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'It just devastated the ecosystem'

MS group proposes act to stop killing dolphins with floodwater

Brian Broom
Mississippi Clarion Ledger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Freshwater may seem like a harmless thing, but in 2019 the Mississippi coast experienced the deadly effects of it. Dolphins and endangered sea turtles were killed along with valuable oysters, crabs and other seafood and a Mississippi or-

ganization has drafted a proposed law that would reduce the risk of a similar environmental disaster happening again.

"Well, I think in my mind that was a watershed moment in dealing with diversions," said Moby Solangi, president, director and CEO of the Institute for Marine Mammal Studies. "In 2019, the opening of the Bonnet Carré, people realized for the first time the devastation when you bring

in polluted river water in such large quantities.

"It just devastated the ecosystem. It was an underwater aquatic hurricane. It destroyed the ecosystem from the ground up like (Hurricane) Katrina."

In 2019 the Mississippi River went above flood stage and posed a risk of damaging the levee system in New Orleans. The nearby Bonnet Carré Spillway, which

is designed to relieve pressure on the levees by diverting water out of the river, was opened twice for a total of 123 days.

Trillions of gallons of polluted water dumped in Sound

The openings diverted more than 10 trillion gallons of water from the Mississippi River into Lake Pontchartrain and ultimately into the Mississippi Sound.

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State, Family Watchdog help track sex offender data near you

Bonnie Bolden and Presley Bo Tyler
Mississippi Clarion Ledger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Need to know how many sex offenders live near you? There are a few ways to find out, and the state makes it easy to get updates.

In Mississippi, that information can be looked up through a state database a few different ways. Or you can use the site Family Watchdog to find information about who lives in your community.

There are approximately 13,681 registered offenders in the state of Mississippi, according to statistics from Family Watchdog. The free service helps look up registered sex offenders in your area for crimes including rape, sexual battery and crimes against children.

Mississippi ranks 18th in the nation for the highest number of recorded offenders, according to Family Watchdog data.

It compares state registries across the country, including all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Mississippi also has about 4,704 offenders per million residents, ranking eighth in the nation.

Here's how to find sex offender registry data in Mississippi and get alerts when there are updates for your community.

Mississippi Sex Offender Registry has two ways to search

You can access the State of Mississippi Sex Offender Registry online at state.sor.dps.ms.gov/.

The state database lets you look up people by first and last name.

You also can find everyone listed within a 3-mile radius of a specific address, like a home, school or daycare. Or use a geographical search by ZIP code. County listings also let you see offenders in custody of the Mississippi Department of Corrections and those who have died.

See **DATA**, Page 4A

Looking for a day trip?

Try one of these close to Hattiesburg

Lici Beveridge
Hattiesburg American | USA TODAY NETWORK

You don't have to go far from home to find a unique experience if you live in Hattiesburg. The Hub City sits at the crossroads of Interstate 59 and U.S. 49, making it easy to get to just about anywhere.

We know Hattiesburg has plenty of things to do at home, but it's also nice to get away for a day to try something different. We chose five places we think you might like to try that are within 100 miles of home.

Gulf Coast Gator Ranch and Tours

Gulf Coast Gator Ranch and Tours is a great place to see alligators up close and in a safe environment. Visitors can learn about gators, feed them, or even hold a baby alligator.

The Gator Ranch also offers airboat tours through swamp land, where dozens of alligators chill out and watch guests swing by.

Tours cost \$35 for guests 10 years and older and \$20 for youths 4-to-9 years old. Self-guided walking tours are \$8 per person. Infants and toddlers younger than 4 and pregnant women are not allowed on



Alpaca are shorn once a year, which is necessary since they don't shed.

SUSAN BROADBRIDGE/HATTIESBURG AMERICAN

TOP: The Gulf Coast Gator Ranch is a great place to see alligators. You can even hold a baby alligator. BOB MOULDER/HATTIESBURG AMERICAN, FILE

the tours.

The ranch is located at 10300 U.S. 90 in Moss Point. For more information, visit airboatswamp-toursofmississippi.com or call 228-475-6026.

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