

FLORIDA AQUACULTURE

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FLORIDA OCEANS AND COASTAL COUNCIL MEMBERS APPOINTED

Charles Bronson, Commissioner of Agriculture, appointed a diverse group of experts to the Florida Oceans and Coastal Council that was established by House Bill 1855 in the last legislative session. The Council will develop priorities for ocean and coastal research and establish a state-wide ocean research plan. The group will also coordinate public and private ocean research for more effective coastal management.

Co-chaired by Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Colleen Castille and Executive Director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Ken Haddad, the Council is made up of fifteen voting members and three non-voting members. DEP Secretary Castille, FWC Director Haddad and Commissioner Bronson each appointed five members. Commissioner Bronson, Secretary Castille, and Director Haddad are non-voting members.

Bronson Appointees:

- Jane Davis – Aquarium Director, The Living Seas at Walt Disney World's Epcot®.
- Dr. Ernest Estevez – Director, Mote Marine Laboratory's Center for Coastal Ecology.
- Rob Kramer – President, International Game Fish Association.
- Jerry Sansom – Executive Director, Organized Fishermen of Florida.
- Jody Thomas – Director, The Nature Conservatory's South Florida Region.

DEP Appointees:

- Dr. Karl Havens – Chair of the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, University of Florida.
- Dr. Thomas D. Waite – Dean of the College of Engineering, Florida Institute of Technology.
- Dr. John C. Ogden – Director of the Florida Institute of Oceanography and Professor of Biology, University of South Florida.

- Dr. Thomas N. Lee – Research Professor of Meteorology and Physical Oceanography at the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, University of Miami.
- Dr. Lisa Robbins – Chief Scientist, United States Geological Survey Center for Coastal and Watershed Studies.

FWC Appointees:

- Billy Causey – Superintendent, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.
- Dr. James Cato – Director, Florida Sea Grant.
- Dr. Shirley Pomponi – President and Chief Executive Officer, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution.
- Dr. Jerome Lorenz – Research Director, National Audubon Society's Tavernier Science Center.
- Dr. R. Grant Gilmore – Senior Aquatic Scientist, Dynamac Corporation.

Special points of interest

- 2005 Gator egg collection very successful.
- Prominent aquaculturists honored.
- HBOI announces Second International Sustainable Marine Fish Culture Conference.
- IRREC hires Dr. Courtney Ohs as Aqua Specialist.

2005 GATOR EGG COLLECTION SUCCESSFUL

BY ALLEN REGISTER, GATORAMA ALLIGATOR FARM



The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) manages a program, in cooperation with Florida alligator farmers, to annually harvest wild alligator eggs for captive grow-out. Florida farmers pay all of the out-of-pocket expenses associated with the program, including helicopter rental, boats, ve-

hicles, and lodging. Collections occur each year during July on state agency managed lands.

The 2005 public alligator egg collection was a repeat of the 2004 successful season. There were worries that heavy rains would have adverse effects on this year's nesting; however, the rains were early enough that the expectant mother alligators (otherwise known as sows) built their nests high and dry when the habitat allowed.

A record number of good nests, 3,334, were surveyed this year. Collectors opened up 1,667 nests

as allowed by this conservation program. The number of eggs purchased by Florida alligator farmers was 35,638 at a price of just under \$10.00 per egg of which \$5.00 per egg is retained by the FWC to support wild alligator management programs and other FWC wildlife programs.

The alligator farming industry is experiencing stronger markets. Hide prices are creeping up and meat sales are going extremely well. The University of Florida has received money through the Aquaculture Review Council to complete research on hide quality issues, which have plagued the industry for the last three to five years.

PROMINENT FLORIDA AQUACULTURISTS RECOGNIZED

EkkWill Waterlife Resources of Gibsonton Florida, a longtime Florida aquaculture business and aquarium industry supplier, was recently named the **2005 Sustainable Florida Small Business Award** by the Council for Sustainable Florida.



EkkWill was recognized for its outstanding achievements in sustainable business practices. Various elements of EkkWill's history and programs led to such recognition, including innovative technology, captive breeding of new fishes, environmental stewardship, water conservation, industry service, and business growth.

The Council for Sustainable Florida is a group composed of both public and private sector representatives. Their mission is to help develop policy and programs dedicated to

Florida's sustainable future, protecting and supporting the important links between a healthy environment, a prosperous economy, a satisfying quality of life and vibrant, livable communities.

EkkWill's prestigious achievement was recognized by the Florida Cabinet. Pictured is EkkWill President Tim Hennessy being congratulated by Governor Jeb Bush during the Cabinet ceremony in Tallahassee.

Don Bryne, Suwannee Laboratories, Inc. of Lake City, was inducted into the **International Water Lily & Water Gardening Society's Hall of Fame** during their annual meeting in Bethlehem Pennsylvania. Don has been a pioneer in the development of aquarium plants and plants for ponds. He and his

wife, Shirley, commenced business in 1966 and have traveled extensively in Africa, Madagascar, Thailand, Sri Lanka, South America, India, and Australia locating plants for introduction. He has hybridized numerous water lily varieties, including award winners of the IWGS New Water Lily Competition in 1997 and 2000.



One of his greatest contributions is the many trips to Brazil to collect *Victoria amazonica* seeds. If it were not for his organized trips, there would probably be no hybrid Victorias today in botanical gardens like Kew and Longwood.

Patrick Nutt of Longwood Gardens with Shirley and Don Bryne (left to right) following the award ceremony. The photo courtesy of Rick Tilley, IWGS.

FISH FARMERS AND SCIENTISTS MEETING AT HARBOR BRANCH TO PUSH MARINE FISH AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY FORWARD BY KEN RILEY, HBOI

There is enormous economic potential in both Florida and around the country to farm marine fish species such as red drum, pompano, snapper, flounder, cobia and others to meet the public's ever-growing demand for seafood. However, to date the industry's progress has been slowed by regulatory problems as well as technological barriers.

On October 20 and 21, leading aquaculture researchers will meet at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution to discuss new research and work that has overcome many of those hurdles, and ways to eliminate any that remain.

"Marine fish aquaculture is just about ready to take off as a large industry thanks to recent breakthroughs in research. Our goal for this conference is to bring together researchers and industry from different regions and with different specialties to share the knowledge that's been generated and push the

industry forward," says Megan Davis, director of Harbor Branch's Aquaculture Division.

The 2nd **International Sustainable Marine Fish Culture Conference** will feature a keynote presentation by Howard Johnson of H. M. Johnson and Associates. Mr. Johnson



is author of the *Annual Report on the United States Seafood Industry*. He is a 25-year veteran of seafood sourcing, sales, marketing, and new product development.

Mr. Johnson will address new marketing opportunities for sustainably produced and certified aquaculture products. Additionally, twenty-five scientists and industry experts will present their latest research on new production technologies for land-based recirculating tank systems, ponds, inshore net cages and offshore sea cages. Presentations will address biology, engineering, integrated health management, and nutrition and feeding practices.

The conference is sponsored by the USDA Agricultural Research Service and Harbor Branch with additional support from the aquaculture industry. The two-day event will draw a diverse audience and is recommended for students, entrepreneurs, biologists, fish producers, farmers, engineers, environmentalists, natural resource agency personnel, city/county planners, state and federal regulatory personnel, educators and others involved or interested in marine fish culture.

"Our previous conference in 2003 was a real success and we anticipate over 200 people attending this year's meeting. We have a great line up of speakers, an aquaculture seafood extravaganza dinner, and tours of Harbor Branch's newly renovated Aquaculture Development Park," reports Kenneth Riley, conference manager.

For more information visit the conference website at www.sustainableaquaculture.org or email kriley@hboi.edu.

NEW AQUACULTURE SCIENTIST HIRED BY IRREC BY ROBIN KOESTOYO, INDIAN RIVER RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER

Dr. Cortney Ohs, an aquaculture researcher with over 12 years of aquaculture research and extension experience with an emphasis in evaluation of management practices for new species, and for existing operations, has been named assistant professor of aquaculture of the University of Florida's Indian River Research and Education Center (IRREC) near Fort Pierce.

Dr. Ohs is the Center's first professor of aquaculture science. He will

head research and extension programs at the Center's Aquaculture Demonstration Project, a 15-acre, inland site adjacent to the St. Lucie County Extension Office. The Project



comprises four grow-out ponds, a greenhouse, retention ponds and a

1,060-foot deep artesian well.

Dr. Ohs completed his doctoral degree in wildlife and fisheries science at Mississippi State University in 2003 and a master's degree in wildlife and fisheries ecology in 1995. He earned a bachelor's degree in biology at Nebraska Wesleyan University in 1992.

Dr. Ohs can be contacted at telephone 772-468-3922 extension 130.

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*Benefiting commercial aquaculture,
Conserving natural resources*



The Division of Aquaculture's responsibilities include certifying commercial aquaculturists through an annual registration, implementing on-farm Aquaculture Best Management Practices to meet the State of Florida's environmental goals, managing 1.4 million acres of coastal waters for the harvest or culture of wholesome and nutritious shellfish, implementing the National Shellfish Sanitation Program through shellfish plant and product inspections, and managing submerged sovereign land leases for aquacultural purposes.

*Visit our web site,
www.FloridaAquaculture.com,
for aquaculture, shellfish, and Division program information*

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