

WNRTA Spring 2017 Newsletter



Photo by Phyllis Bretholtz

The presidential election dominated the news last fall. Hillary Clinton took Massachusetts by just over 60%. In Wellfleet, she won 70% of the vote (1,547). Donald Trump trailed with 23.3% (515) and Jill Stein and Gary Johnson each with 3.3% (73 votes). After the momentous events of November, it was a relatively quiet winter in Wellfleet—a few storms, a few snow days, and several sea animal strandings (see below). Early spring brought more Nor'easters, one of which—on April 1—was strong enough to cause a new break in Chatham, where the existing entrance to Pleasant Bay is already a risky proposition for commercial fishermen.

Looking ahead: WNRTA 2017 summer programs

Thursday, July 13 7:30 - 9:00 pm Council on Aging
Part-time to Full-time Resident? Changing your Wellfleet Ways

Join a panel of neighbors to discuss the decision many of us are considering to become, or not to become, full-time residents of Wellfleet. Why do it? Why not?

Thursday, July 27 7:30 - 9:00 pm Council on Aging
Sea Turtles around the Cape and Islands

Join Bob Prescott, Director of the Wellfleet Bay Audubon Sanctuary, for an illustrated talk about Mass Audubon's 30+ years researching and rescuing sea turtles off the beaches of Cape Cod, which are home to four species of sea turtles-

leatherback, green, loggerhead and Kemp's Ridley.

Thursday, August 17 7:30 - 9:00 pm Preservation Hall

State of the Town

Town officials will bring us up to date on the state of the town's finances, progress on the police station project, the condition of the harbor, affordable housing, and other issues facing Wellfleet. The program will include an overview of current zoning regulations which affect residents who want to renovate or sell their property.

All programs are free and open to the public. Both venues are handicapped accessible.

Harbor

Wellfleet did not make the Army Corp of Engineers 2017 list of funded dredging projects. Senators Warren and Markey and Congressman Keating expressed their support in a joint letter to the Army Corp of Engineers but the earliest the Army Corp of Engineers will take on the dredging of the federal channel in Wellfleet Harbor would be in the fall of 2018. We will need to renew and redouble our lobbying efforts next fall.



Wellfleet Harbor, circa 1950
Photo courtesy Lt Joseph Capello,
Wellfleet Fire Department

Marine Mammal Strandings

Late each autumn, hypothermia causes hundreds of sea turtles to strand on Cape Cod. For more than 25 years, the New England Aquarium and the Mass Audubon Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary have worked together to rescue, rehabilitate and release thousands of these animals, most of which are Kemp's Rيدleys, the world's most endangered sea turtle. Over the last decade, the number of stranded turtles has steadily increased. In the late autumn of 2014, more than 1,200 cold-stunned sea turtles washed ashore causing an unprecedented wildlife emergency. Seattle-based InterChange Media made ["Saving Sea Turtles"](#), a feature-length documentary that tells the story of the inspiring response to this event, as well as the natural history of the Kemp's Ridley, how humans pushed a once healthy population to the precipice of extinction and are now slowly helping it to recover.

Much of the film was shot in Wellfleet. To see the trailer, go to <https://vimeo.com/196496089>.

It premieres on the PBS WORLD CHANNEL on:

*Sunday, April 23 - 7pm EDT

*Monday, April 24 - 4am EDT

*Thursday, April 2- 6 pm EDT

It will also be screened at the Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary once in July and again in August.

For details, check the Sanctuary's [website](#) or call 508.349.2615.



Filmmaker Michele Gomes rescuing a cold-stunned sea turtle.
Photo courtesy InterChange Media

While the past stranding season was a busy one, it was less dramatic than 2014, but in the third week of February 2017, two separate marine mammal strandings occurred in Wellfleet within 48 hours. At dead low tide on the afternoon of February 22, five common dolphins—three adults and two juveniles—were spotted high and dry in the marsh behind the Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary. A staff member called the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). Within a few hours, IFAW volunteers and staff, along with staff from Mass Audubon, had used a sea turtle cart to rescue four of the dolphins and transport them to Herring Cove in Provincetown, where they were released. One of the smallest animals was in poor condition and had to be humanely euthanized. A satellite tag was placed on one of the dolphins; two days after the stranding, it was swimming far offshore in Cape Cod Bay, hopefully headed for the open ocean.

The morning after the dolphins were rescued, a second stranding occurred in Wellfleet. One harbor porpoise was sighted swimming in shallow water in Duck Creek and a second was stranded on shore. IFAW staff and the Wellfleet harbormaster managed to coax the swimming porpoise out to deeper water. After discovering that the larger of the two porpoises was pregnant, they released her later that afternoon at Duck Harbor, hoping that the two animals would take advantage of the deep water there, meet up, and swim out of the area.

Reported in the [Provincetown Banner](#), March 4, 2017



News from around town

This winter the town added a [Visitors](#) page to its website to support local businesses. It lists which restaurants are open and when in the off-season. A calendar of off-season events is in the works.

[OpenCape](#), a non-profit based in Barnstable, owns and operates a state-of-the-art fiber optic network built to serve local governments, businesses, and residents of Southeastern Massachusetts, the Cape and Islands. OpenCape also sells a variety of Internet and Voice-Over-Internet services. If you would be interested in having the Open Cape fiber optic network connected to your Wellfleet home, you can sign up on their [website](#) without any commitment. If enough residents express interest, Open Cape will consider extending its network to Wellfleet, helping to drive economic development by making reliable, fiber connectivity available.

While attending a training workshop in Falmouth, Library Director Jennifer Wertkin had a chance to try out a new microfilm/fiche machine, which has the capacity to print high resolution copies of images from reels like the ones that contain old town records.

One library patron described the machine Wellfleet has now as "a creaky biplane, utterly unsuited to the jet age." The closest decent machine is at Cape Cod Community College in Hyannis. At \$6,000, replacing the one in Wellfleet is an expensive proposition. Jennifer has already approached the WPL Trustees, who have expressed interest especially if she can cover some of the cost from private donors. If you would like to support the purchase, please contact Jennifer at jennifer.wertkin@wellfleet-ma.gov, and let your friends and colleagues know about it as well.

Dues and Donations, please

WNRTA dues are modest-\$25 for an individual, \$35 for a family-but they are what keep us afloat. To pay on line, please go to <http://wnrta.org/join/>. If you prefer, you may send a check to:

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Contributions are always welcome.