

Diamondback Terrapin Turtle Headstart Program Up and Running

The state permit given to Sandy Neck to headstart Diamondback Terrapin turtles was renewed this year. A total of 33 hatchling Terrapins will be raised over the winter by schools, libraries, and community based organizations throughout Barnstable and Sandwich. The turtles are currently about the size of a quarter and expected to grow to the size of a three year old turtle in just 9 months.

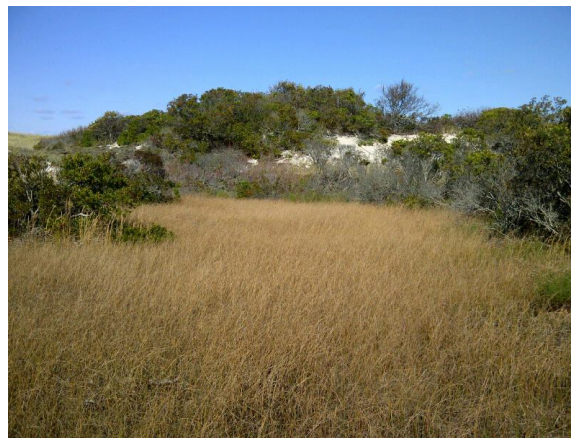


Small young turtles are often predated in their first year with a survival rate of 20%. As they get larger, the diversity of predators likely to eat them decreases. Rapidly increasing a terrapin's size through headstarting will increase the chances that the turtle will survive to reach its reproductive age (females 8 -10 years, male 5-6 years). This is significant because Diamondback Terrapin turtles are a threatened species in Massachusetts.

BATTLE for BIODIVERSITY TRUDGES ON

In October and November, Sandy Neck staff continued the fight to keep invasive plant species from transforming our cranberry bogs, wetlands, and marsh into tall weedy forests of Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), Panicum (*Panicum spp.*) and Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). These three invasive species threaten biological diversity by crowding out native food and cover plant species which in turn affects the life cycles of organisms from birds to amphibians to algae.

Fortunately, in 2002, The Nature Conservancy initiated a Phragmites control project with the Town of Barnstable. This project has continued with support from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, USFWS Partners Program, NRCS WHIP grants and gifts from private foundations. In addition to applying herbicide to Phragmites, Sandy Neck staff has also removed Panicum and Purple Loosestrife when encountered. This year, 34 freshwater wetlands were treated as well as 5.3 acres of salt marsh.



Treated fresh water wetland free of invasive species. When maintained, native vegetation will quickly reestablish.

HUNTING NEWS

New Regulation

Hunting on Sandy Neck beach for in season game can now occur one half hour before sunrise making the start time consistent with the State. Prior to this season hunting could not begin until sunrise. All hunting must still stop at sunset.

Pheasant Season

Hunting pheasant on Sandy Neck has long been a tradition for many Barnstable residents and non-residents alike. This year pheasants were



stocked twice weekly throughout the season and approximately two-thirds were taken.

Deer Hunt

A controlled archery and primitive firearms deer hunt occurred on Sandy Neck this fall. Hunting deer on Sandy Neck is normally prohibited; however, a deer hunt has historically occurred every other year. All participants were required to attend a mandatory meeting to provide hunting license information and review the regulations. To increase the likelihood that all interested hunters could participate; particularly partnering family members, the number of people allowed hunting each day increased from 12 to 20. The limit of deer that could be harvested remained at 12. During the archery hunt 3 deer were taken while 5 deer were taken during the primitive firearms hunt.

Mild Weather Reduces Sea Turtle Stranding Incidents

In early November, Sandy Neck staff begins to keep an eye out for stranded Kemp's Ridley sea turtles, a federally endangered species. Normally we expect to retrieve around a dozen cold-stunned sea turtles which we then transfer to Mass Audubon to transport to the New England Aquarium for rehabilitation.



Park Manager, Nina Coleman, with Kemp's Ridley rescued December 15

This year we have collected 5 sea turtles. According to Robert Prescott, executive director of the Massachusetts Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, warm temperatures and lack of sustained winds have reduced stranding occurrences.

Sandy Neck Stranding Contacts

Sandy Neck Gatehouse
(508) 362-8300

Marine and Environmental Affairs
(508) 790-6272

Seals and Dolphins

IFAW Marine Mammal Rescue
(508) 743-9548

Sea Turtles

Wellfleet Audubon Society
(508) 349-2615

Engraved Boulder Honors Father of Generous Donor

On February 28, 1920, Attorney John D.W. Bodfish conveyed a portion of Sandy Neck to the Town of Barnstable under the condition that it be used as a park and bathing beach, and be named Benjamin Bodfish Memorial Park after his late father. Bodfish Beach, as it is commonly called, has since been an extremely popular destination creating generations of fond memories.



Upon completion of the new bathhouse an engraved boulder was placed at the entrance to the park reminding us of the generous donation by John D.W. Bodfish.



Campers Come for Fall Sun

Campers were taking advantage of unseasonable warm weather throughout the fall. Camping overnight in self-contained vehicles is free beginning October 15th. While an ORV sticker is required year-round to drive on Sandy Neck Beach they are sold at a reduced rate beginning the day after Labor Day.

Park Manager
Nina Coleman

Natural Resource Officer
Matt Gough

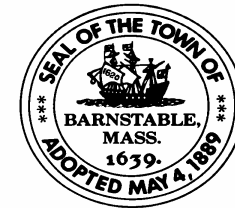
Town of Barnstable
Marine and Environmental
Affairs Division

1189 Phinney's Lane
Centerville, Ma 02632
(508) 790-6272

Sandy Neck Gatehouse
(508) 362-8300

For the latest Sandy Neck information
visit the Sandy Neck website at:

www.town.barnstable.ma.us
(Click on Sandy Neck Beach Park)



Sandy Neck TRACKS is written and compiled by
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All questions and comments are welcome.
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