

ENVIRONMENTAL
STUDIES CENTER

MOBILE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MOBILE, AL



www.mcpss.com/esc

Desiree Bishop
Director

Susan Clement
Biologist

Tracy Delcambre
Resource Teacher

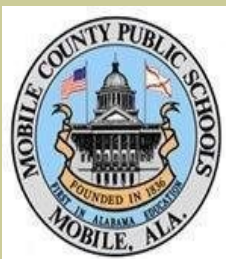
Troy Latham
Resource Teacher

Anita Salinas
Resource Teacher

Grace Phelps
Bookkeeper

Judson Martin
Grounds Keeper

Hubert Robinson
Custodian



Volume III, Issue II

Spring 2013

Critter Corner



Meet Nick

Nick is a white-tailed deer. He came to live at the ESC after being found wandering around with a dog collar around his neck. He was overly friendly, therefore, the staff was unable to release him.

White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are some of the most recognized wildlife. White-tailed deer are named for the underside of their tail. It is white and when raised signals danger to other deer in the area. Deer are herbivores. They eat nuts, fruit, leaves, and grasses. They are browsers, not grazers.

Deer have an excellent sense of smell. Their keen sense of smell is very important for avoiding predators, identifying other deer, and identifying food sources. Deer also have an excellent sense of hearing. Also, white-tailed deer are highly adaptable to various habitat types, as well as sudden changes in habitat composition.

Stop by and meet Nick on your next visit to the ESC.

What's Happening at the Center

The birds are singing and the bees are buzzing! This means that warm weather has arrived. During spring time, the ESC is certainly a busy place. The wildlife rehabilitation department is actively treating many injured, native animals. School programs are taking place everyday, with multiple groups attending the many wonderful educational programs offered. Also, we continue to move forward with improvement efforts on site.

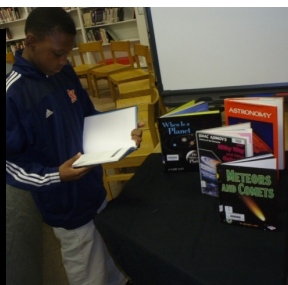
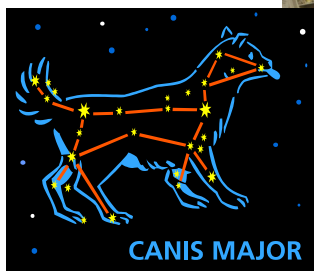
At this time, we have completed a beautiful porch renovation. New siding was added. A hand rail was crafted to surround the porch making it feel like a true "southern porch". In addition, interactive displays were added such as a fur touch table, magnification table, wildlife footprint table, and an observation bee hive. If you haven't had a chance to see these improvements, stop by for a visit soon. We continue to need your help in caring for the injured wildlife housed at the ESC. One way you can help is by donating your aluminum cans to the ESC. The ESC will recycle these cans and receive funds that will help to support the wildlife rehabilitation program.

Spring Open House is Saturday, May 4th from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Admission is free. Activities include: the Raptor Road Show, wildlife talks, reptile show, vendors, concession sales, and much more. We will be having a "Baby Shower" for all of the orphaned wildlife that the staff of the ESC is caring for this spring. Simply bring in an item off of the Wish List on page 7 of this newsletter and place it in one of the bins found on the front porch the day of Open House. We hope you will join us for this wonderful event!



News from Out-of-this World

Sixth grade students across Mobile County study space science during second semester. The Center has a program titled "Reach for the Stars" which takes the portable planetarium to middle schools to enrich their space science unit. During the program students learn to identify popular constellations such as Orion the hunter, Taurus the bull and Orion's two hunting dogs Canis Major and Canis Minor. This is also the season that Jupiter can be seen shining bright in the sky overhead. Inside the planetarium students explore the life cycle of stars, distances throughout the universe, and even the phases of the moon. This year we visited Alba Middle School, Lott Middle School, Booker T. Washington Middle School, Chastang Middle School and North Mobile County Middle School. In addition to "Reach for the Stars" the center also has an additional portable planetarium that is available for checkout by teachers that have been through a certification class. Many Mobile County schools are benefiting from this resource as well. As we approach the Spring season, look for Leo the lion in the East followed by Aquarius and Libra where we will find Saturn throughout the Spring and Summer.



What to do with wild baby birds...

There are two types of baby birds: nestlings and fledglings.

--A nestling is a baby, without feathers or with pin feathers, that has not left the nest.

--A fledgling has feathers and is learning how to fly. It does not return to the nest once it leaves.

If a nestling is found, it should be returned to its' nest. It is alright to touch the baby because birds have a poor sense of smell and the parents will not smell your scent on the baby bird. If the nest cannot be reached, make one out of a hanging plant basket. Poke holes in the bottom, line it with pine straw or grass, and hang it in a bush or tree near the location where the bird was found. The parents will return when they hear the nestling cry.

Fledglings are learning to fly, so they do not stay in the nest. If a fledgling is found, please leave it alone. If it is on the ground, put it in a bush so that it is less vulnerable. The parents are not always with the baby because they are looking for food to feed their young. Again, touching the baby bird will not harm it or cause the parents to reject it.

Baby birds should be taken in only if one of the following occurs: both parents are positively dead, the bird is injured, or the bird is in real danger. When taken in, the bird should be placed in a dark box and brought to the Environmental Studies Center. It is against the law to keep any wild bird without a permit and it is also best for the bird if it is cared for by a trained wildlife rehabilitator. Raising a baby bird takes a lot of time. In fact, a nestling has to be fed every 20 minutes from dawn to dusk. The best thing to feed a baby bird, until it can be brought to a wildlife rehabilitator, is dry dog or cat food that has been soaked in water. Never give it liquid with a medicine dropper!

Some of our recent patients...



Magnificent Frigatebird



American Woodcock



Brown Thrashers



Loggerhead Shrike



Coral Snake



Least Bittern



Least Sandpiper



Carolina Wrens



Canada Goose

Annual MCPSS Science Fair Winners

The annual Mobile County Public Schools Science Fair was held on February 22, 2013 at Burns Middle School. The overall winners are as follows:

Lisa Bramucci-Fay Horizon Award for Most Promising 6th Grade Project
Daniel Hodgins—Clark-Shaw Magnet School—Environmental Science
“Fueling the Future”

Middle School Winner
Julia Bosarge—Clark-Shaw Magnet School—Environmental Science
“Bio-Assessment of Miller’s Creek”

High School Winner
Thomas Gard—Murhpy High School—Microbiology
“Bacteriostatic Activity in Fire Ants”

Overall Winner
Rohan Palanki—Davidson High School—Engineering
“Take My Breath Away”



PRESCRIPTION



Did you know that nature is good for your child's health? Children who feel connected to nature have better physical, mental, and emotional health (Lova 2005). Nature also improves student learning. And sharing the outdoors together can build strong family bonds and create life-long memories.

Let's Go Outside!

To improve your child's health, try these simple and safe activities:

- ☐ Take a walk in the woods
- ☐ Catch lightning bugs in your yard
- ☐ Collect rocks or leaves of interesting colors and shapes
- ☐ Turn over rocks in a stream and look for critters
- ☐ Climb in a sturdy tree
- ☐ Fish in a local stream, lake or pond
- ☐ Ride your bike and notice the different sounds you hear
- ☐ Climb to the top of a hill and watch the sunset
- ☐ Grow a garden and try the fresh foods together
- ☐ Watch birds and imitate their songs
- ☐ Jump in puddles and dance in the rain

PHYSICIAN SIGNATURE



Find out more about how you can connect your child with nature. Talk to your healthcare provider, and discover the resources and opportunities offered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services at www.fws.gov/children, and the Kentucky Association for Environmental Education at www.kaee.org.

DATE



Wildlife Wish List

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



Wildlife Adoptions

For a \$25 annual donation you can help with the feeding, care, and shelter of one of the native wildlife housed here at the Environmental Studies 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 your animal, fact sheet about the species, recognition of your adoption on the exhibit, and the opportunity to make a scheduled visit with "your" animal.

Complete the information below and mail it to the Center with your payment. Make checks payable to the Environmental Studies Center.

Animal Adoption



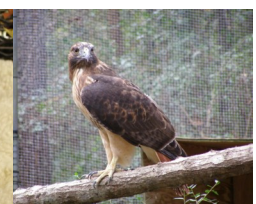
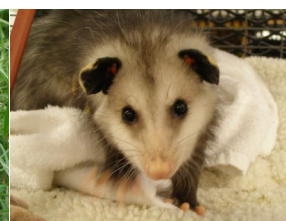
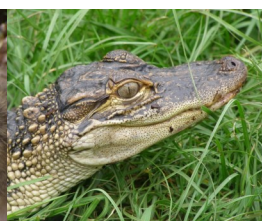
Name: _____

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 ☐ Opossum



Wildlife Success Stories

We have had quite a lot of success stories at the Center but two stand out this year. We received a swallow-tailed kite in April of 2012. A kite is a strikingly beautiful raptor of wetlands that captures flying insects or plucks insects and lizards from the tops of trees. The kite was weak and lethargic and had some feather damage to its tail and wings. We were able to get him over his health issues but because of the feather damage, we had to wait for the bird to molt and grow in new feathers. Birds molt two times a year so this meant housing the kite here until it molted. Finally after a late winter molt, the kite was able to be released in March.

In early February we received an osprey that had fishing line and hooks wrapped tightly around its left wing. An osprey is a large fish eating raptor that is common around our area. It took 30 minutes to remove everything from the wing but thankfully there was not too much damage. There was a small cut and some bruising. After a few days inside, the osprey was put into our flight cage for some exercise and was released two weeks later.



Partners in Education



degussa.

PVOC

Pleasant Valley Opportunity Club

Dr. Louis Buckalew
& Family



Thoughts from the Director

"The future will belong to the nature-smart—those individuals, families, businesses, and political leaders who develop a deeper understanding of the transformative power of the natural world and who balance the virtual with the real. The more high-tech we become, the more nature we need."
- Richard Louv



If I were to tell you to "take a hike" you may be offended, but in the world of nature this would be a good prescription for your health. In today's world of technology, social media, and reality shows, our children are removed from the natural world. According to environmental author, Richard Louv, we have a generation of children that have developed "nature deficit disorder" and the treatment for that is a hike in the woods. At the Environmental Studies Center our mission is to foster environmental awareness and responsibility by giving children opportunities through environmental education and stewardship that will help them develop skills to contribute responsibly in a global community. We know that the forest is the real reality and a natural stress reliever. We hope that you will take advantage of the events and programs we offer so that you and your family can benefit from a walk in the woods.

"We need the tonic of the wilderness...we can never have enough nature..." Henry David Thoreau

Richard Louv is a journalist and the author of several books, including, "Last Child in the Woods." He will be the keynote speaker for the National Marine Educators Conference to be held in July this year in Mobile at Spring Hill College. The speaking event will take place at the Saenger on Monday, July 22, 2013. There are tickets available for the general public. Please go to this website for more information. <http://nmea.disl.org/rlouv.html>

Patients Received in 2011

BIRDS

Common Name	Total # Rec'd
American Coot	3
American Crow	2
American Goldfinch	2
American Robin	1
American White Ibis	1
American White Pelican	1
American Woodcock	1
Anhinga	1
Barn Swallow	3
Barred Owl	10
Belted Kingfisher	1
Black Skimmer	1
Black Tern	1
Blue Jay	26
Broad-winged Hawk	5
Brown Pelican	30
Brown Thrasher	17
Brown-headed Cowbird	2
Brown-headed Nuthatch	4
Canada Goose	1
Carolina Chickadee	2
Carolina Wren	15
Cedar Waxwing	2
Chimney Swift	19
Chipping Sparrow	1
Chuck-wills-widow	4
Common Grackle	5
Common Ground Dove	1
Common Loon	6
Common Nighthawk	2
Common Yellowthroat	2
Cooper's Hawk	11
Double-crested Cormorant	1
Downy Woodpecker	3
Eastern Bluebird	2
Eastern Screech Owl	6
Forster's Tern	1
Great Blue Heron	8
Great Crested Flycatcher	1
Great Horned Owl	7
Green Heron	2
Grey Catbird	3
Herring Gull	3
House Finch	11
Laughing Gull	22
Least Sandpiper	1
Lesser Scaup	1
Loggerhead Shrike	2
Mallard	4
Mississippi Kite	7
Mourning Dove	32
Northern Cardinal	24
Northern Flicker	1
Northern Mockingbird	38
Osprey	5
Pied-billed Grebe	1

Common Name

Pileated Woodpecker	2
Prothonotary Warbler	2
Red-bellied Woodpecker	13
Red-breasted Merganser	1
Red-headed Woodpecker	5
Red-shouldered Hawk	2
Red-tailed Hawk	11
Red-winged Blackbird	2
Rough-winged swallow	2
Royal Tern	5
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1
Sooty Tern	1
Sora	2
Summer Tanager	2
Swallow-tailed Kite	1
Tufted Titmouse	3
Turkey Vulture	1
Virginia Rail	2
White-throated Sparrow	1
White-winged Dove	4
Wood Duck	23
Wood Thrush	1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1
Yellow Crowned Night Heron	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1
Non-migratory Birds	37

Bird Total 504

MAMMALS

Common Name	Total # Rec'd
Armadillo	3
Bat	2
Cottontail Rabbit	37
Flying Squirrel	15
Fox Squirrel	3
Grey Squirrel	176
Mouse	6
Opossum	101

Mammal Total 343

REPTILES/AMPHIBIANS

Common Name	Total # Rec'd
Barking Tree Frog	1
Box Turtle	71
Cooter (Turtle)	2
Gopher Tortoise	5
Mao Turtle	1
Mud Turtle	2
Slider (Turtle)	6
Soft shell turtle	2
Snake	7
Snapping Turtle	6

Reptile Total 103

GRAND TOTAL 950

**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
and summer hours**

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 here at the Center. With 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 about 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 and success.

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