



# Belle Isle News

## Upcoming Events

### Nature Walks with Sean Riley:

1st and 3rd Saturdays, 7:30am; meet at the Bennington Street main parking lot.

### Save the Harbor/Save the Bay sponsored programs:

#### Tidal Pool Explorations at Short Beach:

- July 19, 10:00-11:00am
- August 2, 8:30-9:30am
- August 16, 8:30-9:00am

#### Kayaking at Constitution Beach, East Boston:

- August 17, 2:00-5:00pm

#### Annual Fall Festival at the reservation:

- Saturday, October 15, 1:00-3:00pm (*Rain date: Sunday, October 16, 1:00-3:00pm*)

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## Birding and Banding at Belle Isle

by Norman Hyett

There used to be thousands of salt marshes along the Atlantic coast of North America from Maine to Florida, but today most have been taken over by landfill development projects, including housing, airports, power plants and a wide variety of other uses. The result has been a dramatic loss of habitat for birds and fish to reproduce. It's estimated that since the 1970s over 3 billion birds have died, and most of these deaths came from the interruption of their migration food sources, pesticides and nesting sites.

We all know that most birds migrate. Some stay within the United States, but many travel much longer distances. The Arctic Tern, which migrates the furthest of any bird, travels from Pole to Pole — about 56,000 miles each year. Even hummingbirds, the Ruby-Throated being the one we see most often in our area and which only weigh .11 oz, migrate to Mexico and Central America. They can fly 500 miles across the Gulf of Mexico without stopping.



So why do we “band” birds? There are many reasons for doing so: to track their migration paths; to see where they land for food while on their journey; to count their species numbers to help determine if they are in danger of extinction; and to learn to plant trees, bushes and grasses in areas where needed.

So thank you Sean Riley, and your crew, for not only taking such great care of the Belle Isle Marsh, but for banding birds so carefully. Like the birds with which you spend so much time, you are truly a treasure: one who is universally appreciated by all who know your work.



Photos by the author

# Bird Banding Spring 2022

Photos by Barbara Bishop

*Species observed on day pictured:*

- Saltmarsh Sparrow
- American Kestrel
- Yellow Warbler
- Blackburnian Warbler
- Chestnut-Sided Warbler
- Cape May Warbler
- Magnolia Warbler
- Black & White Warbler
- Worm-eating Warbler
- Common Tern
- Least Tern
- Willet
- Least Sandpiper
- Least Bittern



*Here is a partial list of the 600+ bird species banded this spring:*

- Saltmarsh Sparrow
- Tree Swallow
- Barn Swallow
- Orchard Oriole
- Baltimore Oriole
- American Kestrel
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Yellow Warbler
- Downy Woodpecker
- Northern Flicker
- White-throated Sparrow
- Hermit Thrush
- Brown Creeper
- Osprey
- Warbling Vireo
- Killdeer





## Osprey Update

The Osprey nest at Belle Isle Marsh has been riveting for those of us watching the progress of our nesting pair and their three chicks. Follow along at the Osprey Cam link at [www.friendsofbelleislemarsh.com/ospreycam/](http://www.friendsofbelleislemarsh.com/ospreycam/).

Unfortunately, during this banding foray into the nest, one chick was found expired. It was badly dehydrated and undernourished. According to Sean Riley, this is not an uncommon outcome for the last chick that hatches, and we should be hopeful that the resources brought back to the nest by the adult pair will now be spread sufficiently to the rest of the family. The other two chicks are currently fat and healthy!



# President's Report

by Mary Mitchell

Friends of Belle Isle Marsh has exciting summer and fall programming planned with support from Save the Harbor, Save the Bay, DCR and Piers Park Sailing Program. We have planned for three Tidal Pool Exploration Programs at Short Beach between Winthrop and Beachmont, Revere. A reading of "A House for Hermit Crab" by famed author Eric Carle will get everyone ready to go exploring. Nets will be provided. Matt Nash from the DCR will lead the walk along the shoreline.

In August, FBIM will sponsor a kayak day at Constitution Beach. The kayaks and instruction will be provided by the Piers Park Sailing program. Come join us for fun in the sun!

### **Calling for New Board and Committee Members:**

*The FBIM is engaged in important work around climate change, development concerns, grant work and support for our DCR staff to preserve, protect and restore BIM and its environs. We are calling upon our membership to help us with our efforts. Please consider running for a board position or joining a committee to aid in our work. If interested, please send an email letter of interest to Mary Mitchell at [mjmbartlett@comcast.net](mailto:mjmbartlett@comcast.net) or Daniela Foley at [danifoley0@gmail.com](mailto:danifoley0@gmail.com). Thank you!*

And finally, our Fall Festival will be returning in October after a two-year absence due to Covid. We are in the process of planning a wonderful festival, offering science, art and entertainment. Stay tuned for all the details.

Also, this summer, our Osprey Camera is up and running. Those who have been following along know that three eggs hatched! Follow along by visiting our web page ([www.friendsofbelleislemarsh.com](http://www.friendsofbelleislemarsh.com)) and clicking on Osprey Camera link and you will see the latest "news."

Please plan on joining us this summer and fall for our planned activities or just come for a walk at any of the upland parks in East Boston, Winthrop, or Revere. The Reservation and salt marsh is a beautiful, serene environment to be enjoyed by all.

## Annual Meeting

by Barbara Bishop

This year's Annual Meeting was held in person on April 10, 2022 at St. John's Episcopal Church Hall in Winthrop. See insert for elected officers. Carina Campobasso presented proposed changes to the by-laws which were approved by a vote of the membership. Norm Hyett announced that there are three billion fewer birds in North America today than in 1970, and we are in a "bird emergency." Both common and rare birds are disappearing. This includes Meadowlarks, American Sparrow, and even Starlings. Collisions with buildings kill a billion birds each year. Against this startling backdrop, scientists have found

that waterfowl populations are increasing, thanks to conservation efforts. Sometimes the negative news seems overwhelming, but every effort we make as individuals and as a Friends group can make a difference in protecting the critical salt marsh habitat. We should be hopeful that we can preserve the marsh that we love and the wildlife that lives there.

"The Past is Present" was the theme of the presentation by keynote speakers Susan Adamowicz, Ph.D., salt marsh restoration biologist; David Burdick, Ph.D., Director of the UNH Jackson Estuarine Laboratory; and Geoff Wilson of Northeast Wetlands Restoration, manager of the Bear Creek Wildlife Sanctuary in Saugus. Since colonial times, salt hay farmers and others have diverted rivers, built embankments, dug ditches and filled in wetlands, creating



*(continued on page 7)*



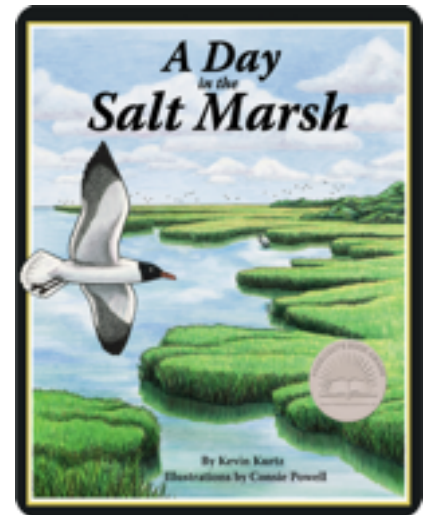
# Children's Corner

by **Mary Mitchell**

For this newsletter, I have chosen to review two books that we plan to use during the summer and fall seasons for our Save the Harbor, Save the Bay supported programming. We will present our first "Story Trail" at the annual Fall Festival. Visitors will enjoy walking along the trail and reading a deconstructed book by Kevin Kurtz entitled "A Day in the Salt Marsh." Earlier this summer at our Tidal Pool Explorations on Short Beach, we will Read Eric Carle's "A House for Hermit Crab" in anticipation of finding hermit crabs scurrying along the bottom of the sandy tidal pools. Come join us!

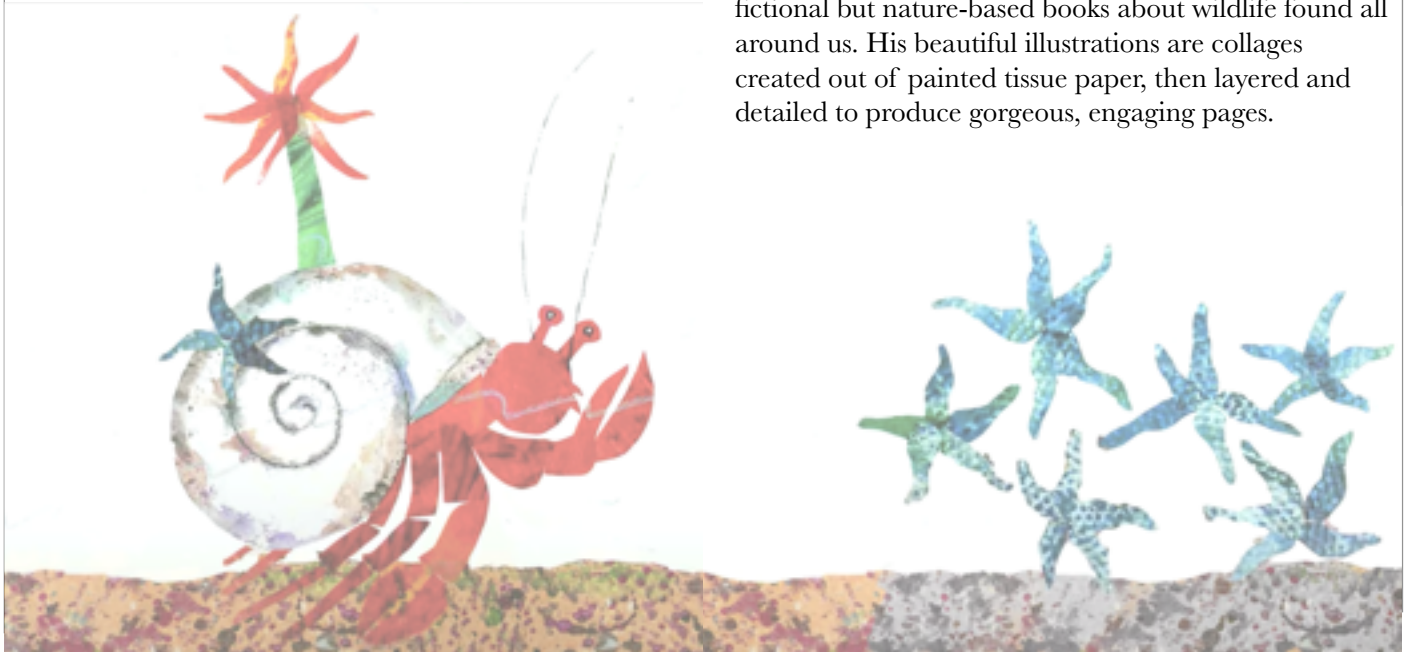
**A Day in the Salt Marsh**, written by Kevin Kurtz, illustrated by Consie Powell, [abordalepublishing.com](http://abordalepublishing.com), 2007.

This lovely book, which follows the tides as they move in and out of the salt marsh during the day, has received the President's Book Award. The reader will notice how the environment changes on an hourly basis as they read along. A variety of animals who call these important estuaries home will be introduced with each rhyming turn of the page. Consie Powell's illustrations are lush, accurate depictions of this often secret world. At the end of the book there are five pages of detailed information about salt marshes, tides, etc. for those readers who choose to learn more about these critical and endangered habitats.



**A House for Hermit Crab**, written and illustrated by Eric Carle, [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com), 1987.

In early February, Hermit Crab discovers his shell is too small and tight. So, Hermit Crab slips away in search of a new home: a larger borrowed shell. He finds one that is the perfect fit for a growing body. As the months pass by, Hermit Crab invites other sea creatures and plants to help decorate his new home. This fanciful story is written and illustrated by famed children's author Eric Carle, whose books have been reviewed in my past columns. Eric Carle wrote many fictional but nature-based books about wildlife found all around us. His beautiful illustrations are collages created out of painted tissue paper, then layered and detailed to produce gorgeous, engaging pages.



# TIDEPOL DISCOVERY

With DCR's Matthew Nash

**Tuesdays July 19 from 10:00-11:00 am and Aug 2 & 16 from 8:30-9:30 am**  
**SHORT BEACH**—located on Winthrop Parkway between Winthrop and Beachmont Park in the lot across the street

Discover and learn about the fascinating plants and animals of the tidepool and why we should care for both these fragile creatures and the tidepool that represents their home.

Nets will be provided for brief capture and release of the tidepool creatures.

*Be prepared for slippery rocks and for getting your feet wet.*



Sponsored by DCR and the Friends of Belle Isle Marsh  
With the generous support of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay.



## July 5, 2022 Tidepool Discovery

*photos by Barbara Bishop*





# Annual Meeting

*(continued from page 4)*

impediments which now impair how salt marshes adapt to rising sea levels and climate change.

Our speakers worked together to create a methodology to restore tidal flow and the health of salt marshes using innovative techniques. They work as part of a regional field team effort, called a SMART team, to plan large-scale restoration projects from Maine to Delaware. They explained strategies for areas of excessive drainage and areas of inadequate drainage, including ditch remediation with natural re-vegetation, creating runnels to improve drainage and the planting of cordgrass. We thank our speakers for their excellent presentation!

## 2022 FBIM Board

**President:** Mary Mitchell

**Vice President:** Kannan Thiruvengadam

**Secretary:** Daniela Foley

**Treasurer:** Erica Foley

**At-large members:** Norman Hyett and Karyl Stoia

# Black Marsh Eclogue

by Sam Hamill

*Although it is midsummer, the great blue heron  
holds darkest winter in his hunched shoulders,  
those blue-turning-gray clouds  
rising over him like a storm from the Pacific.*

*He stands in the black marsh  
more monument than bird, a wizened prophet  
returned from a vanished mythology.*

*He watches the hearts of things*

*and does not move or speak. But when  
at last he flies, his great wings  
cover the darkening sky, and slowly,  
as though praying, he lifts, almost motionless,*

*as he pushes the world away.*



## New at Suffolk Downs: A Dog Park!

- Already available for use
- Large enclosure, with separate sections for small and large dogs
- Port-a-potties available for humans
- Access:
  - \* Driving: From 1A via Tomasello Way
  - \* Driving: From Revere Beach Parkway via Tomasello Way
  - \* Walking: From Bennington Street and from Suffolk Downs T station
  - \* Look for signs to “the Track”

Map from [atsuffolkdowns.com](http://atsuffolkdowns.com)



**Friends of Belle Isle Marsh  
(FBIM) Annual  
Membership dues:**

Family.....	\$15
Individual.....	\$10
Seniors and Youth (under 16)...	\$5

*FBIM is a registered nonprofit corporation.  
Contributions are tax-deductible. Thank you  
for your continued support.*

FBIM is a volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation of this marsh. We believe that protection ultimately depends on public awareness of the value and beauty of this natural resource. Our focus is mainly educational.

For more information or to add your name to our email list, write to: [friendsofbelleislemarsh@comcast.net](mailto:friendsofbelleislemarsh@comcast.net) with the message "subscribe."

*Facebook:*

Friends of Belle Isle Marsh

*Website:*

[www.friendsofbelleislemarsh.com](http://www.friendsofbelleislemarsh.com)

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**Local Farmers Markets**

**East Boston:** July 6 - October 12, 2022

*Hours:* Wednesday, 3pm - 6:30pm

*Location:* Central Square Park, Meridian St.

**Revere:** June 3 - October 28, 2022

*Hours:* Fridays, 12pm - 5pm

*Location:* Front lawn of the American Legion Hall, 249 Broadway, adjacent to Revere City Hall

**Belle Isle News Contributors**

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*Please send your comments and suggestions for future  
newsletter articles to:*

*[friendsofbelleislemarsh@comcast.net](mailto:friendsofbelleislemarsh@comcast.net)*

**Kayaking at Constitution**

**Beach, East Boston:**

*Come kayak with us! With funding from  
Save the Harbor, Save the Bay and  
equipment and monitoring from the  
Piers Park Sailing program, we will be  
launching at Constitution Beach on*

*August 17 from  
2:00-5:00pm*

