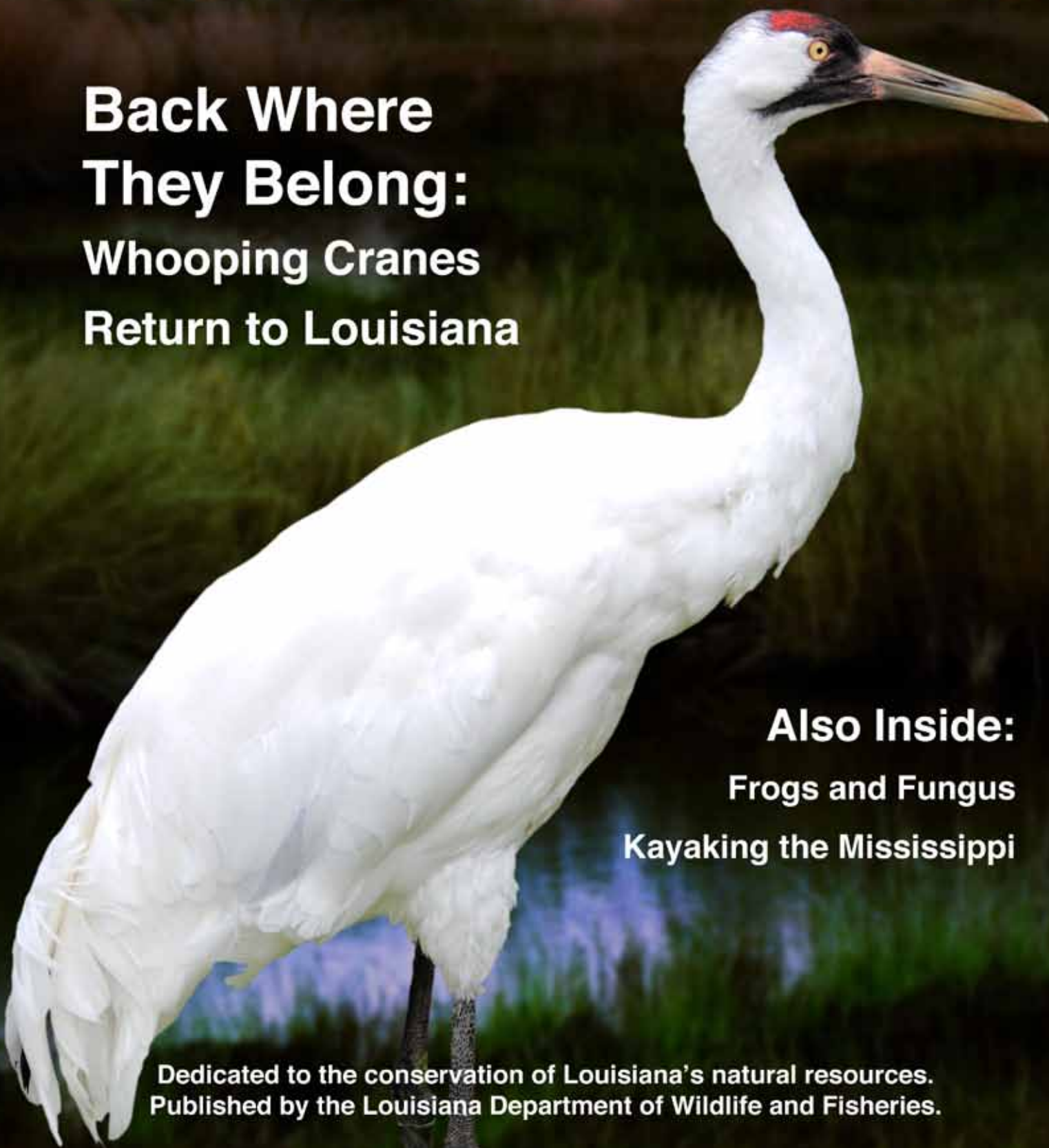


# LOUISIANA Conservationist

**Back Where  
They Belong:  
Whooping Cranes  
Return to Louisiana**

**Also Inside:  
Frogs and Fungus  
Kayaking the Mississippi**

Dedicated to the conservation of Louisiana's natural resources.  
Published by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.





## A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Our motto at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) is “Conserve. Protect. Replenish.” Everything we do relates to these three words. On Feb. 16, 2011, LDWF put that motto into action by participating in a historical event that reintroduced an animal species not seen in Louisiana’s wild since 1950 - the whooping crane.

The plan to bring whooping cranes back to Louisiana has been in the planning for some time, finally coming to fruition in February. Ten whooping cranes were received from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Research Facility in Laurel, Md., and placed in the coastal marsh of Vermilion Parish within the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area (WCA). This marks the first presence of whooping cranes in the wild since the last one was captured in 1950.

The historical range of this large bird once reached from the Arctic coast to central Mexico, with wintering grounds between the Louisiana gulf coast and Rio Grande Delta in northeastern Mexico. In 1890, whooping cranes were regular residents of Louisiana’s southwestern marshes, with groups using the state’s coastal locations for wintering stops during migration. There were reports of whooping cranes nesting in freshwater marshes north of White Lake in 1930, but over time reports of the bird declined. By 1947, only one bird remained in the White Lake area and it was captured and relocated to the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. That was in 1950. The primary cause for the population decline was habitat loss due to wetland drainage, conversion of grassland to agricultural fields and hunting.

Today, we have reintroduced this species and are on our way to repopulating the southwestern wetlands with this magnificent bird. LDWF biologists will manage the project at White Lake WCA as an ongoing recovery effort, coordinated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The opening article in this issue covers this historic event with links to more information on our web site.

Although this is a new program for LDWF, I am not surprised at this agency’s forward thinking. LDWF has a successful track record for reintroducing endangered and threatened animal species, including the American alligator, black bear and wild turkey, just to name a few. Now, we will add the whooping crane to our record, proving once again that LDWF is making a difference in conserving, protecting and replenishing Louisiana’s natural resources.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert J. Barham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Robert J. Barham, *LDWF Secretary*

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# WHOOPING CRANES RETURN TO WHITE LAKE

## *Restoration Begins in Southwest Louisiana Marshes*

by Carrie Salyers

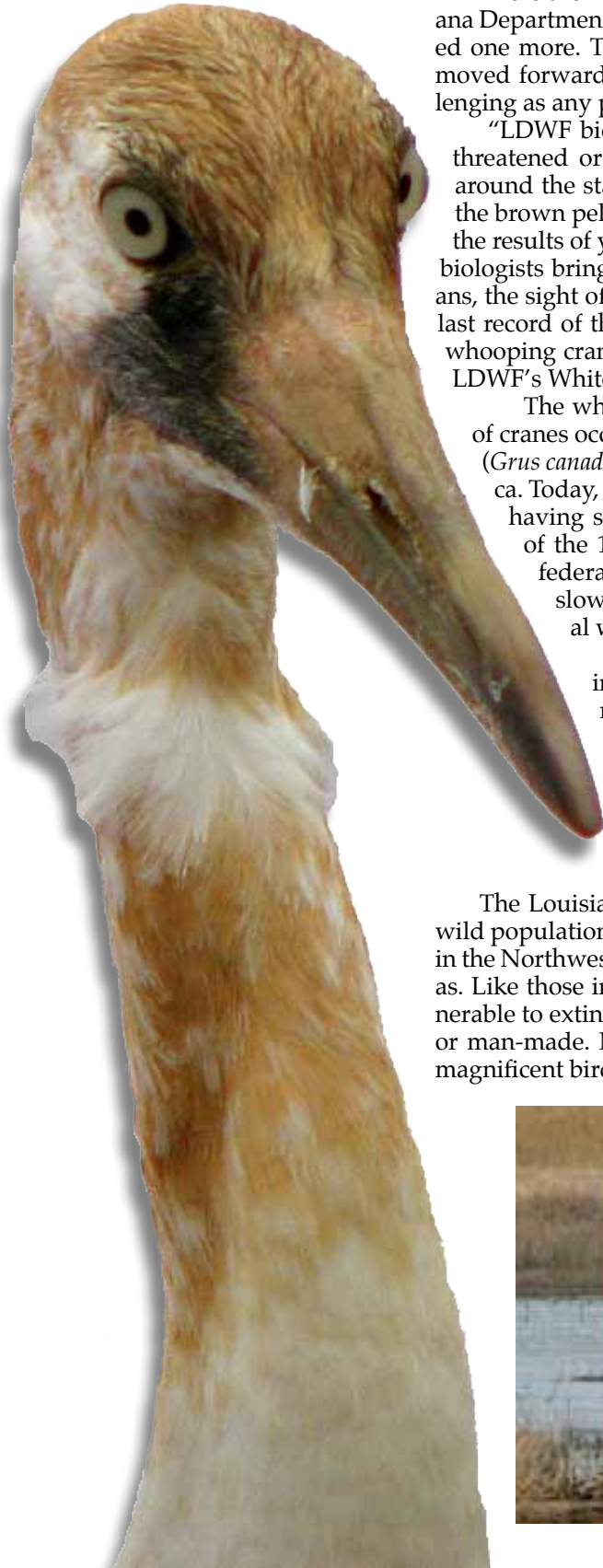
There are many success stories on species recovery associated with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and in February 2011 LDWF added one more. The department's Coastal and Nongame Resources Division (CNR) moved forward with a whooping crane re-population project that will be as challenging as any previous effort.

"LDWF biologists have a proven track record for bringing back species from threatened or endangered status to robust population levels readily noticeable around the state," said LDWF Secretary Robert Barham. "From the alligator and the brown pelican, to the bald eagle and the white-tailed deer, our citizens can see the results of years of tedious field work. The expertise and dedication that LDWF biologists bring to a long-term restoration plan is truly impressive." For Louisianans, the sight of a whooping crane in the wild has been only a distant memory. The last record of the species in Louisiana dates back to 1950, when the last surviving whooping crane was removed from Vermilion Parish property that is now part of LDWF's White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area (WLWCA).

The whooping crane is the most endangered crane species. Fifteen species of cranes occur throughout the world; only two of the 15 species, sandhill cranes (*Grus canadensis*) and whooping cranes (*Grus americana*) occur in North America. Today, sandhill cranes are prevalent, but whooping cranes are in great peril, having suffered severe population declines during the late 1800s and most of the 1900s. Due to these declines, whooping cranes were placed on the federal endangered species status list on March 11, 1967. The population slowly increased over the last 30 years with approximately 565 individual whoopers in North America as of Jan. 31, 2011.

Historically, both resident and migratory populations of whooping cranes were present in Louisiana through the early 1940s. The massive birds, with males growing to 5 feet tall at maturity, inhabited the marshes and ridges of the state's southwest Chenier Coastal Plain, as well as the uplands of prairie terrace habitat to the north. According to Dr. Gay Gomez, professor of geography at McNeese State University and Louisiana whooping crane historian, "Records from the 1890s indicated 'large numbers' of both whooping cranes and sandhill cranes on wet prairies year round."

The Louisiana whoopers are not the only cranes in the wild. A self-sustaining wild population of whooping cranes migrates between Wood Buffalo National Park in the Northwest Territories of Canada and Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. Like those in an eastern migratory population, the Aransas group remains vulnerable to extinction from continued loss of habitat and catastrophes, either natural or man-made. Multiple efforts are underway to reduce these risks and bring this magnificent bird further along its path to recovery. This includes increasing popula-





LDWF file photos

tions in the wild, ongoing efforts to establish a migratory population in the eastern United States and establishing a resident (non-migratory) population in Louisiana. The White Lake marshes and vast surrounding coastal marshes of southwest Louisiana was a positive factor in the decision making process that led to the experimental population approval.

The Louisiana crane population did not withstand the pressure of human encroachment, conversion of nesting habitat to agricultural acreage, hunting, and specimen collection, which also occurred across North America. Dr. Gomez's research indicates "In May of 1939, biologist John Lynch reported 13 whooping cranes north of White Lake and that in August 1940, flood waters associated with a hurricane scattered the resident White Lake population of cranes and only six of the 13 cranes returned. By 1947, only one crane remained at White lake and in March of 1950, the last crane in Louisiana was captured and relocated to Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, Texas."

Whooping cranes currently exist in three wild populations and within captive breeding populations. Captive breeding facilities are responsible for providing eggs that will eventually be released back into the wild. The 10 juvenile cranes relocated to White Lake on February 16 were raised at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Md. The eggs were hatched in May and June 2010 by birds in four locations including the Calgary Zoo in Alberta, Canada, Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Necedah, Wi., Audubon Species Survival Center in New Orleans and Patuxent facility. The young cranes were then flown to Jennings, La. and transported to the White Lake property.

The process preceding the cranes arrival, which involved project approval by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), public meetings and a public comment period, spanned more than two years. "Without our cooperative partners, which includes USFWS, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and International Crane Foundation (ICF), this project would not have come to fruition," said LDWF-CNR Division Administrator Robert Love. "We will continue to work closely with this group for years to come."

Upon their arrival in February, the birds were placed in a small, netted acclimation pen within a larger 1.5-acre pen located at WLWCA. The birds remained in the netted acclimation pen for approximately one month to allow proper transition to their new locale and to allow researchers and biologists the opportunity to ensure all birds were healthy and well acclimated to their surroundings. The birds adjusted quickly and within 24 hours of their arrival, one individual was observed catching and eating a wild crawfish. In addition to wild caught food, the birds have been receiving supplemental pelletized food referred to as crane chow. While contained within the acclimation pen, each bird was fitted with unique leg band colors, a USFWS I.D. band and satellite transmitter. The bands and transmitters will allow biologists and researchers the opportunity to study and follow each bird through its lifespan.

The White Lake cranes were released from the netted acclimation pen on March 14. Biologists conduct daily



monitoring activities and continued supplemental feeding activities. The birds can roam free within the larger pen and actively fly in and out of the pen at their own discretion, roosting at night as they continue to acclimate to the marshes. "Providing access to food sources in the pen early on was designed to attract the group back to the safety of the predator-proof enclosure at night," said Tom Hess, LDWF-CNR biologist program manager. "Our concerns early on were for the birds to develop predator avoidance skills in a marsh environment also inhabited by alligators, bobcats and coyotes."

The goal of the state's reintroduction project is to establish a self-sustaining whooping crane population on and around White Lake, which contains over 70,000 acres of freshwater marsh. A self-sustaining population is defined as a flock of 130 individuals with 30 nesting pairs, surviving for a 10-year period without any additional restocking. Whooping cranes do not generally nest until 3-5 years of age, so the nesting success of the Louisiana group may take several years to be determined. The long-term goal of this reintroduction is to move whooping cranes from an endangered species status to threatened status. Future plans for the project include re-introductions of additional juvenile cohorts once or twice a year for the next two years. At that point, the project will be evaluated to determine the number of birds for released in future years.

The newly established whooping crane population at White Lake is designated as a nonessential experimental population (NEP) under the provisions contained within section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act. The population is considered experimental because it is being reintroduced into suitable habitat that is outside of the whooping crane's current range, but within its historic range. It is designated nonessential because the likelihood of survival of the whooping crane as a species would not be reduced if this entire population were not successful and lost. The NEP status will protect this whooping crane population as appropriate to conserve the population, while still allowing the presence of the cranes to be compatible with routine human activities in the reintroduction area. Examples of such activities include recreational hunting and trapping, agricultural practices (plowing, planting, application of pesticides, etc.), construction or water management.

Although designated as NEP, the Louisiana whooping cranes are still protected under law. Because of the experimental non-essential designation in this rule, if the shooting of a whooping crane is determined to be accidental and occurred incidentally to an otherwise lawful activity that was being carried out in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, no prosecution under the Endangered Species Act would occur. In the case of an intentional shooting, however, the full force and protection of the Endangered Species Act could apply. Additionally, the birds are protected under applicable state laws for non-game species and the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which protects all birds that migrate such as herons, egrets and songbirds.

"We want anyone in the marsh near White Lake to enjoy the moment should they encounter one or more of the experimental birds in the wild during this re-population effort," said Love. "As long as the cranes are observed at a distance, they should adapt to occasional human encounters."

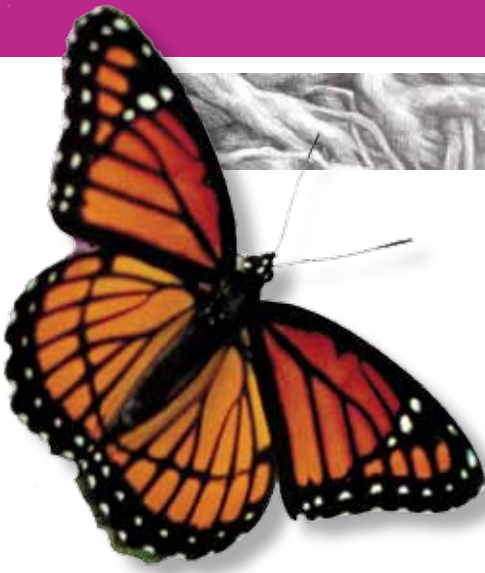
Project funding for Louisiana's whooping crane project is derived from LDWF species restoration dedicated funds, federal grants and private/corporate donations. LDWF's budget for the initial year of the project is \$400,000. The project costs escalate in year two and beyond as the project expands. LDWF estimates it will be necessary to raise three to four million private dollars to help fund a portion of this 15-year project.

Private and corporate donations supporting the whooping crane project can be made to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation. Gifts should be designated as "support of the Whooping Crane Project." For information on the Foundation and to obtain a donation form go to [www.wlf.louisiana.gov/lwff](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/lwff). For more information on the historic re-introduction of whooping cranes to Louisiana, visit [www.wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/whooping-cranes](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/whooping-cranes).

*Carrie Salyers is a biologist with the Coastal and Non-game Division, stationed at the Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge. Carrie has been with LDWF for four years and is a regular contributor to the Louisiana Conservationist.*



# Critters & Weeds



Spring and summer are busy times both for wildlife and the people who enjoy the Louisiana flora and fauna.

For those of us who hunt, the wildlife game species are raising their young for the next seasons.

Colorful spring wildflowers give way to the summer wildflowers which are just as colorful. Song birds as well as marsh and wading birds that many of us enjoy watching are in their breeding plumage - adding more color to the landscape. The blue bird boxes on our rural property in East Feliciana have produced two broods of birds and it has been fun monitoring the boxes and watching birds. It is an exciting and busy time for all.

There are, however, some species of wildlife and plants out there that many people do not care for. Insects and snakes along with stickers and weeds are also producing young and seeds. Bites and pricks occur while we are out and about causing us grief and pain as well as causing us to dip into our pocket books to reduce or eliminate these critters and weeds. The other day I was cutting limbs that have been a nuisance when I am bush-hogging on my tractor and a ground nest of yellow-jackets made me quite uncomfortable for the rest of the day. A couple of cans of wasp spray allowed me to retrieve my limb cutters that I had dropped when I made my dash to safety.

It is unfortunate that critters and weeds are often unappreciated.

Critters and weeds can be both interesting and colorful, when they are not attacking us. Most of them do have an important role in the ecosystem. Some

are of economic importance both from the standpoint of their benefits as well as the problems they cause. Honey bees would be an example of an insect that is important from the standpoint of their pollination benefits and the honey they produce for our table, but can create problems for people who

are allergic to their sting. Poison ivy is an example of a plant that benefits wildlife by producing seed for food (deer also eat the leaves) but causes serious skin problems for people who are allergic to it.

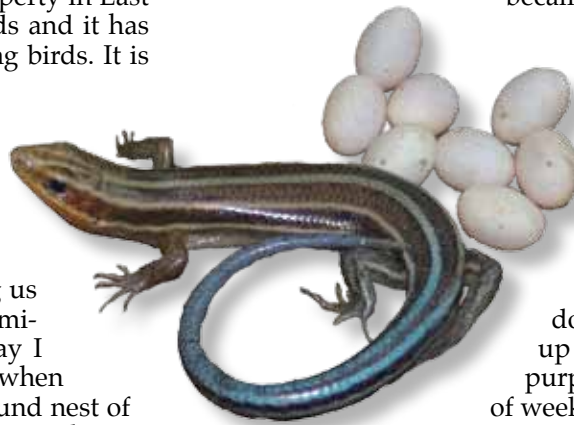
At my home in Baton Rouge I have a wildflower bed that some would say is full of weeds, but for me they are wildflowers. One of the plants, *Cirsium carolinianum*, better known as purple thistle, is one of them. The leaves have sharp points on their ends and one certainly would not enjoy walking on them with bare feet. Invaders attacking a Scottish settlement at night found out about them when they took their shoes off to help aid in their sneak attack. Needless to say the thistles caused them to cry out in the night, spoiling their surprise and thus the thistle

became the national flower of Scotland. A couple of years ago I collected seed from this thistle in north Louisiana and planted them in the bed. Only a couple of plants were produced from this first planting, but this summer over a dozen colorful plants came up and produced colorful purple flowers for a couple of weeks.

In June, while working on the front porch of the camp on our property I encountered one of the critters that most people are not interested in. I picked up a 4-by-4 board to relocate it and discovered that underneath was a female five-lined skink (a lizard) with eight eggs. The female was most colorful with brown, gold and blue coloration and was not concerned in the least about me. Her focus was strictly on the eggs and she remained in a protective state around them. I kept tabs on her for the next couple of weeks. I had never seen a skink with eggs before. The third week after finding her I picked the board up only to see a small 1.5 inch lizard with a bright blue-green tail hightail it to more cover. This encounter has shown me how important cover is for wildlife. While we look at a trees knocked down by a hurricane as debris, the trees in fact become habitat for a whole bunch of critters that we generally don't think about.

So before you squash or chop the next critter or weed that you encounter, consider its worth. You just might decide it has some value and it could even provide some enjoyment. I do however recommend that you enjoy a ground nest of yellow-jackets from a distance.

*David Moreland is the former LDWF Wildlife Administrator and a biologist. "Outdoor Roots" is his regular column in the Louisiana Conservationist.*



Purple Thistle and Five-lined Skink (David Moreland); Viceroy Butterfly (USFWS)





# When Frogs

# CROAK

by Jeff Boundy

Photo by Laurie Reed, South Carolina Forestry Commission, [forestryimages.org](http://forestryimages.org)

“The frogs are a nuisance!” I’ve gotten calls about nuisance spiders, birds, rats, snakes and bears, but the frog complaint was a first. The caller had built a goldfish pond adjacent to their bedroom window and it was now filled with a cacophony of anuran amour. “What can I do?” I was going to reply ‘Build it and they will come,’ but we biologists have been advised to avoid smart-alecky responses to sleep-deprived constituents.

I also knew enough not to advise the caller about how fortunate they were to be hearing frogs, because frogs are going silent over much of the planet. The croaks, peeps, whistles, clicks, chirps and trills of the golden toad are gone from Costa Rica, the gastric-brooding frog silenced in Australia, the stubfoot toad of the Ecuadorian Andes, and even the ornate chorus frog, last seen in Louisiana in 1957. It is a global disappearing act that has alarmed scientists around world. But first let’s look at the many ways frogs populate their species.

## REPRODUCTION

It seems that much has changed in the world of the frog in the past 40 years. At the time it seemed routine: the teacher would have one of us boys bring some frog eggs to school. She would put them in an aquarium next to the window, and over the next month we would watch the eggs hatch into tiny tadpoles, which grew hind legs, then out would pop front limbs, and the tail would shrink. One night the froglets would climb out of the aquarium, and we would discover them weeks later as tiny frog mummies under the cabinets.

However, the cycle we witnessed was anything but routine. A tadpole is a gilled larval form that scrapes phytoplankton with rows of denticles around a beaked mouth, which it digests in a tightly coiled intestine that is many times the length of its body. Once metamorphosis strikes and the forelimbs thrust through the gill openings, the animal must switch to breathing air. The oral scraper becomes a mouth, and the froglet must now catch live prey, which it digests in a quickly modified stomach and shortened intestine. This transformation occurs in just a few days.

The job of making eggs available is, itself, an amazing feat. Typically, male frogs and toads head to some body of water suited to carry the egg-to-froglet cycle to completion. Several factors, including rainfall and sperm maturation, induce the male frogs to migrate to their natal breeding site. The first problem is to get to a breeding site that still exists. Frogs are known to gather in parking lots that had been built months earlier over their breeding pond. If the pond is still there, they begin to call. The call is meant to attract mates, but can also attract predators. Imagine standing naked on the African plains at night shouting for your wife, hoping that any number of leopards, lions and hyenas don’t get to you first. To avoid



Photo courtesy of USGS

The ornate chorus frog was last seen in Louisiana in 1957.





Toad reproduction cycle: eggs, larvae and tadpoles.

Photo courtesy of USFWS



Photo by Andre Karwath, Wikimedia Commons



Photo by Christian Fischer, Wikimedia Commons

the fatal misstep that is predation, a subset of frogs act as satellite males. These crafty crapauds position themselves near a highly vocal male, but wait in silence. When a female moves into range the satellite male intercepts and escorts her away, leaving the cuckolded crooner to sing away, ignorant of his loss.

Any Louisiana boy has likely crouched by a pond and seen all of this for himself. But in other parts of the world, frogs may do things differently. In the gloomy cascading streams of Southeast Asia the rush of water is so loud that torrent frogs couldn't be heard even if they had a voice. Instead, they have brightly colored webbing on the hind feet, which they flash by standing on three feet and holding the fourth in the air. As they wave the hind leg aloft they rapidly flash their foot to attract mates. In the steep tropical forests of Puerto Rico, there is plenty of moisture, but nowhere for it to collect. Lacking pools for tadpoles, tiny female eleutherodactylus frogs deposit their eggs in damp leaf litter, and these hatch directly into lentil-sized froglets. For the strawberry dart frog of Panama, the most

reliable source of water is the little thimble-sized catchments in the leaf axils of plants. The expecting couple travels from axil to axil, depositing one fertilized egg in each. Once that task is complete, it is up to the female to make regular rounds to each axil over the next weeks, depositing a non-fertilized egg into each to feed the resident tadpole. The Surinam toad, when coupled, must do underwater somersaults so that the male can fertilize each egg as it is dropped, catch it in a fold in his abdomen, and push it into the swollen skin of the female's back. Once the egg laying is accomplished, the outer layer of the male's skin loosens and he pulls it off and eats it as if disposing of latex gloves after a surgical procedure. The female is left with a dozen eggs imbedded in her back, around each of which her skin forms a chamber. After some weeks the eggs have hatched and developed into miniature Suri-



Female eleutherodactylus frogs deposit their eggs in damp leaf litter, which hatch directly into lentil-sized froglets.

Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



The strawberry poison dart frog travels from one leaf axil to the next, depositing one fertilized egg in each.

Photo by Thomas Spletstoesser, Wikimedia Commons



The Surinam toad must perform underwater somersaults as part of its mating process.

Photo by Stan Sirebs, Wikimedia Commons

nam frogs, which push open the top of their chamber as if exiting through a manhole cover.

There seems to be no end to the variety of means by which frogs reproduce: viviparous toads that skip the egg/larva stage and give birth to baby toads, burrowing tadpoles with long hose-like spiracles that they stick out of the mud to allow breathing, frogs that hang in groups from a tree limb and cooperate in lathering up a foam nest for the eggs, and desert toads that must complete the mate-egg-tadpole-toadlet cycle in under seven days before rare rain puddles dry. Rather than suffer from the effects of predators and the limitations of water, frogs and toads have adapted in many different ways to persist on Earth. The diversity of their lifestyles has produced an equal diversity of species. In fact, the number of new frog species discovered has averaged about 150 per year since 2000.

## THE DISAPPEARING ACT

One would expect to be overrun by frogs, but that is no longer true for many of their kind. In the late 1960s the California mountain yellow-legged frog was so abundant at my family camp that they would jump in by dozens as I walked along a cascading brook. On later camping trips I would see only a few each day, and unknown to me at the time, I saw my last on July 3, 1976. At a world conference in 1989, frog biologists from around the world discovered that local frog disappearances were global. From then it took over 10 years to discover what was likely the common cause - a fungus with the hideous name *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd). It is believed the fungus occurred naturally in southern Africa, but has been transported to many parts of the world. In many instances, frogs are resistant to the fungus. But when their immune systems are stressed, the fungus can become lethal, particularly to tadpoles. For some reason, frogs that occur at high elevations or along shallow, rocky streams are most susceptible.

The Bd fungus is in Louisiana, identified by folks from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Wetlands Center in Lafayette, La. Fortunately, subsequent monitoring has not revealed any frog declines. While the USGS continues to survey the Atchafalaya Basin, another organization,

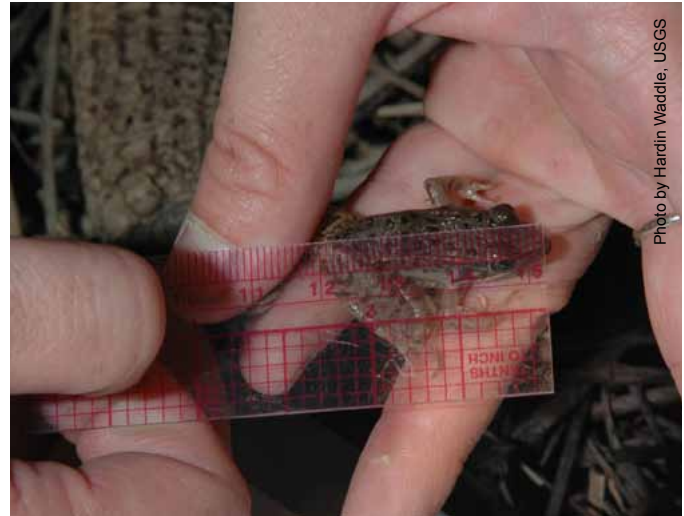


Photo by Hardin Waddle, USGS

the Louisiana Amphibian Monitoring Program (LAMP) conducts surveys throughout the state. LAMP volunteers are assigned specific calling routes, each with 10 stops, and volunteers record nighttime frog calls at each stop. LAMP was initiated in 1996 as part of the North American Amphibian Monitoring Program, itself a part of the USGS. Presently LAMP is coordinated by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, with area coordinators associated with state university and other agency personnel. There are sufficient volunteers in the Lafayette to Baton Rouge areas, but LAMP is in need of volunteers through the rest of the state. Some of the routes have been monitored continually for 15 years; others have never been surveyed.

So far, analyses of LAMP call data reveal only that frog calling is cyclic from year-to-year and there are ups and downs, but no evidence of declines, yet. The Bd fungus seems unstoppable, so we must rely on a healthy aquatic ecosystem in Louisiana to prevent environmental stress on tadpoles. Today I can only say 'so far, so good.' But, if declines happen, they will likely occur very quickly, with no means of preventing them. One night, the Louisiana swamps may go silent. At least the couple with the goldfish pond won't lose any sleep over it.

*Jeff Boundy has been with LDWF for 16 years. He has a PhD from Louisiana State University and has been tracking frogs since 1965.*



Mountain yellow-legged frogs are now absent from more than 99 percent of their previous range in southern California

Photo courtesy of USGS

## DID YOU KNOW?

Rather than suffer from the effects of predators and the limitations of water, frogs and toads have adapted in many different ways to persist on Earth. The diversity of their lifestyles has produced an equal diversity of species. In fact, the number of new frog species discovered has averaged about 150 per year since 2000.

# Common Frogs of Louisiana

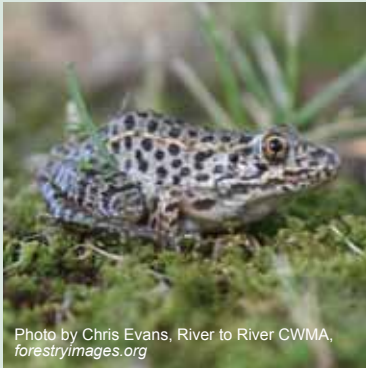


Photo by Chris Evans, River to River CWMA, forestryimages.org

**Southern crawfish frog:** occurs in disjunct populations throughout the state.



Photo by Brad Glorioso, USGS

**Fowler's toad:** occurs throughout the state excluding coastal marshes.



Photo by Brad Moon, USGS

**Gulf Coast Toad:** occurs in the central and southern part of the state.



Photo by Russ Ottens, University of Georgia, forestryimages.org

**American bullfrog:** occurs in any freshwater habitat throughout the state.



Photo courtesy of USGS

**Cope's Gray Treefrog:** occurs throughout the state.



Photo by Joseph LaForest, University of Georgia, forestryimages.org

**Green Treefrog:** occurs statewide in freshwater habitat.



Photo by Dominic Gentilcore, USGS

**Northern cricket frog:** occurs throughout the state.



Photo by Brad Glorioso, USGS

**Eastern narrow-mouthed toad:** occurs throughout the state.



Photo by Hardin Waddle, USGS

**Squirrel Treefrog:** occurs in southern Louisiana bottomlands & disjunct populations in hardwood stream valleys throughout central and northern Louisiana.



Photo by Hardin Waddle, USGS

**Greenhouse frog:** has become established in the New Orleans area and several other metropolitan areas of the state.



Photo courtesy of USGS

**Southern leopard frog:** occurs throughout Louisiana in permanent freshwater habitats.



Photo by Jacob Ford, Wikimedia Commons

**Pickerel frog:** occurs in upland areas in northern Louisiana & pine forests in the southern Louisiana.



Photo by Dominic Gentilcore, USGS

**Bronze frog:** occurs throughout the state in freshwater habitat.



Photo by Brad Glorioso, USGS

**Spring peeper:** occurs statewide except for in coastal marshes.



Photo courtesy of USGS

**Cajun chorus frog:** occurs throughout the state.



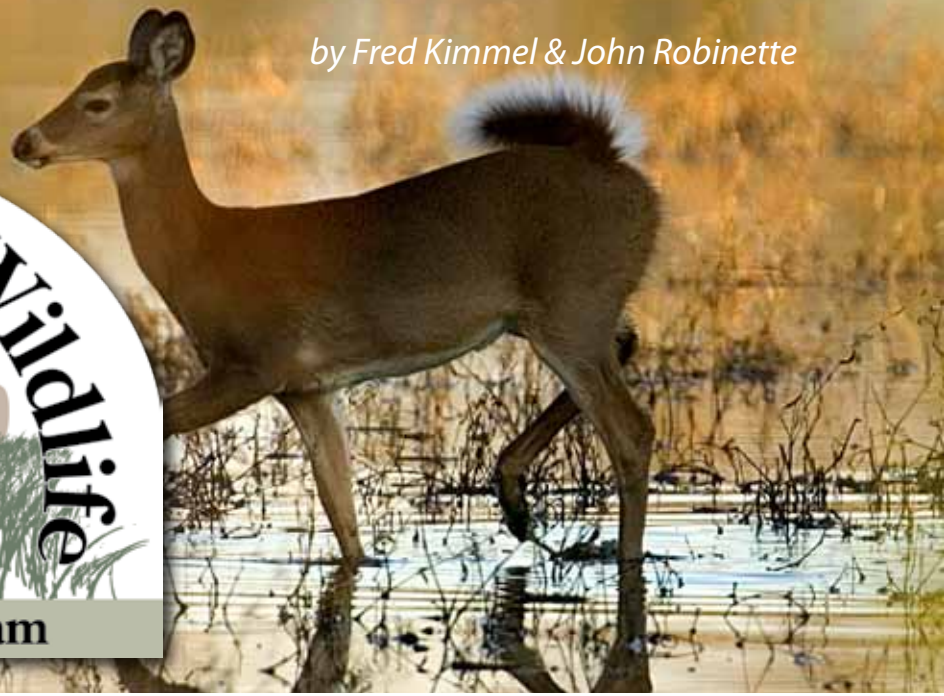
Photo courtesy of USGS

**Pig Frog:** occurs in the lowlands of the lower third of the state.

**DMAP is the most popular topic with PLBs, assisting landowners with managing their deer harvest.**

Photo by Steve Hillebrand, USFWS

*by Fred Kimmel & John Robinette*



About eight out of every 10 acres of land in Louisiana are privately owned. Private landowners vary from forest industry that owns tens of thousands of acres to owners of small tracts of pastureland. The abundance and distribution of wildlife in Louisiana is largely determined by how habitat on private land is managed. For that reason, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' (LDWF) Wildlife Division was reorganized in 2009 to improve the delivery of services to private landowners in Louisiana.

There are 13 wildlife biologists throughout the state whose primary responsibility is to help private landowners and land managers with their wildlife management activities. Private Lands Biologists (PLB) can provide a variety of services to landowners and managers. One of the most common activities is assisting landowners and hunting clubs with deer herd management. This may involve established programs such as the Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP), which provides landowners with tags and guidance regarding deer harvest. Other landowners simply want advice and suggestions to help manage their harvest.

Although deer may be the most popular topic, assistance from PLBs is not limited to deer. Private lands biologists can also help landowners with dove field establishment, management of waterfowl impoundments, forest management and general habitat management for a wide variety of wildlife.

One of the most important things these biologists do is listen. Landowners own and manage land for a variety of reasons. For some it is purely for recreation and for others generating income is a very important consideration. Some landowners and managers have the desire and resources to engage in very intensive management practices, while others take a low maintenance approach. Some landowners have very specific interests such as bobwhite quail management. Others simply want to see and enjoy an array of wildlife on their property. The objectives, needs and resources of the landowner determine

the assistance provided by the private lands program.

PLBs are familiar with a variety of programs and funding sources that can provide financial assistance for management. Not all landowners need or want financial assistance, but for those who do, funding may be available for practices such as prescribed burning, tree planting, native grassland establishment, field border development or invasive plant control. Navigating the myriad of funding sources can be daunting, but PLBs are a valuable resource to help landowners find the financial assistance they need.

While landowners will have varying interests and needs, one common thread in all private lands work is the need for the biologist to evaluate habitat quality and quantity. The biologist may conduct a systematic assessment such as a browse survey or evaluate the habitat simply by a gross inspection of the property. The biologist evaluates the amount of food and cover the property provides and notes factors that limit the abundance of wildlife on the property. One point that will receive consideration is how the property fits into the landscape. In other words, what kind of habitat does the neighboring property provide and how does that impact the subject property? This landscape consideration is most important on smaller tracts.

Once the biologist has completed the habitat evaluation, a plan can be developed. The plan can range from a simple conversation with the landowner to a comprehensive written document. Landowners are encouraged

**A common thread throughout the Private Landowners Program is the need for the biologists to evaluate habitat quality and quantity for all species.**



Photo by Jon Sullivan, www.public-domain-images.com

to seek a written plan to help them maintain a long-term and consistent management approach. Even the best plan will have to be modified as experience and conditions dictate, so landowners are encouraged to maintain contact with their PLB. The landowner and PLB should regularly evaluate the habitat, assess the impacts of management and make changes when needed.

Some landowners may already be working with a natural resource professional such as a consultant forester. The PLB will not replace these other professionals, but will work closely with them to integrate the landowner's wildlife objectives with other management objectives and programs. If the landowner is not working with other natural resource professionals, but needs their assistance, the PLB can help find one.

The department's PLBs can be a valuable resource for landowners and managers. Each PLB is responsible for four to seven parishes and is familiar with local conditions, activity on other properties and programs that benefit local landowners. PLBs may be able to offer ideas and suggestions that landowners may not have considered. For instance, landowners in some areas may want to consider replanting a harvested loblolly pine stand with longleaf pine, others may benefit from using native vegetation as a food plot to reduce costs, still others may find that creation of small openings in the forest are an effective way to improve habitat.

There is no cost to landowners to utilize the services of the department's PLBs. There is a cost associated with enrollment in DMAP. Whether interested in hummingbirds or trophy bucks, looking for a comprehensive management plan or simply have a management question, your local PLB can help. Contact one of LDWF's professional biologists to help you improve your wildlife habitats today.

*Fred Kimmel is the biologist director of the Wildlife Division's Education and Technical Services Branch and has been with LDWF for 26 years. He has a B.S. in Wildlife Conservation from Louisiana Tech University and a M.S. in Wildlife Management from Louisiana State University.*

*John Robinette is the biologist program manager for Wildlife Division's newly created Private Lands Program and has worked for LDWF for 36 years. He has a B.S. from Louisiana Tech University in Wildlife Conservation and Management.*



**Prescribed burning is one of many practices PLBs can assistance landowners with on technique and possible financial assistance.**

Photo courtesy of US Forest Service

## Private Lands Biologists & LDWF Offices



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|---|--|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #00BFC4; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Kori LeGleu      | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #C0A0D0; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Mike Perot      |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #E91E63; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Justin Thayer    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #90EE90; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Vacant          |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #FFFF00; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Michael Drewry   | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #8E44AD; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> David Hayden    |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #FFA500; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Travis Dufour    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #E67E22; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Chase McPherson |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #2980B9; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Jeffery Taverner | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #2E8B57; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> John Hanks      |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #FFDAB9; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> David Breithaupt | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #6B8E23; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Jimmy Ernst     |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #A52A2A; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Cliff Dailey     |  |

### LDWF OFFICES

Monroe	318-343-4044	Hammond	985-543-4777
Minden	318-371-3050	Opelousas	337-948-0255
Pineville	318-487-5885	New Iberia	337-373-0032
Lake Charles	337-491-2575	New Orleans	504-284-5983
		Baton Rouge	225-765-2354



**Landowners own and manage land for a variety of reasons. LDWF can assistance them with obtaining their objectives and utilizing their resources for maximum benefits.**

Photo by Dave Menke, USFWS

Photo by John Robinette, LDWF

story by Hali Dardar  
photos courtesy of David Wojcik

# The Good Long Adventure

On Dec. 20, 2010 David Wojcik visited Morgan City, La. for the first time. "It was a lot different than I thought," Wojcik said, "I thought I would land on the bank of the river, flat and calm. I dreamed I would get out of my boat and stretch my legs and look out on the Mighty Mississippi." There was not much to look at. The weather that day was treacherous; there was a cold northwest wind that permeated the skin. He was unable to dock his 16-foot Chestnut Prospector canoe in Morgan City as the wind slammed him into the docks. He instead took windward and headed for Berwick. After 45 miles of paddling the last day of his long adventure, Wojcik got onshore the only way he could; he lashed his canoe to an unused fishing boat and ambled his way through the boat and to the nearest gas station. "As I sat and drank my gas station coffee, I was done with the river," Wojcik said, "but it seemed more like a bad divorce than a happy ending."

The divorce marked the end of an expedition. In August, Wojcik sold all his possessions, moved out of his house and paddled 2,340 miles through rain, snow and barges down the Mississippi River. Wojcik sought freedom - the freedom to get up in the morning and do what you want, watch the sun rise out the window and skip the dose of apathy.

**David Wojcik at the headwaters of the Mississippi River in Lake Itasca, Mn.**

"I wanted a good long adventure," he explained, "I was never really good at anything. I could do things, like I hike, but I wouldn't call myself a mountain climber. I just wanted to see what I could do. Take myself out for a spin."

He began to walk and jog at least two miles everyday in the spring. Wojcik threw himself into his work. Furiously rushing to finish back orders of boats while building his own canoe by Aug. 20. "Its funny actually, the first time I ever got in my canoe was when my friend pushed

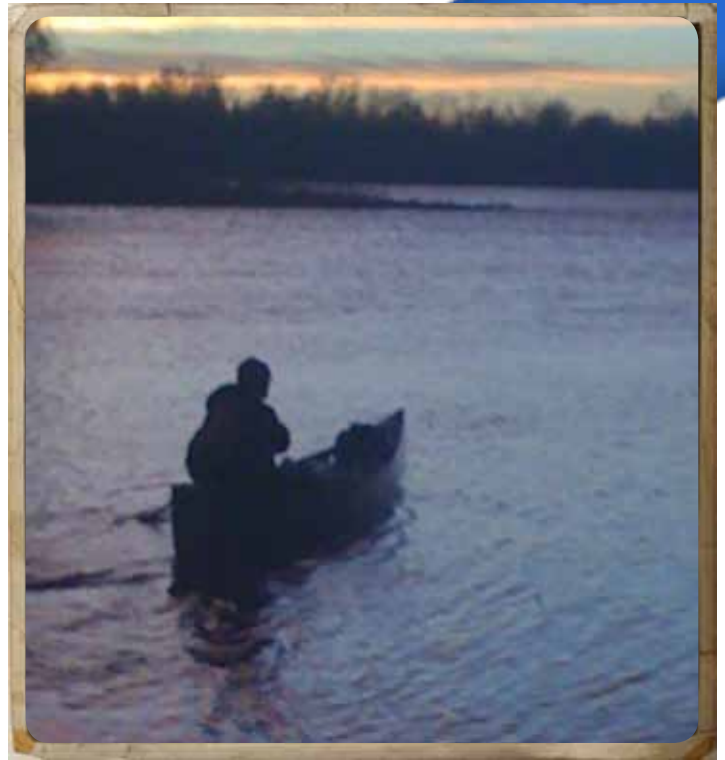


me off in the Mississippi. I just remember thinking, 'I hope I love this boat. I hope I love this boat. I hope I love this boat.'" In fact, Wojcik didn't begin to pack his canoe until the night before.

"I didn't over plan" he said, "I just headed out and did it." His only preparation was calling the Army Corps of Engineers and procuring a detailed map. "Everyone says the river is very dangerous." Wojcik said, "Its just a body of water. It is not as dangerous as we think." He was warned about the dangers of the Mississippi, the river traffic, the eddies, the dams and the solitude. He said knew his home-made boat and paper map in the big river bordered on crazy.

"Plenty of things can go wrong." When going around weirs, the water would blister on the surface and spin his 16-foot Chestnut Prospector. "It was honestly disconcerting," Wojcik said, "but there was never a possibility of being sucked under." The biggest danger was zoning out and getting hit buy a large tow, but those don't usually just sneak up on you. "The things that keep us from doing our adventure are imagined."

On August 20 with a 16-foot canoe Wojcik shoved off the Mississippi headwaters of Lake Itasca, Mn. on his real American adventure

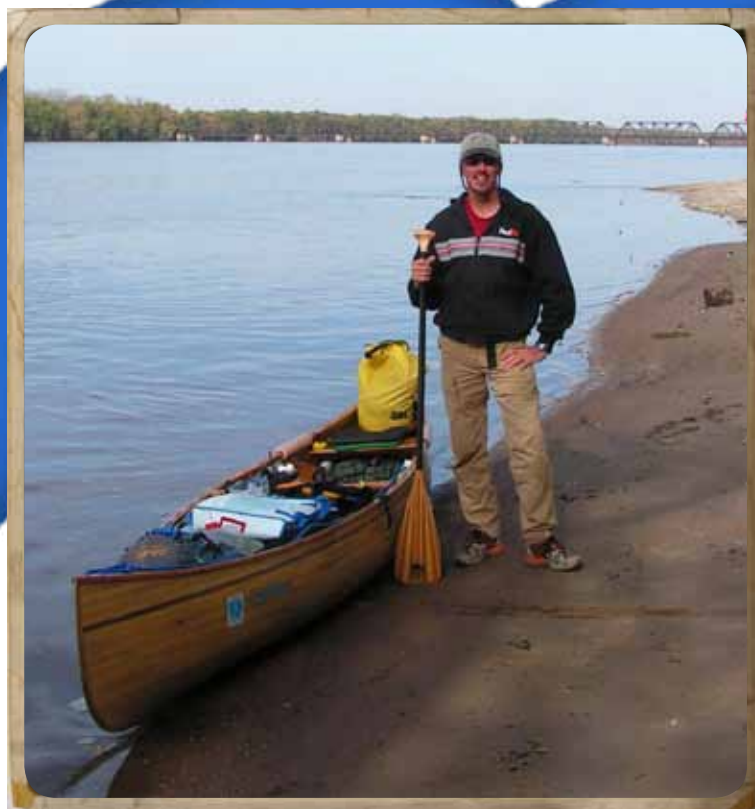


with six gallons of water, a water filter, tent, sleeping bag, clothes, Therm-a-rest, medical kit, strong antibiotics, rain suit, hat, gloves, scarf, marine radio, binoculars, toilet paper, a solar powered phone charger and a banjo.

Wojcik paddled only six miles a day in the beginning, because the current was weak. But as he passed most of the dams the river current got quicker. "You could sit in an inner tube in St. Louis and get four miles an hour," Wojcik said. By the time he got to the lower half of the Mississippi, he was averaging 30 miles a day. His longest day was 50 miles. When he reached Baton Rouge, he heeded the advice of a veteran canoer, "To canoe the Mississippi between Baton Rouge and New Orleans is suicide," Wojcik said. "The massive barge traffic jams are too dangerous for a canoe." He chose to take the Atchafalaya River for the last leg of the journey, ending by the Gulf Intra-coastal Waterway in Morgan City.

"Everyone should do the adventure that is in their heart. I wouldn't push my two kids to do what I did because it's not what their hearts want to do. But everyone should take the adventure that is in their hearts."

"My only regret is that I forgot to bring a beer for my 50th birthday," Wojcik chuckled.



**David Wojcik and his canoe packed with supplies.**

*Hali Dardar is an LSU Mass Communications senior. She is serving an intern position at LDWE.*

# ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Along with the long hours and hard work we sometimes cross paths with the weird, unusual and unexplainable, making our jobs a bit entertaining on those days. The following are true stories collected from LDWF employees and other conservation agencies from across the nation.

## MUDDY MESS

An LDWF agent was contacted by a landowner and advised of a trespasser using an ATV to hunt on posted property. The agent went to the hunting blind and followed a muddy trail to a nearby residence. The agent asked the homeowner about the muddy trail and the man confessed to having hunted on the posted property. The trespasser advised he did not notice the 4-by-4 foot signs that read "Posted - No ATVs."

*Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries*

## FROM THE MOUTHS OF BABES

Having been out of the academy only a few months the young agent took in all of the habits of his field-training officer. The young agent watched quietly through several encounters where the public would ask the older, familiar agent, "Where are they biting?" and the response would be, "in the water." The fishermen would always get a good chuckle and go about their business. The rookie thought that he would try the same phrase one morning as he was checking creel limits alongside the older agent. As they checked one boat whose occupants had obviously not been very successful, the operator of the boat asked the age-old question, "Where are they biting?" Immediately the young agent responded "in the water." The elderly Cajun gentleman operating the boat turned to the senior of the two agents with a serious expression and quipped, "This kid's a smart aleck ain't he?" No chuckles were heard until after the agents had left the scene.

*Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries*

## NOT AGAIN?

One sunny summer afternoon an LDWF agent approached a man sitting on a bucket fishing from the bank of a small canal. Upon seeing the face of the fisherman the agent immediately recognized him. Over the last month he had issued two citations for fishing without a license to this fisherman. One citation had been issued near the town of Vinton and the other just south of Lake Charles. This time the man was fishing near Rockefeller Refuge, some 50 miles further east. As the agent greeted the fisherman he smiled and asked the fisherman if he

had bought a license. The fisherman looked up and with a sheepish grin, exclaimed, "Man, is there any place that you don't work?" The agent just continued to smile and answered, "I'll take that as a 'no.' One more ticket and you get a free toaster."

*Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries*

## OOPS!

On a recent boat patrol, a vessel was stopped for a boating safety check. When it became obvious there were several safety infractions that the operator would be cited for, the operator stated, "I can't believe that you are giving me a ticket! I know your lieutenant and if you call him he'll tell you to let me go and get my stuff." At that point, the agent doing the inspection dialed his lieutenant's cell phone. The sound of a familiar ring tone resonated over the water as a phone was heard. Sitting on the other side of the boat the lieutenant answered his cell phone and asked what the problem was as he removed his sunglasses to look at the agent and violator. The conversation ended with the issuance of two boating safety citations.

*Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries*

## BUFFET BIOLOGY

From the Black Hills of South Dakota - It's a tale of an unlucky elk and a lucky lion. Crews in Custer State Park are looking into reproduction problems in the elk herd, and helicopter crews have been firing sedation darts at elk so they can be studied. Resource manager Gary Brundige told the Rapid City Journal that one elk hit by a dart staggered into some vegetation to lie down, and tipped over - right by a mountain lion sunning itself. The lion helped itself to dinner. Brundige said, "Well, what's a top-of-the-line predator going to do in a situation like that?"

*South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks*

*Stories from agencies other than LDWF were reprinted courtesy of [The Balance Wheel](#), the Association of Conservation Information's newsletter.*





## HBO Documentary Tracks Pelican Rescue Mission During Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Response



Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' (LDWF) biologists and technicians were on the front line of wildlife rescue a year ago in the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig disaster.

Bird rescue was a primary mission of LDWF's Coastal and Nongame Resources Division, and one of the birds rescued, rehabilitated, and then returned to

Louisiana's coastal marshes was a brown pelican, tagged number 895 when recovered from oiled state waters last July. The story of that bird was documented by HBO and is now an HBO documentary film, *SAVING PELICAN 895*, which premiered April 20, the anniversary of the rig explosion.

"It's a remarkable story detailing the efforts of government agencies, conservationists, and wildlife activists joining together to preserve fragile species impacted by oil," said LDWF Secretary Robert Barham. "The significance of that effort is even more special since the brown pelican, our state bird, had just been removed from the federal Threatened and Endangered Species list in 2009."

The film, produced and directed by Irene Taylor Brodsky, provides a detailed look at one facet of what went on over the course of many months to overcome the threat of oil to the state's coastal marsh ecosystem.

### HBO Airdates (all times Central)

APRIL 26 @ 4:00PM and 11:00PM  
APRIL 29 @ 5:45AM  
APRIL 30 @ 4:35AM  
MAY 5 @ 1:00PM  
MAY 8 @ 2:30PM

### HBO2 Airdates (all times Central)

APRIL 27 @ 7:00PM  
APRIL 28 @ 7:30PM

## Louisiana Seafood Still Safe to Eat; Average Consumer Could Eat 63 lbs of Louisiana Shrimp, Each Day for Five Years

Louisiana state officials confirm seafood safety; state has tested more than 1,000 composite samples of Louisiana seafood since the start of BP oil spill.

The average consumer could eat 63 pounds of shrimp each day for five years before reaching the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) "levels of concern" for oil contamination according to Louisiana state officials. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) announced today that levels of contaminants being found in Gulf seafood are so low that the average consumer would have to consume extreme amounts of seafood before approaching a level that approaches a health risk, according to the FDA.

State officials with LDWF and the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) examined the levels of contaminants associated with the BP oil spill, called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), being found in Louisiana seafood that have been collected throughout the spill and determined that the levels were so low that they do not pose a risk to consumers. The average consumer could eat any of the following amounts of seafood each day for up to five years without exceeding the health risks for contamination:

- 63 pounds of peeled Louisiana shrimp, or 1,575 jumbo shrimp,
- 5 pounds of Louisiana oyster meat, or 130 individual oysters, or
- 9 pounds of Louisiana fish, or 18 8-ounce fish filets.

LDWF and the Department of Health and Hospitals have tested more than 1,000 individual seafood samples for contamination associated with the BP oil spill since May 9, 2010. Seafood samples often include more than one specimen. For example, one shrimp sample may include as many as 100 individual shrimp that are then ground into a composite paste and sampled. This composite sampling method provides a more complete picture of the health of seafood off Louisiana's coast.

All of the seafood samples tested by Louisiana and federal officials have been safe for consumption.



## LDWF's Management Efforts Result in Record Catches at the 2011 Bassmaster Classic

*Classic scheduled to return to the Sportsman's Paradise in 2012.*

Across the state, anglers are landing trophy-size bass as a result of management efforts by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. *Bassmaster Classic* competitors were no exception this past weekend as record stringers were brought to the scales. Kevin Van Dam, tournament winner and bass fishing superstar, caught the heaviest weights.

Van Dam wowed the crowds with a cumulative weight of over 69 pounds, the heaviest ever in a *Classic* with a five-fish daily limit. He primarily fished the waters of Lake Cataouatche, a popular fishing spot previously stocked by the LDWF with Florida largemouth bass.

Years ago, the freshwater lake fell on hard times after tropical storm systems pushed brackish water into the area. The lake's productivity was minimal, especially in terms of a bass population. Through stocking efforts, in conjunction with fertile Mississippi River waters, through the Davis Pond Freshwater Diversion Project, the department was able to stimulate a productive ecosystem and generate a lively bass population in the lake. The spot's productivity amazed even the best bass anglers in the world at this year's *Classic*.

Throughout Louisiana, anglers routinely report trophy bass exceeding 10 pounds. This was not always the case. The department's management efforts, including the Florida bass stocking program, are largely responsible for this surge in production.

Bass fishing opportunities in Louisiana rank in the top tier nationwide. However, it's the diversity of fishing experiences that makes Louisiana special. The Louisiana Delta, site of the *Bassmaster Classic* is a great example. "Fishing in coastal Louisiana is an experience that's unique from all other waters in the country," said Mike Wood, LDWF's Director of Inland Fisheries. "On any given cast, anglers can tangle with a red drum, flounder, and maybe even a trophy largemouth bass.

Perhaps this is the reason the Sportsman's Paradise was selected as the host site for the *Classic* again in 2012. Shreveport will welcome the 42nd annual *Bassmaster Classic* next February.

## Louisiana and Texas Establish Consistent Regulations for Recreational Fishing on Shared Waters

*Regulations effective Sept. 1, 2011.*

In a historic move, Louisiana and Texas will soon adopt consistent recreational fishing regulations governing their bordering waters. Biologists from the two states have agreed upon regulations that are biologically sound and consistent on both sides of the boundary.

"This monumental event results from cooperation between the two states along with the support of state Rep. James Armes," said Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Assistant Secretary Randy Pausina. "Our department is committed to working with our state partners to provide a better fishing experience for Louisiana anglers."

The two states share waters along most of their common border, supporting excellent recreational fisheries and attracting thousands of anglers each year. The line between the two states follows the Old Sabine River down through the middle of Toledo Bend, so anglers currently must abide by two sets of laws.

The potential for error for even the most conscientious angler is extremely high. For example, an angler with a legal fish in Louisiana can simply drift over the state line into Texas waters and be in violation of their regulations. Unfortunately, many anglers have been cited because of the unnecessary confusion.

The Texas Wildlife Commission has approved a Notice of Intent to make necessary changes on their end. The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has now given official notice they intend to make the necessary changes for Louisiana.

Anglers are encouraged to provide their input regarding the changes. Louisiana public hearings will be scheduled in the Minden, Many and Lake Charles areas. Meeting dates and specific locations are being finalized and will be released soon.

With positive public approval and passage by both the Texas and Louisiana Commissions, the regulations are to be implemented on Sept. 1, 2011.



Photo by Billy Hathorn, Wikimedia Commons

# LDWF Hosts Second Annual Louisiana Saltwater Series Fishing Tournament

*More than 380 redfish already tagged; series features six rodeos, plus championship.*

The Louisiana Saltwater Series will soon return to the Gulf Coast for the tournament's second year. Hosted by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), the series is dedicated to catch-and-release saltwater angling through a series of agency-sponsored fishing tournaments.

The series was developed by LDWF in conjunction with the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation to promote conservation of Louisiana's saltwater sport fish resources, including one of Louisiana's most valuable sport fish, redfish.

"This series is a critical part of ensuring the health and future of our natural resources and the coastal economy because it promotes the management and preservation of our redfish stocks for future generations," said LDWF Assistant Secretary Randy Pausina.

Each series includes two-man teams with a \$200 entry fee for each event. For teams consisting of three members, only two of the members may be 16 or older. The tournament is a 100 percent payout series. There is a 90 percent payout for the first six events with 10 percent retained for the championship. Payout is determined separately for each event based upon the total number of boats entered. Participants may register online for the tournament at [www.LaSaltwaterSeries.com](http://www.LaSaltwaterSeries.com).

This year, a youth division was established to introduce young anglers to the sport of fishing, and to teach the catch-and-release approach to conservation. Participants under 16 years of age will compete against one another in a separate category for trophy catch; all youth anglers will be recognized.

Data collected from tournament entries serve as valuable tools for LDWF fisheries managers and biologists to improve their understanding of marine sport fish movements, patterns of habitat use and estimate population size. Since 2004, over 15,000 redfish have been tagged through Louisiana's Cooperative Marine Sport Fish Tagging Program.

"Fish tagging can yield a wealth of information. Years ago, most tagging was done by scientists or trained biologists, but today recreational anglers are encouraged to join the effort as volunteers," explained Pausina. "Utilizing volunteer taggers allows us to tag a greater number of fish from a wider geographic area."

In last year's series alone, anglers tagged a total of 380 fish. The recapture rate from the Slidell tournament was as high as 21 percent. Overall weight determined last year's winners, with Richard Rutland taking home the monster catch of the series, a 9.66 lb red drum.

The 2011 series is comprised of six fishing events and a championship. Tournament locations are scheduled across the coast. The 2011 tournament schedule is as follows:

- **April 2:** Lafitte, Seaway Marina;
- **April 30:** Lake Calcasieu, Calcasieu Point Landing;
- **May 14:** Venice, Venice Marina;
- **June 18:** Delacroix, Sweetwater Marina;
- **July 23:** Slidell, Dockside Bait and Tackle/The Dock;
- **Aug. 20:** Port Fourchon, Moran's Marina; and
- **Oct. 7 & 8 - Championship:** Empire, The Delta Marina.

Sponsorships for the Saltwater Series are still available. All sponsorship dollars will go towards the cost of planning, production and prize money.

For complete information, including rules, regulations and entry forms go to [www.lasaltwaterseries.com](http://www.lasaltwaterseries.com).



LDWF Office of Fisheries' file photos





# LOUISIANA<sup>®</sup> SALTWATER SERIES





## DWI Enforcement

One of the primary missions for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Enforcement Division is making the waterways safer for the public with an emphasis on decreasing the number of boating crash incidents and fatalities. The LDWF Enforcement Division performs this mission by executing safe boating patrols in high traffic areas, conducting safe boating classes for new and experienced operators, ensuring compliance with "Rules of the Road" boating regulations and placing an emphasis on Driving While under the Influence (DWI) enforcement on the water.

In 2009, alcohol use was the leading contributing factor in fatal boating crash incidents accounting for 16 percent or 120 deaths in the U.S. according to the U.S. Coast Guard. In Louisiana 2009, alcohol use was also listed as the leading primary cause of fatal boating crash incidents accounting for 24 percent or six deaths. Also in 2009, alcohol was the primary cause for 308 boating crash incidents in the U.S. leading to 330 injuries according to the U.S. Coast Guard. In Louisiana 2009, alcohol was the primary cause of 14 boating crash incidents.

Alcohol consumption impairs a boater's judgment, balance, vision and reaction time. Alcohol also increases fatigue and susceptibility to hyperthermia. Intensifying the effects of alcohol are sun, wind, noise, vibration and movement, which are all common to boating activities.

In an effort to remove these inebriated boat operators from the water, the Enforcement Division continues to step up their DWI enforcement activities. In the last decade LDWF has increased patrols on the water, set up mobile DWI breathalyzer stations and worked toward harsher DWI penalties.

"We (LDWF) are always looking for ways to make boating a more safe and enjoyable activity," said LDWF Lt. Col. Jeff Mayne, the state boating law administrator. "We use these studies and stats to shape our future boating enforcement policies. Since alcohol remains the number one primary cause of boating fatalities, we will continue to put an emphasis on our DWI enforcement and waterway safety efforts."

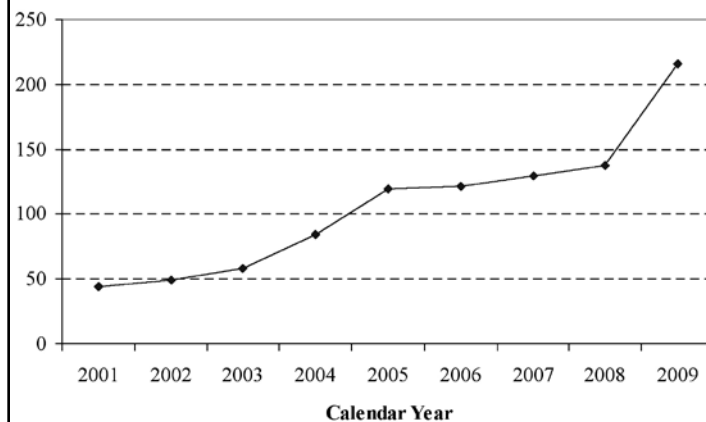
In 2009, LDWF agents issued out 216 DWI citations to boat operators, which was over four times the amount issued in 2001 and almost twice the amount issued in 2006. This increase in DWI citations for vessels can be attributed to a boost in DWI enforcement overtime funding and training for the agents. The Enforcement Division has two mobile vans with breathalyzer machines. These vans are deployed to places in the state where agents suspect a lot of traffic and high alcohol consumption. The Enforcement Division also partners with law enforcement agencies, which allow LDWF to use their mobile breathalyzer machines.

In 2009, LDWF introduced a stricter penalty for operating a vessel or a vehicle while intoxicated. Now when



Photo by Dori, Wikimedia Commons

Figure 2.20. Number of LDWF Citations for Operating a Vessel While Intoxicated, 2001 - 2009



someone is caught and convicted of operating a moving vehicle or vessel, the perpetrator will lose his or her driver's license and boating privileges for the specified time ordered by the judge in the case. Also, each offense of operating a vehicle or vessel while intoxicated counts toward the total number of DWI crimes whether they happened on the water or road.

In Louisiana, a DWI can be issued to anyone operating a moving vessel or vehicle with a blood alcohol concentration of .08 or higher. First offense DWI on the water or on the road carries a \$300 to \$1,000 fine and up to six months in jail. Second offense DWI brings a \$750 to \$1,000 fine and between 30 days and six months in jail. Third offense DWI carries a \$5,000 fine and between one and five years in jail. Again, every DWI offense is also subject to a suspension of driving a vehicle and operating a boat privileges.

"We want people to have fun on the water, but we want it to be safe fun," said Lt. Col. Jeff Mayne. "We say the same thing that you would say to someone when driving a vehicle, and that is to make sure you have a designated driver on the water."

# Crawfish Cakes w/ Horseradish Sauce

Makes: 8 cakes

## Ingredients:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 Cup Saltine Cracker Crumbs                       | 1/3 Cup Chopped Fresh Parsley              |
| 1 Tbs. Dijon Mustard                               | 1 Pound Crawfish Tails, rinsed and drained |
| 2 Tbs. Light Mayonnaise                            | Salt and Pepper to taste                   |
| 1 tsp. Hot Sauce                                   | 1 Tbs. Olive Oil                           |
| 1 Bunch Green Onions, chopped                      | Flour                                      |
| 1/3 Cup Shredded, Reduced-fat Sharp Cheddar Cheese | Horseradish Sauce (recipe below)           |

1. In a medium bowl, carefully combine all ingredients except oil and flour.
2. Cover and chill for 30 minutes, if time permits. Shape into 8 patties.
3. In a large nonstick skillet, heat oil. Lightly dust patties with flour, and cook over medium heat for 3-5 minutes on each side, or until browned.
4. Serve with Horseradish Sauce

*Terrific Tidbit - To make ahead of time mold into patties, and refrigerate, covered, until ready to cook. Shrimp may be substituted if you prefer. For cracker crumbs, place crackers in a food processor or blender. If freezing, freeze uncooked.*

## Horseradish Sauce Ingredients

- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1/4 Cup Nonfat Sour Cream | 2 Tbs. Prepared Horseradish |
| 2 Tbs. Light Mayonnaise   | Pinch Sugar                 |
| 1 Tbs. Lemon Juice        |                             |

In a bowl, combine all ingredients. Mix well.

# Wild



# Palate

## Pear & Brie Mixed Green Salad w/ Orange Vinaigrette

### Ingredients:

Serves: **6**

1/3 Cup Orange Juice	1 pear, cored and cut into chunks
1/2 tsp. Dry Mustard	3 Tbs. Chopped Red Onion
1 tsp. Dijon Mustard	2-3 ounces Brie Cheese, rind removed and cut into small chunks
1/4 Cup Balsamic Vinegar	3 Tbs. Chopped Walnuts, toasted
2 Tbs. Olive Oil	
6 Cups Mixed Salad Greens	

1. In small bowl, whisk together orange juice, dry mustard, Dijon mustard, vinegar, and olive oil.
2. In a large bowl, combine remaining ingredients. When ready to serve toss with dressing.

## Roasted Summer Vegetables & Pasta

### Ingredients:

Makes: **8** (1-cup)

1 (8-ounce) Package Small Tubular Pasta	6 Cloves Garlic, sliced
3 Large Yellow Squash (about 4 cups), halved and sliced 1-inch thick crosswise	3 Tbs. Olive Oil
1 Pint Grape or Cherry Tomatoes	Salt and Pepper to taste
1 Red Onion, halved and sliced 1/2-inch thick	3 Tbs. Grated Parmesan Cheese
	1/2 Cup Torn Fresh Basil Leaves

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Line a baking sheet with foil. Cook pasta according to package directions, omitting any salt or oil. Drain and set aside.
2. Spread squash, tomatoes, onion and garlic on prepared baking sheet. Toss with oil and season to taste. Roast in oven for 35-40 minutes.
3. Add pasta to pan, mixing with vegetables. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese, add basil and toss well.

## Lemon Cheesecake Squares

### Ingredients:

Makes: **25** squares

1 Cup Graham Cracker Crumbs	2 Egg Whites
1 Tbs. plus 3/4 Cup Sugar	1/4 Cup Lemon Juice
2 Tbs. Butter, melted	1 Tbs. Grated Lemon Rind
2 (8-ounce) Packages Reduced-fat Cream Cheese	1 Cup Lemon Curd (found in jar)
1 Egg	

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9x9x2-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
2. In a small bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs, 1 tablespoon sugar, and butter. Press into bottom of prepared pan.
3. In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and remaining sugar, until creamy. Add egg, egg whites, lemon juice, and lemon rind. Mix well.
4. Pour into prepared crust and bake for 40 minutes, until center is set. Remove and carefully spread with lemon curd. Cool completely and refrigerate. Cut into squares.

Recipes taken from Holly Clegg's  
*Trim & Terrific Gulf Coast Favorites.*

To purchase a copy of this book go to: [www.hollyclegg.com](http://www.hollyclegg.com)

