

# Study blames shrimping boats for trashing beaches of Padre Island

□ Litter from the Gulf of Mexico has been washing up onto the shore.

PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE (AP) — One day the beach is nearly pristine. On another day the sands are trashed with milk jugs, plastic sacks and all sorts of other garbage.

It's a given that Gulf of Mexico currents and winds determine which days and where the floating garbage washes up on Padre Island National Seashore, part of the longest undeveloped barrier island in the United States.

National Park Service researchers have worked on a tougher question: Where does it all come from?

Their new study concludes that shrimping boats are more responsible than anyone else for littering a section of the Texas Gulf Coast. It hits an industry that already feels it has been unfairly maligned for environmental unfriendliness.

"The shrimping items are by far what we get the most of," said John Miller, chief of resource protection at the 68-mile national seashore. "The total of it is just absolutely mind boggling when it doesn't have to be that way."

Experts say that besides making the beach an eyesore, the trash can harm birds and marine animals, including endangered sea turtles.

Last year Miller devised a study of 16 miles of beach on the northern tip of the federally protected seashore. Each day the researchers cleared and cataloged the garbage, collecting nearly 41,000 items for the entire year.

"The same time they (shrimpers) are out there, we get an increase in these types of items," said Sean Baker, a resources management specialist

**"We would like to work with the shrimpers to solve this problem."**

— Sean Baker, resources management specialist

who conducted much of the study. "We would like to work with them to solve this problem rather than being antagonistic with them."

"I think they are full of it. They are just looking for somebody to blame," responded Jimmy B. Russell, president of the Texas Shrimp Association. "It kind of offends me that someone would say that."

Russell said Texas shrimpers are conscientious about stowing trash on deck until they get back to port.

Wilma Anderson, executive director of the shrimp association, said some trash accidentally washes overboard from shrimp vessels in high seas. But she objected to the impli-

cation that shrimpers intentionally dump most of the garbage that ends up on the beach.

Anderson said the Navy, offshore oil operations and shipping vessels are equally responsible for marine debris.

But Miller said the study associated only 13 percent of the items with offshore oil and shipping. Another 13 percent came from unknown sources.

Chief Boatswainsmate James Stanbro, in charge of the Coast Guard's Port Aransas station, said most of the 70 shrimping boats that his crews inspect comply with anti-dumping rules.

He emphasized that it's a difficult, subjective judgment as to how much garbage a vessel should go through over a long period at sea.

"My preference would be that the shrimping industry deals with this problem themselves," Miller said. But he hinted that the study might lead to stricter enforcement.

"It's an absolute atrocity that we allow this to continue on our oceans," he said.

Shrimpers already believe that government agencies have unfairly blamed them for a large number of sea turtle deaths.

Under the Endangered Species Act, Gulf of Mexico shrimpers are required to use "trap doors" to allow turtles to escape trawler nets.



Carolyn Becka/Special to THE BATTALION

## Homeward bound

Preparing for the ride home, Bradley Gohlke, a freshman environmental design major, unlocks his bicycle.

# Three people shot while rafting in Mexico

□ The rafters were being robbed until a Mexican army helicopter scared the gunmen away.

AUSTIN (AP) — Three people were shot and robbed while river rafting in southern Mexico, the Austin American-Statesman reports.

Gill Ediger, 47, of Austin, said he was wounded in the leg in the April 6 shooting, the newspaper reported Tuesday.

Ursula Sommer, 37, of Switzerland was struck four times by bullets, including once in the upper back, and Karlin Meyers, 34, of Long Island, N.Y., was shot in the

elbow, the paper said.

Ediger said his wound was treated in a clinic in Palenque, in northeastern Chiapas, Mexico. The others were treated there, then flown to a Miami hospital and later released.

Ediger said four men with rifles began firing at his group of about 20 rafters from a bank of the Usumacinta River, which divides Chiapas from northwestern Guatemala.

Mexican troops have been stationed in Chiapas since clashing with Zapatista guerrillas last year. The fighting has stopped, but thousands of rebel troops remain holed up in rural Chiapas.

The rafters said the attack on them didn't appear to be linked to

the uprising.

"As far as we could tell, (the robbers) had no political affiliation," said Ediger. "There was nothing to indicate they were anything but bandits."

The rafters were ordered to pull over to the bank of the river and were being robbed at gunpoint when a Mexican army helicopter happened to fly by and frightened off the thieves, who fled with some of the rafters' valuables, Ediger said.

Asked whether he would be tackling the Usumacinta River again soon, rafter Blake Harrison, 44, of Sante Fe, N.M., said, "I'm not sure I could give you a flat yes or no, but I figure you can be robbed on the streets of Austin."

## COUNSELINE

# Student Counseling Service can help with treatment of depression

By Dr. Juan R. Riker  
STUDENT COUNSELING SERVICE

Most of us feel depressed sometimes. Unfortunately, many of us in this culture have been conditioned to do one of two things with depression: either ignore the feelings and hope they will go away or "self medicate."

The latter can be done in any number of ways, including eating, drinking, using drugs, overworking and compulsive sexual behavior. The problem with these methods of dealing with depression is that none attend to the underlying causes.

Ignoring the feelings, of course, won't make them go away.

Attempting to numb the pain is potentially even more harmful, as we may fool ourselves into believing the problem is gone, such as constantly

taking pain killers to deal with a physical problem. The illness isn't being treated, only the pain.

Depression, of course, can become dysfunctional and can seriously impair one's ability to carry out normal tasks.

In terms of assessing your own depressive feelings, it can be helpful to examine them along four dimensions: frequency, severity, duration and consequences.

How often do you feel depressed? Every day? Once a week?

How bad do you feel? Totally hopeless, like things will never change? Or just in a mild funk?

How long does your depression last? A day? A week? A month?

Finally, has your depression led to consequences, such as physical problems, problems with relationships or problems on the job or at school?

If your answers tend to be on the more severe end of the continuum, it is probably time to consider getting help.

There are several common symptoms of depression:

- Physiological:
  - Changes in sleeping patterns
  - Changes in appetite
  - Dramatic weight loss or gain
  - Fatigue or general low energy level
  - Physical pain, such as headaches or stomach aches

Emotional:
 

- Depressed mood, feeling sad, apathetic or irritable
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness

Cognitive:
 

- Negative and critical self-talk such as "I can't do anything right"

• Distorted thought processes, such as minimizing positive events and magnifying negative ones

Behavioral:
 

- Diminished interest in and enjoyment of previously pleasurable activities
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Neglecting responsibility and personal appearance

If you believe you may be experiencing depression, it is important to realize that you do have options and you are not powerless. Depression is often an indication that there is something wrong that needs attention.

The first thing to do is a self-assessment.

What is going on in your life? Are you feeling overly stressed? Are the de-

mands placed on you too much? You may need to think about cutting back some areas. You may need some breathing room.

Talking with a counselor is a good first step, and this may be all that is needed.

If your symptoms are extremely severe and include thoughts of suicide, if the symptoms have been present for a long time, antidepressant medication can also be helpful.

Here on campus, the Student Counseling Service is an excellent resource.

Trained counselors, psychologists and psychiatrists are available to help you develop a course of action to manage your depression. In addition, there are numerous off-campus community resources and private practitioners in the Bryan-College Station area.

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The Battalion (USPS 045-360) is published daily, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer sessions (except University holidays and exam periods), at Texas A&M University. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

News: The Battalion news department is managed by students at Texas A&M University in the Division of Student Publication, a unit of the Department of Journalism. Editorial offices are in 0113 Reed McDonald Building. E-mail: BATT@TAMU.EDU. Newsroom phone number is 845-3313. Fax: 845-2647.

Advertising: Publication of advertising does not imply sponsorship or endorsement by The Battalion. For campus, local and national display advertising, call 845-2696. For classified advertising, call 845-0569. Advertising offices are in 0115 Reed McDonald and office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Fax: 845-2678.

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