



## BEARS DEN IN WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM LANDS

A cooperative habitat restoration program that restores wetlands on marginally and non-productive croplands recently helped produce five black bear cub litters in Louisiana.

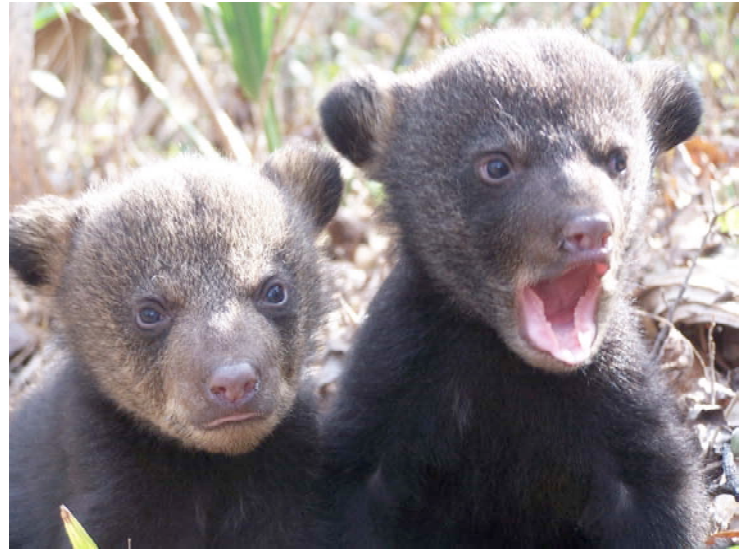
One den was located on a recently planted tract in Bayou Cocodrie National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The remaining four dens were located on privately owned properties enrolled in the Wetland Reserve Program. This valuable program added 10 black bear cubs to the threatened population of Louisiana black bears.

The Wetland Reserve Program is a voluntary easement program and since its creation in the 1990 Farm Bill, over 200,000 acres have been restored to wetlands in Louisiana. These properties now contribute to improved flood protection, carbon banking, and water quality, as well as wildlife habitat for hundreds of species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) listed the Louisiana black bear as a threatened subspecies under the Endangered Species Act in 1992. As with most rare species, habitat loss and fragmentation was the primary cause for the bear's decline.

The USFWS Recovery Plan for the Louisiana black bear requires protected forest corridors between bear populations and protection of existing habitats. Since 90 percent of lands in the historic range of the Louisiana black bear are privately owned, creating these corridors presented several challenges for bear recovery efforts. Prior to the creation of the Wetland Reserve Program in the 1990 Farm Bill, there was no large-scale mechanism in place to create the forest corridor necessary for delisting.

To directly address the recovery criteria, the Black Bear Conservation Committee, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the USFWS launched a landscape-scale approach to forest restoration in order to create the corridors necessary for bears. Large forest blocks, previously identified as high priority bird conservation



LDWF File Photo

areas, were linked by corridors to encourage bear movement between tracts.

This effort evolved the 3.5 million-acre Louisiana Black Bear Habitat Restoration and Planning Maps (HRPM). The HRPM, reaching from the Arkansas/Louisiana border to the Gulf of Mexico, established three levels of conservation based on where bear populations are currently located and how bears move through the landscape. Priority zones and a system for awarding additional points to properties competing for the Wetland Reserve Program and other conservation programs were established by the HRPM.

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### LDWF Administration

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## LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES ARTIFICIAL REEF PROGRAM COORDINATOR PASSES AWAY

**R**ichard Kasprzak, long time coordinator of the Louisiana Artificial Reef Program for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, passed away May 27, 2007.

He was an expert fish biologist that specialized in reef fisheries and artificial reef development. Groups from around the world sought his input and guidance on artificial reef issues and he was invited to participate in many national and international reef

forums. He had been in charge of implementation of the reef program for the state since its inception. Under his guidance, the program accepted over 150 obsolete oil and gas platforms for the benefit of saltwater anglers.

“Rick has been the Artificial Reef Program here. He will be sorely missed by all of his coworkers and the fishing public. He certainly set a great program in motion that we intend to carry on for the future.” said

LDWF Deputy Assistant Secretary John Roussel.

Visitation was scheduled for noon on Friday, June 1, followed by memorial services at 1 pm, both at Rabenhorst East Funeral Home, 11000 Florida Blvd., Baton Rouge.

*For more information, contact Karen Foote at 225-765-2384 or [kfoote@wlf.louisiana.gov](mailto:kfoote@wlf.louisiana.gov).*

## BEARS DEN IN WRP - continued from page 1

“The corridor was created with the expectation bears would use it as a travel route from one large forest tract to another,” said Maria Davidson, LDWF large carnivore program manager. “It was unexpected that bears would den and successfully produce cubs in these young forests. These litters represent the success of this cooperative habitat restoration plan.”

The first bear litter documented in Wetland Reserve Program lands was found in 2004 adjacent to Tensas River NWR in northeast Louisiana. Two additional litters were discovered in 2006, and two more in 2007. All dens were located within the high priority areas identified in the HRP.

Historically, bear densities in the region were highest in bottomland hardwood forests of the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley (LMAV). Because of land drainage and clearing of bottomland hardwoods for agriculture in the LMAV, the original 24 million acres of these forests was reduced to less than 5 million acres by 1980. Unfortunately, many of these tracts are too wet for agriculture and considered marginal or totally non-productive as cropland.

Although the amount of bottomland hardwood loss has stabilized since the early 1990s, restoration of this habitat

is still crucial for bear recovery due to the highly fragmented nature of the remaining forests. Presently, 500-700 bears can be found in several relatively isolated breeding populations in the Tensas and Atchafalaya River Basins in Louisiana.

## CLOSED SEASON FROGGERS CITED IN ST LANDRY PARISH

LDWF Enforcement Division agents cited Brady L. Chautin, 26, and David M. Turner Jr., 23, both of Arnaudville, and Ross J. Fredrick, 25, of Breaux Bridge on May 4 for alleged closed season frogging violations in St. Landry Parish.

Agents responded to a complaint near Arnaudville and stopped the three men as they exited a crawfish pond. The three men were found in possession of nine frogs. The season for frogging is closed during the months of April and May.

If convicted, the penalty for frogging during a closed season carries a fine up to \$500, or jail time not more than 90 days, or both plus court costs. All the frogs were seized and released back to the wild. Agents participating in this case were Sgt. Travis Huval and Agent Lance Devillier.



## 2008 DUCK STAMP TO FEATURE GOLDEN RETRIEVER

**L**DWF has announced that the golden retriever will be featured in the "Retrievers Save Game" series for the 2008 Louisiana Waterfowl Conservation Stamp, or Louisiana duck stamp competition.

The golden retriever must be prominent in the design and each entry must also include live waterfowl selected by the artist. Artists may also choose to include harvested waterfowl, duck decoys, hunting scenes and other backgrounds along with wetland habitats. After 16 years of featuring waterfowl, the program switched to the retriever's series three years ago, because all of the popular waterfowl species had already been used.

"Instead of repeating one of the previously used ducks or geese, we decided on this new approach," Robert Helm, LDWF waterfowl program manager, said. "We were encouraged by last year's participation in the new retriever series and look forward to additional entries this year."

Golden retrievers are a rather recent breed, developed in Britain in the late 1800's. Originally termed yellow retrievers, early breeders used water spaniels, Newfoundlands and Irish setters in the development of the original goldens. The initial vision for the golden retrievers was for a dog that would have great enthusiasm for retrieving waterfowl. Over time the golden has become a popular family pet, show dog, a guide dog for the disabled and continues as a hunting companion. Early golden retrievers were generally darker in color, but today range from cream to dark golden. They are known for their beauty and are the most glamorous of the retrievers.

"Retrievers are very popular among Louisiana sportsmen and we think that some people who might not be attracted to the more traditional duck stamp art might consider purchasing a print featuring a dog," Helm said.

The Louisiana Legislature authorized the Louisiana Waterfowl Conservation Stamp program in 1988. The program was created to generate revenues for conservation and enhancement of waterfowl populations and habitats in Louisiana. During the last 19 years, more than \$9 million has been generated for wetland conservation with approximately \$5 million spent on land acquisition. The Louisiana Waterfowl Program, a cooperative endeavor



LDWF File Photo

*This chocolate lab, painted by Lafayette's own Tony Bernard, won last year's Duck Stamp Competition.*

between LDWF, DU and the Federal Natural Resources Conservation Service has also benefited private lands.

Entries for the competition will be accepted from Oct. 15 to Oct. 19. To enter, an artist must submit an original, unpublished work of art, along with a signed and notarized artist's agreement and a \$50 entry fee. Entries should be addressed to Robert Helm, Louisiana Waterfowl Conservation Stamp Program, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, or P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898.

Judging for the art competition will be based on the following criteria:

1. Accuracy of form, size, proportion, color and posture.
2. Level and accuracy of detail in all aspects of the anatomy of both the retriever and waterfowl.
3. Appropriateness, accuracy and detail in depiction of the habitat.
4. Attractiveness and creativity in composition, subject, background and lighting.
5. Suitability for reproduction as stamps and prints.

A panel of judges with experience in waterfowl biology and/or artistic method will select the winning design. Judging will take place on Oct. 24, at LDWF headquarters in Baton Rouge.

The competition is open to all artists 18 years of age and older. Employees of LDWF and members of their immediate families are ineligible.



## L.D.W.F. ALLOWS RECREATIONAL FISHING FOR PADDLEFISH

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) has announced that on May 20, 2007, it will once again be legal to recreationally harvest paddlefish, sometimes referred to as spoonbill catfish, from many of Louisiana's waters.

Similar to a catfish, the spoonbill has no scales. However, it is easily distinguishable by its rostrum, the paddle that makes up the first third of its body. Some anglers claim the flesh of paddlefish is a delicacy, while others question its palatability.

The paddlefish has been protected from both sport and commercial harvest since 1992 to protect it from over harvest. At that time, LDWF had little information on the population status. Since 1992, the department has investigated its numbers and established artificial spawning techniques.

"We feel the limited harvest of paddlefish, one that does not include the taking of mature females, will provide anglers with an opportunity to harvest a unique fish," said LDWF Inland Fisheries Administrator Gary Tilyou.

Properly licensed recreational fishermen using legal recreational gear may take paddlefish. For a list of legal gear types please refer to the department's 2007 Recreational Fishing Regulations pamphlet or to our Web site at [www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov). No person shall take or possess paddlefish in violation of any of the following provisions:

- a. Area - The taking or possession of paddlefish is closed in all saltwater areas of the state and in border waters shared with Texas.
- b. All possessed paddlefish must be dead. The possession or transportation of live paddlefish is prohibited.
- c. All paddlefish possessed on the waters of the state shall be maintained intact.
- d. No persons shall possess paddlefish eggs on the waters of the state which are not fully attached to the fish.
- e. The daily take and possession limit of paddlefish is two per person.

f. Maximum size limit - All paddlefish greater than 30 inches (lower jaw fork length) must be returned to the water immediately. Lower jaw fork length is the distance from the tip of the lower jaw to the mid-line of the caudal fin. For a picture depicting this, please refer to the LDWF fishing pamphlet.

The commercial take and possession of paddlefish will remain prohibited. No person shall purchase, sell, barter, exchange or trade or attempt to purchase, sell, barter or trade paddlefish, their eggs or parts thereof.

*For more information, contact Gary Tilyou, Administrator, Inland Fisheries Division at 225-765-2331 or [gtilyou@wlf.louisiana.gov](mailto:gtilyou@wlf.louisiana.gov).*

## TWO ST. BERNARD MEN CITED FOR OYSTER VIOLATIONS

LDWF Enforcement Division agents cited two St. Bernard men on May 14 for alleged oyster violations near Pumpkin Lake in St. Bernard Parish. James Menesses, 38, and Jose Arreola, 39, were cited for taking oysters from unleased state water bottoms.

Responding to complaints in lower St. Bernard Parish, agents saw the vessel dredging for oysters on unleased water bottoms. The area in question contains private leases and unleased state water bottoms.

Utilizing LDWF's global positioning satellite equipment, agents marked the location before boarding the vessels. The location was proven to be on unleased state water bottoms, where oyster harvesting is illegal. Agents seized and returned two sacks of oysters to the water and placed two oyster dredges and the boat being used under a department seizure order.

The penalty for unlawfully taking oysters from state water bottoms is a fine up to \$750, imprisonment for not more than 120 days, or both, plus courts costs.

