



August 2022

First Sea Turtle Hatch!

The first sea turtle hatch of the season in our area was recorded on July 24 when loggerhead hatchlings scampered into the Gulf of Mexico from Pensacola Beach. There are 38 recording nests in Escambia County, including one from a rare leatherback turtle. For more on the issue, see the July 27, 2022 *Pensacola News Journal* article “First sea turtle hatch of the season on Pensacola Beach sees 84 loggerheads reach Gulf” at

<https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pensacola/2022/07/27/pensacola-beach-sees-first-sea-turtle-hatch-2022-season-as-loggerheads-enter-gulf-of-mexico/10168053002/>.

November 7 Red, White and Birdies Golf Scramble

The Perdido Key Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring the Red, White and Birdies Golf Scramble on November 7, 2022 at the A.C. Reed golf course on NAS Pensacola. The event will help fund the 2023 “Star Spangle Salute to the Troops” festival held on Armed Forces Day. Non-military players will need to fill out a security form in advance to participate. For more information, go to <https://business.perdidochamber.com/events/details/2022-red-white-and-birdies-golf-scramble-33438>.

New Development

What is all that construction activity on the north side of Theo Baars Bridge near Publix? From the Escambia County’s “Development Order Details” web page, the 13450 Perdido Key Drive site was approved for development in January 2022 as follows (partial quotation):

Construction of a multi-family apartment complex providing 325 dwelling units within 12 buildings on a 28.07-acre parcel. The complex will include a separate leasing office, clubhouse, and maintenance building, and two garages. Site development will provide paved parking, a graveled area for tenant RV and boat storage, and one paved access each to Canal Dr. and Monterey Ave.

Hopefully, provision will be made for greater traffic in an already busy location. For more on the project, go to <https://myescambia.com/our-services/development-services/development-orders/details/perdido-key-drive-multi-family>.

Fish Farms in the Gulf?

Industrial-scale fish farms are being proposed for the Gulf of Mexico including the Pensacola area. According to environmental activist Christian Wagley, they could result in excessive nutrients in Gulf waters potentially leading to more red tide outbreaks plus the potential for disease from the farms spreading to the wild, among other concerns. There is, however, a federal government initiative promoting new aquaculture projects. For more on the issue, see the July 20, 2022 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Pensacola may get one of Florida’s first offshore fish farms, and some are already worried” by Colin Warren-Hicks at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2022/07/20/manna-fish-farms-seeking-open-gulf-mexico-farm-near-pensacola/10051025002/>.

Pensacola a Top 100 City

With its metropolitan area identified as greater than 500,000 by the 2020 census, Pensacola was newly considered in the “America’s Best Cities” review conducted by Resonance Consultancy. Using consumer research and market analysis, Pensacola was 81st overall with additional rankings given in the categories of place, product, programming, people, prosperity and promotion. For more on the review, see the June 30, 2022 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Pensacola chosen as one of ‘America’s Best Cities.’ See where we ranked” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2022/06/30/pensacola-makes-top-100-list-americas-best-cities/7776205001/>.

Tracking Snakes

Escambia County’s Sea Grant representative Rick O’Connor has been tracking snake sightings in our area. There have been quite a variety, including cottonmouth and eastern coachwhip at Big Lagoon State Park, corn snake and pygmy rattlesnake at Tarkiln Bayou, and southern black racer at Lost Key. The tally so far is 17 of the 40 species found locally. Many other snakes have certainly been seen, so if interested in reporting a sighting please contact Rick O’Connor at roc1@ufl.edu.

Releasing Reef Fish

With artificial reefs in Gulf of Mexico waters 100 feet or so deep, fish caught at the reefs can suffer from barotrauma and if released their expanded swim bladder and stomach can hinder a return to depth. Procedures and equipment to improve their chances of survival are discussed in the July 7, 2022 *Outdoor Alabama* article “Return ‘Em Right Targets Survival of Released Fish” by David Rainer at <https://returnemright.org/2022/07/07/return-em-right-targets-survival-of-released-fish/>.

Mangroves

Mangroves are not usually associated with Northwest Florida, but some have move into the area in recent years. These impressive trees thrive in shallow salt water and can create new biodiverse communities. Welcomed by some, others may not be please since a large mangrove tree can obscure a waterfront view but cannot be removed or trimmed without permit from the state of Florida. For a recent article on mangroves, see Rick O’Connor’s July 29, 2022 *IFAS/UFL* article “Mangroves in the Western Panhandle” available at <https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/2022/07/29/mangroves-in-the-western-panhandle/>.

Notes on the Environment

With concerns about inflation and other aspects of the economy plus increased dangers in international affairs, environmental issues can seem less relevant. They remain important of course, so here are a few recent developments.

Save the oceans – The five-day UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon ended with a declaration stating delegates were “‘deeply alarmed by the global emergency facing the ocean,’ whose sustainability is ‘critical’ for the planet.” Threats to the ocean include global warming, pollution and acidification, but despite 10 years of talks a “Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction” agreement (also called the “Treaty of the High Seas”) has yet to be approved. For more on the issue, see the July 1, 2022 *US News and World Report* article “UN Talks Urge Faster Steps to Secure Critical Ocean Health” at <https://www.usnews.com/news/news/articles/2022-07-01/un-talks-urge-faster-steps-to-secure-critical-ocean-health>.

Plastic pollution – Plastics in the oceans can be catastrophic to some of the ocean’s mightiest creatures. In May 2022, a 47-foot sperm whale died near Key West, Florida. “A necropsy revealed a tangled mass of plastic bags, fishing line and tattered fishing nets had blocked the whales’ stomach, preventing it from absorbing nutrients. The knotted mass of plastic debris caused the whale to starve to death.” Drawn from the July 29, 2022 *Ocean Conservancy* e-mail article “Plastic pollution is killing marine life” by Ingrid Giskes.

Global warming – The US Supreme Court recently ruled to limit the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) ability to regulate greenhouse gas mission from power plants. The ruling was considered a setback for the Biden administration’s clean energy goals but welcomed by power companies. For more on the issue, see the June 30, 2022 *Bloomberg* article “Supreme Court Decision May Slow Transition to Cleaner Energy” by Cathy Bussewitz at <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-30/supreme-court-decision-may-slow-transition-to-cleaner-energy>.

Off-shore drilling – The Biden administration is proposing up to 10 oil and gas lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico and one in Alaska over the next five years, prompting a backlash from environmental advocates accusing the Biden administration of backtracking on its “climate cause” but finding support among those favoring more domestic oil production. For more on the issue, see the July 1, 2022 *Associated Press/ Alaska Daily News* article “Offshore drilling plan would allow for 11 sales, including 1 at Alaska’s Cook Inlet” by Janet McConnaughey and Matthew Brown at <https://www.adn.com/business-economy/energy/2022/07/01/biden-offshore-drilling-proposal-would-allow-up-to-11-sales-including-1-in-alaskas-cook-inlet/>.

August Calendar

Aug 05,12 – Guided Pier Walk at Gulf State Park Pier

Aug 04-08 – Orange Beach Open Fishing Tournament

Aug 06 – Commemorative “Battle of Mobile Bay” on Dauphin Island

Aug 09-10,12-14,23-28 – Pensacola Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoo Stadium

Aug 13 – Monster Jam at Pensacola Bay Center

Blue Angels practice at NAS Pensacola August 02, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31
Bands on the Beach at Pensacola Beach every Tuesday, 7-9 PM from April to October

The following websites provide additional information about events in our great Gulf Coast region:

<https://www.visitpensacola.com/>

<http://mygulfcoastchamber.com/>

<http://www.visitperdido.com/>

<http://mulletwrapper.net/>

<https://myescambia.com/>

<http://www.emeraldcoastfl.com//>

<http://alabama.travel/festivals-and-events>

Perdido Key Association Board of Directors