



# Sea Briefs

News Highlights from the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium

Special Edition: Annual Report 2000



## MASGC Heads in New Direction

Welcome to our special edition of *Sea Briefs* highlighting our 2000 activities. As many of you know, Dr. Barry Costa-Pierce accepted the position as Director of Rhode Island Sea Grant, and I accepted the MASGC interim director



position and will work with the staff and BOD during the search for a new director.

Welcome Jackson State University, MASGC's newest consortium member, whose admission was unanimously approved at our May BOD meeting. JSU has a strong marine sciences research program.

MASGC is currently in the first year of our three-year Omnibus Cycle which funded 11 new projects, plus our extension and legal programs. We also leveraged our NOAA funds with the Gulf of Mexico Program creating a \$220,000 aquatic nuisance species research partnership.

I will close by stating that MASGC is far more than a source of funding. Capitalizing on the strengths of our bi-state structure, MASGC will work to increase our leadership role with all agencies serving our coastal communities.

## Strategic and Implementation Plans Lay Out New Priorities

### MASGC Concentrates on Achieving New Goals

In the spring of 2000, the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium (MASGC) published its 2000-2005 Strategic Plan, followed by its 2000-2002 Implementation Plan. These plans set specific priorities and goals for MASGC and its researchers, extension agencies and staff.

MASGC began fulfilling these goals by establishing an Office of Alabama Programs and hiring Dr. LaDon Swann to head up its efforts. This has led to new collaborations with the National Estuary Program, Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, and several coastal agencies. In addition, two Sea Grant "Center of Excellence" one-page proposals were developed -- The first for Marine Biotechnology at the University of Mississippi, and the second for Offshore Aquaculture Research and Development at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Over the last year MASGC's accomplishments in Sustainable Fisheries include: Funding a Program Development (PD) project entitled, "Fisheries Habitat for Juvenile

Red Snapper in the Northern Gulf of Mexico"; Developing and implementing an oyster gardening program with the Mobile Bay NEP; Co-sponsoring the 24th Annual larval Fish Conference in Gulfshores, AL; Supporting the Alma Bryant High School Aquaculture Program and the award-winning Aquaculture Network Information Center (AquaNIC) internet site; Establishing the Offshore Aquaculture Consortium and deploying the first federally-permitted aquaculture cage in the United States.

In Coastal Ecosystems and Habitats MASGC's collaborations include establishing a marine science scholarship with Chevron and Grand Bay NERR; and organizing and leading the National Workshop on the Use of Dredge Materials for Erosion Control and Wetlands Creation. MASGC also funded a project on the Gulf Sturgeon habitat movement in Mississippi's coastal waters; and another on the recruitment dynamics and effects of environmental variation on early growth and survival of important estuarine fishes.

In Marine Biotechnology and Industrial Ecology, research projects covering the treatment and management of ballast water to control non-indigenous species, and ionic liquids used in the extraction of astaxanthin and the solubilization of chitin, were funded by MASGC. In addition, the Consortium assisted UM in its proposal for a Center of Excellence in Marine Biotechnology, and co-organized the 2nd International Conference on Marine Bioinvasions.

**MASGC Priority Areas**

- Marine Biotechnology and Industrial Ecology
- Sustainable Fisheries
- Coastal Ecosystems and Habitats
- Marine Education and Outreach

## Communications Program Helps Keep MASGC Members in Spotlight

The work of MASGC, the funded researchers, educators, and legal and extension programs—stretching across two states—provides an overflow of information to disseminate to all Sea Grant stakeholders.

One of the highlights of 2000 for MASGC's Communications Coordinator, Tim Reid,

was the collaboration with DISL's Public Relations Director Lisa Young in spreading the word about MASGC/DISL's research role in response to last summer's alien jellyfish invasion. The event garnered national and international news coverage on television, in scientific journals and print media, and on web sites.

In addition to writing press releases, informational one-pagers, and reestablishing ties with Consortium members and the media, the Coordinator was involved in local civic groups in both states and took leadership roles in activities such as regional science fairs, earth day celebrations, and beach clean-up events.

Reid also acted as a mentor for an intern from the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College; coordinated the writing and editing of the MASGC Strategic and Implementation Plans, and organized the video documentation of the OAC aquaculture cage deployment shot from ship, helicopter, and underwater.

# MASGC's Outreach Efforts

## MASG Legal Program Continues to Grow

As one of the most well-respected ocean and coastal law research centers in the country, the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Legal Program continues to grow and improve.

- The Legal Program worked with the AUMERC to write and publish *Understanding Fisheries Management* and has already distributed 2,000 copies nationwide.
- MASGLP's Water Log Legal Reporter, which focuses on ocean and coastal legal issues, celebrated its 20th year of publication and now boasts over 1,000 subscribers.
- In addition to answering 40+ advisory requests, the Legal Program's attorneys worked on research in fisheries management and marine habitat, aquaculture, water quality disputes and trade negotiations and the environment.
- To help MASGLP attorneys in 2000, the Program employed eight law students to work as Research Associates.

*MASGC Education, Communications, Extension and Legal Programs work to disseminate Sea Grant information to interested stakeholders in both states.*

## Alabama Extension

**Seafood Safety:** Alabama Sea Grant Extension Program's (ASGEP) Seafood Specialist earned HACCP Trainer certification, helped certify 18 inspectors, provided assistance to local seafood operators, and participated in the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Seafood Task Force.

**Water Quality:** ASGEP educated thousands of people about the Dog River Water Shed, created the Water Shed Guardian Project (recognized by Mobile's mayor), facilitated the Alabama Clean Water Partnership in three coastal watersheds, and trained volunteers in water quality monitoring.

**Oyster Fisheries:** ASGEP presented oyster culturing information at meetings. Its work on oyster reef restoration has resulted in AL-MRD modifying the shell planting protocol at one site.

## Mississippi Extension

**Adopt-A-Stream:** Mississippi Sea Grant Extension Program (MSGEP) participated in the adoption of eight freshwater and tidal streams, and developed with MDEQ two new Adopt-A-Stream kits designed especially for the coastal region of the state.

**Waste Disposal:** MSGEP's researchers worked on a shrimp processing wastes disposal project that provides information on the disposal and/or use of by-products from MS seafood processing plants. One alternative is to convert the solid waste into meal to be used as a feed additive for broiler chickens, fish and aquaculture.

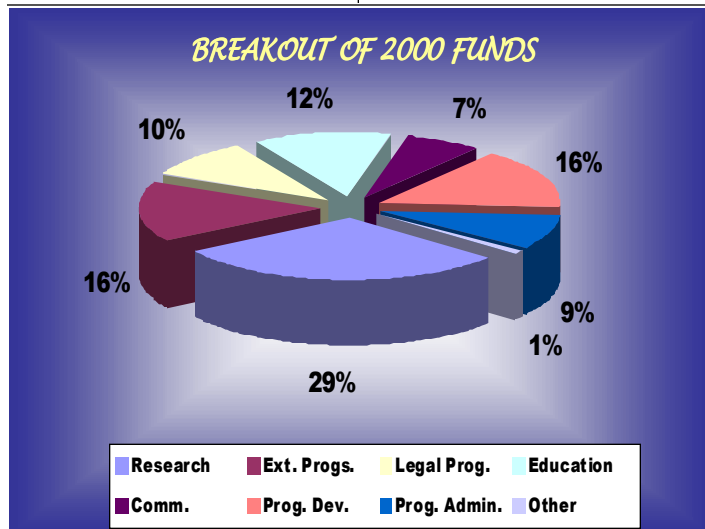
**Bycatch:** Extension staff continued their gear research and technology transfer activities to address bycatch problems in the Gulf shrimp fishery. This has already reduced unwanted bycatch by 70%.



MASGC helps support Alma Bryant High School's Aquaculture Program in Bayou La Batre, AL.

## MASGC Reaches Out to Teachers, Students and General Public

MASGC supported several marine science research and education programs. These included regional science fairs in both states with special Sea Grant Awards given to the top marine science projects; Earth Day celebrations; annual beach cleanups; Public lectures at the Marine Education Center; Ocean Bowl (national marine science knowledge competition); the Jason Project (interactive real-time science exploration with world's top explorers/researchers); Mobile's Bayfest; and summer Sea Camp for children 5 to 14 years old.



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## Fiscal Report: Projects Funded in 2000

Funded Project	Institution of Investigator	NOAA Funds	Institutional Support	Other Funds	Total
Controlling the Molt Cycle of the Blue Crab	UAB	\$50,000	\$28,444		\$78,444
Assessment of Sea Urchins as Fishery and Aquaculture Candidates	UAB	50,750	39,732		90,482
Artificial Diets for the Culture of Fish and Crustacean Larvae	MSU	41,645	11,156	\$20,633	73,434
Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle International Recovery Program	UAB	29,792	20,014		49,806
Early Growth & Survival of Important Estuarine Fishes	USM	41,607	188	20,615	62,410
Isolation & Purification of Bioactive Compounds	UAB	18,605	12,236		30,841
Bioremediation Potential of Heavy PAH Contaminated Sediment	MSU	26,523	119	13,142	39,785
Semisynthetic and Microbial Transformations of Marine Natural Products	UM	50,658	35,416	25,095	111,169
Making Aquatic Connections	MCPSS/AU	18,125	19,623		37,748
Marine Meteorology for Middle School	IMS/USM	38,838	688	19,232	58,758
Mississippi Sea Grant Extension Program	MSU	80,000	62,363	39,637	182,000
Alabama Sea Grant Extension Program	AU	93,694	47,299		140,993
Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Legal Program	UM	73,849	98,378	36,646	208,873
Consumer Attitudes & Preferences for Oysters	MSU	42,256	45,318		87,574
MASGC Communications Program	MASGC	108,148		31,116	139,264
MASGC Program Administration	MASGC	152,013		30,046	182,059
MASGC Program Development	MASGC	272,753		50,660	323,413
Multi-Program & Regional Initiatives	MASGC	25,000			25,000
MASGC Marine Science Scholars Fellowships	MASGC		40,000	40,000	40,000
Dean John Knauss Federal Policy Fellowships	MASGC	76,000			76,000
<b>TOTAL FUNDS ALLOCATED</b>		<b>\$1,290,256</b>	<b>\$460,975</b>	<b>\$326,822</b>	<b>\$2,078,053</b>

**Sea Briefs** is a special report on the efforts of the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium. Editor: Tim Reid Editorial Assistant: Diane Butler. This newsletter is also on MASGC's web site at [www.masgc.org/seabriefs.html](http://www.masgc.org/seabriefs.html). MASGC supports applied, interdisciplinary marine science research, education, and outreach efforts to foster the sustainable development and management of the Mississippi and Alabama coasts and nearshore ecosystems of the Gulf of Mexico. Address: 703 East Beach Drive, Ocean Springs, MS 39564; 228-875-9341; [seabriefs@usm.edu](mailto:seabriefs@usm.edu). MASGP-01-003-02