



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Southeast Region

Southeastern Currents

AUGUST 2010 NEWSLETTER

Home Page
 Behind Scenes
 Bragging Rights
 Friends Group
 Hats Off
 I Gave '8'
 Photo Album
 Wage Grade
 Visitor Services



FWS Biologist Nate Caswell and USFWS Biologist Joe Metzmeier work on Ship Island in Gulf Islands National Seashore. They conduct research on birds that could have potentially been impacted by the oil spill. Photo by Bonnie Stawer, FWS.

Refuge employees dedicated to oil spill response

Since we received the horrific news of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill on April 20, 2010 we have all wondered what we can do as an agency and individually to help. Our Southeast Region employees have provided tremendous support during this crisis. Refuge employees are no exception, as more than 300 Southeast Region refuge employees have responded to the call of duty so far. Their expertise and duties may vary; but, there is only one mission for refuge employees while deployed, and that is to conserve our trust resources.

This is a mission that refuge employees strive for on a daily basis, and the oil spill hits close to home since the Southeast Region has 29 coastal national wildlife refuges from Louisiana to Florida. We are experts at resource management, but the oil spill has added an uncertainty to what we do best. A new set of variables to managing our trust resources has emerged. There is uncertainty on how long will it take for us to see significant changes to wildlife and habitats, and we are hoping for a very slow hurricane season in the Gulf in an effort to lessen the potential for impact to our refuges. Although the future is unknown and there are many unanswered questions, our refuge employees are right at the forefront in an effort to figure it out.

During the oil spill, refuge employees have been working diligently with others to protect our threatened and endangered species, migratory birds, fish, marine mammals, and sea turtles. This is a job that in the past three months they have taken very seriously because 38 federally listed species, protected under the Endangered Species Act, could be potentially impacted by the spill; twenty-nine of these species are listed as endangered. Deployed refuge employees are working arduous schedules of 12 hours or more a day. Duties are as varied as employees' expertise but may consist of patrolling beaches in search of nesting sea turtles, conducting surveys to determine where oiled birds and wildlife may be found, assisting with safe capture and transportation to rehabilitation centers, or working in the incident command center writing reports and collecting statistics.

After completing a shift and in the few hours of rest before returning to duty the next day, employees may wonder if the day's work truly had any bearing on what might likely be the most catastrophic disaster that will affect how we manage our natural resources in the future.

"The hardest part of working this spill is the unknown," says Jack Bohannon, refuge manager at Delta, Breton, and Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuges. "We don't know exactly how much oil has actually been released into the Gulf, we don't know where exactly it will go, and we don't know how much impact it will have on the resources entrusted in our care."

Refuges employees along the Gulf are taking precautions and are preparing for oil on their lands.

Ken Litzenburger, project leader of the Southeast Louisiana (SELA) Refuges Complex, says they have been preparing for oil on

their refuge by, "prioritizing our assets and determining what is most important to protect from a major oil landfall. At this time of the year it would be protecting colonial bird rookeries from disaster. We members meet with BP and the U.S. Coast Guard to set daily work plans and report issues and concerns from the previous day, inspect the booming operations on Delta and/or Breton to ensure it is in the right place and in good condition, and examine the birds on the rookeries to ensure they are not oiled. We also keep disturbance out of the rookeries at all costs and hope the birds make it to flight stage."

With the refuge's staff members' hard work and dedication, so far they have seen only minimal amounts of oil on adult birds and none on the young. Amidst all the oil spill response work, refuge employees try to maintain their regular work duties as well. At SELA, visitor services programs, maintenance, biological programs, budget, and day-to-day operations are still managed by refuge managers and staff.

One encouraging factor resulting from the oil spill response is the formation of several great new partnerships and the rekindling of existing ones. Since the Service is taking a leadership role in evaluating the impact of oil to refuge lands, we are collaborating with other agencies to accomplish this goal. With the assistance of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Park Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Environmental Protection Agency, state fish and wildlife agencies, and other responsible parties, the response effort moves forward to tackle the unknown.

As I write this article, there is renewed hope of containing the spill since the leak has been capped for several days now. This, of course, has our refuge employees optimistic that the work they have done and will continue to do will be worthwhile. Our refuge employees will continue to work alongside others for years to come as our resources recover from the impacts of the oil spill.



Most marsh areas require boat transportation for surveying for oil impacts. Since the spill began, Bon Secour maintenance worker Jerry Dunn routinely checks the shoreline three times a week.
Photo by Bonnie Strasser, FWIS

Submitted by Sharon Fuller, Refuges, Atlanta, Georgia

Behind the Scenes--



Left to right: Senior Chief Jeff Lucas U.S. Coast Guard Reserve (also refuge law enforcement), Emily Watson, GIS Tennessee BIL office, Larry Woodward, Deputy Refuge Manager, Tom MacKenzie, Internal Affairs, Southeast Region USFWS. Taken by Paul Robinson, BP, Forward Operating Base Grand Isle Command Admin. 7-17-2010.

Grand Isle Wildlife Unit's response to oil spill

U.S. Coast Guard Reserve Senior Chief Jeff Lucas gathers with his comrades at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife Section at Grand Isle, Louisiana, during the Deepwater Horizon BP Oil Spill response. Jeff, a refuge law enforcement officer out of the Litchfield Wetland Management District in Minnesota, was activated for 60 days to support the Air Operations Group in Grand Isle. Emily Watson of the Tennessee Ecological Services Office in Cookeville, handles the GIS and database management for wildlife capture teams, and Larry Woodward, deputy refuge manager at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, leads the Wildlife Section. Tom MacKenzie, the Southeast Region's media and tribal relations specialist, was the unit's Public Information Officer.

Submitted by Tom MacKenzie, External Affairs, Atlanta, Georgia

Bragging Rights --



Florida torreya from Sweetwater Creek, Liberty County, Florida. Photos taken in 2009 by Vivian Negron-Ortiz, FWS.

Florida torreya recovery working group meeting

In May 2010 a recovery working group assembled at the Panama City Ecological Services Field Office to provide recommendations for preventing the extinction of Florida torreya, a conifer tree found on ravine slopes on the eastern bank of the Apalachicola River in northern Florida and in Georgia.

The tree is vulnerable to extinction because of its limited range, its low population numbers, and the rarity of its habitat. The main cause of this species decline is still not well understood, even though many research and management activities are being conducted. The decline of Florida torreya is thought to have primarily been a result of disease-causing fungi during the 1950s and 1960s, and/ or a combination of environmental stress and native disease producers, but studies have yet to provide an explanation for this species' decline. The group discussed past, current, and planned activities and their relationship to the recovery actions stipulated in the recovery plan. Recommendations from the working group were incorporated into the torreya's five-year status review.

Submitted by Dr. Vivian Negron-Ortiz, Panama City Ecological Services Field Office, Florida



Dr. Lyda Rivera, University of Puerto Rico, and Vivian Negron-Ortiz, FWS, take soil samples for a soil-borne pathogen survey study. Photo taken in 2009 at Decatur, Georgia, by Dr. David Gorshov, FWS volunteer.



Longest Day of Play participants enjoy an outdoor-themed snack relating to the Food Pyramid and nutrition. Photo by Alex Hoover, hatchery YCC student.

Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery hosts Longest Day of Play event

June 22, 2010, offered outdoor fun as Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery partnered with the Russell County Community Health Coalition and the W.O.W., Working on Wellness Initiative, to offer the first Russell County Longest Day of Play event. Featuring fun, engaging games, and activities designed to encourage children to get outdoors and get moving, the day included a variety of hands-on stations, including many with nature related themes, ranging from fishing to a wetlands exploration to questing and scavenger hunts. A total of 135 people from summer school programs, groups representing various local organizations and agencies participated. Everyone enjoyed the event which is scheduled to become an annual program at the hatchery.

Submitted by Amanda Patrick, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Jamestown, Kentucky



Casting practice and guidance along with a chance to catch a trout or bass. Photo by Alex Hoover, hatchery YCC student.

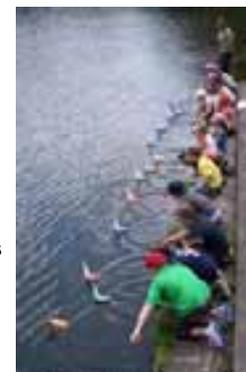


Crayfish and aquatic insects are important parts of aquatic food webs. Photo by JRC Camp, FWS

Junior Ranger Camp Days in Warm Springs

Nicole Rankin and Rosla Plant of the Warm Springs Regional Fisheries Center, Frida Powers from the Friends of the Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery, Student Conservation Association interns Kara Brown and Gary Eddy, and Ashley Aultman and David Burke from Roosevelt's Little White House Historic Site, offered three-day Junior Ranger Camps on June 15 – 17 and June 22 – 24, 2010.

Twenty-one children (fifteen children in the first session, six in the second session) participated in the camp sessions held in Warm Springs and Pine Mountain, Georgia. The children learned about Franklin D. Roosevelt and his hobbies at the Roosevelt's Little White House, aquatic biology at the Warm Springs Regional Fisheries Center, and outdoor recreation at the F.D. Roosevelt State Park. Junior Rangers learned about fish and bird identification, aquatic food webs, and stream and pond habitats while at the Warm Springs Regional Fisheries Center. Other camp activities included a geology walk scavenger hunt, V-mail letter writing, stream aquatic life sampling, nature hikes, a black powder demonstration, bird house and feeder building, and sailboat racing. Junior rangers received patches and certificates during a ceremony held at the F.D. Roosevelt State Park on the last day.



Sailing boats. Photo by JRC Camp, FWS

Submitted by Nicole Rankin, Warm Springs Fish Technology Center, Georgia



Tracy Quinton holds the juvenile American alligator. FWS Photo.

Georgia On My Mind Day

Nicole Rankin participated in the 2010 Georgia On My Mind Day at the West Point Visitor Center in Georgia on June 18, 2010. This one-day event increases awareness of the importance of travel and tourism in Georgia. More than 20 vendors set up displays focusing on travel destinations, ecotourism, and upcoming events. Nicole provided information and brochures on career and volunteer opportunities with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A touch tank with crayfish, salamanders, turtles, and an American alligator was available to highlight the importance of aquatic species conservation.

Submitted by Nicole Rankin, Warm Springs Fish Technology Center, Georgia

Collecting tagged mussels for age validation

Greg Moyer and Nicole Rankin of the Warm Springs Regional Fish Center surveyed for freshwater mussels in the Flint River Basin on June 30, 2010. The purpose of this survey was to relocate or recapture Elephantear mussels tagged in July 2009. Last summer, 21 Elephantears from Chickasawhatchee Creek and 52 Elephantears from Ichawaynochaway Creek were collected, notched using a triangular file, tagged with numbered and passive integrated transponder tags, and replaced in respective creeks.

The goal was to recover tagged mussels one year from tagging to determine and validate age. Unfortunately, the high water levels in Ichawaynochaway Creek prevented the survey at this site. Greg



Tagged Elephantears. FWS Photo.

and Nicole were more successful at the Chickasawhatchee Creek site and were able to relocate 13 tagged Elephantears. Ten mussels were collected and will be sectioned for age determination and validation. Greg and Nicole will return to Ichawaynochaway Creek to relocate and collect Elephantears for age determination and validation and to compare growth to the mussels collected from the Chickasawhatchee site.

Submitted by Nicole Rankin, Warm Springs Fish Technology Center, Georgia



Fish art T-shirts hanging up to dry. Photo by Diane Bunzel, FWS.

A “catchy” event leaves fish imprints at Sewee

On Saturday, June 12, children arrived bright and early at the Sewee Visitor and Environmental Education Center with their families and friends. It was the annual Youth Fishing Rodeo, and approximately 70 girls and boys of all ages, carrying rods and nets, found their fishing spots around the Sewee Pond. Prior to the event, the pond had been stocked with 1,000 pounds of Channel catfish! On hand to assist the kids were Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge and Francis Marion National Forest staff members, agency volunteers, Sampit Bassmasters, and the East Cooper Fishing Club.

Sounds of baited lines hitting the water and the excited voices of children permeated the air throughout the morning. When nine-year-old Jada Simmons was asked if she enjoyed the rodeo, Jada said, “Fishing is fun. I like the gooey worms, and we get to cook up the catfish and eat it!”

Catching fish wasn’t the only fun activity. At the Fish Art tent, the children explored their creative side. Pat McCormack, Sewee volunteer, guided the kids through the process of fish art: “The children get a fish, dry it off, paint it with whatever colors they choose, press a T-shirt on to the painted fish, and then hang it up to dry.”

Creativity flowed! Signature shirts with brightly colored fish designs enclosed the tent before the weigh-in at 11 a.m.

When it was time for the weigh-in, the kids lined up with their fish, each one hoping to take home a prize. Prizes were awarded for two age groups (ages 6 to 10 years-old and 11 to 16 years old) for distinctive categories: most fish caught by weight, largest fish by weight, and most fish caught by each gender. Jessie Perrine took first place with more than 23 pounds of fish in the 6 to 10 age group. With about 24 pounds of fish, Jeb Christopher took first prize in the older group. Grace Christopher took home the prize for most fish caught by a girl, and Matthew Slesinski won the prize in the boy’s competition. All children left the Center with bait buckets full of educational and fun fishing materials.



Prize winner Jessie Perrine needs help to hold up his catch! Photo by Diane Bunzel, FWS.

The rodeo was a wonderful success (despite a heat index around 100° F) thanks to the generous support of agency volunteers, and local organizations and businesses. East Cooper Fishing Club of Mount Pleasant supplied catfish bait and gave the kids great fishing tips. Carolina Seafood in McClellanville provided squid bait, and Georgetown Seafood supplied the fish for the fish T-shirts. Sampit Bassmasters of Georgetown served everyone a free, hot dog lunch with water and drinks. Families expressed their thanks to everyone, saying they were definitely looking forward to next year’s rodeo.

The Sewee Center is a visitor facility operated jointly by the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge and Francis Marion National Forest. Visit the website at <http://www.fws.gov/seweecenter/> or call 843.928.3368 to learn more about the Center and keep informed of monthly events and activities. More photos in [Photo Album](#).

Submitted by Dan Ashworth and Diane Bunzel, Cape Romain NWR, Awendaw, South Carolina



Staff from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Coast Guard, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and Georgia Department of Natural Resources assisting in the pelican release. Photo by Karen Sughrue, FWS.

Brown pelicans impacted by the Deepwater Horizon/BP spill released off Georgia coast

Over two days during the last week in June, 150 brown pelicans affected by the Deepwater Horizon/BP oil spill were released from the U.S. Coast Guard station in Brunswick, Georgia. The two release events were a huge success and were the largest bird release events since the beginning of the spill. Strong collaboration between multiple agencies was a key factor in this achievement, requiring the partnership of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U. S. Coast Guard, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

The pelicans arrived from the Fort Jackson wildlife rehabilitation center in Buras, Louisiana, where they had undergone initial cleaning and treatment. The birds were originally planned to have been released in Texas, but due to the development of Hurricane Alex, a new release site had to be selected. The Plantation Creek dock behind the U.S. Coast Guard station in Brunswick, Georgia, was an ideal coastal setting because it was within a few minutes drive from the Golden Isles Airport. The birds were flown in crates (three birds to a crate) on a Coast Guard aircraft and then transported in vans to the station. When the crate doors were finally opened, the initial behavior of the birds varied. Some birds jumped out right away, while others took their sweet time. Some birds chose to swim around a bit, while others immediately took to the air. By the time the last crate was opened, though, the majority of the birds had formed groups and had exited the scene.

After numerous stressful days in captivity, the pelicans are finally thriving in a natural environment. After the second release on July 1, federal and state biologists took a boat trip with the Coast Guard out to Dredge Island – a dredge spoil site with numerous terns, gulls and pelicans. Twenty-nine newly released pelicans (identified by their red or orange leg bands) were spotted doing quite well out on the island. Also, on July 5, twelve released birds were sighted near the northeastern tip of Bird Island in Nassau Sound, Duval County, Florida. These sightings bring encouraging news in the hopes that the birds will continue to adjust and reestablish themselves in a new location, away from the impacted areas of the oil spill. More photos in [Photo Album](#).

Submitted by Karen Sughrue, Georgia Ecological Services - Coastal Georgia Sub-office, Townsend, Georgia



Dr. Sharon Taylor (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Senior Chief Petty Officer Jeremy McConnell (U.S. Coast Guard) both seen here holding the crate) directed the planning and implementation of live release. Photo by Karen Sughrue, FWS.



Refuge Officers Chris Smith and Frank Simms presented a session on Apprehending Illegal Reptile and Amphibian Collectors. Photo by Howard Phillips, FWS.

North Carolina Law Enforcement officers attend summer training

On July 1, 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, held a one-day training session for law enforcement officers dealing with the illegal harvest and trade in reptiles and amphibians in eastern North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. Twenty-four officers, including eight Refuge Officers, thirteen Conservation Officers, one North Carolina State Park Ranger and two Fort Bragg Wildlife Officers, attended the training, held at the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge headquarters in Columbia, North Carolina. Topics included the Identification of Local Species, Safe Handling Techniques, North Carolina Regulations and Permit Requirements, Illegal Take of Reptiles and

Amphibians in Eastern North Carolina, Tools and Techniques for Apprehending Violators and Current Case Studies.



North Carolina Biologist Jeff Hall and Volunteer Zach Orr presented a session on Handling Reptiles and Amphibians in the Field. Photo by Howard Phillips, FWS.

Submitted by Chris Smith, Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge, Swan Quarter, North Carolina

Friends Group --



Participants of the 2010 Fisheries Friends Conference pose for a group photo. Included is Friends of Wolf Creek NFFH, Inc. member Barry Begley (second row, fourth from left). Photo by Kafia Barrett, FWS.

Friends of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Inc. attend Fisheries Friends Conference

Friends of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Inc. member Barry Begley, along with Wolf Creek Deputy Project Leader Sheila Kirk, attended the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fisheries Friends Group Conference held in Washington D.C., April 20 - 22, 2010. The national conference was an opportunity for Fisheries Friends Groups from across the country to network and share ideas.

In D.C., the group continued the momentum created last year by providing a national forum to support and expand the number of Fisheries Friends Groups; promoting the conservation of aquatic resources; providing educational opportunities for the public; and to advocating the Service's mission. Attendees also learned more about the Fisheries Program budget, along with both current and future program priorities, potential lobbying/partnering organizations, the formation of the established national association, including bylaws review, and spent time on the Hill with the various Senate and Congressional representatives to discuss important issues relating to the goals of the Fisheries Program and the overall mission of the Service.

While on Capitol Hill, representatives from Wolf Creek Hatchery also met with staffers of U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell from Kentucky, along with those representing U.S. Congressmen from Kentucky, Ed Whitfield and Hal Rogers.

Submitted by Amanda Patrick, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Jamestown, Kentucky

Hats Off -



Luizetta reading volunteer information. FWS photo.

Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge's youngest volunteer places second in science competition

Luizetta Vadimovna Navrazhnykh, 16, a Florida Atlantic University student, and a volunteer at Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge placed second in the world in the Plant Sciences category in Intel's International Science and Engineering Fair held in May in San Jose, California. Luizetta earned a second place award of \$1,500 and the right to compete internationally by winning the top prizes at the local, regional, state and national science fairs.

Luizetta's project explained Growth Form in Intertidal Lichen Zonation. This means to the rest of us that in areas where lichen grows, the more advanced foliose lichen has the ecological advantage. However, at a certain point in the rocky intertidal habitat, it is out competed by the simpler crustose lichen. Her project explained this pattern of Zonation by calculating the ability of the lichens to withstand wave forces. She determined that the crustose lichen is better suited for this environment because of its extensive attachment structures.

The Intel International Science and Engineering Fair has been administered by the Society for Science and the Public (SSP) since its inception in 1950. SSP is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to the public engagement in scientific research and education.

When Luizetta is not starring in local plays, studying for class, or winning international science competitions, she is volunteering



Luizetta prepares to look at lichens on the Cypress Boardwalk. Photo by David Underwood, FWS.

four hours a week at the refuge. Her Saturday mornings are spent meeting and greeting visitors in the Visitor Center. Ironically, Luizetta volunteers with our oldest volunteer Frank who is 90 years old. Luizetta has started a research project at the refuge. She will be studying refuge lichens and how the noise and other pollutants from the construction of a new Cypress Boardwalk will affect them.

Submitted by David Underwood, Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Boynton Beach, Florida

I Gave '8' --



A BOW participant lends to slash ovens while baking pineapple upside-down cake and pork loin in marmalade during a Primitive Chef class. Photo by Melody Ray-Culp, FWS.

Becoming an Outdoor Woman workshops in Florida

Don't let the funky name and potential for pink camo put you off! This is a terrific program that gets women, city and country gals alike, out on the land and into the water. Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) workshops offer a relaxed and supportive outdoor classroom for gentle immersion, allowing women to get comfortable outside and ready to connect with family and friends who love to hike, camp, hunt, fish, canoe, watch birds, and otherwise enjoy Florida's natural resources. Participants arrive for lunch on a Friday afternoon and depart after lunch on Sunday, having taken four classes from a menu of 25 that includes everything from pan, bass, and fly fishing; to archery, handguns, long-guns, and muzzleloaders; to backpacking, wilderness survival, knot tying, and orienteering; to canoeing/kayaking and motor-boating; to the most popular Primitive Chef, which really should be called Primitive Gourmet! There's also plenty to do in the evening with campfires, story-telling, star-gazing, and night hiking. Participants also can obtain Hunter Safety Certification, good for a lifetime and accepted in every state.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission offers three BOW workshops each year around the state. The cost is \$175 for the "deluxe package" (bed in a rustic, air-conditioned bunkhouse), with a discount to "tenters." The likes of Bass Pro Shops and Cabelas are generous sponsors of BOW, with each graduating class adding more shoppers to their aisles. Where else can you pick up a camo teddy along with a turkey whistle, cross-bow, and ammo? Of the 101 ladies at last year's spring workshop in Ocala National Forest, about 75 percent were first-timers, though some gals return many times to enjoy the camaraderie and practice their skills. After three workshops as a participant, "I Gave 8" and extended the fun by volunteering as an assistant instructor.



BOW participants in a Map and Compass class learn to navigate under an oak tree. Photo by Melody Ray-Culp, FWS.

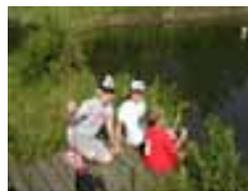
Submitted by Melody Ray-Culp, Florida Panhandle Coastal Program, Panama City, FL Ecological Services Field Office

Photo Album --

A "catchy" event leaves fish imprints at Sewee -- more photos



Judiah Jones, carrying his fishing rod and net, is ready to fish. Photo by Diane Bunzel, FWS.



Katelyn Fidebrant comes over to fish with Lindsey and Owen Goble. Photo by Dan Anbaroch, FWS.



Jade Simons shows off her biggest fish. Photo by Diane Bunzel, FWS.



Charlie Godwin shows how she safely holds her catfish. Photo by Diane Bunzel, FWS.



Grace and Brother Jeb Christopher head home with prizes and T-shirts. Photo by Diane Bunzel, FWS.



Matthew Szepinski proudly displays his prize. Photo by Diane Bunzel, FWS.



Tension mounts as all eyes are on the scale. Photo by Diane Bunzel, FWS.

Brown pelicans impacted by the Deepwater Horizon/BP spill released off Georgia coast -- more photos



Pelicans getting ready to exit the crate. Photo by Karen Sughrus, FWS.



Newly released brown pelicans swimming in Plantation Creek near Georgia's Brunswick River. Photo by Karen Sughrus, FWS.



Newly released brown pelicans (two pictured here with colored leg bands) integrating with other pelicans on Obedge Island. Photo by Karen Sughrus, FWS.



Newly released brown pelicans (four pictured here with colored leg bands) integrating with other pelicans on Obedge Island. Photo by Karen Sughrus, FWS.



The pelicans traveled on a U.S. Coast Guard aircraft to Brunswick, Georgia. Photo by Karen Sughrus, FWS.

Visitor Services --



A record crowd enjoyed a perfect day for fishing. Photo by Amanda Patrick, FWS.

Trout-tastic fishing fun at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery

The 24th annual Catch a Rainbow Kids Fishing Derby on June 5, 2010, was filled with fantastic fishing, smiling faces, jumping trout, and memories to last a lifetime. The annual derby, which began in 1986, has blossomed into one of the largest events of its kind in the country. Total attendance for this year's event was more than 3,300 people, including 1,525 kids.

With plenty to see and do, the event is designed as a fun-filled way to get kids through age 15 outdoors and connected to fishing. Several booths and activities were provided for participants' enjoyment, including archery and BB sports through the local Ducks Unlimited chapter. Everyone also enjoyed all the hot dogs, sodas, bottled water, cotton candy, and popcorn they could eat, and each child received a goodie bag full of treats. Each derby participant, aged 5 and up, chose a rod & reel, a tackle box, a sleeping bag, a tent, or a camping chair. Tots enjoyed their own rod & reel sets as prizes at the kiddie pool.

As in past years, the annual derby event was made possible through the generous support and contributions of many local, regional and national sponsors and businesses. For 2010, sixteen major sponsors donated at least \$1,000 in either cash or items, while countless other organizations gave of their time and/or resources. The event also included the participation of 191 volunteers as well, making it a true example of the positive benefits of partnering. Through such teamwork, an event with a value of \$51,000.00 occurred with little or no cost to any one agency due to the generous donations of a myriad of individuals and

organizations.

Submitted by Amanda Patrick, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Jamestown, Kentucky



Wage Grade Profile --

From hard hat to chef's cap, Jon has got it covered



Jon Powers in one of his many hats! Photo by Cindy Hatley.

After spending four years as a watercraft mechanic in the U. S. Army back in 1986, Jonathan (Jon) Powers was thinking about his next move in life. With his military experience in hand, he began filling out a few SF-171s. While reading an article about a new national wildlife refuge established in eastern North Carolina, he reminisced to his mother about his YCC days at Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in his home state of Virginia. Unbeknownst to Jon, his mom took one of his SF-171s and mailed it in to Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. While his parents were away on vacation, Jon received a letter from the refuge letting him know that he had made the first cut and needed to submit additional materials to complete his application. Within months, Jon was wearing a Fish and Wildlife uniform as a

maintenance mechanic for Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges.

Of course, like many refuge employees, he has worn numerous hats over the years. As part of the fire crew, he has assisted with prescribed and wild fires. Along with other maintenance workers, Jon has been given the opportunity to travel to many other refuges in the North Carolina Coastal Plain Refuges Complex and beyond. In addition, he's banded ducks, built pens for the red wolves, patrolled for sea turtle nests and even worked a stint as the red wolf caretaker.

He made the national news when he went to the airport to pick up eight red wolves of the first group to be reintroduced into Alligator River! His days are far from monotonous. This is one of the reasons he has enjoyed his time at the refuge complex for so long.

"The refuge staff is like one big family," Jon says. "I enjoy interacting with everyone from all the different program areas."

Although you will find him maintaining water levels on the impoundments and assisting with large V-ditching projects, Jon still takes time to help the visitor services staff with every-day maintenance needs. He's not only there to help, he's also big on passing on his knowledge to anyone who wants to learn.

Jon also enjoys learning and recently attended a Preservations Skills Workshop at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia. You might have seen him on the cover of the November/December 2009 issue of Refuge Update. While learning the many ways of preserving cultural resources on refuges, Jon said, "It felt good knowing there are others who are concerned about those resources on natural lands."

While Jon is fond of hunting and fishing with his son, Frankie, he doesn't do it just for the sport. Anyone who has been around Jon at work or in the community knows he also enjoys cooking. While a bachelor, Jon said he developed a knack for getting just the right ingredients together to come up with delicious meals. His wife Christy can sit back and take care of other duties around the house when Jon is in the kitchen. In case you think he's just a run-of-the-mill type chef, you would only have to show up at one of the local stew or chili culinary challenges to realize just how talented Jon is. Last year in the fifteenth Annual Chili Cook Off, Jon took home second Place in the Other Meat category for his Venison Chili as a Home Kitchen Contestant. And earlier this year, he won first Place in the Amateur-Stews/Soups category for his Wildgame Stew at the Stews, Soups, and Sweets "Bustin' the Blues Ultimate Culinary Challenge."

Of course, Jon also has been known to cook up a storm for his co-workers. In fact, quite a few in the maintenance program have noticed a need to purchase larger uniform pants through the years!

Submitted by Cindy Heffley, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Manteo, North Carolina