



SUMMER/AUTUMN 2021 NEWSLETTER



Blue Mountain by Juliana Seedorf

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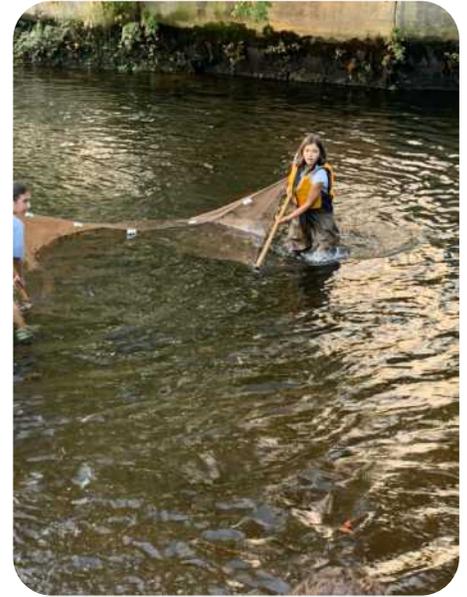
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A Message From the Program Coordinator

Quite a bit of time has gone by since our last newsletter! We had plenty of outdoor fun to keep us busy this spring and summer: working together to cultivate our vegetable garden, participating in community plantings and beach cleanups, species studies of horseshoe crabs and diamondback terrapins, shellfish restoration, cookouts over the campfire, and our first ever Marine Science Week!

It has been so refreshing to get back into our “normal” rhythm with our program and building upon it further by adding new opportunities.

This is the time of year where we take a pause from working on projects during daylight that stretches into the evening, listening to the sweet chirps of new baby birds waiting to be fed, watching the butterflies flutter by and landing on a nearby zinnia, searching for crabs in the intertidal zone and feeling the summer sun warming our backs. It is a new season which will bring new projects. Milkweed seed pods are bursting with wind-blown fluff drifting atop sleeping false sunflowers, deciduous tree leaves are amplifying their red and amber hues, the first praying mantis



Volunteers participated in A Day in the Life of the Nissequogue River

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Save Those Pumpkins! What You Can Do Instead of Throwing Them Away

Save your Jack-o-lanterns and pumpkins from Halloween! Here are some tips for what you can do with them:

- Compost them: if you have a compost pile in your yard, break down your pumpkins into smaller pieces and turn them in! They will make a great addition to your soil for the following season.
- Feed them to your chickens: several of you mentioned that you've added chickens to your household. They can eat it as a delicious treat- flesh, skin, seeds and all!
- Call a local farm to ask if their animal residents can enjoy the pumpkins (Sweetbriar already had a large donation, they recommended Hoyt Farm)
- Roast the seeds: enjoy them as a healthy snack by roasting them! You can find a recipe by [clicking here](#)

Project Spotlight

I spent some time last year planning for a unique post-pandemic summer program. Now is a very interesting time to explore the marine realm in more detail—there have been an increasing number of marine mammal and shark species sightings in Long Island waters. This isn't the only surprise; there have been subtropical species such as spinner sharks spotted in our waters as well.

So why is this? Well, we know that sea surface temperatures have continuously been on the rise each year as the oceans absorb more heat, altering the ecosystem dynamics for migrating, foraging, and breeding patterns. In August of 2020, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) approved the use of Ecological Reference Points (ERPs) for Atlantic Menhaden (otherwise known as bunker). This allows managers to set fishing limits according to predator-prey dynamics (in contrast to the old way which was a single species stock assessment). This is allowing the Atlantic Menhaden stock to increase, leaving a more abundant food source for marine mammals, sharks, sea birds and large fish species ([Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)).

This sparked my interest to create our first ever Marine Science Week program which served as an interactive way to develop a closer connection to the marine environment and to learn more about the complexity of life inhabiting it. This took place for 4 consecutive days in the second week of August. Students visited various sites including the Ernst Marine Conservation Center at West Meadow Beach, the Stony Brook Yacht Club beachfront, and they also got out onto Stony Brook Harbor and Smithtown Bay.

Paddleboard Launch

This month, we began our third boat building stewardship. In 2018, we started this program as a partnership with the Bayles Boat Shop and the [Long Island Seaport and Eco Center \(LISEC\)](#). Each year we work on a different build which takes about 8 months to complete. The goal of this program is to encourage an appreciation and understanding of Port Jefferson's nautical history, to participate in a hands-on experience that enables teamwork and thinking outside the box, and working to craft something that serves a purpose to the marine environment.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, our last season got cut short for our students who committed to building a 14-foot wooden Kaholo paddleboard. They spent one night a week after school from November-March putting forth their time and effort to work as a team. Due to the nature of the project taking place indoors, we decided not to have the students return. Instead, the boat shop staff and I showed up following our weekly schedule to get the job done.

It took a lot of sanding, applying epoxy, more sanding, cutting and laying the fabric design, fiberglass, more epoxy, varnish, more sanding and putting on the finishing touches. Once we reached the end of an arduous school year, our volunteers were invited to celebrate their accomplishments by launching the paddleboard on Stony Brook Harbor. We had a nice, summer morning that was just overcast enough to enjoy a comfortable paddle. The students took turns using the paddleboard while the rest of us rotated out on kayaks and the canoe the students built in the first year. It was a successful and wonderful way to honor our volunteers in seeing through what they started!

Alumni Corner Congratulations to Our 2021 Graduates!!



Olivia Dirla (*left*)
University at Albany, SUNY
Major: Human Biology
Minors: French & Sustainability



Grace Torgersen (*right*)
Stony Brook University, SUNY
Major: Biology with a specialization in Neuroscience



Dylan Matlin (*left*)
Stony Brook University, SUNY
Major: Business Administration & Management



Juliana Seedorf (*right*)
SUNY New Paltz
Major: Psychology
Minor: Art

Alumni Corner Congratulations to Our 2021 Graduates!!



Libby Star (*right*)
University of California, Santa Barbara
Major: Mechanical Engineering



Benjamin Nichols (*left*)
University of Alabama
Major: Business



Thomas Oliveri (*right*)
Stony Brook University, SUNY
Major: Mathematics



Mila Rosenthal-Vincenti (*left*)
Wellesley College, Massachusetts
Major: Pre-Law/Political Science

A Message from the Program Coordinator (cont'd.)

egg cases becoming visible. The days are shorter, but we will be enjoying navigating the wooded trails from a new perspective, listening to the conversation of great horned owls, observing the birds at our feeders and picking seeds from the garden, and having the deer join us in the preserve at dusk.

As always, your teens make our program all the more special and I'm looking forward to another wonderful season.

Warm wishes,
Kayla

Project Spotlight (cont'd.)

We made and used our own plankton tows, analyzed samples under a microscope, observed fiddler crabs scurrying past our feet, virtually navigated through the shark exhibit at the NY aquarium, went seining, did a sea turtle necropsy (animal autopsy), took water quality samples and finished off the week with a Discovery Cruise led by a naturalist to learn more about our local estuary. It was a fun filled week and we hope to make it an annual event!

Thank you to our volunteers (and partner organizations) who participated in the first one!



FRIDAY MOVIE NIGHTS AT THE SMITHTOWN LIBRARY

On the first Friday of each month starting in November, Four Harbors Audubon Society will be showing a movie at the Smithtown Library Main Building. Each movie relates to the natural world or an important environmental issue.

November's showing is "Leave it to Beaver" and will be followed by a discussion about the beaver's importance to our landscapes and ecosystems. Free and open to all, families are welcome.

When: Friday November 5th, from 6:30 PM-8:30 PM

Where: The Smithtown Library Main Building
1 N Country Rd, Smithtown NY 11787

Register here:
<https://4has.org/upcoming-events>







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