

**Southeastern Fisheries
Association, Inc.**

Hotlines



Web Edition

MARCH 1999

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This newsletter is published by Southeastern Fisheries Association. Please pass it along and encourage others to be added to our mailing list.

If you want to be removed from the list, please contact us.

SFA is a non-profit association founded in 1952, charged with maintaining a viable seafood industry in the Southeast.

Robert P. Jones, Editor

**GULF COUNCIL PROPOSES GAG
GROUPEL REGULATIONS**

The first action taken by the Gulf Council after the public hearing process on March 3, 1999 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was to permanently close over 600 square miles to all reef fish fishing. The areas closed are known as the 40 Fathom Contour West of Middle Grounds (site 8) and Steamboat Lumps (site 9) on an 8 to 7 vote. These areas are practically exclusive commercial fishing grounds.

After intensive lobbying by the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) reaching all the way into the Louisiana Governors Mansion, the Council stiffened its collective back and voted to bring the commercial size limit up to 24 inches and the recreational size to 22 inches and one inch each year until 24 inches is reached in order to protect the juvenile fish. CCA's Ted Forsgren and Frank Sergeant of the Tampa Tribune, wanted only the commercial (consumers) sector to be regulated while the recreational anglers continue fishing unabated

Dr. Felicia Coleman, Florida State University Professor of Biology, fought hard for the 600 square mile commercial fishing closure she said was needed to "SAVE THE MALES". A lady seated in the back of the meeting room whispered,

that the closed area should be named "*Felicia Coleman Gonad Bayou*". And so it shall be done.

Alex Jernigan, former President of CCA, made a motion to close all commercial gag grouper fishing during the months of January, February, March and April. This radical proposal was soundly defeated. Dr. Bob Shipp then made a motion to close only February but this too was voted down. There was no change in the 5 fish bag limit, no trip limits for commercial fishermen and no Total Allowable Catch (TAC).

**SFA & SOFA
JOIN FORCES**

The Southern Offshore Fishermen Association (SOFA) has voted to become affiliated with Southeastern Fisheries Association for the common good of the fishing industry. SOFA brings a large number of domestic fishing vessels who supply fresh Florida seafood, primarily grouper to thousands of restaurants, wholesalers and retailers. SFA will assist in developing a "Buy-Back Program" for shark fishing vessels which is a high priority within SOFA. Bobby Spaeth continues as the Executive Director of SOFA and will work very closely with SFA to strengthen the seafood industry. SFA welcomes the SOFA membership.



GOVERNOR BUSH APPOINTS FAWCC MEMBERS

Governor Jeb Bush has appointed 4 members to the new Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FAWCC). To replace a Game Commissioner he appointed Edwin P. Roberts, a 41 year old chiropractor from Pensacola, Florida, an activist in the net ban initiative. To replace former MFC Commissioners McElvey, Woodward and Hanson, he appointed: Nancy Davis, 46, CEO McArthur Enterprises, Miami, H.A. Huffman, 61, President Century 21, Enterprise, John D. Rudd, Vestcor Equities, Jacksonville. All three had applied for the Game & Fish Commission slots. They will need to be confirmed by the Senate which should be just a formality. All nominees seem to be highly successful business people. Whether they have any background in the seafood industry or understand the industry will be seen after the first few meetings. The Florida seafood industry sincerely hopes they serve with an open mind and will work to protect and enhance our ability to produce seafood on a sustainable basis.

UNIFICATION OF GAME & FISH AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

The Florida Senate Natural Resources

Committee passed out its version of the fisheries unification bill without addressing the "adequate due process" subject. The Senate Bill is exactly what the Coastal Conservation Association wants. Public input is having no effect on Senate Bill 864. On the House side, Chairman J.D. Alexander is taking a very deliberate and extensive look at what the unification is all about and the committee is very concerned with what "adequate due process" is going to look like in the final bill. The only persons speaking for addressing adequate due process fully this year SFA's Bob Jones, OFF's Jerry Sansom and the St. Joe Company's lobbyist who was formerly the General Counsel of the Game & Fish Commission. The House Bill establishes the Florida Marine Research Institute as a separate division within the new agency and would place it under the supervision of the executive director. A very wise move that should serve all interests well.

FLORIDA OFFSHORE FISHING CONSORTIUM ESTABLISHED

Concerned fishing interests in Bay County formed the *Florida Offshore Fishing Consortium* on March 9, 1999, as a Section of Southeastern Fisheries Association. The purpose of this new section is to fight the pro-

posed establishment of a marine preserve off Panama City under a gag grouper amendment by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. This highly productive grouper fishing ground will be closed forever to all reef fishing under the federal plan. Much anger and resentment was expressed towards those members of the Gulf Council who voted to close this 600 square mile area to commercial fishing, charter boat fishing and recreational fishing. The National Marine Fisheries Service nor the Council have any idea as to the drastic economic impact on the region in general and in Bay, Gulf & Franklin counties in particular. An all out effort will be made to reopen this issue. An amendment this far reaching must be done under a Full Plan Amendment and not through a quick fix regulatory set of rules. You will be seeing, reading and hearing much more on this issue right away.

SHRIMP ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT MADE

Larry Shafer, longtime member of the Gulf Council's Shrimp Advisory Committee recently resigned from the Committee after serving for more than 20 years. SFA's Bob Jones was selected to replace Shafer who held one of the Florida seats on the Shrimp panel. SFA

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wishes Past President Larry Shafer well in his retirement and thanks him for his years of honest service on behalf of the shrimp industry.

SHOULD KILLING OF FISH IN NATIONAL PARKS BE PROHIBITED?

More and more push is being made to remove any animal harvest from National Parks. "We don't let them shoot

elk, buffalo or moose in Yellowstone, why should federal fish in the Everglades National park be any different," said a recent opinion on the Internet. It is pretty hard to justify the current federal position that fish can't be commercially harvested for consumption from the Everglades National park but fish can be caught recreationally and consumed. Seems like a double stan-



dard. A fish in the Everglades National park doesn't know if its caught by a commercial hook or a recreational hook. It's just a dead fish.

CENTER FOR MARINE CONSERVATION, (CMC) ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND (EDF) and REEF KEEPERS INTERNATIONAL (RKI) are urging fishery managers to establish "no-take" marine reserves in ocean areas off Florida.

to help rebuild depleted fish populations and protect fish habitats. "Marine reserves will be key to rebuilding depleted fish populations and to managing them sustainably in the future," said Alexander Stone of RKI. "The protection of spawning snappers and groupers, especially when they form site-specific spawning aggregations, is also necessary to rebuild and maintain fish populations."

(Fish Rapper 2/23/99 Kim Davis)



If the Tortugas Nursery area is designated as a "no-take" marine reserve the commercial stonecrab, spiny lobster and finfish industries would be devastated. The charter and headboats would disappear. The only industry left in the marine reserve would be the diving industry but sooner or later they too would be excluded from the area. This area is already heavily regulated.

INVEST IN THE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

Southeastern Fisheries Association has been publishing their "Hotlines" newsletter monthly for 34 years. We are expanding the format of the newsletter to include photos, guest editorials, technical information, marketing trends, member information and many articles each month pertinent to the seafood industry both in the southeast and around the world. Our readership consists of members, government agencies, elected officials, prospective members and anyone who requests such publication.

Complete the form below and return to the SFA office with your black and white business card and a check for \$200 and we will give you an ad spot in 4 issues of the "Hotlines"

Company Name _____

Contact person _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

COUNT ME IN AS A SUPPORTER OF THE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY IN FLORIDA

Enclosed is our check for \$200 payable to Southeastern Fisheries Association
Enclosed is our business card - to be duplicated in the next 4 issues of "Hotlines".



Editor's comments

Florida Audubon's ECO-LODGE would have opened a new era and profit center for environmental movement.

According to the Wall Street Journal, there was a plan for a Florida Audubon Society owned ECO-Lodge to be developed on the pristine Ocklawaha River. Such a business would have given the Florida Audubon Society (a non-profit organization) a steady source of revenue to lobby for environmental initiatives in Central Florida. Evidently lack of funds and a personality fight between Clay Henderson, President of Audubon and Ed Davidson, past chairman of Audubon has stopped the project for Audubon but it will go ahead under the direction of a New York developer. According to the news article, this eco-lodge was to be the cornerstone for a series of such lodges across the nation. Another player in this drama is the Water Management District which purchased the property, with tax dollars, in the early 1990's. Also involved is the Pew Charitable Trust through Joshua Reichart who works

for Pew in Philadelphia. The article says it was Reichart who came up with the idea of having eco-lodges throughout America.

There are some disturbing questions surrounding this scheme. Why is the Water Management District buying up land and then helping certain groups to develop this land? How can the private sector compete with tax money and special treatment? Is there a bid process for getting an ECO-LODGE deal or is it limited to just certain "environmental lobbying groups?" Why should Audubon be able to use tax-free dollars and public land to create a revenue stream for their lobbying efforts? Isn't it a conflict of interest for a lobbying group to push for buying certain lands and taking them off the tax roll and then trying to get a lease for profit on the same land by the same group? Something seems out of whack when an environmental lobbying group, or any lobbying group for that matter can use government funds or lands to create a revenue stream to push their private agenda. This seems like a very bad precedent to set in the United States.

F L O A T S A M

Virus may cause epidemic disease in sea turtles.

Sea turtles worldwide may be at risk from a serious tumor epidemic caused by a unique virus genetically related to human herpes, according to a team of researchers at the University



of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine and the Marathon-based Turtle Hospital who first identified it. Scientists are currently working to better

understand the link between the virus and the tumors. The tumors, known as fibropapillomas, erupt on a turtle's soft body tissue and its shell, frequently appearing on or around the eyes, the flippers and even in the mouth. Once the lesions impair the turtle's vision and swimming ability, it has difficulty feeding and ultimately may die. Often the tumors develop within internal organs, such as the lungs and kidneys, and impede normal function. More than 50 percent of the green turtles living in the Indian River Lagoon and Florida Bay are affected, Klein estimated. Nearly 15 percent of the loggerhead turtles in Florida Bay have the disease. In some waters in Hawaii, more than 90 percent of green turtles are stricken with the tumors. The fact that large numbers of marine turtles are dying from a terrible epidemic is

awful and this cause must be taken into consideration whenever turtles are found on the beaches. Generally, when a turtle dies and comes to the beach the shrimp industry is blamed and such blame may be misplaced in most instances, particularly since the US Coast Guard has reported that the Turtle Excluder Device compliance rate by domestic shrimpers is near 99%. That is an amazing law enforcement fact and ought to be highly publicized.

Fishermen sue to protect steelhead. GRANTS PASS, Ore.

(AP) - Sport fishermen and environmentalists have sued federal officials in a bid to list southern Oregon and Northern California steelhead as a threatened species. The lawsuit filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court in

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PERSONALIZED COOLERS AVAILABLE THROUGH SFA

SFA can provide member businesses with insulated coolers in several sizes bearing the logo of the business and SFA seal for a lower than average price. These soft coolers come in a variety of colors and make great gifts for customers or good profit maker for your retail shops. If you want to find out if they sell, give Rich Polvinale, Delaware Chicken & Seafood Market, a call at 954/983-6831. Call the SFA office 850/224-0612 for more information.

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San Francisco against the National Marine Fisheries Service closely parallels one in Portland that forced the agency to list coho salmon in coastal Oregon as a threatened species last year. The Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund filed the lawsuit. Just as they had with coho salmon, the fisheries service initially recommended steelhead in the Klamath Mountains Province and the Northern California unit merited protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Vibrio vulnificus Lawsuit. On Feb. 11, 1999, two LA seafood processors and the families of two individuals who died after eating shellfish tainted by Vibrio vulnificus filed suit in LA District



Court in Baton Rouge, seeking to force the LA Dept. of Health and Hospitals to use new technology that kills Vibrio vulnificus in raw oysters. A hearing was scheduled to be held by District Judge Kay Bates on Feb.23, 1999. On

Feb. 24, 1999, Judge Bates ruled that state law gives the Dept. of Health and Hospitals wide discretion and refused to force LA to require that all raw oysters undergo treatment to kill V. vulnificus. [The

Advocate, Baton Rouge]

FY2000 Federal Budget. On Feb. 1, 1999, the Clinton Administration announced its proposed FY2000 budget, including direct program funding of \$420 million for NMFS (FY1999 was \$401 million). Increases are proposed as part of the Administration's Lands Legacy Initiative, funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund. A separate "Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund" is proposed to be funded at \$100 million. [FY2000 Budget Appendix]

Wilson Bay, NC, Cleanup Grant. On Jan. 28, 1999, the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund announced a \$572,000 grant to Jacksonville for an experimental program that will plant more than a million oysters, clams, and mussels in Wilson Bay, NC, to use their natural filtering capacity to clean Bay waters. A second part of the project will implement a storm water control plan to control runoff. [Jacksonville, NC, Daily News]

Invasive Species. In late January 1999, Cornell University scientists reported at the annual meeting of the American Assoc. For the Advancement of Science in Anaheim, CA, that more than 30,000 non-native species

cost the United States about \$123 billion a year in economic loss. This includes about \$35.5 billion for alien weeds, \$23.5 billion for crop diseases, \$20 billion for insects, \$19 billion for rats, \$6.5 billion for human disease-causing microbes, \$6 billion for feral cats, \$3 billion for zebra mussels, and \$1 billion for Asiatic clams

TURTLE nesting beaches in Rancho Nuevo, Mexico are going to be protected thanks to \$100,000 dollars from the US Fish & Wildlife Service. This is another good example of US taxpayers paying for the protection of an endangered species. The Rancho Nuevo efforts have paid off in considerable more turtles living in the Gulf of Mexico during a critical time period for their survival.

HACCP Enforcement continues with emphasis on sanitation monitoring records, importer specifications and guarantees, not enough CCP's for histamine potential fish and failure to keep proper records on what is going on in the processing plant. Warning letters have been sent to at least nine companies citing major problems that have 30 days to be corrected.





Welcome to SFA New Members: SFA is proud to welcome the following new members into its growing family of successful seafood companies. we encourage each member to support one another for the overall good of maintaining an economic and cultural presence for commercial fishing in America as well as providing marine protein to the people.

Upgrade from Associate to Corporate Member:

Ballard Oil, Inc. and Matanzas Ice Corporation, Ft. Myers Beach, FL
- James Ballard

New Corporate Member:

Gulf Scallops, Inc., Port St. Joe, FL
- Roger Newton, President


Retail Market/Restaurant:

Florida Best Seafood, Inc., St. Petersburg, FL
- Gary Charles Barber

Fish Busterz Fisheries, Key West, FL
- Brian Lindbuck

SeaSpecialties, Inc., Miami, FL
- Steve Yaeger

Harden Fish Company, Okeechobee, FL
- Carey Harden

Keep an  out

for

SFA's 47th Annual Meeting

registration packet to arrive within the next two

This month's Hotlines is being mailed to Southeastern Fisheries Association and Organized Fishermen of Florida members, in the first part of an effort to produce a joint newsletter...A WORK IN PROGRESS

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We invite anyone receiving this newsletter, who is not already a member of SFA to join us and become an activist for your business. We are here to respond to your business needs in the state capital and around the Southeast Region. We can help you only if we know you and correspond with you regularly..... We would look forward to serving you and your company!

