

# Florida Aquaculture

## *El Niño returns* by the Southeast Climate Consortium

**El Niño has returned for the first time since 2003 and will have substantial impacts on our climate for the next 3-6 months.** It appears that El Niño has returned for the first time since the weak event of 2002-03. Unusually warm sea surface temperatures began to appear along the equator around the International Date Line in July and have since spread all the way to the South American coast. The spread of unusually warm water has taken on the traditional El Niño pattern in the last two weeks. It is very likely that the current El Niño will intensify further and last through the winter of 2007.

**What does El Niño mean for the Southeast in the near future?** This El Niño event began a little later in the year than most Pacific warming events. Summer/fall is the usual development season when sea surface temperatures may rise and spread across the Pacific. El Niño normally reaches peak intensity and coverage in the winter months. Because of this seasonality, the first effect

felt in the Southeast U.S. has been the relative inactivity of the 2006 hurricane season. In spite of predictions to the contrary, this year has been a quiet hurricane season and many are celebrating the developing El Niño. El Niño is known to create an environment of high shear (winds changing with height) over hurricane formation regions in the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico that hinders hurricane development. With El Niño continuing to grow and hurricane season ending November 30, we can expect the remainder of the hurricane season to be below average activity.

Partially due to the expected decrease in tropical activity, El Niño actually brings drier than normal conditions (20% - 30% less rain than normal) to Florida in the months of September and October. Rainfall from tropical systems is an integral component of the climate of the Southeast in the fall, which is otherwise fairly dry without the impact of a tropical system.

El Niño does not have much influence on temperatures during these months.

**El Niño and winter weather :** Once the colder months arrive (November - March), the classic El Niño climate patterns should be established and control our weather. El Niño is known to bring more frequent storms, excessive rainfall, and cooler temperatures to Florida and coastal Alabama and Georgia. Florida can expect 40% - 60% more rainfall than normal in the winter months. It is believed that the increase in rain and cloudiness associated with El Niño causes average temperatures to be cooler than normal during the winter months. These cooler temperatures result in greater chill accumulations over the course of the season. While average temperatures are often cooler, El Niño actually reduces the risk of severe cold outbreaks in Florida and the Southeast. The strong subtropical jet stream that is typical of El Niño acts to "block" the

### Inside this issue:

Managing damaging wildlife	2
Florida sales taxes exemptions	3
Mystery Snail static cling available	4

intrusions of cold arctic air masses.

**Current Conditions:** After a very dry spring and early summer for most of the area, more plentiful rainfall has returned to the Southeast in August and September. As is the usual case for summer precipitation, coverage and accumulations have been highly variable throughout the region. Southwest Florida has received soaking rains from tropical storms Alberto and Ernesto along with frequent thundershowers. Other areas, the western Panhandle of Florida and southeast Alabama in particular, have remained rather dry. While not offering immediate relief, El Niño should help these areas catch up in the coming winter.

For additional information and weather planning tools visit: <http://www.agclimate.org>.

## Managing Florida wildlife on the farm by Suzie Hershberger, DACS-Bartow Office

*This article is the first in a two-part series on the effective and legal management of wildlife problems at aquaculture facilities.*



White ibis is an example of a depredating bird protected by state and federal laws that may not be killed.

With its warm climate and unique natural habitats, Florida is home to a diversity of wildlife, some of which cannot be found anywhere else on earth. Though these animals are highly valuable for humans and for the ecosystem, they can also be detrimental when their activities conflict with agriculture.

To follow are the basic steps aquaculture producers should follow in the case of a conflict with wildlife.

**Step 1:** Before any action is taken to control wildlife at an aquaculture facility, it must be determined whether the animals are actually harmful to production efforts. If the damage caused by wildlife is minimal, taking action may not be worth the time, effort, and investment.

**Step 2:** Identify exactly which species is/are responsible for damage at the facility. (For example, uneaten catfish heads and spines

along the shorelines of ponds indicate the presence of river otters; herons often leave behind carcasses with large puncture holes.) Not only will this affect



Non-lethal bird deterrent

which regulations may apply, but it will help in deciding which management techniques will work best.

**Step 3:** Contact the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services program

at 352-377-5556. Wildlife Services biologists can assist with identifying the problem wildlife, estimating damage, and recommending non-lethal control techniques. If lethal methods are required, Wildlife Services biologists may make recommendations for the exact methods that will most effectively remove the problem animal(s).

**IMPORTANT:** Almost all fish-eating birds that frequent aquaculture facilities are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act\*. Lethal control is **not** allowed without a Depredation Permit (Form 3-200) issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Permit applications and instructions are provided by USDA-Wildlife Services biologists, currently cost \$100, and typically are processed by the USFWS within a week of receiving the completed application.

**Step 4:** Check state and local regulations for managing wildlife. For general information on Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission regulations and con-

tact information for regional offices, visit: <http://myfwc.com/critters/policy.htm>

**Step 5:** Use legal and effective methods to control problem animals on your property. The next newsletter will describe suggested management techniques for several types of animals.

For more information from a USDA-Wildlife Services biologist, attend the 2006 Florida Aquaculture Association Conference in Brandon on November 17-18. Visit [www.flaa.org](http://www.flaa.org) for more information.

\*Florida Administrative Code 68A-12.009 regarding depredating birds:

(5)(a) Blackbirds, cowbirds, grackles or crows may be taken when committing or about to commit depredations upon ornamental trees, agricultural crops, livestock or wildlife.



Mel Amundson, Orlando Sentinel

(c) Double-crested cormorants may be taken as provided by 16 U.S.C. section 712 only at freshwater commercial aquaculture facilities certified by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and

at state-operated freshwater hatcheries. Double-crested cormorants shall be disposed of within the boundary of the aquaculture facility by burial or incineration only. By July 31 of each year, each certified aquaculture facility shall report to the Commission the number of cormorants killed and the associated dates for the previous twelve (12) month period from July 1 through June 30.

## Florida sales tax exemption reminders

Aquaculturists that possess the Aquaculture Certificate of Registration qualify for these agriculture-related sales tax exemptions:

1) electricity used directly and exclusively for the production or processing of agricultural farm products on a farm, 2) sale, purchase, or rental of qualifying power farm equipment, 3) all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) that are to be used exclusively on a farm or in a forest for agricultural production of plants and animals useful to humans, including the preparation, planting, cultivating, or harvesting of these products or any other practices necessary to accomplish production through the harvest phase, 4) gross proceeds from the sale of livestock, poultry, and other farm products direct from the farm (excluding ornamental nursery stock offered for sale at retail), 5) butane gas, propane gas, and all other forms of liquefied petroleum gas purchased by a farmer for use in any tractor, vehicle, or other farm equipment which is used exclusively on a farm for agricultural purposes, 6) agricultural uses, and 7) miscellaneous exemptions that includes a feed exemption.

Visit <http://www.taxlaw.state.fl.us> for explanatory Department of Revenue documents entitled, **Tax Information Publications**, that are numbered: 06A01-09 (electricity exemption), 05A01-03 (powered farm equipment), 05A01-04 (off-highway vehicles), 98A01-15 (farm direct sales), and 92A01-07 (liquefied gas).

The sales tax exemptions for agricultural uses and the feed exemption are described in Chapter

212.08, Sales, rental, use, consumption, distribution, and storage tax; specified exemptions, Florida Statutes:

### (5) EXEMPTIONS; ACCOUNT OF USE.—

(a) *Items in agricultural use and certain nets.*--There are exempt from the tax imposed by this chapter nets designed and used exclusively by commercial fisheries; disinfectants, fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, and weed killers used for application on crops or groves, including commercial nurseries and home vegetable gardens, used in dairy barns or on poultry farms for the purpose of protecting poultry or livestock, or used directly on poultry or livestock; portable containers or movable receptacles in which portable containers are placed, used for processing farm products; field and garden seeds, including flower seeds; nursery stock, seedlings, cuttings, or other propagative material purchased for growing stock; seeds, seedlings, cuttings, and plants used to produce food for human consumption; cloth, plastic, and other similar materials used for shade, mulch, or protection from frost or insects on a farm; generators used on poultry farms; and liquefied petroleum gas or other fuel used to heat a structure in which started pullets or broilers are raised; however, such exemption shall not be allowed unless the purchaser or lessee signs a certificate stating that the item to be exempted is for the exclusive use designated herein. Also exempt are cellophane wrappers, glue for

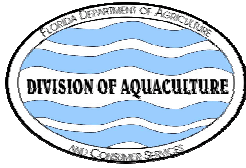
tin and glass (apiarists), mailing cases for honey, shipping cases, window cartons, and baling wire and twine used for baling hay, when used by a farmer to contain, produce, or process an agricultural commodity.

(7) MISCELLANEOUS EXEMPTIONS.--Exemptions provided to any entity by this chapter do not inure to any transaction that is otherwise taxable under this chapter when payment is made by a representative or employee of the entity by any means, including, but not limited to, cash, check, or credit card, even when that representative or employee is subsequently reimbursed by the entity. In addition, exemptions provided to any entity by this subsection do not inure to any transaction that is otherwise taxable under this chapter unless the entity has obtained a sales tax exemption certificate from the department or the entity obtains or provides other documentation as required by the department. Eligible purchases or leases made with such a certificate must be in strict compliance with this subsection and departmental rules, and any person who makes an exempt purchase with a certificate that is not in strict compliance with this subsection and the rules is liable for and shall pay the tax. The department may adopt rules to administer this subsection.

(d) *Feeds.*--Feeds for poultry, ostriches, and livestock, including racehorses and dairy cows, are exempt.

Contact the Florida Department of Revenue, Richard Parsons, 850-922-4838, or Bonny Everton, 850-922-9408, for additional information.

**Charles H. Bronson**  
**Commissioner of Agriculture**



R. Sherman Wilhelm, Director  
Division of Aquaculture  
1203 Governor's Square Blvd, Fifth Floor  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
<http://www.FloridaAquaculture.com>

Phone: 850-488-4033 or 488-5471  
Fax: 850-410-0893  
Email: [wilhels@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:wilhels@doacs.state.fl.us)

**Benefiting commercial aquaculture,  
Conserving natural resources**

DACS-P-00082

### ***Mystery Snail identifier labels now available***

Static cling labels for retail point-of-purchase identification of the Mystery Snail (*Pomacea bridgesii*) are now available from Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. This identifier is a small static cling (2" w x 1 1/2" h) that can be placed on tanks containing Mystery Snails. The goal is to assist consumers as well as state and federal inspectors in identification.



Available in packs of 50, these static clings are free-of-charge to Mystery Snail producers, wholesalers, and retailers. Labels can be included with the shipment of Mystery Snails to the retailer. To order or for more information, contact the Bureau of Seafood and Aquaculture Marketing, 2051 East Dirac Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32310-3760, telephone (850) 488-0163, or email [seafood@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:seafood@doacs.state.fl.us).

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE AND  
CONSUMER SERVICES**

**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**

**PRSR STD**

Division of Aquaculture  
1203 Governor's Square Blvd, Fifth Floor  
Tallahassee, FL 32301