



The Delta News

5 Rivers Delta Resource Center

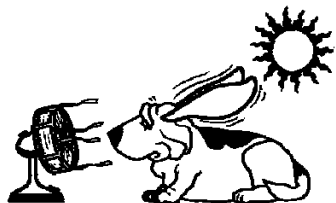


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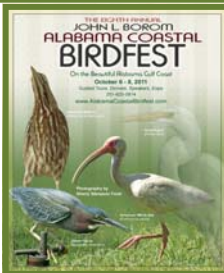
Your Delta Fun Fact for the Month:

The "Dog Days of Summer." We hear it every year around this time, but do you know where the term comes from? During the time of ancient Rome, people noticed that the brightest star in the sky, Sirius, rose and set with the sun during mid-summer. Sirius is also known as the dog star and is part of the constellation called Canis Major, or the Big Dog. Sirius is so bright that it is believed the ancient Romans thought it contributed to the heating of the earth, creating the term "dog days of summer."




What's Up in the Delta this Month?

It's that time of year again! The Alabama Coastal Birdfest is right around the corner, and Birdfest brochures are being mailed as we speak. Registration officially opens at www.AlabamaCoastalBirdfest.com in early August. There you can view what trips are available, see what's new, and find out who is presenting this year. Be sure to book your trips early, and we look forward to birding with you!



IT'S FIELD TRIP TIME!



Hey teachers! School is around the corner and it's the perfect time to start planning your field trip to 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center. We are a field trip destination not only for students, but for church groups, scout groups senior centers, and so much more. We can accommodate up to 80 students at a time, which allows for a better hands on experience while rotating around different stations. A typical tour would include a film in the Tensaw Theater, a visit to the Apalachee Exhibit Hall where students will get a chance to meet local critters that call the delta home, and a woods walk that includes a talk on site history and the flora found in the area. The best part is that the tour is completely **FREE!** You can also add the 23 passenger pontoon boat tour so students can get an up close look at the second largest river delta in the country. The boat does have fees associated with it and can be booked by calling 5 Rivers Delta Safaris at 251-259-8531. You are also welcome to use our picnic pavilions for lunch and be sure to stop by our Cypress Gift Shop. We have items ranging from \$1 and up to help your students commemorate their visit with us. If you are interested in booking a field trip and would like more information, check us out online at www.Alabama5Rivers.com or give us a call at 251-625-0814. We look forward to your group spending the day with us!



Central Christian School stopping for a picture during their nature walk.



Students get an in-depth look at a turtle shell during a field trip

Did You Know You Live in Bear Country?




Did you know that we live in bear country? We sure do and it's **black bear** country to be exact. The black bears that are found in Mobile, Baldwin, Washington, and Clarke counties

are actually a subspecies of the American black bear known as the Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*), and they can be found making a living in bottomland hardwood habitats that provide the bears plenty to eat, lots of good places to make dens, and places to hide when they feel threatened. When it comes to eating, black bears are often thought of as being aggressive predators searching for meat. It turns out to be the opposite! The bears get 95% of their diet from plants and berries. The other 5% consists of protein which is mainly acquired through catching bugs. The bears are opportunistic and lazy when it comes to actually hunting for food, making plants and bugs an easy meal. Today there are around 50 known black bears living in a 146 square mile habitat. It was a much different story in the 1800s. Black bears could be found by the hundreds, but through illegal hunting, human disturbance, and loss of habitat, black bears have dwindled in numbers. They have become a high concern for the state of Alabama, and groups like the Alabama Black Bear Alliance have formed to help monitor and promote conservation efforts as well as educate people about how to peacefully live with the black bears. If you do have black bears living in your area, whether at home or camping, it is important to remember that they are actually very shy of humans and only become dangerous and aggressive if they are continually being fed or feel threatened. There are numerous ways to live with black bears. If you have trash cans outside, make sure they are locked and secured so a bear can not pull them down and find a quick meal. Pet food should not be left out for long periods of times because bears also find it to be a tasty meal. Bears are smart and have a long term memory which will have them returning to same spot again and again. When it comes to camping, always lock your trash up at night and take it with you the next day so the bear does not assume that your campsite will always be a source of food. If you have an encounter with a black bear, be sure to let Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division know. For even more information on black bears, be sure to visit the Alabama Black Bear Alliance at www.AlabamaBlackBearAlliance.org.

Florida black bears are the largest land mammal found in the state of Alabama. Photo courtesy of Alabama Black Bear Alliance.



Normally thought of as aggressive, the black bear is actually shy. Photo courtesy of Alabama Black Bear Alliance.



AUGUST EVENTS

Saturday Adventure Series: Learn and explore the natural resources Alabama has to offer, great for all ages!

- 8/5: Gators After Dark (\$10pp; 7-9pm; Register with 5 Rivers Delta Safaris at 259-8531)
- 8/6: Saturday Class: Spiders! (Grades 3-5; 9am-11am; Free; Registration Required)
- 8/13: Saturday Crafts: Sand Art (12pm-3pm; Free)
- 8/20: Saturday Crafts: Make and Decorate Flower Pots (12pm-3pm; Free)
- 8/27: Saturday Class: Fun with Feathered Friends (Grades 3-5; 9am-11am; Free; Registration Required)
- 8/27: Gators After Dark (\$10pp; 7-9pm; Register with 5 Rivers Delta Safaris at 259-8531)

Outdoor Adventure Night: Two Tuesdays a month, we host groups that can help you get outside and explore the delta! It's free and you don't have to be a member to come!

- 8/2: Alabama Hiking Trail Society (6pm)
Mobile Bay Canoe & Kayak Club (7pm)
Sierra Club (7pm)
- 8/9: Gulf Coast Association of Reptile Keepers (6pm)
Mobile Bay Audubon Society (7pm)

Growing Up Wild: Encourages our preschoolers to begin thinking about things found in nature. 1-2pm. Free, Registration Required:

- 8/12: Terrific Turkeys
- 8/19: Ants on Parade
- 8/26: Spider Web Wonders

StoryTime: Sit back and let us do the reading! 10am-11am. Arts and crafts follow the reading. This month's stories are:

- 8/2: "Yucky Alphabet Book" by Jerry Pallotta
- 8/9: "Drawing Lessons from a Bear" by David McPhail
- 8/16: "Mole Music" by David McPhail
- 8/23: "Owl Moon" by Jane Yolen
- 8/30: "Manatee Winter" by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld

Sunday Matinee: From 2-3pm every Sunday, step inside our Tensaw Theater and catch a free film that is sure to please the whole family! This month's features are:

- 8/7: Dirt! The Movie
- 8/14: American Experience: Into the Deep
- 8/21: Sea Monsters: A Prehistoric Adventure
- 8/28: How Does the Brain Work?

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Rivers Delta Safaris Eco-tours: Go on a boat tour aboard the *Pelican* and explore the lower delta! Daily tours by reservation. Charter tours and canoe/kayak rentals also available. Call 259-8531 to plan your adventure:

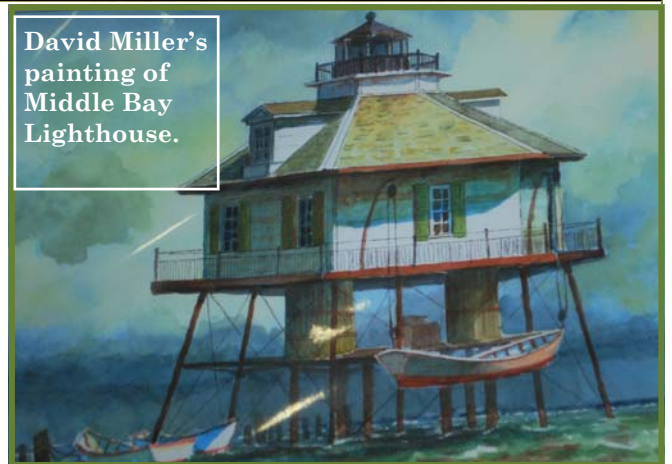
- 8/5: Sunset Wine Tour (6pm-8pm; \$45pp;)
- 8/6: Native American Indian Mound Paddle (9am-3pm; \$35pp includes guide and rental)
- 8/13: Sunset/Moonlight Paddle (7pm-10pm; \$35pp; includes guide and rental)
- 8/20: Sunset Cruise (6pm-8pm; \$25pp)



Cypress Gift Shop: Pelican Bay Arts

If you are in the market for artwork depicting local animals or local places of interest, be sure to stop by the Cypress Gift Shop to see Linda and David Miller's paintings. This husband and wife team live on Dauphin Island and established the company, Pelican Bay Arts. They both enjoy creating beautiful watercolors depicting local places of interest such as Middle Bay and Sand Island Lighthouses and local animals such as blue crab, and brown pelicans. David enjoys painting lighthouses, old boats, docks, and coastal scenes while Linda enjoys painting more of the local animals and plants. For more information on the Miller's paintings, give us a call at 621-0782 or stop by and check us out Monday through Sunday 9am-5pm. All purchases from the Gift Shop support our educational programs!

David Miller's painting of Middle Bay Lighthouse.



Find us on Facebook!

www.Alabama5Rivers.com

251-625-0814