



THE WATCH HILL CONSERVATOR
 222 Watch Hill Road
 Watch Hill, Rhode Island 02891

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THE WATCH HILL CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2011 VOL. 4 NO. 2 WATCH HILL, R.I.

Napatree Stewards Get Good Grades from Rhode Island Natural History Survey

In 2005, the Conservancy and the Watch Hill Fire District, stewards and managers of the Napatree Point Conservation Area, engaged the Rhode Island Natural History Survey (RINHS) to present an assessment of and recommendations for Napatree, taking into consideration its environmental resources, existing recreational uses, educational potential, and other factors.

The RINHS is, in its own terms, “... an independent non-profit organization founded in 1994 to gather and disseminate information on Rhode Island’s animals and plants, geology, and ecosystems, to facilitate communication among the diverse people, agencies, and organizations interested in the ecology of Rhode Island, to preserve Rhode Island’s irreplaceable natural history collections, to foster environmental science education, and to support naturalists and the study of Rhode Island’s natural history.”

In accordance with the RINHS’s 2005 recommendations, the Conservancy and Fire District developed the programs and management protocols under which they have operated their joint Napatree Conservation Program for the past five years. Based upon the 2005 report, the two organizations implemented a variety of programs, from gathering data (animal and plant species, water quality, etc.), to establishing summer educational programs for children and conducting beach walks with trained naturalists for adults and families.



Top photo: Jane Buxton, RINHS
 Left: Spotted sandpiper. Photo Janice Sassi
 Right: Rosa rugosa. Photo Julia Royster

In 2010, at the request of the stewards, RINHS convened a team of scientists for a day-long visit and round-table discussion to assess the impact of activities over the five-year period and to write a new report. That document, published in April and available on the Conservancy’s website (thewatchhillconservancy.org), applauds the work of the stewards and its impact on the environmental health of the Conservation Area.

The combination of hard science and engaging programming has contributed to the protection of wildlife, higher census numbers for endangered and threatened birds, reduction in the impact by dogs, and the ability to provide the Town and other stakeholders with data regarding recreational use and access by boaters. While these are significant gains, the report notes that further steps can be taken. Trail surface and signage can be improved; the public can be further educated about the environmental impact of dogs on the beach; the cost-benefit equation of different strategies for managing the remains of Fort Mansfield should be addressed; the lagoon warrants further study. These and other recommendations are outlined in detail in the report, which will inform plans for future management of the site.

David W. Gregg, Executive Director of the RINHS, in a recent conversation at the organization’s 2011 annual conference, remarked: “This was very straightforward; most of what we would have recommended is already being done.” In his introduction to the report, he notes the impact of programs and policies that are already in place: “The Napatree programs of the Watch Hill Conservancy and the Watch Hill Fire District and the funds the two organizations devote to those programs make a significant contribution to the long-term stewardship of an important natural resource of Rhode Island and the East Coast.”

The word *continue* appears often in the document, entitled “Napatree Point Conservation Area Ecosystem Management Study (July 2010).” Gregg summarizes the primary activities of the Napatree programs and states: “Based on the present review, the Natural History Survey recommends that the Watch Hill Conservancy and Watch Hill Fire District continue building a case for public support of its management strategy by continuing to gather data, track natural resources, and educate visitors and the community about the Point’s conservation value.”

THE WATCH HILL CONSERVANCY
 222 Watch Hill Road
 Watch Hill, Rhode Island 02891
 (401) 348-6540

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For information about community events, lectures, concerts, nature walks, educational programs for children, and others, see the Conservancy’s website below.

www.thewatchhillconservancy.org



Geologist Jon Boothroyd to Speak at Conservancy’s Annual Meeting

The 2011 Annual Meeting of the Conservancy will take place on Saturday, August 13 at 10:00 a.m. at the Misquamicut Club (Golf Club), 60 Ocean View Highway, Watch Hill. Jon Boothroyd will discuss climate change, sea-level rise, and geologic coastal hazards for southern Rhode Island. Boothroyd is the Rhode Island State Geologist and Research Professor Emeritus of Quaternary Geology, Department of Geosciences, College of the Environment and Life Sciences, University of Rhode Island. Primarily a field geologist, he has 45 years of field experience in New England, South Carolina, Alaska, Iceland, Saudi Arabia, Madagascar, Ecuador, Mexico and the Azores. His current research focuses on climate change issues related to accelerated coastal erosion and sea-level rise, coastal geologic hazards and management issues, and long-term beach changes.

The meeting is open to Conservancy members, guests, and the public.

The composition of the survey team reflects the complexity of the issues relating to the management of the site. Participants included Peter August (Landscape Ecologist, URI Professor of Natural Resources Science), Rupert Friday (Director, Rhode Island Land Trust Council), Scott McWilliams (Avian Ecologist, URI Professor of Natural Resources Science), Clarkson Collins (Land Management and Volunteers, South Kingstown Land Trust), Hope Leeson (Botanist, RINHS) and Prentice Stout (marine educator). Individually, each provided the specific perspective unique to his or her discipline. Collectively, they sought to identify measures that would achieve and sustain a delicate balance between recreational use and preservation of the ecological features, wildlife, and marine life of the area. Rather than proposing rigorous constraints that would prohibit access for recreational use, the team concurred that such use can, in fact, help to achieve the desired balance. Responsible and appropriate use offers



Photo Jane Buxton, RHNHS

CONSERVANCY PROVIDES PLANNING TOOL FOR PROPOSED LITTLE NARRAGANSETT BAY TRANSIENT ANCHORAGE

As this issue of the *Conservator* goes to press, the Town of Westerly’s Harbor Management Committee continues its deliberations on the possible location of boundaries and buffers for a transient anchorage to be located off the northern shore of Napatree.

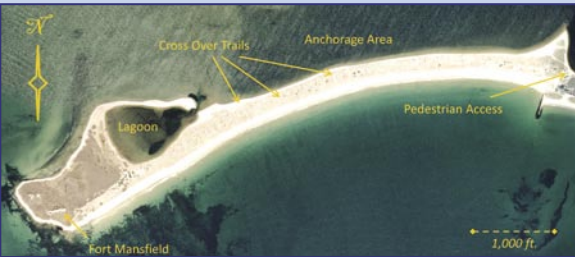
Currently, anchorage in this area of Little Narragansett Bay is unregulated, and on busy summer days hundreds of boats are located randomly throughout the Bay, many in areas of ecological sensitivity.

As stewards of Napatree, the Conservancy and the Watch Hill Fire District are taking an active role in proposing regulation that will protect the delicate ecology of Napatree itself and the waters around it, as well as the wildlife and marine life they support, while encouraging appropriate and responsible recreational use. To that end, in partnership with leading environmental organizations, (the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC), Save The Bay, and others), Juliana Berry of the Conservancy staff has compiled an “opportunities and constraints” map for Napatree and the Bay to aid in decision-making on management policies and planning by the Town and CRMC both in the current process and in the future.

opportunities for education, promotes conservation values, and enhances stewardship by the public at large as they come to appreciate the unique character of Napatree and its wild inhabitants. The Conservancy and Fire District agree: Napatree is a public resource; a combination of responsible use and sound conservation management can ensure that access continues while conservation needs are addressed.

The report notes that Napatree is a movable feature, subject to coastal winds and storms, erosion, and drifting sands. Over time, much of Napatree has drifted north, and portions have broken off entirely, forming small islands north of the spit. Sea level rise will only exacerbate the rate of change in the size, shape, and fabric of the Point, and over time, it may, in fact, be largely or even entirely eradicated by these forces. It’s reasonable, therefore, to question whether or not a significant investment of time, money, and other resources is worthwhile. Gregg maintains that it is:

The sure impacts of climate change and storm events on Napatree Point should not be taken as arguments against detailed active management. Responsible stewardship practices such as managing trail use, managing the impact of dogs, and managing invasive plant species will have short term benefits regardless of future events and, at any rate, will benefit ecosystem resilience, a quality that scientists know helps mitigate those very storm and climate change effects.



RINHS map of current key locales on Napatree (Image RIGIS)

The Conservancy and Fire District are glad to share the credit for the successes of their sound management of Napatree. Over the years, collaboration with a number of local, regional, and federal agencies and organizations has been invaluable in helping them to achieve their goals. Participants, collaborators, and advisors have included the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, The Nature Conservancy, the Audubon Society, Save The Bay, and others.

Napatree is remarkable for its ecological value, as home to migrating birds and mammals, and as a laboratory for the study of marine and land life in rare habitats. As importantly, it is a beautiful site, conducive to bird-watching, walking, swimming, and nature study. The Conservancy and the Fire District are committed to ongoing stewardship of this resource and offering ways of helping the public to understand and enjoy it in ways that are consistent with best conservation practice. JY



Photo Jane Buxton, RHNHS

Berry’s map shows traditional nesting sites for rare and protected bird species (piping plover, least tern, and American oystercatcher), sensitive near-shore areas of eel-grass and shellfish beds, on-shore dunes that warrant protection, and the numerous redundant paths from the Bay to the ocean that have been closed off recently to protect the dunes.

Transient boaters have traditionally used areas on Napatree’s Bay shore, particularly the Kitchen, for daytime access to the Ocean side beach across the dunes or for coastal cruising overnights. Providing a clearly delineated transient anchorage area (to be noted on charts and to be marked in the water with buoys), together with clearly-defined access points and buffer zones, all to be established according to ecological data, will protect sensitive areas and present an opportunity to provide information to boaters about the unique nature of the Point, and how they as informed users can help to ensure its future as a significant resource. The Conservancy and Fire District are committed to providing a pleasant experience for visitors through sound management, a win-win for conservationists and recreational users alike. RCY

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

June 4 – August 6, 9:00 a.m. Napatree Naturalists Saturday morning walks. Meet at the entrance to Napatree near the Misquamicut Beach Club.

June 17 American Songbook, Ocean House (also Fridays July 8 – August 26)

June 19 – September 11 Watch Hill Chapel services

See watchhillchapel.org
Sundays 8:30 a.m. Roman Catholic Mass
10:00 a.m. Non-denominational
“Union” service

June 25, 6 – 9 p.m. Watch Hill Conservancy’s *Celebration of Summer 2011*. Cocktails and hors d’oeuvres. Misquamicut Club Beach Club. Call 401.348.6540 for reservations.

June 28 – August 30, 6 – 8 p.m. Tuesday night concerts in the Village Park, Bay Street (Rain dates the following Thursdays.) See visitwatch-hill.com/calendar for full schedule.

June 29 – July 3: Horseshoe crab monitoring and tagging. See “Napatree Notes” for details.

July 1 – Labor Day Watch Hill Lighthouse Museum open Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1 – 3 p.m. See watchhilllighthousekeepers.org.

July 1 Independence Day Beach Ball, Ocean House. See oceanhouseevents.com.

July 3, 4:00 p.m. Watch Hill Memorial Library and Improvement Society (WHMLIS) Children’s Bicycle Parade. (Decorating at Memorial House, Everett Avenue, 3:30 p.m.)

July 5 – August 10, 8:30 a.m. or 12:30 p.m. Every Tuesday and Wednesday: Napatree Investigator program. See the *Investigator* for details.

July 5 – September 2 WHMLIS Library Hours daily 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.; Story hour Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m., Memorial House.

July 8, Fridays through August 26 American Songbook, Friday Night Clambakes, Cabarets, etc. Ocean House. See oceanhouseevents.com

July 9, 9:00 a.m. at entrance to Napatree. Special Saturday morning walk with conchologist Marion Krepcio.

July 9, 9:30 a.m. Watch Hill Fire District Annual Meeting, Watch Hill Firehouse, 222 Watch Hill Road

July 13 – 17: Final horseshoe crab monitoring and tagging for the season

July 21, 7:15 p.m. Watch Hill Fire Department Smokey the Bear Parade

July 24, 5:00 p.m. Watch Hill Chapel Hymn Sing

July 27 – 28, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Singhvi Jewels show and sale for the benefit of the Watch Hill Conservancy. Ocean House.



Photos Sudhir Singhvi

July 29, 5:30 p.m. WHMLIS Photography Show Opening Reception, Watch Hill Chapel Undercroft. Show open to public viewing daily, Saturday, July 30 – Sunday, August 7, 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

August 3, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Fire Prevention Night, Watch Hill Firehouse, 222 Watch Hill Road

August 6, 9:00 a.m. at entrance to Napatree. Join us for a bird walk with Carolyn Cimino of the Connecticut Audubon Society.

August 13, 10:00 a.m. Watch Hill Conservancy Annual Meeting, Misquamicut Club, 60 Ocean View Highway. Speaker, Jon C. Boothroyd. Members, guests, and public welcome

August 17, 3 – 6 p.m. Rhode Island Blood Center Drive, Watch Hill Chapel

August 19 Salt Marsh Opera “Broadway at the Ocean House,” on the Lawn, Ocean House

August 28, 5 p.m. Watch Hill Chapel Hymn Sing

September 2, Cabaret on the Lawn, Ocean House

Please check the websites of organizations sponsoring events for which times are not listed; dates and times listed may also change. Please note that “members only” events of various organizations are not listed here; readers should check the calendars and websites of the organizations of which they are members.

JEWELRY SHOW AND SALE

On July 27 and 28 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Jane Orthwein and Deborah Royce will host a special show and sale of jewelry by Singhvi Jewels of Delhi, India and Boca Raton, Florida, for the benefit of the Conservancy. Jane has generously offered this show in her home for many years; this year it will be held at the Ocean House.

Sudhir “Sudi” Singhvi is the fifth generation in his family to design, manufacture, and market fine hand-crafted jewelry. Each piece is a unique work of art featuring fine gemstones in either a classic or contemporary setting. Singhvi Jewels offers a wide range of products including one-of-a-kind, hand-made pieces such as rings, earrings, pendants, necklaces, bracelets and brooches – something for every taste.

Our sincere thanks to Jane, Deborah, Sudi, and the Ocean House for their generosity on behalf of the Conservancy.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

The Watch Hill Conservancy is a not-for-profit organization. Your membership supports the protection of the natural and cultural resources of Watch Hill, a variety of programs, and educational publications, including this newsletter.

Member name: _____

Preferred mailing address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

INDIVIDUAL: \$25

No: _____ Total: \$ _____

BUSINESS: \$75

No: _____ Total: \$ _____

FAMILY: \$100

No: _____ Total: \$ _____

SUPPORTER: \$250 - \$499

No: _____ Total: \$ _____

SPONSOR: \$500 - \$999

No: _____ Total: \$ _____

PATRON: \$1,000 - \$2,499

No: _____ Total: \$ _____

BENEFACTOR: \$2,500 - \$5,000 or more

No: _____ Total: \$ _____

OTHER CONTRIBUTION Total: \$ _____

Mail to:
THE WATCH HILL CONSERVANCY
222 Watch Hill Road
Watch Hill, R.I. 02891

Please include names of family members 18 and under. If you are making gifts of memberships, please include the names and addresses of those to receive these gifts.



Where Can I Find Them?

Most crabs live in intertidal zones, the parts of the shoreline that are covered with water at high tide, but are drier at low tide. Rocky areas like those found on the bay side of Napatree are great areas to explore crab habitat, but there are crabs on the ocean side as well.

Boy or Girl?

If you turn a crab over (watch those claws!), you can usually tell its sex. The underside of a crab is composed of lots of smaller shell segments. An easy way to tell boys from girls is this: when those small segments come to a point, like a rocket ship, it's a male. On a female, the segments are rounder, like a hilltop or a mountain.

Introducing The Green Crab

The green crab may be the most commonly seen crab in New England today, but before the 1800s, you wouldn't have seen any! Why not? Because green crabs first came over to America from Europe, possibly as stowaways in the holds of cargo ships about 200 years ago. Apparently they liked it here, because now they can be found all along our shoreline.

As you know by now, the best way to identify green crabs is to count their teeth. In the winter time, adults move to colder water, where they'll stay until the spring. They're usually about four inches wide, and they feast on soft shell clams, quahogs, and scallops. And like most animals, they themselves are eaten by animals. Raccoons like them, and green crabs are often used by local fishermen as bait for tautog.

Shhh...the Hermit Crab likes to be alone (sort of).

One of the favorite crabs of many Investigators is the hermit crab. "Hermits" in the human world are usually folks who choose to live alone, without contact with other people. Hermit crabs don't really live alone, but they do live in shells by themselves. As hermits grow, they need to keep moving to bigger and bigger shells. When that happens, they will search for an empty shell and sneak quickly into their new homes. They have to move fast, because the shell is their only protection from predators, and while they're making the change to a new home it's easy for them to become another marine animal's lunch!

In past summers, Investigators have been lucky enough to see hermit crabs make the changeover from one shell to another. It's a fascinating process to watch, since most of the time, hermit crabs are tucked tightly inside a shell. Their abdomens (where internal organs like the stomach and heart are located) are very flexible. When they change to a new shell, they flex these abdomens until they're tightly wrapped around the inner part of their new home. This also allows them to pull their bodies inside the shell quickly if they are disturbed... by, say, an Investigator exploring!

Editor—Hugh Markey

The Watch Hill Conservancy and the Watch Hill Fire District operate summer educational programs at the Napatree Point Conservation Area in Watch Hill. The Napatree Investigator is a publication of the Watch Hill Conservancy.

The Watch Hill Conservancy

222 Watch Hill Road
Watch Hill, Rhode Island 02891
Email: thewatchhillconservancy@yahoo.com
Website: www.thewatchhillconservancy.org

Get Out and Explore!

Naturalists with The Watch Hill Conservancy take kids out on the shores of Napatree throughout most of the summer to explore crabs and many other forms of life that inhabit the shoreline. Beginning Tuesday, July 5th, our Investigator program is offered every Tuesday and Wednesday (weather permitting). Kids aged seven to fourteen are invited to attend either an 8:30 a.m. or 12:30 p.m. session. This exciting, free educational series is directed by Stephen Brown, science chair at the Pine Point School, assisted by Hugh Markey, a high school English teacher in the Warwick school system. Armed with nets, buckets, and curiosity, the Investigators explore the beach and discover a lot of cool stuff! You can come to single sessions or every week, but only 18 kids can attend each session, so you'll need to register by e-mailing napatreenaturalist@live.com.



Ruddy turnstone. Photo Janice Sassi

Find out more about us by going to www.thewatchhillconservancy.org

See You at the Beach!

Stephen Brown: *Naturalist and director of our Napatree Investigators program*
Hugh Markey: *Naturalist*
Tom Pappadia: *Greeter*
Donnie Cornell: *Warden*
Juliana Berry: *Environmental Project Coordinator*
Janice Sassi: *Napatree Point Conservation Area Manager*

NEWS AND NOTES

OCEAN VIEW HIGHWAY

The *Conservator* reported last year that in keeping with its strategic plan it is seeking ways to make Ocean View Highway safer and more accommodating to bicyclists, joggers, and pedestrians. As we continue to gather data, we've also turned our attention to strategies for acquiring "share the road" signs and enhancing right-of-way maintenance. As plans are formulated, property owners will be given an opportunity to comment and offer suggestions and recommendations. The *Conservator* will continue to keep you informed as this project moves forward.



Photo Richard Youngken

BAY STREET INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT UPDATE

The Town of Westerly, the Watch Hill Conservancy, and the Watch Hill Fire District are moving forward with the Bay Street Infrastructure Project, a collaborative effort which includes the Conservancy's and Fire District's initiative to bury utility wires on Bay Street. What will this look like this season, and will it have an impact on traffic in the Village?

Activity this summer will be confined to offices and meeting rooms as the bidding and contract awards move forward and as state and federal grant proposals are submitted for funds to underwrite a portion of the costs. Construction is not scheduled until fall, when work will begin on new drainage, new water lines, and the underground conduits that will – in a later phase – accept the utility wires and cables that present a potential hazard in the event of severe storms, flooding, or hurricanes.

This phase of the work is expected to be finished by spring of 2012. If completion is delayed for any reason, the project will be "buttoned up" for the summer 2012 season and resumed in the fall. The Town, Conservancy, and Fire District are committed to completing the project with the least possible disruption to the Village, its residents, and visitors.

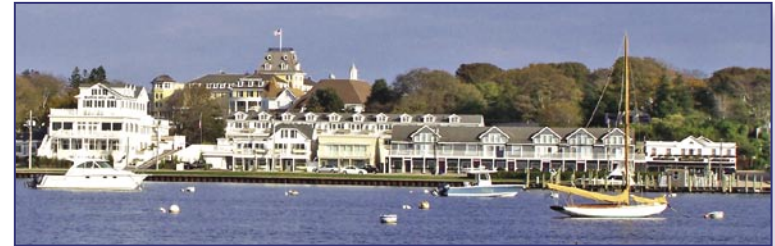


Photo Richard Youngken

GRANT SIMMONS NAMED CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Grant Simmons, a member of the Conservancy Board of Directors, has been named Citizen of the Year by the Greater Westerly-Pawcatuck Chamber of Commerce in recognition of his tireless efforts on behalf of the community. Chaplin Barnes, Executive Director of the Conservancy, applauds the choice. "Grant is a unique member of this community. Always charming and fun to be with, he is involved with innumerable causes, emotionally, intellectually, and physically (as on Napatree, putting up snow fences, taking water quality samples, or working with the engineers in planning for the next phase of the Conservancy's Underground Utility Project). He played a key role in the rebuilding of the Ocean House. He is also a valuable partner of mine in the work of the Roberts Foundation, which supports a dozen charitable activities in Westerly and Watch Hill. He is everywhere, all the time, doing valuable things."

Announcing the award, Chamber President Rudi Houser described Simmons with high praise and appreciation for his work in the community. "Grant is a man of outstanding community spirit, generosity, and concern for the well-being of our citizens and the quality of life in our community. He has committed time and resources to the community and many different institutions and civic organizations. He is a true gentleman and he is very conscientious and passionate for his causes."

In addition to his work with the Conservancy and the Fire District, Grant serves on the Board of the Watch Hill Chapel Society and the Westerly Hospital Foundation. He is a member of the Greater Westerly-Pawcatuck Chamber of Commerce, and supports the Chorus of Westerly. The Conservancy heartily joins the Chamber in recognizing Grant's contributions to our community and its many worthwhile organizations.



Photo Richard Youngken

NEW AND IMPROVED: THEWATCHHILLCONSERVANCY.ORG CHECK IT OUT!

Have you visited the Conservancy's website recently? It has a totally new "look and feel", with new images, interactive maps, and more and better information. The process began with new design concepts contributed pro bono by Kipany Productions; the site has been further enhanced by Fleming and Company of Newport, which will maintain it.

The goal of any website is two-fold. For visitors, it must be easy to navigate and offer the information the visitor is seeking and/or links to related sites. For administrators, it must be robust, easy to update, and accessible by major search engines so it will draw visitors. With these improvements, our site is closer to meeting these goals.

The website offers news updates, progress reports on the Conservancy's various programs and initiatives, and a full archive of the *Conservator*. For the latest word from the Conservancy, bookmark the site and check it often!

thewatchhillconservancy.org



Photo Richard Youngken

Napatree Notes

The 2011 season got off to a busy start! By mid-May, many of our warm-weather species had returned to Napatree Point. We were thrilled to note that piping plovers, American oystercatchers, and osprey were already incubating and the horseshoe crabs were appearing in increasing numbers.

Our season actually began on April 2nd with our annual beach cleanup. Although it was a chilly day, our volunteers (who included both Girl and Boy Scout troops), removed over 600 pounds of trash from the beach in one morning! Preserving this beautiful beach is everyone's responsibility and we are grateful to the hearty folks who turned out to pitch in.

Also in April, we resumed monitoring of Atlantic horseshoe crabs in collaboration with Sacred Heart University's Project *Limulus*. Napatree Point, along Little Narragansett Bay, is a favorite spawning ground for horseshoe crabs, often referred to as "living fossils" and more closely related to spiders than to crabs(!). These wonderful creatures have existed for the past 300 million years and scientists are attempting to determine their migration and spawning patterns. The success of this species is directly related to the success of many endangered and threatened shorebirds and marine life, and the success of emerging biomedicine technologies and established pharmaceutical protocols hinges on their very existence. We invite anyone interested to join us during the high tides of the new and full moon through July to help us count and tag the crabs as they come ashore to lay their eggs. All ages are welcome to participate and should be prepared to get their feet wet. Volunteers should plan to arrive about a half hour before the high tide. Registration is required: e-mail napatreenaturalist@live.com to sign up and receive more information. See calendar listings in this issue for dates.

JS



American oystercatchers. Photo Janice Sassi



Piping plover. Photo Janice Sassi



Photo Julia Royster

Welcome 2011 Coastal Fellows!

You'll see new faces on the Point this summer: Tim Lima and Adriane Gorski have joined the crew as URI Coastal Fellows, joining Fellows program alumna Kathy Hallal from 2010.

Tim Lima is a first-time Coastal Fellow, a University of Rhode Island junior majoring in Wildlife Conservation Biology who also works as a therapeutic service worker and has volunteered for a variety of organizations. He has a clear passion for the environment and learning new skills, then sharing that enthusiasm with others. Eager for field experience, Tim looks forward to the horseshoe crab monitoring, water quality sampling and testing, outreach, and, of particular interest to him, the Investigators. His main endeavor, however, will be the continuation and finalization of the invasive plant species inventory and mapping, and comprehensive cataloguing of all flora, west of the lagoon and along the spit. In his own words, he can't wait to "get his hands dirty" as he contributes to the conservation and preservation of Napatree's unique natural communities and effects a positive impact on their biodiversity.

Adriane Gorski is also a first-time Coastal Fellow and URI junior; her major is in Animal Science. Her employment history ranges from horseback trail guide, to laboratory assistant, to veterinary technician, to various positions in the service industry, among others. Adriane will be participating in the Conservancy's science and extracurricular initiatives, but her Fellow focus will be to identify the predators - from mammals to reptiles - along the dunes and within the densely-vegetated western end and Fort, and analyze the appropriate management techniques. Adriane is looking forward to the wide breadth of field experiences available in the Watch Hill area.

We are also pleased to welcome back Katherine Hallal, one of our 2010 Coastal Fellows, who will be continuing her efforts with horseshoe crab monitoring and with the Investigator program.

JB



Atlantic horseshoe crabs. Photo Juliana Berry



Photo Juliana Berry



NAPATREE INVESTIGATOR NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2011 VOL. 3 No.2 WATCH HILL, R.I.

IT'S THE CRABBY INVESTIGATOR!

By Hugh Markey

Well, let's make this clear: our Investigators aren't the crabby ones, but this issue of the Investigator will be an all-crabby spectacular! Watch Hill Conservancy naturalists and Investigators have found so many amazing varieties of crabs along the shores of Napatree Point during our summer beach walks that we've decided to dedicate this whole issue to learning more about them.



Several Investigators became expert crab catchers last summer, using a variety of found objects for the crabs to grab in order to bring them up for examination. Local stores also sell simple wire tools that hold bait to attract crabs. Many kids on the rocks of Napatree seemed to think that chicken parts were pretty effective!

Some people may just lump crabs into one big seafood soup, but how many species can you name? Have you been pinched by one while in the water? Do you know what kind it was? Let's take a closer look at what they are and how to tell one from another.

What Am I Looking For?

Some crabs are named for the color of their shell (or carapace), like the green crab and the blue crab. But many times algae grow on their shells, which makes most carapaces just *look* green or brown. So how do you know which crab you're looking at? It's all in the teeth.

Teeth? As in toothbrush and toothpaste? Well, no. Many crabs have spikes along the edge of their carapace. They're not part of the crab's mouth, but are called "teeth" because they look like the sharp teeth of an animal. By counting them, we can tell what kind of crab it is. For example, a green crab has five teeth, counting from its legs to its eye sockets.



An assortment of green crabs and Asian shore crabs. Photos Julia Royster

CUT ALONG THE DOTTED LINE AND SHARE WITH FRIENDS!