

January-February 2013

### A DAY ON THE BEACH

by Lanny and Marilyn Johnson

The Jones family had been enjoying a wonderful vacation at Fort Myers Beach on the coast of Florida. That morning they had driven to one end of the island to visit Lovers Key State Park. They had hiked some of the trails around the inner islands and bays and seen some wonderful wildlife – an osprey catching a fish, another osprey eating a fish, many snowy egrets wading in water looking for fish to eat, and a roseate spoonbill feeding in the mud flats. Billy and Mary really wanted to see a bottlenose dolphin or a manatee that also live in the park, but so far the family hadn't spotted any.

After hiking, the family headed down to the beach where they discovered it was low tide. As Mary and her mother began collecting many different kinds of seashells lying on the beach, Billy set about stomping through the



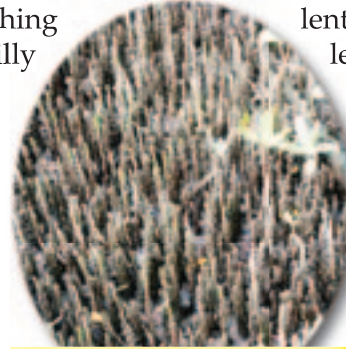
ROSEATE SPOONBILL

tidal pools, having a great time splashing water. Mr. Jones smiled and said, "Billy let's play a different kind of game. Let's quietly wade through the pool, and see how many animals we can find."

By wading slowly through the pool, Mr. Jones was able to point out many kinds of sea creatures – a dead horseshoe crab, many hermit crabs living in dead seashells, crabs with spots, crabs with sand stuck to their back for camouflage, living sand dollars, sea urchins with shells stuck to their spines, sea anemones, tiny flounder hiding in the sand, seastars, and many living seashells that still had their critters inside.

Mary and her mother found lots of beautiful seashells. They found Florida fighting conchs, horse conchs, scallops, lightning whelks, angel wings, lettered olives, and sand dollars, to name only a few of many kinds they found.

On the way back to the parking lot, the family took a short hike out to a fishing pier on one of the inner bays. "Wow," Mary exclaimed as she looked over the railing of the boardwalk leading to the pier. "Look at these trees ... they are on stilts!" Mr. Jones laughed and replied, "These interpretive signs say that those are not stilts, but roots growing downward from the trunk and lower branches of the Red Mangrove. The roots keep the trunk and leaves above the water and hold the trees firmly in the mud. They also have special tiny holes called



PNEUMATOPHORES

lenticels [*len-ti-sels*] to take in air. The lenticels only let air get through, not water or salts. Over on the other side of the boardwalk you can see hundreds of what look like pencils sticking up out of the mud. Those are called pneumatophores [*noo-mu-tu-fors*] and act like 'breathing tubes' for the Black Mangrove."

Mr. Jones continued, "It also says, that mangroves provide a safe haven and a nursery for a lot of different fish, birds, crustaceans, and shellfish."

At the end of the pier a fisherman showed the family a redfish he had just caught. He explained that he fishes there a lot and has caught many different kinds of fish – tarpon, snook, sheepshead, snapper, jack, bluegill, bass, sea trout, and even shark.

Before leaving the park the family sat down at a picnic table. "Well children, did you have a good time today?" asked Mrs. Jones. Billy was so bubbly that all he could do was excitedly nod his head and grin, while Mary stated that not only did they "have a ball" but also shared that she was amazed at all the different things they had seen.

"Yes, we were able to see a wonderful variety in the things that God has made," said Mr. Jones. "Think about this ... we only explored a very small area of God's creation today ... there was much that we couldn't see hidden in the water, air, dirt and plants. Then think about how big the earth is and all the things in it and you really start appreciating what an awesome Creator we have! Let me read to you one of my favorite Bible verses, and then we will pray, thanking God for His wonderful creation."

[Solve puzzle on back to see what Bible verse Mr. Jones read]



RED MANGROVE ROOTS

## LEGEND OF THE SAND DOLLAR

There's a pretty little legend  
That I would like to tell  
Of the birth and death of Jesus  
Found in this lowly shell

If you examine closely  
You'll see that you find here  
Four nail holes and a fifth one  
Made by a roman's spear

On one side the Easter lily  
Its center is the star  
That appeared unto the  
shepherds  
And led them from afar

The Christmas poinsettia  
Etched on the other side  
Reminds us of his birthday  
Our happy Christmastide

Now break the center open  
And here you will release  
The five white doves awaiting  
To spread good will and peace

This simple little symbol  
Christ left for you and me  
To help us spread his gospel  
Through all eternity



SAND DOLLAR TOP



SAND DOLLAR "DOVES"



SAND DOLLAR BOTTOM

CRABS	REMEMBER	CONCHS	TARPON	HIS
ROOTS	SNOOK	MARVELLOUS	WORKS	SCALLOPS
THAT	EGRET	TRUNK	SHEEPSHEAD	HE
SAND-DOLLARS	HATH	ANEMONES	DONE,	SNAPPER
BLUEGILL	WHELKS	HIS	URCHINS	WONDERS,
AND	BASS	SPOONBILL	THE	ANGEL-WINGS
TROUT	JUDGMENTS	OLIVES	LEAVES	OF
SHARK	HIS	LENTICELS	MOUTH;	STARFISH
1 CHRONICLES	FLOUNDER	OSPREY	PNEUMATOPHORES	16:12

FOR ANSWERS GO TO: <http://www.discovercreation.org/kids/NewsletterAnswers.htm>

## CROSS-OUTS

Only an intelligent Creator could create the amazing things we find along and near a seashore. Solve the puzzle above to find what the Bible says about that Creator.  
Hint - All words are found in story on front page.

CROSS OUT ALL:

1. Fish
2. Birds
3. Sea Creatures
4. Seashells
5. Parts of a Mangrove Tree