The Coastal Waters Consortium Presents:

Scientist Spotlight

Tom Aepelbacher

What is your role as a scientist for CWC?
I am a Research Associate with LSU's Department of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences. I am responsible for planning and coordinating the sampling efforts for the Marsh Health component of the project as well as collecting samples and recording measurements at our field sites.

Can you summarize your oil spill research and describe any surprising findings you have come across?
Data has been collected related to the DWH oil spill's effects on coastal Louisiana marshes and the effects to the food web in these important ecosystems. Synthesis efforts are underway to analyze the collected data and to provide a better understanding of the impacts of the DWH oil spill on coastal Louisiana marshes.

What is your educational background?
I received a B.S. degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Michigan in 2009.

What inspired you to become a scientist?
While growing up in Michigan and Minnesota I spent a lot of time in the outdoors especially around aquatic environments. As a student at the University of Michigan, I was fortunate to spend two summers studying at the University of Michigan Biological Station where I gained experience is designing experiments and collecting data related to aquatic ecology.

Can you describe what you enjoy the most about conducting scientific research?
I enjoy working in scientific research because it gives me an opportunity to work outside and be surrounded by nature. I enjoy observing organisms in their natural environments and seeing how they respond to different stressors such as predators or to anthropogenic influences.

The Coastal Waters Consortium's mission is to assess the chemical evolution, biological degradation, and environmental stresses of petroleum and dispersant within Gulf of Mexico coastal and shelf ecosystems.

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