

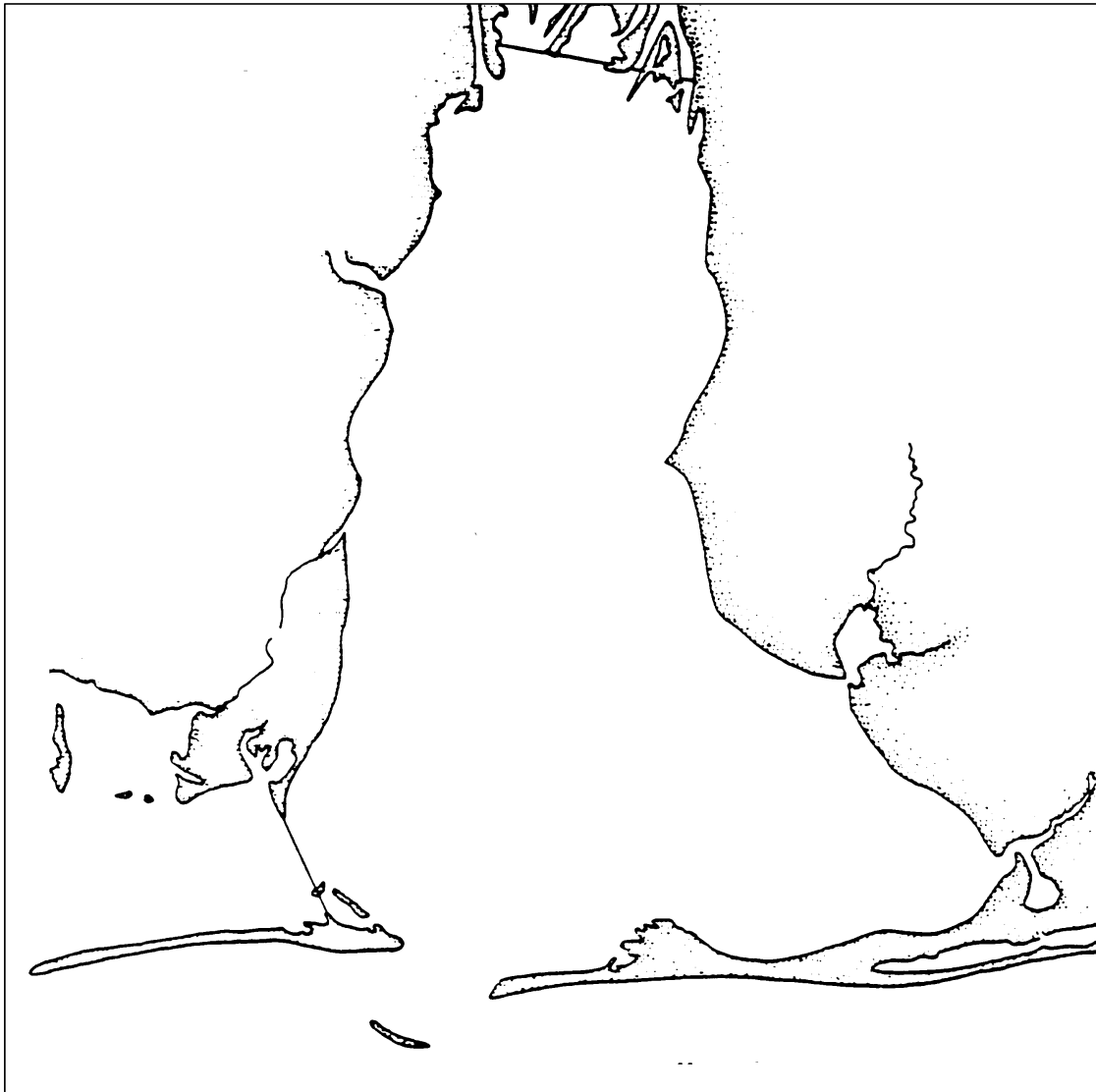
## MAP OF MOBILE BAY

To be completed *BEFORE* your visit.

*Label North, South, East, and West.*

*Label these locations around coastal Alabama: Dauphin Island, Gulf of Mexico, Mobile Bay, Ft. Morgan Peninsula, Mobile Delta*

*Label where you would find these salinities: freshest water, saltiest water, brackish water.*



# At the Alabama Aquarium

6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Activity

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The Alabama Aquarium exhibits plants, animals Alabama's coastal ecosystems. An estuary is a place where freshwater from land mixes with saltwater from an ocean. Your visit will take you from the freshwater Mobile-Tensaw River Delta to the salty Gulf of Mexico waters.

*This worksheet is divided into the galleries that you will find as you tour the aquarium. Read the panels, observe the tanks, and ask docents and staff to help you find answers.*

## Entrance

1. Mobile Bay has the \_\_\_\_\_ largest watershed in the United States.

## Mobile-Tensaw River Delta

1. At the largest tank in the Delta Gallery, you will observe a swamp scene. Swamps are dominated by trees. Name one common tree in the swamp. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name two benefits of the wetland filtration system. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What are invasive species? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Name two invasive species that have been introduced into the Southeastern U.S. \_\_\_\_\_  
What is the approximate dollar value of the damage done by invasive species?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Mobile Bay Estuary

1. Name a vertebrate and an invertebrate you found interesting on the Touch Table. What did you find interesting about each of these animals?

Vertebrate: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Invertebrate: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Find the largest tank of the Mobile Bay Gallery. The poles in this tank represent what structure? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What happens during a jubilee? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Why are sea grass meadows shrinking? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What impacts can this loss have on humans? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What can humans do to help halt this loss? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Dauphin Island

1. Below is a cross section of a barrier island. Label the following habitats:

*beach dune maritime forest salt marsh*

Label one plant or one animal that can be found in each of the above habitats.



## Northern Gulf of Mexico

1. What is the name of the heaviest *bony* fish? \_\_\_\_\_  
What is unusual about its body? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Observe the octopus. The large, bulbous *mantle* above the octopus' eyes contains what? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is sargassum? \_\_\_\_\_ How does it serve as a "mobile home?" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Look above you. What three things are carried by the pipes running throughout the Aquarium? \_\_\_\_\_ Where do the pipes deliver what they are carrying? \_\_\_\_\_

1. **ARCOS Weather Stations:**

Record these current weather conditions for the Dauphin Island station:

Air Temperature _____	Water Temperature _____
Dissolved Oxygen mg/L _____	Salinity _____

\* Don't forget to include units of measure.

Would you expect the salinity to be higher on the north side of Dauphin Island, or on the south side? \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## The Living Marsh Boardwalk

The Living Marsh Boardwalk is located outside the Alabama Aquarium. This area was once the site of a sewage-septic tank used by the Air Force. In 1993, the Dauphin Island Sea Lab removed the septic tank and rebuilt the marsh. Use the panels and audio kiosks on the boardwalk and your own observations to answer the following questions.

1. What are the two dominant plants in the salt marsh? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What animal makes a daily migration up and down these marsh plants? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Where would you find it at high tide? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What are two functions that barrier islands perform? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. As you look *east* across Mobile Bay, what large man-made structure do you see?  
\_\_\_\_\_ What type of natural resource is this  
structure extracting deep beneath the bay's surface? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is marine debris? \_\_\_\_\_  
How does eating plastic kill an animal? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Invertebrate Trail**

In the space below, make a rubbing of your favorite invertebrate from the Invertebrate Trail.