

LITTORALLY Speaking



Littoral: The region along the shore; the intertidal zone

News from the American Littoral Society

Fall/Winter 2016

Littoral Society Addressing River Pollution Problem

The Navesink River in New Jersey is polluted, but a broad coalition is coming to its aid.

According to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), the Navesink River is suffering from a high fecal coliform count during periods of high run-off. Due to this high count, the NJDEP has further limited the area available to shellfish harvesting.

Since the downgrade of the river's waters, the NJDEP has increased its water monitoring efforts, and early tests point to multiple causes, including human waste, domestic animal waste and wild animal waste being carried into the river by storm water run-off.

The river is not yet off limits to recreation. However, the shellfish limitations are like the proverbial canary in the coalmine. If fecal coliform counts rise

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The Littoral Society has been producing and distributing flyers with tips on how homeowners can reduce pollution in area rivers.



Recycled oyster shell is dumped at the Sandy Hook curing site.

We're Happy to Get the Shell

Andrew Carnegie famously said: "The first man gets the oyster, the second man gets the shell."

At the American Littoral Society, we're happy to be the second man because we're using that shell to help put oysters back into New Jersey's rivers and bays.

This year the Society has ramped up its "Shuck It, Don't Chuck It" shell recycling program to include more restaurants, while increasing efforts to educate people about the water-cleaning benefits of bivalves. In 2016, the Society also installed the third of five oyster reefs in the Delaware Bay, raised more baby oysters for an established reef in Barnegat Bay, and helped press New Jersey's legislature for changes that would enable larger scale oyster reef restoration projects.

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From the Executive Director's Desk

As I write this, on the fourth anniversary of Hurricane Sandy, there is a 35-knot breeze blowing across Sandy Hook Bay. It's a lesser reminder of that day, without the storm's destruction of many communities along the New York and New Jersey coast.

The newspapers offer a more telling commemoration, with stories about angry protests in the Trenton Statehouse by property owners still waiting for their homes to be rebuilt.

Recently, we have seen a spate of reports on lessons learned. However, like the breeze today, those accounts are a faint echo of the discussions that came in the wake of that disaster, which suggested reconsideration of how we live along our storm-prone coast.

Unfortunately, long-term solutions often get lost in the maelstrom of public and private priorities. An October New York Times editorial acknowledged this hard reality with words that sounded a little like the biblical admonition to the wise and foolish builders:

"In a rapidly changing climate ... windblown condos and bungalows

are in harm's way, and what government really should be rebuilding is storm-absorbing wetlands and parks.

"Everybody wants to live on the beach. But when the storms blow and the waters rise, overmatched bureaucrats and frustrated homeowners will end up caught in the undertow, for years to come. In this sense, the very words "Build It Back" miss the point — unless by "back" you mean back, way back, from the water's edge."

While an immediate withdrawal from the coast may not be feasible, there are things that can be done to adapt in the meantime. Many studies have confirmed that natural coastal features — such as dune systems, oyster reefs and healthy, expansive tidal marshes — significantly diminished the impact of Sandy in the places those bulwarks had survived poor coastal development practices.

Likewise, building new parks and public seashores — "rewilding" stretches of coastline — will not only reduce our vulnerability, but also start to build a new relationship with our climate-changed shores.



Tim Dillingham, Executive Director

We must get back to those initial post-storm conversations about how to escape the whirlpool of repetitive damage and loss by protecting and restoring nature's defenses as part of a managed retreat from the water's edge.

Such hard discussions are required because wind will blow and water will rise regardless of political ideologies or [redacted] on climate change. It's a [redacted] life on the coast.

And when the storms come, as they always have, we know what will happen to houses built on sand.



The Society was very pleased to receive a generous grant of \$20,000 from the Meringoff Family Foundation in support of our Restoration Corps (R-Corps) youth workers in Jamaica Bay. R-Corps is a green jobs training and service program for at-risk youth in New York City, that teaches students to become environmental stewards through structured education programs in ecology and conservation. The grant was made at the recommendation of philanthropist and Meringoff family member, Sophie. Members of the family visited Jamaica Bay this summer, to see restoration work in progress. Pictured are (left to right): Stuart Post, Executive Director of the Meringoff Foundation, Sophie Meringoff, and Tim Dillingham, Executive Director of the American Littoral Society.

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Monitoring Key to Wreck Pond Restoration Project

If you build it they will come may have worked for "Field of Dreams." However, effective environmental restoration projects require a bit more effort in order to determine the effect the work has had and, ultimately, whether it has been successful.

Monitoring is a key component of restoration projects, because it can show how the work affects an ecosystem and the surrounding area. Moreover, monitoring can guide changes to project management, which might lead to better project outcomes.

To this end, the American Littoral Society continues to expand the monitoring efforts at Wreck Pond, which is in the midst of a \$7.5 million restoration project. As part of that, the Society recently instituted a citizen science program.

Wreck Pond is a 73-acre coastal lake located in residential sections of Spring Lake and Sea Girt, NJ. Historically, the pond and surrounding watershed have had a number of environmental problems.

Since the early 2000s, a diverse group of partners has been working together to address the issues and help restore the ecological health of Wreck Pond and the larger watershed. The current project, which involves installation of a 600-foot box culvert, aims to reduce flooding and erosion around the pond, while improving water quality and providing an improved passage for migratory fish. The project is due for completion in December 2016.



The 600-foot passage at Wreck Pond will make it easier for migratory fish to move into and out of the pond, while also improving water quality and reducing local flooding.

As part of the project, Society staff has been testing water quality and counting fish in the pond for nearly two years. This past Spring, those efforts included the use of electronic PIT (passive integrated transponder) tags to determine river herring movement in the pond and watershed.

River herring — a primary food source for popular sport fish like striped bass — use Wreck Pond and similar coastal lakes to spawn. PIT tags (tiny electronic transmitters that are inserted into fish) act like an EZPass to record the time and date each individual fish passes over an in-stream antenna. By

installing several antennas in the watershed, the Society collected information on adult herring movement and behavior during their spring spawning run. This information will ultimately lead to more targeted restoration and better species management.

Now the Society is recruiting members of the

public to help collect other scientific data. These Citizen Scientists will help the Society collect more information, which should lead to better project management, and, in the long run, better project success. Additionally, members of the public will gain ownership of the restoration, and personally benefit from the training and experience.

In the Wreck Pond Citizen Science Program, volunteers have the option of performing site monitoring, bird monitoring or both.

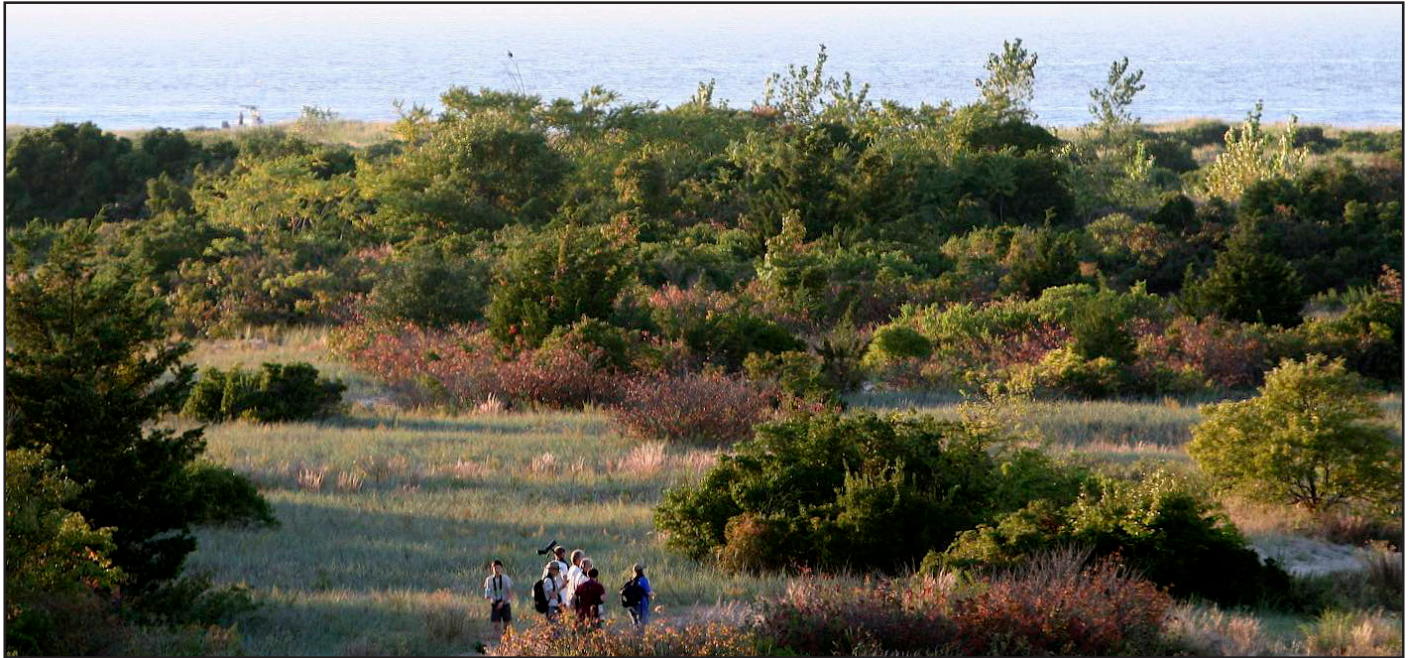
Site monitoring involves taking readings of water level, salinity, and temperature at various sites located throughout the watershed. Bird monitoring involves documenting any birds observed on the beach near the location of the new culvert. The data collected in this program will be used to characterize the current state of the watershed and measure changes that occur after installation of the culvert is completed.

Contact Zack Royle at zack@littoralsociety.org for more information or if you are interested in taking part in the program.

For more information on the PIT tagging program contact Captain Al Modjeski at Alek@littoralsociety.org.



Littoral Society interns count fish in Wreck Pond.



Above: A group involved with the Sandy Hook BioBlitz conducts a survey on the northern tip of Sandy Hook. Below: Two students involved in the Sandy Hook BioBlitz pull a seining net in Horseshoe Cove and a BioBlitz volunteer uses the iNaturalist phone app to record a species. (Photos by David Hawkins / American Littoral Society)

Park Service Celebrates Centennial with Gateway BioBlitzes

In celebration of the National Park Service Centennial, Gateway National Recreation Area and the American Littoral Society partnered to host a BioBlitz double-header in 2016.

On June 10-11, a BioBlitz was conducted in the Jamaica Bay unit of the park, where the American Littoral Society's Northeast Chapter has its offices. Gateway's Sandy Hook unit followed with its BioBlitz on Sept. 23-24.

The Park Service launched the first BioBlitz in 1996 as a fun, fast-paced way to acquaint the public with the importance of biodiversity by inviting them to work alongside scientists and naturalists while taking a snapshot of the flora and fauna found in parks. The inaugural Sandy Hook BioBlitz took place in 2011 and another was conducted in September of 2015.

The iNaturalist app was used in both events to capture pictures and information about the species being cataloged. The app not only helps users record their observations with words, pictures and video, but also provides a means to share them for crowd-sourced identification.

More than 400 organisms, ranging from lichens and mallards to bullfrogs

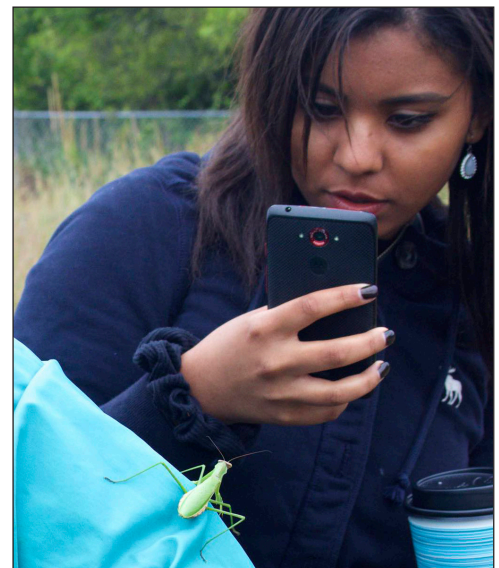
and bunny rabbits, were recorded at each of the events.

Surveys took participants into the holly forest (one of only two maritime holly forests in the entire world) and the brackish ponds near North Beach, as well as the coves along Sandy Hook's shores.

In addition to those helping with the BioBlitz, many people turned out for public programs that included seining and star-gazing.

"The BioBlitz is a rare opportunity for the general public to engage with scientists, educators, and naturalists, while taking part in a citizen-science based program," said Tim Dillingham Executive Director for the American Littoral Society. "Besides being fun and educational, the effort helps us understand how events such as Hurricane Sandy and climate change are affecting life."

Plans are to make the Sandy Hook BioBlitz an annual event.



Name That Fish

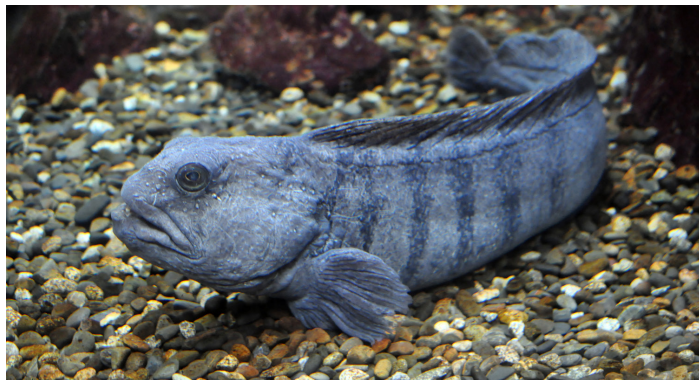
With fall upon us — and stripers, Northern Gannets, and humpback whales chasing schools of bunker south — it is once again time to put on our ichthyological thinking caps and play “Name that Fish.”

Last month’s correct answer was: hogchocker (*Trinectes maculatus*).

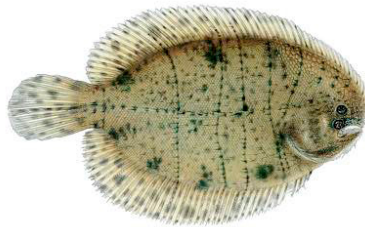
Hogchockers, one of our local flatfishes, are unique among Western Atlantic right-eyed flounders in that their eyes are comparatively tiny and inset and that they do not possess any pectoral fins. Hogchockers are common inhabitants of brackish bays and estuaries from Maine, to the Gulf of Mexico, and south to Venezuela.

These fish tend to show a preference for waters of relatively lower salinity than other indigenous flatfishes. They also exhibit a notable tolerance for waters with low dissolved oxygen levels. The diet of hogchockers consists of amphipods, nereid worms, copepods, small fishes, and especially clam siphons.

Hogchockers are purportedly a very tasty flounder, although there is no commercial trade in this species given that a lunker or especially large hogchocker is around 10 inches in length. The common name of hogchocker is rumored to have come from hogs choking on these fishes when attempting to swallow them tail first.



Take a good look at the fish above and send your best-guess to “Name that Fish” c/o the American Littoral Society, 18 Hartshorne Drive, Suite 1, Highlands, NJ 07732



Hogchocker (*Trinectes maculatus*)

We had many correct answers last go around, as well as a fair number of incorrect guesses. To be fair to those that guessed incorrectly; they were mostly in the correct family (family Achiridae: American soles), they just guessed the wrong genus and/ or species.

Incorrect answers included; Dover sole, peacock flounder, windowpane

flounder, brown sole, and lined sole.

Lori Singer, our finance director here at Sandy Hook, and member of the “Name that Fish” prize committee, chose Pete Weiss of Manhattan, from the correct entries that were placed in the Society Tagging Program hat.

Congratulations Pete, you may now wear said hat with ichthyologic pride while walking the canyons of NYC, or while fishing the canyons of the continental shelf.

Take a good look at the fish above and mail your best guess to: “Name that Fish” c/o the American Littoral Society, 18 Hartshorne Drive, Suite 1, Highlands, NJ 07732. Or send an email guess to: jeff@littoralsociety.org

Films Featuring Littoral Society to be Screened at RAE Conference

Two films featuring American Littoral Society staff and programs will be screened as part of a documentary film series at the Restore America’s Estuaries Summit in New Orleans, LA from Dec. 10-15.

The Coastal Films series will include more than half-a-dozen films focused on coastal issues. Curated by Michael Pasquier, a professor at Louisiana State University, each film tells a different story of how people and communities are addressing coastal challenges.

Saving Jamaica Bay, tells the story of how one community fought

government inaction and overcame Hurricane Sandy to clean up and restore the largest open space in New York City, which had become a dumping ground for garbage, sewage and bullet-riddled mobsters. Narrated by Academy-Award winning actress Susan Sarandon, ***Saving Jamaica Bay*** features some of Jamaica Bay’s most dedicated advocates including Don Riepe, Littoral Society Northeast Chapter Director.

New Jersey’s Hidden Coast looks at the work being done to save New Jersey’s Delaware Bay beaches by the American Littoral Society

and Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ. It features narration by Tim Dillingham, Executive Director of the American Littoral Society, and appearances by Littoral Society Habitat Restoration staff, including Capt. Al Modjeski and Shane Godshall.

Other films to be screened include: ***Return of the River, Water Like Stone, Shored Up, Ocean Frontiers III***, and ***Finding Common Ground*** (in production).

The film series is free for Summit Registrants. More information is available at: <https://www.estuaries.org/Summit>.

Society's Members Day Brings Music to the Coast

Sandy Hook came alive with the sound of music for the American Littoral Society's annual Members Day on Saturday, June 11, 2016.

The Society's annual meeting is a traditional day to celebrate and thank members for their support.

The event took place at Littoral Society headquarters, 18 Hartshorne Drive in Gateway National Recreation Area's Sandy Hook unit, with close to 250 people in attendance.

Members Day activities traditionally include seining in the bay, a walk through Sandy Hook's Holly Forest, and birding excursions. This year, the gathering also featured a collaboration with the award-winning Union City Music Project (UMCP).

The UMCP provided a special musical performance to Society members and guests. In return, the students and their parents shared in the Society's other planned outdoor activities. For some UMCP students and parents, this was the first time they had ever been to the ocean.

The collaboration between the American Littoral Society and Union City Music Project was made possible by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. Both organizations are Dodge Foundation grantees and the coastal concert provided a way for them to pursue their missions in new ways.

"We are thrilled that this partnership was formed as a follow-up to a recent Dodge grantee convening. We believe that building relationships, making connections and working together, particularly across program areas and among non-traditional partners, are keys to greater impact," said Chris Daggett, President, of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

The event was supported by the National Park Service (NPS) in conjunction with NPS Centennial celebration.

The Union City Music Project is a child development non-profit organization that uses music as a vehicle for social change by providing students with intensive after-school orchestral instruction, mentoring, and academic tutoring.



Above: Capt. Al Modjeski, Littoral Society Habitat Restoration Director, shows children a small fish from Sandy Hook Bay. Below: An Osprey brings a flounder back to the nest.

The UCMP goes far beyond just teaching music scales. The project promotes fundamental life skills such as self-esteem, self-expression, cooperative learning, discipline, and creativity by teaching music in an orchestral setting to students who range in age from four to 15. UCMP participants receive free musical instruction and instruments, and have the opportunity to attend a full range of cultural, social, and enrichment experiences, such as their visit to Sandy Hook, for an annual participation fee.

The impact of the music program on participating families has been powerful, according to Melina Garcia, UCMP founder and Executive Director.

"One mother cried, saying she never had the opportunity to take her kids outside of Union City because she didn't have a car. She was so touched, and so moved," said Garcia.

The partnership also fit with the Society's core mission of helping people become stewards of the shore. The Society believes that sitting at a computer or reading a book may cause people to develop an interest in the coast; but standing knee deep in sea foam with sand between their



toes will cause them to develop a passion to protect the environment and maintain natural resources.

"We believe this is a remarkable opportunity to share beautiful music with our members and the beauty of the coast with the parents and children of the Union City Music Project," said Tim Dillingham, Executive Director for the Littoral Society. "We hope the combination will foster greater passion to protect and preserve our natural treasures — like shorebirds and seals, as well as the places those creatures need to survive and thrive."



Top left: Union City Music Project students and parents enjoy lunch with Littoral Society staff and members. Top right: The lantern room atop the Sandy Hook lighthouse provides a spectacular view of New York City. Lighthouse tours were just one activity available on Members Day. Left: Sam Kimmelman and other Society volunteers received special recognition at Members Day. Below: Children from the Union City Music Project take a bow at the end of their performance. Samuel Marchan, center, is music director for the UCMP.



Shell Recycling

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In January efforts paid off through approval of a bill allowing environmental and research groups to establish oyster colonies in polluted waters, including the Raritan Bay, as long as the colonies are not easy to see or access.

NJ's Department of Environmental Protection had prohibited such colonies for nearly six years, fearing that poachers could introduce potentially tainted seafood into the market, damaging New Jersey's \$800 million shellfish industry. The new law requires the state to allow the colonies once the research groups certify in writing that the oysters are out of sight and inaccessible.

The Littoral Society restores oyster reefs because they can provide a natural protective barrier against coastal flooding and erosion, offer habitat for other marine life, and help clean bays and estuaries.

The protective aspects of oyster reefs are a primary reason the Society has been working with Conserve Wildlife Foundation (CWF) to construct natural reefs in the Delaware Bay. That work was highlighted this year with the 2nd Annual Shellabration, which saw dedicated volunteers brave wind and snow in early April to establish an oyster reef at Moores Beach in Maurice River Township. That reef will be dedicated to military veterans on Nov. 12 at the 2nd Annual Veterans Day on the Bay.

The 1st Annual Veterans Day on the Bay took place on November 11, 2015 at the Bayshore's South Reeds Beach. The reef was dedicated to all veterans and highlighted veteran involvement in the effort to restore New Jersey's Delaware Bayshore. Event attendees honored their own military veterans by inscribing that special person's name on a shell and placing that shell on "Veterans Reef."

The Littoral Society, CWF and volunteers also worked over several weekends in October 2016 to build an oyster reef at Dyers Cove, near Newport, NJ.

All of these beaches were restored following Hurricane Sandy and more

than 10,000 cubic yards of sand were replaced at Dyers Cove beach last spring. The bayshore beaches needed restoration and protection so that horseshoe crabs would have proper breeding grounds. Crab eggs feed shorebirds, like the Red Knot, which stops in New Jersey each spring on its long journey from South America to the Arctic Circle. The Red Knot and other shorebirds help bring \$35 million in tourist dollars to the New Jersey bayshore region each year.

While oysters make great guardians for coastal areas, they're also nature's Merry Maids. A single oyster can filter impurities from up to 50 gallons of water every day. That benefit is the primary motivation for the Society's work in Barnegat Bay.

This year the Society re-stocked its oyster nursery in Ocean Gate, NJ in a June 28 ceremony, and on July 15 held a 2nd Annual Parade of Boats to ferry those babies to their permanent home at our restored reef off Good Luck Point.

Partners in the Good Luck Point oyster restoration project include the Barnegat Bay Partnership, Stockton University, and ReClam the Bay, with support from Ocean Gate and Berkeley Township. The Littoral Society has also teamed up with Stockton University's Marine Field Station and Parsons Mariculture for work on an oyster reef project in Little Egg Harbor.

That work was highlighted in an Oct. 1 Lunch n' Learn at Bayville, NJ's Shady Rest Restaurant, a recent addition to the shell recycling program. Among other participating restaurants and wholesalers in Ocean and Monmouth counties are Manahawkin, NJ's Old Causeway Steak & Oyster House and Mud City Crab House, and Highlands, NJ's Lusty Lobster.

The recycled shell will be cured for a year, then used to help supplement existing reefs or build new ones in New Jersey's coastal waterways.

The Society's shell recycling program is the first of its kind in NJ and makes clear that we don't mind who gets the oyster, as long as we get the shell to aid our work.



Littoral Society staff and volunteers braved wind and snow to build a reef off Moores Beach.



Philippe and Ashlan Cousteau planting dune grass on Sandy Hook.

The American Littoral Society marked World Oceans Day on June 8 by leading an effort to restore dunes on a beach in Gateway National Recreation Area's Sandy Hook Unit. Ocean conservationists and filmmakers Philippe and Ashlan Cousteau made a special appearance and helped plant dune grass. The day concluded with lunch and remarks from the Cousteaus.

Philippe Cousteau is the grandson of the late Jacques Cousteau, the world-famous explorer, conservationist, filmmaker, innovator, scientist, photographer, author and researcher. Phillippe and his wife Ashlan partnered with La Mer, an Estee Lauder company, to help create a series of vignettes that illustrate how the ocean serves as their muse.

Created in 1992 and made official by the United Nations in 2009, World Oceans Day serves as a time to recognize the importance of the sea as vital for all life on earth and to focus action on preserving both that ecosystem and its wildlife.

River Pollution

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unabated, eventually the limit for recreational use could also be reached.

That's the bad news, but fortunately there is good news.

Local organizations, towns surrounding the river, government agencies — including the NJDEP — and various organizations, including the American Littoral Society, are rallying to clean up the river.

The NJDEP identified domestic animal waste as one of the culprits and because one incident pointed to waste from a local horse farm, the Monmouth County Health Department has stepped in to see to it that the local farms use best management practices (BMP) to dispose of their horse manure and stable scrapings.

The Littoral Society is approaching the pollution problem on multiple fronts, which include public information and environmental restoration.

The Society has begun an educational effort to teach the public about the toxicity of dog waste by sending out flyers and enlisting the help of the media to alert dog owners to the importance of proper disposal of every bit of dog waste.

Since 1991 the EPA has categorized dog waste as toxic, along with oil products, pesticides and herbicides. One gram of dog waste contains up to 23 million fecal coliforms and an average dog produces about 227 grams of waste per day. The EPA has

found that two or three day's worth of droppings from about 100 dogs could introduce enough bacteria to temporarily close a bay and all the watersheds around it to swimming and shell fishing. That makes the proper disposal of all dog waste critical.

Even though the majority of dog owners comply with the law, many dog owners who don't live near the river are unaware that their dog's waste can still be carried to the Navesink through storm drain systems.

According to a report from the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC), "today, the greatest contributors to poor water quality in New Jersey's rivers are from "non-point" sources, transported by rainwater as it washes across the land and drains into rivers."

Fertilizers, oil, pesticides, trash, sediment, and other contaminants can also harm fish and birds, and make the rivers unsafe for fishing, recreation and drinking.

The Littoral Society has created another flyer to educate the public about the impact of lawn fertilizer when it flows into our rivers. Those include algal blooms, fish kills and jellyfish proliferation. Plans are underway to do more outreach on other river pollution related topics.

The society is also working to put more living shorelines along the river. Living shorelines — which replace hardened structures with wetland and other native plants, such as grasses, shrubs, and trees — can absorb

and filter rainwater run-off, as well as create habitat for wildlife. The society is working with Fair Haven and other municipalities around the Navesink to install and encourage the use of more living shorelines to improve the river's water quality.

Oysters are also on the menu.

The society has already installed oyster reefs in Barnegat and Delaware Bays and hopes to put oysters back into the Navesink and Shrewsbury Rivers. One oyster can clean up to 50 gallons of water per day, and oysters were historically a part of the area's local ecosystem. Currently, with the help of The Lusty Lobster, a local seafood wholesaler, the society is collecting oyster shell from local restaurants as part of its "Shuck It, Don't Chuck It" program. Doug Douty, owner of The Lusty Lobster, sits on the Littoral Society Board of Trustees.

The goal is to get the oyster shell back into the rivers to provide a foundation for oysters to grow on and also create habitat for other marine life. A plan to have local waterfront residents and restaurants hang shell bags from their docks on the Shrewsbury and Navesink Rivers, to monitor for the presence of natural oysters, is in the works. Our eventual goal is returning oysters to the water once the pollution numbers have been reduced.

For more information about the oyster shell recycling program or to become involved in cleaning up the Navesink, please contact Pim Van Hemmen at pim@littoralsociety.org.

Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Ocean Plans on Track for Approval

The year isn't over, but 2016 has already been historic for ocean planning.

The final versions of both the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Ocean Plan have been submitted to the National Ocean Council for review. Both regional plans — the first products of the 2010 Executive Order from President Obama that established a National Ocean Policy — could be ready for implementation by the end of this year.

That National Ocean Policy set forth a vision to ensure that US oceans and coasts, and the Great Lakes, are healthy and resilient, safe and productive, and understood and treasured so as to promote the well-being, prosperity, and security of present and future generations.

The American Littoral Society played a role in advocating for both plans through its work with the Healthy Oceans Coalition. The HOC is supported by the Conservation Law Foundation and the Littoral Society.

On Oct. 19 the final version of the Northeast Ocean Plan was sent to the National Ocean Council for official review. The Council — made up of the more than 20 federal agencies and offices with responsibilities to manage and protect our ocean and coasts — will review the plan for at least one month, and may approve it by late November.

After receiving approval from the council, the Northeast will become the first region to have its own regional ocean plan to guide ocean decision-making. Once the plan is final, the work to put it into action will begin.

The Mid-Atlantic region isn't far behind, having submitted its plan for final review on Nov. 2. The plan should help identify special places or Ecologically Rich Areas (ERAs) in the ocean that need to be protected, reduce conflicts over resources, and increase the information needed to sustainably use our shared ocean and coastal space.

This Action Plan is the culmination of over three years of meetings, workshops, stakeholder engagement, and communication with the public.



Wind farms are just one of the new demands being placed on the ocean. The American Littoral Society supports renewable energy, but has worked to ensure that ocean planning prevents them from harming ecologically important places.

The Society began working in 2013 as a conservation community stakeholder. Since then the Society has engaged with Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB) members, officials in the Mid-Atlantic Congressional delegation, state and municipal officeholders, and people in the New Jersey environmental and recreational fishing communities to ensure awareness of the process and urge engagement in the Plan's development.

A draft of that plan was released on July 5, 2016 for a 60-day public comment period, which included public listening sessions in each state.

Following release of that draft plan, the Society worked through several avenues to enhance awareness of the process and urge engagement in the plan's development. Those included:

- Co-hosting a public workshop in Belmar, NJ;
- Developing detailed Society comments on the Draft Ocean Action Plan;
- Producing a video to increase public understanding of ocean planning;
- Delivering a petition in support of the plan, which was signed by more

than 3,000 residents, to the Mid-Atlantic Congressional Delegation; and

- Co-sponsoring a petition with the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters that gathered over 1,700 signatures in support of protecting ERAs.

The RPB wrapped up the public comment period the day after Labor Day and has since been working to incorporate stakeholder suggestions into the final Action Plan that will be sent to the National Ocean Council.

The Council will read and digest the proposed plan and either approve it or ask the RPB to consider changes. Then the plan will come back to the regional body for final acceptance, followed by implementation.

Implementation is where all the planning turns to actions, such as identifying ERAs.

Once the work begins, the Littoral Society will continue involvement as a voice for conservation, working with the recreational fishing community and other stakeholders. You can stay informed and updated on that effort by signing up to be on the mailing list at MidAtlanticOceanPlanning.org.

Upcoming Trips and Events

December

Thursday, Dec. 1, 5:30 p.m. Dec. 1, 4, 6, 8, 11	Red Bank, NJ Sarasota, FL	Gallery Jupiter Fish Auction Kayak Trips
Saturday, Dec. 3, 10 a.m.	Jamaica Bay, NY	Winter Survival Bird Walk
Saturday, Dec. 10, 9:30 a.m.	Lemon Bay Park, FL	Marine Life Exploration
Tuesday, Dec. 10, 5-9 p.m.	Broad Channel, NY	NE Chapter Holiday Party
Saturday-Thursday, Dec. 10-15	New Orleans, LA	Restore America's Estuaries Summit
Wednesday, Dec. 10, 1-3 p.m.	Sarasota, FL	Care-free Learner Eco-Tour

January

Sunday, Jan. 1, 11 a.m.	Sandy Hook, NJ	New Year's Day Walk
Sunday, Jan. 1, 11 a.m.	Jamaica Bay, NY	New Year's Day Walk
Friday-Sunday, Jan. 13-15,	Montauk, NY	Montauk Winter Weekend

February

Thursday, Feb. 2, 10 a.m.	Sandy Hook, NJ	Winter Seal & Waterfowl Walk
Saturday, Feb. 18, 8:30 a.m.	Lincroft, NJ	Jersey Shore Surfcasters Surf Day

March

Monday, March 6, 10 a.m.	Sandy Hook, NJ	Winter Seal & Waterfowl Walk
Sunday, March 12, 1 p.m.	Rumson, NJ	St. Patrick's Day Parade
Monday, March 20, 5 p.m.	Sandy Hook, NJ	Spring Equinox Walk
Saturday, March 25	Bradley Beach, NJ	Dune Planting

April

Saturday, April 8	Delaware Bay, NJ	Third Annual Shellabration
Friday, April 14, 4 p.m.	Sandy Hook, NJ	Holly Forest Walk
Saturday, April 15, 1-5 p.m.	Sandy Hook, NJ	Honor Your Mother Art Show
Saturday, April 15, 8 a.m.-Noon	Sandy Hook, NJ	Surf Fishing Clinic
Saturday, April 22	Jamaica Bay, NY	Earth Day Shoreline Cleanup
Saturday, April 22	Asbury Park, NJ	2nd Annual Lobster Trot

May

Saturday-Sunday, May 20-21	Sandy Hook, NJ	Ocean Fun Days
Saturday-Sunday, May 20-21	Island Beach State Park, NJ	Ocean Fun Days
Wednesday, May 24, 6-8 p.m.	Sandy Hook, NJ	Horseshoe Crab Walk
Saturday, May 27	Jamaica Bay, NY	Horseshoe Crab Festival
Sunday, May 28, 5-8 p.m.	Jamaica Bay, NY	Sunset Ecology Cruise
Days and Times TBD	Delaware Bay, NJ	Horseshoe Crab Tagging

This Holiday Season, please consider making a donation to the American Littoral Society through the 2016 Annual Appeal or by giving the gift of membership. Call 732-291-0055 or email Laurie Bratone at laurie@littoralsociety.org.



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