



## Special Activities

- Public Lectures
- Annual Open House
- Summer Courses

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# Tidings

*A publication of the Florida State University Coastal & Marine Laboratory*

## Stranded Sperm Whale's Skull Donated to the Laboratory

The skull of a sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) that stranded in the Florida Keys now rests at the FSU Coastal and Marine Laboratory (FSUCML), thanks to Dr. Doug Nowacek (FSU Dept. Oceanography) and Dr. Blair Mase (National Marine Fisheries Service S. E. Region Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program).



The large (15 M) whale was quite old and in such poor health that it could not be saved. "The recovery of this particular whale," said Mase, "was a challenge logistically resulting in very little scientific data being collected. Thus, in the end it's wonderful to see that this whale's skeletal remains will contribute towards science and education at FSU."

Male sperm whales typically reach 18 m, while females reach 12.5 m. The sperm whale's head is about one third of the whale's total length. The lower jaw, expected to arrive in the next few weeks, bears relatively large conical teeth that are used in the capture of prey.

## Plans Underway for Open House 2007

Plans for the April 21, 2007 Open House are already well underway, thanks to a generous grant from the Franklin County Tourist Development Council and the concerted efforts of FSU Department of Biological Science's Saturday at the Sea Program Staff, Barbara Shoplock and Bob Lutz, and FSUCML's own Maranda Marxsen and Sharon Thoman (see Staff Highlights). Based on the success of the 2006 Open House, with attendance up from 1,200 in 2004 to over 3,500, the intent is to follow a similar format, with a scavenger hunt for the kids, FSU Faculty displaying their research wares and giving talks, and participation of local agencies and organizations such as the National Estuarine Research Reserve and Gulf Specimens Laboratory.

The whale skull will certainly draw a crowd, as well.



To make accommodations to participate in the Open House due to a disability, contact Sharon Thoman (sthoman@mailer.fsu.edu). Requests must be received at least five working days before the Open House.

## Message from the Director

The FSUCML is off like a shot, focused on research, education and outreach related to the ecology and physical processes of the NE Gulf of Mexico ecosystem. We owe it all to Provost Larry Abele and Vice President for Research Kirby Kemper.



Research at the FSUCML ranges from the ecology and behavior of reef fishes, to the use of geochemical isotopes to trace groundwater discharge, to the echolocation of dolphins and whales. The addition of four resident research faculty and several post docs will broaden the array considerably. Last summer we hosted five academic courses, including Field Methods in Underwater Archaeology, Science Inquiry for Teachers, North Florida Ecosystems, Marine Vertebrates, and Marine Invertebrates. We also added a new 15 passenger van to the fleet, allowing us to provide the shuttle service from campus to the laboratory.

I am thrilled to be the on-site director of this lab. With the dedicated, high energy staff of the FSUCML focused on our mission, we are sure to be a resounding success.

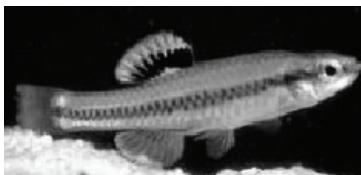
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## ... And from the Facilities Manager

The FSUCML facilities and grounds have been a work in progress this past year. Some of the improvements you will readily notice and some you will not. The addition of native landscaping has greatly enhanced the natural beauty of the laboratory and we hope to be adding more in the future. We have been working very hard to freshen up the housing, too. The teaching labs have been given a good cleaning, and the floors have all been repaired and refinished. Our goal is to continue repair while upgrading the lab with better and—when possible—GREENER material. We are also working very hard to be more ENERGY conscious with our daily operations. This is an evolving project for the lab. It's an exciting time to me to be at FSUCML! Come on down. We'd be glad to show you around. I welcome suggestions and ideas on how we can improve the facilities and user friendly services we offer. Contact me, Dennis Tinsley, 850.697.4108 or email dtinsly@mailer.fsu.edu.

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## Lecture Series, the Second Thursday of Each Month



The FSUCML Lecture Series—featured the second Thursday of each month—started in August of 2006. Talks included (among others) *Groupers on the Edge*, *The Life & Times of the Spiny Lobster*, *Bottle-nosed Dolphins of the Big Bend*, *Small Fish in Big Streams*, and *Trees and Bees of the Florida Panhandle*.

Mark these dates for the Spring 2007 Lecture Series:

- March - Felicia Coleman - *Red Grouper: Digging Fools on the Forty Fathom Break*.
- April —Todd Engstrom—*The Ivory-Billed Woodpecker, The Spirit of an Ancient Forest*.
- May— Chris Koenig *The Ivory Tree Coral : An Endangered Habitat*.
- June - William Herrnkind –*The Ultimate Shell Game: How Conchs, Clams, and Crabs Control Local Marine Biodiversity*

Updates can be found here: <http://www.marinelab.fsu.edu/outreach.html#lecture>

## Staff Highlights: The Familiar and the New

The early months of 2006 were certainly changing times for the FSUCML family. We thank for their dedicated service all of those who have moved on, including Director Rich Iverson, Associate Director John Hitron, Secretaries Carolyn Fisher and Pat Jackson, Business Manager Becky Culp, ADP Coordinator Dr. Dan Marelli, and Program Assistant Michael Pomeroy. Everyone else, including Dennis Tinsley (now Facilities Manager), Steve Wilson (Boat Captain), Engineers Bobby Henderson and Mark Daniels, and Custodian Linda Messer, all pitched in on every aspect of pushing and pulling the laboratory forward, alternately serving as painters, groundskeepers, and receptionists for several months. Joel Valdez (Academic Diving Program) and Randy Pierce (PEN Instructor) have kept ADP running smoothly.

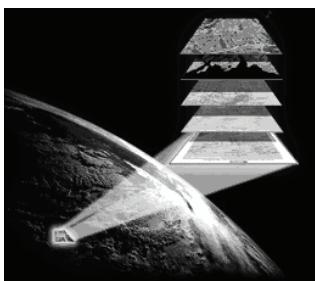
Spring brought new crew members, with the addition of Dama Murphy (Business Manager), Maranda Marxsen (Departmental Secretary), and Frank Lindamood (Carpenter and Electrician)—just in time to help plan and pull off the largest Open House the lab has ever had (see story on Open House). By September, the staff was joined by Sharon Thoman (Receptionist) and Mike Lavender (Alternate Boat Captain and Interim University Diving Safety Officer). Please make a point of stopping in to meet the new staff members and reacquaint yourself with old friends.



Left to Right:  
Frank, Dama, Maranda, Mark, Dennis, Felicia Mike, Linda, and Sharon  
(Bobby is fishing)

## Academic Courses and Non-Credit Workshops

FSUCML is hosting several academic courses and workshops this spring and summer. The academic courses include *Northwest Florida Ecosystems* (Dept. Oceanography), and *Marine Invertebrate Ecology* and *Inquiry in Marine Ecology for Teachers* (Dept. Biological Science).



New this year are two non-credit workshops, one for natural resource professionals, *Introduction to Geographic Information Systems for Coastal and Marine Applications*, and one for the layman naturalist, *The Edge of the Sea Experience*. Details about all of these courses can be found on the website.  
<http://www.marinelab.fsu.edu/education.html>.





## BECOME A FRIEND OF THE FSUCML

### You Make the Difference!

As a Friend of the FSUCML, you join a dedicated group of people interested in our mission to understand the ecology and physical processes responsible for making this region so biologically diverse and pristine. You can help us by making a private tax deductible gift. Gifts of any amount are important, whether it's for operating funds or to establish scholarships for undergraduate and graduate research.

*YES, I WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A FRIEND OF THE FSUCML.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount \_\_\_\_\_.

### Contributions can be made to the FSUCML General Fund

Our current wish list:

- Interpretive signs for whale skull
- Closed Seawater System
- Floating Docks
- Dorm Furnishings
- Video conferencing system
- Research Scholarships for undergrads and grads
- Grad Student Housing



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*Tidings*, a publication of the FSU Coastal & Marine Laboratory, is available in alternative format by contacting Sharon Thoman at the FSUCML (email [sthoman@mailer.fsu.edu](mailto:sthoman@mailer.fsu.edu)). This publication is printed on recycled paper.