



HPWA

Spring Newsletter

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE

[TheHerringPonds Watershed.org](http://TheHerringPondsWatershed.org)

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Temporary parking site for Condon trailhead

President's Letter – 2020 Plans

by Don Williams, President

We all know the bad news and are probably pretty tired hearing about it every day. I certainly don't mean to minimize the seriousness of the coronavirus pandemic but I thought it might be timely to look for some positive outcomes of life's current restrictions.

First, the Herring Ponds Watershed Association is hoping to reschedule as many of the postponed activities as possible, when we can ensure the safety and enjoyment of you, our constituents. We will collect water quality samples, test our major swimming sites for E. coli during the summer to monitor water safety and check for invasive species as planned. With your continued help, we will continue our string of major successes. Your confidence in us has been heartening.

Second, the appeal of our watershed will not be adversely affected by the coronavirus and will continue to be here for us to enjoy.

Third, our watershed is here for us to enjoy. Throw a line in the water. This is also a good time to visit the Alper Nature Preserve and hike to the abandoned cranberry bog. Bring a phone and a couple of children or grandchildren and you'll be able to learn about the labeled shrubs, trees and flowers along the way. May is an excellent month for bird watching. Pick a spot in the forest and get ready to see and hear the birds in all their mating glory. Late April and early May provide an awesome herring run. Just drive to the fisherman's parking lot off Sandy Pond Road and walk to the Herring River Bridge where you might be treated to one of nature's miracles. You might try sculling (I'm an avid convert) or sailing for exercise and exhilaration. Pick a warm day and jump in the water. July and August are best but I put my dock in in May and the pond is not impossibly cold. Finally, go visit the Condon Property off Roxy Cahoon Road, purchased by the town with substantial HPWA help. Parking is available at the old entrance to the MA Maritime Academy and the trail is across the street. You will see why we helped preserve this property! This is a good time to visit our watershed whether for the first time or the hundredth time. You will not be disappointed.

There are some common themes for our watershed – exercise, enjoyment and quiet. All are excellent –either alone or with family. You might see the eagle. You might cement a friendship. You might have a series of marvelous thoughts and ideas. You might gain a new appreciation for the special place where we live. You might realize that our predicament is merely a large bump on an otherwise pretty smooth road. Perspectives might change, perceptions might increase and new possibilities might be unveiled.

Feel free to share your experiences with me (donald_r_williams2003@yahoo.com or 508 833-4355) and I will share them with our watershed constituency. There is never enough good news.

Be safe, be well.

Herring News

By Ramona Krogman

Herring Count: Spring has arrived bringing river herring up from the Cape Cod Canal on their way to Great and Little Herring Ponds. A camera in the path is recording their progress. In a typical year, HPWA conducts live counting where the herring move into Great Herring Pond. The live counts supplement the data, documenting the number of fish that spawn in the river rather than moving into the ponds. Due to the stay at home order, live counting is postponed until May 4. The status of counts will be reevaluated at that point.

World Fish Migration Day will be postponed this year. It will be celebrated in the bright clear autumn days of October. **Plymouth's new date is October 24, 2020!** The World Fish Migration Foundation still plans some celebration in May. **On May 14th**, you are invited to tune in to a 24-hour webinar hosted by the World Fish Migration Foundation called [Global Swimways Webinar Marathon](#). In this webinar, experts on the subject will tell about global swimways, species population status and trends. Practitioners and experts from each continent will share best practices and experiences and inspire us all to take action! The webinar will be divided into 9 sessions, each lasting 1-2 hours. For more information about the webinar sessions, please feel free to read the descriptions on their website (above in blue). Each session is free to join and can accommodate up to 500 participants. Please register for the session(s) that you wish to attend.

Herring Crawl: The HPWA Herring Crawl in May has been canceled due to the need for social distancing requirements. The directions and a self guided tour are still available for those who need time out in the sunshine on their own. To download the map shown, go to <https://bit.ly/2Y0Okms>



From the Education Committee - Lee Pulis, Chair

HPWA committee members worked hard with the Town this January - March to plan for our volunteer herring count in April and May, the annual Town Herring Festival for April 25th, our Herring Crawl for May 1 & 2, and World Fish Migration Day on May 16. We regret that these key events had to cancel or postpone, but want to provide some ideas and resources to help you get the most out of Spring 2020 in the watershed, whether alone on walks or homeschooling energetic kids and grandkids.

We've added a [COVID-19 Environmental Education Resources](#) page <https://bit.ly/3aGUDON> to our website loaded with links to both HPWA and third party materials. The document with the gold star is our latest list of resources. The new webpage displays best on a computer rather than a phone screen.

If you're hyperlinked out, just take a break and enjoy getting outside. Reconnect with nature...enjoy and be healthy!



- Use HPWA's online [Stewardship and Volunteer Activity Guide](#) PDF as a home-schooling environmental curriculum and activity resource. If you want a print copy email Lee or stop by 921 Long Pond Rd for "no-contact delivery" on the porch.
- Download or view HPWA's online [Superhero herring comics](#) from the website.
- View herring at the canal (they are there now) and Bournedale park.
- Take a socially distanced nature walk at [Alper](#), Condon, and Carter Beale open spaces for solitary or whole family participation. Share your observations, photos and species lists. Upload Pine Barrens plant photos to [Salicicola.com](#) for species identification help.
- Plan and prepare a raised bed "Crisis Garden," reduce lawn monocultures, nurture milkweeds, and plant native species for pollinators and wildlife. Google: Companion plant chart. There is a shortage of seeds due to demand ... try growing food from kitchen scraps.
- Create items for donation and online or future sale including benches, scarecrows, ACEC board games, paintings, decor, puzzles, coloring pages, crafts, photos, folk art, nest boxes, bee hotels, potted native transplants, etc.
- Contribute artistic and photographic resources for current and future association use. You can submit to our Facebook page or contact any board member.
- Take a bag along on your walks and pick up litter and trash to help beautify our watershed and keep it safer for children and animals.
- Stay abreast of, share, and support friend organizations' posts and initiatives (SEMPBA, WAA, PBP, Wildlands, Manomet, Herring Alliance, etc.).



Photo: Steve Smith. Green beans, green garlic, tomatoes, cucumber, carrots, parsley, red onion, celery and yellow bell pepper.

JAPANESE KNOTWEED - HISTORY, GROWTH AND CONTROL

By Jerry Levine, Invasive Species Committee

Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) is an herbaceous, perennial plant that was originally from Asia - introduced in Great Britain in 1825 and naturalized in the US in 1886. The plant is now considered an invasive plant as it discourages the growth of native plants by altering the availability of sunlight, moisture, and nutrients.

Knotweed is found growing in a variety of habitats, abandoned lots, roadway edges, streambanks, and wetlands. The plant can grow up to 15 feet tall. It has large heart shaped leaves arranged alternately on hollow bamboo like stems with clusters of small white colored flowers. The plant's shoots come up from a network of spreading rhizomes and grow very rapidly.

Knotweed is an extremely difficult plant to eradicate due to its propensity to spread by roots or rhizomes. The



roots can grow to a depth of 6 ft. and spread 23 feet from the original plant. The plant can be spread by transferring a small piece of root or stem while moving contaminated soil or during erosion from high water. The plant can also be spread by seeds and the plants spread by sending out roots to increase the size of the patches.

Control of Knotweed

Being proactive is critical, this plant is highly invasive.

Eradication can be achieved by a multipart process: removal, disposal, revegetation and use of herbicides. Due to the issue of using herbicides near and around an aquatic environment this will not be discussed. Be aware of removal of plants in a wetland, the issue must be cleared through the local conservation Commission.

The knotweed plants can be cut using a variety of methods: pruners, brush cutters, lawnmowers, etc. A small piece of the plant can start a new infestation, be careful while cutting and disposal, rake up and bag all pieces.

Disposal of the cuttings is critical to prevent new infestations. All cuttings and roots should be bagged and disposed of offsite.

The recommended procedure is to cut or mow a minimum of 4 times a year between April and September. Recall that Knotweed has the ability to spread beyond 20 ft. of the original plant. Consider the area that is necessary for proper cutting and elimination. Be aware of cutting non-invasive native plants in the area.

After the Knotweed is removed, re-vegetate the site with native plants, bare soil is an opportunity for re-infestation. The final step in the eradication of Japanese knotweed is to monitor the site to prevent re-introduction of the plant.

For more information go to: http://nyis.info/invasive_species/japanese-knotweed/

Garden Tips from Geri Williams

While many of us are sheltering in place and have extra time on our hands, now is a good time to walk our property and plan some improvements to our landscaping. **Early spring is a good time to find the invasive shrubs in our woodland borders.** Most native plants don't start to grow leaves until early May, so most of what you see that is green are invasive shrubs like honeysuckle. Many invasive plants get the jump on natives by greening up earlier, growing faster, photosynthesizing longer. It is easier to pull or cut them out before everything else grows up in the woods. You can also cut off at ground level bittersweet and greenbriar vines. Jerry Levine has written a great article on recognizing and removing Japanese Knotweed, which is highly invasive and prevalent in our watershed. Now is a good time to cut down the first sprouts and bag them up.



As you are planning additions to your gardens, **think native plants.** They are better adapted to our environment, require less moisture and provide more nectar and pollen for bees, butterflies, moths and their caterpillars, and hummingbirds. The National Wildlife Federation's **NATIVE PLANT FINDER** directs us to the most productive native plants for pollinators. Some of the plants listed for our area are goldenrod, strawberry, sunflower, Joe Pye weed, violet and lupine. Some trees and shrubs are oak, beach plum, chokecherry, willow, birch, apple and crabapple, blueberry and cranberry.

So think about digging up some lawn and planting a pollinator garden or help yourself to a healthier lifestyle by planting a vegetable garden and some blueberry bushes. Even though the soil is still cold, you can plant radish, lettuce, spinach, kale and chard seeds, or purchase small plants to get even earlier harvest.

Our lawns are very labor and resource intensive, they require so much water, and the fertilizer companies have persuaded many of us that we need to fertilize 4 times a year and use pesticides and herbicides at great expense. However you do **not** need to fertilize more than once or twice a year, spring or fall (fall is best). Using less fertilizer and water helps our watershed and you will have to mow less often. By using a mulching mower and leaving the clippings on the lawn, you are returning nutrients and helping the lawn retain water better. Adjust your lawn mower to only cut off 1/3 of the grass blade when mowing.

When purchasing plants make sure they have not been treated with systemic insecticides

like imidacloprid, dinotefuran, clothianidin, and thiamethoxam as these pesticides have been shown to harm pollinators and the caterpillars that feed on their leaves. Also do not use these pesticides during the growing season. Try using neem oil or insecticidal soaps.

Although the fancy hybrids with double flowers and unusual colors are tempting to us, studies have found that pollinators are much less attracted to them, and even have difficulty accessing the reduced pollen and nectar in many-petaled hybrids.

I hope these tips are helpful. If you have any questions I might be able to answer, email me at geri3williams@comcast.net or call me at 508-833-4355. Stay safe and enjoy your time outside in your yard.

3 Upcoming Spring Programs

You can join 3 new programs from **Wildlands Trust** from the comfort of your home. There is no charge, and Wildlands will be using Zoom to bring you these programs live with presenters Rob MacDonald, Wayne Petersen, and Blake Dinius. To learn more and get detailed instructions on joining each program are provided on the registration pages: <https://wildlandstrust.org/events>. Recordings of the programs will be posted on our website and social media platforms if you cannot join the event.



Exploring Striar Conservancy's Vernal Pools

Thursday, April 30, 2020
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Learn all about vernal pools with volunteer Rob MacDonald at this live virtual presentation.



Birds of Spring

Thursday, May 14, 2020
7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Join renowned Ornithologist Wayne Petersen to learn about spring migrants in SE Massachusetts at this live virtual presentation.



Tick and Mosquito Safety

Thursday, May 28, 2020
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Plymouth County Entomologist Blake Dinius teaches us how to stay safe from tick and mosquito-borne illnesses in this virtual presentation.

Thank You, Members!

by Martha Sheldon, Membership chair

We are pleased to welcome new members to HPWA: Nicholas Fiori, Jonathan and Mai Frank, Chris Fusco, Roger Janson, Mike Press and Yvonna Rowinski, and Morgan Wealti. Welcome!! We hope to meet you in person when the current health situation abates, and hope you stay in touch with us via social media and emails. Our annual letter to renew your dues will be sent to members in late May.

THE HERRING PONDS



WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

We hope you enjoyed our Newsletter. Send any suggestions or pictures you would like to see in future newsletters to Geri Williams at geri3williams@comcast.com

TheHerringPondsWatershed.org

