

Research: CBA assists with Gulf Sturgeon & Coastal Dune Lake Research

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I am a Master's of Science student from Delaware State University working under Dr. Dewayne Fox to research behavioral ecology of Gulf sturgeon residing in Choctawhatchee Bay. Specifically, we are utilizing acoustic telemetry technologies to assess changes in habitat utilization and patterns of residency of Gulf sturgeon as they overwinter in the Bay. In particular, we are interested in identifying the type of sediments and invertebrate communities (potential prey items) that are present where Gulf sturgeon reside as well as environmental characteristics such as depth, water temperature, and salinity, and will compare these patterns with those assessed in the late 1990's. We plan to relate our findings to changes in land use that have occurred in the Choctawhatchee Bay watershed in the last couple decades. In addition, we are characterizing habitat throughout Choctawhatchee Bay so that we may compare habitat utilized by Gulf sturgeon with all available habitat types throughout the Bay. We greatly appreciate the support and assistance provided by the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance, the National Marine Fisheries Service Panama City Laboratory and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Panama City Field Office to conduct this research this field season.

