

# RRT REEF BRIEF

Volume 99, Issue 1

January 10, 1999

## ***Important Dates***

- 1/13** 6:30 PM  
Scubonauts  
regular meeting  
@ Worman's  
on San Jose.
- 1/20** 6:30 PM RRT  
Board meeting  
@ JU's Reid  
Hall
- 1/20** 7:30 PM RRT  
regular meeting  
@ JU's Reid  
Hall
- 1/26** Tentative 1999  
training class  
classroom date  
for Inverte-  
brates—Mary  
Lyons, instruc-  
tor.

## ***From Your Coordinator***

It's 1999 and the water is cold! That's the bad news. The good news is that the Florida DEP grant process is moving right along. We have been assured that as we submit data now—we will get paid! Thanks to John Perkner in his continuing efforts. Now maybe we can get him to come to the meetings!!

This year it is back to Jacksonville University's Reid Hall for our regular meetings. Due to personnel changes at the Southeast Branch Library, we were not carried forward on the schedule for 1999! So, for those of you who wanted to continue meeting at Reid Hall, this is good news for you. And for those of us who voted for the library, who said it's a democratic organization! Special thanks to Dr. Quinton White and to Lee Cobb for helping us with this change.

Look at this month's science officer column. It isn't too soon to have your gear serviced. The shops would appreciate your business this time of year, too!

As a final thought, elections of officers are coming up in March. If you have a "burn" to get more involved, now is the time to step forward. We have an excellent, extremely successful, quality on the job training program that will teach you everything you never wanted to know. Let one of us know what talents you would like to share with the Team!

*Jim Cribb*

## **Training Update**

The Training Class of 1998-'99 has been proceeding quite well. To date, we have completed over half of the Training Modules. The class members have been meeting the second Tuesday of each month for the classroom component. They then meet the following weekend for the in water diving portion. However, this month we will be meeting only for the classroom component. Mary Lyons will be teaching this module (Invertebrates) on Tuesday, January 26, 1999. If anyone is interested in reviewing this module, feel free to contact me to make arrangements to attend.

Next month we will be back to the typical schedule of the second Tuesday for classroom component and the following weekend for the dives. We will be going to Crystal River to do fish counting and to dive with the Manatees. Currently, we are making arrangements so if there is any desire to join us let me know, ASAP, as there is limited spacing available.

That is all for now, I will see you at Reid Hall.

*Brian E. Salzman,*  
Training Officer

**SUPPORT YOUR  
NEWSLETTER – CALL UP THE  
"EDITOR" AND GIVE HIM AN  
ARTICLE OF INTEREST FOR  
THE NEXT ISSUE!!**



Jacksonville Reef Research Team

### Publicity

Well, here it is the first of the year and I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday.

Phyl Stoffle and I have been working on the 'new' Reef Research booth and plan to have it ready before the first 'booth' event in the spring. I haven't purchased a new booth yet as I am still hoping to find a quality exhibit without having to spend the Reef Research Team's hard earned funds. We are planning on having the photos at this months RRT meeting so you guys can assist with suggestions for captions.

Speaking of booths we still need volunteers to manage and man the booth at these public events, Earth Day, Zoo Day, and maybe the Shrimp Festival at Fernandina Beach. Again, I will be happy to assist anyone willing to 'run' a booth at a local public event.

*Jim Barnes*,  
Public Relations

### Team Boat

Over the Holidays, Mike Ellis has spent more hours on getting the team boat ready for the diving season. The trim tab hydraulic cylinders have been replaced and are working well. He has ran it in the river some and repaired a few minor problems that came up. Both engines are running well and the boat is looking good!

When you see Mike, express your thanks to him for all of his efforts. I understand that he is looking for a few volunteers to take a run "up" the river toward town and see how it does.

*Phil Harville*

### Manatees have a bad year, but not the worst . . . Thursday,

*Jan 7, 1999*

More manatees died from collisions with watercraft in 1998 than in any previous year, but in terms of overall numbers, it was only the third highest year for manatee mortality, according to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Manatee deaths in Florida totaled 231 for 1998; 66 were from watercraft-related injuries. Numbers for 1997 were 242 total deaths, 54 of which were boat related. The worst manatee mortality year was 1996, when a toxin from a red tide infested the water and 415 manatees died that year, 60 of the deaths were boat related.

The state has been monitoring manatee mortality since 1974, and boat collision deaths have been steadily rising. In 1974, there were only three.

"We are disappointed that watercraft-related mortalities continue to increase," said David Arnold, chief of DEP's Bureau of Protected Species Management. "We continue to believe, however, that our efforts are making a difference. We see the continued support of Florida's citizens as the key to the recovery of this species."

Experts estimate that there are around 2,400 manatees in Florida waters. Also known as sea cows, the adults range from 10 to 12 feet long, weighing from between 1,000-1,200 pounds. As mammals, they come to the surface for air every few minutes when they're active or swimming. This is when they're most

vulnerable to boat propellers. When resting, they can stay on the bottom for 10 to 15 minutes. Females mature at around five to nine years of age and give birth to one calf every two to five years.

Despite the manatee's ability to swim large stretches of water, the population tends to stay put because of its dependence on specific habitat features. The vegetarian animals prefer protected coastal waters and rivers, where sea grasses or freshwater vegetation are abundant, because they can eat between 100 to 150 pounds of vegetation a day.

Manatees appeared 50 to 60 million years ago. Florida's waters were probably colonized by a few Caribbean manatees around 10,000 years ago, making the Florida gene pool somewhat limited.

The combination of slow reproduction rates, loss of habitat and encounters with man have contributed to their designation as endangered.

The other leading causes of death among Florida manatees are also human-related. In addition to watercraft injuries, they become entangled in float and fishing lines and ingest foreign objects, such as garbage thrown from boats. Every year several are also caught or crushed by flood gates and canal locks. Warm water releases from power plants are drawing them farther north, out of their natural territory, potentially exposing them to cold that they can't survive.

Florida and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have established a number of sanctuaries for manatees and delineated manatee speed zones for boaters. However, there are very few marine patrol police in the state, and compliance with the speed zones is to a large degree voluntary.

*Courtesy of Environment News Network*

## HAPPY NEW YEAR, EVERY-ONE!!

Hope all had a very merry Christmas, and had an opportunity to visit with family for the holiday's. I don't know about you, but I made some inroads into my diving paraphernalia by asking Santa for a wreck reel, a new tank, and a new wetsuit. My theory on the wetsuit situation is that the hangers cause the suits to shrink over time. So, I've had to make a contribution to the economy by purchasing some much-needed (as I impressed upon my wife) dive gear. So far, only the reel has made it into my acquisitions.

I have been out of touch with most everyone since the weather has gotten cold and the holiday's arrived, so there is not a lot to say. I did talk to Billy Taylor about the new class, and he said things were progressing very nicely. The arrangements he and Brian made with the facilities at Camp Blanding have done the trick. Good luck on that endeavor, and please let me and anyone else know if help is needed.

Evidently, the mess with the lawyers regarding our grant has been remedied, and all we need to do is get the sites monitored. John Dodrill has said that all the staff is in place for getting the monies squared away.

I sure miss diving, and can't wait to start a new season. I already have my regulator serviced so I can avoid the last-minute rush when the season begins this spring.

Also, for those wanting to "step-up to the plate", elections for new officers are upon us. So, if you've a hankerin' for a prestigious position of power, consider getting yourself nominated.

See you on January 20th at Reid Hall!

Later,

*Lex*

## 1999 DIVE SCHEDULE

Day	Month	Dive Date	Rain Date	M	J	Location
Saturday	April	04/03	04/10		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	April	04/17	04/24		*	Jaxspots
Saturday	May	05/08	TBA	*		<b>BB</b>
Sunday	May	05/16	05/23		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	June	06/06	TBA	*		<b>CR Culverts</b>
Saturday	June	06/19	06/26		*	Jaxspots
Saturday	July	07/03	Open		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	July	07/04	TBA	*		<b>JW</b>
Saturday	July	07/10	07/24		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	July	07/18	TBA	*		<b>EEF Culverts</b>
Saturday	August	07/28	TBA	*		<b>TR Anna</b>
Sunday	August	08/08	08/15		*	Jaxspots
Saturday	August	08/14	08/21		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	August	08/15	TBA	*		<b>HH Barge</b>
Saturday	September	09/04	TBA	*		<b>JW</b>
Sunday	September	09/12	09/19		*	Jaxspots
Saturday	October	10/02	10/09		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	October	10/10	10/17		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	October	10/31	TBA		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	November	11/14	TBA		*	Jaxspots

Notes: M = Monitoring Dives      J = Jaxspots Confirmation and Discovery Dives

Meet at Mayport Marine promptly at 7:30 for all dives, unless specified otherwise

Contact Alex Waters at 262-5001 or John Perkner at 273-4562 with questions on the schedule.

# 1998 Officers/Board of Directors

President - Jim Cribb	904-264-1840 (H)	904-264-0520 (W)
Vice President - Alex Waters	904-262-5001 (H)	904-260-3911 (W)
Chief Scientist - John Perkner	904-273-4562 (H)	904-791-5064 (W)
Safety Officer- Don Stadler	904-384-2534 (H)	904-354-3278 (W)
Treasurer - Jim Nelsen	904-641-0717 (H)	904-448-0305 (W)
Secretary - Allison Rogers	904-751-4513 (H)	904-260-6369 (W)
Public Relations - Jim Barnes	904-757-1928 (H)	904-778-6089 (W)
Training Officer- Brian Salzman	904-744-4006 (H)	904-366-1820 (W)
Webmaster - Ray Smith	904-389-9668 (H)	904-854-5990 (W)

## Bluefish

Family Pomatomidae, BLUEFISHES

*Pomatomus saltatrix*



**Description:** color blue or greenish blue on back, sides silvery; mouth large; teeth prominent, sharp, and compressed; dorsal

and anal fins nearly the same size; scales small; lateral line almost straight.

**Similar Fish:** blue runner, *C. crysos*.

**Where found:** young usually INSHORE

**\*Florida Record:** 22 lbs., 3 ozs.

## Bonefish

Family Albulidae, BONEFISHES

*Albula vulpes*



**Description:** silvery color with bluish or greenish back; slender, round body; snout long, conical, aiming downward and overhang-

ing lower jaw; dark streaks between scales on upper half of body and faint crossbands extending down to lateral line; extremities of dorsal and caudal fins shaded with black.

**Where found:** primarily INSHORE fish inhabiting shallows of the Florida Keys; found in shallows often less than 1 foot deep, usually over lush grass flats, occasionally over white sand. **\*Florida Record:** 15 lbs., 6 ozs.

In This Issue...

Don't forget. It's back to Reid Hall at JU!!



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