

# Florida Aquaculture

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## Florida Legislature committed to aquaculture

Despite a looming billion dollar plus shortfall in revenue and an additional projected deficit of \$1.8 billion next year, the Florida Legislature, during its Special Session C held October 3 – 12, refused to cut additional funds from the Division of Aquaculture.

The Governor and Florida Legislature earlier in the year asked for a 4 to 10 percent cut in all program areas to help make up the revenue shortfall. The Department offered less than a

4 percent cut. The State had already reduced the money it spends for each quarter of the year by one percent, which by the end of the year will total a 4 percent reduction in funds available for expenditure.

After extensive hearings, presentations, and debate by the members of the House and Senate Subcommittees, Chairs Stan Mayfield and J.D. Alexander decided not to cut aquaculture. "This is a big moment" said Commis-

sioner Charles Bronson. "Aquaculture is finally reaping the benefits of its hard work to become a recognized and significant member of the agriculture community. Not all of the agriculture groups fared this well."

The second quarter revenue estimates continue to show a slow decline in tax receipts. The Legislative regular session starts on March 4<sup>th</sup>.

## Contribute to the 2007 Census of Agriculture

Commissioner of Agriculture Charles Bronson urges Florida aquaculturists to participate in the 2007 Census of Agriculture. Bronson noted, "Census data is vital to the continuation of federal and state programs and is used all the time by local governments, Florida Legislature, and Congress to make vital decisions about public funds."

Conducted every five years by the USDA, the Census is a complete count of the nation's farms and ranches and the people who oper-

ate them. The Census looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures and other topics. It provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the nation.

Recent state budgeting has forced the Department to discontinue the biennial Florida Aquaculture survey. Fortunately, the national 2007 Census of Agriculture can take its place.

NASS will mail out Census forms on December 28, 2007 to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2008. Producers can return their forms by mail or, for the first time, they have the convenient option of filling out the Census online. For more information about the Census, visit [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov) or call toll-free (888) 4AG-STAT or (888) 424-7828.

## Transgenic species BMP reminder

Aquaculture Certificate of Registration holders that are planning to culture, or are culturing, transgenic species (i.e., organisms whose genomes have been modified by the introduction or deletion of specific genetic material), must apply for and receive an authorization from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Please contact Kal Knickerbocker, Division of Aquaculture, at 850-488-4033 or [knickek@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:knickek@doacs.state.fl.us).

## Mote completes third caviar harvest by Nadine Slimak, Mote Public Relations Manager

In the fall of 2006, Mote Marine Laboratory became the first organization in Florida to harvest caviar, which they produced from sturgeon grown in an environmentally friendly production system that treats and recirculates its water at the Mote Aquaculture Park in eastern Sarasota County 17 miles from the coast. In November of this year, Mote began its third caviar harvest.



Sturgeon eggs are cleaned, salted, and gently mixed with a spatula.

Mote, which has about 75 metric tons of growing sturgeon, is currently harvesting caviar from the bester and Siberian species. This batch of caviar – mostly from the besters, which are being phased out of production at Mote – will be sold to a North Carolina-based caviar house. Mote has also provided caviar to the world-famous Petrossian caviar house. Mote expects to harvest around 50 kilos from the 5 to 7-year-old fish.

Mote's Sturgeon Demonstration Program has several goals:

- **Reducing the pressure on wild sturgeon stocks**, which have been extremely depleted worldwide by overfishing. By producing caviar from fish grown in

aquaculture settings, Mote helps provide supply to meet a growing demand so that wild fish stocks may have a chance at rebounding.

- **Ensuring a healthy and safe food product.** Questions of seafood safety have recently been at the forefront in the news. Mote's fish are produced safely in a controlled environment that ensures they are safe for consumers.

- **Creating a new business model for Florida and the U.S.** By supporting the industry in Florida, Mote is helping develop

new business models to expand the state's economy.

- **Reducing our nation's dependence on imported food fish.** The U.S. trade deficit in seafood is second to that only of oil. Growing fish domestically will help reduce the nation's dependence on other countries.

- **Supporting aquaculture research that is important for the nation.** By creating new systems to produce fish for food in an environmentally sound way, Mote is supporting the creation of a new industry while emphasizing sound environmental practices.

Mote is also seeking funding to help support the program. While this caviar harvest is an important one, Mote Aquaculture Park is still trying to rebound from a July 2006 fire that destroyed one-third of its stock and the building that housed it. Continued investment will help support the program until it reaches a break-even point, expected to occur in 2009.



Mote processing manager Wade Tappan places salted caviar in tins. Gold-plated tins or glass jars are used to protect the flavor.

For more information, contact Business Manager John Pether at 941-234-3566 or [jpether@mote.org](mailto:jpether@mote.org) or Kevan Main at 941-388-4541, ext. 27 or [kmain@mote.org](mailto:kmain@mote.org). Images courtesy Lawson Mitchell, Mote Marine Laboratory.



Caviar ready for shipment.

## Eagle Scouts help Florida's coasts

Volunteers are an important part of the Coastal and Aquatic Managed Area's (CAMA) effort to protect Florida's coastal resources. Many Eagle Scouts, the highest Boy Scout rank, have organized and completed volunteer projects at CAMA sites.



coral colonies to the Key West area, where coral had never been transplanted before. In the Indian River, debris removal was part of an existing spoil island enhancement project. To further habitat restoration, an Eagle Scout and other volunteers planted native vegetation.

In the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, a kayak cleanup project led by an Eagle Scout resulted in the collection of 30 bags of debris. Another Eagle Scout organized a coral transplantation project as part of an ongoing program. The Eagle Scout focused on transplanting

Public education is very important because CAMA managed areas endure intense recreational use by people unfamiliar with the importance of fragile coastal resources and species.

Eagle Scouts have assisted in the construction of educational kiosks in the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve and on spoil islands in the Indian River. They have also worked on aquaria and interpretive signs in Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Some projects improved facilities for the public and staff. Eagle Scouts built an accessible ramp, deck, and walkway for the Wekiva River Aquatic Preserve. Trails and a camping area were built at the Rookery Bay Reserve. The Indian River now has more picnic tables and camping facilities on spoil islands.

Article and image courtesy the CAMA Program.

## Aquaculture America '08: Beyond magic...competing in world markets



The annual North American conference devoted to aquaculture will be held February 9-12, 2008 at Disney's Coronado Resort in Orlando. The Florida Aquaculture Association is the conference host. Highlights to the four day conference include Dr. Gunnar Knapp, University of Alaska, speaking during the plenary session on the economics, politics and the future of aquaculture; the concurrent Marine Ornamentals '08: Collection, Culture and Conservation conference; a World Wildlife Fund sponsored workshop to create environmental stan-

dards for mollusc culture; a trade show of equipment and services featuring 200 booths; and a variety of valuable sessions:

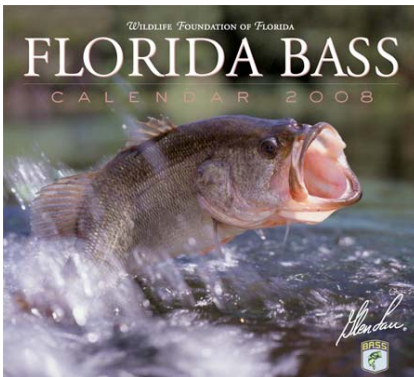
- Key Seafood Buyers Tell All
- Marketing Aquaculture Products for Your Sustainable Profits
- Will National Aquatic Animal Health Issues Affect You?
- Aquaculture Drug Approval Process
- Aquaculture 101: Starting an Aquaculture Business
- Shrimp, Freshwater Fish, Catfish, Bass, Molluscan, or Marine Fish culture sessions
- Feeding Strategies for Bait and Ornamental Fish
- Live Hauling Fish

- Aquaponics
- Entering Organic Aquaculture in the USA
- Aquaculture Education and Training
- Offshore Aquaculture

The Florida Aquaculture Association is hosting a special session on Florida aquaculture and three tours on February 9th: East and West Coast Florida, and a Disney The Land and The Sea Behind-the-Scenes tours.

For complete conference information and registration information, visit <http://www.was.org>, e-mail [worldaqua@aol.com](mailto:worldaqua@aol.com) or call 760-751-5005.

## 2008 Florida Bass Calendar on sale now!



The 2008 Florida Bass Calendar, featuring gorgeous underwater photos, is now on sale through the Wildlife Foundation of Florida. The calendar features interesting facts, tips and fishing-related dates. They make great holiday gifts, and profits support the Florida Bass Conservation Center's mission to improve the future of freshwater fishing in Florida.

The Center is a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to the propagation and conservation of Florida's famous largemouth bass. Florida bass are actually a distinct subspecies of largemouth black bass characterized by faster growth and being a more challenging piscatorial opponent than their northern cousin. In addition, Florida is home to the Suwannee and shoal basses, which are unique southern adaptations of the black bass, are very limited in range, and need careful management to ensure their healthy futures.

Order yours today online at <http://www.WildlifeFoundationofFlorida.com/> or call 800-988-4889.

Reef scientists, managers, conservationists, fishers, and divers, will find an opportunity at the 11th International Coral Reef Symposium to assimilate the most recent and best scientific information available about these precious and irreplaceable natural resources.

The Symposium's goal is better understanding of coral reef ecosystems and consequently effective



conservation and management strategies. The Symposium will promote the dissemination of knowledge about reef sustainability and resilience, particularly important to many nations who depend upon coral reefs for their economy and food supply.

The U.S. and South Florida venue will also provide convenient access for experts and policymakers to mutually visit and study reef systems in the Atlantic, Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, Meso-America, and Eastern Pacific.

Over 2,500 attendees are expected from the U.S. and international marine science, management, and conservationist communities. For additional information and registration, visit <http://www.nova.edu/ncri/11icrs/index.html>.

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



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