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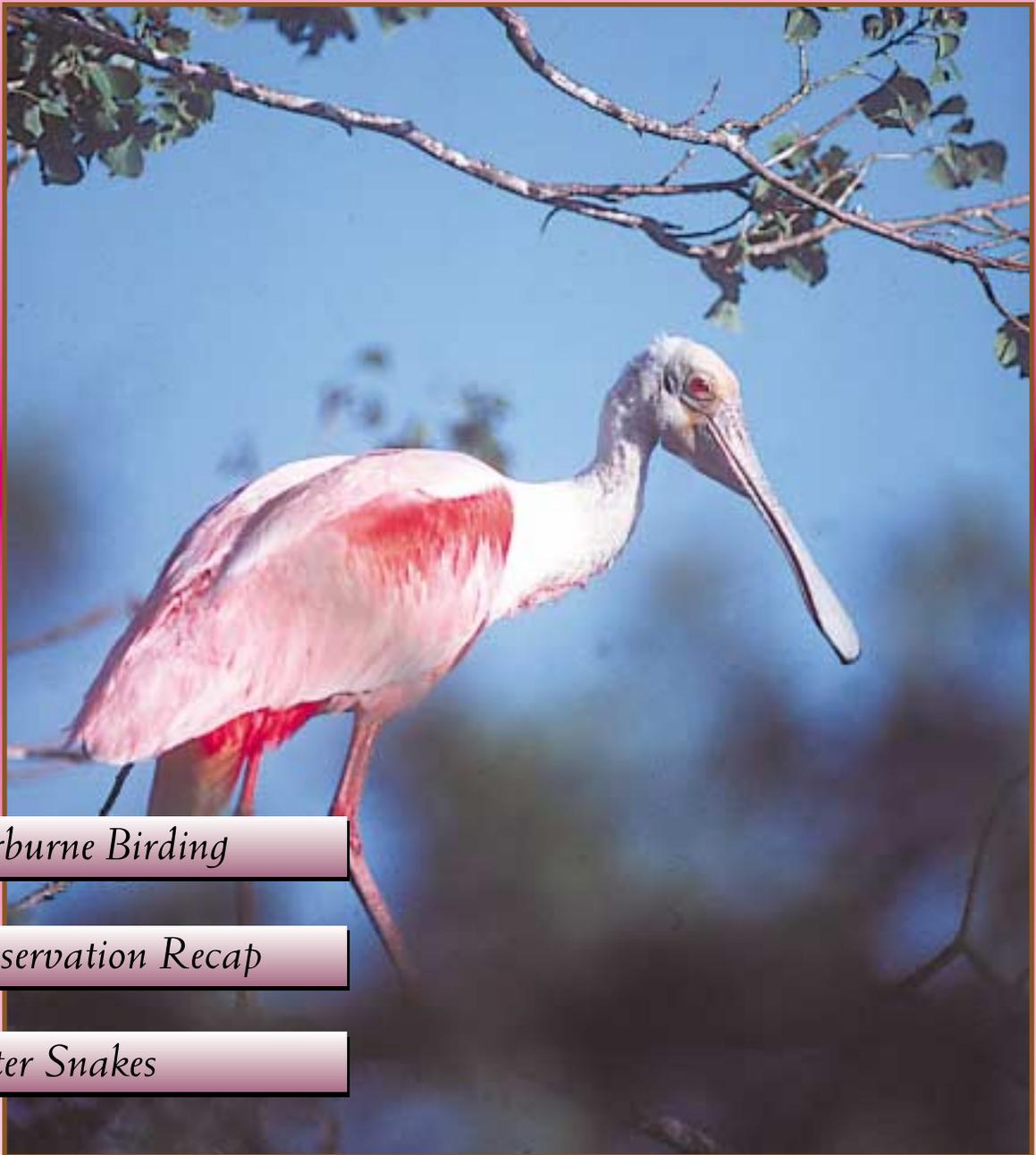
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■ *Sherburne Birding*

■ *Conservation Recap*

■ *Water Snakes*

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On the Cover...

The roseate spoonbill (ajia ajaja) seems to be proliferating throughout south Louisiana, possibly due to the development of the crawfish farming industry in the latter half of the past century. These "cajun flamingos" are sighted in ever increasing numbers from the coast to the central part of the state. Until the early '90s sightings were rare even along the coast. Roseate spoonbills get their coloring as they age because of the reddish pigments of the crawfish, crabs and shrimp that make up a large part of their diet. The "spoonbill" is one of many interesting avian species found during spring and summer on the Sherburne Wildlife Management Area, featured on page 8 of this issue. - Photo, courtesy LDWF



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FROM THE PRESIDENT



*Keith
Saucier*



Over half a century has passed since the first offshore oil rig was dropped into shallow water just barely off the coast of Louisiana. I wasn't around at the time, so I don't know if people realized the significance of the event but one thing is unmistakable, the environment and the culture of south Louisiana would never be the same. Certainly the state of Louisiana and its citizens have benefitted from the prosperity brought about by the oil industry, but at what cost? Since 1930, Louisiana has lost over 1,500 square miles of coastal marshes. While the causes for all of this land loss are numerous and complex, it is well recognized that oilfield-related develop-

ment has been a major contributor; the navigation channels and canals dredged for oil and gas extraction and transport have dramatically altered the hydrology of our coast. Still today, we continue to lose 25 to 30 square miles each year – a football field sized area of



Louisiana is the base of operations for dozens of offshore oil/gas production platforms like this one way out in the Gulf of Mexico. CARA would allocate some of the royalties from offshore mineral development for conservation purposes including restoring Louisiana's eroding coast.

land every 20 minutes. And even when the currently planned restoration projects are in place, an additional 600 square miles of Louisiana marshes will convert to open water over the next few decades.

I believe the sheer enormity of Louisiana's coastal land loss actually makes the problem inconceivable or even unbelievable to most people. Maybe that explains why this crisis has been overlooked by national conservation groups, and even by some of our own state officials for so many years. Compare this to the attention, and money, that Florida is getting to fix problems in the Everglades, which are indeed serious, but no more critical and worthy of attention than the tragic, continuing loss of thousands of acres of Louisiana's coastal wetlands.

Certainly there is a compelling national interest at stake here. Consider among other things that thirty percent of the nation's total commercial seafood harvest comes from Louisiana's marshes and estuaries; eighteen percent of U.S. domestic oil production, and 24 percent of natural gas production come from coastal Louisiana and the adjacent Gulf of Mexico, with an annual value of \$17 billion; and seventy percent of the waterfowl

Continued on page 34

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Randy
Lanctot*



The recent session of the state legislature was a good one for conservation. Several Louisiana Wildlife Federation initiatives received attention thanks to the interest of Federation members and our friends in the Legislature. A digest of the pertinent bills and resolutions that were finally adopted can be found starting on page 20. I will use this space to highlight some of those that were, at least in part, the result of LWF efforts.

Since the mid-1990's LWF has supported allowing the use of leashed tracking dogs on private land (where the hunter has permission) to recover wounded deer. This is already being practiced by some hunters, but, up until now, it has been a violation of the law to do it during the still hunting season for deer. Our initial efforts met with resistance

from the LDWF Enforcement Division but apparently the division's problems have been resolved as it did not object to HB 48 by Rep. Hammatt when it was discussed in committee. There was one glitch as the bill moved through the process. Although originally introduced to require that a deer tracking dog be leashed, that limitation was removed by amendment in the House Natural Resources Committee with the concurrence of the LDWF enforcement representative. The amendment jeopardized the bill, since it raised concern that persons could claim they were tracking a wounded deer if caught with dogs during the still hunting season, even though in reality they were attempting to run deer to the gun. This generated a lot of calls and emails opposing the bill. Working with Senators Barham and McPherson, and Representative Hammatt, LWF was able to reinstate the leash requirement and the bill finally passed.

A few years ago, the opportunity for recreational fishermen to use hoopnets to harvest nongame fish like catfish, gaspergou and buffalo in freshwater areas of the state was repealed. Since then, LWF has advocated reinstating the recreational hoopnet gear

license to allow use of a limited number of hoopnets so that folks could use this gear to harvest a few catfish for home consumption without having to get a commercial fishing license. HB 85 by Rep. Salter allows the use of up to 3 hoopnets for an annual \$20 recreational hoopnet gear fee in freshwater areas above I-12 and I-10.

It looks like we're finally going to have a long-needed recreational hunting season on nutria, thanks to the efforts of LWF and Rep. Pitre and Sen. McPherson. A very simple concept, the legislation authorizing the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (LWFC) to establish a nutria season had to be amended every step of the way to get the language just right so that it didn't threaten landowners with the prospect of hordes of trespassing nutria hunters, take any opportunities away from trappers, or denigrate the species to such a degree that future potential for marketing the fur or meat would be precluded. We were able to address the concerns of both groups and now it's up to the LWFC to set the season and establish the rules. The Commission has proposed a Sept. 1 through Feb. 28 season with no bag limit. Some have

Continued on page 5

New State Park On the Way

by Elizabeth DeLouise

Residents of Washington Parish have a good thing coming their way. There is a new state park to be developed about 5

ing money will be provided by state and local funding. In a press release posted on the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism web site, State Senator Jerry Thomas says, "Good things can happen

are a clean industry, "They don't deplete the resources in the area, residents don't have to worry about pollution because there will be on-site sewage treatment, and it's a plus for local businesses in that it attracts tourists." If the Bogue Chitto State Park is like most other state parks, according to Boehringer, approximately 25% of the land will be developed with the rest remaining in its natural state.

Though no hunting will be allowed on the property, park visitors can look forward to RV and tent camping sites, cabins, a visitor/nature center, hiking trails, and picnic areas for day use. Kenny Lang, Land Officer with the Office of State Parks in Baton Rouge, feels as though the most popular and alluring aspect of the park will be the 4 miles of river frontage the park will contain with several large beaches along the banks. State Parks is collaborating with a local canoeing and tubing company located along the Bogue Chitto River south of the proposed park. "We won't have canoes at the park, but we are working with an established business (the Enon Canoeing and Tubing Company) to set up a partnership combining both of our resources," Lang says. There are also several gravel pits remaining from the gravel mining industry that have long since filled in with natural vegetation and water offering a lake setting for park visitors.

The area was a natural choice for creating a new park because there is no such park in the northern part of the "boot" of Louisiana, but the main attraction is the varied topography. "The area is home to many different land types; the river, gravel lakes, the swampy lowlands, hardwood bottoms, upland pine/hardwood mix, and many natural springs. There are also steep ravines that contribute to the 80 foot rise in elevation. It's a very attractive place for a State Park," says Lang. He also mentions the opportunity to incorporate local historic legends that coincide with the topography – without telling you the end of the story, let me just mention Frickey's Cave and the movie 'Dead Man Walking.' You'll have to visit the park yourself to find out the rest of the story.

For information on other state parks in Louisiana, log onto the State Parks web site: www.crt.state.la.us



Canoeing and tubing will be one of the many attractions of the new Bogue Chitto State Park. The park will include 4 1/2 miles of shoreline along the Bogue Chitto River. Photo courtesy of LDCRT

miles south of Franklinton. State parks usually attract tourists with vacation dollars to spend at the local businesses, so the cash registers of Franklinton merchants will benefit from this development, but so will most anyone else who cares to visit the park and marvel at the beauty of the Bogue Chitto River. Initial acreage for the Bogue Chitto State Park has been purchased from the Timber Management Group of Weyerhaeuser, and negotiations are underway for purchasing the remaining 700 acres. Part of the funding for the second land acquisition will come from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which is a federal program allocating funds from oil and gas exploration and production on the Outer Continental Shelf for outdoor recreation and habitat acquisition. The remain-

ing money will be provided by state and local funding. In a press release posted on the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism web site, State Senator Jerry Thomas says, "Good things can happen

when all levels of government, community leaders and businesses work together." Bo Boehringer, Public Information Director with the Office of State Parks, says that if the legislature approves the funding for the additional land purchase, and if the Office of State Parks can formalize the agreement with Weyerhaeuser in due time, the park will open in 2 to 3 years. The state park is in early development stages; because only the first section of land has been acquired, there are many remaining steps to be taken before the park is open to the public. "Right now, we're studying the topography of the area and the natural resources. After this step we'll draw up a master plan that will coordinate placement of cabins, visitors' center, trails, etc.," says Boehringer.

Overall, Boehringer says, state parks

suggested that deer hunters be allowed to shoot nutria with buckshot and high-powered rifles during the gun deer season. That's not exactly what we had in mind. We are hoping hunters will give nutria a try as table fare, not just blow them away. There is also a safety issue associated with firing rifle and shotgun loads, that can easily kill or maim another person should a mishap occur, at an animal that doesn't require that kind of firepower to harvest cleanly. Go figure!

An idea suggested by the LWF last year, and that would have avoided most of the year-long acrimony with the state of Mississippi over nonresident hunting and fishing fees, provides for the issuance of non-resident fishing licenses on a per day basis. HB 1420 sets a fee of \$5 (basic) for freshwater and \$20 (\$ 5 basic and \$15 saltwater) for saltwater fishing per each day specified on the license.

Another bill LWF supported, of a "nuts and bolts" nature, delegates responsibility to the State Land Office (SLO) within the Division of Administration for determining ownership boundaries of state lands and water bottoms. HB 1696 requires SLO to do an inventory of all such properties, among other things. In ownership disputes, the attorney general's office will continue to represent the state. The issue of public access to public lands and waters is of growing concern as landowners and lessees have sought to block free access to areas that have traditionally been available for use by the public or that are otherwise public property.

Legislation establishing a Hunting and Fishing Advisory Council to educate citizens about the benefits of hunting and fishing and the contributions that sportsmen make to conservation originated from a resolution sponsored by the Clio Sportsmen's League at the LWF convention this year. The bill was sponsored by Sen. McPherson and passed without opposition. It may be up to LWF to get the council organized and functioning, however.

Consistent with LWF's efforts to make as much public land available for appropriate outdoor recreation, SB 352 transfers Larto Island from the State Land Office to LDWF to manage as a wildlife area. Another bill, SB 366 authorizes the transfer of the scenic easement along I-49 in St. Landry, Avoyelles, Evangeline and Rapides Parishes, that is now only available for use by the adjacent private hunting clubs, from DOTD to LDWF for

management as a bowhunting-only area.

Another very important bill that was supported by the Federation, SB 965 setting up the foundation for a groundwater management and conservation program for the state, is reviewed on page 42, so I won't say anymore about it here.

A number of important resolutions were initiated through the efforts of the Federation. Resolutions normally do not effect law or direct specific action, but express the intent of the Legislature on a particular subject. On the House side, LWF was directly responsible for HCR 86 which expresses the Legislature's support to Congress for a diversion of freshwater from the Mississippi river into the Maurepas Swamp which has been suffering from altered hydrology and saltwater intrusion. This resolution is very similar to the one sponsored by the east Ascension Sportsman's League and the Lake Maurepas Society at the LWF convention earlier this year. Rep. Ron Fauchaux was happy to sponsor the resolution supporting a good conservation project that is advocated by conservationists and government officials in his district as well as the US Environmental Protection Agency.

On the Senate side, several resolutions were introduced that tracked those adopted by delegates to LWF's recent conventions. Among the most timely and significant of these are SCR 48 stating legislative support for the promotion of ecotourism in Louisiana relating to bird watching. This vote of confidence comes at a time when the Atchafalaya Trace Commission and the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism are developing proposals to enhance birding opportunities in the state with respect to tourism promotion. SCR 49 urges the inventory of state lands with outdoor recreation potential that are not already available to the public for such purposes, and goes hand in hand with the previously-noted legislation directing an inventory of state lands and water bottoms by the State Land Office. Also germane to this issue is SCR 52 that authorizes the State Land Office and other pertinent state agencies to require public notice prior to closure of a waterway or access to waters traditionally used by the public. SCR 134 was an LWF initiative to get the support of the Legislature for expanding the conservation programs of the Federal Farm Bill which have important water quality and wildlife conservation benefits here. The resolution was extremely popular. We were able to get the top advocates for wildlife and agriculture in the Louisiana Legislature to coauthor the resolution. Special thanks to Ag Committee chairs Sen.

Mike Smith and Rep. Francis Thompson and House Speaker Charlie DeWitt, as well as the other coauthors, for working with us.

Although not LWF's initiatives, there were a few other bills and resolutions LWF had an impact on in an effort to serve our members and our conservation goals. HCR 42 sets up a task force to review state and local trespass laws. LWF is represented on the task force thanks to an amendment offered by Sen. McPherson and supported by resolution author Rep. Dan Flavin. We also were able to improve a resolution promoting a national energy policy so that it included consideration of conservation and alternative sources.

Fortunately, there were few bills worthy of opposition. One would have altered definitions of recreational fish and commercial fish and was so confusing, even the bill's sponsor could not explain it. One of the effects of HB 1428 would have been to prohibit the harvest of redbfish and other saltwater fish with archery gear and scuba gear. But it had other impacts. Although not claimed by the LDWF as an administration bill, it apparently had been drafted by the LDWF Enforcement Division. The bill's sponsor deferred it when the committee began to load it up with amendments. Interestingly, an attempt was made to salvage part of the bill with a last minute amendment by Senator Hainkel to another enforcement bill, but the exposure of the impropriety of an LDWF staffer discovered in the Senate amendment room, which is normally a restricted area in the Senate Chamber, caused a ruckus that resulted in the bill failing to pass.

Strange and amazing things often happen in the waning days of a legislative session!

We did lose one bill – a proposed constitutional amendment guaranteeing the freedom of Louisiana citizens to hunt, fish and trap in compliance with conservation laws and regulations set by the LWFC and Legislature. It passed out of the Senate with 27 coauthors, but the House Natural Resources Committee deferred the bill when it generated some opposition from landowner groups and got caught up in an ongoing dispute between the Departments of Wildlife and Fisheries and Agriculture and Forestry over the regulation of deer pens in the state. In all likelihood, we will see the legislation again and LWF will be better prepared to address the legitimate concerns and get the support needed to put the proposal on the ballot. I'll be taking another look at this issue in a future column, so stay tuned.

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Birding at Sherburne Wildlife Management Area - Atchafalaya Basin, Louisiana



Typical bottomland hardwood habitat found on Sherburne Wildlife management Area.

by Jay V. Huner, Ph.D (Crawfish Research Center, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 1031 W. J. Bernard Road, St. Martinville, Louisiana 70582)

Imagine literally hundreds of brightly-colored warblers and cryptic, but vocal vireos. Add to this backdrop all sorts of other songbirds, wading birds, and a good number of kites. Sounds a bit like a “fall out” situation along the Gulf coast during spring migration, doesn't it? In fact, this is a late spring/early summer snapshot of the Sherburne Wildlife Management Area (Sherburne) located in the central part of the Atchafalaya Basin many miles north of the Gulf.

My birding experience has been limited to a few recent years. South-central Louisiana is my home and I have passed by Sherburne hundreds of times without ever bothering to stop. I happened to spend about an hour there in mid-May 2001 with my friend and professional ornithologist Mike Musumeche. Even at 1:00 PM in the heat of the day, we were amazed to see and hear hundreds of songbirds in a short trip with several hurried stops as we rode along the gravel road through the WMA. This road follows the western side of the WMA along the Atchafalaya Pilot Channel levee

from the Whiskey Bay exit off I-10 to US-190 at Krotz Springs. Two special treats included hearing several wood thrushes singing and seeing a graceful swallow-tailed kite fly over my truck just before we got back to I-10 as we left the area. I found the birding so fascinating that I made it a point to accompany fellow birders belonging to the Louisiana Birders Anonymous (LABA) organization on their annual trip to Sherburne the following Sunday.

Dr. Van Remsen, Professor of Biological Sciences, at Louisiana State University, has stated that Sherburne hosts one of the highest densities of nesting neotropical songbirds in North America. Dr. Remsen bases this observation on the annual Breeding Bird Surveys that he has conducted there in mid-spring for a number of years. Any birder visiting the area for the first time is sure to leave the WMA with this same opinion. I am told by Dr. Remsen that the area supports large numbers of migrant land birds in the Fall as well.

About Sherburne WMA

According to an article published in the May/June 2001 issue of the Louisiana Conservationist magazine, Sherburne is physically situated in the Morganza Floodway system of the Atchafalaya Basin

within the lower and upper portions of Pointe Coupee, St. Martin, and Iberville parishes. Sherburne WMA is part of a 42,610 acre management unit including U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuge) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers properties, and Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) land that is managed by LDWF.

The Sherburne area is a bottom-land hardwood forest with four dominant species groups including cottonwood/sycamore; oak/gum/hackberry/ash; willow/cypress/ash; and overcup oak/bitter pecan. Trees in the midstory are the seedlings of the dominant species, and box elder, red maple, red mulberry and rough-leaf dogwood. Ground cover is sparse in the forest proper due to shading and natural, seasonal flooding. However, blow downs from periodic tropical storms and hurricanes, and forest management activities create open areas that vegetate quickly.

Common understory plants include rattan, greenbriar, rubus, trumpet creeper, virginia creeper, poison ivy, and milkweed. Dew berries and black berries are common in blow down and managed open areas.

Accessing the Sherburne Area

There is only one access road to the Sherburne area - LA 975, the gravel road intersecting I-10 at the Whiskey Bay exit on the south and intersecting US 190 at Krotz Springs on the north. Within the Sherburne area itself, there are a number of oil field roads and ATV paths that permit visitors to access the interior. In addition, there is a road that connects LA 975 to Big Alabama Bayou where there is a public boat launch. This road is in bad condition and a new access road is currently being constructed. There are public boat launches on Big Alabama Bayou and North Little Alabama Bayou. Maps and more information about access can be obtained from the LDWF district office in Opelousas (5652 Hwy 182, Opelousas, LA 70570 - tel. 337 948-0255 or 566-2251).

Cautions

LA 975 is not a very good road. The roadway is a composite of gravel, shell, and

old, broken asphalt. Oncoming traffic needs to slow down and pass with care. Dust can be terrible in dry weather and travel with small cars during wet periods is to be avoided. Heavy vehicles associated with the petroleum industry and logging operations must be treated with "respect".

Mosquitos and biting flies can be a challenge to any visitor to any location in the Atchafalaya Basin. Sherburne is no exception. The poison ivy in the forest understorey is a wonderful plant for wildlife, especially birds, but must be dealt with by those who are allergic to the plant.

Sherburne is a wildlife management area meaning that, during hunting seasons - October to March, hunting occurs. Deer are hunted there with high power rifles and shotguns. Birders can certainly bird during various hunting seasons but must take appropriate cautions including wearing hunter orange clothing. It is also a good idea to stay to the roads and trails and avoid hunters, if possible.

Some Sites of Interest and Birds Encountered in May 2001

A vehicle-based visit to the Sherburne area should include the entire length of LA 975. Circles can be made from the east or west using US 190 to the north and I-10 to the south. Many birders may prefer, however, to drive the length of LA 975, about 18 miles, and return the way they came stopping at interesting sites seen but missed on the first pass.

Remember, this birder's experience with the Sherburne area is based on two trips toward the end of May 2001. Thus, I've only seen a modest amount of what the area has to offer to birders of all skill levels. One can easily become totally engrossed in an area that encompasses 42,000+ acres of habitat. However, most birders will be limited initially to sights along LA 975 and, for many, that experience will be one of great excitement. LA 975 follows the levee along the east bank of the Atchafalaya Pilot Channel. During dry weather, look for culverts beneath the road where water accumulates during wet weather. These areas concentrate birds looking for a drink and a meal, so it's not unusual to encounter 15-20 species at a stop. There are plenty of "turn outs" for ATV trails and oilfield roads and a few logging trails. There is, of course, the Big Alabama access road that takes visitors to a public boat launch. Roughly 12 miles north of I-10, 6 miles south of US 190, one reaches the Sherburne recreation unit with

LDWF offices, firing range, camping area, and boat launch. Shortly before one reaches US 190 when approaching from the south, a railroad right of way crosses the road. The raised railway is a good place to stop to look for swallow-tailed kites, black vultures, and turkey vultures and scan the sky for wading birds and the surrounding forest for all manner of wading birds and songbirds. Within a short distance of the railway, one encounters the twin highway bridges across the Atchafalaya Pilot Channel at Krotz Springs. Cliff Swallows have established a major nesting presence at this site and are a pleasure to study at close range.

I have been "birding" for about three years. I have never before encountered as many white-eyed vireos and prothonotary warblers as I encountered in the Sherburne area. I rarely see summer tanagers but found five different birds on my second trip. I was treated to several hooded warblers and Kentucky warblers and heard/saw at least one Swainson's warbler.

So, how many species of birds might be encountered in the Sherburne area? Based on the available checklists for the general region, the unit should host well over 200 bird species. What have I personally encountered in the area? I have listed below the birds that I picked up on my two trips in May 2001. The list seems representative of the area for that time of year when compared to the lists of the other skilled birders that accompanied me. There are some obvious, common misses including: yellow-throated vireo, eastern bluebird, brown thrasher, and orchard oriole.

Conclusions

The Atchafalaya Basin is the largest bottomland hardwood forest remaining in the Lower Mississippi River Alluvial Valley. Birders who are interested in visiting this habitat can access it most successfully by visiting the Sherburne area. Don't expect any creature comforts and do make sure that your vehicle is up to the visit before you go.

(Note: the author thanks Dr. Van Remsen for his review and editorial input to this article.)

Birds Encountered in Sherburne Wildlife Management Area, Louisiana May 2001

Pied-billed Grebe (1)
Anhinga (15)
Great Blue Heron (2)
Great Egret (20+)

Snowy Egret (20+)
Little Blue Heron (20+)
Tricolored Heron (1)
Cattle Egret (50+)
Green Heron (2)
Yellow-crowned Night Heron (25+)
White Ibis (30)
Roseate Spoonbill (1)
Black Vulture (2)
Turkey Vulture (6)
Wood Duck (1)
Swallow-tailed Kite (1)
Mississippi Kite (7)
Red-shouldered Hawk (1)
Red-tailed Hawk (1)
Wild Turkey (1)
Killdeer (1)
Yellow-billed Cuckoo (8)
Barred Owl (1)
Chimney Swift (4)
Ruby-throated Hummingbird (8)
Red-bellied Woodpecker (15)
Downy Woodpecker (1)
Pileated Woodpecker (5)
Acadian Flycatcher (1)
Great Crested Flycatcher (4)
Eastern Kingbird (1)
Loggerhead Shrike (1)
White-eyed Vireo (20+)
Red-eyed Vireo (8)
Blue Jay (10)
American Crow (10)
Fish Crow (5+)
Purple Martin (3)
Cliff Swallow (100+)
Barn Swallow (10)
Carolina Chickadee (20+)
Tufted Titmouse (15+)
Carolina Wren (15+)
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (3)
Wood Thrush (2)
Northern Mockingbird (3)
European Starling (5)
Northern Parula (10)
American Redstart (3)
Prothonotary warbler (40+)
Swainson's Warbler (1)
Kentucky Warbler (6)
Common Yellowthroat (1)
Hooded Warbler (6)
Yellow-breasted Chat (20+)
Summer Tanager (6)
Eastern Towhee (1)
Northern Cardinal (20)
Indigo Bunting (8)
Painted Bunting (14)
Red-winged Blackbird (1)
Common Grackle (15)
Brown-headed Cowbird (18)

The “Community Garden Initiative”

by Elizabeth DeLouise

“Ooh, what’s this?”
“Can I eat that one?”
“I love carrots! And pickles.”
“That smells sooo delicious!”

You would think we were walking through the produce section at the grocery store with those observations, but we’re actually outside walking through a special garden



Raised-planters along the perimeter of the school garden at Westdale Elementary make gardening accessible for everyone.

at an elementary school. The kids, an assortment of 3rd and 4th graders, go to Westdale Elementary in Baton Rouge. Margaret Mercier is their teacher responsible for this schoolyard garden. Margaret’s enthusiasm for “garden learning” is unmistakable and unshakable, and her students seem to feel



Taking turns with the bird scoop! Clockwise from left: Margaret Mercier; Dorri Huffty, 4th grade; Reonna Adams, 4th grade; Joseph Williams, 3rd grade; Kyra Williams, 3rd grade; and Seth Hazelett, 3rd grade.

the same way.

Up the road a little ways is another garden, called the King’s Outreach garden. This one is surrounded by homes instead of classrooms. Though the King’s Outreach garden is not in the courtyard of a public school, it is a place of learning. Both of these gardens, Westdale and King’s Outreach, are places where teachers, friends and students congregate to pass on gardening tips and important life-lessons.

Called the ‘Community Garden Initiative’ and affiliated with BREADA, the Baton Rouge Economic and Agricultural Development Alliance, these school and neighborhood gardens find a niche in the various communities of our society. Currently in the BREADA program, there are approximately 10 school gardens and 10 community or neighborhood gardens. Margaret started the school garden at Westdale Elementary in 1994. “It’s just a way of life for me,” she says of gardening. “Growing up, we always had 3 to 4 home-grown vegetables on the table for any meal.” She feels at home planting and weeding and she is an effective force inside the classroom, so a natural connection for her was to bring the classroom outside. “Why would I sit behind a desk all day when I could take my speech students in the garden to deadhead a bush and learn the sound ‘s’?” she says. “The kids love it out here.”

The tour through the Westdale garden is enough to whet one’s appetite; my mouth

waters as we walk through the rootbeer plant, the Pizza Garden (rosemary, chives, carrots growing within a raised brick circle), and the trailing cucumber leaves. But the garden isn’t just for looking. The students are involved directly with the maintenance of the garden – each classroom has their own raised bed, and for students in wheelchairs, there are easy access planters lining the courtyard. Margaret says, “I’m always asking the teachers, what are you teaching and how can we work it in? There really isn’t anything that can be taught in the classroom that can’t be taught out here: data tabulation, using descriptive words, writing skills, poetry, science, you name it. The students enjoy being out here, and they really learn just as much as when they’re in the classroom.” From her tone, I gather that she learns a lot out here too.

At the King’s Childrens’ Outreach Center garden, Reverend Robert Joseph feels that working in a garden is a healing therapy. “Gardening and fishing can help extend one’s life,” he says matter of factly. Many members of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation would agree with this statement; gardening and fishing are the two most pursued recreational activities as indicated by responses to the LWF’s membership surveys.

The King’s Childrens’ Center is a garden right now, but is destined for much more than just gardening. “We want to turn this building into an outdoor amphitheater,”



The Westdale garden is home to birds, squirrels, ladybugs, lizards, butterflies, water striders and beta wasps.

Rev. Joseph says pointing to the farthest building back, “and this house we want to turn into a boys’ home with an in-house



A very promising muscadine vine adorns the front yard of the future boys' home at the King's Children's Outreach garden.

chaperone," he says motioning to the building directly in front of us. The 20 or so rows in the garden provide for people in the community who invest their time and energy in maintaining an area. When I visited in February, there was broccoli, lettuce and mustard greens growing, and the muscadine vine looked very promising.

One person that works in the King's Outreach garden is Malinda Joseph. "I don't care for the cold so I kind of slacked off this winter, but otherwise I'm out here most everyday," she says. Her motivation to get outside and spend time working in the garden is the peace, fellowship and helpful hints she gets from other workers. "It's nice to come out here and have conversation with the other people working and, of course, get some gardening tips," Malinda says. She emphasizes that the fellowship with other gardeners is the main reason she chooses to work the land instead of work the remote control. Malinda feels, just as Rev. Joseph and Margaret Mercier do, that a garden is a good learning environment and a soothing place.

"Often times in school, children get labeled as 'the class clown' or 'the jerk' and they get trapped into acting that way all the time," Margaret explains. "Coming out here with the breeze, the birdsong, and flowing water really contribute to their emotional healing and gives them confidence to deal with their peers' classifications. It's such a healing place — I'm convinced of it."

Margaret and Rev. Joseph both advocate organic methods of gardening, such as mulching, weeding by hand and using good, rich soil. These approaches appear to work

extremely well in attracting and increasing wildlife around their gardens. On the afternoon that I go to visit at Westdale, Margaret rounds up 5 of her students, the aforementioned assortment of under-agers, to come out in the garden to feed the birds. They notice my camera and become tickled at the prospect of becoming famous; they feel certain that to have one's picture in a magazine means instant celebrity status. ("It's not that big of a magazine," I tell them.) One would think that with the excitement of the ensuing summer vacation the kids would be like

kernels in a hot skillet with no attention span, but it is obvious how much they cherish time spent in their garden.

There is only one scoop to transport feed to feeder, and I'm expecting a small crisis as there are 5 students attempting this chore. "Isn't it wonderful how they share!" exclaims Margaret, oblivious to my moment of worry. "They really have a sense of how to let each other have a turn and the importance of sharing. Another good lesson we learn out here."

The garden at Westdale has been blooming for seven years with grants and support from organizations and individuals throughout Baton Rouge, as well as help from civic organizations and LSU. So far, Westdale has donated over one ton of goods to the Baton Rouge Food Bank in the form of fresh vegetables from the garden and staples brought to school by teachers and students and collected in home rooms. The King's Outreach garden also donates to the Food Bank and gets funding from various foundations. BREADA supports both of these initiatives and supplies equipment and guidance whenever needed.

Rev. Joseph and Margaret Mercier both use the garden as a backdrop for their teachings. Both feel that being outside and working to grow flowers, fruits and vegetables is a positive and beneficial mode of learning. They might be on to something. ■

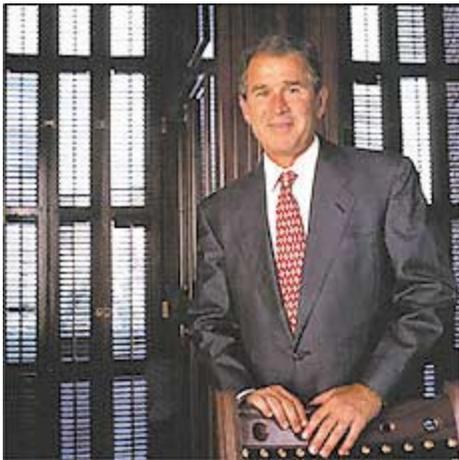


Malinda Joseph prepares the soil for snap beans and mustard greens in February. The 2-story building to the right is to be the open-air amphitheater.

President Bush: First 100 Days

The much-heralded “100 days” benchmark has come and gone, and to mark the occasion, the National Wildlife Federation issued its own evaluation of the Bush administration’s early days. The bottom line: after 100 days in office, the administration has racked up an environmental scorecard that’s generating more concern than encouragement.

Having initially offered to work with the administration toward a proactive agenda for conservation progress, NWF’s early



President George W. Bush

take was that President Bush’s actions during his first weeks in office amounted to all-out war on environmental progress. Since then, the administration has made several announcements apparently designed to mitigate the reaction to some of its earlier initiatives. But many appear to be more “spin” than substance.

The Bush administration can still work toward real progress on the major conservation issues detailed below, though there is scant evidence to date of a genuine commitment to such a positive course. Clearly the administration has a long way to go before claiming a record of success in safeguarding and restoring the wildlife and wild places Americans treasure.

Conservation Funding

The administration continues to miss an opportunity to deliver on its philosophy of putting needed resources into the hands of the states. Its budget proposal fails to deliver the funding needed for state management of non-game wildlife and its habitat. Despite reintroduction of the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) in Congress,

the only administration statements on the subject, by Interior Secretary Norton, continue to cast doubt on the administration’s commitment to its success.

Wildlife Restoration

Reports that the administration is prepared to block or indefinitely delay U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) implementation of the Citizen Management Plan for restoring grizzlies to 15 million acres of wilderness in Idaho and Montana signal a possible misstep of tremendous significance. The plan, with its wide bipartisan support and its unprecedented level of local control, offers the administration a chance to demonstrate its commitment to making federal environmental laws work for wildlife and people too. Rejection would be a huge setback.

Public Lands

Administration actions and comments point to increased peril for America’s public lands. Vice President Cheney, head of the administration’s energy task force, recently announced that its energy policy will emphasize increased generation over conservation, and will seek to expand the nation’s oil, coal and natural gas industries, reiterating his support for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The administration’s decision — to let stand the Clinton administration’s roadless area policies on 60 million acres of wilderness — is welcome, but could essentially be undone by suggested “revisions” that would allow the policies to be challenged at the local level. Additionally, the decision to delay the issuance of the Northern Great Plains National Grasslands management plan raises concerns that industry input may dramatically change the course of conservation policies that have firm scientific backing and have already received thorough public vetting.

Wetlands

A legal loophole has led to the destruction of thousands of acres of wetlands through ditching and draining. Having first delayed its decision, the administration deserves credit for finally electing to close that loophole. But the ultimate effect will depend on the degree to which agencies enforce the rule and defend industry challenges in court — which is, at best, uncer-

tain. Meanwhile, the proposal to eliminate the Wetlands Reserve Program from the Agriculture Department budget turns its back on a highly successful tool for conserving wetland habitat and ensuring water quality.

Greening the Corps

Newly introduced legislation affords the opportunity to change the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from a destroyer of the environment to a leader in its restoration. Administration support of this legislation is critical and will be viewed as a test. In its budget, the administration has proposed no funding for new Corps projects, and cuts funding for many of the existing top environmentally damaging Corps projects (see #8). These actions are a welcome sign that reform remains on the president’s agenda.

Global Climate Change

The administration has failed to show the leadership needed to effectively confront the issue of global climate change, first reversing the president’s pledge of crucial mandatory controls on carbon dioxide emissions, then cavalierly abandoning the international treaty on climate change. Now President Bush has called for significant cuts in funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. The administration seems determined to promote an energy policy that will only further the nation’s dependence on polluting fossil fuels such as coal and oil.

Water Quality

Early administration action rolling back limits on arsenic in drinking water was a serious step in the wrong direction on America’s water quality. While the administration has since promised new standards after additional studies, it has suggested that these may be as high as twice the World Health Organization standard of 10 parts per billion. Sound science supports the original standards, and reopening the issue is a mistake. No additional administration actions have yet been taken on items included in NWF’s agenda for healthy waters, so this remains an area ripe for development of common-ground conservation solutions.

Continued on page 41

National Estuary Assessment

Estuaries, the areas where freshwater drainage from land mixes with the waters of the sea, are the most fisheries productive of all marine and coastal waters. They are also fragile. Human population growth in the



Habitat loss, which occurs from natural and human disturbances stresses the natural resources in the Barataria Bay.

U.S. is greatest near its estuaries.

Water running off from these heavily settled drainages (watersheds) ends up, along with whatever it carries, in these productive estuaries. Many of the pollutants produced by man are actually not poisonous, but rather are chemicals that serve as fertilizers that can increase plant growth. Nitrogen and phosphorus are the two most important of such nutrients. While plants in estuaries need some nutrients to grow, a supply that is too large can be very negative. This over-enrichment of water with nutrients is called eutrophication.

Excess nutrients come from four main sources besides the ones produced by nature. Nitrogen and phosphorus can come from agriculture due to rainwater runoff from fertilized crop lands or from livestock operations. The same two nutrients enter estuaries as discharges from sewage treatment plants as well as runoff from city streets, yards and lawns. Some of this comes from pet waste, some from lawn and home garden fertilization, and some from other human activities. Finally, substantial amounts of nitrogen are produced by automobile and power plant emissions into the air. These, of course, end up being brought to earth by rainfall and other weather.

Three things happen when a body of water becomes eutrophied. Dense growths of algae may block sunlight and smother native water plants which serve as fish habitat. These heavy algae growths (blooms) eventually die off and sink to the bottom. There, as they decay, they deplete oxygen

needed for fish life. Also, some forms of algae that do well in eutrophic waters are toxic. The toxins they produce can kill fish in the water or contaminate oysters and clams. Winds can blow these toxins from



wave spray inland where they may cause breathing problems for humans. Eutrophication can affect commercial and recreational fishing, boating, swimming and tourism.

Recently, a report was printed from a National Assessment Workshop and the National Estuarine Eutrophication Survey. The work covered 138 estuaries in the United States and was to produce an assessment of how eutrophied U.S. estuaries cur-



Since 1980 there have been 188 reported fish kills in the estuary due to the presence of nutrients, toxins, and other contaminants. In September of 1994, an algal bloom resulted in a fish kill of almost 200,000 fish.

rently are or likely to become. Of the 138 estuaries assessed, 44 showed high signs of eutrophication and another 40 showed moderate levels. This is 65% of the total surface area in all U.S. estuaries. Conditions are expected to worsen in 86

estuaries, stay the same in 44, and improve in only eight estuaries during the next 20 years.

Ten estuaries from Louisiana were included in the assessment. Also included was the Mississippi River plume, the offshore waters where the dead (hypoxic) zone occurs. The estuaries were grouped by their level of eutrophication:

High Eutrophication

Mississippi River Plume
Lake Pontchartrain
Calcasieu Lake

Moderate Eutrophication

Barataria Bay
Terrebonne/Timbalier Bays
Atchafalaya/ Vermillion Bays
Sabine Lake

Low Eutrophication

Breton/Chandeleur Sounds
Mississippi River (Delta)
Mermentau Estuary

Unknown Condition

Lake Borgne

Most of the estuaries in the Gulf states are predicted to get worse in the next 20 years, six of them to a high degree. Two of these six are in Louisiana: Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River plume. Nationally, only eight of the 138 estuaries assessed are expected to improve in the next 20 years. Two of those, Breton/Chandeleur Sounds and Mermentau Estuary are in Louisiana.

The report states that eutrophication-causing nutrients must be managed over the entire watershed, not just in an estuary. It also points out that there is not an overall national plan to deal with the problems of marine eutrophication, and that one is very much needed. — *courtesy, Jerald Horst, LSU AgCenter Cooperative Extension Service and SeaGrant program.*

For comprehensive information on eutrophication refer to:

www.btnep.org/pages/eutrophication1.html



Sojourn In Bear Country: The Making of NWF's "BEARS"

By Christopher N. Palmer,

Executive producer of NWF's new giant-screen film *BEARS* and president and CEO of National Wildlife Productions.

For millennia, humans looked up into the night sky and saw a certain configuration of stars in one familiar shape. This constellation we now call Ursa Major — the Great Bear. Some societies ascribed special powers to the celestial bear and believed



Black Bear

that it could move between Earth and sky.

And for millennia, bears moved freely throughout the globe. Like humans, bears can make a home in many different environments. Of the seven continents, all but Antarctica and Australia have been home to bears. But in the last 100 years, the balance of power between humans and bears has shifted dramatically against the bear.

Yet bears continue to hold sway over our imaginations. They are the epitome of wilderness. They inspire feelings of awe, respect — and fear. NWF's latest film, *BEARS*, brings Earth's largest terrestrial predator to the giant screen. Shot against the backdrop of spectacular wilderness, *BEARS* lets viewers get closer to these majestic, and at times comical, animals than is possible in the wild.

The film opens with a visual montage of the bears of the world, then explores in depth the three North American species —

the black bear, the "grizzly" or brown bear, and the polar bear. These and the world's five other species face threats to their survival in all or significant portions of their remaining range.

Not all of us can go into the wilderness to view bears, but a film like this can bring bears to us.

The National Wildlife Federation has invested significant funds in large-format film production and distribution because we believe that these films are one of the best ways to promote public education about conservation issues. We aim to inform and inspire audiences to take action, on a personal and civic level, to ensure wise stewardship of our natural heritage.

The theme of *BEARS* is survival. The black bear, the most common bruin of North America, has to survive an infancy that is rife with dangers. The survival rate of black bear cubs is about 50 percent. The grizzly, also known as the brown bear, has to survive its fierce reputation. It has been persecuted by civilization, and its habitat has been greatly reduced. The polar bear, the only bear that is almost exclusively carnivorous (which makes filming it an interesting experience), is threatened by global warming. I hope *BEARS* enables audiences to have a deeper understanding of an animal that humans have regarded with mixed emotions for most of history.

NWF has been working to conserve bears for decades. North American bears have been one of our highest priorities,

going back to 1951, when we were asked to step in and help preserve the Kodiak bear, a type of grizzly that lives on Kodiak and nearby islands in the Gulf of Alaska.

Most recently, we have been actively engaged in the ongoing effort to reintroduce grizzly bears into the 5,785 square miles of the Selway-Bitterroot and adjacent Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Areas in central Idaho and western Montana. Grizzlies roamed the Selway-Bitterroot as late as the 1940s before being hunted to extinction in the region. These powerful, magnificent animals once numbered in the tens of thousands and ranged from the Great Plains to the Pacific Ocean. Today, they occupy less than two percent of their former range in the lower 48 states.

Film, which reaches out to an audience of millions, can play an important part in moving people to action. At NWF we see films as a means to an end, not an end in itself. This doesn't mean that we don't go after the most spectacular footage. On the contrary, we realize we can best inspire people to protect the wild by giving them the opportunity to see what could be lost.

Alaska's Katmai National Park and Preserve is home to an estimated 2,000 grizzlies and has the highest recorded density in the world. So it was to the mountains and rivers of Katmai that our crew went to film these bears. The film culminates in a great feast — a gathering of grizzlies fishing for salmon in the McNeil River. Dave Lickley, the director, said, "The most notorious



Grizzly Bear

thing about filming in Alaska is the unpredictability of the weather. Yet, the last week we went out to film the bears fishing in the McNeil River we had the best weather imaginable. Sunny, clear days! Viewers will

their range. To catch a dinner they need to foray out over the frozen sea after seal meat. But as temperatures rise, the seas are frozen for shorter periods and polar bears are hard-pressed to maintain their weight and repro-

some great footage of polar bears sparring and wrestling.

Yet the aspect of their behavior that most struck me as I watched the film take shape was their playfulness. Some of the film's most memorable images are of bears playing. I think these scenes are very valuable in reminding people of the complexity of bears and their right to live unharassed in fully functioning ecosystems.

When people think of bears, they often think of bear attacks. Most of the time, though, bears live a placid existence. Humans can learn to live with bears in our wilderness areas if we are respectful of their behaviors and needs for space.

"Bears are intelligent, powerful, and gentle, but not to be taken lightly," said NWF field biologist and scientific advisor for *BEARS*, Dr. Sterling Miller. "They need wild areas in order to thrive. Our fears about bears need to be replaced by a deeper grasp of the important role these top predators play in both the natural setting and in our human culture."

Native American peoples understood this, and many of their myths and legends told of the supernatural powers of bears. *BEARS* not only carries a conservation message, it also intricately folds into its narrative the images and stories of the role of bears in Native cultures.

To the Inuit people of the Arctic, for example, the most powerful animal in their world was the polar bear. They believed that the spirit of the bear was interchangeable with the human spirit. Like humans, the bear stood upright to face its foes. Like humans, the bear was a great hunter. Their name for the bear was Nanook—the great white hunter. Their soapstone carvings of polar bears show an understanding of the animal based on close observation that blends science and artistry.

With similar deftness, *BEARS* aims to blend education and entertainment. Although beautiful to watch, and with a story line that is both informative and evocative, *BEARS* carries an important conservation message. We've designed educational materials to accompany the film that will help drive home the lessons to be learned from the bears' struggle to survive.

BEARS captures the timeless appeal of cubs as viewers follow the antics of two black bear cubs that emerge with their mother into the springtime of the Bitterroot Valley. Over the next few



Polar Bears

be astounded by the quality of the footage we were able to capture with this extraordinary light."

Nevertheless, the changeable weather exacted a very heavy toll. Our film is dedicated to the memory of two researchers who were to serve as scientific advisors to our film. Dr. Malcolm Ramsey and Dr. Stuart Innis had devoted their lives to the study of polar bears and, in particular, to the effects of global warming on the bears. They were killed in a helicopter crash just before they were due to begin helping us on the film.

Global warming is already a pressing problem for polar bears in southern parts of

ductive capability.

Of all bear species, polar bears are the most dangerous because they are almost completely carnivorous. We had a close call with one technician in the Arctic when we were filming polar bears. This technician caught the attention of a polar bear and barely made it back into the vehicle in time.

The odd thing about bears is that you watch them lope around and they put you in mind of big, furry cows. These "cows" have long claws and sharp teeth and can run 30 miles-per-hour. Suddenly, one will get frisky and take a swipe at another one. It all happens so fast! We did manage to get

Continued on page 19



Bill Ford



by Bill Ford

I am hoping that most of you survived the flood of 2001. In East Feliciana, we had plenty of rain, although the flooding problem wasn't that much of an issue. I did empty my rain gauge, which measures 5



LWF Secretary and Dist. 9 At-Large Director, Virginia Burkett presents an LWF sponsor plaque to Cypress Bend (Toledo Bend) Resort General Manager, Marshall Tullios. LWF's past President, and NWF Representative, Edgar Veillon, solicited Cypress Bend's membership at LWF's annual convention which was held in March of this year at the resort.

inches, three times in four days so I know that we got at least 15 inches up in Clinton. I live in one of the few houses in Louisiana that has a basement — yes, a basement in Louisiana! Needless to say, I did spend quite a few hours with the shop-vac cleaning up a few inches of water, but other than a few downed limbs and the water in the basement, the Ford family fared pretty well. I know that not everyone fared as well, and certainly our prayers and wishes for a quick clean-up are with you.

For me, the biggest event during all the storms and rain was that the hard drive on my computer in the LWF office "crashed". All I can say is that I shoulda, wished I woul-

da, "backupped" more often. Eighteen months of unretrievable files are now floating around in cyberspace. Lesson learned. The computer "guy" told me that the usual life of a hard drive is three years, after that you can expect something to go wrong. He also told me never to depend on just a surge protector. My advice, — backup, backup, backup!

Our Spring Appeal was mailed in May and we have once again had great response to this mid-year fundraiser. Donors to the Spring Appeal are listed at the end of this column. Thank YOU! Your support is vital to the LWF's conservation education and advocacy work.

Our 5th Annual Adventure Sweepstakes is off and running. Look for your tickets in the mail. Colorado hunting trip, Rocky Mountain fishing adventure or a Caribbean cruise — the choice is yours if you are the Grand Prize Winner. Of course the GPW can also take \$2000 cash if s/he desires. The 1st place winner will have to choose a new Remington rifle or \$500 cash, and the 2nd place winner will make a choice between a Lifetime Hunting/Fishing license or \$300 cash. Drawing date is December 5th, 2001. If you are a new member and didn't receive your sweepstakes tickets don't worry, we will give everybody another chance to take part later in the year.

Speaking of new members, welcome to all of you who have "signed on" since the last issue of the magazine. In appreciation, we are listing your names in this issue. You are definitely appreciated, but most importantly you are now a part of the "Voice for Conservation" that makes up the Louisiana Wildlife Federation. Your voice strengthens our efforts!

That's it from me. With the summer months upon us and many people taking to the water, please remember, Safety First, and always wear that PFD (Personal Floatation Device — Lifejacket) when underway. All children and non-swimmers should wear them all the time. Remember — a PFD floats, you don't (until its too late).

2001 New Members (to \$49) 3/16/01 through 6/01/01

- Robert H. Abney, Jr. - Slidell
- Ferdinand Allain, III - Brusly
- Willie B. Allen - Oil City
- Ronald L. Andrews - Vicksburg

- Ronnie Andries - Alexandria
- Wayne R. Argence - Kenner
- Minos Armentor - New Iberia
- Iva Augenstein - Lake Charles
- Bank of Gueydan - Gueydan
- Joseph G. Beaud - New Roads
- Joey J. Begnaud - New Iberia
- Rev. Douglas Belgard - Deville
- Sharon Bengtson - Independence
- Paul H. Benoist - Baton Rouge
- Carol L. Bergholz - Bossier City
- Clay A. Bilbo - Pearl River
- Josephine V. Blackwell - Metairie
- Clyde Bolton - Franklin
- Gary C. Bordelon - Kingwood, TX
- Mike Bordelon, SRA - Alexandria
- Roger Boughton, D.V.M. - New Iberia
- B. F. Bouser - Baton Rouge
- Dallas Bowers - Lafayette
- Ethel P. Bowman - Jennings
- Peter O. Braquet - Bridge City
- George Brewer - Houma
- Brad A. Broussard - Plaquemine
- W. Ray Brown - New Orleans
- Paul E. Brummett - Jennings
- Sister Janet A. Buescher - Montegut
- George N. Byram, Jr., M.D. - New Orleans
- Bart Caple - Lake Charles
- David W. Carnal - Dubach
- Michael Cart - Youngsville
- M. Hampton Carver - New Orleans
- Marlon Chaddrick - Turkey Creek
- Joseph F. Cheleno - New Orleans
- Diane Chisholm - Baton Rouge
- Tommy Christiana - Metairie
- Joseph A. Cicero, Jr. - Metairie
- John F. Clark, III - Metairie
- Wayne A. Comberrel, Jr. - Covington
- Glenn E. Compton - Lafayette
- John R. Contois, Jr. - Baton Rouge
- Sharon Core - Crowley
- Jeff Courtney - Boyce
- Donald R. Cox - New Iberia
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BEARS: *Continued from page 15*

months the cubs learn what foods to eat and what to avoid, who is friend and who is foe, that water is wet and trees are made to fall out of. There is one heart-stopping sequence when the two cubs follow their mother into a stream. The current is fast, and the cubs are swept downstream. Will they cross to safety? They do, but it's touch and go for awhile. As a member of the audience, you find yourself rooting for their survival. This is the best thing that NWF films can do — make viewers care about the fate of a species and from that empathetic spark, take the leap to caring about the fate of other species and the protection of their habitats.

BEARS goes into the wilderness and lets the animals “speak” for themselves through natural behavior in natural settings. To paraphrase Chief Dan George: what we can understand, we will not fear; what we do not fear, we will protect. **BEARS** celebrates the great spirit of the great American bears.

[Note: This article will be published in the September edition of “The Big Frame,” which is read by everyone across the globe who is involved in producing, distributing and exhibiting giant screen films.]

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Recap of the 2001 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature

The recently adjourned legislative session was a fairly quiet but productive one for conservation. Legislators introduced over 3,000 bills and 500 resolutions, down about a thousand or so from previous sessions not restricted to fiscal matters only. The percentage of bills pertaining to conservation, environment and related outdoor recreation was also down from previous years from the usual 10% to about 6%.

The "big" conservation bill that passed the session establishes a foundation for managing the state's ground water resources. Although several bills on this subject were introduced, SB 965 sponsored by Senators Hoyt, McPherson, Theunissen and Representative Daniel, et al. was the measure that ultimately passed. This legislation is described in more detail elsewhere in this publication. A list and brief description of those measures that LWF was tracking and that were adopted follows. Those bills without Act #s had not been signed by the governor as of June 18th.

HB 1 (Act) APPROPRIATIONS Provides for the expenses of state government, including: Department of Wildlife and Fisheries – \$61,089,999 and 797 employees (\$8,475,585 and 82 jobs for the Office of Management and Finance; \$16,908,824 and 287 jobs for the Office of the Secretary which includes \$15,527,932 and 274 jobs for the Enforcement Division; \$21,486,341 and 203 jobs for the Office of Wildlife; \$14,206,249 and 225 jobs for the Office of Fisheries); Department of Natural Resources – \$712,104 and 3 jobs for the Atchafalaya Basin Program and \$39,130,030 and 115 jobs for the Office of Coastal Restoration and Management; Department of Environmental Quality – \$116,286,729 and 1,054 jobs; Office of State Parks – \$18,243,875 and 320 jobs.

HB 2 (Act) CAPITAL OUTLAY Provides for construction and acquisition projects including: State Parks-Fontainebleau (\$3,200,000 priority 1; \$6,365,000 priority 5), Sam Houston Jones (\$415,000 P1), Lake D'Arbonne

(\$7,315,000 P1), South Toledo Bend (\$3,840,000 P1; \$3,690,000 P5), Palmetto Island (\$100,000 P1; \$2,000,000 P2; \$10,250,000 P5), Bogue Chitto (\$1,500,000 P1; \$2,800,000 P2), Chicot (\$2,500,000 P1; \$1,380,000 P5), Cypremort Point (\$2,050,000 P1; \$365,000 P2), Tickfaw (\$700,000 P1), Lake Claiborne (\$430,000 P1), Lake Bruin (\$890,000 P1; \$160,000 P5), Caney Creek Lake (\$4,975,000 P1); Atchafalaya Basin Program: (\$5,840,000 P1; \$4,000,000 P2; \$16,000,000 P5 and \$475,000 P1 for East Grand Lake); LDWF – Rockefeller Refuge (\$2,425,200 for habitat protection and restoration work).

HB 48 (Act) DEER TRACKING DOGS Allows the use of leashed deer tracking dogs during the still hunting season to recover wounded or down (but not found) deer.

HB 49 (Act 27) MUZZLELOADERS Allows the use of magnifying scopes on muzzleloaders during the muzzleloader season regardless of the age of the hunter.

HB 65 (Act 28) COMMERCIAL FISHING Designates all LDWF district offices south of I-10 as locations where commercial fishing licenses will be sold, in addition to the offices located in Bourg, New Iberia, New Orleans and Baton Rouge; deletes the specific requirements and details for the Commercial Fisherman's Sales Card.

HB 79 (Act 29) TOLEDO BEND CREEL LIMITS Sets daily take, possession and size limits for fish taken by recreational fishermen on Toledo Bend Reservoir as follows: black bass - 8 fish, 14" minimum length; white bass - 25; striped bass and hybrids - 5, no more than 2 over 30" in length; crappie - 50; blue catfish - 25, 12" minimum length; channel catfish - 25, 11" minimum length; flathead catfish - 25, 14" minimum length. Sets possession limit for these species at twice the daily limit; provides that a violation is a Class II offense; conditions the effect of the statute on enactment of similar legislation by the Texas Legislature.

HB 85 (Act 30) RECREATIONAL HOOPNETS Allows the use of up to 3 hoopnets with a \$20 recreational hoopnet gear license in waters north of I-12 between Baton Rouge and the Mississippi state line, north of I-10 between Baton Rouge and Ragley, and north of LA 12 from Ragley to the Texas line.

HB 158 (Act 344) WILDLIFE VIOLATIONS/LATE PENALTY Authorizes the LDWF secretary to impose a 10% late penalty and assess adjudicatory hearing and other associated costs against Class 1 offenders for failure to timely pay civil assessments for violations, including interest on the civil assessment and reasonable attorney fees.

HB 159 (Act 113) LDWF UNDERSECRETARY Delegates additional authorities and responsibilities to the LDWF undersecretary in administering the Office of Management and finance, including socioeconomic research, customer service, fee and fine collection, information dissemination and media relations.

HB 254 (Act) DEQ/SOLID WASTE Requires DEQ to collect data on parish and municipal resource recovery and recycling programs and make an annual report on its findings to the House and Senate Environment Committees.

HB 259 (Act 223) HUNTER EDUCATION EXEMPTION Exempts active and retired military and POST-certified law enforcement officers from the hunter education certification requirement provided those seeking the exemption apply for such in person at the LDWF headquarters office in Baton Rouge.

HB 281 (Act 226) NUTRIA SEASON Authorizes the LWFC to set a recreational hunting season for nutria.

HB 312 (Act) BAYOU LAFOURCHE / FRESH WATER Authorizes the Bayou LaFourche Freshwater District Board of Commissioners to implement measures to prevent saltwater intrusion.

HB 329 (Act 51) SALT/FRESH-WATER LINE – ORLEANS PARISH

Declares the waters of the Intracoastal Waterway in Orleans Parish from the power lines at the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal east to the Rigolets to be both fresh and salt water with regard to fishing regulations.

HB 336 (Act) WILDLIFE VIOLATIONS/CIVIL ASSESSMENTS Holds a person summoned for a violation of a wildlife law liable for a "no contest" plea upon failure to appear in court and therefore subject to the payment of any civil assessments due, as well as loss of all hunting and fishing privileges while the assessment remains unpaid.

HB 337 (Act) ELECTRONIC PAYMENT/WILDLIFE FINES Allows a person to pay fines for Class I violation of wildlife/fishery laws through the LDWF electronic license issuing system.

HB 445 (Act 57) CRAB TASK FORCE Establishes a Crab task Force to advise the LWFC and LDWF on matters pertaining to the management and development of the crab industry.

HB 446 (Act) WHITETAIL LICENSE PLATE Directs the creation of a white-tailed deer license plate available for a fee of \$10 in addition to the 2-year vehicle tag fee plus \$3.50 for handling; revenue generated from the sale of the plate is dedicated to LDWF programs pertaining to the white-tailed deer.

HB 480 (Act 116) MULLET TASK FORCE Creates a Mullet Task Force to advise the LWFC on the opening of the mullet season.

HB 569 (Act) NONRESIDENT MEDIA HUNTING/FISHING LICENSE Directs the LWFC to establish a special nonresident outdoor press license, good for up to 7 consecutive days, for a fee of \$20.

HB 598 (Act) INFECTIOUS WASTE CLEANUP Requires the regulation of the cleanup and remediation of spills or discharges of infectious waste by DEQ and the recovery of costs to DEQ associated with the cleanup if the waste was transported by a hauler not permitted by DHH; prohibits the generator of infectious waste from using an unpermitted hauler to transport such waste.

HB 602 (Act) INDIVIDUAL SEWAGE SYSTEMS Requires all new and reconditioned sewage treatment systems of 1,500 GPD or greater capacity and that produce effluent to have a means or device for disinfecting the effluent.

HB 1029 (Act 252) ENVIRON-

MENTAL SETTLEMENTS/BENEFICIAL PROJECTS Sets forth a procedure for the Attorney General to approve or reject beneficial environmental projects that are proposed by DEQ as part of settlement agreements within a 90-day period and requires DEQ to respond to questions from the Attorney General within 30 days.

HB 1179 (Act) OPEN BURNING Allows municipalities of 5,000 or less to burn brush and yard waste outside of 500 feet from an occupied building or residence, provided the municipality prohibits burning within the corporate limits and provides a collection service for yard waste and brush.

HB 1297 (Act 16) ATCHAFALAYA LAND SWAP Authorizes an exchange of Atchafalaya Basin land between the state and the St. Martin Land Co. that will enable the development of various features of the state's conservation and recreation plan for the Atchafalaya Basin.

HB 1407 (Act 147) MULLET VIOLATIONS Revises the penalties for violation of the state commercial fishery laws/regulations pertaining to mullet.

HB 1415 (Act 271) SPECKLED TROUT Revises the penalties for violation of the state commercial fishery laws/regulations pertaining to speckled trout.

HB 1416 (Act 148) BRETON-CHANDELEUR SOUND SHRIMPING Revises the boundaries of Breton and Chandeleur Sounds for shrimping.

HB 1417 (Act 149) FISHING GEAR PROHIBITIONS Defines bandit gear and longline gear and prohibits the use of such gear in state territorial waters.

HB 1419 (Act 150) TUNA/SHARK POSSESSION REQUIREMENTS Revises the requirements of maintaining body parts intact, etc. for tuna and shark until landed and establishes permit suspension penalties for violation of commercial shark permit requirements.

HB 1420 (Act) NONRESIDENT FISHING LICENSE Provides for daily (per day) nonresident saltwater and freshwater fishing licenses for \$15 and \$5, respectively; creates a 4-consecutive day nonresident trip freshwater fishing license for \$15 and a 4-consecutive day nonresident saltwater fishing license for \$45; reduces the season nonresident

saltwater fishing license to \$30.

HB 1422 (Act 185) LDWF ENFORCEMENT Provides that graduates of the LDWF enforcement academy shall have general law enforcement powers.

HB 1427 (Act) CHARTER FISHING CLIENT LICENSE Makes charter passenger fishing trip licenses available to resident as well as nonresident anglers.

HB 1429 (Act) CHARTER FISHING GUIDE LICENSE Requires anyone representing themselves to be a saltwater charter boat fishing guide to be in possession of a valid state charter boat fishing guide license.

HB 1430 (Act 186) WMA PERMIT/LIFETIME LICENSE Includes the WMA hunting permit in the privileges covered by the lifetime hunting license.

HB 1481 (Act) SALT/FRESHWATER LINE Adjusts the salt/freshwater line in Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes north to the Intracoastal Waterway from the state line to Highway 27 at Gibbstown.

HB 1483 (Act) UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS Substantially revises the provisions of the Underground Storage Tank Law administered by DEQ.

HB 1606 (Act 438) OYSTER LEASES Beginning in 2003, oyster lease holders are required to annually report details of bed development and production to LDWF for the state to use in planning coastal restoration projects.

HB 1640 (Act) ENERGY USE/STATE FACILITIES Authorizes and directs the Division of Administration to implement the state's energy management policy for state buildings to minimize energy cost and consumption

HB 1692 (Act 165) SPOTTED SEA TROUT/STATE SALTWATER FISH Designates the speckled trout as the official state saltwater fish and authorizes its use on official state documents.

HB 1696 (Act) OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF WATER-BOTTOMS Delineates the responsibilities for administering and managing state lands and water bottoms and charges the State Land Office in the Division of Administration with the tasks of develop-

Continued on page 40

Commission Proposes Nutria Hunting Season

At its June 7th meeting, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission amended its "Notice of Intent" for the 2001/02 hunting seasons to include nutria among those species recreational hunters will be able to harvest this fall. The action was taken at the request of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF), pursuant to Act 226 of the 2001 Legislature. Rep. Loulan Pitre of Cut Off and Sen. Joe McPherson of



Nutria

Woodworth sponsored the "nutria season" bill, which was initiated by a resolution adopted by the delegates to the Louisiana Wildlife Federation's 62nd Annual Meeting held this past March at Toledo Bend. Among the top reasons cited in the LWF resolution for having a recreational hunting season for nutria were: the overpopulation of nutria is causing severe damage to wetlands and levees; commercial trapping is no longer sufficient to keep nutria numbers in balance with the habitat; and, properly handled and prepared, nutria meat is good table fare.

Philip Bowman, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries assistant secretary, recommended to the Commission that the nutria season run from September 1 through February 28 and that there be no bag limit. Although there is no biological reason for a bag limit due to the current nutria overpopulation situation, LWF would have preferred setting a bag of 8 and a possession of 16, as is the case for rabbit and squirrel. LWF president Keith Saucier said that the reason for a bag limit would be to encourage harvest, but not waste. He also noted that having a limit would serve as an incentive for hunters to harvest nutria.

Recreational hunters will not be allowed to sell nutria skins or meat unless they possess a valid trapping license and do so only during the open trapping season. Hunters

will be allowed to take nutria during daylight hours only and with weapons that can be legally used to take small game. Bowman said that the proposed nutria season will have no effect on the LDWF's nuisance animal permit program that allows landowners to kill nutria that are damaging their property.

Deadline Nears For Youth Outdoor Journalism Contest

The deadline is drawing near for entries in the state Youth Outdoor Journalism Contest sponsored by the Louisiana Outdoor Writer's Association and The Advocate Educational Services. Entries must be postmarked by July 1, 2001. The essay/photo contest is designed to stimulate an interest in outdoor journalism and photography among the young people of Louisiana. In addition to cash prizes, winning entries will be published in The Advocate (Baton Rouge) and other publications.

There are two age divisions in the essay category (Senior - 14 thru 18 and Junior - 9 thru 13). The photography category is open to all students ages 9 thru 18. Each essay entry must be an original, unpublished story about personal experience pertaining to hunting, fishing, boating, camping, hiking, or other related outdoor experience. It must be 300 to 1,000 words in length and typed, double-spaced on one side of the paper. The stories will be judged on interest, subject matter, readability, spelling and grammar. The entrant's name, age, school, home address, and telephone number must be included at the top of each page submitted.

Each photo submitted must be an original, unpublished color or black/white print center-mounted on 8 x 10 inch poster board with the same entry identification required for essay submissions attached to the back of the poster board.

Cash prizes are \$300, \$200 and \$100 for first, second and third places respectively, in each division of each category. There may be other merchandise prizes depending on program sponsorships. Winners will be notified within 45 days of the submission deadline. First place winners in each category will be honored at the LOWA's Fall Conference in October in Venice, Louisiana. Lodging for the winners and chaperone(s) will be compliments of the LOWA.

Mail entries to: LOWA - YJC; The

Advocate; P.O. Box 588; Baton Rouge, LA 70821 by the July 1st deadline.

Winnsboro, New Orleans Educators To Attend

National Wildlife Conservation Summit

Two of Louisiana's outstanding educators have been selected by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation to attend the National Wildlife Federation's 2001 Family Conservation Summit.

Mary Nichols of Winnsboro and Ann Yoachim of New Orleans were chosen by LWF's Conservation Education Committee to receive the scholarships from among numerous applicants. Educators were rated on their level of activity concerning conservation/ environmental education instruction during the past year and committed to continuing that work in the future.

"We are pleased to once again support two top Louisiana educators with this scholarship," said Kathy Wascom, LWF's Conservation Education Committee chair. "It is always difficult to choose just two of the applicants."

This year's Summit is being held June 30-July 6 at the Canaan Valley Resort in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia. Canaan Valley is the highest valley east of the Rocky Mountains with an average elevation of 3,200' and contains the largest wetlands complex in West Virginia.

The Summit experience includes 7 days of exploring nature through educational programs, interpretive activities, creative indoor/outdoor adventures and scenic field trips. Classes are specifically designed to help educators develop creative lessons that will enrich their students' understanding of environmental issues and ecological concepts. Program goals are: to increase awareness and understanding of ecological issues; to increase confidence in teaching about the environment; and to demonstrate ways to easily incorporate environmental education throughout the curriculum.

Nichols teaches 6th and 7th graders at Mangham Junior High and has been involved in environmental education for the past eleven years. She has contributed to Mangham's Beautification Projects and uses many recycled products in science and art projects. Yoachim, an interpretive naturalist at the Audubon Louisiana Nature Center, coordinates a diverse public program at the Nature Center that reaches Pre-K to

12th grade students, as well as adults. She currently organizes the Louisiana Youth Environmental Summit (LA YES!).

The scholarships, \$1,200 each, are applied to the costs of tuition, lodging, meals and transportation. Recipients are expected to submit an article on their Summit experience for publication in *Louisiana WILDLIFE Federation* magazine and to conduct a 1-2 hour workshop for other educators to convey some of the ideas learned at the Summit.

For further information on National Wildlife educational programs, including the Family Summit, go to:

www.nwf.org

Youth Hunter Challenge

Nicholas (Bud) Rains and Colt Bothel were declared Junior and Senior winners of the 2001 Louisiana Youth Hunter Education Challenge. One hundred twenty-four youngsters tested their skill in eight categories at the competition held May 18-20 at Camp Grant Walker near Pollack. The event was sponsored by the Louisiana Hunter Education Instructors Association and supported by the LDWF.

Taking top honors, Rains and Bothel were awarded lifetime hunting licenses and will compete in the national competition to be held later in the summer. The top 15 scorers in each age division are eligible to attend.

Participants were tested in riflery, shotgun shooting, muzzleloader, archery, wildlife identification hunter safety trail and orienteering. A written hunter responsibility exam was given as well. Rains also belongs to the Desoto Youth Shooting Team, which took first place in the Junior (14 years and younger) team competition. Bothel belongs to the Caddo-Bossier Youth Hunter Education Club which took first place in the Senior (15 years and older) competition.

LDWF Hunter Education Coordinator Bud Carpenter stated, "What I like about the Challenge is that it not only teaches the fundamentals of safety and marksmanship, it also encourages personal ethics. It develops self-esteem and offers a challenge to excel."

LDWF Adds Acreage to WMAs

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) recently acquired three tracts of land to enhance three different Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).

The newly-expanded areas include Boeuf, Buckhorn and Tunica Hills WMAs.

Boeuf WMA in Caldwell Parish had 311 acres added; 861 acres were added to Buckhorn WMA in Tensas Parish and 424 acres were added to Tunica Hills WMA in West Feliciana Parish. The Tunica Hills addition was purchased from The Nature Conservancy of Louisiana. The Buckhorn WMA addition is enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), a voluntary program for restoring and protecting wetlands. LDWF managed lands include over 6,500 acres of WRP lands, and over 130,000 acres in Louisiana are enrolled in the national program

What You Need to Know About Pesticides

In an effort to educate residents of Louisiana about health effects related to pesticide exposure, a multi-agency pamphlet was recently developed and printed. The glossy, colored pamphlet, entitled 'What You Need to Know About Pesticides and Your Health in Louisiana,' discusses health effects related to commonly used pesticides, how pesticide exposure occurs, what to do if you are exposed to a pesticide, and laws regulating the use and application of pesticides. The pamphlet also explains how to file a health-related pesticide incident complaint with the LA Department of Agriculture and Forestry. To obtain a copy of the pamphlet, contact the Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry (225) 925-3763; the LA Dept. of Health and Hospitals (toll-free 1-888-293-7020), or the Louisiana Environmental Action Network (toll-free 1-225-928-1315).

Former USFWS Director Joins NWF

The former director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is moving into the top conservation post at the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). Jamie Rappaport Clark will join the nation's largest conservation education and advocacy group later this month as senior vice president for conservation programs.

"Jamie will be a tremendous asset to our organization and our cause," said NWF President Mark Van Putten. "She knows conservation, she knows the obstacles, and she knows how to surmount them; that's a recipe for real success."

Among Clark's immediate challenges will be leading NWF and its grass roots part-

ners in efforts to work with the new administration toward tangible conservation progress. The organization has identified a number of issues, from conservation funding to wetlands protection and imperiled species restoration, on which it sees opportunity for common ground with the nation's new leaders, while working closely with state and regional authorities.

"I'm anxious to keep building on the progress we've made in improving the health of our environment, our wildlife and our wild places," Clark said. "But it's going to take hard work and a commitment to building new alliances. I'm excited to be working with a group that believes as I do that conservation is not a partisan issue and that crafting win-win solutions is the key to success." Clark credits bipartisan support for making possible some of the major conservation successes achieved during her lengthy tenure with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in a variety of roles. She includes among these highlights the spectacular recovery of the gray wolf, bald eagle and peregrine falcon, and the passage of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, which ensures that activities on refuges are consistent with sound wildlife conservation principles.

In keeping with NWF's long tradition of crafting conservation solutions on a foundation of sound science, Clark brings an extensive scientific background to her new position. Prior to serving as director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from 1997 to 2001, she held posts as the agency's assistant director of ecological services, and as chief and senior staff biologist of the endangered species division. Previous wildlife research and management positions with the Department of the Army and other defense agencies also capitalized on Clark's extensive scientific background.

Holder of an M.S. in wildlife ecology from the University of Maryland, and a B.S. in wildlife biology from Towson State University, Clark has broadened her skills with postgraduate training in environmental planning. At NWF, she will lead conservation advocacy programs emanating from the organization's Virginia headquarters and 11 field offices, and executed in partnership with state affiliate organizations and grass roots volunteers nationwide.

"I'm excited to be taking another position that can make a real difference in the

health of our world,” said Clark.

Ville Platte Man Pleads Guilty to Waterfowl Violations

Robert Guss Miller, 57, of Ville Platte, pled guilty to several waterfowl charges before U.S. Magistrate Mildred Methvin on April 11 in Lafayette. The charges stemmed from an investigation by LDWF and federal wildlife officers.

Agents acting on complaints of waterfowl poaching at Miller’s Lake in Evangeline Parish saw Miller and his juvenile son kill several ducks and put them in a hidden white sack and decoy bag. Agents checked the sack to find 17 mallards, four gadwalls, one teal and one widgeon.

Miller was fined \$1,450 for taking and possessing over the limit of ducks, \$1,350 for failure to maintain custody of migratory game birds ducks, \$500 for aiding and abetting a juvenile and an assessment fee of \$30. Additionally, he was put on two years of supervised probation with a condition of no hunting during that time, plus 40 hours of community service work. The waterfowl were seized and donated to charity.

LDWF Sgt. Chris Cormier, Sr. Agent Scott Fontenot and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Special Agent Philip Siragusa participated in the case. U.S. Asst. District Attorney Camille Domingue prosecuted the case.

Public Asked to Report Black Bear Sightings

In March, four female Louisiana black bears and their cubs were relocated through a joint venture between the LDWF, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, LSU and the Black Bear Conservation Committee (BBCC). The bears were relocated to the LDWF Red River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). LDWF black bear biologist Maria Davidson joined USFWS staff in transporting the bears to their new homes. The area is comprised of 36,210 acres of bottomland hardwood and managed by LDWF for the public in Concordia Parish. The WMA was chosen for its excellent black bear habitat and strategic location between two existing bear populations.

Females and cubs are targeted for relocation specifically because of the mothers’ instinct to stay with the young cubs. Bears have a powerful homing instinct and may travel hundreds of miles to reach familiar territory, almost surely encountering the

dangers of traffic and other human interference along the way. A mother bear, howev-



er, will stay with her young cubs until they are old enough to leave the den. By that time the mother should be acclimated to her new surroundings and likely to remain there. According to Davidson, there is a possibility of bear movement outside the WMA. As these bears develop home ranges, sightings by the public are possible. Any sightings will be extremely beneficial to scientists working in the program. Black bear sightings are possible in the following parishes: Avoyelles, Concordia, Evangeline, Pointe Coupee and Rapides. Anyone who sees a black bear, a federally-protected species, is strongly urged to contact Davidson at 225/765-2385 or the LDWF 24-hour toll free hotline at 1-800-442-2511.

DU Web Site Tracks Waterfowl Via Satellite

Satellites in space are helping waterfowl biologists keep a watchful eye on ducks and geese as they make their epic journeys to the northern breeding grounds. And nesting hens are being monitored to see how many ducklings are successfully hatched and fledged. Web surfers can follow these birds by visiting Ducks Unlimited. DU is using the most high tech methods available to gain knowledge about the habitat needs of mallards, pintails and North Atlantic Canada geese. Three ongoing studies can be monitored online at:

www.ducks.org

“We’re posting the studies on the web to share information expeditiously with colleagues in the biological field and with all others who have an abiding fascination with the interesting life history patterns of waterfowl,” said Dr. Bruce Batt, chief DU biologist. “These studies will enable DU and others to design habitat conservation programs that will help assure a brighter future for our

valuable waterfowl resource. These studies will help us focus our resources on the most important habitats that are used by the birds.”

Trophy Bucks Measured

The scoring of potential trophy class deer harvested in Louisiana during the 2000-2001 deer season is currently underway across the state. The past deer season also marks the end of the third recognition program for Louisiana Big Game Records.

David Moreland, LDWF deer study leader and coordinator of the Louisiana Records Program says that several trophy deer have been officially scored already and there are many more to score. Most hunters wait until their buck gets back from the taxidermist before it is officially scored but once a rack has air dried for 60 days it can be officially measured, according to Moreland. The cold weather made for increased deer activity, particular during the rut when larger, mature bucks are most active.

Shannon Deville of Broussard harvested the best buck to date in St. Landry Parish. Deville’s buck was a 14-pointer that scored 179 2/8 points in the typical gun category. Kenneth Harrison of Springhill killed a ten-pointer in Claiborne Parish that scored 160 3/8 typical points. Female hunters in the bayou state are represented by Betty Deslatte who killed a 14-point buck in West Feliciana Parish that scored 140 4/8 typical points and qualifies for the Louisiana Recognition Program. The bucks killed by Deville and Harrison will qualify for the Louisiana Record Book and Boone and Crockett recognition.

Bryan Meche of Duson leads the archery typical category with an 11-pointer that scored 144 6/8 points. Other archery harvested bucks that have been officially measured includes a 144 class eight-point that James Baxley of Winnfield killed in Winn Parish, a 138 3/8 class 11-point killed by Hank Kizer of Lafayette in Concordia Parish and an 11-pointer that Guy Bergeron of Baton Rouge killed in East Feliciana Parish. All of these deer not only qualify for the Louisiana Record Book but will also qualify for the Pope and Young Record Book.

Official measurers are located in all the regional wildlife offices across the state. Persons who believe they have harvested a buck that would qualify for recognition

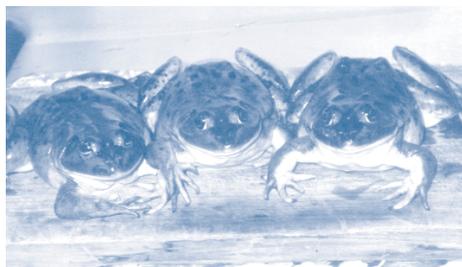
should call and make an appointment to have the deer officially scored. The Louisiana Program recognizes deer harvested with gun, muzzleloader, and bow and arrow. There are categories for both typical and non-typical whitetails. The Louisiana Program also recognizes trophy wild turkeys harvested during the spring turkey season. Measurements are taken of the spur length and width which are used to rank trophy gobblers.

The upcoming 2001-2002 deer season will mark the beginning of the fourth Recognition Program which will include the years 2001-2003. Copies of the 1979-91 Louisiana Record Book, Louisiana Big Game Recognition Program 1992-1994, 1995-1997, and the current state listing of the Louisiana Big Game Records are available from the Deer Program Section or the LDWF library, both located at 2000 Quail Drive in Baton Rouge. – *courtesy, LDWF*

Froggin' Time

From a frog's point of view, June 1 is a grim day in Louisiana. On this first day of frog season, dozens of commercial froggers and hundreds of recreational fisherman move into the swamps at dusk, armed with headlamps and gigs. Their quarry are bullfrogs and pig frogs (also known as lagoon frogs or grunTERS), Louisiana's only species whose hind legs are large enough to eat.

Bull and pig frogs may be taken in Louisiana every month except April and May. The brief closed season allows the frogs time to reproduce. There are no bag



Bud-Wi-Ser.

limits, but bullfrogs must be five inches and pig frogs must be at least three inches in body length. Frogs can be taken by hand, with long-poled "grabbers" and with gigs and spears. Recreational froggers need a fishing license and commercial froggers are required to possess a reptile/amphibian collector license, which is available from the LDWF for \$25.

During the past several years, Louisiana's frog populations, along with crawfish and farmers, have had to face the drought. The drought means less area to reproduce, but also limits accessibility by frog hunters into some areas of swamps and marshes. One frog buyer reported that he has not seen a decrease in the availability of frogs during the past five years, but believes that the results of the drought may be delayed. LDWF relies on feedback from frog hunters, since there is no reporting requirement for catch. –*courtesy, LDWF*

Louisiana Officials Recognized by Corps

Louisiana Department of Natural Resources secretary Jack Caldwell was recently honored for his commitment and dedication to protecting Louisiana's coastal ecosystem. He was presented with the "Commander's Award For Public Service" by Col. Thomas Julich, New Orleans District Commander of the Army Corps of Engineers. Caldwell was cited for his work with the Coastal Wetlands, Planning Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA), also known as the "Breux Act". Atchafalaya Basin Program Director Sandra Thompson Decoteau and past Morgan City Mayor Tim Matte were also recognized by the Corps for efforts related to developing the state's Master (conservation and recreation) Plan for the Atchafalaya Basin.

Marine Reserves Beneficial, Scientists Say

Over 160 marine scientists have signed a statement declaring that there is "compelling scientific evidence that marine reserves conserve both biodiversity and fisheries, and could help to replenish the seas," according to Dr. Jane Lubchenco of the Dept. of Zoology at Oregon State University. "Marine reserves work, and they work fast. It is no longer a question of whether to set aside fully protected areas in the ocean, but where to establish them."

The scientists note that fully protected marine reserves "are viewed by many as a key tool to help reverse widespread overfishing and habitat disturbance. Yet because there are gaps of knowledge about how reserves work and because they are perceived to be taking something else away from dwindling fisheries, they are often vigorously resisted."

However, a 3-year study has produced findings which, say researchers, underscore

the effectiveness of marine reserves in protecting both fish and fisheries. The study found that after just one to two years of protection marine reserves produced results that, according to one researcher, were "startling and consistent." Among the findings: population densities were on the average 91% higher, biomass was 192% higher, average organism size was 31% higher and species diversity was 23% higher.

The study found that size and abundance of exploited species also increase in areas adjacent to reserves because "reserves serve as natural hatcheries, replenishing populations regionally by larval spillover beyond reserve boundaries." They also found that networks of fully protected marine reserves linked ecologically (through larval dispersal) and physically (through currents) are "much more likely to achieve the full array of benefits that marine resource managers are being called upon to deliver, rather than the current tendency to establish single isolated reserves.

Concludes Dr. Lubchenco: "Conservationists can be reassured that marine reserves are protecting biodiversity, and while fishermen may lose access to some areas, they will reap the benefits outside the reserves. The overall lesson is that all stakeholders can be served by well designed networks of marine reserves."

Undercover Agents Nab Unlicensed Fishing Guides

The week of May 1 yielded three arrests for unlicensed saltwater fishing guides in south Louisiana. The arrests were a result of a covert investigation performed by LDWF undercover enforcement agents last summer.

James L. Mitchell Jr., 37, of Jesuit Bend, James L. Mitchell Sr., 64, of Gretna and Alan Yedor II, 29, of Marerro, were each arrested on one count of acting as a saltwater bowfishing charter boat guide without a license. The Mitchells were booked into Plaquemines Parish Jail and Yedor was booked into Jefferson Parish Jail.

The penalties for acting as a saltwater guide without a license are \$400 to \$750, up to 120 days in jail, or both, plus court costs. The arresting agents for the cases were LDWF Region VIII Lt. Alan Adam, Sgt. Glen Jackson, Sgt. Stephen Clark, Sr. Agent Kris Bourgeois, Agent Rachel Zechenelly and Agent Eddie Skena.

NWF Names Dombeck Senior Fellow

The National Wildlife Federation has named former U.S. Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck to the post of senior fellow. In the new role, Dombeck will advise NWF on development and implementation of a wide range of policies, including the need for international conservation and cooperation. He will also play an important role in promoting NWF's common-sense, solution-oriented approach to environmental issues to new audiences.

"We cannot meet the needs of people without first securing the health of the land," said Dombeck. "The Federation's commitment to finding solutions that work for people and nature is one I've shared all my life, and it's one I'll continue to work toward," he added.

"Mike is a living, breathing conservation hero," said NWF President Mark Van Putten. "He will help us to keep America on a path toward real conservation progress."

Dombeck won broad acclaim — including a NWF National Conservation Achievement Award — for his nearly four-and-a-half-year record of leadership at the Forest Service helm. He ushered in a new era of environmental stewardship at the agency, changing its primary measure of success from commodity outputs to ecosystem health.

Dombeck presided over development of the Roadless Area Conservation Policy crafted under the Clinton administration, but now potentially threatened by a Bush administration plan to reassess roadless rules forest by forest. Dombeck also led reform of the Forest Service's 386,000-mile road system, protection of national treasures such as the Rocky Mountain Front, and development of a national fire plan based on protecting communities and restoring the health of fire dependent lands.

Earlier roles as acting director of the Bureau of Land Management and in the Interior Department's Land and Minerals Management office gave Dombeck unique insights into the challenges America will face from the new push for energy development on public lands.

"No one knows better than Mike Dombeck how to balance the health of land, water and wildlife with the demand to extract resources. We'll put that knowledge to good use," added Van Putten.

"I'm pleased that the National Wildlife Federation is giving me an opportunity to reach out to its extensive grass roots to continue my advocacy for sensible conservation policies that recognize the limits of the land and stem from a true respect for nature," said Dombeck.

A Ph.D. in fisheries biology, with graduate degrees in biology, education and zoology, Dombeck is the second former agency head to join the NWF. Former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark assumed the role of NWF senior vice president for conservation programs in May.

"I'm hopeful that Mike and Jamie can help the National Wildlife Federation work with the Bush administration to build on the conservation progress achieved under its predecessor," said Van Putten. "Conservation is not a partisan issue. The shift to a new administration needn't mean a shift away from safeguarding the real treasures of our nation and the world."

State NWTF Chapter Makes Donation for Turkey Management

The Louisiana Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation has donated over \$8,000 to LDWF to purchase seed and nets for wild turkey management and research programs. Approximately 2,100 pounds of chufa, an important winter food for wild turkeys, were acquired for planting food plots on six WMAs. In addition, four rocket nets for trapping, relocation and research were obtained with the funds.

The National Wild Turkey Federation is a non-profit conservation organization. Its mission is the conservation of the wild turkey and preservation of our hunting heritage.

Sawfish Proposed as Endangered Species

In April, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) formally proposed listing the smalltooth sawfish as "endangered" on the U.S. Endangered Species list. NMFS was requested by the Center For Marine Conservation to list both this fish and its once less common relative, the largetooth sawfish, as endangered. If the smalltooth sawfish is listed, it will be the first U. S. marine fish declared to be endangered. Critical habitat for the fish will likely be designated. A recovery plan will also be prepared.

This once very common fish ranged throughout all the Gulf and U.S. Atlantic states up to New York. At one time, recreational fishermen frequently caught the fish which grew up to 18 feet long. Entanglement in fishing gear as bycatch is blamed as the main reason for the decline of the species, although coastal development and pollution are listed as longterm threats.

Like the closely related sharks, sawfish grow slowly, mature late and produce few young. Some scientists estimate that the U.S. population of the fish has declined by as much as 99%. Harvest in Louisiana waters is already prohibited by state law. — *courtesy, Jerald Horst, LSU AgCenter Cooperative Extension and SeaGrant Program*

LDWF Boating Access Program

The primary responsibility of the LDWF is managing Louisiana's fish and wildlife resources, but the department is active in a multitude of other related areas, including the development and maintenance of boating and fishing facilities that provide access to Louisiana waters.

The LDWF Fishing and Boating Facility Program is funded by the federal Sport Fish Restoration Fund on a 75% federal/25% state-local basis. This was made available through the 1984 Wallop/Breaux amendment to the Dingell-Johnson Act, passed by Congress in 1950. Dingell-Johnson is a "user fee" generated from a 10 percent excise tax on certain fishing gear. The act provided for apportionment of funds to the states based on a formula dependent upon the total amount of land and water area in the state and the total number of fishing license purchasers.

By the latter part of the 1970s, revenues generated by Dingell-Johnson were not sufficient to meet the growing demands for increased access to fishing areas, enhanced sport fishing opportunity and public education in aquatic resource conservation and management. In 1984, legislation introduced by then-Congressman John Breaux and Senator Malcolm Wallop successfully amended the Dingell-Johnson Act, extending the tax to include essentially all fishing tackle, import duties on imported tackle and boats and motorboat fuel taxes in the program. The Sport Fish Restoration Fund is the result of that federal legislation.

By current law, a minimum of 15 percent of the Sport Fish Restoration Fund

allotted to Louisiana each year must be spent on boating access to fresh and salt waters. Local governmental entities provide matching funds for projects in their areas. Consequently, very little money is required from the LDWF Conservation Fund.

Facilities include boat ramps, fishing piers and water control structures that manage the hydrology of aquatic habitat. Since 1984, LDWF's Inland Fisheries Division has enrolled 73 projects under the program, with a total completion of 65 structures. In addition, 60 boat ramps in Louisiana are routinely inspected and maintained.

Recently completed public access facilities projects for boating and fishing include the Calcasieu Ship Channel Jetty Pier in Cameron Parish and the Caddo Parish Larto/Saline Lake stump removal projects. Projects currently in the planning and/or construction stage include the Fort Pike boat launch and the South Shore Harbor improvements in Orleans Parish, the Madisonville

boat harbor and the LaCombe Main Street boat launch in St. Tammany Parish, the Franklin boat launch, phase two of the Berwick boat launch and the North Bend boat launch in St. Mary Parish and the Grand Chenier boat launch in Cameron Parish.

"Approximately \$6.6 million of the Sport Fish Restoration Fund has been allotted to the program since its inception in 1984," noted acting LDWF Inland Fisheries Assistant Administrator Gary Tilyou. "The LDWF Public and Boating Facility Program has resulted in significant progress in the management of Louisiana fisheries resources and marked improvement to the accessibility of our waterways for those in Louisiana who continue to enjoy boating and fishing."

For more information about public access to boating facilities in Louisiana, visit the LDWF library at 2000 Quail Drive in Baton Rouge or consult the LDWF web site www.wlf.state.la.us

Haynesville Celebration of Butterflies

The third annual Haynesville Celebration of Butterflies will be held September 15-16, 2001 at the Claiborne Parish Fairgrounds in Haynesville, Butterfly Capitol of Louisiana. The festival is a classroom for learning about nature.

Special consultant for the festival is Dr. Gary Noel Ross of Baton Rouge, Director of

Butterfly Festivals for the North American Butterfly Association. Featured speaker and Grand Marshall for the butterfly parade is author Barbara Damrosch of Harborside, Maine. Other speakers will present programs on butterfly gardening, water gardening herbs, water conservation, greenhouses,



Monarch butterfly

forestry and composting.

A highlight of the festival is a 25' X 40' conservatory complete with butterflies, larvae and chrysalides, as well as their hosts and nectar plants. Additional attractions are field trips, wild flowers and birds; a beauty pageant; nature craft booths; food; music; a 5-K run; nature photography contest and display; and activities for children.

For more information contact festival director Loice Kendrick; 318/624-1929; loicekendrick@excite.com

Circle Hooks

The Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council is encouraging all commercial and recreational fishermen to use circle hooks when fishing for red snapper in order to reduce the mortality (death) rate of fish that are caught and then released because of minimum size limitations. The council has considered, but for the time being, stopped short of making circle hook use mandatory for snapper fishing. At first glance, it's hard to imagine how this awkward-looking hook can catch anything.

The big advantage that circle hooks offer is that fish are almost never deep-hooked. When the fish takes the bait and attempts to swim off, the hook pulls out of the throat and to a corner of the mouth, where the hook rotates and pierces the jaw. Usually the corner. Once the fish is hooked, it finds that it is almost impossible to shake the hook out. Jaw-hooked fish have a much higher survival rate after release than deep-

hooked fish.

Circle hooks offer other advantages. When properly used, catch rates are much higher than with J-shaped hooks. They are also safer, with no exposed point to hook a fellow fisherman. Circle hooks are also much less likely to snag on bottom or debris. After the fish is landed, the hook can be removed with a simple twist using needle nose pliers or with a dehooking device.

While commercial fishermen have been using circle hooks for some time, first-time recreational users will need reeducation not to set the hook. Jerking the rod in response to a bite will pull the hook from the mouth of the fish nearly every time. The fish must be allowed to hook itself when it swims away. Another minor problem is that determining the right hook size can be difficult because hook sizes currently are not standard



Circle hook.

among manufacturers. This lack of standardization makes ordering circle hooks from a catalog a little difficult. — *courtesy, Jerald Horst, LSU AgCenter Cooperative Extension Service and SeaGrant Program*

Jonesville Men Arrested In Gamefish Case

Merthyr R. Mount, 26, and Joshua D. Boughton, 21, both of Jonesville, were arrested April 14 by LDWF enforcement agents. The pre-dawn arrests took place at Black River Lake in Catahoula Parish after the two men docked their boat at a pier and began unloading numerous game fish allegedly taken with hoop nets.

LDWF Sr. Agent Charles Ward and Sr. Agent Robbie Roberts turned flashlights on Mount and Boughton as they carried a half-barrel of game fish from the pier. Mount fled into nearby brush but surrendered a few minutes later. Two additional half-barrels were found in the boat. A total of 388 crappie, 27 blue gill, seven white bass and one

warmouth were found in the containers. In addition, the agents discovered 600 yards of two-inch gill netting tied to the pier, running parallel to the shore line.

Mount was cited for taking game fish illegally, possession of crappie over the limit, using illegal gill nets and resisting an officer by flight. Boughton was cited for taking game fish illegally. The fish, boat and outboard motor, half-barrels and gill net were seized.

Taking game fish illegally and using illegal gill nets are both punishable by fines of \$400 to \$750 or up to 120 days in jail, or both, plus court costs and forfeiture of seized items. Over the limit of game fish carries a penalty of \$100 to \$350 or up to 60 days in jail, or both, plus court costs. Resisting by flight carries a fine of up to \$500 or up to six months in jail, or both, plus court costs. In addition to criminal penalties, a civil restitution for the value of the illegally taken fish in the amount of \$2,476.71 must be paid to LDWF if the two men are convicted of taking the fish illegally. LDWF Sr. Agent John Barker and Lt. Emmett Bonner assisted in the case.

LDWF Coloring Books Fun, Educational

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has coloring books available for the public at no cost. Booker Fowler Fish Hatchery and the Story of Finnie the Fingerling can be found at LDWF headquarters at 2000 Quail Drive in Baton Rouge or at the Booker Fowler Fish Hatchery, located between Woodworth and Forest Hill in Rapides Parish.

The book, created and written by LDWF educator Angela Capello, was illustrated by Gene Dupuis and Paul Wallace and designed by Louisiana Conservationist Associate Editor Thomas Gresham. It gives an overview of what goes on at Booker Fowler from the laying of eggs to the releasing of young fish into lakes and rivers and includes facts about the hatchery.

Some key points in the book about the innovative aquarium and hatchery complex include:

*The \$13 million dollar facility opened in June 1997.

- 60 acres of water make it the largest hatchery in Louisiana.
- The Florida largemouth bass is its primary fish.
- The hatchery also produces several

species of catfish.

- It participates in a joint state and federal restoration project of the protected paddlefish.

In addition, the aquatic education activity booklet was designed to correspond to the Louisiana Department of Education science framework for teachers, with benchmarks listed on the last page. Parents, teachers and others working with elementary-age children are encouraged to pick up a copy and enjoy learning more about Louisiana's largest state-of-the-art fish hatchery. Tours of the hatchery are available by contacting Capello at 318/748-6999 or by e-mail capello_aw@wlf.state.la.us

Live Fast – Die Young

If ever a motto could be used to describe a fish, this one describes the dolphin (*Coryphaena hippurus*), not to be confused with the marine mammal also called dolphin. This brilliantly-colored open-ocean fish is found worldwide wherever waters are above 68 degrees. In the Gulf of Mexico, dolphin support a substantial fishery, primarily in the summer months.

Dolphin have an explosively fast growth rate. It may be the only fish that scientists can measure their growth rate per day. In the Gulf of Mexico dolphin grow at the rate of 5 inches per month, topping out at a maximum size of 41/2 to 5 feet in length in two years. Then they die! Scientists estimate that 100% of Gulf of Mexico dolphin die before they are 2 years old. Live fast – Die young!



Female



Male

Dolphin

Dolphin begin spawning when they are almost 21 inches long during their first year of life. In the Gulf, spawning occurs in the summer in high-salinity offshore waters at water temperatures of 75 degrees or higher. Particularly high numbers of larval (baby) dolphins have been found near the

Mississippi River delta. They spawn repeatedly during the season, laying 85 thousand to 11/2 million eggs per spawn, with larger fish producing more eggs.

Dolphin are eating machines. In the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic, they eat more triggerfish than anything else, followed by decapods (shrimp relatives), squid, jacks and flying fish.

Dolphins are pursued by both recreational and commercial fishermen, with recreational landings being six times higher than commercial landings in the Gulf of Mexico. More females than males are caught in the fishery. It seems that small fish of both sexes, and females of all sizes, spend more time around large floating objects and seaweed rips, and are therefore easier to locate. Large males spend more time in open water traveling between female dominated schools near floating cover. – *courtesy, Jerald Horst, LSU AgCenter Co-operative Extension Service and SeaGrant Program*

Bowman Named Chairman of Mississippi Flyway Council

LDWF Asst. Secretary Phil Bowman was named chairman of the Mississippi Flyway Council for 2001-2002 at a Washington D.C. conference March 17. In addition, LDWF Waterfowl Study Leader Robert Helm serves on technical committees for the Council and will be the secretary for the coming year. The Mississippi Flyway Council is comprised of 14 states and three Canadian provinces geographically located on the flyway.

"It's an honor to represent LDWF as chairman of the council," noted Bowman. "Duck hunting generates approximately \$125 million dollars in economic activity in Louisiana each year - more than any other state."

The Mississippi Flyway Council was organized in 1952 to exchange information on waterfowl research and management. The findings of the council aid in setting season dates and limits.

Gun-Related Deaths and Injuries Drop Dramatically

The latest report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia reveals that the gun-related death rate in the U.S. declined 25 percent between 1993 and 1998 to its lowest level since 1966. The gun-related injury rate

dropped 40 percent during the same period. In 1993 there were 39,595 gun-related fatalities or 15.4 deaths per 100,000 people. In 1998, there were 30,708 fatalities or 11.4 deaths per 100,000. Injuries declined from 104,241 (40.4 per 100,000) to 64,484 (23.9 per 100,000). The greatest decline in fatalities was from unintentional causes where the rate dropped 47 percent, followed by a 42 percent drop in the homicide rate, and a 15 percent drop in the suicide rate. Overall, unintentional fatalities represent less than 4 percent of all firearm-related deaths. According to the CDC report, the decline is consistent with a 27 percent decrease in violent crime during the mid-1990s. The CDC statistics were collected from emergency rooms and death certificates in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The full report can be viewed on the CDC web site: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/mmwr_ss.html

Free Posters In LDWF Library

LDWF has free posters available in the library at its Baton Rouge headquarters. The colorful, attractive poster, entitled "Unique and Irreplaceable - Gulf Coast Marine Habitat" shows important fish and wildlife and describes some gulf habitat problems. It was produced by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) in coordination with LDWF Marine Fisheries biologists. GSMFC is an organization of the five states (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida), whose coastal waters are the Gulf of Mexico. GSMFC has as its principal objective the conservation, development and full utilization of the fishery resources of the Gulf of Mexico to provide food, employment, income and recreation to the people of the United States. One of the most important functions of GSMFC is to serve as a forum for the discussion of various problems and programs of marine management, industry and research, and to develop a coordinated policy to address those issues for the betterment of the resource and all who are concerned. LDWF personnel serve in a number of roles on the commission.

To pick up your free poster come by LDWF headquarters at 2000 Quail Drive in Baton Rouge or 2415 Darnall Road in New Iberia. To learn more about GSMFC, contact them at P.O. Box 726, Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0726, 228/875-5912 or visit the commission's web site:

www.gsmfc.org

Dares Recognized

LDWF's Capt. Sandy Dares recently received the U. S. Coast Guard Certificate of Merit Award. Dares is Enforcement Region VIII supervisor in the New Orleans area.

According to U.S. Coast Guard Rear Admiral Paul Pluta, the award was given to Dares in recognition of his untiring work and numerous contributions to the Coast Guard. As captain of the LDWF Region VIII office, he has provided valuable support to search and rescue and law enforcement missions, significantly enhancing Coast Guard presence throughout southeastern Louisiana.

Boaters Urged To Heed Warning Flags

In Louisiana there are more recreational and commercial divers than ever before. Commercial divers are in demand in the offshore energy industry and for biological research, and recreational divers are attracted to the marine life associated with offshore oil platforms. Diving can be a dangerous activity if precautions are not taken.

For safety's sake, divers are required to display warning flags in the area where they operate. There are two common flags used by divers. Most recreational or SCUBA



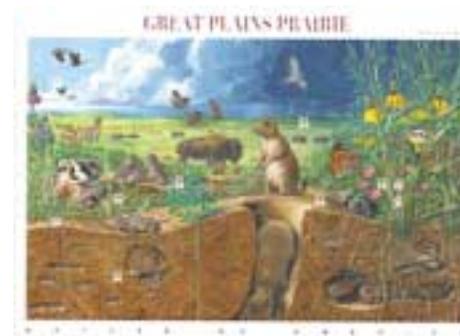
Diver down flag

divers generally display a red flag with a white diagonal stripe, known as the Divers Down flag. Federal law requires commercial diving operations to display the Alpha flag. This flag is pennant-shaped, with the mast side half white and the outside half-blue. Some divers also mark the boundaries of their dive sites with buoys. Boaters should maintain a constant vigil for vessels flying these flags and exercise extreme caution nearby. Commercial dive operations can have up to 200 feet of hose connected to the divers. SCUBA divers could be even farther from their boats as they carry their own tanks.

Divers should be diligent in displaying the proper flags and should use caution and good judgement while underwater. Divers should try to stay within reasonable distance of their boats and warning flags. Boat operators should always remain vigilant for others who share the waters. Alert and safety-smart divers and boat operators can help ensure a safe and enjoyable aquatic experience. — *courtesy, LDWF*

New Grasslands Postage Stamp

Every time you write a friend or pay a bill, you can help publicize the importance of America's grasslands by using the U.S. Postal Service's new 34-cent Great Plains Prairie stamp.



Part of a series featuring important ecosystems, the new issue consists of ten stamps that create a mosaic of wildlife living aboveground and belowground on the prairie—from buffalo to dung beetles.

As part of its grasslands campaign, the National Wildlife Federation is working with the Postal Service to promote the stamp as a tool to educate people about the beauty of the grasslands and the urgent need to conserve them for people and wildlife.

NWF President Mark Van Putten was a featured speaker at the stamp dedication ceremony at the University of Nebraska in April. NWF also participated in a symposium held in conjunction with the stamp's release and contributed materials for a stamp-related outreach kit sent to postmasters in 12 Plains states. It also sent portions of its grasslands curriculum to a Postal Service list of more than 300,000 classrooms.

Buras Men Arrested For Gill Netting

Kat Van Tran, 31, and Hung Quoc Ho, 35, both of Buras, were arrested by LDWF enforcement agents on March 24 for illegal

gill netting activity. Both men were arrested and booked into the Plaquemines Parish Jail and were charged with using saltwater gill nets illegally, taking game fish illegally with gill nets, taking saltwater commercial fish with gill nets outside the legal season, taking or possessing 50 or more spotted seatrout on water, possessing red drum and spotted seatrout illegally on vessel with a gill net and taking spotted seatrout without a required permit. Kat Tran was also cited civilly for improper running lights.

LDWF enforcement agents conducted surveillance of the Riverside Boat Launch after receiving information that the subjects were working gill nets on the east bank of the Mississippi River and then returning before dawn to off load spotted seatrout that were illegally taken with the gill nets. Agents observed the subjects approach a pick-up truck parked in a wooded area along the river bature and off load four lugs and one sack of fish from a vessel to the truck. One subject then departed the area in the vehicle registered to Tran, was stopped and found to be in possession of 285 spotted seatrout.

The vessel occupied by the other subject proceeded to the launch, where he was stopped and found to be in possession of 2,000 feet of gill net in which there were fresh fish. Both subjects were placed under arrest and transported by Plaquemines Parish deputies to Port Sulphur. Agents seized the pick-up truck, boat, outboard engine and trailer, several gill nets and numerous fish involved in the violations. A total of 285 spotted seatrout, 400 pounds of black drum, 200 pounds of sheepshead, one red drum, one stripped bass and one black bass were donated to local charities. Civil restitution citations were also issued to both subjects for the illegally taken fish.

Using a saltwater gill net illegally is punishable by a fine of \$950, up to 120 days in jail, or both, plus court costs and forfeiture of seized items. Taking game fish by illegal methods is punishable by a fine of up to \$750, up to 120 days in jail and forfeiture of seized items. Taking saltwater commercial fish outside the legal season is punishable by forfeiture of any permit or license used and permanent loss of privileges to take such species. Possessing more than 50 spotted seatrout on the water is punishable with a fine of up to \$750, up to 120 days in jail, or both, plus court costs and \$25 per fish over the legal limit. Possession of red drum and

spotted seatrout illegally on a vessel with a net is punishable by a fine of up to \$500 plus court costs, and offenders shall serve 30 days in jail and have licenses revoked. Taking spotted seatrout without a permit is punishable by forfeiture of any permit and those convicted shall be forever barred from receiving permits or license to take such species. Length and weight of certain species determine civil penalties. Improper running lights carries a civil fine of \$50. Agents participating in the investigation were LDWF Lt. Brian Clark, Sgt. Robert Martin, Agent Mike Downie and Agent Mike Garrity.

New LWFC Member Appointed

Lee Felterman, 47, a native and resident of Patterson, has been appointed to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission by Governor M. J. "Mike" Foster, Jr. The appointment was announced at the April 5 commission meeting. Felterman's term will run concurrently with the Governor's.

Felتمان is manager of crew and utility vessels for Seacor Marine in Patterson. In 1997, he negotiated the sale of his family business, Galaxie Marine Service to Seacor Marine. Felterman replaces outgoing commissioner Warren Delacroix and will represent commercial seafood interests.

Volunteers Wanted For NWF's Habitat Stewards Program

Do you love gardening and wildlife and have an interest or experience in teaching? If so, the National Wildlife Federation's Habitat Stewards(tm) program wants to hear from you.

The program, sponsored primarily by Wild Birds Unlimited, trains volunteers to help schools, businesses, homeowners and neighborhoods develop or protect wildlife habitat sites.

NWF is seeking individuals and organizations to volunteer as "hosts" who will recruit and train the stewards, monitor their work in the community and report on their progress to NWF. Being a host does not require any special expertise, says Jean Tufts, program coordinator. "Whatever your base of knowledge, we will train you."

In addition to providing funding and promotional support, individual Wild Birds Unlimited stores help hosts recruit stewards, send staff to speak at training sessions and sometimes serve as hosts themselves.

If you are interested in becoming a Habitat Steward host, contact Jean Tufts at 703-438-6240 or jtufts@nwf.org

Louisiana Has Safest Hunting Season Ever In 2000

LDWF reports that 2000 was the safest hunting season on record in Louisiana. For the first time since LDWF has collected data on hunting-related firearm accidents, there were no firearm related fatalities.

"Hunter safety works," noted LDWF Hunter Education Coordinator Bud Carpenter. "Since 1970, Louisiana has trained 450,000 students in the basic hunter education course with 20,000 students trained annually since mandated state laws took effect in 1984. We have seen a steady decline in firearm accidents from a high in 1983 with 46 accidents and 18 fatalities compared to the 2000 hunting season where only seven firearm related accidents were reported with no fatalities. For the ten year period from 1981 to 1990, there were 291 hunting accidents compared to 1991-2000 when accidents declined to 146, a 50 percent reduction."

Responsible and safe firearm ownership is alive and well in Louisiana. When one considers that 300,000 hunters take to the woods, lakes and fields each year spending millions of man-hours with loaded firearms, an injury rate of 2.3 per 100,000 participants is unequaled in any other outdoor activity, according to Carpenter.

"We believe there are three major reasons for the reduction of accidents in Louisiana and nationally: mandatory hunter education, hunter orange clothing, and prosecution of those who cause negligent injuries in hunting accidents. Forty-nine states now require hunter education course completion for hunting license eligibility.

Hunting accidents are always very newsworthy and often make for front-page coverage. Accidents are also tragic stories due to the involvement of family members or close friends being injured. Despite bad press, hunting is a safe sport when practiced responsibly and statistics show that it is becoming safer. Much of the credit goes to the 1,000 men and women who volunteer their time to teach over 500 hunter education courses held each year in Louisiana. One of the greatest expressions of parental guidance is to enroll their young hunter in a hunter education class as early as possible.

The classes, sponsored statewide, are free of charge and posted regularly on the LDWF website: www.wlf.state.la.us. Information is also available by contacting LDWF hunter education at 225/763-3521.

NWF Offers Nature Education For Challenged Youth

Young people with hearing, visual, motor and learning impairments can now enjoy traditional nature-education activities alongside youngsters without disabilities, thanks to Access Nature, an innovative curriculum for educators available from the National Wildlife Federation.

Designed for classroom, after-school and other non-formal programs, Access Nature includes teaching tips and suggestions for alternative equipment and materials to make nature study, scientific investigations and hands-on projects enjoyable for all participants, including those with disabilities. Next fall, NWF will begin training teachers in use of the curriculum.

The Federation developed Access Nature in cooperation with Easter Seals Virginia. The curriculum was pilot tested with more than 400 participants in Washington, D.C., and Virginia during the past year and a half.

To order Access Nature, call 716-461-3092. For more information about the curriculum or the teacher training program, please call 800-822-9919.

Tuna, Grouper and Spanish Mackerel Regulations Change

State rules that were implemented on Dec. 20, 2000, were not available at the time of publication of the 2001 recreational or commercial fishing pamphlets. The minimum size limit for yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna taken by recreational or commercial fishers is 27 inches curved fork length and the possession limit for yellowfin tuna taken by recreational anglers is three fish per person per day in Louisiana territorial waters. Curved fork length is measured from the tip of upper jaw to fork of tail measured along the contour of the middle of the body. All owners/operators of vessels (commercial, charter/headboat, or recreational) fishing for and/or retaining regulated Atlantic tunas (Atlantic bluefin, yellowfin, skipjack, albacore, bigeye tunas and Atlantic bonito) in the Gulf of Mexico, including Louisiana territorial waters are required to possess a federally issued Atlantic tunas permit. Permits can be obtained by call-

ing 1-888-USA-TUNA or by visiting the National Marine Fisheries Services permitting website at: www.nmfspermits.com/.

Also NMFS changed the fishing year for Atlantic tunas to June through May of the following year. Therefore, the 2000 Atlantic tunas permit will be valid from the date of issuance through May 31, 2001.

Minimum size limits for gag and black grouper changed from 20 inches total length to 22 inches for recreational and to 24 inches for commercial. Also, commercial harvest and sale or purchase of gag, black, and red grouper is prohibited from February 15th to March 15th of each year. The recreational possession limit for Spanish mackerel has increased from 10 to 15 fish per person per day.

Dove Hunters Fined

U.S. Magistrate Louis Moore of the U.S. District Court Eastern District of Louisiana in New Orleans handed down stiff fines for dove hunting offenses after accepting guilty pleas from five men. David Graham, 50, of Amite, was sentenced to pay a fine of \$3,650. Gerald Graham, 32, also of Amite and Lucien Dufreche, 42, of Ponchatoula, were each sentenced to pay \$1,000 in fines. David Graham was charged with hunting doves over bait and killing 97 doves over the limit. Gerald Graham and Dufreche were also charged with hunting doves over bait and for killing over the limit of doves.

In a separate case, Ray Voisin, 53, of Theriot and Michael Daigle, 54, of Houma were each sentenced to pay \$750 in fines. All the men were also sentenced to two years of probation and migratory bird hunting privileges for two years. Agents participating in the cases were LDWF Lt. Len Yokum, Sgt. Alton Smith, Sgt. Grady Brecheen, Sgt. Cullen Sellers, Agent Guy Adams, Agent Jarrod Watson and Agent Britt Forbes.

Seafood Dealer Arrested For Illegal Transactions

Dung Gary Nguyen, 33, manager of Fourchon Seafood, was arrested and booked into Lafourche Parish Jail on May 24 on four counts of second offense purchase of commercial fish from unlicensed fishermen, six counts of fourth offense failure to maintain records and five counts of second offense failure to report commercial fisheries data. Nguyen also had an outstanding warrant for contempt of court in Lafourche Parish.

Nguyen purchased shrimp from an unlicensed fisherman with purchases in excess of \$60,781. Nguyen also failed to maintain proper records on six separate occasions and failed to report purchases for November, 2000 through March, 2001 to the LDWF. Commercial fisheries data is used by LDWF in conservation of Louisiana's natural resources. Second offense purchase of commercial fish from unlicensed fishermen is punishable by fines from \$500 to \$1,000, up to 60 days in jail, or both, plus court costs. Fourth offense failure to maintain records is punishable by fines from \$750 to \$1,000, up to 120 days in jail, or both. Second offense failure to report commercial fisheries data is punishable by fines of \$500 to \$800, up to 90 days in jail, or both, plus court costs. Agents participating in the case were LDWF Sr. Agent Jay Diez and Sr. Agent Jason Dreher.

New Minimum Standard For Trophy Deer

Beginning with the fourth Louisiana Big Game Recognition Program for 2001-2003, the new minimum standard for a gun killed deer will be 130 for the typical category and 165 for the non-typical category. According to LDWF deer study leader David Moreland, the new standard of 130 fits the definition of what hunters believe a trophy deer looks like. A good eight point with a 16 inch inside spread, 20 inch main beams and four inch bases can score 130. Minimum standards for the bow and muzzleloader categories will remain the same.

"I have often heard it said that a trophy deer is all in the eyes of the hunter," noted Moreland. "There are, however, standards which have been established that define a trophy deer. A major part of this definition concerns the weapon used by the hunter to bag the deer. Since it is somewhat easy to reach out and touch with a modern firearm, the minimum standard established which defines a gun killed trophy is much greater than that of a deer taken with bow and arrow." In Louisiana, the minimum standard for a gun killed deer for qualification in the Louisiana Big Game Recognition Program was previously 150. The minimum standard for a bow killed trophy was 90. All habitat types in Louisiana are capable of producing a buck that will score 100 points, consequently, all of the state is capable of producing trophy deer. A deer that scores 150 points is truly one with a large set of antlers.

Hunting and Deer Populations

Because many quality deer are harvested each year in the state that do not score that high, it has been requested that the minimum score for a gun killed deer be reduced so that more of these fine bucks can be recognized. According to the 1999 Game Harvest Survey, most Louisiana deer hunters believe an eight point buck with a 16" inside spread is a trophy deer. This new minimum standard will increase the number of trophy deer killed in the state each year. Since much of the habitat in Louisiana is capable of producing deer that will score 130, the concept of trophy management is a more obtainable objective for deer managers. — *courtesy, LDWF*

Licenses Can Now Be Purchased Via the Internet

Effective immediately, you can buy recreational hunting and fishing licenses from the comfort of home. Licenses may now be purchased via the Internet with a credit card. Visa and Mastercard are accepted through a link at the LDWF web site: www.wlf.state.la.us. The additional payment option was designed to make sports license sales more convenient for consumers. There is a \$3 surcharge for the option.

New Wetlands Guide Published — Workshops Planned

The Gulf Restoration Network (GRN) is pleased to announce the release of its new citizen wetlands manual: *A Guide to Protecting Wetlands in the Gulf of Mexico*. This is a comprehensive guide detailing the laws that protect wetlands, the types of wetlands found in the five Gulf states, wetland groups in each state, federal and state agency contact information, as well as the opportunities for citizen participation in decisions that affect wetlands in the Gulf region (eg, how to get on mailing lists to receive public notices of projects that affect wetlands and the steps you can take to oppose projects that destroy wetlands).

The GRN is offering free workshops to citizens concerned with wetland destruction in their communities. Participants in these workshops will receive *A Guide to Protecting Wetlands in the Gulf of Mexico* free of charge.

To request a wetlands workshop in your community contact the GRN at 504/525-1528 or email them at:

cgoldberg@gulfrestorationnetwork.org

The normal life span of a white-tailed deer is dependent upon several factors. Captive white-tails live up to 20 years or more, but wild, free-ranging deer rarely approach that age. All researchers agree that

do not shoot the young bucks but allow them to grow older and therefore they generally have heavier body weights and larger antlers. Only two percent of the bucks harvested on WMAs and 16 percent of the does



in the wild, does live longer than bucks. Factors which influence longevity include age, disease, predators, human influence (hunting, development, vehicles), and weather.

In Louisiana the most effective deer population control method is hunting. Winters in the bayou state are relatively mild and large predators that prey heavily on white-tails no longer live in the state. Human development is beginning to move into the rural woodlands, but deer seem to be adapting and road kill mortality is not a serious problem yet.

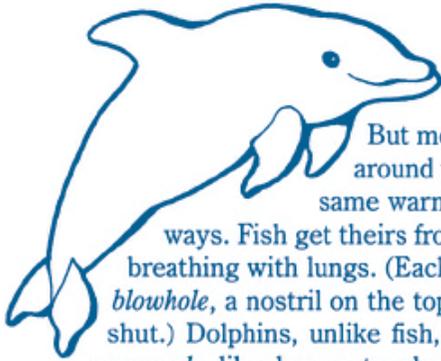
Regulated hunting is the management tool which helps to keep the deer population in balance with available deer habitat, and must include the harvest of both bucks and does. On private land enrolled in the Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP), the average age of a harvested buck is 2.2 years and the average age for a doe is 2.7 years. On the LDWF Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), the average age for a harvested buck is 1.6 years and the average age for a doe is 2.4 years. The older age for bucks harvested on private land is a direct result of selective harvest programs being practiced by DMAP cooperators. Hunters

harvested are four years or older. On DMAP lands, five percent of bucks harvested and 20 percent of the does killed are in that age group. The fact that the bulk of Louisiana's harvested deer are in the younger age classes is an indication that hunting is helping to control deer herds. When deer populations are kept under control, both the deer and its habitat are kept in a healthy, productive state.

Orleans is the only parish in Louisiana that is not included in a deer hunting area. Consequently, the deer herd in Orleans east is expanding and conflicts with humans are increasing. Ruston was experiencing similar problems, especially with vehicles/deer collisions during the rutting season. The city initiated a controlled archery hunting program and conflicts have been reduced. It is well-documented that regulated hunting is the least expensive means of reducing deer numbers. Officials in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania recently hired sharpshooters to kill 429 deer in an effort to reduce the deer population in a 4,180 acre wooded park. With properly regulated sport hunting, this expensive alternative for controlling deer numbers can be avoided. — *courtesy, LDWF*

Ranger Rick Kids' Page

All About Dolphins



For years, many people thought dolphins were fish. After all, dolphins live in water, they're shaped a lot like fish, and they have a fishlike tail. But most fish are *cold-blooded*—their bodies are as cool or as warm as the water around them. Dolphins are *warm-blooded*. That means their bodies stay about the same warm temperature all the time. Fish and dolphins also get oxygen in different ways. Fish get theirs from the water, by breathing with gills. Dolphins get oxygen from the air, by breathing with lungs. (Each time a dolphin comes to the surface for air, it takes a breath through its *blowhole*, a nostril on the top of its head. Before it dives again, the dolphin snaps its blowhole tightly shut.) Dolphins, unlike fish, feed their young with milk from the mother's body. That makes them *mammals*, like dogs, cats, elephants and humans.

Did You Know?



Dolphins use echoes to find, or locate, objects around them. This is called *echolocation*. A dolphin directs clicking sounds into the water, and when the sounds hit something, they bounce back as echoes. By listening to these echoes, the dolphin can tell how far away an object is. It can also tell the size, shape and speed of the object—and which direction the object is going.



When dolphins first appeared on Earth more than 50 million years ago, they were land animals. Scientists believe these ancient dolphins were hairy creatures. But once dolphins moved into the water, the hair slowed them down. So they evolved (changed over time) to have almost no hair—only a few whiskers on their faces.

ACTION!

What You Can Do

Reduce, reuse and recycle your trash so it does not end up in the water where dolphins live. Encourage family and friends to properly dispose of toxic wastes like car oil at special collection sites, rather than pouring them down the drain.

Check out the new giant-screen movie *Dolphins*, a production of MacGillivray Freeman Films in association with the National Wildlife Federation. For a preview of *Dolphins* and a list of show locations, visit the web: www.nwf.org/nwp/dolphins.

Dolphin Dining

All dolphins are *carnivores*, or meat eaters. They swallow their food whole or in large chunks. Fish, squid and shrimp are on many dolphins' menus. Killer whales (the largest dolphins) also eat seals, sea lions, birds—even other dolphins.

Although they sometimes feed by themselves, dolphins often hunt in groups. They circle around a school of fish, herding them into a smaller and smaller bunch. Then the dolphins take turns darting into the school. One by one they snatch their dinners.

Can you help find these dolphin foods: salmon, squid, eel, anchovy, herring, shrimp, seal, catfish, sea lion?



A	C	R	I	S	H	R	I	M	P
N	E	J	K	J	E	L	K	I	S
C	A	T	F	I	S	H	F	E	O
H	S	R	I	H	O	P	E	F	S
O	A	O	S	E	A	L	I	O	N
V	L	O	Q	R	L	L	F	X	E
Y	M	N	U	R	B	A	B	C	L
K	O	O	I	I	E	E	L	A	S
X	N	F	D	N	G	G	E	A	G
S	T	B	S	G	O	S	B	L	K



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migrating through the Mississippi and Central Flyways spend their winters in coastal Louisiana.

The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources estimates that we will have to spend approximately \$14 billion over the next 50 years to stand any chance of turning this problem around. Ironically, if we don't spend the money needed to abate the problem, we'll probably spend a similar amount relocating several million Louisiana citizens (and businesses) rendered homeless by our retreating coast. One way or another, we're going to pay.

Year in and year out Louisiana has underwritten the negative impacts from outer continental shelf production, but we get no share of the mineral royalties. Every bit of those royalties are returned to the U.S. Treasury to the tune of about \$6 billion per year. Last year, Louisiana Senator Mary Landrieu, crafted a plan to do something about this inequity. She introduced a bill in Congress that would take half of the royalties from offshore oil leases (about \$3 billion a year) away from the feds and divide it among the states. Since the formula used to allocate this money is based primarily upon each states' population and total offshore production, Louisiana's share was much bigger than any other state – in the neighborhood of \$300 million annually. I know you've all heard of this bill. It was called the "Conservation and Reinvestment Act" (CARA for short), and the Louisiana Wildlife Federation worked hard on it last year. CARA easily passed through the House of Representatives last summer, and would have become law if not for some very ugly, election year partisanship in the Senate. It was definitely Washington politics at their worst.

Well, CARA is back for another try this year and we will do everything we can to help get it passed. Louisiana needs this law very badly. There is probably no way we can ever come up with the \$14 billion it takes to save our coast all by ourselves – nor should we. All Americans have used and benefitted from the oil and natural gas produced off our shore. It's our turn to get something back and we need a little help from the rest of the nation. It's high time Louisiana gets its fair share. It may be the only hope for saving our coast.

Earlier this year, LWF was asked to comment on plans by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service to establish a new migratory flock of

the endangered whooping crane. The thinking behind the plan is that having more than one flock of "whoopers" wintering along the Gulf coast would better insure the survival of the species if the current wintering area along the upper coast of Texas is damaged by storm, oil spill or some other disaster. At one time, the coastal prairies and marshes of Louisiana hosted both a migratory and a resident flock of whooping cranes. But by 1950, the birds were all but gone and the last Louisiana "whooper" was caught and added to the small remaining flock wintering at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on the Texas coast.

Although the prevailing USFWS proposal is to establish a flock of whooping cranes along the Florida Gulf coast, LWF recommended future consideration of reestablishing "whoopers" in our state. The hundreds of thousands of acres of state, federal and private wildlife refuges along Louisiana's coast should provide ample habitat and security for the birds, and innovative programs now available for encouraging private landowners to collaborate in restoring endangered species would alleviate much of the anxiety associated with the impact endangered species recovery would have on private property. Hopefully, the Service will seriously consider our recommendations and take a look at Louisiana for a future whooping crane recovery project.

It's an honor to welcome two newly affiliated organizations to the Federation. The Southwest Louisiana Wildlife Association was organized about a year ago and has several hundred members from Calcasieu, Beauregard, Jeff Davis, Allen and Vernon Parishes. Wade Hanks serves as SWLWA president. Also newly reaffiliated is the Louisiana Trappers and Alligator Hunters Association. LTAHAs president is Sam Smith. These affiliates have already been working with LWF and I look forward to their continuing collaboration and participation. A number of other groups are considering affiliation with LWF and I hope to welcome them in the next issue. Until then I remain,

Yours in conservation,
Keith R. Saucier

President



MEMORIALS AND GIFTS

The Louisiana Wildlife Federation occasionally receives memorial and honorary gifts from its members, friends, organizations and business concerns. All memorial contributions and honorary gifts so designated, unless otherwise directed by the donor, are credited to the Federation's Conservation Education Scholarship Fund. The interest from the Fund is used to award scholarships to Louisiana educators to attend one of the National Wildlife Federation's Conservation Summits where they learn about the wonders of the natural world and principles of resource stewardship. This knowledge is then shared with other Louisiana educators and used in the classroom. Perpetuated through the learning process, your gift is a lasting contribution to the conservation, wise use and enjoyment of our environment and its dependent fish and wildlife resources.

An appropriate letter is sent on the donor's behalf to the family of the deceased or to the person honored. The amount of the gift is not disclosed unless requested. Send your gift to:

Louisiana Wildlife Federation

P.O. Box 65239

Baton Rouge, LA 70896-5239

Be sure to supply us with your name and address, and the name and address where the acknowledgement is to be sent. Indicate if it is a memorial on behalf of someone deceased or in honor of some active person.



Species Profile: The ANHINGA

The American anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*), is a large black water bird frequently seen perched spread-eagled on pilings or branches overhanging the water. The bird is often confused with the cormorant because the two birds are similar in many respects. Like the cormorant, the male anhinga is black with a slender bill

bill is pointed rather than hooked like the cormorant's.

The male anhinga is black with white spots on the head, neck, back and wings and the female is brown on the head, neck and breast. There is a white band on the wings and tail and a green circle around the eyes. The long slender beak is orange. The anhinga is also known as a water-

buoyancy in water, facilitating a slow, stalking hunting habit while submerged in shallow aquatic vegetation where they spear fish with their pointed bill. The neck bones are arranged to allow a strong and fast stab. On the wing, the bird is an awesome sight in Louisiana swamps. It flies with the long tail spread fanlike and an outstretched neck.

The habitat of the unusual bird is freshwater ponds and swamps with thick vegetation, especially cypress. One habitat requirement is the presence of logs and branches near the water where the bird can sun and dry its feathers. Because the plumage is wettable, there is a considerable loss of body heat underwater. The anhinga is rarely seen in winter in Louisiana, but is common in summer, especially as a nesting bird around the swamp lakes in north Louisiana. Most of the birds disappear by the end of October and reappear in spring.

Anhinga nests are made of sticks and built over the water, usually on low-hanging limbs of cypress trees. These strong fliers, which resemble a cross in flight, are a very social species and tend to nest colonially, often with long-legged wading birds. Clutch size is usually three to five eggs which are bluish white in color. The female usually lays the eggs from April through June. Hatchlings are born without plumage and appear reptilian. The fledglings, which do not attain definitive plumage until the third year, often escape from the nests into the water since they can swim before learning to fly.

Anhingas are short distance partial migratory birds. They move regularly between summer nesting habitat in Florida, Louisiana and Mexico; current studies indicate anhingas to be residents in Florida. No anhingas have been observed or recorded outside the Americas. — *courtesy, LDWF*



Anhinga, photo by Leonard Lee Rue III.

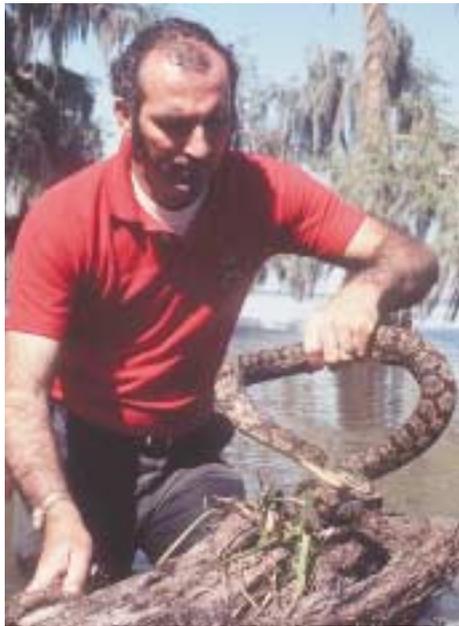
and long neck. Often called a snakebird because of its resemblance to a swimming serpent, the anhinga has a slimmer neck than the cormorant with a much longer tail. It swims with only the long, black, snaky head and neck above water and its

turkey because of its long, turkey-like tail, which usually equals the length of its body. The plumage is fully wettable, unlike most aquatic birds. The unusual plumage and dense bones are adaptations that allow the birds to achieve neutral



Most Water Snakes Non-Venomous

Boaters in Louisiana's numerous waterways are familiar with the sight – snakes perched in over-hanging tree limbs, seemingly waiting for the unwary to drift under



Kelly Falcon holds a diamond back water snake -photo courtesy LDWF

the tree. The first thought that races through many boater's minds is "water moccasin."

These sunning snakes are, however, probably quite harmless. The fact is, the majority of snakes seen in Louisiana's waterways are non-poisonous and are easily distinguished from their poisonous cousins. Moccasins are the only venomous semi-aquatic species in Louisiana, whereas there are several different species of non-poisonous water snakes.

One of the non-venomous species most often misidentified as a moccasin is the diamond-backed water snake. The two snakes can be similar in color – grayish with a faint pattern on the back and sides. Close observation, however, can reveal several distinguishing features. The first identifying feature is a snake's head. Moccasins, like other pit vipers including rattlesnakes and the copperhead, have broad, flat heads. There is a marked difference in the width between the head and the neck. There also is a ridge

above the eyes in moccasins, giving them a somewhat menacing appearance.

Skin patterns vary in moccasins depending on age and locality, but most show a dark band bordered by cream-colored bands running from behind the eye to the angle of the jaw.

A snake's eyes also provide identifying features. Non-venomous snakes have round pupils, while poisonous species have elliptical pupils similar to those of cats.

Behavior can be equally revealing. Non-venomous species usually beat a hasty retreat when discovered, while moccasins hold their ground or crawl away slowly. When excited, moccasins will rapidly vibrate their tails while non-poisonous snakes will not.

The most identifiable behavior is exhibited when a moccasin is provoked. The snake will hold its mouth wide open. Displaying the cottony-white interior as a warning to stay away. Non-poisonous snakes do not do this.

Regardless of whether a snake is sunning in a tree or swimming in the water, the reptile poses little threat to humans. They will normally avoid contact with humans. If left alone all snake species will usually move away without confrontation.

"Snakes of Louisiana", written by LDWF herpetologist Jeff Boundy, is available for \$4 at the LDWF Library, located at 2000 Quail Drive in Baton Rouge. The 32-page book, replete with full-color photographs, is a good reference for those interested in snake identification and information. LDWF also has a Louisiana snake poster. The full-color poster is available for \$4, along with six other posters depicting waterfowl, amphibians, turtles and fish of the state. "Snakes of Louisiana" and the posters can also be obtained by mailing a check or money order to Louisiana Conservationist, P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898. Those wishing to use MasterCard or VISA can call 225/765-2918. Each order must include a four percent state sales tax (East Baton Rouge Parish residents add an additional five percent parish tax) and a shipping and handling fee based on the amount of the order. -courtesy, LDWF

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First-time \$100 or greater LWF Contributing members are entitled to receive a sponsor plaque for their home or office. We extend our grateful appreciation to the following Sponsor Members of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation. Their support and that of all our loyal members is directly responsible for the Federation's growth and success.

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Spoonbill Cats

Paddlefish, or spoonbill catfish as they are often called, are a primitive fish species found in almost all of Louisiana's natural waterways. They are often seen by commercial fishermen, but few anglers notice them because they do not bite on hooks. They feed by straining microscopic animals (zooplankton) from the water with their huge mouths.

These fish were once very common in much of the United States. By the early 1900s



Picture of a 50lb paddlefish caught in Oklahoma. Paddlefish are protected in Louisiana and illegal to harvest.

their numbers were much reduced, probably due to habitat destruction, pollution and/or over-fishing. During the first 20 years of this century, some paddlefish were harvested for their roe (eggs) which were used to make caviar. Prices were \$1.50-\$2.00 per pound for the eggs. Louisiana was the first state in the U. S. to protect paddlefish when the state legislature approved a closed season in 1914. This was later changed, and protection was provided with a 15-pound minimum size limit.

Later commercial paddlefish harvests were low, averaging under 27,000 per year between 1966 and 1986. All the harvest during this period was for their flesh (rather than for their roe) at 11 to 37 cents per pound. Then in the late 1970s, the U. S. banned all imports from Iraq and Iran, two of the world's largest caviar exporters. U. S. markets turned again to paddlefish roe as the next best substitute and the prices for the roe rose to \$12-15 per pound.

Nonresident commercial fishermen began fishing for paddlefish in Louisiana by 1984, concentrating their effort in the

Mermentau River. Because of public concern and the fact that so little was known about the health of the fish population, the fishery was closed by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission in 1986.

It has remained closed, but since 1986 Department of Wildlife and Fisheries biologists have conducted substantial research on the fish, sampling their population, and tagging and releasing both wild and hatchery-raised fish. Biologists used gill nets, otter trawls, and hook-and-line snagging to sample the Calcasieu, Mermentau, Atchafalaya and Pearl Rivers; two backwater lakes, Henderson Lake and Saline-Larto; and three lakes, Yucatan, Grand (southwest Louisiana) and Pontchartrain. During the 3-year period, 334 paddlefish were collected. All fish were measured, weighed, sexed, and aged by counting the rings in a cross-section of their jawbones. Highest catch rates were in Lake Henderson, followed by Lake Pontchartrain. No Paddlefish were caught in the Calcasieu River or Yucatan lake.

The smallest fish caught was 24 inches long and the longest, a male fish, was 63 inches. The heaviest was a 46-pound female. Although other studies indicate that paddlefish can live to 30 years, no fish older than 14 years old were captured in Louisiana.

Male paddlefish began maturing by 4 years old and by age 9 were mature. Females began maturing at 7 and all were mature by 10 years old. Spawning takes place in the spring, when the fish begin to migrate up rivers and water temperatures are between 50 and 66 degrees F. Males seem to spawn every year and females once every 2 to 5 years. The largest number of mature fish were found in Lake Pontchartrain. Females captured had egg count estimates of 65,716 to 136,843 eggs per female.

Paddlefish can make long migrations. In Louisiana, paddlefish have been observed to travel 40 miles from Toledo Bend Reservoir into Texas through the Intracoastal Waterway. Movements of 500-800 miles have been observed in the Missouri River.

LDWF biologists plan to continue their work in cooperation with 21 other states in the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association. This will include more sampling, tagging of fish, and hatchery production and stocking. — *courtesy, Jerald Horst, LSU AgCenter Cooperative Extension Service and SeaGrant Program.*

Groups Fight Reverse of EPA Stance on Mercury

National Wildlife Federation has taken legal action demanding that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) stand tough against the electric utility industry's attempt to derail the EPA's decision to regulate mercury and other toxic pollutants from the nation's power plants. The action was prompted by the Bush administration's reversal on campaign promises to limit carbon dioxide emissions from power plants and NWF's concern about the utility industry's influence over future regulations.

NWF acted on two fronts:

- Joined by nine other organizations, the Federation intervened on the side of EPA to oppose an electric industry lawsuit in the U.S. Court of Appeals. That lawsuit seeks to overturn the agency's determination to regulate mercury.

- Along with 43 other organizations, NWF filed an official objection to a "groundless" administrative petition in which the industry asked EPA to back off from its mercury decision. "For more than ten years, the electric utility industry has been trying to derail efforts to regulate its mercury emissions, despite mounting evidence of the public health and ecological risk of mercury exposure, and the increasing public and political support for national controls," says Felice Stadler, national policy director of NWF's Clean the Rain campaign.

Joining NWF in its "petition of opposition" were six of its state affiliates: Michigan United Conservation Clubs, the Minnesota Conservation Federation, the League of Ohio Sportsmen, the Indiana Wildlife Federation, the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and the Natural Resources Council of Maine.

NWF has campaigned hard for controls on power plant emissions of mercury, a powerful neurotoxin that builds up in the food chain, threatening the health of people and wildlife. According to a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control, at least ten percent of women of childbearing age ingest mercury at rates above EPA's safe level, and an estimated 390,000 children are born each year at risk for neurological effects due to mercury exposure.

The NWF's web site has additional information on mercury poisoning as well as other problems and can be found at:

www.nwf.org/

DON'T LET A SUMMER OUTING GET UNDER YOUR SKIN

Poison ivy, poison sumac and poison oak make life miserable for approximately 50 million Americans each year. In fact, it's hard to find an outdoors enthusiast who has not suffered at least one bout of blistering, itching skin from these cousins of the cashew family. Nonetheless, confusion and



Poison ivy with berries.

misconceptions abound.

Among the most common is the belief that many people are immune to the skin irritations caused by this species. Sensitivity to urushiol, the chemical responsible for the skin rash, varies from person to person. But no more than one in ten is truly immune.

This misunderstanding arises partly because contact does not always result in allergic reactions. Plants must be damaged for urushiol to be released. Cases of plant induced dermatitis occur most frequently in the spring when leaves are fragile and exude more urushiol.

People seldom react to their first exposure. It usually takes a second or third time for the skin to erupt. Up to a third of the population can be exposed several times before their bodies respond. Unfortunately, many of the worst cases are found in middle-aged people who have waded through ivy for years before experiencing any discomfort.

All three plants are found in Louisiana. Poison sumac occurs in wet areas such as pitcher-plant bogs, wet longleaf pine savannas and seepy areas. This woody perennial shrub grows up to 15 feet high, and its leaves contain 7 to 15 smooth edged leaflets with a reddish petiole. Poison oak occurs in dry woodlands, growing up to 18 inches. It has a tri-foliolate leaf system, as does poison ivy, but it is not a climbing vine. All three

species bear drooping clusters of white berries. Of the three plants, poison ivy is the most prolific, plaguing every parish in the state. This vine grows up trees, fences, and walls of old houses. If you go into areas where these plants may grow, take precautions. Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts, and avoid touching your face. Wash all clothes upon returning home. Any infected areas should be cleaned with rubbing alcohol then washed with water. Soap merely lifts urushiol from the skin and spreads it to other parts of the body.

Although rashes are not contagious, inflammation can occur on other parts of the body days after an initial outbreak. Urushiol is more slowly absorbed where skin is thicker, and if it's trapped under fingernails it can be spread by scratching. Affected areas remain sensitive for years and can erupt again when other parts of the body are exposed to the toxin.

Symptoms usually subside within two to three weeks. In the interim, you may find relief with over-the-counter steroid creams. Antihistamines and calamine lotion will also reduce itching. Another remedy includes running hot water over the infected area for



Poison sumac with berries.

approximately 30 seconds, which often reduces soreness for up to eight hours.

For more information:

poisonivy.aesir.com

-courtesy LDWF

AFFILIATE CLUBS

DISTRICT 1

St. Bernard Sportsmen's League

DISTRICT 2

Clio Sportsman's League
Jefferson Rod & Gun Bass Club
Jefferson Rod and Gun Club
Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation

DISTRICT 3

Acadiana Bay Association
Iberia Rod and Gun Club

DISTRICT 4

Claiborne Parish Hunting and Fishing Club

DISTRICT 5

Waterways Access Association

DISTRICT 6

Baton Rouge Sportsmen's League
Citizens For A Clean Environment
Citizens For A Clean Tangipahoa
East Ascension Sportsmen's League
Lake Maurepas Society
Point Clair Hunting Club
Central LA Chapter, Safari Club International
Triangle "T" Sportsmen's League

DISTRICT 7

Acadiana Sportsmen's League
Southwest Louisiana Wildlife Association

DISTRICT 8

Avoyelles Wildlife Federation
Bayou Bassmasters of Alexandria
Rapides Wildlife Association

DISTRICT 9

Louisiana Toledo Bend Lake Association
South Toledo Bend Civic Association
Toledo Bend Bi-State Alliance

STATEWIDE

Association of Louisiana Bass Clubs
Bayou State Bowhunters Association
Louisiana Chapter, National Wild Turkey Federation
Louisiana Safari Club International
Louisiana Trappers and Alligator Hunters Association
United Commercial Fishermen's Association



ing a master list identifying all public lands and water bottoms and protecting, administering and conserving public lands and water bottoms to best ensure full public navigation, fishery, and recreation consistent with the constitution.

HB 1716 (Act) CHARTER BOAT LICENSES Establishes a charter boat license for "mother ship/multi-skiff" operations at an annual fee of \$1,000 for an operation of 6 or fewer skiffs and \$2,000 for operations with more than 6 skiffs; requires each skiff to have a "charter skiff" license at an annual fee of \$50 that indicates that it is fishing under the mother ship's charter boat license; requires nonresidents fishing from a skiff with a charter skiff license to have a 3-day fishing license at a fee of \$30 and copies of the charter boat and charter skiff licenses in possession.

HB 1795 (Act 439) COASTAL RESTORATION/OYSTER LEASES Sets forth a procedure for delineating coastal restoration impact areas within which special provisions apply that limit or restrict oyster leases.

HB 1895 (Act) OIL SPILL/REGIONAL RESTORATION PLANNING Establishes a Regional Restoration Planning Program in the office of the Oil Spill coordinator to assess natural resource damages associated with oil spills; further establishes a Natural Resource Restoration Trust Fund into which all monies collected to restore resources damaged by spills are deposited and increases the funding available to administer the oil spill program.

HCR 36 DISABLED ANGLERS/DOUBLE LIMITS Urges the LWFC to double the daily creel limit for anglers with disabilities

HCR 42 TRESPASS STUDY Creates a task force to review the state and local trespass laws and make a report to the Legislature.

HCR 43 ENERGY POLICY Memorializes Congress and the President to adopt a comprehensive national energy policy.

HCR 66 BAYOU BOEUF ADVISORY COMMITTEE Creates the Bayou Boeuf Advisory Committee to study the future uses of water from Bayou Boeuf and to develop plans for sustaining the resource including creating a freshwa-

ter district between Alexandria in Rapides Parish and Washington in St. Landry Parish.

HCR 69 NO JAKES RULE Urges the LWFC to prohibit the taking of juvenile turkeys.

HCR 76 WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES FOUNDATION Urges the LDWF secretary to establish and nurture a relationship with the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation and avail itself of the Foundation's potential assistance.

HCR 86 MAUREPAS SWAMP DIVERSION Memorializes Congress to support the proposed Maurepas Swamp Diversion.

HCR 90 ATCHAFALAYA BASIN PROGRAM Authorizes the study of proposals to include projects in Assumption, St. Landry, and St. Martin Parishes within the spending cap of the Atchafalaya Basin Program.

HCR 92 SEAFOOD ADVISORY BOARD Creates the Louisiana Seafood Industry Advisory Board, composed of 15 voting and 8 nonvoting members, to work with agencies that regulate the industry and the development and implementation of regulatory policy and other enhancements.

HCR 129 GULF HYPOXIA ACTION PLAN Urges Congress and the President to implement the Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan to reduce the nutrient loading to the Mississippi River, which causes algal blooms and oxygen depletion in the waters of the Gulf of Mexico that causes the "Dead Zone".

HCR 157 REGIONAL POLLUTION Urges DEQ to establish a consortium of southern states with common environmental issues to develop solutions to regional pollution.

HCR 167 ESTUARY RESTORATION Urges Congress to fully fund the implementation of the Estuary Restoration Act of 2000.

HCR 168 ATCHAFALAYA FLOW Urges the Corps of Engineers to increase the water flow from the Mississippi River into the Atchafalaya River at Old River to improve the water quality and crawfish production in the Atchafalaya Basin.

HCR 177 WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT Urges Congress to have the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in consideration of the resources LDWF puts into enforcing the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which represents 32,000 man-hours and nearly \$2 million annually, establish a

cooperative enforcement program with LDWF that will help fund the LDWF's MBTA enforcement work.

HCR 187 WATER MANAGEMENT Requests the proposed state water management commission and advisory task force to develop a cooperative aquifer and groundwater stewardship policy with the neighboring states of Mississippi, Arkansas and Texas.

HCR 198 BAYOU LAFOURCHE Memorializes Congress to support and fund a project to divert 1000 CFS of freshwater from the Mississippi River down Bayou LaFourche to improve water quality in the Bayou.

HCR 203 LITTER STUDY Urges the House and Senate Environment Committees to jointly study the status, effectiveness and enforcement of the state's litter laws and penalties.

HCR 233 CAST NET LICENSE Urges LDWF to study the feasibility of a recreational cast netting license to generate funds to construct and maintain restroom facilities near waterways where recreational cast netting is a popular activity.

HR 137 EPA/PLAQUEMINE VINYL CHLORIDE Requests the U.S. EPA to assist in the investigation of vinyl chloride contamination of the drinking water in Plaquemine.

SB 269 (Act 83) SHRIMPING Requires that the 2002 and 2003 brown shrimp seasons in Area 2 be opened no later than the third Monday in May and that the LWFC provide a review of the seasons at the close of the 2003 season.

SB 338 (Act 320) DISABLED HUNTING LICENSE Provides for a basic, big game and archery hunting license at \$5 each for residents receiving disability benefits from the Social Security System.

SB 352 (Act 86) LARTO LAND TRANSFER Directs the State land office to transfer land at Larto Lake in Catahoula Parish to LDWF, and prohibits timber cutting on the land.

SB 359 (Act 322) HUNTING/FISHING ADVISORY COUNCIL Establishes a hunting and fishing advisory council within LDWF to promote the benefits of hunting and fishing among Louisiana citizens and to educate those citizens about the contributions hunters and anglers make to the economy.

From the Managing Editor

First celebrated in 1970, Earth Day has been an annual event to increase public awareness of environmental issues. The first Earth Day alerted people to the dangers of pollution, and it stimulated a new environ-



Greg Grandy shows a king snake to the nursery school children participating in this year's "Wildlife Day" held the Friday before Earth Day. Coordinated by LWF's Conservation Education Committee Chair, Kathy Wascom, LWF has sponsored this educational noon-time Earth Week event in downtown Baton Rouge since 1990.

mental movement. It was initially established as a time to gather and clean up litter, to protest threats to the environment and to celebrate progress in reducing pollution. While the 2001 Earth Day celebration was a lot of fun, it was a little more tame and less 'en-masse' than the original gathering 31 years ago; the World Book Online notes that the original festival saw 20 million people nationwide gather to support the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Clean Air Act.

On April 22, Baton Rouge celebrated Earth Day. Various and numerous exhibitions lined North Boulevard for an all day fete— Honda brought a few models of environmentally friendly cars, an all species parade (the Girl Scouts bedecked as an assortment of flora and fauna), a fashion show displaying clothes and accessories made from recycled plastics, live music, and plenty of booths with jewelry, soap, and food for sale. The LWF had a table set up

with free posters and brochures, but the stars of our display were the hermit crab boxes filled with live critters – anole lizards, geckos, caterpillars, worms, spiders, a roach or two. We were very grateful to our volunteers that helped field questions and keep the critters on their best behavior: Pat and Lelah Weber, Darby and Jay Landaiche, W. G. "Robby" Robinson and Stan Carpenter. It was hot, though we did have the welcome shade of an old oak tree and were conveniently situated near the snowball stand. Thank you, volunteers, for supporting the LWF, by volunteering your time and patience; all of you were a huge help in many ways. We hope to provide more opportunities for members to become actively involved with the LWF. Until that time, submitting photos to the magazine is always an option. Pictures of habitat scenes, wild flowers and butterflies, wildlife, hunting/fishing and other outdoor activities, etc. are always needed to add visual diversity to the publication, and if you have a story to accompany your photography, send that along too. On our membership survey, many of you indicated that "outdoor photography" is one of your pursuits, so share the wealth and mail us some pictures!

Thanks again to the LWF volunteers and the Baton Rouge Earth Day Committee. Have a fun and safe summer.

-Elizabeth

delouiselwf@aol.com

Leg. Session Recap: Continued from page 39

SB 366 (Act) I-49 SCENIC EASEMENT/PUBLIC BOWHUNTING Authorizes the transfer of the scenic easement along I-49 in St. Landry, Avoyelles, Evangeline, and Rapides Parishes from DOTD to LDWF and authorizes the use of the area for bowhunting only for big game; prohibits access to the property from I-49 and the use of ATVs and construction of any kind (such as tree stands).

SB 379 (Act) CASTOR CREEK RESERVOIR Proposes construction of a lake on Castor Creek and creates the Castor Creek Reservoir District.

SB 412 (Act) TURKEY CREEK RESERVOIR Proposes the construction

of a lake on Turkey Creek and creates the Turkey Creek Reservoir District.

SB 474 (Act 324) NONRESIDENT STUDENT/TOURNAMENT BASS FISHING LICENSE FEES Allows full-time nonresident students at an accredited Louisiana college or university to hunt and fish in Louisiana for the same license fees as a resident provided their home state provides reciprocity to students who are Louisiana residents; further creates a nonresident black bass tournament license for \$30 valid from July 1-June 30 for anglers competing in bonafide bass fishing tournaments registered with LDWF.

SB 569 (Act) UNDERWATER OBSTRUCTION FUND Extends the funding for the Underwater Obstruction removal Fund through July 2004.

SB 650 (Act 329) ALIEN FISHING LICENSE FEES Repeals the requirement that certain fishing license fees for aliens be twice the nonresident fees for the same licenses and applies the normal resident and nonresident commercial fishing license fees to resident and nonresident aliens.

SB 762 (Act) DROUGHT PROTECTION TRUST FUND Sets up a trust fund to make incentive payments to farmers who switch from groundwater to surface water for irrigation during drought situations and to support the development of surface water sources for agriculture.

SB 928 (Act 333) HOOPNETS Specifies that hoopnets without leads may be left unattended in saltwater areas to take catfish commercially.

SB 950 (Act 19) NONRESIDENT FISHING FEE Reduces the nonresident saltwater fishing license fee to \$30.

SB 965 (Act 446) GROUND WATER MANAGEMENT Establishes a 15-member Ground Water Management Commission in the office of the governor; requires 60 days prior notice for proposed new water wells (domestic use wells exempted); requires the commission to determine critical ground water areas in the state where aquifer's are being depleted under current use and conditions and authorizes the commission to promulgate rules to regulate water withdrawals from aquifers in critical groundwater areas and provide for a contingency plan in emergency situations; establishes a 49-member Ground Water Management Advisory

Task Force to assist in developing a comprehensive water management system for the state for presentation to legislative oversight committees prior to January 2003.

SCR 32 ENERGY POLICY
Memorializes Congress to establish a national energy policy and provide incentives for the production of natural gas.

SCR 34 LDWF BILL DIGEST
Requests LDWF to publish a digest of introduced legislation pertinent to its responsibilities on its web site.

SCR 40 FOREST BOUNDARY MARKER
Requests the Forestry Commission to change the selection of paint color for making forest boundaries from gray to purple.

SCR 45 SENIOR HOOP NETS
Urges the LWFC to allow senior citizens with a basic fishing license to use up to 2 hoop nets in freshwater areas to take nongame fish for home consumption, in compliance with length and bag limits.

SCR 46 BOBCAT HUNTING SEASON
Urges the LWFC to establish a recreational hunting season for bobcats subsequent to a review of the bobcat population throughout the state.

SCR 47 NUTRIA HUNTING SEASON
Urges the LDWF to establish a recreational hunting season for nutria.

SCR 48 BIRDING ECOTOURISM
Expresses the Legislatures support for the promotion of ecotourism in Louisiana associated with birdwatching and urges state agencies and universities to develop materials and resources to encourage this activity.

SCR 49 STATE LANDS/OUTDOOR RECREATION
Urges the inventory and identification of all state lands that could be utilized for public outdoor recreational uses.

SCR 50 WOOD DUCK BAG LIMIT
Urges the LDWF to study the status of the wood duck population with the intent of increasing the daily bag limit from 2 to 4 birds if the population will support such an additional harvest.

SCR 52 WATERWAYS/BARRICADES
Urges the Attorney General, the Coastal Zone Management Program, and the State Land Office to give public notice prior to any navigable waterway being gated or barricaded; further authorizes these agencies/programs to require that public notice be given prior to the closure of a waterway or access to waters traditionally used by the public.

SCR 66 FIREARMS/CHILD ACCESS
Creates a joint legislative committee to study and make recommendations with respect to child access to firearms.

SCR 74 BUNDICK SWAMP
Requests the office of state parks to study and make recommendations on the suitability of including portions of Bundick Swamp in Beauregard Parish in the state park system.

SCR 107 ATCHAFALAYA BASIN WATER
Requests the Corps of Engineers to increase the flow of water into the Atchafalaya Basin to maintain a minimum stage of 12 feet NGVD at the Butte LaRose gage throughout the spring.

SCR 130 SCENIC RIVERS
Nominates portions of the following waters for inclusion in the Natural and Scenic Rivers System: Whiskey Chitto Creek in Beauregard Parish; Barnes Creek from LA Hwy 27 to the Calcasieu River; Bearhead Creek from its headwaters to the Houston River; Bundick's Creek from its headwaters to Bundick's Lake and from Bundick's Lake to Whiskey Chitto Creek; Beckwith Creek from its headwaters to the West Fork of the Calcasieu river; Hickory Creek from its headwaters to the West fork of the Calcasieu River.

SCR 134 AG CONSERVATION PROGRAMS
Urges the President and Congress to expand and fund federal agricultural conservation programs including the Conservation Reserve, Wetlands Reserve, Environmental Quality Incentives, Wildlife Habitat Improvement and Forest Incentives Programs.

SCR 143 RESIDENTIAL ENERGY CODE
Urges the Department of Natural resources and the Louisiana Homebuilders Association to study the feasibility of adopting a statewide residential energy code and establishes an advisory task force to assist DNR in formulating such a code.

SCR 158 WASHINGTON PARISH RESERVOIR COMMISSION
Creates the Washington Parish Reservoir Commission to study the feasibility of developing a reservoir in Washington Parish and to search for a potential site.

SCR 167 BAYOU MANCHAC/FOUNTAIN FLOODING
Creates a task force to study the feasibility of alleviating flooding in the Bayou Manchac/Fountain area.

SR 44 VINYL CHLORIDE/PLAQUEMINE
Same as

HR 137.

SR 50 CHARTER BOAT MORATORIUM
Urges the Congress to ask the National Marine Fisheries Service not to implement the proposed charter boat moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico or restrict it to the Eastern Gulf.

SR 51 FALSE RIVER POLLUTION
Urges DEQ to initiate testing of the water quality in False River on a monthly basis for the next 6 to 12 months.

SR 70 COASTAL RESTORATION
Directs the Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Authority to annually present for approval to the Senate and House Committees on Natural Resources, at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the legislative session, all projects being considered for inclusion in the coastal wetlands conservation and restoration plan for the year.

SR 72 BAYOU MANCHAC/FOUNTAIN FLOODING
Same as SCR 167.

SR 76 OCS MITIGATION
Urges Congress to direct the Minerals Management Service to develop a plan for mitigating the impacts associated with Outer Continental Shelf oil/gas leasing and development in the Gulf of Mexico.



First 100 Days: Continued from page 12

"Green" Trade

The administration continues to send mixed signals about incorporating environmental protection in trade liberalization initiatives. At the recently concluded Summit of the Americas in Quebec, President Bush declared, "Our commitment to open trade must be matched by a strong commitment to protecting our environment." And the administration has also announced it intends to conduct environmental reviews of all significant international trade agreements. But these positive indications are muddied by presidential statements such as, "We should not allow [environmental] codicils to destroy the spirit of free trade." As a result, there is considerable uncertainty about how far the administration intends to go toward ensuring that trade and environment proceed hand-in-hand.

Water Legislation More Than “Just Another Study”

by Randy Lanctot

Much of the “buzz” at the start of the 2001 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature last March was about water supply and the several bills filed to establish a state water policy and management program. Provoked by a continuing drought, depletion of some of the state’s major aquifers, and proposals to pump even more water for power generation, the issue had the public’s and legislators’ attention. Governor Foster appointed a water policy study task force on the heels of a public information and outreach cam-

The Senate passed SB 965 without objection after rejecting and adopting numerous amendments during floor debate. The measure then moved through the rest of the process quite uneventfully. Governor Foster signed SB 965 on June 19th making it Act 446 of the 2001 Regular Session.

Some legislators suggested that the bill had no “teeth”, that it was just another study, and that it would not address the immediate concerns with current and proposed unsustainable uses of ground water. True, the legislation does not specifically halt withdrawals or prohibit any proposed uses. It does, however,

making procedures of the Administrative Procedures Act, to permit and regulate ground water withdrawals for all wells drawing from an aquifer if current or proposed withdrawals make the overall withdrawal rate unsustainable.

It will take a while for the Ground Water Management Commission to get organized, establish its procedures for operation, determine the status of aquifers and where the “critical groundwater areas” are, and promulgate rules for permitting withdrawals in such areas. But it’s the intent of all involved to expedite the process.



Irrigation is a major use of ground water in Louisiana.

paigned by the Senate and House Environment Committees that was spurred by Senators Cain and Hoyt and Representative Damico. The task force issued its findings and recommendations a few weeks before the Legislature convened, and several bills were filed proposing various water policy and management strategies.

There were some initial fireworks as three Senate bills vied to be the primary legislative vehicle. The bill that emerged from the Senate Environment Committee was the one that most closely tracked the recommendations of the water policy task force, Senate Bill (SB) 965 by Senator Hoyt. A similar bill was filed in the House by water policy task force member, Rep. William Daniel. It was passed by the House Environment Committee, and when it came up on the House floor, Rep. Daniel returned his bill to the calendar to await the outcome of the Senate legislation.

establish a foundation upon which to build an effective water conservation and management program for the state. It is by no means “just another study”, and here’s why.

Prior to Act 446, the state had no authority to regulate and permit ground water withdrawals. Anyone with legal ownership of or access to the surface of land or water bottom could drill a water well and pump as much water as they wanted for most any purpose. Wells were required to be registered with the Office of Public Works in DOTD, but that was the extent of the state’s function in the management of ground water use. With Act 446 in place, new water wells (exclusive of domestic supply wells) are required to file for registration 60 days prior to development of the well and provide essential information concerning well location and capacity. It also creates a Ground Water Management Commission with the authority to establish regulations, following the rule-

Details of Act 446

A 15-member Ground Water Management Commission (GWMC) is established in the governor’s office with the following persons (or their designees) represented — the governor serving as chair; the director of the Governor’s Office of Coastal Activities, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry; the secretaries of the following departments: Economic Development, Environmental Quality, Health and Hospitals, Natural Resources, Transportation and Development, Wildlife and Fisheries; one member appointed by the governor from three nominees submitted by the Police Jury Association; one member appointed by the governor from 3 nominees submitted by the Louisiana Municipal Association; one farmer from the Chicot aquifer region appointed by the governor from 3 nominees submitted by the Louisiana Farm Bureau; one member appointed by the governor from 3 nominees submitted by the Sparta Groundwater Conservation District Board of Commissioners; one member appointed by the governor from 3 nominees submitted by the board of commissioners of the Capital Area Groundwater District; and one member appointed by the governor who is a geologist or an engineer with expertise in ground water resource management.

Beginning July 1, 2001, the prospective owners of all new water wells, that are not replacement wells or domestic wells, are required to submit information about the proposed well to the commissioner of conservation 60 days prior to drilling the well. Information must include the ownership of the well, name of the driller, latitude and longitude of the well location, the well’s depth and capacity, and any other information

required by the commissioner.

The GWMC is required to determine "critical ground water areas" in the state, defined as an area where the sustainability of an aquifer is not being maintained under current or projected uses. "Sustainability" is defined as the use of ground water in a manner that can be maintained for the present and future time without causing unacceptable environmental, economic, social or health consequences. The GWMC is required to promulgate rules to preserve and manage the ground water in critical areas including permitting of wells, limitations on withdrawals, and restrictions on well depth and spacing. The highest priority is given to human consumption and public health and safety if limitations on use are necessary in critical ground water areas, and in emergency situations. For other uses, the law gives the GWMC guidance on allocation. The law also gives the GWMC guidance on regulations for permitting, including consideration of well capacity, geographical location, well depth, water use and potential impact to sustainability of the aquifer or aquifer system.

Act 446 further establishes a 49-member Ground Water Management Advisory Task Force to assist the GWMC and to recommend a comprehensive water management system for the state prior to January 2003. It specifies an array of issues, including conservation, education, mitigation, alternatives, recycling, surface water management, etc. for the task force to consider in developing its recommendation. The GWMC sunsets on July 1, 2003 with the expectation that the Legislature may adopt another structure, based on the recommendations of the task force, for managing the state's water supply.

So, what does all of this have to do with the Louisiana Wildlife Federation and your interest in the outdoors and our fish and wildlife resources? Admittedly a response to growing public concern about the quality of our water supply and its sustainable use, Act 446 is still a proactive initiative that will prevent crisis-driven water use restrictions and help to avoid depletion of surface water resources so that the water levels and river discharges necessary for fish and wildlife to thrive can be maintained. And, every now and then, don't we all enjoy a long, cool drink of water (and a hot shower), too?



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Ole Tibby



It was bad enough that Erna and me missed the LWF convention at Toledo Bend this year, but when I read the last issue of the magazine regarding the convention, all the resolutions, the wonderful people whom are dedicated to conservation, the award winners, Mark Van Putten and all other NWF representatives being there, Ole Ecriviteur almost had a stroke, being regretful for not being there. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE RECIPIENTS OF AWARDS FOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, WELL DESERVED.

My condolences to the family of Robert J. Stelly who died on June 9th. Robert was

a member of the Baton Rouge Sportsmen's League and a former fishing buddy. He was retired from the Department of Environmental Quality.

We are fortunate to have a granddaughter in school in Madison, Wisconsin, who is interested in wild animal protection and whatever habitat is necessary for their survival. Needless to say, I am tres intre (very interested) in helping her out. This Ole Ecriviteur already sent her an envelope full of articles from LWF and the LA Department of Wildlife & Fisheries that will help her. She called and was thankfully amazed. Don't you know, Tibby busted some buttons in his front shirt! My grandson Trent is very interested in deer hunting and doing whatever it takes to increase the environment for the deer. His dad, Ronnie, said to me, "Dad, he is a carbon copy of you; he has to go in the out of doors."

Some time when we venture into the out of doors, things will happen to ruin the trip.

May 21st I serviced my boat for a fishing trip to Bayou Pidgeon, taking Vernon Dennis with me, a friend and past co-working buddy. The left signal light did not work on the boat trailer and the truck. I was to

repair it myself, but the arthritis wouldn't let me pull the connections apart in order to check them. So, I took the truck and boat to Central Car Care nearby. Lynn Doss there repaired them and the gas gauge that also was not working. When I picked it up, I asked Lynn what the cost was. Can you imagine, he said, "Nothing, Mr. Thibodeaux." I could not believe my ears.

So, Tuesday morning we left for the fishing trip. Lo and behold, the trolling motor nut was loose. As I took it off to clean out the moss and part of a trot line, I dropped the nut that holds the propeller on. So we had to run the outboard to a group of stumps, drop anchor and fish, which was very inconvenient. Another boat with 2 nice gentlemen had an extra nut to give us to fix the trolling motor. We were again very thankful. They would not accept payment for the nut. Merci beaucoup to them. We failed to ask them their names. All we found out was that they were from Brusly, near home.

On our way home after we had caught 36 fish (one was a catfish, some were sac-a-laits, the other were bluegills – nice ones) the truck began to fail to go forward from stop in drive. I had to start in first then shift into drive. Finally it failed to go in any gears. I walked to the nearest house to ask them to use their phone. My cell phone failed to work. This was Mr. Michilli's home and he allowed me to use his phone to call my wife, Erna. He interrupted me saying, "I have some transmission fluid. Let's try adding fluid." The transmission was empty. After trying that failure, he took Vernon to my home to get his vehicle to tow the boat, then the truck to my home. To top it off, we offered Mr. Michilli to pay him for the 8 quarts of fluid he had given us to put in the transmission and for driving Vernon to my home. You guessed it, he refused to take payment for anything. We thanked him a million times.

While I stayed with the truck as Vernon went home with the boat, 2 different ladies who lived across the Greenwell Springs Road where we were stranded came by, so, after all the mal chance we had, we were finally having some luck.

Bon Peche,

Hard Luck Tibby



Tibby's big bass! On a visit to the Booker Fowler state fish hatchery, where LWF held its spring board meeting, Tibby poses with the state record bass (15.97 lbs) taken by Greg Wiggins in Caney Lake in February 1994.

My Yard

Editor's Note: This is the third article in an extended series describing what people do to make their yards attractive to wildlife and interesting, educational places to enjoy the outdoors. This installment of the series takes a little "twist" in that it's told by the gardener himself and describes a gardening adventure in the extreme northern part of the South. I'm not talking about Shreveport – Virginia is the venue for Doug Inkley's backyard habitat. We invite you to send us your own "backyard" stories along with photos of your successes to share with readers of Louisiana WILDLIFE Federation magazine.

Home Is Where The Habitat Is

Photographs and story by Doug Inkley

It always seemed so far away.

Despite my training as a wildlife biologist and my often repeated day dreams of creating wildlife habitat in my own backyard, it was a long time coming. It wasn't



Common milkweed is a prairie plant that attracts monarchs and other butterflies.

just laziness; the complexities and challenges of life always kept me busy. Working long hours was a perennial excuse. Facing the undesirable mid-life crisis of a divorce was an unwanted excuse, but nevertheless had to be dealt with. And not owning my own home was a darn good



In the fall, milkweed takes advantage of the wind to spread its seeds.

reason. Obstacles a-plenty.

Finally, the excuses ran out and the opportunity presented itself. Laziness helped. It started when I at long last was able to purchase a home. My "dream house" was truly exciting ... a decent house, nice big lawn and good neighbors. I thought I had it all.

Several weeks after helping my bank assume ownership the lawn was looking decidedly shaggy, especially compared to

my neighbors' carefully manicured lots. I eagerly stepped behind the mower and with a loud roar took off amidst the smells of gasoline and burned hydrocarbons; just imagine what it meant to the ozone layer and the wildlife! Two exhausting hours later and drenched in sweat, I collapsed on the porch and swore I'd never do that again. That's the moment, five years ago, that my own backyard habitat got started.

I never again mowed half the yard, instead letting it grow wild into old field habitat. I gave nature a helping hand by planting pines for cover and oaks for mast, but they are still very small. Nevertheless, the change is readily evident. Last week my neighbor told me that in the mornings my yard "sounds like a menagerie; it's wonderful."

This week the rufous-sided towhees are in, the white-throated sparrows are still singing their spring song, and the northern orioles and indigo buntings have returned. Both Carolina wrens and house wrens are making a loud racket and nesting.

The success I was having inspired me to take the next plunge and install a couple small backyard pools. Although it was strenuous work, the process of designing and creating these pools was great fun. Rock edges now hide the pond liner and frogs sit on the floating log. I listen to the frogs calling as I fall to sleep at night. In



The pond takes shape. After the hole is dug, the liner is given a test fit.

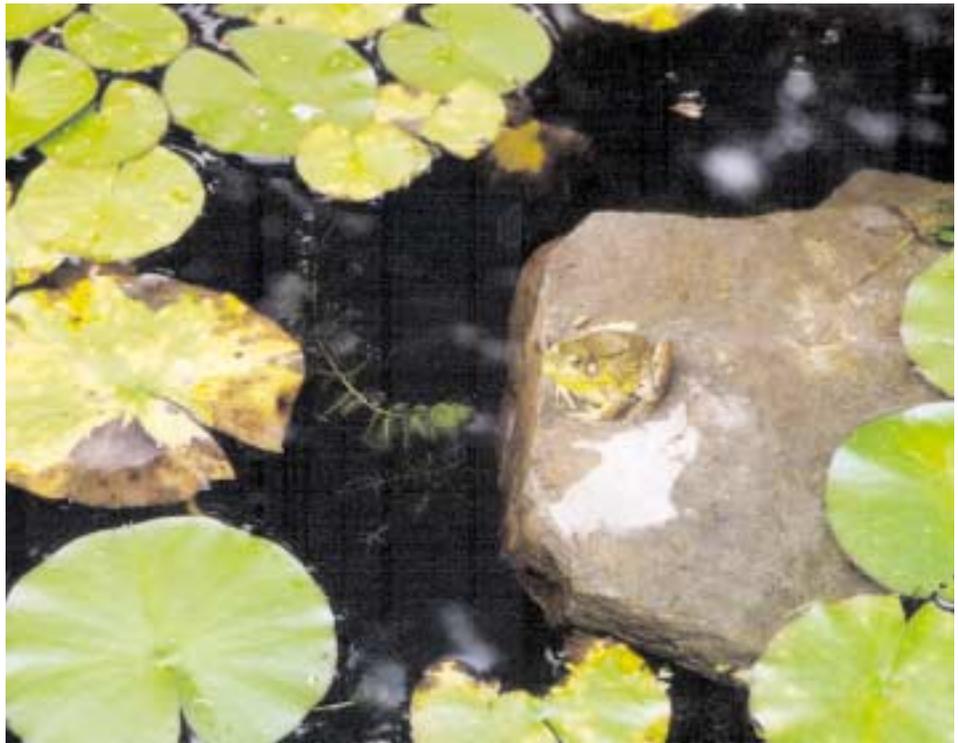
the early morning they make flying leaps at the flies buzzing by. The flag iris are about to bloom and I love picking a spearmint leaf and chewing on it.

A couple buckets of water scooped from a nearby pond brought wondrous little creatures to my pools. The water striders chase each other, occasionally jumping instead of gliding across the surface. The water boatmen paddle quickly beneath the surface and I've even seen adult dragonflies go whizzing by. The tadpoles are getting larger but I still can't see any legs growing.

My backyard habitat hasn't been without a little challenge or two along the way. Occasionally a recently purchased plant won't survive. I also once made the mistake of leaving the grill outside after a barbecue. Then, I couldn't use it for three to four weeks when a house wren quickly built its nest in the ashes and proceeded to raise its young. Now I put it away after each use!

I also learned never to tell the neighbors when I see a snake. Last year they killed a 12-inch baby black rat snake that wasn't even a quarter inch in diameter, fearing that it was a copperhead. It must have been awfully ferocious looking! They think all snakes are either copperheads or rattlesnakes!

The greatest fun has been in attracting bluebirds. This week I discovered that I have not one, but two bluebird pairs using the nest boxes I put up. And they spend a lot of time in the old field habitat.



A frog finds Doug's pond "A - OK".

The day dreams of creating my own backyard habitat have finally come true. Not just enjoying it, but also making it, has been an adventure. Sitting on the wooden bench, instead of mowing is a much better option. I can hear the bluebirds sing and watch as the frogs wait silently for their unsuspecting prey. Somehow, as I take all this in, the long hours of work are forgotten and the mid-

life crises just doesn't seem very important any more.

It is indeed a backyard wildlife habitat. It is also so much more.



A blanket of snow graces Doug Inkley's habitat – an element Louisiana gardeners rarely see.

Doug Inkley, Ph. D is Senior Scientist and Assistant to the National Wildlife Federation President. Last year Doug had his backyard habitat certified as a part of the National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program. Certification information is available at:

www.nwf.org

or by writing to: Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program, National Wildlife Federation, 11100 Wildlife Center Drive, Reston, VA 20190-5362. - ed.



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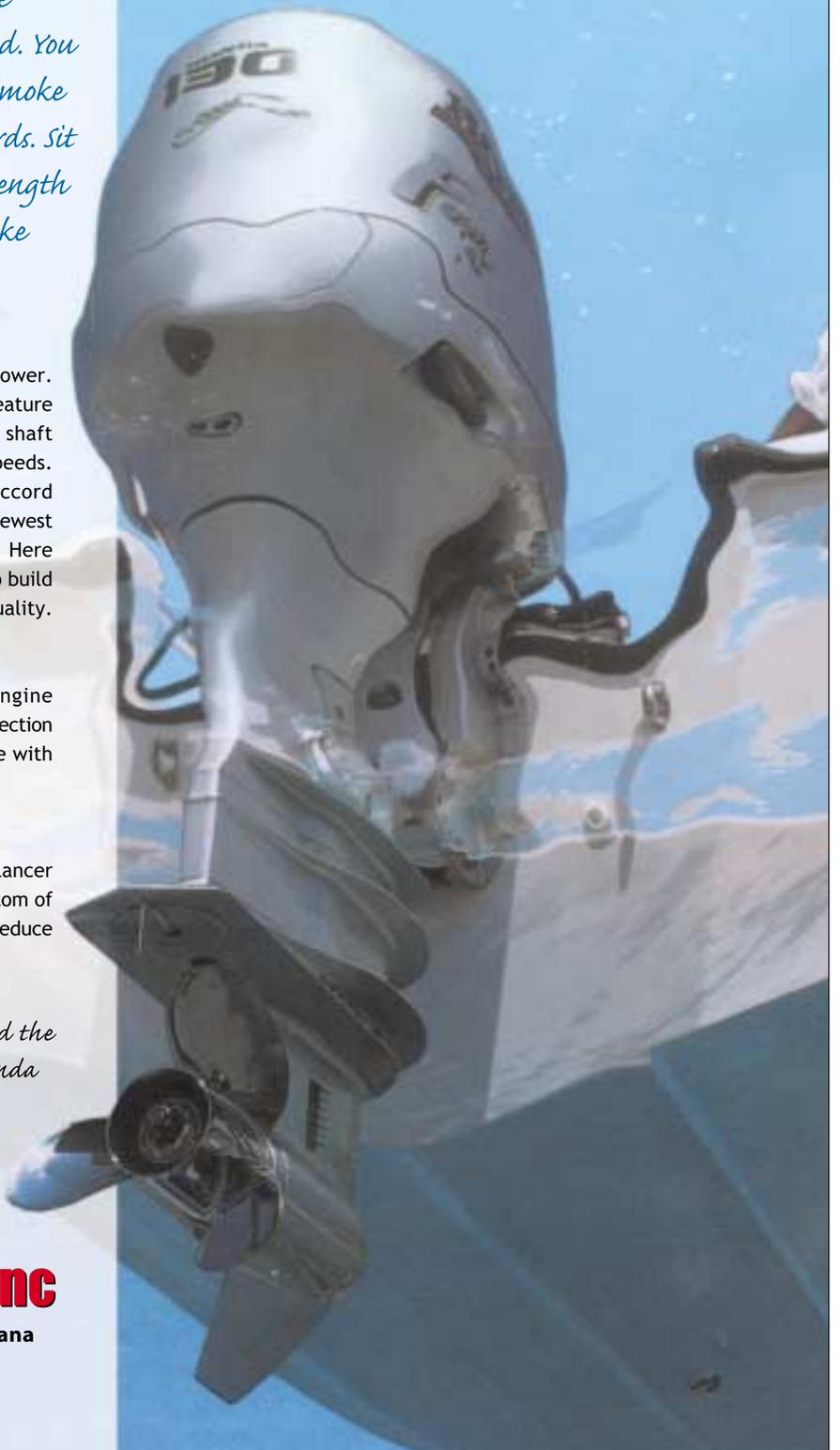
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