishermen and small business owners who don't have a good mechanism to communicate information

about smart oyster harvesting ideas. We want to help facilitate that communication."

Each commercial oyster license holder who participates in the program will receive a rain suit and shirt with the program's name and logo and some tools which are useful for commercial oyster fishermen.

Another meeting will be held in fall 2005 for oyster processors and other people in the oyster business.

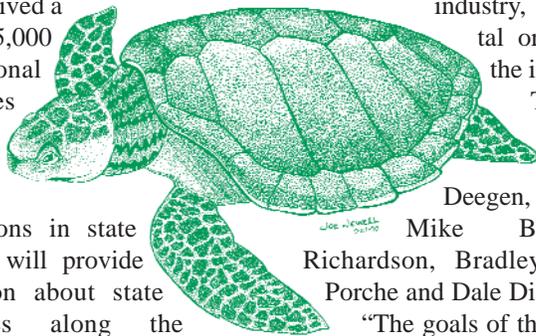
Funding for this project is provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration through an award from the National Marine Fisheries Service in support of Mississippi's Hurricane Ivan Shellfish Restoration and Enhancement Project.

Need more INFO?
For more information about the oyster stewardship program, contact Dale Diaz at (228) 374-5000.

DMR receives grant for turtle study

The DMR has received a grant for nearly \$25,000 from the National Marine Fisheries Service to write a comprehensive report that addresses sea turtle interactions in state waters. The report will provide detailed information about state managed fisheries along the Mississippi coast. The report will be organized first by gear type and secondarily by fisheries using that gear.

In 2001, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) approved a comprehensive strategy to address sea turtle interactions in state and federal fisheries operating in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. This strategy is a new approach for reducing incidental capture of sea turtles in U.S. commercial and recreational fisheries based on evaluating sea turtle bycatch across gear types and relying heavily upon involvement of stakeholders (e.g., fishing



industry, non-governmental organizations, and the interested public).

The report writing team consists of Dr. Fred Deegen, Mike Buchanan, Mike Brainard, Bill Richardson, Bradley Randall, Eric Porche and Dale Diaz.

“The goals of the turtle study are to conserve and recover sea turtles, increase effectiveness in management and to prioritize turtle-fishery interaction concerns,” said DMR Marine Fisheries staff officer Dale Diaz, who serves as writing team project coordinator.

COM unit aids MP divers in search and rescue



The Marine Patrol Dive Team recently purchased underwater communications (radios), four sets of Ocean Reef masks, regulators for the divers and a surface unit. The new communications equipment will enable officers on the boat or pier to talk to the divers underwater or to hear their communications when multiple divers are underwater.

“The radios will enhance diver safety during search and recovery dives by allowing divers to communicate problems to the surface without another diver having to go down to investigate,” said Marine Patrol Senior Master Sgt. Richard Cooley. “The maximum range on the COM units is 600 feet. Water temperature, density and objects may reduce that distance.”

Marine Patrol Citation Totals

(April-June 2005)

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Shrimp | 23 |
| Crab | 9 |
| Oyster | 1 |
| Commercial Net Fishing | 0 |
| Live Bait | 1 |
| Miscellaneous Seafood | 6 |
| Recreational Fishing | 58 |
| Boat and Water Safety | 94 |
| Marine Litter | 1 |
| Miscellaneous | 9 |

Boat and Water Safety Statistics

(April-June 2005)

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Classes held | 14 |
| Students certified | 240 |
| Outreach events | 2 |
| Presentations | 17 |
| Boat inspections | 24 |
| Boating accidents | 8 |
| Fatalities | 1 |

Sound Advice

Lt. Frank Wescovich



In this issue of *Coastal Markers*, I will answer some more questions that are frequently asked by people calling the DMR Boating Safety staff.

Question: I just bought a boat and it is currently registered to the last owner with an expiration date of next year. When will I need to apply for my new registration?

Answer: You have 10 days from the date you acquired the boat to submit a registration form to the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. The current registration of the previous owner ceases to be valid when he sells the boat to you.

Question: I am applying for a loan to buy a boat. The lending institution says they will need a title on the boat in order to give me a loan. What do I need to do to obtain a title?

Answer: Mississippi is a non-title state for boats. This means that a title is not required for boats as it is for automobiles. However, titling became optional for boats approximately six years ago. To obtain a title you must submit a title application and the proper fee to the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks in Jackson, Miss. They will then process the application and create a title. The lending institution will hold the original title until the loan is satisfied. They will be listed as the lien holder. You will have a copy of the original. Once the lien is satisfied, the lender will send the original title back to Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. They will remove the lien and send you a clear title for your boat.

Question: I have just finished going through my emergency equipment on my boat and found out that my visual distress flares are expired. Are they

See SOUND ADVICE, page 9

DMR licenses 27 live bait shrimp camps

During the months of April and May the DMR's Shrimp and Crab Bureau inspected and licensed 27 live bait shrimp dealer facilities, 24 live bait harvest vessels and 12 live bait transport vehicles in order to help provide the public with live and dead bait shrimp. The number of bait shrimp dealers licensed is down from 31 dealers licensed last season.

By law, Mississippi live bait shrimp operations must be inspected and licensed annually by May 31. Inspections include observing that dealers have met requirements such as sufficient vessel safety gear, proper net and door sizes of trawls, and adequate facilities to keep live shrimp for sale to the public. Bait shrimp landings and sales are reported monthly to the DMR by each licensed dealer.

"Mississippi's live bait shrimp dealers



Traci Floyd (right) goes over a site inspection of Ocean Springs Marine Mart with owner Kenny DiNero.

provide a valuable service to the recreational fishing community by offering one of the top live bait options for landing prized sport fish," said Traci Floyd, marine fisheries scientist. For a complete listing of licensed live bait shrimp dealers, contact the DMR at (228) 374-5000.

DMR mentors local student through national program

Stephanie Heimann, a graduating senior from Biloxi High School, has begun work at the DMR as a recipient of the 2005 Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology mentoring program scholarship. Heimann started the eight-week mentorship program, sponsored by the American Fisheries Society, on June 1.

Heimann applied for the scholarship because she is interested in pursuing a career in Marine Science. She was one of only 65 students selected internationally.

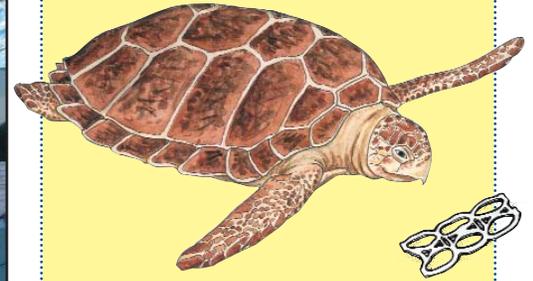
"The Hutton Scholarship Program is a very competitive nationwide program, and I commend Ms. Heimann on her selection," said DMR Executive Director William Walker. "The Department of Marine Resources is honored to be chosen by Ms. Heimann as her host agency. This is an outstanding program that assists our most talented future leaders in making important career development decisions, and we look forward to working with Ms.



Stephanie Heimann is the recipient of the 2005 Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology mentoring program scholarship.

Heimann during her mentorship program." Students selected for the program were matched with a professional mentor for a summer-long, hands-on experience in a marine setting. A scholarship of \$3,000 is awarded to each student accepted into the program. Selection of students was made by the American Fisheries Society.

17th annual Mississippi Coastal Cleanup



Saturday, Sept. 17
8 a.m.-11 a.m.

Volunteer!

Call (228) 374-5022, ext.
5063 or 5062

Selection criteria included academic ability, recommendations and communication skills.

"This is the second year the DMR has participated in the mentoring program," said mentor Kerwin Cuevas, DMR biological program coordinator. "Stephanie will have an opportunity to work with all of the programs in fisheries. This should help her in settling on which area she would like to focus her studies on."

Stephanie Heimann is the daughter of Thomas and Denise Heimann of Biloxi.

How to apply

For more information about the Hutton Scholarship Program, visit the American Fisheries Society's Web site at www.fisheries.org and click on Hutton Program.

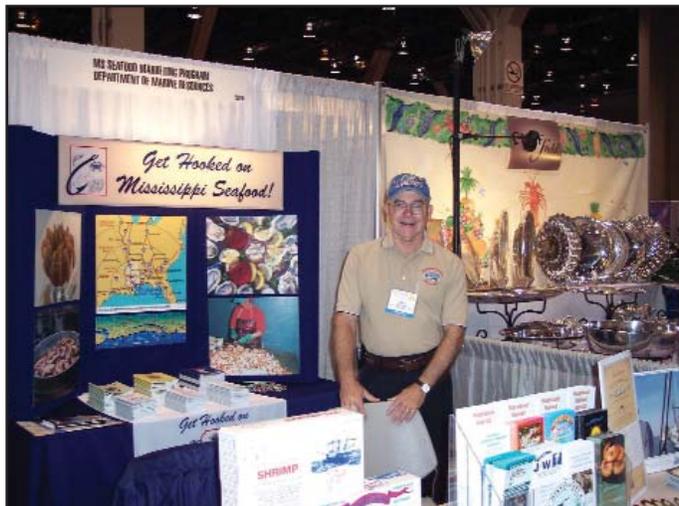
Volunteers help restore Deer Island



More than 100 volunteers planted marsh grass at Deer Island on April 9. The event was organized by the DMR Coastal Preserves Program and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District. The volunteers were shuttled by boat to the island to plant black needlerush and cordgrasses on the newly restored portion of the island, which was created in the summer of 2003 with dredge material from the Biloxi channel. This project created an additional 50 acres of tidal marsh. The plants will stabilize the new soil and help to prevent erosion, which has been the source of the loss of more than 300 acres over the past century. Once established, these plants will also provide valuable nursery habitats for shrimp, crabs, and fish.

Seafood Marketing Program takes Mississippi seafood to the Windy City

Mississippi Seafood Marketing Program Coordinator Irvin Jackson prepares the DMR exhibit for the Chicago Foodservice Expo. The Seafood Marketing Program's next event is the Louisiana Foodservice Expo in New Orleans, Aug. 6-8, which will feature Hattiesburg's Chef Robert St. John in the Great American Seafood Cook-off.



The DMR's Mississippi Seafood Marketing Program exhibited for the second year at the Chicago Foodservice Expo, held May 21-24 at the McCormick Place convention center in Chicago. About 40,000 prospective buyers and sellers attended the event.

Approximately 2,500 attendees from across the country and overseas stopped by the DMR exhibit and received copies of the Mississippi Seafood Business Directory, Seafood Cookbooks, and various seafood industry materials.

"We received many positive comments about Mississippi seafood at the show," said Irvin Jackson, DMR's Mississippi Seafood Marketing Program coordinator.

Davis Bayou Preserve gets new boardwalk

Volunteers from Boy Scout Troop 271 of Ocean Springs, the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain, Audubon Mississippi, the City of Ocean Springs and the DMR Coastal Preserves Program completed the construction of an access structure at the Davis Bayou Preserve in Ocean Springs in April.

The structure is located at the end of Hellmer's Lane, and consists of a 40-foot long walkway that connects the parking area to a viewing platform and a footbridge which crosses a tidal creek. In addition to constructing the access structure, the scouts enhanced the area by planting native vegetation, including wax myrtle, yaupon, and muhly grass. This boardwalk is one of the stops on the Ocean Springs birding trail. It is a one-acre tract at the upper end of the Ocean Springs Harbor. It is in a natural and serene wooded area in the middle of the city, with lots of beautiful large magnolia and oak trees.

The land was purchased through an EPA grant, and is managed by the Coastal Preserves Program. Like all Coastal Preserves, the Hellmer's Lane Boardwalk is accessible to the public. Future projects for the area include creating a footpath and removing exotic (non-native) vegetation.

New fish ruler sticker available free to anglers

The DMR, in cooperation with Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks, has developed a new fish ruler sticker for saltwater anglers. Anglers can affix the fish ruler sticker to their boat or cooler to measure their catch.

In addition to a 40-inch ruler to measure your fish and ensure it is of legal size, the sticker contains size and possession limits for popular saltwater fish, GPS coordinates for more than 20 inshore and off-shore artificial fishing reefs, a marine litter ordinance sticker (required on boats in marine waters), and emergency contact information for boaters.

Anglers can pick up their free fish ruler sticker, while supplies last, at the DMR office, 1141 Bayview Avenue in Biloxi, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Red snapper illustration by © Joe Jewell.

NERR Notes

Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve



NERR to be featured on EstuaryLive Webcast

The Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR), in partnership with the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, will be hosting EstuaryLive on Sept. 23 at the reserve on property belonging to the Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Designed as an interactive activity for classrooms, this program can be viewed by anyone with Internet access.

Held in celebration of National Estuaries Day, EstuaryLive is a free, live, Internet field trip to five different estuaries around the

country. This year's program will feature the following five sites: Grand Bay NERR and Mobile Bay NEP, Ala.; Tillamook Bay National Estuary Program (NEP), Ore.; New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program, N.J.; Jacques Cousteau NERR and Barnegat Bay NEP, N.J.; and San Francisco Bay NERR, Calif.

During the program, naturalists that work in partnership with NOAA's National Estuarine Research Reserve



Bayou Heron will be featured on the Grand Bay NERR s EstuariesLive broadcast on Sept. 23. This aerial photo shows maritime slash pine flatwoods/savanna habitat.

System and the U.S. EPA's National Estuary Program will take participants on a journey through each estuary's unique ecosystem. Participants will interact with these tour guides by e-mailing questions to the sites during the field trips. Many of the questions will be answered live during the broadcast. In addition to the classroom participation, a few school groups will be able to attend a local environmental center such as the J.L. Scott Marine Education

Center in Biloxi to participate in the event on a larger scale.

Grand Bay Reserve's theme for EstuaryLive, "Marshian Invaders," is designed to take a unique look at coastal exotic and invasive species, American Indian middens, and salt pannes, in addition to general information about estuaries. Students will learn how these invasive or "alien" species, such as nutria, often make themselves at home in new estuarine environments and how their presence impacts biodiversity. Ways to control or manage these invaders will also be discussed and demonstrated. Long Beach High School's Marine Quiz Bowl Team will serve as assistants for this project and present some of the information.

You do not have to be a student to benefit or participate in this event.

More Info?

Email jen.buchanan@dmr.state.ms.us or Lyokel@mobilebaynep.com
Visit www.estuaries.gov

Coastal strategists discuss city, county training needs

The Grand Bay NERR Coastal Training Program (CTP) hosted a strategy session luncheon for local elected officials and their staff members on May 16 at the Grand Casino Biloxi Bayview Convention Center as part of the Smart Growth Coastal Development Strategies Conference. The focus of the session was to examine the coastal resource management training needs of local municipalities.

Results of the CTP market analysis and needs assessment surveys were reviewed, and luncheon attendees participated in brainstorming activities to help clarify survey results. Local elected and appointed officials in Jackson, Harrison and Hancock counties and the eleven coastal cities within them are a primary target audience of the CTP.



Kay Kell and Harrietta Eaton with the City of Pascagoula review CTP workshop topics.



Seafood Safety Corner

The deadline for the renewal of all seafood dealers' licenses was April 30. A total of 76 permit holders were recertified.

The first quarterly inspections have been completed, and sampling for the semi-annual water quality inspections began on June 13.

In addition to our continued efforts to provide technical assistance to the seafood industry, we held a workshop on *Vibrio vulnificus* Health Education on April 27 in Biloxi. *Vibrio vulnificus* is a naturally occurring bacteria that may adversely impact consumers with certain underlying health conditions.

ing of oysters and guidance on many other important seafood safety issues.

Speakers included Dr. Linda Andrews, associate professor of Mississippi State University, Scott Gordon, DMR shellfish bureau director, and Jan Welker, seafood officer with the DMR's Seafood Technology Bureau.

Among the 46 participants were representatives from the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference; U.S. Food and Drug Administration; Mississippi Hospitality and Restaurant Association; Mississippi Department of Health and Human Services; Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center; seafood processors and restaurant owners.

The workshop discussion concluded that more education efforts are needed to reach out to the public about the risk of *Vv* illness for the at-risk consumers and that there are alternative oyster products available in the market today for consumers. There is also a need for more user-friendly promotional and educational materials for the at-risk people who handle seafood.

One of the many seafood health promotion and education exhibits planned for the year was held May 28 at a fishing rodeo in the Lizana community in Harrison County, Mississippi. Several educational and promotional materials were distributed, including the brochure and fact sheets about *Vibrio vulnificus*. Several local residents participated in the family-oriented festivities, and anglers caught many species of fish that were entered into the rodeo competition.



Ruth Posadas

SOUND ADVICE, continued from page 5

OK to keep onboard? If not, how do I dispose of them?

Answer: Visual distress signals have an expiration date. It is three years from the date of manufacture. Both the manufacture date and the expiration will be stamped on the signal. It is perfectly alright to carry expired flares onboard. In all probability they will work as well as the new ones. They just do not meet the legal requirement for signals that are within the expiration date. You still are required by law to have flares onboard that are **not** expired. I suggest when you need to use your flares, use the expired ones first. This may allow you to save the new ones for next time. If you don't want to carry the expired ones onboard, bring them to DMR's Marine Patrol office, and we will properly dispose of them. Please do not dispose of them yourself, as they are very dangerous and could be illegal if used in a non-distress situation.

Question: Should I keep my boat registration card on my boat at all times?

Answer: Yes, the registration card must be available to be shown to officials at all times when the boat is in use. If you loan your boat to someone, make sure they have access to the card in case they are boarded by Marine Patrol or other officials.

I hope these questions and answers have shed some light on boating for you. For further questions or other information, please call DMR Boating Safety at (228) 432-2820.

Remember: Wear your life jacket. Life jackets save lives. Safe boating is no accident.

Lt. Frank Wescovich oversees the DMR's Boat and Water Safety Program. He can be reached at (228) 432-2820 or (228) 435-1332.



DMR Marine Fisheries Technician Rita Duvernay (right) distributes materials to workshop registrants at the *Vibrio vulnificus* Health Education workshop on April 27 in Biloxi.

The workshop targeted members of the seafood industry including processors, harvesters, wholesalers, retailers, oyster bar/restaurant owners and oyster handlers, state and federal agency regulators, government officials, educators and medical professionals.

Participants in the workshop received information on issues related to food safety and sanitation as well as technological issues in relation to post harvest process-



Recreational saltwater sportfishing licenses expired June 30

Recreational saltwater fishing licenses are on sale now and may be purchased at the DMR and most Wal-Mart, Kmart, sporting goods stores, bait shops and fishing camps. Annual licenses cost \$5.85 and are valid from July 1 to June 30 of the next year.

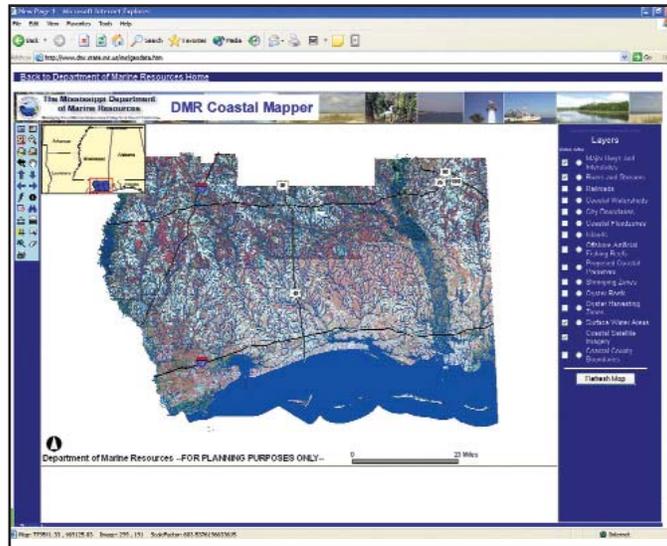
Interactive map of Coast now on DMR Web site

The DMR Comprehensive Resource Management Plan (CRMP) recently unveiled an online interactive mapping application, called the Coastal Mapper, on the DMR's Web site at www.dmr.state.ms.us. Whether you want a bird's eye view of your neighborhood to determine the location of the nearest boat launch, or study your local watershed, the DMR's Coastal Mapper is for you.

The Coastal Mapper is a Web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) that provides the user an opportunity to view and query geospatial data pertinent to Mississippi's six coastal counties.

The user can choose which data layers to display, has the ability to zoom and pan the view, measure distances, and display attributes associated with objects in the view. Additionally, the functionality has been enabled to allow the user to hyperlink from the mapping application to related information on the Web with one click of the mouse. For instance, each of the six coastal county boundaries in the interactive display are hyperlinked to the corresponding county Web site. All this is available to anyone with a Web browser and Web access. No additional software is required.

Early in the CRMP process, the utilization of GIS was approached by providing



Coastal Mapper is available online at www.dmr.state.ms.us. Click on **Geodata** on the navigator bar on the left side of the page.

the coastal cities and counties with hardware, GIS software, and data. It was then necessary, in most cases, to obtain training to use the system. With the Web-based GIS approach, no additional software, hardware, or training is required. The data is provided to the user via the application, so only one data set needs to be maintained.

The application itself and the associated tools are very intuitive and can be utilized almost immediately. An online tutorial is provided as the user enters the application's Web site for new users. The tutorial provides explanations for every available tool, points out the important parts of the

user interface, provides instructions on how to turn layers on and off, how to select specific layers, and how to refresh the map display.

The Coastal Mapper currently offers approximately 36 coastal data layers for viewing in addition to both satellite imagery and aerial photography covering the entire Mississippi Gulf Coast. Despite being recently unveiled for public use, the Coastal Mapper is a dynamic application with improvements and additional data scheduled for implementation within the very near future. Some of the layers currently available include: CRMP Potential Land Development

Model, Boat launches/fishing piers/marinas, Floodzones, Inshore artificial reefs, Soils, Offshore artificial reefs, Roads, Coastal Preserves, Highways, Oyster reefs, Streams, Oyster harvesting zones, City boundaries, Shrimping grounds, and County boundaries.

The Coastal Mapper was funded through a Coastal Impact Assistance Program grant.

Want to Know More?

Contact Grant Larsen with DMR/CRMP at (228) 374-5000.

DMR receives Keep Mississippi Beautiful Awards

The DMR was presented with two awards at the 13th annual Keep America Beautiful Awards Luncheon held April 21 at the Country Club of Jackson in Jackson, Miss.: a second place award for its joint effort with the Mississippi Department of Transportation in the State Government category for the 2004 Trash Splash Cleanup and a 2005 Partnership Award for exemplary support of Keep Mississippi Beautiful.

This is the fifth consecutive year that Keep Mississippi Beautiful recognized the DMR with an award for its efforts to coordinate volunteer marine debris cleanups along the Coast and the second year the DMR was recognized with a partnership award.

"It's an honor to accept these awards

on behalf of the DMR, our partners and the many volunteers who removed nearly a ton of marine debris from our coastal waterways during the 2004 Trash Splash event," said Lauren Thompson, DMR Public Relations Director. "We will continue to look for ways to partner with the community on environmental stewardship projects to increase public awareness of the harmful effects litter has on our marine environment."

To be eligible for a Keep Mississippi Beautiful/People Against Litter statewide award, a program must show successful results in one of the following environmental leadership areas: litter prevention, beautification and community improvement, minimizing the impact of solid waste on communities and recycling.



From left: Keep Mississippi Beautiful Vice Chairperson Stephanie Hutchins, DMR Public Relations Director Lauren Thompson and Central District Transportation Commissioner Dick Hall.



Take a Bow

Recognizing employees' commitment to excellence

Personnel board awards Jewell with CSM

DMR Marine Fisheries Assistant Director Joe Jewell completed the first three levels of the Mississippi Certified Public Manager program.



The Mississippi State Personnel Board (SPB) awarded Assistant Director of Marine Fisheries, Joe Jewell with the Certificate in Supervisory Management.

Jewell completed the first three levels of the Mississippi Certified Public Manager program, which includes 30 hours of professional development training, one required reading/abstract and a job-related project. Jewell's project was "Computerization of the Department of Marine Resources' Office of Marine Fisheries Grants"—the major components of which have been approved by the SPB and implemented at the DMR. The certification program recognizes participants who have mastered the fundamentals of management concepts and prepares them for the complex and demanding governmental issues confronting Mississippi. A participant must complete six levels to receive the Certified Public Manager Designation.

Public Affairs Bureau wins national awards



DMR Public Relations Director Lauren Thompson and DMR Public Relations Representatives Susan Perkins and Marti Schuman received two national awards at the annual National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC) Communications School held May 9-11 in Austin, Texas.

More than 600 entries were submitted to the 2004 Blue Pencil/Gold Screen Awards competition, which recognizes excellence in written, filmed, audio/videotaped, published and photographed government information products.

The following awards were presented to the DMR: a Second Place Blue Pencil Award was presented to the DMR Public Affairs Bureau for its "BioBlitz" press kit in the category Shoestring Budget and an Award of Excellence was presented to the DMR Public Affairs Bureau for the "Mississippi Boater's Guide," in the Brochure/Booklets/16 pages or less/In-House category.

Learning about native plants

Plant identification workshop participants listen to Dr. Robert Mohlenbrock lecture about freshwater marsh habitats and the plant species that thrive there. More than 200 plants were identified during the four-day period, including Soapberry Tree, Tiny-leaf Buckthorn and Black Needle Palm.



The DMR's Coastal Preserves Program and the Grand Bay NERR's Coastal Training Program welcomed Dr. Robert Mohlenbrock of Biotic Consultants, Incorporated to South Mississippi for a four-day coastal plant identification workshop May 3-6, 2005. DMR staffers Lauren Bass, Brittany Breazeale, Jennifer Buchanan, Jill Cooke, Marian Dicas, Bradley Ennis, Willa Henriksen, Chris May, Josh Skidmore and Gretchen Waggy attended the class, which consisted of an introductory botany lecture and three days of intense field work. The focus of the workshop was on coastal and riparian habitats within the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and Ward Bayou Management Area.

Happy Anniversary!

These anniversaries mark employees' years of service with the Department of Marine Resources and the state of Mississippi.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (7/1/80) George Wright Sr. | (8/18/03) Sally Richards |
| (7/1/85) Scott Gordon | (8/20/01) Christine Popwell |
| (7/1/87) Joey Moran | (8/25/86) Judy Bosarge |
| (7/1/91) David Rose | (8/25/97) Marty Jones |
| (7/1/91) Frank Wescovich | (9/1/98) Kenny Melvin |
| (7/1/93) Linda McCarthy | (9/1/00) Alan McArthur |
| (7/1/97) John Grimsley | (9/1/00) Don Baxter |
| (7/1/99) Leah Bray | (9/1/00) Tina Shumate |
| (7/1/03) Marian Dicas | (9/1/01) Linda Bullard |
| (7/7/92) Charlie Vyles | (9/1/03) Jason Ferrill |
| (7/8/02) Dr. William Walker | (9/1/03) John White |
| (7/14/03) Mike Rigdon | (9/1/03) Chris May |
| (7/15/99) Michaela Hill | (9/9/00) Matt Hill |
| (7/21/97) Joe Ziegler | (9/10/01) Gwynn Taylor |
| (7/25/96) Corky Perret | (9/13/04) Steven Kelly |
| (7/31/90) Dorothy Daniel | (9/15/99) Erick Porche |
| (8/1/86) Mike Buchanan | (9/15/99) Al Warburton |
| (8/1/99) Susan Perkins | (9/15/99) Joe Roach |
| (8/7/02) Justin Godfrey | (9/18/00) Jerry Brashier |
| (8/13/01) Joan Murphy | (9/20/01) Marti Schuman |
| (8/15/01) Richard Cooley | |

We thank them for their dedicated service to the management of our marine resources.



**Mississippi Department
of Marine Resources**
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

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**Mississippi Coastal Cleanup
September 17**

DMR Calendar

August 11

Comprehensive Resource Management Plan Meeting, Bolton Building, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, 10 a.m.

August 16

Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources meeting, Bolton Building, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, 9 a.m.

September 17

Mississippi Coastal Cleanup, coastwide marine debris cleanup, 8-11 a.m. To volunteer, call (228) 374-5022, ext. 5063 or 5062.

September 20

Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources meeting, Bolton Building, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, 9 a.m.

September 23

EstuaryLive, "Marshian" Invaders, Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Details: (228) 475-7047. (See story on pg. 8.)



**Sept. 24 is
National
Estuaries
Day**

Doc's Fishing Tip



Fishermen prospecting in the barrier island surf for Spanish mackerel and bluefish will enjoy good results with a silver casting spoon this time of year. A spoon's fluttering action and scintillating flash mimic many of the bait fish species that rank high on the smorgasbord that these fish savor. Remember to use a black, steel leader ahead of the spoon, though, or you will stand a good chance of having it cut off by these toothsome predators.

— Fred Deegen, Ph.D., Deputy Director
Spanish Mackerel illustration by ' Joe Jewell