



Jenkins Promoted to Director of Marine Police



John Thomas Jenkins, Director, Alabama Marine Police Division

Veteran Enforcement Officer John Thomas Jenkins has been named Director of the Alabama Marine Police Division by M. Barnett Lawley, Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR).

Jenkins began his ADCNR career with the Marine Resources Division in 1986. For the past six years, he served as Chief Enforcement Officer for that division. He began as Director of Marine Police in July 2008.

During his tenure with ADCNR, Jenkins has received numerous awards. Because of his courageous conduct during Hurricane Katrina, he was awarded the 2007 Legislative Medal of Honor for Law Enforcement Officers by the Alabama Legislature and Governor Bob Riley. Jenkins was also recipient of the 2006 Governor's Conservation Achievement Award as Conservation Officer of the Year presented by the Alabama Wildlife Association, as well as the FDA Recognition Award for 2006 Exemplary and Sustained Superior Service.

"I feel privileged that we have somebody of John Thomas' ability and demeanor available to serve as Director of the Marine Police Division,"

Commissioner Lawley said. "John Thomas has exhibited his knowledge in the enforcement area, his organizational skills, his ability to work with people, and most of all his ability in solving problems. John Thomas is an excellent choice, a valuable addition to Marine Police and an asset to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

"His past history and qualifications speak for themselves. I know of no one better suited for this position, and I am delighted to make this appointment as Director of Marine Police," Lawley added.

The Alabama Marine Police Division patrols the public waterways, oversees the registration of all pleasure boats, the licensing of all boat operators, and operates a statewide education program. Marine Police also administers the State's regulatory waterway marking program, presently overseeing 1,518 hazard and control markers/zones. A Disaster Response Team that responds to emergencies statewide and a Boat Theft Unit that investigates boat and marine accessory theft cases are also among the services provided to Alabama's boating community. **DA**



James Griggs Awarded Conservationist of the Year

James H. (Jim) Griggs of Fairhope recently received the Conservationist of the Year award at the 2008 Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards banquet. Griggs has worked diligently for the past 19 years with private landowners, public and private entities, and state officials as Alabama's State Lands Director. In this capacity, he is responsible for the management and care of 800,000 acres of terrestrial and submerged state lands, the revenues that flow from those lands to Alabama and its citizens, and the long-term health of the natural resources and wildlife habitats that reside on those lands.

Griggs also has a passion for educating the public about the value of our natural resources. The Five Rivers Delta Resource Center in Mobile, the Blakeley Nature Center in Baldwin County, the Wehle Nature Center in Bullock County, and the Alabama Coastal Birdfest exist today because of the dedication, leadership, and involvement of Jim Griggs.

However, without question, his greatest passion is helping secure for



Willard Bowers, Alabama Power Co.; James Griggs, Alabama Department of Conservation; Barnett Lawley, Department of Conservation; and Riley Boykin Smith, Alabama Wildlife Federation

the long-term wild places in Alabama through the Forever Wild Program. He has been intimately involved with the development and execution of the Forever Wild Program since its inception in 1992. Since it began, 64 properties totaling 138,000 acres have

been secured for natural areas, wildlife management areas, and outdoor recreation use.

The AWF Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards are the most prestigious conservation honor in the state of Alabama. **AA**



Stripling Named Enforcement Officer of the Year

Sergeant Eddie Stripling, a 22-year veteran of the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, is the recipient of the 2008 Conservation Enforcement Officer of the Year Award. The award is part of the Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards sponsored annually by the Alabama Wildlife Federation.

Because of his untiring efforts, Sgt. Stripling has earned the full respect of his colleagues, supervisors, the Lamar County court system and the courts in surrounding areas. In addition to his enforcement responsibilities, he also serves as Field Supervisor, District Training Officer, and as a Certified Hunter Safety Instructor with more than 500 students trained during his tenure. He has proven himself a valuable asset to the Department of Conservation and is known as a mentor, a promoter of hunting and angling traditions and a dedicated public servant. **AA**



Margaret Sedlecky Named Educator of the Year

The Alabama Wildlife Federation Recently named Margaret Sedlecky as Conservation Educator of the Year as part of the annual Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards. For the past 13 years, Sedlecky has served as the education coordinator at Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, a facility of the Coastal Section of the State Lands Division.

Sedlecky uses the Reserve as an outdoor classroom and laboratory to teach thousands of students and adults the importance of coastal habitats and the role they play in sustaining native wildlife. She is also coordinator of the Baldwin County Grasses in Classes Program, which restores dune systems, salt marshes and submerged grass beds. To date, more than 21,000 native plants have been planted along Alabama's coastal habitats thanks to her foresight, planning and drive. **AA**

Stroud Named Shikar-Safari Officer of the Year

Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Pilot Raymond Stroud is Alabama's recipient of the Shikar-Safari Club International's Wildlife Officer of the Year. A committee of fellow officers, who are also former award recipients, selects the recipient of the annual award. All district supervisors endorsed the nomination. They laud Stroud as "the epitome of dedication, hard work and cooperation."

Although Stroud is not a Conservation Enforcement Officer, his aeronautical work has resulted in the arrest of over 1,000 violators of game and fish laws and regulations.

Enforcement Chief Allan Andress said Stroud provides field officers with the ability to conduct aerial reconnaissance over a wide area in a short period of time, thus saving many hours of work time. "We credit him with a substantial increase in our effectiveness in addressing violations such as hunting by aid of bait and hunting at night," he said.

Shikar-Safari Club International is a worldwide organization dedicated to the protection, enhancement and preservation of wildlife. The club encourages and promotes the enforcement of conservation laws and regulations around the world. They present an award annually to a Wildlife



Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division Director Corky Pugh, Shikar-Safari representative Philip Jackson, Raymond Stroud, and Enforcement Chief Allan Andress.

and Freshwater Fisheries employee. In addition, they have funded training materials for employees this year, saving the Department a significant amount of money. **OA**

Marine Police Officers Recognized for Rescue Efforts

Marine Police Lieutenant Ryan B. Bennett and Sergeant Joseph C. Kelley were nominated for the Legislative Medal of Honor and recognized by the Alabama Legislature for their heroic actions.

On November 1, 2007, at approximately 8 p.m., Sgt. Kelley notified Lt. Bennett that a boating accident severely injuring all five occupants had just occurred at the site of the old Gulf State Park Fishing pier that had been destroyed during Hurricane Ivan. As the officers were en route by patrol boat to the scene, they were notified that Gulf Shores Fire Department had already set up an Incident Command Center on the beach and had made contact with the vessel, but could not transport the victims due to the nature of their injuries.

Arriving at the scene, Lt. Bennett and Sgt. Kelley observed a Gulf Shores Fire Medic on board the damaged vessel with four injured adults and an unconscious child. Because the extent of the injuries to all those on board

was unknown, the decision was made to tow the damaged vessel closer to the beach area, where the victims could be transferred to the rescue personnel waiting on shore.

While towing the vessel to shore, they had to cross over a slight swell, which caused the damaged vessel to tilt hard to the left side, at which point it began taking on water, and then began to sink. Sgt. Kelley immediately cut the tow lines and began to maneuver the patrol boat into position beside the sinking vessel. Observing that the fire medic holding the unconscious child had been washed off the vessel and was struggling in the water, Lt. Bennett leapt off the patrol boat into the water. He swam to them and after getting both of them in a life-saving hold, began to swim back to the patrol boat where Sgt. Kelley was waiting. They brought the unconscious victim on board first, then assisted the fire medic onto the patrol boat.

Once they made sure everyone involved was on the patrol boat, they began to head towards the shore. Suddenly, several of the victims began to cry out that their clothing was burning them. Realizing that all of the victims and the rescuers had been in gasoline-filled water, Lt. Bennett and Sgt. Kelley had all of them strip their gasoline soaked clothing off and radioed ahead for a decontamination station to be set up. After arriving on shore, the victims were carried or assisted off the patrol boat, decontaminated, and transported to the local hospital for treatment of their injuries.

The skill and professional expertise demonstrated by both Lt. Bennett and Sgt. Kelley kept a bad situation from becoming worse and saved lives that evening. Both of these officers have been involved in other life and death rescue situations and have always maintained a calm, professional demeanor, never hesitating when lives were at stake. **OA**



Fisheries Biologist Coauthors Book on Freshwater Mussels

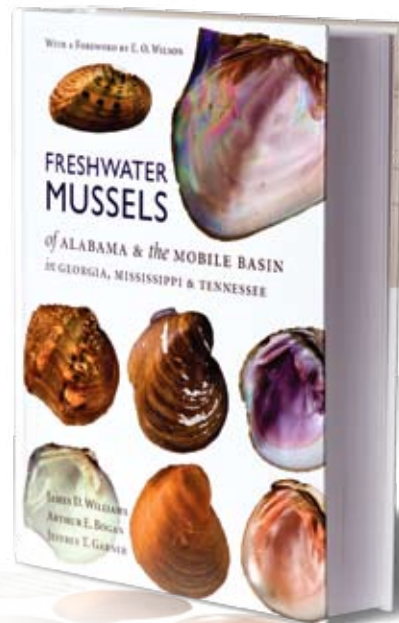
After almost 13 years of work and research, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) Fisheries Biologist Jeff Garner finally can see the reality of having his hard work pay off in the form of a new book titled *Freshwater Mussels of Alabama and the Mobile Basin in Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee*.

The book, sponsored by ADCNR and coauthored with James D. Williams and Arthur E. Bogan, with foreword by E.O. Wilson, is a 908-page publication offering in-depth information on each of the 178 species that make up Alabama's extraordinarily diverse freshwater mussel fauna. The book's publisher, The University of Alabama Press, hails the book as must-have for educational and research purposes since Alabama's rivers and waterways are home to the largest and most diverse population of freshwater mussel species in the nation. The book also covers reaches of the Mobile Basin that lie in Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee. However, many of these mussel species have been significantly depleted in the last century due to habitat alteration (river damming, channelization, siltation), pollution, and invasive species, and many more are in imminent danger of extinction. Freshwa-

ter mussels serve as natural water filters and their presence may indicate a healthy aquatic ecosystem.


Garner is a malacologist and has been with ADCNR's Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries for 14 years. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from the University of North Alabama and a master's degree in biology from The University of Alabama Huntsville. "Work on this volume has consumed a large portion of my time over the past 12 or so years," said Garner. "It has been a terrific learning experience and I owe my coauthors, Jim Williams and Art Bogan, a debt of gratitude for involving me with this project. Its completion leaves me with a great sense of accomplishment and even greater admiration for the creatures that I have chosen to study." Garner also co-edited *Alabama Wildlife (Vol 2): Imperiled Aquatic Mollusks and Fishes* and *Alabama Wildlife (Vol 4): Conservation and Management Recommendations for Imperiled Wildlife*.

James D. Williams is a research associate at the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville, Fla. and coauthor of *The National Audubon Society Field Guide to Fishes, Non-indigenous Fishes Introduced into Inland Waters of the United States*, *Vanishing Fish of North*



America, and *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Fishes, Whales, and Dolphins*.

Arthur E. Bogan is Research Curator of Aquatic Invertebrates for the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences, Raleigh, N.C., and works as Adjunct Professor of Zoology at North Carolina State University, in addition to being coauthor of *Freshwater Mussels of Tennessee*.

Freshwater Mussels of Alabama and the Mobile Basin in Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee contains 773 black-and-white and color illustrations and sells for \$70. It may be ordered online at www.uapress.ua.edu or by calling 800-621-2736. 



Officer Receives Accolades

Officer Mark Fuller of the Marine Police Division, along with the Benjamin Russell High School Media Class, received the Award of Merit for the Southeastern United States for their contributions to boating safety. The award was presented in San Diego, Ca. during the National Water Safety Summit in recognition of the video, *Sink or Swim*. The video was a collaboration between students in media class and Officer Fuller. It highlights the dangers of underage drinking and boating and the lasting impact it can have on the lives of those involved.

In addition to receiving the Award of Merit, Officer Fuller was also named the National Association of State Boating Law Administrator's Southeastern Officer of the Year, the Southern States Boating Law Administrators Association's Officer of the Year, and the Alabama Marine Police Division's Officer of the Year for his contributions to boating safety and the boating community. 