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A Letter from the President

Our young server, perky and eager for a tip, starts making her way over to our table. My stomach rumbles from hunger and my friend asks, “so, what are you getting?” While most people would say simply, “the special” or “the chicken quesadilla,” I answer, “the shrimp risotto or the oyster bisque...but I need to know if the shrimp are local and where the oysters were harvested.” Once at the table, our server’s enthusiasm quickly vaporizes as she realizes she’s waiting on one of those dreaded high-maintenance tables that peppers her with questions about the seafood dishes. Flustered, she heads back to the kitchen with her laundry list of questions, only to return to find that I will order the chicken quesadilla.

I know some of you will nod in agreement; others of you will make a mental note to never go out to eat with me. Aren’t there other, bigger fish to fry (pun intended!) than standing on my “local fisheries” soapbox? What about the issues of protecting our treasured right whales and loggerhead sea turtles that teeter on the edge of extinction? What about the human health impacts associated with marine debris and pollution? These issues are just as important as supporting local fisheries, but as educators with limited time with our students, how do we decide what topics we should emphasize? If only we could dedicate every minute of every day to teaching about the ocean...but, I digress.

Hanging on my office door is a poster with the quote: “In the end, we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught.” These words serve as a reminder of the charge we have as marine educators to kick off or perpetuate the ripple effect concerning a variety of ocean-related issues. How on earth (or ocean) do we figure out what issues are the most important to teach given the small time we have with our students? What determines whether one species or topic should be focused on more so than another? Do we take advice from popular media, our next door neighbor, scientific research, personal preferences, or a combination? These aren’t original questions, but perhaps the answers are more straightforward than we think – each of us needs to ask ourselves what issues personally motivate us to care for the ocean. No matter if your “thing” is the giant blue whale, marine debris, or the distribution of sand grains on the beach, we are all part of a complex and delicate web. Your personal investment in an issue or topic can serve as an effective springboard for the larger stewardship and conservation messages for the overall health of our ocean.

We know you will enjoy this latest issue of SeaScripts featuring amazing marine education efforts being done around the state...and a lesson concerning local fisheries. Best wishes for a productive and educational spring!

Sincerely,

EV Bell
SCMEA President
Grabbing the Right Grouper: A Lesson in Mislabeling

By Megan Westmeyer
Sustainable Seafood Initiative Coordinator

Every couple of years, the media focuses in on seafood labeling - usually after a conservation organization, researcher, or group of students collects seafood from retail markets or restaurants and sends samples away for DNA testing. The results usually show that one quarter to two thirds of seafood products are something other than what they were sold as.

Mislabeling can occur during any step in the seafood supply chain and occurs for different reasons. Sometimes mislabeling is intentional - to deceive the customer in order to get a higher price. It may also occur intentionally to replace a gastronomically unappealing name with something more appetizing to an export market. Patagonian toothfish was renamed Chilean sea bass (it is not a sea bass, nor it is always from Chile), and slimehead became orange roughy.

Mislabeling happens at the local level too. Gag grouper (by far the most commonly harvested grouper in the Atlantic) is nearly always called black grouper when it reaches the market, though the “real” black grouper is rarely caught off the Carolina coast and is harvested in South Florida. This mislabeling is understandable because of the unappealing nature of the name “gag”, but the black grouper population is currently much healthier than gag (which experienced overfishing in recent years and is smaller than the target size). A more appropriate market name would simply be “grouper,” with curious consumers inquiring about the species and making an educated purchase.

Environmental sustainability is deeply dependent on the species and origin, and incorrect information makes it difficult for consumers to make responsible choices. Swordfish harvested in the U.S. and Canada are considered sustainable because of strict conservation regulations concerning the fishing gear, which have drastically reduced the bycatch of non-target species, such as juvenile swordfish and sea turtles. But most countries do not fish with these same methods, making most imported swordfish unsustainable.

Two valuable resources for consumers concerned about mislabeling are FishBase and the FDA Seafood List. FishBase (www.fishbase.org) is a searchable database of nearly every known fish species in the world. It contains basic information such as common name, Latin scientific name (which is unique to every species), images, geographic origin, and biological characteristics. This site is helpful for identifying exactly what species of fish you may have on your plate.

The FDA Seafood List (most easily found simply by typing “FDA Seafood List” into an internet search engine) is a searchable database of names that the FDA considers to be acceptable market names for seafood products sold in the U.S. While there is no legal obligation to use these names, it offers a way to avoid confusion and the possibility of mislabeling. {continued on page 4}
EEASC is pleased to announce that registration is now open for the 2012 Conference at Pleasant Ridge Camp & Retreat Center in Marietta, South Carolina (near Table Rock State Park). Our conference is family-friendly! Children 10 and under eat free; children under 17 participate for free; and special workshops for kids are offered throughout the weekend.

New this year:
- Unlimited “turns” on recreation activities (during scheduled hours) for gem mining, high ropes course, and zip line
- Evening social hour, hayrides, and family fun games
- Up to 8 hours of Continuing Education Units or Exchange Day Credits for teachers (varies by school district)
- FREE certification for the new ‘Growing Up WILD’ program
- Frog call night hike
- Morning yoga
- Trout fishing for the whole family

Early registration ends April 18th and space is limited, so sign up soon. We hope to see you there!

For more details, visit:
http://www.conference.eeinsc.org/

{continued from page 3} The information given on The Seafood List includes the Acceptable Market Name, the Scientific Common Name (which is also an acceptable market name), the Scientific Name (the Latin name) and the Vernacular Names, which are commonly recognized local or regional names for a species. According to the FDA, a vernacular name is NOT an acceptable market name, but is only shown to help with cross-referencing or to help users identify a species in question.

There is so much variety within the world of wild seafood that it can be intimidating to consumers who are not used to such a selection. Try to do your homework on your local dinner selections. The variety of wild seafood should be embraced and celebrated, not hidden behind mislabeling with familiar names.

To learn more about the Sustainable Seafood Initiative, please visit the website: http://www.scaquarium.org/SSI/default.html.

Save the Date!
The SCMEA 2012 Conference will be held October 5-7 at Hobcaw Barony. Stay tuned for more details.
Teacher workshop: Estuary 101

Course Description: The goal of the Estuary 101 workshop is to improve teachers’ and students’ understanding of the environment using local examples, and to provide resources and experience to support the incorporation of estuary and watershed topics into classroom teaching. The course is also designed to promote stewardship of watersheds and estuaries. To achieve this better understanding, teachers will use the estuaries.gov site to access modules and activities and an online interface to real-time and archived estuarine monitoring data (from NERRS’ System Wide Monitoring Program).

When: Teacher workday
March 23, 2012
8:00 am – 12:00 pm
Where: Sewee Visitor & Environmental Education Center

To sign up or for more information contact: Allie Kreutzer
Email: score@dnr.sc.gov
Phone: (843) 953-9057

Course Objectives (participants will be able to):
- Access and use the on-line Estuaries 101 curriculum and other NERRS/NOAA educational products with students.
- Locate, download, and use data relevant to lessons about estuaries.
- Lead students in learning activities that improve the students’ abilities to become stewards of the environment.

[Logos and graphics]
Project Design & Evaluation
April 3–4, 2012
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Overview
Coastal resource managers, local decision-makers, and outreach and education professionals are invited to attend this FREE, two-day NOAA Coastal Services Center-led course to learn how to increase the effectiveness of your programs, projects, and outreach. During this program, you will obtain the knowledge, skills, and tools to design and implement projects that have measurable impacts on a targeted audience. This course is hosted by the Coastal Training Programs at ACE Basin and North Inlet-Winyah Bay Reserves. Space is limited to 35 people. Please register by March 23rd to secure your spot.

Location
Marine Resources Research Institute
Indoor Classroom
SC Dept of Natural Resources
217 Ft. Johnson Road
Charleston, SC

Registration
Register Online Here:
www.northinlet.sc.edu/training/events.html

Questions?
Contact Leigh Wood
Leigh.Wood@belle.baruch.sc.edu
843-904-9034

“How can I be sure that my projects will reach the right audience and have the right impact?”

“What can I do to make sure that my efforts go beyond ‘preaching to the choir’?”

“How do I measure the performance of my outreach and education efforts?”

If you have ever asked yourself these questions, this course is for you!

COURSE INSTRUCTED BY:

FREE WORKSHOP! LUNCH IS PROVIDED!

HOSTED BY:
Getting To Know Your SCMEA Board Members!

Name: Michelle J. Ashley
Date and Place of Birth: March 21 (1st day of spring!) Florence, SC
Occupation: APES, Environmental and Marine Science Teacher
Education: Horticulture, B.S. Clemson--Divergent Learning, M.Ed. Columbia College
First Job: At 14--blew up rafts at a local tourist store--N.M.B., SC
Favorite animal in SC: Our little furry rodent friend, the gray squirrel
Most unique animal you've seen: Roseated Spoonbill
Most unforgettable moment working in Environmental Education: Meeting Gil Grovesnor with National Geographic.
Favorite Part about working in Environmental Education: Learning new things, meeting new people....just being outside ;)
Most fulfilling part about working in Environmental Education: Having students ask me when we're going to meet again...for environmental activities...because they've enjoyed what they've learned or where we've been.
Funniest moment working in Environmental Education: watching two squirrels "boxing" on top of a deer stand.
Favorite outside activity in SC: Camping
Other talents/hobbies: Gardening, beekeeping, biking, hiking
Where have you traveled: Not far out of our southern states...just recently to La Jolla, Calif. (saw the Scripts Institute) and D.C. (National Geographic and Population Connection).
Where you want to travel, and why?: Anywhere I haven't been --to see in person things I've read about.
Something most people don't know about you: I love to travel.
Outside organizational involvement (organizations related to the environment that you may be involved in): Aiken Beekeepers, SC Bluebird Society, EEASC, Envirothon Coach, Population Connection facilitator, PLT.
Weird habits: Obsessively placing things in order. {continued on page 8}
Name: Jaime Thom
Date and Place of Birth: December 22 in Louisville, KY
Occupation: Educator
Education: BS Marine Biology from the College of Charleston
First Job: Vet tech
Favorite animal in SC: Snails (specifically moon, tulip and whelks)
Most unique animal you’ve seen: All nudibranchs are fascinating to me.
Most unforgettable moment working in Environmental Education: Probably when one of my high school interns fell out of his kayak. Doesn’t sound so scary or unforgettable until you learn that he has a disability and at the time walked with crutches.
Favorite Part about working in Environmental Education: Getting to work with different people every day of all ages and backgrounds. I never get bored!
Most fulfilling part about working in Environmental Education: It might sound corny, but I like making people’s day. If I can make their time at the Aquarium more enjoyable by letting them touch a snake or by showing them a horseshoe crab molt, it’s been a good day.
Funniest moment working in Environmental Education: I’ve had a lot of them, but my most recent was when a 4 year old was telling me that a mouse would prefer cheese pizza over pepperoni because all mice like cheese.
Favorite outside activity in SC: I have too many favorites to pick one. I love to hike, kayak, ride my bike, spend time at the beach.
Other talents/hobbies: Reading, crocheting, coed softball, babysitting my nephews, being a Packers fan.
Where have you traveled: Mexico, Dominican Republic and most of the US
Where you want to travel, and why?: Greece, because every picture I see of Greece makes me want to pack my bag and go.
Something most people don’t know about you: I am a 3 time high school marching band state champion.
Outside organizational involvement (organizations related to the environment that you may be involved in): National Association of Interpretation (NAI), National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), NMEA, SCMEA.
Weird habits: I am an organizing freak. I like things to be neat and in their place. It’s a good thing AND a bad thing!

Have your students been hard at work on an ocean-related project since the start of the school year? Well now it’s time to show it off to the world! We invite you—educators and students alike—to post your projects: art, audio-visual presentations, and scientific experiments to OUR OCEAN SPACE, a web-based network for exchange of projects in a wide variety of imaginative formats, created and uploaded by young Citizens of the Ocean to share with their counterparts worldwide.

So shout it from the rooftops! Teachers and students: share those ocean-related projects with other classrooms, linking together young people through their understanding and interpretation of ocean systems by contributing to our growing community of projects today: visit http://thew2o.net/our-ocean-space for more information.
Free Money for Classroom Supplies
By Brian Thill
Scholarship Committee Chair

Need teaching supplies? Apply now for a Renkas Marine Education Grant. This is a great opportunity for you to apply for a $250 award to support your marine education programs in your formal or non-formal classroom.

The award is named in honor of Cindy Renkas and her children, Brock and Jenna. Cindy was the first SCMEA marine educator of the year and a former NMEA marine educator of the year. Brock and Jenna were very active in SCMEA from a very early age. Up to 6 grants will be awarded. To apply, you must be an active member of SCMEA. Applications are due to the scholarship committee by August 20, 2012. Application forms and information is available on the SCMEA web site at: http://www.scmarineed.org/files/2012/Renkas-Marine-Education-Grant.pdf.

If you have any further questions about this opportunity, please contact Brian Thill at bthill@scaquarium.org.

North to Alaska! It’s not too late!
By Brian Thill
Scholarship Committee Chair

It’s not too late to plan for a great trip to Alaska! Apply now for the Jacques Cousteau Memorial NMEA Travel Award. This $500 award provides travel expenses to the NMEA Conference which will be held June 24-28 in Anchorage, Alaska.

Only active members of SCMEA are eligible. Scholarship awards are based on financial need of the applicant. Geographical location and order of receipt of the completed applications are not considered in the decision to award scholarships. Applicants must not be a SCMEA Officer, voting member of the Board of Directors, or an Institutional member, and must not have been awarded a scholarship for the last three NMEA Annual Conferences. Preference will be given to first time NMEA Conference attendees.

Applications are due to the scholarship committee by April 1. Application forms are available on the SCMEA website at: http://www.scmarineed.org/files/2012/Jacques-Cousteau-Memorial-NMEA-Conference-Travel-Award.pdf

The awardee will be notified by May 15 and must initially pay for conference travel and will be reimbursed after receipts and proof of attendance are submitted to the SCMEA treasurer. The attendee must write an article for the SCMEA newsletter and/or make a presentation at the next SCMEA conference describing his/her experiences and sharing information acquired at the NMEA conference within a year of receiving the award. In addition, the awardee must attend the majority of the sessions and events at the national conference.

For questions or more information, please contact Brian Thill at bthill@scaquarium.org or call 843-579-8546.

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Teachers are very important to the South Carolina Aquarium. In an effort to show our appreciation and to bring them even closer to our mission, we have added a new benefit! The South Carolina Aquarium is now offering all South Carolina Certified K-12 Teachers a FREE Individual Membership (value $55). The teacher may use this value ($55) as a credit to upgrade to any other level of membership.

To be eligible, you must be a South Carolina K-12 teacher and must present a copy of either your current school issued teacher ID or a current pay stub. See http://www.scaquarium.org/Education/teachers.html for more details!
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Front Cover Photo

By Kendle Enter

A bridge over the dunes, surrounded by goldenrod

It’s not too late to register for the 2012 NMEA Conference!

Join fellow NMEA-ers in Anchorage, or “Tikatnu,” the “big ocean river” place of the Dena’ina Athabascan Indians, on Cook Inlet.

Early registration runs until April 14, 2012. For more information, visit: http://www.pacname.org/conf.shtml

Hosted by: Northwest Aquatic and Marine Educators (NAME) and Alaska Center for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence (COSEE AK)