


NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Preserving the Narrow River and the Watershed Since 1970 / Spring 2016

Groups Promote Boater Safety on the River

Tony Columbo of the Mettatuxet Yacht Club, Narragansett Harbor Master Kevin Connors, Narragansett Parks and Recreation Director Steve Wright and Jason Considine of Narrow River Kayaks conducted a panel discussion on March 24 at the Mettatuxet Yacht Club to discuss safety concerns, promote boater safety and field suggestions. A follow-up meeting will take place at Mettatuxet Yacht Club before Memorial Day open to all interested parties and concerned boaters. Check narrowriver.org soon for more details.

In addition, Jason will hold workshops on Monday, June 13 and Wednesday, June 15 at Narrow River Kayaks at 5:30 p.m. These workshops are the same on each date and open to any paddler interested in learning how to safely navigate the lower river and learn about signage, boat traffic, sandbars, tides and more. Portions of this workshop will take place on land and on water in kayaks, canoes or paddle boards. Space is limited for each date and pre-registration is required. For more information or to register, email Jason Considine at narrowriverkayaks@verizon.net.

For more on boater safety see "Paddle Safety on Narrow River" on page 5.

Mark Your Calendar

Here are four events to get out and enjoy Narrow River and learn about its unique estuarine environment.

Visit narrowriver.org for event information and registration.

Run Along the River Saturday, May 14

Don't miss the 29th Narrow River Road Race with 10K and 5K Runs and a 5K Walk. Check-in and walk-up registration start at 8:30 a.m. at Narragansett Beach.

What Lives in the River Saturday, June 11

Enjoy this family event where children learn about river critters through seining and other hands-on activities, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at Middlebridge Marina.

Swim the River Saturday, June 25

Check-in and walk-up registration for the Turnaround Swim start at 7:45 a.m. at the URI Boathouse on Walmsley Lane, N.K.

Paddle at Sunset Friday, July 22

This year's Pettaquamscutt Paddle will be a sunset cruise. Check-in at Narrow River Kayaks is at 5:30 p.m. for a 6:00 cruise.

Glossy Ibis Symbol for 29th Narrow River Road Race

It may be a tough season in Rhode Island for logo makers, but we are ready to go with this year's Narrow River Road Race symbol featuring the Glossy Ibis, a frequent visitor to Narrow River in the summer months. Per tradition, runners and walkers in the event on Saturday, May 14 will receive a T-shirt with a Johann Schumacher photo of the Ibis on the front and 2016 NRPA Event Sponsors listed on the back. For more on the Ibis see Craig Wood's "Sickle Bill Gives Glossy Ibis Distinctive Look" on page 4.



President's Cove

NRPA recently completed its 2016 membership drive, with you and more than 350 households either renewing membership or joining us for the first time. Added to that number are the generous local merchants and other organizations that show their support for the watershed by sponsoring NRPA events such as the Narrow River Road Race.



Three times a year we mail this newsletter to members and other interested parties. It's one way of making you aware of the full slate of activities we have planned for the year and addressing some of the issues affecting the Narrow River Watershed. In this edition, for instance, we focus on boater safety and what each of us can do to make sure that everyone can have a safe and enjoyable time on the river. I would also encourage you to visit our website (<http://www.narrowriver.org/>) frequently for updates and photos of life on the river.

The membership drive and sponsor contributions are the most important parts of our annual fund-raising mix, which also includes some grants for specific projects. The uncertainties in this annual cycle keeps this chronic fund-raiser worried year to year that we can fund (and expand) our preservation and education programs. But with your help, we meet our budget each year.

NRPA is also the beneficiary of endowments at the Rhode Island Foundation set up by four individuals: John Elder Dick, Carl W. Otto, Robert Leeson, Jr. and Robert J. Gormley. These funds provide a measure of long-term security and, combined with annual contributions, allow us to proceed with confidence. Our partnership with the Rhode Island Foundation, gives us access to planned giving resources and professional endowment management. By contributing to our endowment, your charitable giving can benefit NRPA forever.

Richard Grant

Richard B. Grant, NRPA President

		United Way of Rhode Island
<p>NRPA is part of the United Way Workplace Campaign. Our donor option number is 6239</p> <p>If you plan to give to United Way, please consider designating a portion of your gift to NRPA.</p>		



MISSION STATEMENT

The Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) works to preserve, protect, and restore the natural environment and the quality of life of all communities within the Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River Estuary and Watershed.

www.narrowriver.org

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Narrow River Notes

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HELP WANTED

Computer savvy person with environmental interest to fill program coordinator role at NRPA. Contact Ken McShane at ken.mcshane@verizon.net

Fourth Graders Track Osprey Migration



Mrs. Wood's Fourth Grade class at Monsignor Clark School in Wakefield recently

examined the features of ospreys that make them so well adapted for catching

fish. They also received a lesson on the osprey's spring migration from as far as the Amazon Rain Forest to New England nesting grounds.

With help of NRPA's **Craig Wood**, they tracked the daily progress of two birds (Snowy and Edwin) transmitting a radio signal of their exact position on their journey north.

Teachers interested in similar programs, should contact NRPA at nrpa@narrowriver.org. Programs can be tailored for grades 4 through 12.

Two Join Board

In January, the NRPA Board of Directors welcomed two new members:



Molly Mageau, of Narragansett, is the Head Teller at People's Credit Union in Wakefield and is interested in starting cleanup projects in the watershed.

Chris Hubbard, of Wakefield, is the Director of Municipal Partnerships for WasteZero and has extensive background in recycling and wastewater treatment.

Abby Cobb Wins NRPA Science Fair Award

Education Chair **Veronica Berounsky** presents South Kingstown High School Junior **Abby Cobb** with the 2016 NRPA Science Fair Award at the March NRPA Board of Directors meeting. The award includes a \$50 prize and NRPA membership.

Abby's project at the SKHS Science Fair in January, *A Slick Solution: Best Way to Clean Up an Oil Spill*, evaluated the ability of three materials to remove oil from water: hair, cotton balls and sawdust. Hair was the most efficient, that is, absorbing the most oil and the least water.



NRPA also awarded Honorable Mentions at the SKHS Science Fair to:

- ❑ Hossam Zaki for a project titled *Commercial Water Filters*
- ❑ Matthew Kutcher for *Power of Water through Electrolysis*
- ❑ Cristian Rodriguez-Gervais for *Natural Remedies against Bacteria*
- ❑ Sierra Rowley for *Micro Plastics, Macro Problem*

Sickle Bill Gives Glossy Ibis Distinctive Look



By Craig Wood
Principal Ecologist, ESS Group
NRPA Board of Directors

While the Glossy Ibis does not nest along the Narrow River, it is a relatively common sight in the summer foraging in small flocks within salt marshes for insects, mollusks and crustaceans. Its diet typically does not include fish. The Glossy Ibis is a medium-sized wading bird, standing up to 26 inches in height. It is easily distinguished from other local wading birds (herons and egrets) by its dark appearance and long, down-curved bill. Unlike herons and egrets which fly with their necks retracted, the ibis flies with its neck stretched out. Touch sensors on the down-curved bill allow the ibis to rapidly snap the bill closed as it probes the substrate when it encounters prey, while ridges along the bill help to securely grasp the

prey in place. The scientific name, *Plegadis falcinellus*, is derived from *Falx*, the Latin word for sickle, referring to the bird's distinctive bill.

While they appear dark at a distance, adult birds are chestnut colored with an iridescent purple gloss on the head, neck, and underside. During the breeding season, bare facial skin becomes a cobalt blue trimmed with a thin band of white. Immature birds are similar to adult, but with a dark banded bill, duller body and a neck covered with light streaks.

The most widespread of all ibis species, the Glossy Ibis is found throughout the Americas and around the world. It is originally from Africa, immigrating to South America in the 19th century. In North America, the Glossy Ibis nests in a narrow band along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts.

The species is migratory and

nomadic; those found in R.I. may wander widely before migrating southwards to wintering grounds.

Glossy Ibis nest in small mixed colonies with other wading birds, such as Great Egrets and Black-Crowned Night Herons, on predator-free islands in Narragansett Bay. Both the male and female help to construct the nest of sticks and twigs in trees or shrubs up to 10 feet above ground. Both parents incubate the eggs (typically 3-4); the female usually attends the nest at night and the male during the day.

First spotted in R.I. in the 1930s, the first recorded nesting in this state was in 1971. This species can display great volatility in the number of nesting pairs, with a R.I. population peaking at 500 nesting pairs in 1991, then declining to 135 pairs in 2013. R.I. Department of Environmental Management biologist Chris Raithel says there were about 200 nesting pairs in R.I. last summer. Nationwide, the species is considered a low conservation concern and continues to expand its range. However, due to its small population in R.I., the species is a local conservation concern.

See <http://www.narrowriver.org/glossyibis> for the sources for this article and links to additional information.

Paddle Safety on Narrow River

By Jason Considine
Narrow River Kayaks
NRPA Board of Directors

With its spectacular estuary and wildlife refuge, beach and tidal flats, kettle ponds, and access to fresh, brackish and salt water, who can blame anyone for wanting to enjoy warm weather and the outdoors on Narrow River? Each year brings more people and more vessels (both motorized and self-powered) to Narrow River, particularly in the stretch between Middlebridge and the mouth of the river, where the sandbars have grown in size each year making it difficult for vessels to safely navigate around smaller boats. Here are a few tips to help ensure a safe and enjoyable outing on Narrow River in your kayak or canoe and on your stand-up paddle board.

- ❑ Wear a Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (pfd).
- ❑ Do not paddle alone, but with someone familiar with the river who can give you some pointers.
- ❑ See and be seen. Wear brightly colored clothing. Consider brightly colored equipment when making a purchase.
- ❑ If you must paddle at night, make sure you have proper lighting. In low light conditions, a white light

must be shown toward oncoming traffic.

- ❑ Plan your route and familiarize yourself with the water you are navigating. Obey all posted markers, warnings and regulations.
- ❑ Check the weather before you go. The conditions where you are going to paddle may be very different from the conditions outside your front door. Factor wind, weather and tides into your trip. Save the easier paddle for your return trip when you are more likely to be fatigued.
- ❑ Know your limits. Don't overdo it. Avoid putting yourself in situations on the water that make you uncomfortable.
- ❑ Dress properly. Wear fast-drying materials. Bring a hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, snack and water.
- ❑ Be courteous, respectful and helpful to others on the river.
- ❑ Avoid the stretch between Middlebridge and the mouth of the river. There is plenty of quieter paddling and less motor boat traffic in Pettaquamscutt Cove and north of Middlebridge.
- ❑ The current from Sprague Bridge to the mouth of the river is the strongest and can be too much for many. Novice paddlers should avoid the mouth of the river and the ocean.

❑ If you are paddling with children or anyone that tires easily, bring a tow rope just in case.

South of Middlebridge, there are temporary seasonal markers to help you navigate the stretch to Sprague Bridge. Going under Middlebridge toward Sprague Bridge, stay on the east (left) side between the white numbered buoys and the salt marsh. This will keep paddlers off the sand bars and safely distanced from the motor boats, which will follow the larger orange buoys in deeper water.

- ❑ Exercise extreme caution just before Sprague Bridge, where all boat traffic converges. Stay to the side and give motor boats the right of way. If you are in a larger group, avoid spreading out across or "cluttering" the waterway. In many areas, motorized boats have a very narrow area to pass without going aground.
- ❑ Do not operate your vessel under the influence.
- ❑ Leave no trace. Take out what you take into the watershed. Properly dispose of all waste, including pet waste.
- ❑ Narrow River is closed to shell fishing. Think twice about filling your hatch with quahogs.

Information on Paddle Safety and Stewardship is available at the American Canoe Association at americancanoe.org.

2016 NRPA Event Sponsors

Many thanks to the generous organizations and individuals who are sponsoring NRPA events this year, including the Narrow River Road Race on May 14, What Lives in the River on June 11, the Narrow River Turnaround Swim on June 25 and Pettaquamscutt Paddle on July 22.



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