



# The Henry L. Ferguson Museum

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## From the President

Spring couldn't have come soon enough for many of us this year, particularly given the winter storms that came our way. The winter of 2013 seemed endless at times, and the island saw its share of snow for more days than usual for our coastal climate. Spring at Fishers arrived on schedule with its anticipated occurrences: the migration of spotted salamanders into vernal pools, the singing of peepers, the arrival of our island ospreys, the blooming of spring ephemerals, and the migration of spring warblers. It has been a cool and lovely spring with seemingly endless days of sunshine. However, the gardeners among us are hoping for some rainy days, as it has been a very dry spring. As I write this letter, the shad trees are in full bloom, giving the island woodlands a special beauty. We are fortunate that Fishers remains a largely unspoiled environment with a generous share of protected open space.

Since our last newsletter, the Museum has enjoyed an eventful year and continues to be an important cultural asset to the community. Pierce Rafferty, Museum Director, has spent countless hours preparing and arranging our new exhibits and programs. A wide range of children's programs is scheduled, including "Life Underground," an introduction to the lives of subterranean creatures, and "Meet the Animals," a program featuring live animals and their habitats. Our Smith Vaughan lecturer this summer is Chris Elphick, an Associate Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, UConn. His talk will describe the biology of coastal marsh birds, how their lives are influenced by the ebb and flow of the tides, and how sea-level rise is expected to affect

them. Other lectures include a "History of Plum Island, NY," given by author Ruth Ann Bramson, and "The Eelgrass of Fishers Island," given by Chris Pickerell, Marine Program Director at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program on Long Island. Chris's talk will reveal the ongoing eelgrass research that has been taking place around Fishers Island and highlight its importance to restoration efforts in other parts of New York and Connecticut. Pierce Rafferty will give a timely "Population Talk" that will chronicle the rise and fall of Fishers Island's population from first settlement in the 1640s to date.

Our Annual Exhibit for 2013 celebrates neighboring Race Rock Lighthouse. The exhibit was produced in collaboration with the New London Maritime Society and its associated Custom House Maritime Museum and promises to be most interesting. "Illustrated Ospreys," our Special Exhibit for 2013, showcases how one raptor has been portrayed by bird artists over the centuries.

The Museum would not be what it is today without the support of many Fishers Islanders and I extend my thanks to all who have contributed to our endeavors. I also wish to thank all of the Museum Board members for their time and efforts on behalf of the Museum. Board members have given many hours of volunteer time ranging from event planning, publicity, programming, trail maintenance, assistance with the collections and the Museum Store, and financial advice.

I look forward to seeing each and every one of you at the Museum this summer!  
—Penni Sharp, *President*



Race Rock Light over water. March 12, 2012. Photo by Todd Gipstein.

## “Illustrated Ospreys”



Osprey, Plate 364 from “Birds and Trees of North America” by Rex Brasher. Museum Collection.

A special display at the Museum featuring artistic views of our favorite fish-eating raptor *Pandion haliaetus* that date from the 1700s to the late 1900s.

*The Henry L. Ferguson Museum 2013 Annual Exhibition*

## RACE ROCK LIGHT



*Exhibition produced in collaboration with  
the New London Maritime Society*

Photograph by Gail Cypher.

Exhibition sponsored by:



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Join us for the opening reception on Saturday, June 29th, 5 to 7 p.m. All welcome!

# NATURE NOTES

by Penni Sharp

## Ferns of Fishers Island

Fishers Island is a botanically diverse island with a number of different habitat types supporting different plant communities. Nearly 1000 species of vascular plants were identified in a 2003 study of the island flora. The flora of Fishers Island was first documented by Hanmer and St. John in 1940 and 1941 respectively. Together, the two studies reported 563 species. The 2003 study greatly enlarged the numbers adding approximately 400 species to the earlier data.

According to the recent survey, twenty-one different fern species can be found on the island, many occurring in damp or wet habitats. In some of these areas, large glades of ferns carpet the forest floor. The fronds or leaves of a fern vary in size and shape according to species. Many species have differing morphology for the fertile and sterile fronds. Fertile leaves carry the spores for reproduction, usually on the underside of the leaf.

One of the common ferns on the island is the cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*). Early relatives of this fern and others of its group date back to the early Mesozoic, about 210 million years ago. This large fern is easily recognized in early spring as the fiddleheads emerge. They are densely coated with cinnamon-colored downy wool. (A word of caution—the cinnamon fern fiddlehead is not the edible species and is bitter, hairy and unpleasant to eat.) The hummingbird uses the wool



Cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*). HLFM Sanctuary, 5/15/13.

to line its nest. The fertile frond is distinctive and is the first to appear. A bright green upon emergence, it soon turns to a cinnamon-brown. It is club-like in appearance and withers early. The sterile leaves are large, erect and arching, growing from a central rootstock.

Another fern, somewhat less common on Fishers, is the Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*). This is a handsome evergreen fern common on rocky shaded slopes. Fertile and sterile leaves are similar although the fertile leaves tend to be larger. These wither in winter while the sterile leaves remain evergreen throughout. This fern gets its name from the fact that it is green at Christmas as well as from the appearance of the individual leaflets. These are said to resemble a Christmas stocking and with a bit of imagination, one can see the likeness. Christmas fern can be found within the brickyard woods and along the Chocomount Trail.

One of the less common ferns on the island is the ebony spleenwort (*Asplenium platyneuron*). This is a fern of well-drained rocky soils. This small semi-evergreen fern is found at Fishers on roadside banks and along the Chocomount trail. It is a small fern averaging a little over a foot in height. It is recognized by its narrow, ladder-like leaves and blackish stalk. The fertile fronds remain erect and taper at both ends. The sterile fronds are shorter, spreading, and tend to lie flat on the ground.

New York fern (*Thelypteris noveboracensis*) is relatively common on Fishers Island. This fern forms large patches and can be seen in the Brickyard Woods in addition to other spots on

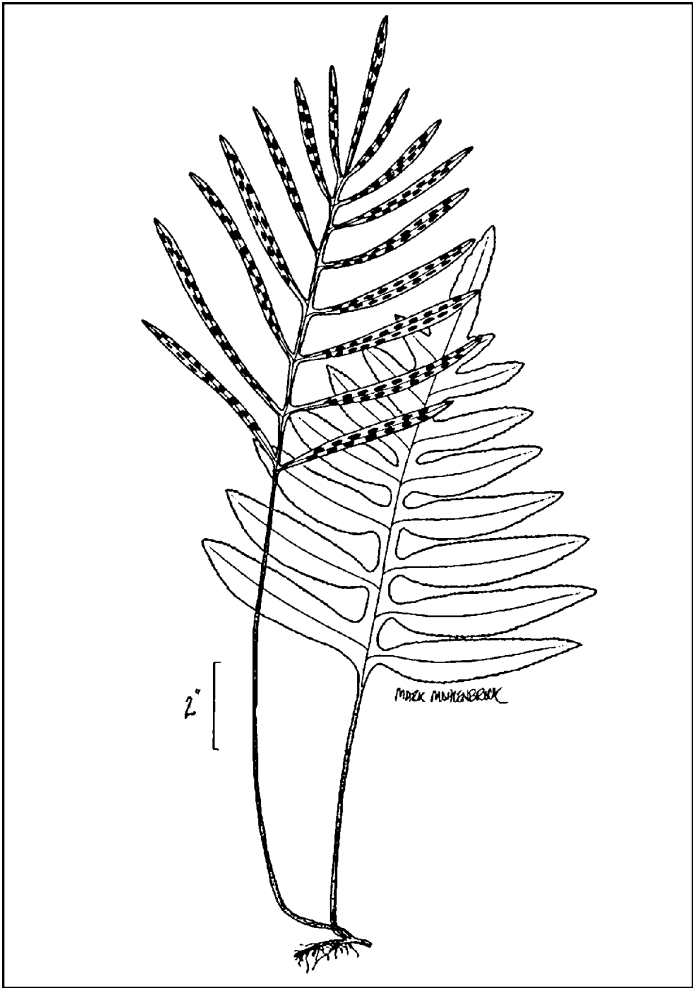


Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*). Clay Point Road. 5/15/13.

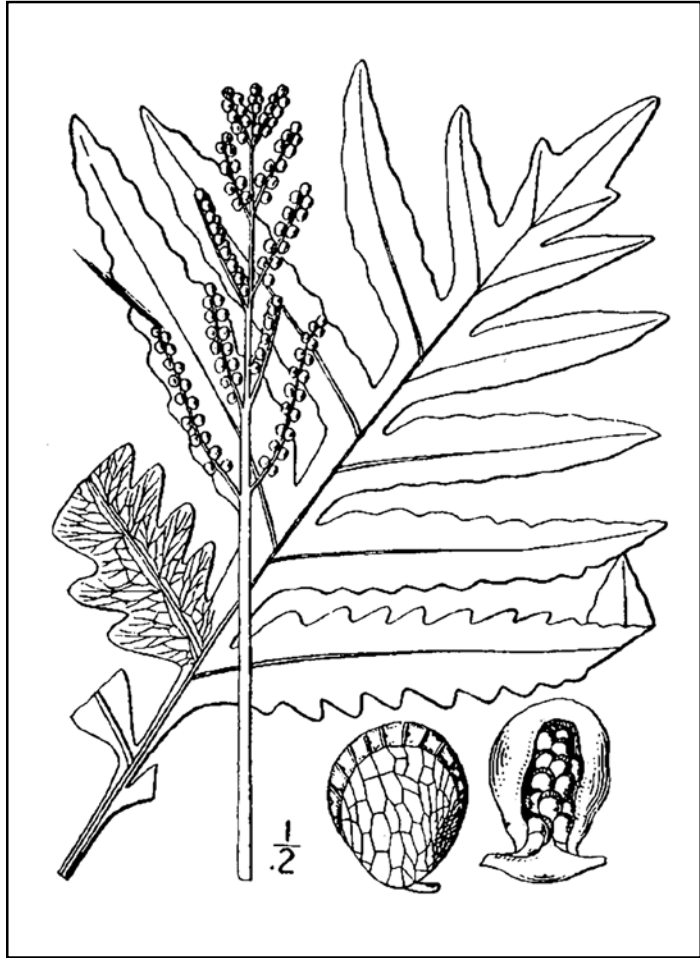
the island. One way to distinguish the New York fern is that the fronds taper at both ends, or as many like to think of it, New Yorkers burn the candle at both ends. New York fern is quite delicate with thin light green fronds. It grows from a tuft in mixed woodlands and at the edge of swamps. Fertile leaves are larger, narrower and usually more upright. The spores are found on the underside of the leaves.

One of the most distinctive and handsome ferns on Fishers is the netted chain fern (*Woodwardia aureolata*). This fern is so named due to the chain-like pattern of veins found along the midrib of the underside of the leaf. The chain fern spreads by creeping rhizomes and often forms large colonies. It is a fern of moist, wet acid soils and on Fishers is seen in the Clay Point woods. It is a deciduous fern and the fronds are a waxy dark green. The fertile frond is sometimes mistaken for sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*) which it closely resembles. The fertile fronds are very narrow and contain rows of chainlike fruit dots.

As indicated, the sensitive fern, also known as the bead fern, can be confused with the netted chain fern. Sensitive fern is a plant of wet places and the edges of woods. The sterile leaves are tall and somewhat coarse and are light green in color. This is a deciduous perennial fern. The fertile fronds are shorter and upright and the spore cases are enclosed in small, beadlike segments. The fertile fronds start out as green leaves, but by late summer turn to a rich brown. Although essentially dead,



Netted chain fern (*Woodwardia aureolata*). Courtesy of USDA.



Sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*). Courtesy of USDA.

the fertile fronds persist through the winter. Sensitive fern is named in part due to its susceptibility to frost and drought and it withers at the first frost.

These are a few of the ferns that can be found at Fishers Island. Many can be seen from the trails on Museum property, so keep a lookout as you enjoy a walk in the woods.

“So what have we learned from studying the past and present flora of Fishers Island over a 100 year period? We have observed that the plant life of Fishers Island is dynamic, populations come and go, they increase and decrease in size from year to year. Natural forces such as hurricanes and northeasters, droughts and flooding, insect infestations, etc., can significantly alter the physical structure of ecosystems resulting in opportunities for plants to colonize new sites, and conversely, resulting in the loss of habitat for other species. But by far, the greatest single impact upon the plant life of Fishers Island during the past 100 years has been man. The irreversible destruction of habitat due to development and the alteration of natural wetland systems has resulted in significant changes in the island’s flora. Fortunately, outstanding examples of natural communities still remain on Fishers Island. About 45 species of rare, endangered, and threatened vascular plants occur on the island, making this site one of New York State’s most significant botanical hotspots.”

Excerpt from article: “Sleuthing for Rare Plants on Fishers Island, Suffolk County, New York” by Edwin Horning, 1999.

## Osprey “Edwin” is “Tagged”

by Pierce Rafferty

Rob Bierregaard, a Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Department of Biology, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, came to Fishers Island on May 11, 2013 at the invitation of the HLFM to “tag” an osprey with a satellite transmitter. Rob was specifically interested in tagging a male osprey to determine over time the routes taken and sites visited by the bird while it foraged for fish. We chose the occupied osprey nest adjacent to Beach Pond—located at the southern end of Middle Farms Flats—because that platform was low enough to be accessible by ladder.

Rob and a small group of volunteer helpers arrived at the nest shortly after 11 AM and verified that the female was on the nest, incubating her three eggs. We waited at a distance until we saw the male osprey—named “Edwin” in honor of the late Museum Curator and FI School teacher Ed Horning—deliver a fish to his mate. She took the fish off to eat, and Edwin settled down in the intermittent rain to take a turn at keeping the eggs warm. After about 20 minutes, the female had finished her lunch and was back on the eggs.

We then decided it was time to set the trap. As we approached the nest the female flushed and vigorously and vociferously let us know what she thought about our proximity to her clutch of eggs. The male, who had just left the nest, was conspicuous in his absence. The slightly camouflaged trap, which resembled the sort of hand-made wire hat one would wear to a H.O.G. tournament or a costume party, had flat rims with a protruding rectangular mid-section that “sat” over the eggs so they wouldn’t get damaged during the trapping. Rob placed the eggs found in the nest within a plastic baggy to further protect them from exposure during the trapping. The female soon came back to the nest, landed on the platform edge, and tried to sit on her eggs. (The eggs are the “lures” in this process.) Her toes quickly got caught up in the fish-line

“nooses” that cover the top of the wire trap. She was subsequently retrieved by Rob, hooded, bagged, measured, weighed and banded. During this period the female was kept quietly and safely by the car some distance away from the nest, while the waiting game began.

After about a half an hour, Edwin decided to return. (He was not the most attentive or protective male osprey that Rob has tagged.) The process then repeated itself after he landed on the nest and got his toes tangled in the trap’s nooses. The female was released soon after Edwin was captured, but only after the baggy had been removed from the eggs and the trap had been removed from the platform. In Edwin’s case, in addition to banding, a one-ounce, solar-powered transmitter was strapped to his back during a 30 minute “operation” that was quite elaborate and involved a good deal of precise stitching to attach the cross-banded straps to each other. We were all quite impressed with Rob Bierregaard’s ingenious trapping method and his bird-handling skills. He is a consummate professional, and it was an honor to watch him in action.

At time of publication, the Museum has already received more than two weeks of data from Edwin’s transmitter. We were very surprised to discover that from the outset he has been making repeated flights to Connecticut to hunt for fish, reaching points as far west as East Lyme. Please visit the Museum’s website [www.fergusonmuseum.org](http://www.fergusonmuseum.org) to discover the latest on Edwin and his travels. If all goes well, we should be able to track Edwin in the late fall and discover where he winters.

*The Museum appreciates the volunteer help we received in the field from JR Edwards, Jeff, Catherine and Benjamin Edwards, John Ski, Hank Golet, Ken Edwards, and Nick Spofford. Special thanks to the Utility Co. for their ongoing support of “Team Osprey” and to the Spofford Foundation for enabling this fantastic project. We are also most appreciative of the ongoing research that Richard O. “Rob” Bierregaard, Jr. conducts involving ospreys and other raptors and hope that Edwin contributes useful data to his efforts. Many thanks to all involved!*



Hooded “Edwin” Fitted with Transmitter. 5/11/13. Photo by John Ski.

# Osprey Studies in the Age of Silicon

by Rob Bierregaard

Birds are quite literally both marvelous and wonderful. We marvel, with no small dose of envy, at their ability to fly, and we wonder, among many other things, what happens to so many of them in the winter. For millennia, the mysteries of migration—Where do birds go? How do they find their way to and from their wintering ground? How long does it take to get there and back again?—have remained inscrutable.

## The Early Studies

The first clues about where birds travel came from birds marked simply for identification. While out hawking one day in 1595 King Henry IV's Peregrine Falcon disappeared chasing a bustard. Some time later, it was found on the Isle of Malta, 1,350 miles away. In a particularly bizarre example, a stork appeared one spring in the middle east with a Masai spear in it—a macabre indication of where it had been over the winter.

John James Audubon was the first person we know of to mark a bird specifically to learn about its migration. In the first decade of the 19th century, he tied silk threads around the legs of Eastern Phoebes nesting at his Pennsylvania farm and thus was able to recognize these same birds returning the following spring. A small, but key piece of the puzzle fell into place—at least in this species, the same birds come back to the nest each year.

At the turn of the 20th century, scientists began marking birds systematically. Uniquely numbered metal bands were placed on their legs. The recovery of these bands showed us where the banded birds traveled after they were banded and told us how long they lived, but we were still left with a myriad of questions unanswered. Among the more obvious were: What routes did they take to get to the places where they were encountered? When did they arrive there? Was the band recovery location their final destination or a stop along their way to some more southerly winter home? Do families travel together?

Back in those dark ages (pre-satellite transmitters), nearly 30,000 Ospreys were banded in North America. Being a large and conspicuous bird, the recovery rate for banded Ospreys was high enough that we developed a good picture of how migration works in Ospreys. Almost all east coast and Midwest Ospreys spend their winters in South America. Females leave their nesting territories in August, two to three weeks before the males and juveniles. Interestingly, juveniles seemed to spend an extra year on the wintering grounds, eschewing a return trip north in their first spring. As all the adults head to their nesting grounds, the young stay put, avoiding the needless risks of another migration—they don't breed until they're 3 or 4 years old. Band recoveries paint an overland path for these birds from their nesting grounds to Florida. From the Keys, band returns indicate that they island hop, staying over land as much as possible through Cuba to Hispaniola and then head down to South America. Based on banding data, it looks as if most North American Ospreys winter in the Cauca

and Magdalena valleys of Colombia, with some spread out over much of northern South America and a very few birds reaching as far south as Argentina.

Information from banded birds requires, obviously, someone finding the banded bird, and that usually means the bird is dead. This introduces some biases into the data that could affect our picture of Osprey migration. How often do Ospreys go out over the Atlantic at any point on their route to the Caribbean? We know they sometimes do, because they have been reported on Bermuda, but how common is this? It's very unlikely that we would get a band recovered off shore, so are all the Ospreys that leave Florida really island-hopping, or do some of them just head south from Cuba and cross the Caribbean? We can't tell this from band recoveries, because we're not going to find an Osprey that dies out over open water. Is there a real concentration of wintering Ospreys in northern Colombia, or is this the result of a higher human population density there resulting in more band recoveries there than in the vast and much more sparsely populated rainforests of Amazonia?

## Silicon to the Rescue!

It wasn't until late in the 20th century that technology provided a way to answer these and many other questions about bird migration that had long seemed forever out of our reach.

In the late 1970s, scientists began tagging animals with radios that could send signals to satellites. The source of those signals could be located, so the scientists could track their tagged study subjects. The first radios deployed were huge and only very large animals such as elk or caribou could carry them.



Rob Bierregaard adjusting transmitter on Osprey "Raphael."



Closeup of Edwin's one-ounce transmitter. 5/11/13. Photo by John Ski.

Like all things electronic in these silicon-based days, the transmitters rapidly became smaller and smaller. (Unfortunately but understandably, because the market for tracking devices to deploy on birds is a rather limited one, prices have not followed the “getting cheaper” part of Moore’s Law.) As the transmitters became smaller, we could put them on smaller and smaller birds. By the mid 1990s, satellite transmitters were being produced that weighed just a bit more than an ounce and could send a signal to a satellite orbiting 540 miles overhead! This opened the doors to remote tracking of Ospreys. (The standard practice is that we don’t put anything on a bird that weighs more than 3% of the bird’s body weight, and a one-ounce transmitter passes this test on the smallest Ospreys—males—which weigh between 2.4 and 3.5 lbs.)

The first transmitters simply sent a radio signal up to a satellite with some very basic data about the transmitter itself: its ID number, some information about whether the transmitter (and consequently the bird) was still moving, and some engineering data about the state of the transmitter itself. Because the satellites receiving these signals are moving at a very high speed and the transmitter is relatively stationary, the frequency of the signal received at the satellite will be higher as the satellite approaches the transmitter and lower as it flies away from it. (If you don’t remember it from a physics class, you’ve probably noticed this phenomenon—the Doppler Shift—when a siren passes you on the highway.) A computer program uses some fancy trigonometry (and probably a couple of second derivatives) to determine where the signal was coming from based on the difference between the frequency that transmitter should be emitting and the frequency perceived at the satellite.

The locations are fairly accurate—down to about 100 yards in ideal circumstances, but more often to within a mile or so. Not bad from 540 miles away! And that’s all we need to follow birds on migration. With that level of accuracy we can tell when they start and stop migrating, the route they take, and where they spend the winter, but we cannot use the data to really understand how the birds are using their local environment. To get to that level of detail, we had to wait for GPS units to be incorporated into the transmitters.

The wait was not long. In 2001, Microwave Telemetry, our

supplier and the leader in the field, manufactured their first GPS transmitter. At the same time, they introduced another very important innovation to the transmitters—solar charged batteries. This greatly increased the expected lifespan of the transmitters, enabling us to follow multiple migration cycles by the same individual. The first GPS unit weighed almost 3 ounces—too heavy for an Osprey. It took a few years before they were able to make them small enough for our birds.

Once we deployed these tiny GPS devices on Ospreys, we could get pinpoint accuracy on the locations. Instead of knowing where our birds were to within 100 yards or a few miles, we could virtually determine in which tree they perched, and more importantly, what body of water they were fishing. The GPS data also include speed, direction, and altitude for each hourly location, so we can look at how local weather affects migration.

Remarkable as the GPS satellite data was, we were still limited. For various technological reasons relating to getting a 1-ounce device talking to a satellite, we could only get 12 hourly locations per day. While this was light years ahead of the old Doppler units, we weren’t satisfied. (You can never have too much data!) With locations taken every hour, we could miss an entire hunting expedition. If a bird left its nest at 1:05 and brought back a fish at 1:55, all we would see were two data points (1:00 and 2:00 PM) at the nest, and the fishing trip would be invisible to us. Conversely, if we saw a bird heading away from its nest at 1:05 and coming back at 1:55, we couldn’t tell where the bird had gone.

The scientists and engineers working on these transmitters solved this problem by literally bringing the communication system down to earth. Instead of using satellites to receive the data, we can now get data from our tagged birds via cell-phone towers. This requires much less energy from the transmitter, so we can get amazing amounts of data. Given a fully charged transmitter, we can get locations every two minutes! Now our Ospreys have no place to hide—we can monitor their every move, especially around the breeding grounds.

## Osprey Tracks

Osprey tracking via satellite with the Doppler transmitters began in 1995 in Sweden. From 1995 through 2012, 244 Ospreys were tagged in North America and about 140 in Europe.

I got into satellite tracking in 2000, pretty much at the tail end of the big push to tag Ospreys with Doppler transmitters. After 2003 I had tagged a modest six adult Ospreys. At that point we already had such a great picture of the migration from the old Doppler transmitters that we really wouldn’t learn anything new by tagging more adults, so I switched my focus to tracking juveniles.

In 2007 I began using the new GPS transmitters on juveniles and realized that the new technology offered us an opportunity to fill in a lot of gaps in our knowledge of the feeding habits of the adult males around their nests. So in 2009, I once again began tagging adult male Ospreys.



Three years of fall tracks for “Sr. Bones,” a Nantucket Osprey who has made three complete circuits. Map courtesy of Rob Bierregaard.

Why males? Once a pair of Ospreys has returned to its nest and laid eggs, the female is pretty much glued to the nest. Except for brief respites when the male brings her a fish and takes over incubation for a half hour or so, the female is on the nest almost nonstop for about eight to nine weeks. She has to incubate the eggs and keep the young warm on the cool days, cool on the hot days, and dry on the rainy days. While she has her talons full with all those duties, the male is working overtime providing all the fish that the family—the male, the female, and up to four voracious young—will need during that period.

Thus the success of the pair is fully on the shoulders of the male. And so these are the birds to tag if we want to understand how Ospreys use the environment around them in their one and only job, which simply put is turning fish into new Ospreys.

So what have we learned about Osprey migration from all these tagged birds? Do these data change what we concluded based on the banding data?

The early Doppler data, collected mostly by Mark Martell, then working at The Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota, came from 74 Ospreys tagged on the east coast, the Midwest, and the Pacific northwest.

Mark and his colleagues showed, to no one’s surprise, that the big picture we’d deduced from the banding data was basically sound. The satellite data however, also to no one’s surprise, filled in many details and answered some of the questions that banding recoveries could not address.

Males and females leave the nesting areas at different times—females in mid-August and males and juveniles in September—and go to different places. Females tend to migrate further south than males. Banding returns had already hinted at that, but now we knew. Mark tagged one family (both adults and two young) in Minnesota. The satellite tracks showed that one of the adults flew to South America via Florida and the Caribbean, while the other stayed over land and got to South America via Mexico and Central America. The two young flew—separately—down the Mississippi and over

the Gulf of Mexico to the Yucatan. So families most definitely do not travel together!

A comparison of the winter locations of satellite-tagged birds with banding returns tells us that the banding returns are definitely biased. Satellite-tagged birds spread out very evenly over much of the northern half of South America, so those clusters of recoveries up in northern Colombia were just there because more Ospreys were found, not because more Ospreys spend their winters there.

The tracks from Mark’s tagged birds showed that virtually all the East Coast Ospreys and many of the Midwestern birds travel down what Mark calls the Osprey Highway to the Tropics—Florida to Cuba to Hispaniola to South America. Almost no Ospreys flew from Cuba to Central or South America.

East Coast birds, when heading south with a wind out of the west will get to the Outer Banks of North Carolina and fly over open water (the Georgia Bight) to Florida—a distance of some 500 miles. We would never have known this from banding returns.

Ospreys heading south from the Midwest and East Coast populations average about 130 miles/day, which includes occasional stopovers of as much as 3 weeks. On a normal migration day, their ground speed will be between 20 and 30 mph.

They almost never migrate at night over land, but they do migrate at night over water. This really comes as no surprise, as their crossing from Hispaniola to South America usually takes at least 16 hours. They can’t alight on the water and rest as a gull could, so once they’re out over the water, they’re in the air for the duration. Some of our juveniles tagged on Martha’s Vineyard cross over 1,000 miles of the Atlantic before they get to the Bahamas (they don’t know any better). These nonstop flights can last more than 50 hours, so the birds are flying through the night twice without a break!

Besides showing us the routes and timing that migrating Ospreys use, when we have a bird survive the migration cycle and head south for a second time, we get important insights into their navigational system. All birds that have been followed for more than one migration cycle return faithfully to exactly the same place every winter. However, they do not take the same route each year. An individual can arrive in South America 300 miles east or west of where they made landfall in South America the previous year, probably in an area they’ve never seen before. And yet as soon as they head inland, they somehow know where they are relative to their winter destination. They then make the appropriate adjustments in their route and work their way unerringly to the remote mountain valley or tributary of a tributary of the Amazon out in the trackless expanses of the world’s largest rainforest. The important implication of these different routes across years is that they don’t use landmarks to navigate, so they must be using some cues from the Earth’s magnetic field.

The GPS and cell-tower data from adult males is full of surprises. It’s early days still with these transmitters, but we can already see remarkable differences in the behavior of neighbor-



ing males over on the Westport River colony in southeastern MA, where we have had as many as three males tagged simultaneously. Not surprisingly, early in the spring when the herring are running up the East Branch, all the birds are up there taking advantage of the all-you-can-eat smorgasbord. Once the herring stop running, each bird heads off to hunt his own particular combination of fishing holes—mostly freshwater ponds. One of the birds was flying 20 miles one-way to fish off Jamestown, RI.

We see other shifts in fishing locations as different fish species—menhaden and bluefish, for example—move into and out of the neighborhood of our tagged males.

Thanks to the efforts of the Henry L. Ferguson Museum and the Spofford Foundation, Fishers Island joined the study this spring. Using one of the new cell-tower transmitters, we tagged an adult male, named “Edwin,” in honor of Fishers Island teacher and Ferguson Museum naturalist Edwin Horning, in the Middle Farm/Beach Pond area of the island. I think

all involved (Edwin himself excluded) were amazed to see that Edwin is commuting more than 10 miles each way to get apparently all his fish around and just west of the mouth of the Niantic River!

2013 is a big year for tagging adult males. Including Edwin, I have tagged 11 new males this year and have three others tagged from previous years. New birds in the study range from the middle of the Chesapeake Bay to northern New Hampshire—a span of about 525 miles.

If all goes well, next year we will deploy at least two more transmitters on Fishers Island Ospreys.

Details of my research and annotated maps for this year’s and all previously tagged birds can be found on line at: <http://www.bioweb.uncc.edu/bierregaard/>. Edwin’s maps and data can be found online at: <http://www.fergusonmuseum.org>.

*Richard O. “Rob” Bierregaard, Jr., a resident of Pennsylvania, is the Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Department of Biology, University of North Carolina, Charlotte.*



Top row: 1. The trap with fish-line “nooses” on top that entangle the bird’s toes. 2. Rob Bierregaard setting the trap over the nest.  
Bottom row: 3. Edwin being retrieved from trap. 4. “Tagged” Edwin is released. All photos by John Ski.



The Board of Trustees would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to all who gave as “*Friends of the Museum*,” to the Land Trust, or “*in memoriam*” during 2012. We are grateful to each and every one of you!

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Gregory & Vinton Bauer	Alicia & Rick Cleary	Ederic Foundation	John C. Goss Family
Andrew & Bonnie Benkard	Philip & Esther Colbran	Randolph & Kelly Eddy	Porter & Mariel Goss
Thad & Margaret Bereday	John & Katie Colgate	Chris & Trudi Edwards	Tess & Gerrit Goss
Hilary & Anders Bialek	Mr. & Mrs. Atwood Collins	Ken & Ann Edwards	Kevin Grant & Valarie Kinkade
J. Truman Bidwell, Jr.	Amy Fine & Bradley J. Collins	Peggy Elliott	Joby Gray
Margot & Jerry Bogert	Porter & Lauren Collins	Joan Ellis	Richard Grebe
Frank & Elisabeth Bohlen	Matthew Commons & Claire Woolston Commons	Roberta C. Elwell	Harry & Nancy Gruner
Linda & Mark Borden	George & Leslie Conant	Fairfield Foundation	Hewitt G. Hafer & Marilu Hafer
Mr. & Mrs. David P. Boswell	Margot & Dave Congdon	Ann & Alfred Ferguson	Mr. & Mrs. C. Barrows Hall
Ghislaine Boulanger & Charles Kadushin	Connecticut Audubon Society EcoTravel	Charles B. Ferguson	Josie & Bill Hall
Sarah Boy	Anne Cook & Peter Conze	Harry & Susie Ferguson	Stephanie & James Hall
Robert F. Boyd	Barbara & David Cook	Estate of Sarah M. Ferguson	Jane & Fred Hamilton
Mr. & Mrs. Charles E. Brainard	Bard & Liz Cook	Chris & Laurie Finan	Helen & Jim Hamilton
Andrew & Helen Braun	Elizabeth H. Cook	Sandy & Rossie Fisher	Thomas M. Hamilton
Marnie & Kit Briggs	Mr. & Mrs. Steven A. Cook	Henry H. Fisher	Tracey & Gil Hanse
John & Elena Brim	Mr. & Mrs. Peter J. Coolidge	Mr. & Mrs. Bertram B. Fisher	Michael & Patsy Hanson
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Bruce Oswald  
Mary L. Pankiewicz  
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Harris & Liz Parsons  
Nancy & Jay Parsons  
Reyn Parsons  
Susie & Bobby Parsons  
Arthur & Louise Patterson  
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Tim & Sharon Patterson  
Elizabeth Peishoff  
John J. Peishoff  
Pequot Inn  
Mary Jean Pelham  
Joseph & Paula Pendergast  
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Carter & Staley Sednaoui  
Penni & Greg Sharp  
Gregory & Deborah Shillo  
Rob Shippee & Gayle Beyer  
Tom Siebens & Mimi Parsons  
Scudder & Susie Sinclair  
Mary & John Ski  
Debbie & Ashley Smith  
Sooner Foundation  
Karen & Willard Soper  
Frances Spark  
Michael & Amy Spencer

John & Melie Spofford  
Nick & Martha Spofford  
Spofford Family  
Alix & Janie Stanley  
Janice & Peter Steil  
Lorna & Bill Stengel  
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III  
*Please excuse any inadvertent misspellings or omissions*

## Additions to the Museum's Collection in 2012

**Richard Baker.** One original 1885 brochure promoting land sales on Fishers Island.

**Charles Beckham II.** Photocopy of brochure "Dedication: Plum Island Animal Disease Laboratory, Sept. 26, 1956," and several Plum Island-related copy prints.

**Marjorie Blizzard.** Framed oil painting by H. L. Ferguson entitled "Billy's Roost." The painting is a daytime view of Ed Hedge's Fish Market dated July 1954.

**Robert Brooks.** Rusted pistol found hidden in stone wall near donor's house off the Gloaming.

**Miggie Bryan.** Misc. sheets of unused FI Country Club (FICC) stationery with four different letterheads, c.1940s to 1983, and one sheet of unused Our Lady of Grace Church stationery.

**Brad Burnham.** Five aerial photographs of Middle Farms Flats area, 9/29/2012 (digital files).

**Grace Burr.** Three color photographs documenting trees gnawed by beaver(s) near Barlow Pond, 1993 and 1995.

**Ralph & Lauryn Carbone.** Two copies of memorial booklet "Hank Luce III: Service of Remembrance, November 17, 2005," and one copy of 1987 memorial booklet "Nancy Bryan Luce."

**Jim Carney.** Collection of FI Gazettes and book "A Collection of Stories" by R.S. Morton.

**Susanna Doyle.** Article entitled "John Winthrop, Jr. and the Alchemy of Colonial Settlement" by W.W. Woodward from *American Ancestors*, Spring 2011.

**Jeff & Catherine Edwards.** Three postcards: Munnatawket Ferry, 13th Regiment, N.Y. N.G., Fort Terry, NY, c.1905, and lighthouse view. One full-page magazine ad with montage that includes Latimer Reef Light.

**Ken Edwards.** Snapshot of George Griffin clearing snow with bulldozer, circa March 1961. Two certificates of



Rusted pistol found hidden in stone wall near Bob Brooks' house. Donated by Bob Brooks.

achievement received by donor for EMT and emergency care and transportation training, in NYC and on FI, 1971 and 1976 respectively. Invitation to 75th anniversary of FIFD dinner at FI Club, June 2002, photocopy of FIFD 25th anniversary banquet program, and one Charlie Morgan photo of FI Fire Department members giving donor birthday cake, 1/10/1987.

**Harry & Susie Ferguson.** One copy of "Connecticut Circle Magazine" May 1948 issue with article on NY and Conn. boundary issues. Copy neg. with matching photo of "Map of New London and its Vicinity: Exhibiting the Situation of the Harbour, Forts, Frigates &c" by A[mos] Doolittle, New Haven, 1813.

**Henry Fisher.** Two color photographs of former brick barracks, Fort H.G. Wright, c.1960.

**FI School.** Several copies of 2012 promotional brochure entitled "The Fishers Island School: A Learning Experience Like No Other." One Tee-shirt promoting joint school/museum program on War of 1812 at Lyman Allyn Art Museum, New London, Conn., April 12, 2012.

**Chris Gaillard.** Antique Fishers Island souvenir inkwell made from carved whelk shell, c.1900.

**Louise Gaumond.** One FIFD Marathon circular patch.

**Col. Terry Gibbs USA (Ret.).** "Meeting the Submarine Challenge: A Short History of the Naval Underwater Systems Center" by John Merrill and Lionel D. Wyld. US GPO 1997.

**Karen Goodwin.** Advertisement clipped from unidentified 1960 magazine for "Fishers Island 42" sailboat built by the Stonington Boat Works, Stonington, Conn.

**Nora Howard.** Photocopies of papers relating to Rev. Jos. Pierpont

**Craig Hudson.** Several pages from 1930s architectural magazines with drawings and photos of FI residences, including those built for A. Dater, W. Vanderpool and J.N. Brown.

**Richard Jensen, Sr.** One DVD with transferred footage of FI Club burning, September 19, 1963, and movie of FIFD training in former Battery Marcy gun emplacement, c.1960s.

**Henry & Margaret King.** Framed B/W reproduction of



Postmaster H.C. Hansen and residents in Post Office, Fishers Island. News photo, 3/15/1945. "To Secede or Not Secede: That's the question that's bothering the 572 residents of Fishers Island." Museum acquisition.

Moses Park's map of Connecticut (1766) from Library of Congress Map Division.

**Arthur Kuijpers.** Photocopies of papers (primarily correspondence and contracts) relating to the I.W. Bonbright residence, Fishers Island, from the files of the Olmsted Bros., Brookline, Mass. Dates: 1926 -1930.

**Catherine Ladd.** Two six-inch silver-plated spoons: one with "Mononotto Inn" on handle and one with "Mansion House" on handle. Misc. photos featuring FI views and FI residents.

**Lighthouse Works.** Printed announcement for closing of Art Exhibition: "In WILDNESS is the Preservation of the World: Recent Drawings by Ethan Kibbe." July 21 [2012] & "Positive Future Prophecy Posse" printed "poster"/poem by Maya Hayuk/Jef Scharf, two artists brought to FI by the Lighthouse Works Art Collective in the summer of 2012. Printed on the Mayonnaise Press letterpress.

**Geordie Loveday.** Single wooden-shafted golf club (low unnumbered iron) with name of country club and golf pro stamped on the head of the iron: "Wykagyl [Country Club], Aleck Smith." c.1905.

**Patricia Lynch.** One oversized matchbook from Mansion House Hotel & one wooden military automobile pass for Ft. H.G. Wright, c.1930s.

**Sarah Malinowski.** Two books: "Black Roots in Southeastern Connecticut, 1650-1900" by Brown and Roise and "Soil Survey of Suffolk County, New York" by USDA (includes section on Fishers Island).

**Tom McCance.** One framed copy print USCG station and north shore boat house on East Harbor, 1930s.

**Austin McPhail.** Taxidermied Ring-necked pheasant (male).

**Mystic River Historical Society.** 11 pages of FI-related newspaper clippings from unspecified newspapers, circa 1905, originally collected by Mrs. Rhoda A. Woodburn of Liberty Street, Westerly, RI.

**Bobby & Susie Parsons.** Metal nameplate "Murdock" from Murdock Cottage, FI.

**Betty Peishoff.** FI School Dedication program, 1972. FI School Graduation program, 1973. Group portrait



Freighter *Willboro* aground at Race Rock, 3/26/1936. Museum acquisition.

Time Table of The Fisher's Island Navigation Co.		
1910.	Steamer Restless.	1910.
Commencing Thursday, June 16, and until further notice.		
Leaves Fishers Island.		Leaves New London.
6.30 a. m.	7.30 a. m., carries mail.	
Leaves Mansion House wharf. Mondays, leaves at 5.35 a. m.		10.00 a. m.
8.45 a. m., carries mail.	1.25 p. m., carries mail.	
12.00 noon.	4.15 p. m.	
2.40 p. m., carries mail.	Waits until 4.30 p. m. for train.	
5.10 p. m., carries mail.	6.10 p. m., carries mail.	
	Waits for train leaving New York at 3.00 p. m.	
SUNDAYS.		
8.45 a. m.	10.00 a. m., carries mail.	
7.00 p. m., carries mail.	7.45 p. m.	

Fishers Island Navigation Co. timetable, 1910. Museum acquisition.

of cast of FI School play, circa 1937. New London Elks Club group photo (includes various FI residents) circa late 1940s. FI School graduation program, June 23, 1947. Original photo of FI High School basketball team, 1945/46.

**Vicki & Pierce Rafferty.** One copy of "Garden Design" magazine April 2012 with article "One Last Hurrah" on the Armstrong's Hoover Hall and Hooverness. One poster for the band "The Depressions" featuring Ben Cameron. Poster was for concert held on August 18, 2012 to benefit the FI Movie Theater.

**Sandy & Debbie Riegel.** One copy FICC By Laws - 1976, and one copy of FICC Golf Schedule -1954.

**Jim Righter.** Lois Plummer collection, including seventeen snapshots taken on FI in the 1930s, 52 vintage Fishers Island postcards, c.1920s to 1950s, five oversize Mansion House Hotel matchbooks, c.1930s, one sheet of unused Hay Harbor Club letterhead stationery, c.1950s, two 1930s FI Girl Scout membership certificates for Lois Plummer, one potholder with Race Rock Light illustration and one coffee cup with map of FI, c.1960s.

**Jean Robinson.** One HHC golf scorecard, c.1940s

**Kandi Sanger.** Correspondence between G.H. Bartlett and his wife Jennie, 1870s and 1880s (eight letters), Mansion House teapot ("M" on side, "Mansion House" on bottom), five demitasse spoons with "Mansion House" on top of handle, seven FI postcards dating from the 1950s to the late 1990s, nine FIFD "Beer Fest" buttons (years 1975, 1978, 1979 and 1981) and one "Ray Edwards Candidate for Election" button.

**Nina Schmid.** Two digital photographs of new Union Chapel pastor Rev. Pam Vollinger posing with Rev. Rosemary Baue, her predecessor, at Rev. Pam Vollinger's installation in June 2011. Maps of FI, two c.1957 & one c.1970s. Mansion House brochure, c.1940.

**John and Melie Spofford.** One copy of self-published book



Grade school cast of play, Fishers Island School, circa 1937. Donated by Betty Peishoff.

with photos by the donors taken at parties and events at Armstrong residence "Hooverness" (2004-2010).

**Mary Vaughan.** Photos documenting Smith Vaughan lecture reception at HLFM, 2012.

**James Wall.** Collection of photos and ephemera relating to the Bartlett family and the Bartlett Cottages. Suffolk County Fire Safety Certificates of Award issued to donor in 1978 and 1979. Training completion certificates issued to donor by Suffolk County Dept. of Health Services for EMT training (1976) and Conn. State Dept. of Health for Emergency Medical Technician-Ambulance training (1976).

## HLFM Acquisitions in 2012

**Objects include:** Two porcelain trinket boxes made in France: "A Trifle from Fishers Island," c.1900. One FI Ferry Schedule for 1910. "Fish Hawk" Plate XVI, lithographic print by Theodore H. Jasper, 1878. One watercolor of an osprey on branch attributed to artist Philip Rickman (1891-1982).

**Books and magazines include:** Natural history of New York City's Parks and Great Gull Island. Landowner's Guide to state-protected plants of forests in New York State. Detached page from July 30, 1881 issue of *Scientific American* that includes article "Home of the American Osprey." *Time*, May 2, 1955 issue with Claire McCardell cover.

**Photographs include:** Mansion House Hotel, c.1895. FI Residence of Rev. Henry Ferguson, c.1895. Cottages on Hay Harbor, c.1895. R.P. Linderman house, FI, with caption proving Bruce Price is architect (from 1903 magazine).

Collection of 67 Ft. Wright postcards, including 42 real photo postcards (primarily 1910s). J.N. Brown and fiancée Anne S. Kinsolving at FI Horse Show, 1930. News photo: "Singer [Alma Gluck] sails for first Russia visit," 1934. News photo: aerial view of freighter *Willboro* aground at Race Rock, 1936. News photo: Lammot duPont at Senate hearing, 1/12/38. News photo: aerial view of Bank Street, New London, Conn., smoldering after the fire triggered by Hurricane of 1938. 28 b/w snapshots of military activity and armament at Ft. Wright, NY, Fort Michie, NY, and unid. locations during WW II. News photo: H.C. Hansen and residents in FI Post Office, 1945. News photo: Fashion designer Claire McCardell, c.1956.



New London's Bank Street smoldering after 1938 Hurricane. News photo. Museum acquisition.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The Henry L. Ferguson Museum is the collection, preservation and exhibition of items of Pre-History, History and Natural History of Fishers Island and, through its Land Trust, the preservation in perpetuity of undeveloped property in its natural state. It is organized for the education and enjoyment of the Island's community and visitors and for the protection of habitat for the Island's flora and fauna.

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## Museum Speakers and Programs 2013

**Life Underground.** Find out about groundhogs, box turtles, salamanders, moles, beetles, worms and many more creatures that call underground home. Learn how these creatures are essential to all life while getting to know our subterranean friends. Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center (DPNC) family program for ages 5 and up. **Wednesday, July 3rd.** Time: 2 to 3 p.m. Location: the Museum. Suggested donation \$5.

**Population Talk.** An illustrated lecture by HLFM Director Pierce Rafferty. Now more than ever the subject of Fishers Island's declining year-round population is a topic of concern and discussion. This "big picture" talk examines the rise and fall of Fishers Island's population from first European settlement to date with a focus on the factors shaping the numbers in the critical post-WWII period. Discussion to follow. **Sunday July 7th.** Time: 4 p.m. Location: Union Chapel.

**Creepers and Leapers.** Live frogs, snakes and salamanders provide an up-close introduction to the interesting adaptations of our native amphibians and reptiles. DPNC family program for ages 5 and up. **Wednesday, July 10th.** Time: 2 to 3 p.m. Location: the Museum. Suggested donation \$5.

**Conservation in an Era of Climate Change: Can We Save Saltmarsh Birds as the Oceans Rise?** An illustrated lecture by Chris Elphick, Associate Professor in the Dept. of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at UConn. Since 2002 Chris Elphick has been studying birds that live in coastal marshes. His talk will describe the biology of these birds, how their lives are influenced by the ebb and flow of the tides, and how sea-level rise is expected to affect them. The HLFM's 2013 Smith Vaughan Lecture on a Natural History Subject. **Sunday, July 14th.** Time: 4 p.m. Location: Union Chapel. Reception at HLFM to follow.

**Owl Prowl.** Get up close and personal with a live owl, dissect owl pellets and learn about owls' unique adaptations for nocturnal life. DPNC family program for ages 5 and up. **Wednesday, July 17th.** Time: 2 to 3 p.m. Location: the Museum. Suggested donation \$5.

**Meet the Animals.** Children and adults alike will learn about ecosystems, habitats, food webs and more during this popular Children's Museum of Southeastern Connecticut (CMSC) family program for ages 4 and up. **Wednesday, July 24th.** Time: 2 to 3 p.m. Location: the Museum. Suggested donation \$5.



Beyond "Meadows in a Can." Lecture on Native flora appropriate for meadow creation. Thursday, July 25th.

**Beyond "Meadow in a Can": Techniques for Integrating Native Flora into Your Fishers Island Landscape.** An illustrated lecture on Native flora appropriate for meadow creation given by Polly L. Weigand, Soil District Technician, Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District, and Uli Lorimer, Native Plant Curator of Brooklyn Botanic Garden. **Thursday, July 25th.** Time: 4 to 5 p.m. Location: Union Chapel.

**History of Plum Island, NY.** This illustrated lecture by award-winning author Ruth Ann Bramson will examine the history of neighboring Plum Island from the time of pre-colonial Indian settlement through to its use as a military fort and, more recently, as the site of a government research facility. She is currently co-writing a history of Plum and Great Gull islands. **Sunday, July 28th.** Time: 4 p.m. Location: Union Chapel.

**The Eelgrass of Fishers Island: New York's Last Great Stronghold for this Important Species.** Chris Pickerell, Marine Program Director at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program on L.I. will chronicle the on-going eelgrass research that has been taking place around F.I. and highlight its importance to restoration efforts in other parts of New York and Connecticut. **Sunday, August 4th.** Time: 4 p.m. Location: Union Chapel.

**Peek into a Pond.** Come discover what creatures are living in our ponds. We'll have nets and buckets so you can take your



The Eelgrass of Fishers Island: New York's Last Great Stronghold for this Important Species. *Lecture on Aug. 4th.*

best shot at catching frogs, tadpoles, fish, insects and more! DPNC family program for ages 5 and up. **Wednesday, August 7th.** Time: 2 to 3 p.m. Location: the Museum. Suggested donation \$5.

**Creature Features at the Ocean.** Join us as we explore animals and their special adaptations for living in water and on land. CMSC family program for ages 4 and up. **Wednesday, August 14th.** Time: 2 to 3 p.m. Location: Drop off and pick up at South Beach by the parking area near end of 1st hole

of Hay Harbor golf course. IF RAIN, MEET AT THE MUSEUM FOR INDOOR PROGRAM. Program limited to 20 people. Advance registration required. Suggested donation \$5.

**Ahoy Matey.** Children can dress as pirates to set the mood for a walk down the plank on the way to loads of swashbuckling activities. We'll share a pirate story, sing some pirate songs, and use our spy glasses and maps to find the buried treasure. A CMSC family program for ages 3 to 6. **Wednesday, August 21st.** Time: 2 to 3 p.m. Location: the Museum. Suggested donation \$5.

**The History of Race Rock Light.** This illustrated lecture by HLFM director Pierce Rafferty will celebrate the remarkable achievement of engineer Francis Hopkinson Smith and his partner in the construction of Race Rock Light, Capt. T.A. Scott of New London. **Sunday, August 25th.** The talk will complement the HLFM's current exhibition on Race Rock Light. Time: 4 p.m. Location: Union Chapel.

**Nature Walks:** During July and August, Nature Walks will start at the Museum at 2 p.m. unless changes have been posted.

**Museum Hours:** June 30th to Labor Day: Tuesday through Friday: 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 12 noon. Closed Mondays.

**Off Season Hours:** To be posted. For special appointments: Please call Museum Director Pierce Rafferty at the Museum.

## The Henry L. Ferguson Museum

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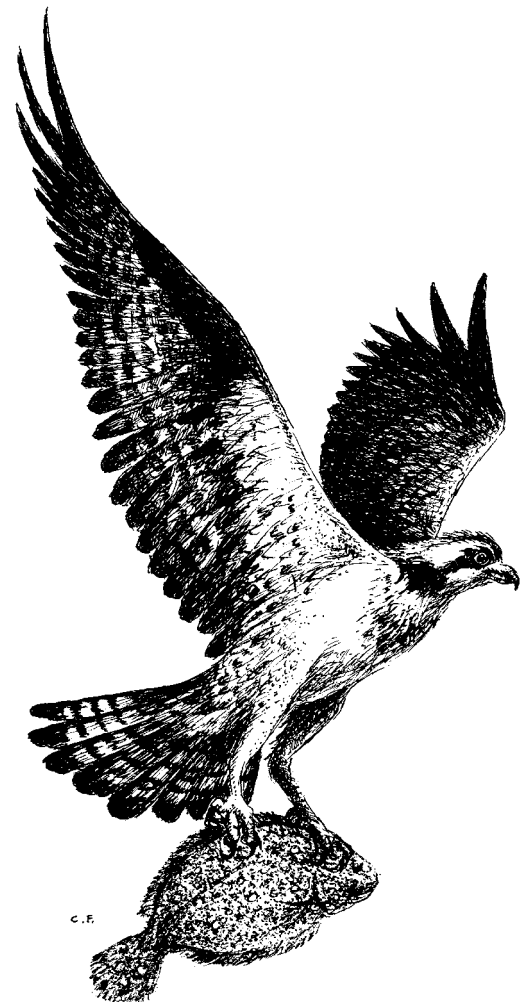
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