

## ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAMS



Galveston Bay Estuary Program • 281.332.9937 • gbep.tamug.tamu.edu • March 2001

### GALVESTON BAY

*Galveston Bay is a premier Texas resource. The bay provides important natural habitats for many species; it is an important transportation artery—the Port of Houston is the third largest port in the country; it provides one third of the state's commercial fishing income; and it serves as a general indicator of the health of the environment. Approximately 4 million people live and work in watershed—half the population of the state of Texas lives in the watershed and impacts the bay.*

#### FACTS ABOUT THE ESTUARY

- Seventy-five percent of the bird species in North America spend some time in Galveston Bay.
- More than 10,000 recreational boats are registered in the Galveston Bay area, the third largest concentration of recreational boats in the US.
- Over half the state's recreational fishing expenditures (valued at \$600 million annually) are related to Galveston Bay.
- The Port of Houston is the second largest in the US and eighth largest in the world in tonnage. It generates \$5.5 billion in annual revenues.
- The Houston-Gulf Coast Region accounts for almost half of the nation's basic petrochemicals manufacturing capacity and over one-third of the nation's petroleum refining.

## HEALTH OF THE ESTUARY

- Over 35,000 acres of coastal wetlands have been lost since 1960 due to subsidence, erosion, dredge and fill activities, and development.
- Some urban tributaries to the bay continue to experience low dissolved oxygen levels.
- Chlorophyll-a levels have declined to 25 percent of their 1975 values; however, populations of planktivorous fishes have increased.
- Although oyster populations are increasing, they still remain well below levels found in Galveston Bay prior to shell dredging.
- Harvestable areas on existing reefs continue to increase.
- Total suspended solids, fecal coliform, total phosphorus, and oil and grease loadings are greater from non-point sources than point sources.
- Recent risk assessments conclude that finfish and blue crabs in many parts of Galveston Bay are safe to eat except for a few areas near high urban land uses where advisories remain.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ESTUARY PROGRAM

- Testing innovative seeding techniques to reduce the cost and time involved in restoring seagrasses.
- Continue to foster coordination and communication among state and federal resource agencies for the many cross-jurisdictional initiatives.
- Leveraged some \$6 million from local state and federal partners since 1997 to restore several hundred acres of habitat in the Galveston Bay area.
- Trained over 20 teachers through the Galveston Bay Education Program. The teachers will potentially reach over 200 students.
- Sponsored Marsh Mania, a national record-breaking volunteer habitat restoration event led by the local Galveston Bay Foundation.
- Developed an integrated database to establish a systematic mechanism to determine the status and trends data of Galveston Bay health.
- Initiated a grant program to increase bay stewardship.

### *Crab Meat Stuffed Jalapenos*

|  |                        |  |
|--|------------------------|--|
| 1 lb blue crab meat, flaked                                      | 1/8 tsp cayenne pepper | Cut peppers in half lengthwise. Discard pulp and seeds and rinse carefully. In a large mixing bowl, combine remaining ingredients except breading mixture. Stuff pepper halves with crab mixture and press stuffing around pepper. Set peppers aside.<br><br>Prepare breading mixture. Place cracker meal in a flat pan. Mix milk, eggs, and salt and pepper in a separate bowl. Dip peppers in egg mixture, then in cracker meal. Repeat procedure. Deep fry at 365 degrees until golden brown. Drain on absorbent paper.<br><br>Makes 30 hors d'oeuvres. |
| 1 can (1 lb, 11 oz) jalapeno peppers                             | 1 clove garlic, minced |  |
| 2 tbsl each: finely chopped green pepper, onions and dill pickle | 1/4 cup milk           |  |
| 1/4 cup cracker meal   | Breeding Mixture       |  |
| 1 beaten egg   | 2 cups cracker meal    |  |
| 1/4 tsp salt   | 1 cup milk             |  |
| 1/4 tsp black pepper   | 2 eggs                 |  |
|  | 1/4 tsp salt           |  |
|  | 1/4 tsp pepper         |  |
|  |                        |  |