

THE Sea Nopsis

VOLUNTEER NEWS

MARCH 2007

Hooded Merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus* (*Mergus cucullatus*)

The smallest of our mergansers, Hoodeds are most often seen along rivers and in estuaries during the fall and winter. They are usually found in pairs or in flocks of up to a dozen; when startled, they are among the fastest-flying of our ducks. Males perform a beautiful courtship display and, once mated, swim energetically around the female in further ritual displays. Hoodeds feed chiefly on small fish, which they pursue in long, rapid, underwater dives, but also take small frogs, newts, tadpoles, and aquatic insects.

Description

Family: Anatidae, Ducks and Geese view all from this family 16-19" (41-48 cm). A small duck with a slender pointed bill. Male has white, fan-shaped, black-bordered crest, blackish body with dull rusty flanks, and white breast with 2 black stripes down side. Female is dull gray-brown, with warmer brown head and crest. Both sexes show white wing patch in flight.

Adult male:

- * Yellow eye
- * Black head and back
- * Large white patch in the center of the crest
- * White breast and belly
- * Black and white stripes at forward portion of reddish flanks
- * Dark tail
- * Inner half of upperwings whitish, bordered by 2 dark bars
- * Alternate plumage worn from fall through early summer
- * Male in basic eclipse plumage similar to adult female

Adult female:

- * Brown eye
- * Cold gray-brown head, neck, flanks, back, and upperwings with paler breast
- * Faint reddish tinge to crest
- * White belly

Cool Facts

- * The Hooded Merganser is the second-smallest of the six living species of mergansers (only the Smew of Eurasia is smaller) and is the only one restricted to North America.
- * Although up to 44 Common Merganser eggs have been found in one nest, one female probably does not lay more than about 13. Larger clutches result when more than one female lays eggs in a nest.
- * The Hooded Merganser finds its prey underwater by sight. The merganser can actually change the refractive properties of its eyes to enhance its underwater vision. In addition, the nictating membrane (third eyelid) is very transparent and probably acts to protect the eye during



Male Hooded Merganser

swimming, just like a pair of goggles.

Summer Range

Breeds from central British Columbia southward to coastal Oregon and western Montana. Also from eastern Saskatchewan and eastern Dakotas eastward to Atlantic Coast northward to Nova Scotia, southward to Louisiana and northern Florida.

Winter Range

Winters from southeastern Alaska to southern California, and Arizona. Also from southeastern Minnesota, southern Ontario, and central Maine southward to Gulf Coast and Florida.

Habitat

- * Breeds in forested wetlands, on wooded ponds, lakes, and rivers; winters in coastal marshes and inlets.
- * In migration and in winter found in wider range of open waters, along coasts, and in shallower waters than other mergansers.

Food

Fish, aquatic insects, and crustaceans (especially crayfish). Dives underwater to catch prey.

Sources used to construct this page:

Dugger, B. D., K. M. Dugger, and L. H. Fredrickson. 1994. Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 98 (A. Poole, and F. Gill, eds.). The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA, and The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.



Volunteer Openings

Penguin Promenade Volunteers needed

We are attempting to move the Penguin Promenade to the reef window but need help with crowd control and help bringing the birds in. We need volunteers to help out on a regular basis. We would need 2 people twice a day for about an hour each time. If you can help out, please contact Skip Uricchio duricchio@flaquarium.org

Admissions volunteers needed everyday to meet and greet our guest. We especially need help on weekends and during spring break. If you can help out, please contact volunteer services cmelton@flaquarium.org or (813) 273-4121.

Quarantine - any & all mornings starting at 7:30.

Reef Food Prep - Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri & Sat. mornings

Snorkle the Beach - any day

Horticulture - Water EAS, Two Days a week 7-noon.

Horticulture Assistant – volunteer needed to assist with watering and various tasks in the Horticulture department mornings one or two days a week. Can be flexible days.

If you're interested in these openings, please complete a Husbandry Application in the lounge, and submit it to Volunteer Services. Don't forget, you must write down the specific title and date of the position you're applying for. If you are applying for more than one position, please complete an application for each position. Allow two weeks to be contacted. If not, call the volunteer office and we will check the status for you.

Announcements

Spring Break Members Only Night

Monday, March 19, 2007, 6:00 to 9:00 pm - Volunteers needed from 5:00 to 10:00 pm

Volunteer duties include:

- Crowd control (We'll probably have 1,000+ guests)
- Greeting at main entrance and exit
- Assisting with crafts tables
- Assisting with behind the scenes tours, touch tanks, smart carts, etc, per Jason Minnear

Food and beverages for the volunteers will be provided starting at 4:30 pm in Classroom B.

Also note...the new downstairs lobby touch tank may be open in time for this event, but we're not advertising it yet in case it's not ready for the public by that date. In the event it is open, we'll need some additional crowd control help...I think all of the members will rush to see it as this is the first time they'll have a chance. Plus, Explore A Shore water components will be on, weather permitting, until dusk.

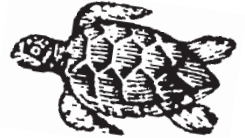
Please contact Jason Minnear (813) 273-4000, ext. 4227 email jminnear@flaquarium.org or volunteer services cmelton@flaquarium.org. There is also a signup sheet on the volunteer bulletin board above the sign in screen.

Dragon Boat Races

We need volunteers for our fourth annual **Dragon Boat Race on Saturday, April 28th**. We have lots of positions available including event set-up and clean-up, registering teams, answering guest's questions, selling merchandise, working on the boat docks, etc. You'll have fun and help us raise money for two non-profit organizations, The Florida Aquarium and Moffitt Cancer Center. Forms are in the volunteer lounge. Return the completed form to Katie Kearney.

Dragon Boat Race Paddlers needed

We need a few more paddlers for the **Dragon Boat Races - Saturday, April 28, 2007**. Please contact Kathy Conlon at (813) 273-4060 email kconlon@flaquarium.org if you are interested in participating on the Aquarium's team. The Team is comprised of 20 paddlers and 5 alternate paddlers, drummer and steersperson, so we still need a few more good men and women! Dragon Boats participation requires a commitment of three practices and a full Saturday on race day, so it is not a great deal of time, it is a lot of fun, and you're rowing for a great cause – The Florida Aquarium!
Practice Days and Times as follows: April 4, 11 and 18 – 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Let's meet in front of the Aquarium at 5:00 on those days.



Happy February Birthdays To...

Molly Guilfoyle.....	2	Roy Byers	9	Ed Chittenden	30
Wendy Shawver	3	Ben Jones.....	13	John Oaks	31
Brandy Knowles	4	Carol Gray.....	17	Mark Platau.....	31
Lauren Emeigh	4	Justin Smith	19		
Jackie Guzy	8	Ken Bernhardt.....	20		
Margo Schmidt.....	8	Michele Ladner.....	25		

If you have a birthday in September, be sure to stop by the volunteer office for a special gift.





From the Diver's Deck...

from Mike Terrell, the dive guy

IMPORTANT CHANGE

In the past, some of you have mentioned that getting here by 5PM for the evening dive shift was a stretch because of evening rush-hour traffic. Some of you have also mentioned that Wed and Thursday evenings didn't work well in your schedule and you'd like another evening shift to dive. Well, we have heard and we will provide! Starting on Tuesday Feb 20th, we will have a new evening dive schedule. We will have THREE evening dive shifts (Tues, Wed & Thurs) and they will all start at 5:30PM and run until 7:30PM. If you're one of the evening regulars and you're used to getting here by 5PM, know that the official dive briefing will be at 5:30PM sharp. You're welcome to come early, set up and socialize until then. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask.

A NEW FAMILIAR FACE

Jim Iglar has now taken up the reins of the evening dive shifts. He will be the Dive Supervisor for the Tues, Wed and Thurs 5:30 PM dives.

PHONE PROBLEMS

As some of you have found out, we are experiencing technical difficulties with our phone system. Since both Casey Coy and I have relocated our work spaces to Area D, the phone system had to be changed. Here's what we know so far:

- * If you want to reach Casey, his # is 813-367-4019. That line goes directly to him and only him. Do not leave messages for me (Mike T) or dive shift requests on that line.
- * If you want to reach me (Mike T), my number is 813-273-4000 extension 4248. That line goes directly to me and only me.

Here's what is still up in the air:

* The new dive office phone number is 813-273-4000 extension 4223. This is the number you will call to talk to Jason Minnear, Jim Iglar and to schedule a dive. However, we are still having problems accessing the voice mail boxes. Please DO NOT leave dive requests on this line yet. I can't guarantee that we'll get your message. Once the bugs have been worked out, we'll let you know when it's safe to use it.

LITTLE SALT SPRING EXHIBIT

For those of you that are interested in the work we've done with the University of Miami at Little Salt Spring, many of the artifacts that have been recovered will be on display at the North Port Library. The opening of the display is Wed, Feb 28 from 5:30 PM – 8:00 PM. The artifacts will remain on display at the library the entire month of March.

FAV'S DIVE TRIP - SOLD OUT!!!!

Get your name on the WAITING LIST and keep your fingers crossed!

Join us aboard the Ultimate Getaway as we dive the beautiful reefs and awesome waters of the Dry Tortugas. We depart Thursday May 31st 2007 returning on June 3rd 2007 from Ft. Myers. Cost will be a humble \$610 - a bit extra for Nitrox. Up to 6 or 7 dives a day including night dives! \$200 per person deposit is due ASAP, with balance due May 1st 2007. Make checks out to Tina Lewis, and send them to Tina at 5550 Atlantic Ave N, St. Petersburg 33703 Visit the website www.ultimategetaway.net for photos and more info.



To schedule a dive email Diveschedule@flaquarium.org or call (813) 367-4019.

Hope to see you all soon.

WHAT'S NEW

from Kristine Sanchez Dive Interpreter

There is some new coral in the Planktivores exhibit down in Sea hunt area. The newest addition is Red Chili Coral, *Nephtyogorgiasp.* It is the red coral that is underneath the rocks because it is actually hiding from the light!! The reason for that, is because the Red Chili Coral is a non-photosynthetic coral. Go check it out!!!

Due to some immediate exhibit repair needs, we will be taking the Caribbean Coral tank (next to

Seadragons, right across the big panoramic window) down beginning on Sunday. The entire rock structure will need to be rebuilt. The coral will be relocated to a holding tank for the repair. Once we have the exhibit down, we will assess timeline for repairs and communicate that. Just don't forget that there are still many other places in the aquarium for guests to see live coral.



Volunteer Services
701 Channelside Drive
Tampa, FL 33602
(813) 273-4121

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Visit our volunteer website at
www.volunteer.flaquarium.org

Community Event

Membership and Education need your help! We are participating in the Apollo Beach Manatee Arts Festival on March 10 and 11. We will be promoting the Aquarium, its mission and programs. On Saturday shifts are 9 AM - 1 PM and 1 PM - 5 PM, volunteers will be working along side Education staff. On Sunday, shifts are 10 AM - 1 PM and 1 PM - 4 PM, volunteers will be working along side Membership staff. We are looking for at least 2 volunteers per shift so that each person can take a break and also have a chance to check out the festival. If you can join us please contact David Bryant via email or phone at dbryant@flaquarium.org or (813) 273-4000 ext. 4040. OR add your name and phone number to the sign up sheet posted on the board in the Volunteer Lounge. We will contact you prior to event to give you necessary details.

Evening Tide Talks

Join us for the next Evening Tide Talks on March 14. Craig Watson will be presenting "**Steamy Waters: The Fascinating World of Fish Sex**". With over 28,500 species, fish are the most abundant and diverse vertebrates on the plane. Within this diversity is an amazing variation of reproductive strategies. As an aquaculture professional, Craig is a "fish sex" expert and will introduce us to fascinating methods that fish have developed to insure the survival of their offspring.

There is a complimentary reception at 5:45pm, featured presentation 6:15pm.

**For more information and to RSVP
call 813-273-4568.**

Curious about an animal or area in the Aquarium? Do you have news you'd like to share with other volunteers? Maybe you have an interesting story about volunteering. Send it to us! We'll try to put it in the newsletter.