

By: P.J. Waters, Aquaculture Extension Associate
Alabama Sea Grant/Auburn Marine Center

Students may be enjoying a long awaited summer vacation, but work continues at a number of area high schools who are continuing to develop their aquaculture/aquascience programs. By some counts, there are as many as six high schools in Mobile and Baldwin Counties who have aquaculture/aquascience programs available for students. Such programs have the unique advantage of offering learning opportunities in hands on environments. The idea being, that students will learn more, and remember what they learn longer because they are actually doing the work, rather than simply sitting in lectures. Additionally, students can develop a series of invaluable character assets including responsibility, teamwork, and problem solving, each of which employers find attractive in new hires.

One of the leading programs in southwest Alabama is Alma Bryant High School. With hurricane recovery in full swing, they recently added hybrid striped bass to the list of species that students work with. Researchers with Auburn University were able to send some newly feed-trained fingerlings to the program where students will begin work with them after the summer vacation closes.

The addition of new species to high school aquaculture/aquascience programs expands the educational opportunities for students, as each species has its own list of requirements to grow and maintain good condition. New species test the student's knowledge of water

quality, feed requirements, and growth rate calculations, which brings a healthy dose of practical mathematics into the course. Perhaps most importantly, the addition of another species to a school's aquaculture/aquascience program keeps the student's interest and enthusiasm for learning up. Though hard to think about here at the end of June, this summer will draw to an end; and with the beginning of the next school year, we look for continued success from the aquaculture/aquascience programs of our local high schools.

For additional questions or information, contact P.J. Waters, Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center, 438-5690.