



Mark your calendars...

- August 27, 28 or 29—National Wildlife Federation free workshop at Museum of Natural History in Gainesville—“Watersheds and Wetlands” for K-8 educators. Contact Marilyn Roberts at 352-846-2000 x210
- September 10—Clean Marina and Boatyard Workshop 6-8 pm, Embassy Suites Hotel, Jacksonville. Contact the Sea Grant office for more info.
- September 17-23—National Pollution Prevention Week
- September 28—Grand opening for Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve. Call 904-461-4054 for more info.
- More on the back page!

Focus on fish

Welcome to the second issue of Aqua Notes! If you are new to our mailing list and missed the first issue, give us a call and we'll send you a copy!

What's been happening?

The summer has been busy—I was involved with three 4-H summer camps (involving participants from Nassau, Duval and St. Johns counties), several Clean Marina checklists (congratulations to Palm Cove Marina in Jacksonville on their official designation on July 25!), and a workshop called “Bringing the Estuary into your classroom” (co-organized by Janet Zimmerman with the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve). Through all the chaos, I try and find time every weekend to head out to the intracoastal and fish for a few hours. I've been having a great time learning what types of fish (and other critters) are found in this area. I've learned how to get a catfish off the hook without being stuck or slimed, and can even throw a cast net fairly consistently! This issue of Aqua Notes is dedicated to fish and fishing—as always, if you have any questions or suggestions for topics, please give us a call!



Some of the participants in the 4-H Coastal Camp show off their “fishy” crafts

Maia McGuire

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Recreational saltwater fishing regulations

The newest issue of the recreational saltwater fishing regulations came out in July. This publication will now only be issued twice a year. You can pick up a copy at the Sea Grant Office, at you local tax collectors of- fice or at most bait and tackle shops. Remember that you may need a saltwater fishing license—rules about licenses are available online at <http://marinefisheries.org> and you can also purchase your license online at this site.

Monofilament recycling program starting

Discarded monofilament fishing line kills or injures hundreds of birds, turtles and manatees each year. Recreational and commercial fishing generates a large amount of waste monofilament. This monofilament can be recycled, but there is no existing program in NE Florida to collect and recycle this type of plastic. The NE Florida Sea Grant office is working with other community groups in Nassau, Duval, St. Johns and Flagler counties to implement a monofilament recovery and recycling program which will be modeled after the very successful program in Brevard county. (The program in Brevard county collected 1000 lbs of monofilament in a six month period!). Fort Clinch State Park is the location of the first monofilament recycling station in NE Florida—thanks to Tami Duncan and Kathy Russell for their efforts in Nassau County. We need your help to purchase materials for construction and installation of monofilament recycling stations throughout the 4-county area.



Your tax-deductible contribution of \$75 will pay for all materials needed for the construction of one monofilament recycling station. At the time of writing, the Sea Grant office has received definite sponsorship for 4 stations and tentative sponsorship for 14-19 more (including 10-15 that Flagler County Road and Bridge has offered to make and install in county parks—thanks Benji Cauley!).

I want to sponsor a monofilament recycling station! How do I do this?

Please send a check in the amount of \$75 for each monofilament recycling station you wish to sponsor to NE Florida Sea Grant Extension Program, 233 Marine Center Drive, St. Augustine, FL 32080. Checks should be made out to “University of Florida SHARE”. A receipt for your donation will be mailed, so please be sure that your correct address is on your check. Please also include a note with your name or business name if you wish to have this acknowledged on the recycling station. We will make every effort to install “your” recycling station in a location that is geographically close to your address.

Berkley’s monofilament recycling program

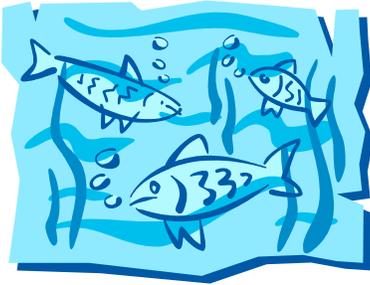


Monofilament that is collected in recovery and recycling containers will be sorted by volunteers into “clean” and “fouled” line. Fouled line (line that is tangled with plant material or has things growing on it) cannot be recycled. This line will be cut into short pieces and discarded. Clean

line will be sent to Berkley (a fishing line manufacturer in Iowa) to be recycled. Berkley melts down the line, combines it with other recycled plastics and uses it to make fish habitats and tackle boxes, among other items. It seems appropriate that recycled fishing line should be used to make products that benefit anglers! The fish habitats may be purchased or can be acquired by redeeming proofs of purchase from Berkley products (including Trilene©). For more information about Berkley’s program, call 1-800-BERKLEY.

Strange but true...

- Many types of birds and animals show sexual dimorphism—in other words, the males and females look different. However, some coral reef fish take this one step further. In families like parrotfish and wrasses, there will be a dominant or “terminal” male which will oversee a school of females and “lesser” males. When this fish dies, one of the other fish (male or female) will take over the role of terminal male and will physically change to become the terminal male, to the extent of switching gender!
- Groupers and some types of smaller fish have evolved an interesting relationship. Groupers can often be spotted sitting on the sand with their gill covers flared open and their mouths wide. If you look closely at one of these fish, you may notice several small fish swimming in and out of the mouth and gills. These “cleaner fish” are actually picking parasites off the grouper, so both members of the partnership benefit. The grouper is freed of the pesky parasites, and the cleaner fish get a free lunch!



- Have you ever been stuck by the spines on a saltwater catfish? The reason that these wounds hurt so much is that the catfish has poison glands at the base of the spines, so you are getting more than just a simple puncture wound.
- Fish have something in common with trees and corals. All of these organisms have growth rings that can be used to estimate age. Fish have growth rings both on their scales and on tiny bones in their ears, called otoliths.

Circle Hooks

- Circle hooks differ from the more common “J-hook” because the point of the circle hook arcs back towards the shank of the hook. Commercial fishermen have been using circle hooks for decades—proof that these hooks can and will catch fish effectively! The biggest advantage of using circle hooks is that it prevents gut-hooking the fish. If a fish swallows a circle hook, the hook can actually be pulled back up to the mouth of the fish without catching on the fish’s digestive tract. Once the hook reaches the fish’s mouth, the action of the fish pulling against the fishing line will cause the hook to catch in the corner of the mouth—without needing to be set. Experienced anglers will find that they need to restrain themselves—attempting to set a circle hook when a fish bites the bait will most likely result in the hook being pulled out of the fish’s mouth. Resist the urge to pull back on the rod and let the fish hook itself!

Commercial fishermen
have been using circle
hooks for decades

Tips for avoiding unwanted encounters with sharks...

The recent shark attack in Pensacola has once again raised fears about going in the water at the beach. While shark attacks on humans are rare, the National Marine Fisheries Service has some advice for bathers. These include the following:

- Don’t swim in low-light conditions or when the water is murky (this is when sharks become most active but can’t see very well)
- Avoid wearing shiny jewelry or brightly-contrasting colors
- Never swim, dive or surf alone
- Avoid swimming between sandbars, near channels or near steep dropoffs where sharks are frequently found
- If a shark is seen in the area, calmly leave the water





NE Florida Sea Grant Extension Program
233 Marine Center Drive
St. Augustine, FL 32080

Phone/fax: 904-461-4014

We're on the web!
www.flseagrant.org

Did you know?

- Marina operators can get FREE manatee awareness signs (metal ones) from the Florida Marine Patrol office in Jacksonville. These signs were made by the Save the Manatee Club and the only “catch” is that you must take a photo of the sign in place and send it in to FMP to prove that you have used the sign for its intended purpose. For more information, call Donna at 904-270-2500.
- “Don’t Splash Your Trash” signs are available for \$10 from Chris Benjamin at 904-824-9720. Also call Chris if you are interested in helping with weekly “Trash Busters” shoreline cleanups.
- September is Coastal Cleanup month—volunteer to help this national effort to clean up our shorelines! Dates and contact information for beach cleanups are given below:

Nassau County—call Keep Nassau Beautiful at 904-277-2701

Duval County—September 15, call 904-630-3420

St. Johns County—September 29, call 904-824-9720

Flagler County—call Keep Flagler Beautiful at 386-517-2075