



Undercurrents

the official news source of COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION ALABAMA

April 2010

[A Word from the Executive Director](#)

Fellow CCA Members,

Like the dogwoods bursting into bloom across Alabama, CCA spring events are beginning to happen in every part of our beautiful state. You'll see announcements in this newsletter from most of our chapters inviting you to membership and fundraising gatherings. I hope you'll make a serious effort to attend at least one event this spring. Our chapter boards work very hard to create an enjoyable atmosphere at our fundraisers. Some folks say CCA puts the *fun* in *fundraising*.

The recent economic downturn has had a negative effect on our membership renewals, so this newsletter is going out to all members and expired members over the past three years. Please check to see if your membership has expired, and if it has please take a minute to renew. We need your help to keep us on the leading edge of marine conservation in Alabama.

After months of planning, CCA Alabama's new web site is nearing completion. The site will contain several new sections, including a new interactive method of purchasing tickets to events, ordering CCA Alabama merchandise, and renewing or initiating new memberships. We'll send you a notice when the site goes on line, so stay tuned.

It is a pleasure to be a part of CCA Alabama.

Thank you for all your help in making a big difference in marine conservation. We're making progress, and we couldn't do it without you.

Ed Williamson

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License Tag Update



The new Fish Alabama license plate has been received with enthusiasm around the state, with tags showing up in unexpected locations, some more than 300 miles from the coast. Besides the obvious locations like Birmingham, the Mobile/Baldwin area, and Montgomery, tags are being seen on vehicles in Huntsville, Dothan, Tuscaloosa, and smaller non-metropolitan inland areas. CCA's license plate is available wherever vehicle tags can be purchased. Of the \$50 tax deductible fee, about \$42.50 goes to CCA Alabama and will be used for marine conservation in the state.

When you go to the tag office to purchase your tag, be sure to ask for the "Fish Alabama" tag.

CCA Coast Watch Program Expands

To become Coast Watch members, volunteers attend a two-hour class,

Volunteers Remove Over 300 Derelict Crab Traps From Mobile Bay Causeway



Fifty volunteers from CCA, Mobile County Wildlife Conservation Association, and Mobile Bay National Estuary Program partnered with the State Conservation Department on Saturday, March 6th to remove abandoned crab traps from upper Mobile Bay.

Prior to the event, Conservation Department officials notified commercial crabbers that any trap left in the water on that day would be considered abandoned and subject to removal.

Abandoned traps are perpetual killing machines. Crabs that enter the trap are unable to escape. They die, their decomposing bodies attract more crabs

usually from 6:00 to 8:00 PM, taught by MRD enforcement personnel. After completing the course attendees receive a manual containing a printout of the regulations covering recreational and commercial fishing, provided by CCA Alabama. Coast Watch members also receive a wallet card with a hotline number. When a violation is observed, the member calls the hotline number. The number is answered 24-hours a day, seven days a week. At night and on weekends the number rings at a dispatch office in Montgomery and the call is reported to the officer on duty in Mobile and/or Baldwin County.

The first Coast Watch session was held on March 25th in Orange Beach. Additional courses will be conducted on May 13th at Bass Pro Shop in Spanish Fort and on June 17th at The Gates of Fowl River in South Mobile County.

News Release from CCA National:

Council Action on Gulf red snapper signals need for reallocation

Shortened recreational season brings allocation issue to the forefront

Recreational anglers were cheered earlier this year by news that after decades of federal management, culminating with a two-fish bag limit and a 74-day season in 2009, scientists suddenly announced that the Gulf red snapper stock is no longer undergoing overfishing, which is a significant step on the road to recovery.

However, the reward for decades of sacrifice announced at the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council meeting this week is a good news/bad news scenario for recreational anglers who will see their quota increase to about 3.4 million pounds in 2010, from 2.5 million pounds in 2009, but will also see their season shrink by at least two weeks.

"Thanks to a combination of factors, including significant bycatch reduction

and fish, and the cycle goes on until the trap is removed. Volunteers, using shallow draft boats, retrieved several derelict traps containing live crabs and fish. One trap held a small tripletail, puzzling all the participants, including fisheries biologists.

After the traps were rounded up, crushed, and put into the dumpster provided by Big Red Containers, participants, some wet and muddy, were treated to a delicious pulled pork lunch provided by Mobile Gas Corporation.

CCA Announces Additional Investment Opportunities

Three new opportunities are now in place for members who recognize the effectiveness of CCA's initiatives in marine conservation and are willing to invest in the organization's continuing success.

Over the past three years, CCA Alabama's Life Membership campaign has yielded a crop of over 100 new life members, making CCA Alabama one of the leading state chapters in life members as a percentage of total membership. Life members care deeply about our marine resources, and they are willing to invest beyond the regular membership dues of \$25 per year in order to keep our state moving forward in conservation. Life members contribute \$1,000, either as a one-time gift or in quarterly installments of \$250. New life members receive a distinctive acrylic cube with an embedded CCA logo and a life member fishing shirt.

CCA Alabama has expanded the giving opportunities by adding a Sustaining Member level for those who commit to investing \$1,000 per year for five years. Existing Life Members may attain Sustaining Member status by contributing an additional \$4,000 in annual increments of \$1,000. Sustaining Members' entire investment stays in Alabama and is used exclusively for

measures for the shrimp fleet, the stock is improving," said Dr. Russell Nelson, CCA Gulf Fisheries consultant. "But clearly the Council now needs to take into account the problems caused by the increasing average size of the fish being caught and take a long overdue look at reallocation."

Even with a recovering stock, the hundreds of thousands of anglers pursuing red snapper in the Gulf are still left with just 49 percent of the total allowable catch, while about 400 commercial fishermen are currently entitled to 51 percent of the harvest through a catch share system. A rebounding stock means recreational anglers are finding it easier to catch red snapper, and the fish they catch are bigger. With a quota set in total pounds, the only way the government is capable of controlling recreational harvest is to shorten the season.

"Based on current data and from reports by recreational fisherman themselves, it appears that we have a strongly recovering red snapper fishery with larger fish being taken by recreational anglers which tend to skew the data on the pounds of fish being caught by recreational fishermen," said Tim Strickland, chairman of CCA's Gulf Fisheries Committee. "The inequitable result being proposed is the shortest season ever for recreational fishermen in 2010."

CCA has long called for reallocation of fisheries where appropriate based on an economic analysis to provide the greatest economic benefit to the country.

coastal marine conservation.

CCA's national headquarters has added two additional giving levels: Heritage and Legacy membership. Heritage Members give \$5,000 in one year, and Legacy Members donate \$10,000 in a single year. Both levels have the option of quarterly installments. Heritage and Legacy members receive desk cubes similar to the Life Member cube.

CCA was, is, and will continue to be a "science based, resource first, angler advocate" organization. Alabama's coastal marine resources have benefited greatly from the hard work provided by eight active chapter boards and generous help and support from its members. The three new investment levels give those who share our concerns, and are willing to be a significant part of our continued success, new vehicles for helping to keep CCA on the leading edge of marine conservation.

A wise investor looks at an organization's past history and future expectations before committing financial resources. For an in-depth discussion of CCA's past accomplishments and future plans, please contact the state office at 251-478-3474.



Spring Brings Multiple CCA Events

The months of April and May are filled with opportunities to attend CCA events around the state. Below is the schedule

Thursday April 8th: The Eastern Shore chapter's Fish Talk will feature Jim Franks and Eric Hoffmayer of the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Laboratory. Both are highly qualified marine biologists. Topics presented will include

whale shark science, cobia migration, and tripletail research. - Hot dogs and soft drinks will be provided before the talk, which will be held at the Faulkner State College Auditorium in Downtown Fairhope. The public is invited. There is no charge for the event, which begins at 5:30.

Saturday April 10th: Lower Alabama's annual Spring Beach Party will be held at a new location, Guy Harvey's Island Grill, located at The Wharf in Orange Beach. The event will include good food and entertainment as well as the usual spirited live and silent auctions. Tickets are available for \$50 per couple/\$35 per single at Sam's Bait & Tackle on Canal Road, at Tipseas Steam Shack on the Beach Highway, or they can be ordered by calling the CCA office at (251) 478-3474. Tickets at the door will be \$60 per couple and \$40 per single.

Thursday April 22nd: CCA's Western Shore chapter will hold its third annual "Bugs-n-Suds" membership rally at the Pelican Reef restaurant on Dauphin Island Parkway, just north of the Fowl River Bridge. Tickets are \$15 per person in advance, \$17 at the door. Admission closes at 7 p.m. Members are encouraged to bring potential CCA members to the 6 until 9 p.m. event. Entertainment, along with a low country crawfish boil and draft beer are included in the ticket price. Tickets are available at the CCA office in Mobile. For information, call (251) 478-3474.

Wednesday April 28th: North Alabama's Sponsor Dinner at a private residence. A limited number of tickets will be pre-sold. Cost is \$100 per couple. There will be no tickets at the door. For information, call Adam Simmons at (256) 810-4640. Ribs, brisket and shrimp are on the menu, and there will be a small silent auction.

Thursday May 6th: Birmingham's annual Crawfest will be held once again at the Birmingham Zoo in Mountain Brook. Crazy Cajun will provide a seafood buffet, and there will be live entertainment, a silent auction, and multiple raffles. The fun begins at 6 p.m. Call the CCA ticket office for information. (251) 478-3474.

Friday May 7th: Mobile/Eastern Shore Spring Fling on the causeway. *Locust Fork* band will entertain at this annual fundraiser. Boiled shrimp, gumbo, and jambalaya highlight the menu, and auctions & raffles help make for a great time as these two chapters once again join forces for a great event. Tickets are \$85/couple and \$55/single in advance, \$95/couple and \$60/single at the door. The hours are 5:30-10:00, and the location is the Five Rivers Delta Resource Center. Call the CCA office for details. (251) 478-3474.

For updates and questions on all events, please call CCA Alabama at (251) 478-3474 or e-mail ccabama@aol.com

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