

THE IPA NEWSLETTER

Mystic Lake, Middle Pond and Hamblin Pond in Marstons Mills, MA

Winter 2019

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PROTECTION OF SALTWATER ESTUARIES INTERIM REGULATIONS

In 2008, the Town of Barnstable adopted regulations restricting the size of individual sewage disposal systems, with the intent of mitigating the adverse flow of nitrogen into the saltwater estuaries. These regulations, which apply to the watersheds for the estuaries and cover the majority of land in Barnstable south of Route 6, are temporary and intended only to remain in effect until such time as the Town adopts and implements a comprehensive plan to address the nitrogen reduction required in these estuary systems.

The Town has plans for long-term sustainable economic growth and is seeking relief from the temporary Saltwater Estuaries Protection Regulations in order to develop a 1,000-ft buffer zone along Route 28 from Yarmouth to Mashpee for both residential and commercial projects.

The Town is also implementing a Comprehensive Wastewater Quality Management Plan which provides for the (i) expansion of the Hyannis, Barnstable, and Cotuit sewer systems; and (ii) the protection and maintenance of the drinking water wells, the wastewater treatment facilities, the solid waste and landfill facilities. The Town believes this plan meets the criteria for lifting the Saltwater Estuaries Protection Regulations.

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POND WATER QUALITY DATA NOW AVAILABLE ON IPA WEBSITE

Water quality data for the three Indian Ponds that were collected during 2014–2018 were recently posted on the IPA website (<http://www.indianponds.org/>) for readers to examine and use. To access these data, go to the website's home page and click on "Current pond testing results", which is included in a list of topics along the right-hand margin of the page. You will then be on a page that lists pond testing data for 2018 through 2011 (Note: the 2011 data had been uploaded to the website some years ago). The data are on spreadsheets which can be opened using Microsoft Excel.

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Webmaster

Maggie Fearn

IPA, Inc., PO Box 383
Marstons Mills, MA 02648

<http://www.indianponds.org>
info@indianponds.org



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ICE FISHING ON THE INDIAN PONDS

It's that time of year when many of my friends have headed south for the winter. However, for those of us staying, there is nothing like ice fishing for its beauty, serenity, and quietness out on the ice. Not much can surpass being out on a frozen lake with a friend and enjoying some great fishing and camaraderie.

Ice fishing on all three Indian ponds is quite good, and given that the fish have not seen much bait for months, they are eager to cooperate. My experience has led to catching very sizable largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, pickerel, and yellow and white perch. On Hamblin Pond, which is stocked, you can also catch rainbow and brown trout through the ice.

Safety is the foremost concern in going out on the ice, especially for the first time. It is a good idea to not venture out alone and always bring a rope, a throw device, and a chisel to check ice thickness. Given the winds, currents, and daily temperature fluctuations, ice thickness can vary by several inches. Sheltered coves where the air is still will freeze first and have the thickest ice.

Safe ice (usually 4–6 inches) on our ponds is not a guarantee every year. In over 15 years fishing the ponds, safe ice has occurred about 50% of the time.



Larry Rhue with a nice trout caught in Hamblin Pond.



Larry Rhue ready for a day of ice fishing on Middle Pond.

I usually go for the day and bring a small sled packed not only with my tackle, but also food and a small gas stove. Once on the ice, you select a spot where you want to fish and, optimally, one where you can find shelter from the wind. Most ice fishing here is done with wooden ice fishing traps available at most sporting goods stores or tackle shops. These traps have a reel with flag attached to the main shaft. The flag will spring up when a fish pulls line off the reel below the water's surface. In Massachusetts, you're allowed to place five traps.

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PROTECTION OF SALTWATER ESTUARIES – INTERIM REGULATIONS

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The Board of Health (BOH) and Town representatives have been discussing this issue for almost two years and recently held public hearings on the Town's proposal to rescind the Saltwater Estuaries Protection Regulations. There is public support for the Town's economic development plan, specifically the need to provide urgently needed year-round affordable housing in the community. However, the Barnstable Clean Water Coalition (BCWC), the Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC), and many residents are strongly opposed to the Town's proposal because they fear any development along Route 28 will increase, not decrease, the nitrogen flows into the saltwater estuaries.

It is this writer's opinion that the BOH feels that the Town's Comprehensive Wastewater Quality Management Plan does not meet the criteria for lifting these regulations and that the BOD is currently inclined to leave the interim Saltwater Estuaries Protection Regulations in place, with amendments which broaden the scope of permitted variances. The BOH voted at its January 22 meeting to continue the public hearing at its June 25 meeting.

The IPA board of directors recognizes the Town's desire for new investment and additional affordable housing to achieve sustainable growth in the community, but the board also feels it is essential to protect the saltwater estuaries and that the Town needs to adopt and implement a plan which provides for a significant and permanent REDUCTION in the nitrogen flows into the estuaries. Without clean water in the estuaries and on our beaches, the quality of life on the Cape, as we know it, is not sustainable. The IPA board will be supporting the BCWC and APCC in their opposition to the Town's proposal to rescind the interim Saltwater Estuaries Protection Regulations.

Peter Atkinson

CALLING ALL COLLEGE BOUND SENIORS

The Indian Ponds Association (IPA) is pleased to announce that it will offer a \$1,000.00 scholarship again this spring to a graduating senior from Marstons Mills. The Schwarm Memorial Scholarship was established in 2005 in memory of Edward Schwarm, a former IPA director and officer. It is in his memory and the goals of the IPA to select a student who will balance his/her professional career with a continuing effort to preserve our environment.

The scholarship is available to any graduating senior residing in Marstons Mills and attending either public or private high school. Applications are available at the Barnstable High School Guidance Office, Sturgis Charter School, or on the IPA website at www.indianponds.org. Deadline for submission is April 1. We encourage our seniors to apply early.

Betsey Godley

A BUZZARD BY ANY OTHER NAME

I have been asked to regale you with a story about buzzards or vultures, since both names may be used interchangeably. I was going to title this "The American Vulture", but in researching it, I discovered there are five different vultures in North and Central America. There are even two in North America. They are the turkey buzzard (or vulture) and the black vulture, also known as the American black vulture. The black vulture is only found in the Southwest, while the turkey vulture is found in some sections of every state in the Union.

Turkey buzzards may be found as they cruise open areas such as farmland, forest, and rangeland. They are most likely to be seen along roadways and near landfills that have not been capped, like those on Cape Cod.

Their diet is carrion, which they locate using their excellent sense of smell. Their preferred diet is mammals, but they would not refuse reptiles, other birds, fish, or invertebrates. Their first choice is dead animals that have had time to soften up so that the buzzard can pierce the skin. They are also quite particular having been known to set aside and leave the scent glands from dead skunks. Buzzards, fortunately, have great immune systems that allow them to scavenge carcasses without



Turkey vulture in flight

contracting any of the diseases that their prey may have been carrying. Vultures almost never attack living animals.

Turkey vultures nest in crevasses in rocks, caves, thickets, burrows constructed by mammals, and abandoned nests of other birds. They prefer to nest far away from any civilization. They do not build full nests. If they cannot acquire a nest, courtesy of some other bird, they



Turkey vulture perched on a fence.

may scrape out a spot in the soil or the litter on the floor of the woods. Once they have constructed such a site, they may use it for many years.

They generally have one brood a year. This may consist of 1–3 eggs, for which there is an incubation period of 28–40 days.

They are able to soar at low altitudes, which helps them to locate carrion with their acute sense of smell. On the ground, they move around with ungainly hops. At carcasses, you may find many vultures assembled, but typically only one bird feeds at a time. The lucky one of the moment must enforce the one-at-a-time pecking order while also trying to maintain his position at the carcass.

These birds rate a 5 out of 20 as a Continental Concern Score, which shows where birds rate in concern for species survival. They are threatened by DDT and can be killed by poisons or lead in dead animals. Of main concern is lead shot left behind by hunters. The birds eat the shot along with the remains left behind and eventually suffer lead poisoning. Other concerns include trapping and shooting for the "fun of it".

You may often find turkey vultures along the side of the highway, but you probably won't find them in your backyard. The only thing of any interest to a buzzard in your yard might be the occasional bird that may die there. But, one day last fall, my wife and I saw 5 of them sunning themselves on the roof of a cottage on Church St. in West Barnstable.

Dave Reid

ICE FISHING ON THE INDIAN PONDS

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Larry With Bass and Pickerel

Some fishermen prefer to use a small rod with a jigging lure and sit next to the hole working the jig up and down to attract fish. Further north, where the winters are longer, they set up shanties for jigging. I like to do both, so I often set four traps and save the fifth hole for sitting down and jigging.

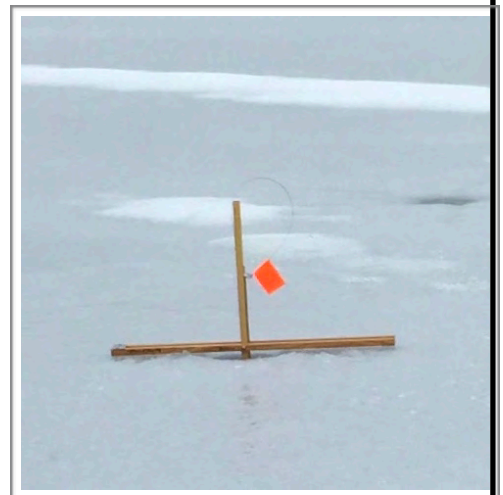
Once you have selected your area to fish, use an auger or ice chisel to cut your holes. Once done, set your traps with live bait such as shiners, chubs, worms, or salmon eggs.

Hopefully, before too long, you'll get a raised flag indicating a bite. This is exciting as the challenge is to go to the hole, pull the trap out of the water and look to see if the line is running off the reel. If so, give a quick jerk to hook the fish and pull it up. Hooking the fish and fighting it as you pull up takes some skill. There is always great anticipation to find out what is on the end of the line. A major part of this serene experience is enjoying

the wildlife all around you. Eagles, hawks, and gulls watch your every move. I usually throw them a fish or two and watch them gracefully swoop down for a free meal.

Setting up a mini base camp on the ice and cooking hotdogs and coffee and sharing stories is part of the fun. Many memories are made without the stress of everyday life interfering.

When I was young, my dad took me ice fishing and it wasn't long before I found this to be one of my favorite activities with him. Memories of those trips catching fish, cooking hotdogs and beans, and ice skating with him are amongst my most cherished moments.



Ice Trap

Larry Rhue

All photos provided by Larry Rhue

POND WATER QUALITY DATA

(continued from page 1)

The data in question consist of measurements of temperature and dissolved oxygen at water depths ranging from 0.5 m below the surface to within 1 m of the bottom at roughly two-week intervals beginning in spring and concluding in the fall. Such measurements are taken over the deepest place in each of the ponds. In addition, a Secchi disk measurement of water clarity is taken on each sampling data. Each of the files contains separate sheets for Mystic Lake, Middle Pond, and Hamblin Pond. On each sheet, two graphs are also included, one portraying the year's temperature measurements and another showing the dissolved oxygen measurements.

Emory D. Anderson



Annual Marstons Mills River Herring Count Meeting

Saturday, March 16th from 9-11am

Osterville Village Library, 43 Wianno Ave., Osterville



BCWC and Barnstable's Natural Resources Department are looking for volunteers to count herring at the Mill and Middle Pond fish ladders beginning April 1st.

Counting herring is fun, family-friendly and fast (only 10 minutes a day!)

Abigail Archer, Marine Resource Specialist with Cape Cod Cooperative Extension and Woods Hole Sea Grant, will talk about herring runs and restoration projects on Cape Cod and in SE Mass., and Amy Croteau, Barnstable Natural Resource Officer, will present an update on the status of herring runs in Barnstable.

After a brief training, there will be an optional trip to the Middle Pond fish ladder.

To volunteer or for more information, contact Heather Rockwell at hrockwell@bcleanwater.org or 508-420-0780.

BCleanWater.org

**TO SEE NEWSLETTER PHOTOS IN FULL COLOR
GO TO THE IPA WEBSITE: www.indianponds.org**

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR HERRING RUN COUNTING

The annual river herring spawning migration into Mill Pond, up the Marstons Mills River, and into Middle Pond and Mystic Lake will start again sometime in late March or early April when the water temperature reaches about 51°F. Again, as has been done for the previous 13 years, local citizens are being asked to volunteer to count the number of herring coming up to spawn. Counting will be done again this year at both the Mill Pond ladder and at the Middle Pond ladder.

In 2006, when a moratorium on the harvest of river herring was imposed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a volunteer counting program was launched under the direction of Kevin Galvin (initially with the Marstons Mills River Day Committee and later the Marstons Mills River Watershed Association) to provide data to the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), where the count data are used in a statistical model to generate an estimate of the run size. This program continued under Kevin's direction until his untimely death in January 2012. Annette Nichols of the IPA coordinated the program in 2012 and 2013, after which it was taken over and has been administrated since by Three Bays Preservation (now Barnstable Clean Water Coalition). In most years, counting was only done at the Mill Pond ladder, but beginning several years ago, counting has also been done at the Middle Pond ladder.

The counting program this year is being coordinated by staff of the Barnstable Clean Water Coalition and the Town Natural Resources Program. The IPA is collaborating by using this newsletter to advertise the program and to invite and encourage its members and all readers of this newsletter to participate as volunteers in this important community activity.

An information and training session will be held Saturday March 16 from 9–11 am at the Osterville Public Library, 43 Wianno Avenue, Osterville (see notice on page 6). Abigail Archer, Marine Resource Specialist with Cape Cod Cooperative Extension and Woods Hole Sea Grant, and Amy Croteau, Barnstable Natural Resource Officer, will give presentations. If you would like to learn about the counting program and how to sign up as a volunteer, please plan to attend this session. If you are an experienced counter, simply sign up by contacting BCWC at info@bcleanwater.org or 508-420-0780.

Counting is easy and fun. Counts are done for 10 minutes in each daylight hour of the day. You can sign up for as many time-slots as you want in a day and for as many days as you are able. Counters are needed at both ladders, especially the Middle Pond ladder, which may be unfamiliar to many, but is located in a quiet location of the Indian Lakes Estates subdivision a mile or so upstream from the Mill Pond ladder. As a volunteer counter, you will gain the satisfaction of knowing that you are doing a public service assisting the DMF in monitoring the abundance of this important fish species.

Emory D. Anderson

UPDATE ON MIDDLE POND HERRING RUN RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

In the fall 2018 issue of this newsletter, we summarized progress to date on the Middle Pond herring run reconstruction project, as reported by Amanda Ruggerio. Since then, Amanda has indicated that the existing permit was extended an additional three years on December 4. A request to amend the existing Order of Conditions, originally scheduled to be heard by the Conservation Commission on February 12, has been continued until March 5. The DPW is continuing to work on acquiring easements with abutters to the run, and is still hopeful for a summer construction start.

Emory D. Anderson

"To preserve and protect the natural environment and ecological systems of the Indian Ponds and surrounding parcels of land and watershed and to participate in studies and work with other agencies, individuals, and groups to educate the public, serve the community, and promote and preserve the Indian Ponds and surrounding areas." IPA Mission Statement

INDIAN PONDS ASSOCIATION, INC.
P. O. BOX 383
MARSTONS MILLS, MA 02648

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

