

Letter from the Director

2003 has been a year of dramatic events in many areas of interest to the Sea Lab "family". The DISL Foundation has continued to mature and prosper beyond all of my expectations. At the end of the year, the Foundation received substantial support from the community and it is now virtually assured of meeting the Kresge Endowment challenge grant. Perhaps of equal significance has been the active engagement with the schools of south Mobile County through the fund-raising initiative of the Halloween celebration in The Estuarium! This has brought the research faculty and graduate students into direct contact with the local school children.



Dr. George F. Crozier

The Sea Lab and the Foundation were further honored by a visit from Dr. E.O. Wilson. Dr. Wilson is an honorary member of the Board of Trustees of the DISL Foundation and came as both the Wiese Visiting Lecturer and gave the commencement address at the University of South Alabama. He has expressed great interest in the Laboratory and in returning to the area.

Through the actions of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program and the support of Alabama Power, The Nature Conservancy, and the Scenic Causeway Coalition, we are now committed to a very significant investigation of the anthropogenic impacts of altering the interface of the Mobile River Delta and the Bay itself. This project may have national implications in the areas of biodiversity, hydrologic modification, and habitat restoration. The Gulf of Mexico Program has expressed interest in continued support of the effort being led by Dr. John Valentine.

This Delta initiative has also become a part of the new Environmental Monitoring and Data Management program that developed as a consequence of our Cast-Net Data Management project carried out in concert with our Louisiana and Mississippi counterparts. The goal of this effort is to develop a Coastal Ocean Observing System that will encompass Mobile Bay and Mississippi Sound, linking the NEPs of Mobile Bay and Barataria-Terrebonne as well as the National Estuarine Research Reserves of Weeks Bay and Grand Bay.

All in all, this has been a year of great intellectual growth with new faculty in both University Programs and Discovery Hall. This bodes well for the future and I look forward to 2004.

Dr. George F. Crozier

Executive Director
Dauphin Island Sea Lab

University Programs

University Programs (UP) oversees summer undergraduate and year-round graduate (M.S. and Ph.D.) education, as well as faculty research.

Sixteen of the 22 member institutions sent students to the DISL for the 2003 Summer Program. UP delivered 590 undergraduate hours and 130 graduate hours during the summer and 417 graduate hours during the academic year.

Seven M.S. students and three Ph.D. candidates who conducted their research on campus and were advised by Sea Lab faculty received their degrees from their home institution.

For the fifth year in a row, DISL also participated in NSF's Research Experience for Undergraduates, hosting six students for twelve weeks of intensive study and fieldwork.



Marine Scientist Mike Dardeau (left) instructs students during the Technical Methods class.

Sea Lab faculty continued to produce nationally renowned publications during the reporting year, totaling 26 refereed articles; three non-refereed publications; 48 scientific presentations; and 13 public presentations.

UP research contributed \$446,228 to the Sea Lab's total extramural funding of \$2,436,681, which includes DISL research, public service, instruction, scholarships and equipment grants.



Ph.D. student Ryan Moody poses with a penguin colony in Antarctica, one of his field sites for his dissertation research on mollusks.

Discovery Hall Programs

Discovery Hall Programs (DHP) includes K-12 academic classes, teacher workshops, summer programs for middle and high school students, BayMobile (the Sea Lab's traveling classroom) and the Estuarium.

In the reporting year, DHP received several new grants for innovative marine education programs in the region. Sponsored by Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, one of the programs partners with Mississippi's J.L. Scott Marine Education Center and Aquarium to introduce teachers in both states to developments in biotechnology. The J.L. Scott Center and Mobile County's Environmental Studies Center were also partners in a grant for Enhanced Educational Efforts, funding a soft-money position at each agency to support marine education outreach for two years.

The National Science Foundation designated the Sea Lab as Alabama's Center for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence (COSEE) in 2003; as such, the Sea Lab hosted a successful workshop linking educators with research scientists for a week of lectures, field trips and dialogue. Additionally, the Sea Lab offered a workshop for informal educators with 50 participants from Alabama and Florida.

In 2003, DHP conducted field and coursework for:

Elementary School:	4,605
Middle School:	2,845
High School:	2,215
College:	278
Teachers:	230
Other:	293



DHP keeps the ocean alive for young students, offering several half-day camps for young children and their parents during the summer.

Total: 10,466 individuals



The Estuarium, the Sea Lab's public aquarium, continues to thrive. In 2003 it was Mobile's fourth most well attended tourist attraction, hosting 77,475 visitors.