



# The Delta News

## 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center



Volume II, Issue VIII

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### Your Delta Fun Fact for the Month:

Everyone knows how fireflies got their name, but did you know that their light is created by a light organ under their abdomen that mixes oxygen and a chemical called luciferin to produce the light. The light they give off is used for finding their mates.



### What's up in the Delta this month?

Look carefully as you tread through the delta this month. Baby White-Tailed Deer are just being born. You can tell the babies by their distinct white spots on their back.



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# The Hunt for the American Alligator!

Out of all the animals found making their home in the delta, one stands out more than any other. The American Alligator. This “living fossil” attracts the most attention of all our visitors at 5 Rivers, and with due cause. These larger than life reptiles have been around for over 200 million years, even walking with the dinosaurs! However, the alligator was at one time on the brink of extinction. Because of over harvesting and loss of wetland habitat, the alligator was listed on the endangered species list in 1967. In 1987, they were removed from the list, but are still federally protected. Alabama’s gator population has grown to the extent that they pose a nuisance in some areas. In 2006, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) implemented a limited hunting season in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta.



The design of the American Alligator is truly amazing. These animals are built to maneuver through the delta with great ease. Their feet are webbed to help them walk over the mud, and in the water they fold to their sides helping them glide through water while the tail functions as a rudder. The eyes, nose, and ears are positioned to allow the whole body of the alligator to be underwater making it almost invisible to its prey. An alligator’s jaw is built to crush. In fact, it has more crushing power per square inch

than any other animal on the planet, including the Great White Shark! When it comes to eating, most alligators would rather grab something that can easily be swallowed in one bite, such as turtles, small mammals, and fish. However, on occasion they do grab something a lot larger such as feral pigs and white-tailed deer. In these instances they will use what is known as a “death roll” to actually tear pieces of flesh off its prey to eat.

Today, alligators can be seen just about everywhere in the delta. Since adult alligators have no natural predators in the area, it falls to state land managers to control the ever-increasing populations through a strictly controlled hunt that occurs two weekends in August.

If you would like to catch a glimpse of an alligator up close, 5 Rivers has an opportunity for you to do so! On August 7th and 28th, we continue our “Gators After Dark” classes which include a talk about alligators as well as an after dark boat tour to see them when they are most active. The class is from 7:30pm to 9:30pm and registration and prepayment of \$10 per person is required. If you are interested in joining us, give us a call at 251-625-0814.

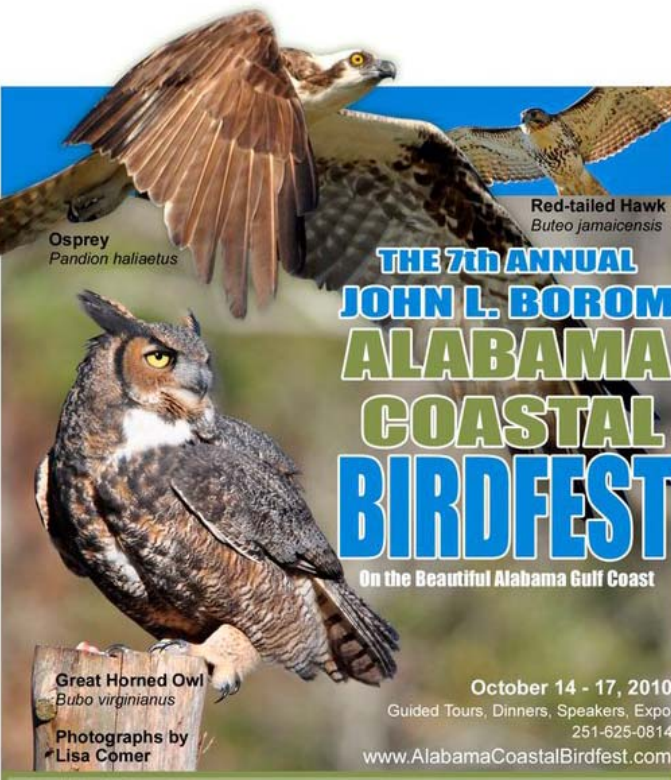


# Alabama Coastal BirdFest

It's that time again! Time to get ready for the 7th Annual John L. Borom Alabama Coastal Birdfest. Since 2004, this festival has been attracting birders from around the country with the amazing diversity the Gulf Coast of Alabama has to offer. Every year the Coastal Birdfest coincides with the annual fall migration of many birds from North America to Central and South America. Alabama's coast is an important stop for the birds during their migration to warmer weather, and the trips scheduled during Birdfest allow birders to catch a glimpse of many of these birds. This year's event will include four new guided birding trips - two pontoon boat trips into the middle Mobile-Tensaw Delta, and two canoe/kayak trips in the Delta! Many of the most popular trips by land and sea to places such as Bayou La Batre, Fort Morgan, Weeks Bay, Dauphin Island, and other stops on the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail will be revisited. Registration for the trips can be made by visiting the website, and each trip is limited in its space so join early! Birders from beginners to experts will find much to enjoy and many opportunities to learn more at this year's festival.

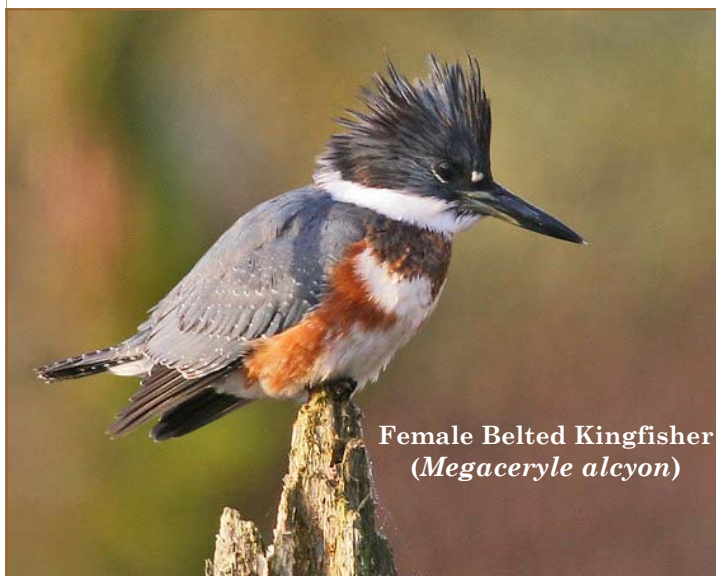
Along with the guided birding trips, the festival will again be offering a free Bird and Conservation Expo on Saturday October 16th which will take place on the grounds of Faulkner State Community College in Downtown Fairhope. The Expo boasts a wide variety of activities for kids and adults alike! From live raptors and snakes to numerous displays and exhibits from conservation organizations, vendors, artists, and more, there is sure to be something to interest everyone.

Birdfest also has some wonderful speakers lined up for this year's event. For the welcome reception being held on October 14th, birders will have the chance to enjoy drinks and hors d'oeuvres as well as the company of other birders!



A slide show set to music from local avid birding photographer Lisa Comer, whose artwork is on this year's poster, will also be shown at the reception. On October 15th, the Birdfest Social will have a shrimp boil along with a presentation by Dr. John Dindo, Senior Marine Scientist and Associate Director of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. He will talk not only about the state of our coastal wildlife habitat, but also the wildlife habitats and nesting patterns of herons, egrets and ibises on Cat Island as well.

Registration for the 2010 Alabama Coastal Birdfest is already well underway. If you would like to register for any of the trips, or if you would like more information on what trips are offered, please visit [www.AlabamaCoastalBirdfest.com](http://www.AlabamaCoastalBirdfest.com). We have thoroughly enjoyed having this event and have made new friends from around the country and as far a way as Canada! We hope to see you at the 2010 Alabama Coastal Birdfest!



Female Belted Kingfisher  
(*Megascops alcyon*)

## Join us for a Saturday Adventure!



Round out your adventures with a Delta Safaris moonlight paddle, a summer-fun river paddle on the Perdido, or maybe even a romantic wine tasting sunset cruise! Visit 5rds.com.

The new Saturday Adventure Series has kicked off with a resounding success from our first few "Gators After Dark" classes, but we are not going to stop there. We have many new adventures planned for the upcoming months. For the history buffs, we will feature a history class that explores the culture of native Americans that once lived in the heart of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. The Bottle Creek Indians were mound builders who had a thriving civilization from 1,000 AD to 1500 AD, and they were an epicenter of trade for the Mississippian Indian culture. The first class will be held on October 3rd and includes a lecture and boat trip to the actual mounds themselves.

For those interested in learning the basics of bird watching, beginning in September we will feature a class dedicated to all the ins and outs of how to tell a warbler from an egret, what to look for, and what to take with you when out in the field. After an hour in the classroom, participants will get to test their skills on a boat tour in the lower delta. Don't worry, there won't be a written exam, just a relaxing hour viewing wildlife with friends.

The Saturday Adventure Series is for all ages, so if you're looking for a fun, weekend family activity that gets you outside exploring, we hope to see you here. Keep an eye on our calendar to see what's coming up!

## AUGUST EVENTS

**Sunday Matinees:** 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:

- 8/1/10 "Eyewitness Insects"
- 8/8/10 "Hooked on Hummingbirds"
- 8/15/10 "Housefly, An Everyday Monster"
- 8/22/10 "Blue Gold"
- 8/29/10 "The Civilian Conservation Corp"

**Outdoor Adventure Nights:** Two Tuesdays a month hosts 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!

- 8/3/10 Alabama Hiking Trail Society (6pm)  
Mobile Bay Canoe & Kayak Club (7pm)  
Sierra Club (7pm)
- 8/10/10 Hunter's Education Course (6pm)  
GulfCoast Amphibian & Reptile Keepers (6pm)

**Saturday Class Series:** Interesting subjects for all ages. All classes are free unless other wise specified and all require registration. This month's classes are:

- 8/7/10: "Life Cycles of the Winged and Slimy" (K-3)
- 8/28/10: "Alabama Turtles" Grade K-3

**5 Rivers Delta Safaris Eco-tours:** Daily tours 11am-1pm Wed-Sun. Specialty tours dated below. Reservations required, 259-8531. Whether by pontoon boat or by canoe and kayak, find your adventure today! Canoe/kayak rentals also available.

- 8/7/10 Sunset Wine Tasting Cruise, 6:30-8:30pm, \$45pp
- 8/8/10 Perdido River Paddle, 9am-4pm, \$50pp
- 8/24/10 Full Moon Paddle, 6pm-10pm, \$50pp

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

- 8/3/10 "Monarch and Milkweed"
- 8/5/10 "Y is for Yellowhammer"
- 8/12/10 "Alligator At Saw Grass Road"
- 8/17/10 "The Lorax"
- 8/31/10 "Sweet Briar Goes To Camp"



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

- 8/7/10 "Gators After Dark" 7:30pm-9:30pm, \$10pp
- 8/28/10

Learn about the most notorious inhabitants of the swamp! Class includes talk on American Alligators and a 1 hour boat tour to see gators up close.