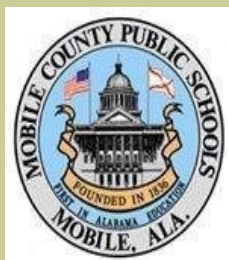


ENVIRONMENTAL  
STUDIES CENTER

MOBILE COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MOBILE, AL



Volume II, Issue I

November 2011

## Critter Corner



### Meet Marsha

Marsha is an osprey. One of the largest birds of prey or raptors in North America, many people refer to the osprey as a "fish hawk" because they hunt fish. The osprey boasts an unusual smell due to an oil on their feathers that protects their body as they dive into the water in an effort to retrieve a fish. They are the only raptor that fully submerges into water when hunting. When the osprey catches a fish, it carries it head first to make flying more aerodynamic. The osprey does not mind making its nest on man-made structures like large light posts near bodies of water.

Stop by and meet Marsha . The ESC is open Monday—Friday from 8:00 until 4:30.

## What's Happening at the Center

Fall has arrived and the ESC is very busy. School groups visit each day and the wildlife rehabilitation program stays busy. As the weather cools and the leaves begin to change color, the ESC is beautiful to visit this time of year.

On November 5th, we held our first Open House of the school year. The day was full of wildlife tours, reptile and raptor presentations, kid's activities, and Starlab shows. If you missed this Open House, we will have another one on May 5th.

The Center is an ever changing place. Recently, we welcomed a new member to our staff, Troy Latham. Troy is our newest resource teacher. He previously taught at Vigor and Murphy High Schools. Welcome aboard Troy! Also, we began construction on our new raptor exhibit. This exhibit will house injured birds of prey native to our area. One of our Partners in Education, Evonik Degussa Inc., sponsored the enclosure. Also, Evonik has provided funds for students at Bryant Career Technical Center to build new squirrel cages for the Center. The squirrels housed in these cages are juveniles waiting to be released. Make sure to stop by and see our new additions!



## News from Out-of-this World



On Oct 5th, we saw over 300 students, parents and teachers for our semi annual Sky Watch. The Mobile Astronomical Society graciously gives their time and talent to the community by setting up their telescopes and taking us on a tour of the moon, planets, stars and other deep sky objects. Participants enjoyed viewing our half moon, Neptune and even Jupiter with some of its moons. Another big hit was the opportunity to see Vesta, the second largest asteroid in the asteroid belt. There is a NASA spacecraft called Dawn currently orbiting and mapping the surface of Vesta. Astronomers also showed binary stars and globular clusters to participants.

There was also plenty to see with the naked eye as summer and fall constellations are both in view. The summer triangle featuring Aquila the eagle, Lyra the harp and Cygnus the swan was visible. The teapot of Sagittarius and Scorpius are found in the southern sky. Ursa Major and Ursa Minor in the North are popular constellations. In the East our fall constellations, Pegasus, Andromeda and Cassiopeia are showing up to tell their annual story of the royal rescue. Our next Sky Watch will be on Feb 29, 2012 at 7 p.m. We hope to see you there.







## Seasonal Ideas for Wildlife Near You

### From U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Christmas Tree for Wildlife

#### String of Pearls

Using a needle and thread, string together different kinds of grapes. Add variety by alternating grapes, raisins and cranberries.

#### Popcorn Party

String popcorn together using a needle and thread. Make sure that the popcorn is 100% natural with no butter or salt. Add variety by stringing cranberries separately or together with the popcorn.

#### Cracker Bracelet

Purchase any size or shape crackers. The crackers must be salt free. String them together with a needle and thread into a round bracelet.

#### Apple/Orange Slices

Cut thin slices of apples and oranges. Hang each slice separately, with colorful ribbons, all over the tree.

#### Bird Bags

Make these just like a wedding rice bag except substitute bird seed for rice. Purchase some net material and fill it with any kind of bird seed. It is helpful to add some finely crushed egg shells to the seed mixture to supplement the birds diet with calcium. Tie a red or green ribbon at the top and hang it from the tree.

#### Peanut Heaven

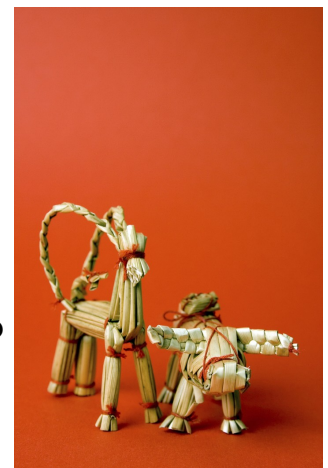
Take several raw peanuts and string them together with a needle and thread. Tie a colorful ribbon at the top to help attract birds.

#### Pine Cone Pleasure

Collect big or small pine cones. Mix peanut butter with oatmeal for a thick consistency. Apply the mixture inside and around the pine cone and roll in bird seed. Hang it with a ribbon.

#### Suet Loot

Suet is a popular bird food. Melt beef fat or bacon grease and let it cool. Add bird seed, peanut butter, fruit or granola. Mesh onion bags make good suet containers and are easy to hang.



# Wildlife Rehabilitation News

We are forming an organization to support the wildlife rehabilitation program. It is called the Environmental Studies Center's Wildlife Friends. We need people to help with a variety of things. Since the rehabilitation program is only funded through grants and donations, we really need people to organize fund raisers for the program. The newsletter is sent out twice a year and we need help putting address labels on it and folding it. We need people to help feed our exhibit animals and to raise orphaned squirrels, bunnies, and opossums. The rehabilitation program does not have a pick up service for injured wildlife so we thought we could form a group of people, in different areas of town, to pick up animals when they cannot be brought to us. These are just a few areas that we need help in and we thought the "Wildlife Friends" could do this. The membership fee is a donation of \$10.00 annually for individuals or families. All members will receive a newsletter subscription and the knowledge that you are helping your local wildlife. The application to become a member is below.



## Become a Member of the Environmental Studies Center's Wildlife Friends

The Environmental Studies Center houses a wildlife rehabilitation program that is dedicated to the care and potential release of injured and orphaned native wildlife. You can help the wildlife rehabilitation program by becoming a "Wildlife Friend". We need your help fund raising, doing mailings, and maintaining exhibits, among a few things. Please help us help your local wildlife.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Zip Code:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

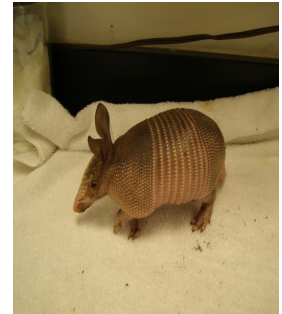
Membership (includes a newsletter subscription)  
\$10.00 Individual or Family (annually)

### I can volunteer to help with:

Fund Raising/Donation Solicitation \_\_\_\_\_ Mailings \_\_\_\_\_  
Promotions \_\_\_\_\_ Orphan Caretaker \_\_\_\_\_ Exhibit Animal Feeder \_\_\_\_\_  
Animal Transportation \_\_\_\_\_ Exhibit Maintenance/ Construction \_\_\_\_\_

## Wildlife Wish List

Clip-on clamp lamp	1 cc and 3cc syringes	Animal crackers
Pine bark mulch	Pine shavings (for cages)	Dried whole corn
Cages	Baled hay	Scratch feed
Heating pads	Ziploc freezer bags (gallon & quart)	Wild birdseed
Liquid laundry soap	Bleach	Raw peanuts (in shell)
Liquid dishwasher soap	Paper Towels	Nuts (in shell)
Wal-Mart gift cards	<u>Food Items</u>	Dry dog food (small bites)
60-watt light bulbs	Small frozen fish	Unsalted sunflower seeds
Scrub brushes	Frozen mixed vegetables	Canned sardines in water
Cash	Cheerios	Canned dog and cat food



## Wildlife Adoptions

For \$25 a year you can help with the feeding, care, and shelter of one of the native wildlife housed at the Center. Not only can you adopt an animal for yourself but you can give an adoption as a gift. Adoption benefits include: adoption certificate, photograph of animal, fact sheet about the species, recognition of your adoption on the exhibit, opportunity to make a scheduled visit with “your” animal. Complete the information below and mail to the Center with payment to adopt.

### Animal Adoption



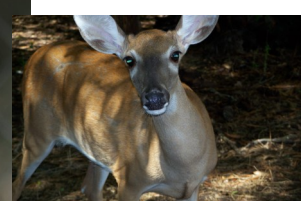
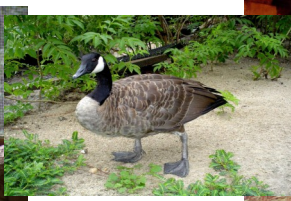
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please choose one: ☐ Raccoon ☐ Deer ☐ Pelican ☐ Seagull ☐ Alligator  
☐ Mallard Duck ☐ Canada Goose ☐ Black Vulture ☐ Turkey ☐ Coyote  
☐ Red-Tailed Hawk ☐ Bald Eagle ☐ Golden Eagle ☐ Turkey Vulture ☐ Screech Owl  
☐ Barred Owl ☐ Great-Horned Owl ☐ Great Blue Heron ☐ Peregrine Falcon



## How can you help the ESC????

- ♦ Donate items from the Wish List
- ♦ Complete a Wildlife Adoption
- ♦ Become a Fan on Facebook
- ♦ Join the volunteer program
- ♦ Become a Partner in Education
- ♦ Purchase an inscribed plaque
- ♦ Make a cash donation
- ♦ Become an ESC Wildlife Friend

To find out more about helping the ESC contact 251-221-5000.



### Partners in Education



degussa.

PVOC

Pleasant Valley Opportunity Club

Dr. Louis Buckalew  
& Family

## Thoughts from the Director

I just want to thank you for your support. If you are receiving this newsletter it means that you are a supporter of the Environmental Studies Center. I am Desiree Bishop, the new director of the Environmental Studies Center. I am new as director, but not new to the Center. I have been a resource teacher here at the Center since 2003 and a science teacher in the Mobile County Public School System since 1980, so I have been around a while. Throughout my education career the Environmental Studies Center has always been on my radar. It is a rare thing for a public school system to fund and support an environmental center like the one we are lucky to have here in Mobile. I hope to continue the legacy of environmental education and stewardship that Lloyd Scott started over 37 years ago. So I hope to keep what you already love and add many exciting new things. If you haven't visited us in a while please make a point to come and see us. We have a new exhibit for birds of prey being built and it will house the raptors that will be a part of our new outreach raptor program. There will also be some changes in programs and classroom exhibits, but don't worry our message and passion will always be the same – conservation and preservation through education. We are glad you are part of our family and we hope that with your help we will be able to add more friends and support.



*Desiree Bishop*

“One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.” Shakespeare



## Wildlife Success Story

Fortunately, we have many success stories from this past summer. Some uncommon animals that we got in were a long tail weasel, a Bonaparte's gull, and a clutch of green heron nestlings. The long tail weasel is found throughout North America but is not very common in South Alabama. The weasel came to us with a head injury. We think that it had been hit by a car. After a few days it perked right up and it was released after a couple of weeks. The Bonaparte's gull is also not very common in South Alabama. It's a small gull that is very "tern" like. It came to us with both eyes swollen and sealed shut. We think that it might have gotten into some sort of chemical. It was released after about 1 ½ months of treatment. The 4 nestling green herons were found on the side of a road. We have no idea how they got there. They were not found near any trees. They were raised and released on our lake. Success stories are what keep us going here and because of your donations, we can keep helping our native wildlife.



## Annual Calendar Contest Winners

On November 5th, the annual calendar contest winners were announced at Open House. The contest is sponsored each year by our Partner in Education, Pleasant Valley Opportunity Club. The winners are as follows:

### Kindergarten – Third Grade

- 1st Place** Dayna Brunson  
Old Shell Road Magnet
- 2nd Place** Annabelle Elsworth  
Collier Elementary
- 3rd Place** Sarah Deaton  
Collier Elementary

### Fourth-Fifth Grade

- 1st Place** Daryl McDonald  
Griggs Elementary
- 2nd Place** Kiera Hinton  
Old Shell Road Magnet
- 3rd Place** Holly Jo Cowart  
Old Shell Road Magnet

### Sixth-Eight Grade

- 1st Place** Trajan Pugh  
Clark-Shaw Magnet
- 2nd Place** Lillie Blacksher  
Clark-Shaw Magnet
- 3rd Place** Ruben Yerena Jr.  
Burns Middle

### Ninth-Twelfth Grade

- 1st Place** Hunter Crane  
Baker High
- 2nd Place** Josh Latham  
M. G. Montgomery High
- 3rd Place** Jordyn Pierce  
M. G. Montgomery High

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
STUDIES CENTER**

**MOBILE COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**MOBILE, AL**

**6101 Girby Road  
Mobile, Alabama  
36693**

**Phone: 251-221-5000  
Fax: 251-221-5002**

**Open 8:00a.m.-4:30p.m.  
Monday—Friday**

**Individual Admission:  
Free  
\$2 Donation appreciated**

**Group tours:  
Reservations required  
Contact 251.221.5000  
for pricing information**

**Non-profit organization**



**Wild Adventures**

The Environmental Studies Center is a natural sciences education facility designed to provide unique learning experiences. In addition, wildlife rehabilitation plays a vital role each day at the Center. Featuring over 500 acres of rich woodlands, the Center affords teachers, students, and the general public an opportunity to experience firsthand the natural environment. Natural resources include pine and bay forests, swamps, freshwater streams, carnivorous plant bog, and a twenty-acre lake.

Man-made resources include numerous nature trails, covered pavilions, live animal exhibits, butterfly garden, and native plant garden. Indoor facilities include an auditorium, library, and classroom containing live reptile exhibits, a saltwater aquarium, and numerous preserved specimens native to Alabama.



The Environmental Studies Center houses a wildlife rehabilitation program that is dedicated to the care and potential release of injured and orphaned native wildlife. The wildlife rehabilitation program receives over 1000 wild patients a year. These animals all need food, care, and shelter to survive. The program relies upon donations from people like you for its operation.

**Environmental Studies Center  
6101 Girby Road  
Mobile, Alabama 36693**