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EXPLORE TALKING FISH ON ELC EVENING EXCURSION

WABASSO ISLAND, Fla. On Friday, April 11, from 7 to 9:30 PM, the Environmental Learning Center will feature “Drum Beats,” a boat trip on the Indian River Lagoon. Excursion participants will witness an amazing phenomenon of nature—listening to the voices of black drum fish making drum-like sounds with distinguishable male and female voices during spawning season.

Somewhat surprising, it has been known for centuries that some species of fish produce sounds. In fact, because water, particularly turbid water like the lagoon, filters out light, the sense of sight in sea creatures is not as important as sound, which travels well in any water. Sounds are used as mating calls, warning and distress signals or to frighten off predators. The excursion will allow participants

to eavesdrop on a variety of species including the black drum, shrimp, toadfish and silver perch.

Leading the outing will be Dr. Grant Gilmore, a distinguished marine scientist as well as an educational and entertaining guide. Dr. Gilmore has nearly 40 years experience studying fish in the Indian River Lagoon and is a leader in marine estuarine fish biology, including communication, evolution and behavior. He worked from 1971 through 1998 at the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, where he made over 300 submersible submarine dives, and he has made numerous television documentaries of his expeditions, including several for the Discovery Channel. Dr. Gilmore is now president of Estuarine, Coastal and Ocean Sciences, Inc., providing support for public and private entities.

Drum Beats has been a popular ELC EcoVenture and typically sells out. It promises to be a delightful way of learning more about our lagoon and its inhabitants. The cost is \$50 for adults and \$20 for children (\$45 and \$15 for members), and reservations can be made by calling 772-589-5050.

The Environmental Learning Center is located north of Vero Beach off County Road 510 at the western edge of the Wabasso Bridge. Its 64-acre island campus includes exhibit areas, native plant gardens, picnic facilities, gift shop and visitor center. A list of its many field excursions including hikes, boat excursions, nature walks and bird watching can be found at www.elcweb.org.
