

Coastal Markers



Volume 10, Issue 4

NEWSLETTER OF THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

Spring 2007

Gov. Barbour to speak at Smart Growth Conference

Conference to be held May 9-10 at IP Casino Resort Spa in Biloxi

Gov. Haley Barbour will be one of the speakers at the eighth annual Coastal Development Strategies Conference (Smart Growth) on May 9-10 at the IP Casino Resort Spa in Biloxi. Gov. Barbour will talk about coastal restoration on the second day of the conference.

All over the United States, communities are using principles of smart growth to protect and enhance their natural environment while local economies grow and prosper. Attendees of the conference will have the opportunity to dialogue, learn from each other and cooperate on selected issues to promote smart growth across the coastal region and into our rural areas.

This conference is hosted by the



Gov. Haley Barbour

Comprehensive Resource Management Plan (CRMP) in association with the CRMP stakeholders and the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce.

Two full days of conference will feature speakers and breakout sessions. This

dynamic conference provides networking opportunities to form new partnerships, new ideas and discuss smart growth as a way to guide new development, seeking a better quality of life for all citizens.

CRMP is a program within the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR). CRMP's mission is to develop a plan to sustain Mississippi's coastal resources while providing a healthy economy in the region.

"This annual smart growth conference is important to everyone who calls southern Mississippi home," said Tina Shumate, CRMP director. "We are carrying out our mission to address challenges and opportunities as we rebuild our Gulf Coast and grow as a region."

The multidisciplinary event draws elected officials, city and county staff, contractors, developers, bankers, planners, realtors, engineers, landowners, industry, students, federal and state agencies, county boards of supervisors, lawyers, private and corporate entities, environmentalists, resource managers and others committed

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Special oyster season opens

The DMR opened Area VIII "B" Conditionally Approved Waters to the harvest of oysters for tonging only, on March 5. This is the first shellfish growing area to open for oyster harvest since Hurricane Katrina.

The hurricane caused about 90 percent to 95 percent oyster mortality on the major commercial reefs.

Area VIII "B" Conditionally Approved Waters in east Jackson County which includes the following: the South Rigolets, L'Isle Chaude, L'Isle Chaude Bay, Jose Bayou, Jose Bay, portions of the North Rigolets, northern portions of Point Aux Chenes Bay, including the area locally known as Graw Point Bay and the southern portions of Middle Bay.

The following areas will be closed to harvest: Bangs Lake, Middle Bayou, Southwest Bayou and Clay Bayou. All other Mississippi waters will remain closed to harvest.

For more information, call the 24-hour DMR Oyster Information Hotline at (228) 374-5167 or 1-800-385-5902.



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**Visit the DMR online
www.dmr.state.ms.us**

Director's Notes

Dr. William Walker



Spring is here in South Mississippi. The trout are biting, the cobia are running, and recreational boaters are out in full force. DMR's Boat and Water Safety Bureau took a big hit in Katrina, the Oak St. office was washed away in the storm, but starting this spring, Marine Patrol is once again offering free boat and water safety classes to the public. Those born after June 30, 1980 must complete a boat and water safety course and have a boating certificate in their possession while operating a motorboat or personal watercraft in Mississippi waters. For more information or to sign up for a class call (228) 523-4134 or see page 10.

Progress continues on marine debris removal. As of April 9, 78,866 cubic yards of marine debris has been removed in the three coastal counties, with 65,259 cubic yards removed from inland waterways and 13,607 cubic yards removed from the shoreline to a half-mile out in the Mississippi Sound.

A massive cultch plant is under way to restore and enhance Mississippi's oyster reefs. This is the biggest replanting effort our state has ever seen. Paid for through the NOAA Hurricane Katrina Fisheries Disaster Grant, the \$3 million cultch plant will spread 57,668 cubic yards of cultch material on 580 acres at Pass Christian, Pass Marianne and Kittiwake reefs in the western Mississippi Sound.

Recreational fishermen will be pleased to hear that the rebuilding of all of Mississippi's nearshore fishing reefs that were damaged or destroyed by Katrina has begun. Work started in April, with the rebuilding of the nearshore reef just south of the pier at Courthouse Road in Gulfport. Concrete slabs from buildings destroyed by Katrina were donated by the City of Gulfport and used as reef material for that reef.

The nearshore reef rebuilding project will continue in all three counties throughout the summer thanks to the five-year NOAA Hurricane Katrina Fisheries Disaster Grant.

Executive Director

Thanks!

Thanks to those DMR employees who contributed to this issue of Coastal Markers:

- Dr. Fred Deegen
- Marcia Garcia
- Kerwin Cuevas
- Linda Wakefield
- Irvin Jackson
- Scott Gordon
- Traci Floyd
- David Ruple
- Frank Wescovich
- Amy Taylor
- Jeff Davis
- Ruth Posadas

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to rebuilding the Gulf Coast.

"Conference curriculum touches a range of issues and is vital to a myriad of professions and business leaders across the Gulf Coast," said Kimberly Nastasi, CEO of Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber. "It really has something for everyone."

Real estate agents can earn 10 hours of continuing education credit by attending the eighth annual Coastal Development Strategies Conference, and receipts will be provided to all other professions—such as, engineers, teachers and architects—to submit for credit to their respective organizations.

The deadline for pre-registration is April 27, 2007 and is \$125 per person (\$80 for students). After April 27, the registration fee will be \$155 (until May 8) and on-site registration is \$175. Conference fees include two breakfasts, refreshment breaks, two lunches, one evening reception and conference materials.

For more information or to register for this year's conference, contact the DMR at (228) 374-5000 or the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce at (228) 604-0014, or visit the DMR online at www.dmr.state.ms.us or the Coast Chamber at www.mscoastchamber.com.

DMR deploys limestone reefs south of Horn Island



Florida Limestone artificial reefs are transported to Fish Havens 1 and 2, located about 25 miles south of Biloxi.



A Florida Limestone reef is hoisted and ready for deployment.



One of the 60 artificial reefs is sunk on the reef site.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) deployed 60 Florida Limestone artificial reefs on Fish Haven 1 and Fish Haven 2, on Feb. 27. The reefs are located about 10 miles south of Horn Island—25 miles south of Biloxi. The DMR will deploy a total of 240 of the Florida Limestone artificial reefs during the next several months.

Florida Limestone reefs are triangular pyramid-shaped reefs that are made of concrete and limestone, allowing marine life to easily attach themselves. Each reef is eight feet in height with a base of 12 feet.

“These reefs will provide an excellent habitat for reef fish,” said DMR Artificial Reef Program Coordinator Kerwin Cuevas. “The benefit of using this type of material and design, in addition to being excellent habitat, is that it is extremely durable and suitable in storm events.”

The Florida Limestone reef is manufactured by and will be deployed by Walter Marine of Orange Beach, Ala.

This artificial reef project is being funded through the Mississippi Hurricane Katrina Disaster Restoration, Enhancement and Monitoring Program to Study the Recovery of Gulf Fisheries. Hurricane Katrina damaged about 80 percent to 90 percent of Mississippi’s nearshore and offshore artificial reefs on Aug. 29, 2005.

Artificial Reef Program Update

- **About 80 percent to 90 percent of Mississippi’s Artificial Reefs were lost as a result of Hurricane Katrina**
- **Since August 2005, the DMR has deployed six steel hull vessels, six barge loads of concrete culverts and 240 Florida Special Pyramids as artificial reef material**
- **Plans are under way to enhance offshore juvenile reef fish habitat with Coastal Impact Assistance Program funds.**
- **Funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will be used to deploy reef balls, which are designed to mimic natural reef sites.**

Crab Trap Removal Program recycles 9,862 traps

From February 11 through 16 the DMR and the University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL) contracted with 45 Mississippi resident commercial crab trap fishermen to remove a total of 9,862 derelict crab traps from Mississippi's marine waters.

"This was our most successful trap cleanup ever," said DMR Fisheries Scientist Bill Richardson. "We had excellent cooperation from the fishermen."

Mississippi's closed season for crab traps began February 5 at 6 a.m. and reopened February 17 at 6 a.m. Mississippi licensed crab trap fishermen were allowed to remove their traps from the water during the first seven days of the closure. After February 11, any traps remaining in public waters were considered abandoned and subject to removal.

Eligibility for the program required Mississippi crab trap fishermen to have been licensed commercially in the year 2005 (license years 2004-2005 or 2005-2006), hold a current crab trap license and show proof of residency.

"Crab traps may become derelict in many ways but are primarily lost by



Commercial fisherman Pete Floyd delivers derelict traps to be recycled at the Pascagoula drop-off site. Floyd was one of 45 Mississippi resident commercial crab trap fishermen to help remove a total of 9,862 derelict crab traps from Mississippi's marine waters.

storms, which can break the buoy lines," said Richardson. "Although crab fishermen brought their traps in from the water to keep them safe as Hurricane Katrina approached, the storm surge consumed the traps anyway."

Three drop-off sites were set up to receive the derelict traps: Bayou Caddy in Bay St. Louis, the Point in Pascagoula and Ocean Springs Harbor in Ocean Springs. DMR and GCRL staff manned the sites and loaded the traps into dumpsters. The dumpsters were taken to David Motor &

Scrap where the traps were recycled.

Since the program's inception, Nov. 4, 1999, over 15,000 abandoned and derelict traps have been removed from Mississippi marine waters through the Mississippi Derelict Crab Trap Removal Program.

The project was funded through the Mississippi Hurricane Katrina Disaster Restoration, Enhancement and Monitoring Program to Study the Recovery of Gulf Fisheries. A joint effort of the DMR and GCRL, the program was funded by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission through the Katrina Disaster Relief Grant. The

grant was created by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to restore the marine environment and give the fishing industry assistance in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

"The DMR would like to thank all of Mississippi's commercial crab fishermen, GCRL, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission and NOAA for making this effort a great success," said DMR Office of Marine Fisheries Staff Officer Mike Brainard.



Harriet Perry, director of the Center for Fisheries Research and Development (CFRD) at GCRL, left, waits her turn as Traci Floyd, DMR Fisheries Scientist, right, and Bill Dempster, GCRL Technician, CFRD, center, jump on plywood to smash down derelict crab traps into a dumpster. The traps were collected at the Pascagoula Point drop-off site during the Post-Katrina Derelict Crab Trap Gear Removal Program held February 11 through 16, 2007.

State officials visit Deer Island breakwater site



Photo at left, from left: DMR Executive Director William Walker, Commission on Marine Resources Vice Chairman Richard Gollott and Sen. Tommy Gollott view the concrete rubble breakwater south of Deer Island on Jan. 13. The one-mile breakwater is being built with debris from the Biloxi-Ocean Springs Bridge, destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, and will help slow erosion of the island by reducing the wave energy hitting the shoreline. Photo at right: Over the past 150 years, about 40 percent of the island has eroded away. The breakwater, which is .75 mile south of Deer Island, will also enhance recreational fishing opportunities by providing a hard substrate that will diversify habitat and attract sportfish. Construction of the breakwater is weather-dependent and will take several months to complete.

Capitol Day event draws more than 200 visitors



DMR Public Relations Representatives Marti Schuman (left) and Susan Perkins distribute educational materials to visitors who stopped by the DMR exhibit.

More than 200 people visited the DMR's exhibit at Capitol Day, held in the state capitol building rotunda on Jan. 25, 2007, in Jackson. Capitol Day is a day when any state department or state interest group can exhibit at the state capitol. The days are scheduled throughout the legislative session to give each exhibitor equal space and time to make an impression on legislators.

The exhibit, with items representing the DMR's various pro-



DMR Staff Officer Irvin Jackson (third from left) and DMR Marine Patrol Chief of Enforcement Walter Chatagner talk to Capitol visitors about recreational saltwater fishing.

grams, was on display for state senators, representatives, other lawmakers, and Capitol employees. DMR staffers were on hand to answer any questions. The DMR display also included educational materials, color fish posters, information about recreational saltwater fishing, the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, boat and water safety, coastal ecology, seafood recipe cards and cookbooks.

Six marine debris removal projects completed

The DMR is working closely with its federal partners to identify and remove marine debris from Mississippi's coastal waterways and shorelines and to develop useful and effective methods of disseminating information to mariners about the location, physical properties and abundance of the debris.

As the work to clean up beaches, waterways and the Mississippi Sound continues, six of 16 projects are completed. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which heads the multi-agency effort with the U.S. Coast Guard, the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources and other partners, is moving forward with 10 other projects.

Of the \$230 million allocated for Mississippi's marine debris removal, \$222 million is part of an intra-agency agreement that began October 1, 2006. So far, nearly \$14 million has been spent on the six completed projects.

Three of the six completed projects were initial test sites for the marine debris removal initiative: Enger Street in Jackson County, Henderson Point in Harrison County, and Jourdan River Isles in Hancock County. The fourth completed site includes the Pearlington area and the Pearl River. Work to clean the beaches from mean high tide to one-half mile into the Mississippi Sound and the inland waterways north of Interstate 10 were recently finished. More than 17,000 cubic yards of debris was removed in the inland project.

"No other hurricane before Katrina left so much marine debris," said Jeff Byard, acting director of the Mississippi Transitional Recovery Office. "FEMA, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, the Coast Guard, Mississippi's Marine Resources and other partners have broken ground in developing ways to work together to identify hazards and remove them safely."

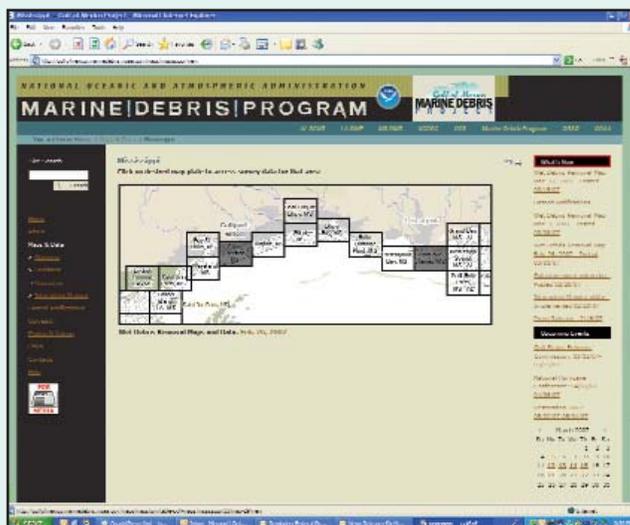
"Working together, we are making a lot of progress," said Mike Womack, director of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency. "We still have a long way to go, but we're moving away from cleaning up and much closer to rebuilding along the Coast."

A separate project to clean up the Mississippi Sound from one-half mile out to four miles out began in April. The contract for cleaning debris from Bayou Caddy, Heron Bay, Lakeshore, Bayou Phillip, and Four Dollar Bayou in Hancock County was awarded in March and is in progress.

Five other projects are in the process of being put out to bid. Three are in Harrison County and two are in Jackson County.

As of April 9, more than 78,800 cubic yards of debris have come out of the water since marine cleanup began last September. Funding for the marine debris removal projects is 100 percent federally funded until May 15, 2007.

Gulf of Mexico marine debris mapping Web site launched



Free maps of the locations of marine debris left in the wake of Hurricane Katrina are available on the Web at <http://gulfofmexico.marinedebris.noaa.gov>.

In response to the threat of submerged marine debris in the Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama coastal zones, NOAA's Gulf of Mexico Marine Debris Project team is developing interactive maps from hydrographic surveys of debris left in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. A collaborative effort among NOAA's Marine Debris Program, Office of Response and Restoration and Office of Coast Survey, the team is working with the U.S. Coast Guard and other federal and state agencies, including the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, to ensure coordination of ongoing recovery efforts in the Gulf of Mexico.

NOAA's Gulf of Mexico Marine Debris Project has made available free scaleable maps indicating location, abundance and physical properties of marine debris left in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The maps can help boaters and fishermen avoid gear-damaging debris and keep users updated on the status of debris removal in the survey areas.

How to get the data

Download the maps at:
<http://gulfofmexico.marinedebris.noaa.gov>.
The data is available for downloading in a variety of formats and is updated weekly.

Celebrate Earth Day



Visit the DMR booth at the Gulf Islands National Seashore Earth Day event
Saturday, April 21
10 a.m.-3 p.m.

DMR awards young marine scientists for excellence

The DMR presented four local students with the DMR Excellence in Marine Sciences Award at the Region VI Science and Engineering Fair held March 1 at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Jefferson Davis Campus in Gulfport. This is the eleventh year the DMR has sponsored the award.

The DMR's Excellence in Marine Sciences Award was established to encourage local students to develop research projects involving Mississippi's coastal resources. With this award, the DMR hopes to encourage students to identify and find solutions to the Coast's environmental problems. Each winner received a certificate and monetary award.

The award is presented by the DMR to outstanding Region VI science fair entries that deal with a marine-related issue. In consideration for the award, all project titles are reviewed and each student with a marine-related project is interviewed and questioned about his or her project. Finally, DMR judges rate the eligible projects and the ratings are compiled to determine the overall winners.

Class III entries represent students in grades seven and eight, Class IV entries represent students in grades nine and ten and Class V entries represent students in grades eleven and twelve.

Winners of this year's Excellence in Marine Sciences Award were:

- **Hanna Hatcher**, age 12, Stone County



Hanna Hatcher, age 12, Stone County Middle School, received a DMR Excellence in Marine Sciences award for her Class III entry, "Monofilament Fishing Lines, How Strong Are They?"

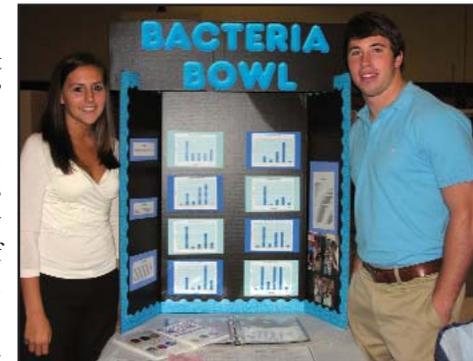
Middle School, for her "Monofilament Fishing Lines, How Strong Are They?" Class III entry;

- **Christopher Peterson**, age 15, Ocean Springs High School, for his "An Examination of Density Dependent Settlement on Barnacles of the Genus *Belanus*," Class IV entry; and

- **Sami Wilkinson and Sean Brauchle**, both age 18, Mercy Cross High School, for their "Bacteria Bowl," Class V entry.



Christopher Peterson, age 15, Ocean Springs High School, received a DMR Excellence in Marine Sciences award for his Class IV entry, "An Examination of Density Dependent Settlement on Barnacles of the Genus *Belanus*."



Sami Wilkinson and Sean Brauchle, both age 18, Mercy Cross High School, received a DMR Excellence in Marine Sciences award for their Class V entry, "Bacteria Bowl."

Coast artist helps promote fishing license requirement

DMR Administrative Services employee Robin Vaughn (left) checks for valid Mississippi saltwater sportfishing licenses as Coast artist Marty Wilson signs "Saltwater Fish Common to Mississippi" posters. The poster signing event was held Jan. 29 at the DMR headquarters to encourage residents to buy a recreational saltwater fishing license. The license is required for all recreational methods of finfish harvest in the coastal and marine waters of the state. Everyone who stopped by the DMR license lobby and either purchased or presented their valid 2007 Mississippi recreational saltwater fishing license during that time, received the DMR saltwater fish identification poster, hand-signed by the artist. The poster features the artwork of Coast artist Marty Wilson and depicts more than 30 saltwater fish common to Mississippi waters. An avid fisherman, Wilson grew up at his father's fishing camp on Point Cadet in Biloxi.





Reserve partners with NOAA to monitor mercury

The research staff at the Grand Bay NERR have recently partnered with scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Air Resources Laboratory (ARL) to implement a long-term monitoring program of atmospheric mercury in the Gulf of Mexico region. The presence of mercury in the environment, its wide distribution and cycling in coastal and aquatic ecosystems, and risks to human health constitute a major environmental resource management issue. However, large gaps in our understanding of the emissions, transport, deposition, transformation, and effects of mercury hamper the implementation of cost-effective management strategies.

Mercury Exposure

Atmospheric deposition delivers mercury to sensitive aquatic ecosystems, where it can be converted to more toxic and bio-available forms such as methylmercury. Methylmercury bioaccumulates through the aquatic food web, so that organisms at higher trophic levels generally contain higher concentrations of the contaminant. Human exposure to methylmercury results from the consumption of contaminated fish and other aquatic organisms, and fish consumption advisories due to mercury contamination are widespread throughout the U.S.

Many of the complex processes controlling the movement of mercury through the environment are poorly understood, and there is debate over the efficiency of emission controls in reducing mercury concentrations in estuarine and marine fish. Moreover, there are conflicting reports regarding actual mercury exposure risks to humans from these sources. Further, attention is focused on the Gulf of Mexico because of the issuance of large numbers of mercury-related fish consumption advisories there and fish consumption in coastal areas is believed to be significantly higher than the national average.

Monitoring Effects

In order to better understand this critical environmental issue, scientists from NOAA's ARL have established a long-term atmospheric mercury monitoring site at the Grand Bay NERR. ARL scientists have specialized in the long-term monitoring of complex environmental variables and have conducted many mercury measurement campaigns in the Arctic and Antarctic and in several locations in the U.S., including Cove Mountain, Tenn., the Gulf of Mexico, Oxford and Wye, Md., and Harcum, Va.

In addition, researchers with the NERR, Mississippi State University, and the University of Georgia are collaborating on a project to determine current mercury levels in a variety of



The Grand Bay NERR has partnered with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to set up a station to test for mercury in the atmosphere to learn more about its effects on coastal and aquatic ecosystems as well as human health.

estuarine animals including snails, fiddler crabs, fishes and birds. NERR and ARL scientists welcome collaborations with other atmospheric scientists, biologists, marine and coastal researchers to better understand the link between atmospheric deposition of mercury and the plants and animals along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

For more information about the mercury monitoring project, contact Dr. Mark Woodrey or Dave Ruple at the Grand Bay NERR at (228) 475-7047.

Reminder: Federal shrimp vessel moratorium permits required

NOAA Fisheries Service is requiring all shrimp vessel owners to have a commercial shrimp vessel moratorium permit aboard vessels fishing for or possessing shrimp in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico, effective March 26, 2007. The intended effect of the final rule is to stabilize participation in the shrimp fishery of the Gulf of Mexico and to provide better information by which to manage the fishery.

Permits under the 10-year moratorium are fully transferable, allowing permittees the flexibility to enter or exit the fishery as they choose.

In October 2006, a 10-year moratorium on the issuance of new federal shrimp vessel permits for the shrimp fishery of the Gulf of Mexico was established. All currently active open access federal shrimp vessel permits will no longer be valid as of March 26, 2007. As of that date, only vessels eligible for a federal shrimp vessel moratorium permit will be allowed to fish for or possess shrimp in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

To be eligible for a commercial shrimp vessel permit under the moratorium, vessels must have been issued a valid commercial shrimp vessel permit prior to and including December 6, 2003. Additionally, an owner who sold his qualified vessel, had his qualified vessel repossessed, or otherwise lost use of his qualified vessel (i.e., damage, sinking, unaffordable repairs), but who obtained, prior to September 26, 2006, a valid commercial shrimp vessel permit for the same vessel or another vessel equipped for offshore shrimp fishing, of at least five net tons, and documented by the Coast Guard, is eligible for a permit under the moratorium.

Owners of vessels who meet eligibility and desire a commercial vessel permit for Gulf shrimp must submit an application postmarked or hand delivered no later than October 26, 2007 to the National Fisheries Services, Southeast Regional Office Permits Branch, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701, (727) 824-5301.

After October 26, 2007, no applications for commercial vessel permits for Gulf shrimp will be accepted. Failure to apply before October 26, 2007, precludes permit issuance even when the applicant otherwise meets the permit eligibility criteria.

While there is a one-year period to obtain a moratorium permit, the permit is needed if the vessel is shrimping in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico beginning on March 26, 2007.

Commercial vessel permits for Gulf shrimp are fully transferable, with or without the sale of the vessel. To request a transfer of a commercial vessel permit for Gulf shrimp, the owner of a vessel who is to receive the transferred permit must complete the transfer information on the reverse of the permit and return the permit and a completed application for transfer to the Permits Branch. Transfer documents must be notarized for all permits.

Renewal of a commercial vessel moratorium permit for Gulf shrimp is contingent upon compliance with the recordkeeping and reporting requirements also established by this final rule. If a commercial vessel permit for Gulf shrimp is not renewed, the permit will be terminated and will not be reissued during the moratorium. A permit is considered to be not renewed when an application for renewal, as required, is not received within 1 year of the expiration date of the permit.

Contact: NOAA Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office Permits Branch, (727) 824-5326; fax: (727) 551-5747.

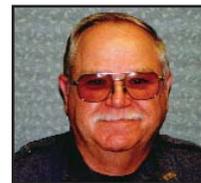
Marine Patrol Citation Totals

(January-March 2007)

Shrimp	1
Crab	5
Oyster	10
Commercial Net Fishing	02
Live Bait	0
Miscellaneous Seafood	1
Recreational Fishing	101
Boat and Water Safety	46
Marine Litter	1
Miscellaneous	10

Sound Advice

Lt. Frank Wescovich



Well folks, the cold days of winter are behind us, and spring is upon us. By now everyone is probably

getting ready to drag out the old boat and have some fun on the water. That is all well and good as long as you remember some basic Boating Safety rules.

Rule Number 1. Wear your life jacket. Life jackets save lives. Make sure you have one wearable, U.S. Coast Guard-approved, personal flotation device of proper size onboard for every person.

All persons who have not reached their 30th birthday must wear their life jacket at all times while under way on boats less than 26 feet in length.

In addition all boats over 16 feet in length must also carry an approved seat cushion or ring buoy as their throwable device.

Rule number 2. Make sure you file a float plan, or at least tell someone the particulars of your boat trip before you go. That way if you get in trouble and don't return on time, they will be able to contact the proper authorities to look for you.

Don't deviate from your plan. Many countless hours have been wasted searching for someone that did not go where they said they were going. Precious lives have even been lost in the past because of this.

Rule number 3. Make sure you check out your boat before setting out on a long trip. It sure is better to break down close to home instead of out beyond the islands. Be sure to check such things as your fuel supply to make sure that it is fresh and uncontaminated. Most fuel problems on boats are because of bad gas. If it was left in the tank from last year, chances are it is bad and should be replaced. Carry a basic tool kit and basic supplies such

See SOUND ADVICE, page 10



Seafood Safety Corner

Springtime is just around the corner and many new seafood businesses are starting to open. Although the Mississippi Gulf Coast seafood processing industry is slowly recovering from Hurricane Katrina, it is very evident that the industry is coming back to life with renewed hope and enormous vigor.

Processors Update

Prior to the storm, Mississippi had a grand total of 76 certified seafood dealers and processors. Thirty-seven facilities consisted of oyster dealers and processors, 24 facilities were shrimp dealers and processors, and the remaining 15 facilities consisted of crab dealers and processors. Since the aftermath of Katrina, the seafood industry has expanded greatly. Currently, the industry has 18 certified oyster dealers (two of which are shucking-packing facilities), 19 shrimp dealers and processors, and 11 crab dealers (one active crab processing facility). The Seafood Technology Bureau staff is continuing its effort in extending technical assistance to all who are planning to open and who are in the process of opening their seafood processing businesses.

Assistance for New Businesses

Operating a seafood business is a partnership with a regulatory agency. Those who are planning to operate one are encouraged to call the Seafood Technology Bureau for requirements in licensing and certification. Do not wait to call after you have started your business operation after you have bought a seafood dealer's or processor's license from the DMR. This is a common mistake by those who are not aware of these requirements. Seafood dealers and seafood processing businesses should purchase the city and county licenses. There are other regulatory agencies that may be contacted before one can operate retail, wholesale, and/or a seafood processing business. To help inform the public about the process to start a seafood business in south Mississippi, a guide will be printed in April 2007 to help all those who are interested to start one. For those who are renewing their licenses, the DMR

licensing office will be open for renewals starting April 2007.

HACCP Training Requirement

In addition to owning a license for the business, the DMR's Seafood Technology Bureau would like to remind all owners that at least one person who works for the business must have HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) and Basic Sanitation training. These training courses are requirements for the business to be certified before it can operate. HACCP is a federally mandated system of preventing hazards from entering one's product and keeping the product sanitary. HACCP training courses are offered by the Association of Food and Drug Officials every year. The Seafood Technology Bureau collaborates with the Mississippi State University and the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium in offering HACCP courses to members of the Mississippi seafood industry twice a year.

Water Sampling Service

The Seafood Technology Bureau also assists the industry with collecting water samples from each business to ensure the water quality meets appropriate standards. This is a service to the Mississippi certified seafood dealers and processors only. It is taken twice a year; during the month of March before recertification of the seafood facilities and in September the same year, before the oyster season opens. Samples are taken to the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory where they are analyzed for fecal coliforms that may be present. When the results are complete, a copy is given to the business. Good water quality is a must for all seafood processing facilities.



Jeff Davis

SOUND ADVICE, continued from page 9

as spark plugs and replacement filters. You will be hard pressed to find a marine store when you are miles offshore. Make sure that safety items such as emergency flares, fire extinguishers, and bilge pumps are onboard and in good condition. Remember that signal flares expire three years from the date of manufacture. The expiration date is stamped on each individual flare. If you have had them onboard for a while, it is probably time to replace them.

Rule number 4. Be sure you have a reliable form of communications onboard when venturing offshore. A VHF radio is the preferred piece of equipment. Cell phones may work, but are often unreliable when offshore. Also when you call for help on a VHF radio, you can be heard by all other persons with a VHF radio that are listening. When you call for help on a cell phone, you are dependent on reaching one individual and often you only have time to get one call out. VHF's are not cheap, but they are inexpensive when you consider that they may save your life.

Remember: SAFE BOATING IS NO ACCIDENT.

Lt. Frank Wescovich oversees the DMR's Boat and Water Safety Program. He can be reached at (228) 523-4126.

Free Boating Safety Classes

Call Marine Patrol at (228) 523-4134 to register.

Bolton State Office Building, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi
May 12, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; June 16, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; June 30, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Mississippi Power Company Auditorium, Highway 90, Bay St. Louis
April 28, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; June 9, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Mississippi Power Company Auditorium, Telephone Road, Pascagoula
May 5, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; June 23, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Pre-registration is required.

Need more info?

**Contact the DMR Seafood Technology Bureau
(228) 374-5000**



Take a Bow

Recognizing employees' commitment to excellence

Seafood Officer Davis named State Standardization Officer



FDA Regional Shellfish Specialist Southeast Region Miles Motes (left) presents DMR Seafood Officer Jeff Davis with a plaque for his achievement.

DMR Seafood Officer Jeff Davis completed requirements for shellfish plant standardization. Davis is conferred as a State Standardization Officer (SSO) in accordance with the requirements of the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP).

Every state must have an SSO, so that FDA will not have to go in and standardize all the seafood officers that inspect the processing facilities. The FDA can standardize an SSO and in turn the SSO standardize any new Seafood Officers.

The FDA recommends only two SSOs per state, so that there will always be one if the other resigns. Each state is required to have at least one SSO in order for dealers in that state to be able to ship seafood across state lines. Mississippi's two SSOs are Jeff Davis and DMR Seafood Officer Ron Jordan.

"Jeff stepped up to the plate, as the need for another state standardized officer arose," said DMR Seafood Technology Bureau Director Ruth Posadas. "He was willing to dedicate his time and efforts to being federally standardized. He passed the test and has made us all proud, making our regulatory program more stable and secure."

DMR employees lend expertise to five local science fairs



DMR employees served as judges for school science fairs at Magnolia Park Elementary School in Ocean Springs, Escatawpa Elementary School in Escatawpa, Anniston Elementary School in Gulfport and Nativity BVM Elementary School in Biloxi, as well as the Region VI Science and Engineering Fair held at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Jefferson Davis Campus in Gulfport.

Thanks to the following staffers who volunteered to serve as judges: **Christine Johnson, Traci Floyd, Brittany Breazeale, Roxanne Russell, Greg Christodoulou, Charlie Robertson, Veronica Spears, Rick Ranew, Jennifer Buchanan and Ruth Posadas.**

Jennifer Buchanan also serves on the Region VI Science and Engineering Fair Task Force.

Happy Anniversary!

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

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (4/1/89) David Dollar | (5/1/06) Scott Saucier |
| (4/1/98) Bryce Gex | (6/1/00) Rudy Balias |
| (4/1/98) Mike Yonce | (6/1/00) Lauren Thompson |
| (4/11/88) Russell Doucet | (6/1/02) Robin Zantow |
| (4/20/04) Danny Ross | (6/1/06) Gretchen Clayton |
| (5/1/88) Walter Chataginer | (6/14/04) Tim Broder |
| (5/1/01) Jennifer Buchanan | (6/15/90) Christine Johnson |
| (5/1/01) Joyce Gagliano | (6/24/93) Jimmy Hester |
| (5/1/04) Bradley Randall | (6/25/01) Grant Larsen |
| (5/1/06) Kristina Broussard | |

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

Mississippi Coastal Preserves Program

celebrates 15 years

May 8, 2007





Mississippi Department
of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

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Save the date! 8th Annual Coastal Development Strategies Conference, May 9-10. To register, call (228) 374-5000 or (228) 604-0014.

DMR Calendar

April 17

Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources meeting, Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center, 1815 Popp's Ferry Road, Biloxi, 9 a.m.

April 22

Earth Day

May 15

Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources meeting, Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center, 1815 Popp's Ferry Road, Biloxi, 9 a.m.

June 19

Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources meeting, Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center, 1815 Popp's Ferry Road, Biloxi, 9 a.m.



**July 4 is
Free Mississippi
Saltwater
Sportfishing
Day.**

Doc's Fishing Tip

Spring is the best time for wade or pier fishing for speckled trout anywhere along Mississippi's twenty-six miles of front beaches. Be there near daybreak or whenever the tide is strongly moving with a bucket of live shrimp or a fist-full of top-water plugs—Norm Baits, Top Dog Mirrolures, Zara Spooks and the like—and you will almost be guaranteed great fishing!

— Fred Deegen, Ph.D.



Mississippi Gulf Shrimp Etouffee

- 5 lbs. Mississippi Gulf Shrimp, peeled, de-veined and chopped
- 1 c. butter or margarine
- 2 onions, chopped
- 6 stalks celery, chopped
- 3 tbsp. garlic, chopped
- 4 tbsp. flour
- 1 c. mushrooms, chopped
- 3 tbsp. paprika
- Salt, black pepper, and red pepper flakes to taste



In a large skillet melt butter; sauté onions, celery and garlic. Stir in flour and cook slowly for 5 minutes. Add shrimp and cook for 20 minutes. Add 2-3 cups of water and mushrooms. Stir in paprika and seasoning. Cook for 30 minutes. Serve over rice with hot French bread.

Recipe by Linda Wakefield

Reprinted from "Get Hooked on Mississippi Seafood" recipe cards.