

# Sarasota Waters

BOB ARDREN

the longest cold spell in recent memory and all of the white pelicans signal that winter is here. You can spot the pelicans in the Buttonwood area on Longboat Key, according to Annie Walker, and I spotted some on "The Cove" off the village of Cortez.

Baitman at New Pass Bait Shop tells me he sometimes sees a small flock of white pelicans on the bay (the area where the Ski-a-Rees do their thing) and they occasionally wander into New Pass. I haven't shown up there so far this year.

## Local fish

Is there a good argument to eat local fish? Try this. Roughy has been a trendy fish in recent years, especially on restaurant menus. Small, white, flavored filets make it easy to sell.

Scientists have recently discovered the less than long orange roughy that only dwells on flats a mile deep off New Zealand can live to be 30 years old. They reach sexual maturity sometime in the 1930s.

Overfishing, basically for the American market according to *The New York Times*, has put the roughy population into collapse. We've been eating roughy for so long we basically know nothing about — and we've been eating roughy's not the only one.

These days, there are all the arguments about commercial fishers being pushed farther and farther out and their high technology enabling them to harvest "creatures of the deep." But the rush to the market this deep-sea food is beginning to change the ecology of the deep-water, sunless regions. More than half the planet, scientists worry, could give us pause — even if casually eating our old fish doesn't.

Well, if it helps any, mothers say it'll stunt growth and maybe make you go blind. Serious grouper, snapper, trout and pompano, you can get them, are simply superb too.

## Free Benny

Marine reports that Benny, the young bottlenose dolphin airlifted here in October, is doing well. He also reports Benny has a long way to go before



Placing reef balls in the gulf.

he can be released back into the Atlantic Ocean.

"We're pleased to see progress, in that he's been eating more food, increased his swimming and even demonstrating limited diving activity," reports Jay Gorzelany, head of Mote's Marine Mammal Stranding team.

Even though Benny was brought to Mote by National Marine Fisheries officials, there aren't any federal funds to pay for his care. That means some money is needed.

Donations to cover the cost of Benny's medicines are about depleted. If Mote is to be successful in returning Benny to the wild, it's going to take a strong financial commitment from the community, according to Gorzelany.

So if you've got a few dollars left over from Christmas and want to start the new year with a good deed, call Mote at 388-4441 and make a pledge.

## Are manatees lost?

More than 10 percent of Florida's manatee population died in the first 11 months of 1995. That's 198 of an estimated 1,800 creatures and the second-worst year on record.

In 1990 a killing freeze deep into south Florida pushed the total to 206. But there was no killing frost last year. Sure, speeding boats claimed their share of the state's official marine mammal, but even those boats aren't the manatees' biggest problem.

Patti Thompson, a biologist for the Save The Manatee Club in Maitland, has finally come right out and said what many of us have suspected for a long time.

That is, we're killing manatees through development.

"The biggest long-term problem is the loss of habitat with rapid waterfront development," she says. Loss of habitat means loss of food supply, forcing the manatees into open waters where they are more likely to come in contact with speeding boats. "Florida's inability to say no to development — in the long run — is what is going to wipe out this species," Thompson adds.

## Seeing what's left

Perhaps you have some guests who need entertaining, or maybe you're just plain curious. Either way, join Peggy Williams of the American Littoral Society on a wading tour in Sarasota Bay. The next tour wades away from the Ringling Causeway at Bird Key Friday at 8 a.m. Call Peggy at 355-2291 for more information and to sign up. Cost is \$3 to society members and \$5 for non-members.

If you're willing to do a little work for our bay, here's a chance to see someplace interesting up close. Help the Littoral Society remove Australian pines from a barrier beach and the upland of Palmer Point. Jan. 6 and the first Saturday of each upcoming month from 8:30 until noon is the work-party schedule. Call John Sarkozy for details at 966-7309.

## New fishing reefs down

Michael Solum at the county's Coastal Zone Division operation says 160 reef balls were placed on the M-17 reef site during early December. Looking kinda like whiffle balls made of concrete, reef balls are probably the best idea yet for creating fishing reefs.

Mike says the reef balls were placed around the site's center of Loran 14124.5 / 44364.6 and GPS 27 degrees 02.62' / 82 degrees 38.80'. That's 10.5 nautical miles west of the Venice Inlet.

This project was funded by saltwater fishing license revenues and a grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. If you can get there, this should be a new fishing hot spot. Let me know what you find.

## Fishing report

Front after front on top of cold weather made gulf fishing tough recently, with most fishers preferring to stay inside prowling canals and areas out of the wind.

Capt. Mark Schindell calls recent weather and fishing conditions "goofy," but he's putting clients on lots of sheephead along oyster bars and on the flats. For even more fun, they're catching big ladyfish in Big Pass.

Ron the Baitman at New Pass says he's seeing "lots of fishers and not too many fish. Blue fish, sheephead, some drum and the occasional snook are about it."

Capt. Jonnie Walker, fishing out of New Pass, says he's still finding a few snook despite the cold weather, in addition to the fish Ron the Baitman mentioned earlier. "Capt. Rob Roberts caught four snook this morning," Walker reported over the weekend.

Speaking of Roberts, he has a new television fishing show on Blah TV every other Thursday evening at 8:30. Check it out on channel 36 and you'll surely learn something new. We all do.

Hart's Landing reports slow action, with only occasional redfish off the Saprito Pier.

Capt. Mark Grassett says he's finding trout to 18 inches along the ICW from Point Crisp to Blackburn Point. In addition, he's finding sheephead, snook and jacks in canals and around the docks of Siesta Key.

**CD Buyers**  
6.75%

Salle N.W.  
Maturity 01/17/11  
Callable - 1 year  
C-Insured



RICHARD A. BORES  
2250 Gulf Gate Dr.  
Sarasota, 925-4255

## Richard Jones

Individual Investors Since 1971

10 or fewer names and easy  
portfolios available upon request.

COUPON COUPON COUPON  
NESTA KEY'S BEST KEPT SECRET™

## ★★WE PAY CASH★★ FOR GOLD

Broken, scrap, used — any condition, any quantity, chains, bracelets, rings, charms, necklaces, jewelry, class rings.

**KAMAX CORP. • 359-2868**

3434 N. Tamiami Tr. Next to West One - 1 block S. of Myrtle