



## FEBRUARY 1, 2009: THE PHASEOUT OF 121.5 MHz BEACONS FOR SATELLITE DISTRESS ALERTING

In October 2000 the International Cospas-Sarsat Program, announced at its 25th Council Session held in London, UK that it plans to terminate satellite processing of distress signals from 121.5 and 243 MHz emergency beacons on February 1, 2009. All mariners, aviators, and individuals using emergency beacons on those frequencies will need to switch to those operating on the newer, more reliable, digital 406 MHz frequency if they want to be detected by satellites.

The decision to stop satellite processing of 121.5 / 243 MHz signals is due to problems in this frequency band which inundate search and rescue authorities with poor accuracy and numerous false alerts, adversely impacting the effectiveness of lifesaving services. Although the 406 MHz beacons cost more at the moment, they provide search and rescue agencies with more reliable and complete information to do their job more efficiently and effectively. The Cospas-Sarsat Program made the decision to terminate 121.5/243 MHz satellite alerting services, in part, in response to guidance from the

International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). These two agencies of the United Nations are responsible for regulating the safety on international transits of ships and aircraft, respectively, and handling international standards and plans for maritime and aviation search and rescue. More than 180 nations are members of IMO and ICAO.

NOAA, along with the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Air Force, and NASA (the four Federal Agencies who manage, operate, and use the SARSAT system) are strongly advising users of 121.5/243 MHz beacons to make the switch to 406. Meanwhile, anyone planning to buy a new distress beacon may wish to take the Cospas-Sarsat decision into account.

Source: <http://www.sarsat.noaa.gov/>



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## Coastal & Marine Resource News

Calhoun County  
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## HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY



The Sandhill Crane is a tall gray bird of open grasslands, meadows, and wetlands. It congregates in huge numbers in migration.

## DESCRIPTION

- Very large bird.
- Long neck.
- Long Legs.
- Gray body, may be stained reddish.
- Red forehead.
- White cheek.
- Tufted feathers over rump
- Size: 120 cm (47 in)
- Wingspan: 200 cm (79 in)
- Weight: 3400-4900 g (120.02-172.97 ounces)

[http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Sandhill\\_Crane.html](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Sandhill_Crane.html)

# BROILED FLOUNDER

2 small Gulf flounder,  
cleaned and dressed  
½ teaspoon salt  
¼ cup lemon juice  
¼ cup melted butter  
or margarine  
¾ teaspoon paprika  
Dash of pepper

Place flounder on individual pieces of aluminum foil. Combine remaining ingredients and brush flounder inside and out with sauce. Preheat oven and broil about 4 inches from source of heat for 12 to 15 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Baste flounder once during broiling, but do not turn.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

## W.H.E.P.

The 2009 State Contest for the 4-H Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program (WHEP) will be held on April 4, 2009 at the Gus Engeling Wildlife Management Area in Anderson County just northwest of Palestine. This web link takes you to their homepage to gain directions and other information regarding the facility; [http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/hunt/wma/find\\_a\\_wma/list/?id=10](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/hunt/wma/find_a_wma/list/?id=10).

This area is located in the Southeast Mixed and Outer Coastal Plains Forests

ecoregion of the WHEP Manual. Your teams at this contest will be responsible for information from this and the Urban ecoregions.

If you are interested in forming a team or becoming a coach, please give me a call. Contest registration is made by the local coach through the 4-H Connect online system; <http://texas4h.tamu.edu/4hconnect/index.html>. Contact Ruth McCraw in the Extension office with any questions regarding setting up that system. Registration payment is made online as well.

## WANTED: SHARK PHOTOS

Texas Parks and Wildlife has proposed an amendment to protect sharks that have been determined to be in an over-fished condition or are undergoing over-fishing. To help anglers better identify the sharks in question, I am looking for actual photographs taken of these sharks.

Species of interest are: Atlantic angel, basking, bigeye sand tiger, bigeye sixgill, bigeye thresher, bignose, Caribbean reef, Caribbean sharpnose, dusky, Galapagos, longfin mako, narrowtooth, night, sandbar, sand tiger, sevengill, silky, sixgill, smalltail, whale, and white.

If you have any, please share with me.

## BEACHCOMBING

Beachcombing — walking along the beach to see what treasures have washed ashore — is fun to do on a summer day. But try it this winter and you'll learn what the best beachcombers know: The season's strong storms and lack of crowds leave behind the most amazing finds! Driftwood, egg cases, and shells are among the objects you might encounter. You might also come across a piece of sea glass, which is glass that has been tumbled smooth by water and sand. Or maybe you'll find some coral, a whelk, or a sand dollar. Just be sure to leave live organisms where you found them because most can't survive outside their natural habitat. (Courtesy of Delaware Sea Grant College Program)

## QUESTIONS?

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**THIS NEWSLETTER IS AVAILABLE ONLINE @ <http://calhoun-tx.tamu.edu>**

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