

# the shell-cracker



<http://www.sdafs.org/flafs>

FLORIDA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

**October, 2005**

## *President's Message:*

I want to talk about the three “R’s” and how they affect our future. If you are hoping to read about “Reading, writing and arithmetic” then I suggest you read Larry Olmsted’s article on achieving personal success (How to Get Really Smart and Secure a Super Job; Fisheries; Vol. 30 [3]). Here, I am referring to the organizational R’s: recruitment, retention, and reorganization.

*Recruitment* – Since I became a Chapter member in 1995 – a recruitment event itself – I have watched student participation grow dramatically. Student recruitment is important for the entire profession, and it helps our Chapter bring in a steady stream of energetic and earnest individuals. In particular, the formation of our new AFS Student Subunit will help recruit students and build future leaders.

Recruitment of professionals seems to be working, but is unstructured and may be ineffective. The solution most readily available to each of us is to act as recruiters as opportunities arise. When you meet a fishery professional you have never seen at an annual Chapter meeting, do you encourage them to attend? Go ahead and tell them about our topical symposium theme this year (see p. 5), about the growing number of posters, or about whatever it is that attracts you to the annual meeting. They are likely to enjoy attending and their participation is likely to make our meetings more interesting. Sure everyone is busy, but someone out there may just need an invitation.

*Retention* – We must be doing something right because Chapter memberships have been strong and steady (in the 230-260 range) for the last decade. We are indebted to the consistency and quality of our website and newsletter for advertising Chapter events and presenting breaking fishery news. Our annual meetings – our centerpiece of Chapter activities – also contribute to retaining members interested in learning, networking, and socializing.

But what else could we be doing to engage and retain members? I hope to see a broader range of Chapter activities in the future, especially in terms of continuing education and outreach. I have heard it discussed before that we should sponsor an educational workshop at the beginning (or end) of our annual meetings. I have also heard others express interest in adopting a stream or spearheading an aquatic restoration project. These are great ideas. I encourage you to think of – and act on – group activities that will help with career development, or build *esprit de corps*, while engaging our Chapter with a larger community.

*Reorganization* – Perhaps the most visible success in this area is the formation of the student subunit. I have watched this subunit for several years now – from its beginnings as nothing more than an idea through the passing of its bylaws – and I was amazed at how this galvanized student productivity. It is no accident that students are more involved in the annual meetings, organizing symposia (<http://>



# Getting in Touch

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[surf.ifas.ufl.edu/colloquium.htm](http://surf.ifas.ufl.edu/colloquium.htm)), and contributing to our newsletter (see p.7).

We are constantly reorganizing our leadership, by the very nature of electing a new president each year. As such, this is a great opportunity for a series of individuals to develop their professional skills and for the organization to maintain a fresh perspective.

Our future as an organization depends on our continued achievement in these three areas. Moreover, I would argue that too much focus on any single "R", at the expense of the others, can make an organization lopsided and weaken it. As a volunteer organization, we should take note and be pleased with our ability to build such a balanced foundation for our future success.

**Rich McBride, President FL AFS**

## *Upcoming Events*

Oct 2-5: Eighth International Shellfish Restoration Conference, Brest, France.

Oct 5-7: 2005 Sportfishing Summit, Key Largo, FL.

Oct 16-19: 59th Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies: When Practice Meets Policy, St. Louis, MI.

Oct 17-20: Organization of Fish and Wildlife Information Managers 2005 Annual Meeting and Conference, Tallahassee, FL.

Oct 19-21: 2nd International Sustainable Marine Fish Culture Conference and Workshop, Fort Peirce, FL.

Nov 7-11: 58th Annual Meeting of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, San Andres Isla, Columbia.

Nov 8-10: Southeast Bycatch Workshop, St. Petersburg, FL.

Interested in contributing something to the Shell-Cracker? Email Jackie Debicella at <a href="mailto:jmdebicella@mactec.com">jmdebicella@mactec.com</a> with any articles or information that you would like to be included in the next issue. The deadline for the next issue is December 30th, 2005, so start fishing...
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# FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION COMMUNITY-BASED FISHING PROJECTS

By Paul W. Thomas

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) Community-Based Fishing Project operates state-wide in 51 water bodies (1740 acres) located in Florida's four major metropolitan centers, Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa/St. Petersburg, and the Palm Beach/Broward/Miami-Dade county urban corridor of southeast Florida, which can claim over 85% of the state's 16 million-plus residents as permanent and serve as the destinations for over 45 million annual visitors. It has been in existence for nearly 30 years since the humble beginnings took root in Jacksonville in the mid-1970's. The project's goal is to provide a diversity of convenient close to home fishing opportunities for Florida's increasingly urban population. Our premise is that ease of access, security and family-friendly atmosphere are important to Florida's urban anglers. Virtually all waters are in state, county and city parks, and program design, maintenance, and operations are developed in conjunction with the local cooperator. Most waters have been established as FWC Fish Management Area's (FMA) with appropriate harvest restrictions, bag limits, and other site specific regulations such as motor restrictions as needed. Three quarters of annual Project funding is through the Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration program with the remaining budget portion stemming from the sale of freshwater fishing licenses.

Project waters are typically intensively managed fisheries utilizing hatchery stockings and supplemental feeding. For example in 2003-04 over 177,000 channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*) and 10,000 palmetto bass (*Morone chrysops* x *M. saxatilis*) were stocked and over 100 automated fish feeders dispensed 12,000 lbs. of feed. In most instances supplemental feeding is used to attract anglers and their quarry in closer proximity to each other at choice bank fishing areas, not to increase growth rates of sportfish. Creative outside-the-box fisheries have been created as well to provide urban anglers with unique catch opportunities such as Dover Park's common snook (*Centropomus undecemilis*) fishery east and inland of Tampa and Orlando's trophy channel catfish site, Kirkman Pond. Other more traditional fisheries management techniques in use include: aeration systems to stabilize dissolved oxygen levels, quarterly water quality monitoring, fish attractors of various designs, aquatic plant control activities including herbicide use and stocking of triploid grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*), fish and wildlife habitat improvements such as drawdowns to improve lake bottom substrate and planting of submersed and emergent native aquatic vegetation, and annual fish population monitoring. Ease of angler access is a concern and is addressed in a variety of ways from simply having site maintenance personnel hand-clear bank fishing locations to construction of universally accessible fishing piers and boat ramps.



Earth Day family fishing event at Oscar Scherer State Park in Osprey, Florida

A key element that distinguishes community-based fishing from traditional lake management activities are FWC-sponsored family fishing events, held to increase awareness of the Project or a particular pond site and encourage participation in fishing by the general public. Fishing is considered a “gateway” or introductory outdoor activity; one that is easy and economical to pick up, can be enjoyed by the whole family, and which can stimulate interest in Florida’s natural resources and associated outdoor sports. These and other related community activities are extremely popular e.g., in 2003-04 project staff conducted or facilitated 249 outreach events with an audience of 773,155.

Because of the popularity of FWC fishing events and other related outreach efforts the Project has evolved into a unique front-line link between the agency and the general public and has fostered several long-term partnerships with local stakeholders. For instance, Bass Pro Shops worked with Orlando staff to create a low coast boat rental program at Turkey Lake which generated over 4000 hours of fishing in its’ first year. The Tampa Bay chapter of Safari Club International provided funding, manpower, and materials for two public fishing piers in Tampa parks and a mobile fishing event trailer that is made available to community organizations to help conduct their own fishing events as well as increasing staff efficiency with fishing outreach activities. Even classic rock has had a hand in community-based fishing partnerships. The Van Zandt family of Lynyrd Skynyrd fame donated land and a pond for a fishing park in Jacksonville where adults are not allowed to fish unless accompanied by a child. Project personnel are a familiar sight at the Florida Sportsman Magazine fishing shows and the Frank Sargeant Outdoor Expo in Tampa, (Florida’s largest trade show that caters to the outdoorsperson and families) which has helped foster an outstanding relationship between FWC, the public, and the media.

Community-based fishing is a time proven concept here in Florida that works to bring our residents and our outdoor recreational resource opportunities together in a positive sense. As Florida’s urban areas and populations continue to grow, the interest and demand for fresh water fishing opportunities grows accordingly. New sites need to be continually evaluated and added as the usual constraints of time, funding, and manpower allow in order to meet the outdoor recreational needs of our burgeoning constituency.

## **ATTENTION: FAFS Annual Meeting—Abstract Format**

Limit abstracts to < 300 words and follow this format (WORD is preferred):

Presenter: McBride, R. S.; Tel. 727-896-8626; Email: [richard.mcbride@myfwc.com](mailto:richard.mcbride@myfwc.com)

Author(s): McBride, R. S.<sup>1</sup> and R. E. Matheson<sup>2</sup>. Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, Fish & Wildlife Research Institute, 100 Eighth Avenue, SE, St. Petersburg, FL 33701. Tel. 727-896-8626. <sup>1</sup>[richard.mcbride@myfwc.com](mailto:richard.mcbride@myfwc.com) ; <sup>2</sup>[eddie.matheson@myfwc.com](mailto:eddie.matheson@myfwc.com)

Title: Florida’s Diadromous Fishes: biology, ecology, management, and conservation

Abstract: This symposium will review the concepts and context of diadromy among Florida’s fishes. Diadromy is a complex life history pattern that involves true migrations between freshwater and marine biomes. These migrations occur at predictable times or at characteristic life stages and involve reciprocal migrations between freshwater and saltwater of most or all individuals of the species. Diadromy can be further subdivided into anadromy, catadromy, or amphidromy based on which biome serves as the spawning or nursery grounds. Diadromous species represent only about 1% of all fish species worldwide, and diadromy is similarly rare among Florida fishes. Nonetheless, diadromous species are very important economically and ecologically. Some of Florida’s diadromous fishes are economically important fishery species. Other diadromous species are abundant enough to serve as significant and predictable prey resources for other fishes and wildlife. Other diadromous species, such as Gulf sturgeon, have special conservation status. All diadromous fishes are important sentinels of environmental health because their life history encompasses essential fish habitat from the non-tidal, freshwater to coastal, marine biomes. This symposium will review the more popularly known examples – particularly sturgeons, catadromous eels, anadromous shads, and striped bass – and introduce other Florida species whose diadromous nature is less well known or more equivocal.

Student Presentation: no (versus yes, to indicate work reported was completed while a student)

Presentation type: oral (versus poster)

# **Annual Meeting and Symposium Announcement – 1<sup>st</sup> Call for Papers**

## **26<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Florida Chapter of the American Fisheries Society**

**February 21-23, 2006**  
**Ocala 4H-Camp, Ocala, Florida**

The 2006 annual meeting, which will consist of both a symposium and contributed topics, is coming together. The symposium topic for this year's meeting will be "Florida's Exotic Aquatic Animals". More than 50 species of fresh and saltwater exotic fish, along with numerous invertebrates, have been accidentally or purposefully introduced into Florida. Introduced species include peacock bass, grass carp, flathead catfish, blue tilapia, spotted tilapia, oscars, Asian swamp eels, Mayan cichlids, armored catfish, plecos, lionfish, Corbicula, Daphnia lumholtzi, and green mussels.

What exactly are exotics? How did they get here? What is their current status? Risk Assessment - What is it and does it work? What effects have they had on Florida's ecosystems? Do we know? What do the data show? What are prohibited and restricted species? These are some of the many questions that this year's symposium will address.

The meeting format will consist of both invited and contributed oral presentations and posters. Dig into your file cabinets and help us better understand these animals! Plan on giving a contributed platform or poster presentation either on exotics or on another topic of your choice. **All abstracts are due Friday, January 13, 2006 for full consideration in the symposium or contributed sessions.** Send your abstract (<300 words) and associated information in formatted fields (follow format on p.4) to [Fish@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:Fish@ifas.ufl.edu); in the subject line of your email, please list the author(s) as they will appear in the program (e.g., Holder-LundyHyle.doc). Platform presentations will be 20 minutes (15 minutes for presentation and 5 minutes for questions or discussion). We will have PowerPoint 2003 loaded on a laptop capable of accepting your presentation on a CD or DVD. All posters will be formally presented on Tuesday evening, February 21, and can be left up for the entire meeting. Posters should be no larger than 150 X 100 cm (60" X 40"), but they can be set up either as portrait or landscape format on an easel. If you require other options for projection or poster formats, please contact the annual meeting's Program-chair Chuck Cichra at [Fish@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:Fish@ifas.ufl.edu).

**Students:** There will be travel awards available for students. The application form is available on the Chapter's website at <http://www.sdafs.org/flafs/awards.html>. Master and doctoral students are also eligible for the Roger Rottmann Memorial Scholarship, for which the recipient(s) will be announced at the Annual Meeting. More information and the application materials are available at <http://www.sdafs.org/flafs/doc/rothmann.html>.

The 2006 meeting will be held at the Ocala 4-H Camp, on beautiful Sellers Lake in the Ocala National Forest. This venue is located east of Ocala, south of SR 40, just off SR19. Maps will be available in the next issue of the Shellcracker and are currently on the Chapter's website at <http://www.sdafs.org/flafs/doc/ocala4h.html>. The schedule will remain the same as in the past. We will begin with lunch followed by presentation on contributed topics on Tuesday, February 21; symposium platform presentations will be organized for Wednesday, February 22; the meeting will end with presentations on contributed topics, followed by lunch and awards on Thursday, February 23, 2005. Please note the late registration fee on this year's form: Help reduce everyone's registration time, give us a head's up on the head count, save money, get the correct-size meeting shirt, and don't miss any talks by filling out the pre-registration form and sending in your deposit to the Chapter's Secretary-Treasurer Eric Nagid by January 13, 2006 (see pre-registration form in this newsletter). In addition, you should plan to bring your own linens or sleeping bag if you are planning to sleep at the camp. Linens will only be available in limited supplies for \$6.00.

We are very excited about the plans for our 2006 annual meeting and hope to see you there!

If you want to suggest possible speakers or to get involved in the planning of the symposium or contributed sessions, please contact Chuck Cichra, Program Chair, at the University of Florida -- phone: 352-392-9617 ext 249 or e-mail: [Fish@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:Fish@ifas.ufl.edu)

### **Attention Fearless Chum Chasers!!!!**

Just a friendly reminder for all. Our stock of chum and raffle prizes now consists of one small box and a couple of large items. Your assistance is needed in soliciting items for donation to the raffle. ANYTHING Biology or fishing related that you are willing to beg for, swipe, buy or donate would greatly contribute to our raffle cache. Remember, all proceeds go towards funding student travel to our annual FAFS meeting. If you have any questions or need mailing information please contact [bridgettif-fany@yahoo.com](mailto:bridgettif-fany@yahoo.com). We look forward to seeing you all in February.

**Florida Chapter of the American Fisheries Society – 4H Camp Ocala, FL  
Annual Meeting Registration: February 21 to 23, 2006**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ STUDENT (YES/NO): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS\*: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DAY-TIME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

AFFILIATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL DATE/TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*This address will be used in our mailing list and should be the one where you want to receive newsletters and other materials.*

**PRE**-Registration Fees prior to January 13, 2006:

**One-day Registration:** (\$20.00) \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Registration:** (\$30.00) \_\_\_\_\_

**LATE**-Registration Fees after January 13, 2006:

**One-day Registration:** (\$23.00) \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Registration:** (\$35.00) \_\_\_\_\_

**Partial Meals and Lodging**

Tuesday: 21 February, 2006

Lunch	(\$6.00)	_____
Dinner	(\$12.00)	_____
Lodging	(\$23.50)	_____

Wednesday: 22 February, 2006

Breakfast	(\$3.00)	_____
Lunch	(\$6.00)	_____
Dinner	(\$12.00)	_____
Lodging	(\$23.50)	_____

Thursday: 23 February, 2006

Breakfast	(\$3.00)	_____
Lunch	(\$6.00)	_____

**Full Meals and Lodging:** (\$95.00) \_\_\_\_\_

**Linens (Bring your own or limited supply):** (\$6.00) \_\_\_\_\_

**FL Chapter dues (calendar year 2006):** (\$10.00) \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Enclosed: (Minimum \$10.00 Deposit)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Balance Due:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dietary Needs: (vegetarian, low fat, etc.)** Note: This is a cafeteria-style service and food must be ordered at least a week in advance. Please respond promptly if you need something special, training center staff will try to accommodate:

What size meeting T-shirt do you want?    Small    Medium    Large    X-Large    XX-Large    XXX-Large

**Please Make Checks Payable to Florida Chapter, AFS and mail to:**

Eric Nagid	
c/o FWC Gainesville Fisheries Lab	Phone: (352) 392-9617 x. 240
7922 NW 71 <sup>st</sup> Street	Fax: (352) 392-3672
Gainesville, FL 32653	Email: eric.nagid@myfwc.com

We can accept **non-FWC VISA** or **MasterCard** on the meeting date.



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# Student Section

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## ABUNDANCE AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF PREDATORS ON SEAWARD MIGRATING JUVENILE AMERICAN SHAD IN THE ST. JOHNS RIVER, FLORIDA

By Nick Trippel  
University of Florida/FWC

The St. Johns River in Florida was once considered home to the largest recreational American shad, *Alosa sapidissima*, fishery on the Atlantic coast, however the fishery has drastically declined due to continuing decreases in American shad abundance. My objectives were to assess the temporal trends in juvenile American shad leaving the river, to compare catch rates to those of a similar study completed 35 years ago, and to evaluate predator diets in the sample area before, during, and after juvenile American shad moved through the area. I also compared predator diets to prey availability over 2004-2005 to evaluate seasonal variation in the relative importance of prey species to predator diets within the Palatka area of the St. Johns River.

Trawl catch rates of juvenile American shad and other juvenile *Alosa spp.* were extremely low. Only 23 American shad were collected during 12 months of sampling. The highest catch rates occurred in October which was similar to the historical study, and catch rates were similar to those from 35 years ago using similar trawling gear. The surface trawl may not have been an effective sampling method as more juvenile *Alosa spp.* were collected while electrofishing for predators. Electrofishing catch rates peaked in November. Only one American shad and one hickory shad were found in predator diets throughout 12 months of sampling and 1,532 total predator diets measured.

Correlation analysis revealed that trawl catches and occurrence of individuals found in diet samples were positively related for several species including: Atlantic menhaden *Brevortia tyrannus*, sucker-mouth catfish *Hypostomus plecostomus*, and white catfish *Ameiurus catus*. The number of species found in largemouth bass *Micropterus salmoides* diets varied significantly by month and size class. Atlantic menhaden were found to be the most energetically beneficial to predators, and I found that during months when they were present, all size classes of largemouth bass utilized them as prey.

Management implications of this study include helping to successfully manage the American shad fishery in this river, and to better relate the life history of common prey items in this coastal river system to seasonal and ontogenetic diet shifts for the common predators.

### Student Announcements

- The FL Chapter student subunit now has a webpage: <http://www.sdafs.org/flafs/Students/index.htm>. Thanks to Nicole Morris (Univ. of West Florida) and Bob Wattendorf (FWC) for putting this together.
- The East Carolina Student Subunit of AFS is hosting this year's student colloquium. Information is available at: [http://www.ecu.edu/org/afs/The\\_Fifth\\_Annual\\_AFS\\_Student\\_Colloquium\\_Information\\_Page.html](http://www.ecu.edu/org/afs/The_Fifth_Annual_AFS_Student_Colloquium_Information_Page.html)

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