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Eric Looper
Gulf Ecology

3/19/2006

We left Pittsburg around 8 a.m. it was cold and cloudy. As we drove south towards Oklahoma the weather didn't change but the land did. The soils in Oklahoma were much more sandy and pale than Kansas. We stopped to eat lunch at McAlester on highway 69. It was still sprinkling after we finished lunch. We stopped for the night at Tyler State park. At the park the land was very hilly and the soil was very compacted with little vegetation. At camp we saw a raccoon and an armadillo. During the night a rain storm blew in and the compacted soil and lack of vegetation caused a large amount of runoff and caused several campers to sleep in the van.

3/20/2006

In the morning, after picking up a soaked camp, we drove to Austin to get our collection permits. The weather was very nice. In Austin the land had changed much more flat. After getting our permits we drove to Smithville and found a laundry mat so some could dry their clothes. While some were drying their clothes some of us went seining at the Rio Colorado just outside of town. This was the first time some of us have ever gone seining before. We were show several different methods of seining to collect different types of species. We caught eight species of fish at this location. After seining we drove to Lake Texana to camp for the night.

3/21/2006

After leaving Lake Texana we drove to Aransas National Park on the coast. The park was interesting; you could see how the salt that is blown off the water has shaped the trees and coast line. We saw a pair of Whooping Cranes in the water in the distance. After leaving the park we drove to Goose Island to seine. At Goose Island seining was very productive. The monofilament seine was very ^{hard} changing to pull through the water but there were some big fish in it. We then started to drive to the North Shore of ~~South~~ Padre Island. It was very windy on the beach so setting the tents was very difficult and some had to sleep in the van.

3/22/2006

The wind on the beach was still blowing in the morning so we picked up our gear and drove to the showers that were near. The showers were very nice even though they had no hot water. We drive to the Texas State Aquarium in Galveston after showering. The displays were very neat. The jellyfish display was my favorite because of the ability for some jellyfish to emit light is very interesting I think. After leaving the Aquarium we drove to the Adolf Thome Jr. Park. The park was by a canal that looked very much like a very long strip pit that could be around Pittsburg. The soil around the camp was very sandy with not very much organic matter. Several fished off the pier that was by the camp. I tried to throw the cast net to catch some new species but only caught bait for the fisher.

3/23/2006

In the morning a flock of Rio Grande Turkeys ran through camp. After breakfast we went to the Atascosa Park and went to the visitor center. At the center we watched three videos about topics that concern the park. The park had nice habitat for bird to be watched. The park was used as a bombing range during WWII so you could see mounds of dirt in the shapes of ships that pilots used for practice. In the large open fields many Osprey were seen. After eating lunch we went to Brownsville to cross the border into Matmoreyes, Mexico. In Mexico we visited many shops and watched around the town market. I walked to the city square and went to a Catholic Church with some of the class and then returned back to the market. After buying our souvenirs and crossing the border we bought shrimp for a boil. That night Chris caught an Atlantic Stingray from the pier it was very neat to see a live specimen like that.

3/24/2006

We drove to the Rio Grande River delta to seine. The Tide at the delta was strong and the waves on the beach were very large. It was very chilly and the water was cold. Seining was very hard and we used the dip nets in the reeds to collect specimens. After leaving the Delta we drove the South Padre Island to seine Laguna Madre. The weather was still chilly but the water was warmer and calmer. The bottom of the Laguna was gravel with several deep pockets. We caught several Gobi's in pop cans that were in the water.

3/25/2006

We packed up our camp for the last time and drove to back to South Padre Island to seine. The weather was very nice and the surf was very nice as well. We used the monofilament seine again and went out as far as we could and caught many different fish. The triple tail was the neatest fish I think we caught. Many people stopped to watch what we were doing and many fishermen were watching as well. After seining some of us tried to body surf in the waves but it didn't work as well as we planned. We then went to the south point of the island and caught Molly Millers out of the rocks that had been placed there to break the surf. After eating lunch and stopping at a souvenir shop we started back to Pittsburg.