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September – October
Volume 50-5

Ben Gullett “Mullet Invitation” Fishing Tournament September 11-12, 2009 in Cortez, Florida

This is an opportunity to test and show off your skills by catching mullet using a castnet. Mullet may be caught between Tampa and Venice using castnets only. Six mullet will be accepted in the weighin with prizes for the largest catches for two person teams. There will also be prizes for the Junior division (age 5-17).

There will be a benefit dinner open to the public, (with some very fresh mullet guaranteed) on Saturday September 12, 2009 at 6:00 pm at Star Fish Company in Cortez, Florida.

Ben Gullett was a native of Manatee County, an avid mullet fisherman and famous for his smoked “Mullet by Gullett” that he served for many years at the Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival. He passed away last year after an accident and his family and friends started this tournament to honor him and help everyone enjoy catching and eating some fresh mullet.

The tournament is sponsored by Star Fish Company and The Islander. Proceeds will benefit the Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage (FISH) and the acquisition of environmentally sensitive land.

Complete details, rules and entry forms are available at www.cortezvillage.org.

Source: Cortez Village Historical Society

Tampa Bay Continues To Regain Seagrass

Tampa Bay gained more than 1,300 acres of seagrass between 2006 and 2008, and now supports more seagrass than at any time measured since the 1950's, according to the most recent aerial surveys of the bay.

Overall, the amount of seagrasses in Tampa Bay increase by 5% from 2006-2008, according to surveys conducted by scientists with the Southwest Florida Water Management District's Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Program. This slightly exceeds the 4.7% increase tallied between 2004 and 2006, the last time seagrass coverage was assessed.

Seagrasses – which generally grow in waters less than 6 feet deep – are a key indicator of the bay's health because they require relatively clean water to flourish.

Scientists cautioned that these latest gains may be due, in part, to the ongoing drought, since less rain means less storm water runoff flowing to the bay. Nutrient-laden runoff clouds the water, preventing sunlight from reaching the underwater grasses. The increase may also be partially a function of even clearer water than usual when the aerial photos were taken, allowing better views of seagrasses in deeper waters.

Tampa Bay now has an estimated 29,647 acres of seagrass – far less than the Estuary Program's goal of 38,000 acres, but the highest recorded total since the benchmark 1950's period adopted by the Program. The highest increases, of 31%, were documented in Middle Tampa Bay, which extends from the Gandy Bridge to the Manatee County line. Hillsborough Bay, traditionally the most polluted bay segment, nearly doubled its seagrass coverage, from 415 to 810 acres in the 2-year period.

Seagrass declines of 6%, 7% and 22% respectively, were reported in Boca Ciega Bay, Terra Ceia Bay and the Manatee River.

The Estuary Program's seagrass recovery strategy relies on controlling nitrogen loadings to the bay to maintain sufficient water clarity for seagrasses to grow. Overall, the pace of seagrass recovery in Tampa Bay has quickened over the last decade, to about 510 acres per year, up from 427 acres per year before 1999.



CHECK OUT THIS WEBSITE!!

Release your fish alive



Florida Sea Grant has partnered with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission to produce the website www.catchandrelease.org.

Check it out. There is a wealth of catch and release techniques information from around the world!



SAVE THE DATE!
2010 Florida Artificial Reef Summit
Cocoa Beach, Jan. 21st-23rd, 2010



Why attend?

Meet and discuss current issues, hear the latest research, and share new ideas for future projects with other members of Florida's artificial reef community.

Who will attend?

Scientists, artificial reef program managers, fishery and natural resource managers, volunteer research diver organizations, and artificial reef citizen constituency organizations.

Topics Addressed

Synopsis of the 2007 FWC Artificial Reef Science Colloquium and the 2009 International Conference on Artificial Reefs and Artificial Habitats, marine fisheries and adaptive management, permitting and regulations, Florida's 'Ships to Reefs' initiatives, goliath grouper, artificial reef monitoring projects, and regional and state updates.

Need More Information? The summit website will be active Oct 1 at www.flseagrant.org and will contain registration details. Or contact John Stevely, (941-795-6012) jmstevely@ifas.ufl.edu

Sponsored by: Florida Sea Grant and Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission

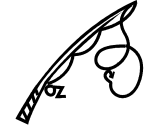
Basis 5 Conference to Chronicle 30 Years of Bay Science

The fifth Bay Area Scientific Information Symposium will be held October 20-23 at the Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort in St. Petersburg. TBEP is major sponsor of this conference, which brings together the bay area scientific community periodically to review progress in restoring the bay and identify emerging issues.

The theme of BASIS 5 is "Using Our Knowledge To Shape Our Future." The entire conference will focus on revisiting and updating the science presented at the very first BASIS conference in 1982. Among the topics to be explored are the geology and hydrology of Tampa Bay; wildlife; seagrasses and other habitats; and climate change.

Registration is \$75 for the full conference; \$35 for one day. For more info about registration, visit <http://tbep.org/news.html>.

Source: Tampa Bay Estuary Program – Bay Post Script



Anglers Don't Forget!

Beginning August 1, 2009, a saltwater fishing license will be required for Florida residents who fish from shore.

- Shore includes: pier, jetty, bridge, floating dock or similar structure.
- The annual resident shoreline fishing license will cost \$9.00.
- Resident anglers may also purchase a \$17.00 one-year saltwater license which covers both shoreline and watercraft recreational fishing.

Benefits of New Shoreline License for Anglers:

- Anglers avoid paying for more expensive federal license.
- All of the revenue from these new sales will go directly to improving marine fisheries in Florida. Programs supported by these dollars include fisheries management, research, enhancement, boating access, fish health and angler outreach.
- Florida receives money from Sport Fish Restoration based on the number of recreational licenses sold.

Florida Gulf Facts

- “About 70% of Florida’s 13 million people live in the coastal zone.”¹
- “With 2,276 miles of tidal shoreline, Florida has the most diverse saltwater fishing on the planet. No other state offers such a range of tropical, subtropical, and northern species of fish.”²
- The Gulf of Mexico is the world’s 9th largest body of water.
- The Gulf of Mexico contains half of all of the wetlands in the United States.
- The Gulf of Mexico shoreline stretches over 3,400 miles from Cape Sable, Florida to the tip of the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico.
- The Gulf drainage basin covers 60% of the contiguous United States.
- 33 major river systems drain into the Gulf of Mexico.

¹FWC 2007. “Estuarine Communities,” in Fishing Lines: An Angler’s Guide to Florida’s Marine Resources 6th Edition. Dan Ellinor and Michelle Owen (editors). Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, Division of Marine Fisheries Management.

²FWC 2007. “Where to Fish,” by Rich Abrams, in Fishing Lines: An Angler’s Guide to Florida’s Marine Resources, 6th Edition. Dan Ellinor and Michelle Owen (editors). Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, Division of Marine Fisheries Management.

Florida Sea Grant and Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation Announce Scholarship Opportunities

The Guy Harvey Excellence in Marine Science recognizes undergraduate and graduate students enrolled full time at Florida institutions of higher learning. The program is being administered by the Florida Sea Grant College Program.

Need more information? Go to www.flseagrant.org then enter Guy Harvey in the search function.

New Law Allows Florida-Friendly Landscaping

A new law signed by Gov. Charlie Crist promotes the installation of Florida-friendly landscaping. The law states that homeowners associations (HOAs) may not prohibit a homeowner from installing Florida-friendly landscaping on their property, or create any requirement or limitation in conflict with state law. The law also states that HOAs may not fine homeowners for brown lawns when the homeowner is abiding by water shortage rules such as the Water Management District's water shortage orders that restrict residents to watering their lawns one day per week.

Florida-friendly landscaping emphasizes nine easy-to-accomplish principles that, when practiced, can have a significant positive impact on yards and the environment. By following Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ practices, homeowners use a low-maintenance approach to landscaping that conserves water and reduces chemical and fertilizer use. Homeowners also spend less time maintaining their lawns and more time enjoying them.

The concept was developed by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, and is based on the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods program that was originally created by the Tampa Bay, Sarasota Bay and Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Programs. "Because homeowners can no longer be prohibited from following Florida-friendly landscaping practices, they will have more freedom to choose the type of plants and turf that are right for their property," said Sylvia Durell, Florida-friendly landscaping project manager for the Southwest Florida Water Management District. "This is a great opportunity for homeowners to get to know their yard's sun, soil and moisture conditions and put the right plant in the right place." To learn more about Florida-friendly landscaping visit www.FloridaYards.org or <http://www.sarasotabay.org/nar-bayfriendly.html>.

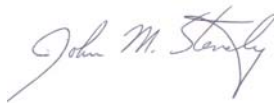
Source: Sarasota Bay Estuary Program newsletter.

Bay Wise Kayak Tour

The popular **Bay Wise Kayak Tour** program will be offered again beginning in December through April. Retired marine biologist and SBEP Citizen Advisory Committee member Dr. Jack Taylor will lead the educational kayak tours in Sarasota Bay waters. Discover the plants, animals, habitats and other features that make Sarasota Bay an Estuary of National Significance. This program is sponsored by the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program and is **FREE** to the public. Participants must bring their own kayak and gear.

For more program information, kayak rental information or for reservations, please contact the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program offices at 941-955-8085 or info@sarasotabay.org.

Sincerely,



John Stevely
Sea Grant Extension Agent

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