



Salem Sound Monitor

February 2008

Dear Friends of Salem Sound Coastwatch,

It's hard to believe that February has come and gone. Here is the print version of our February email newsletter. If you have email, please let us know—it would help us a lot. Not only would you get your newsletter faster, but also it would save us money for postage and printing. Send us an email to info@salemsound.org to get your monthly e-newsletter. Thanks!

February is noteworthy for Valentine's Day--a day when we express our love. And those of us who love the beautiful waters of Salem Sound want it to be filled with healthy habitats that support an abundance of plants and wildlife. **But did you know that one of the threats to the health of the Sound comes from biological invasions of non-native plant and animal species from all parts of the world?**

Our Local Invaders Include--

Phragmites--The most common invasive in our watershed is a plant called *Phragmites australis*, a.k.a. "common reed." You've seen it -- it's a tall grassy reed with a feathery plume that grows alongside wetlands and salt marshes. Phragmites grows quickly and densely, crowding out other plants and eliminating food and shelter for marsh dwellers from the smallest fishes to ducks, herons and other birds.

Degraded wetlands are dominated by Phragmites!

For more information see: www.invasiveplants.net/phragmites



Green Fleece Alga-- When you walk on the beach you can see bits of Green Fleece Alga, a spongy seaweed that threatens the native New England eelgrass beds which provide one of the most valuable shallow water habitats. **The second largest eelgrass bed in MA is located off the coast of Beverly and Manchester-by-the-Sea.**



Check out: www.salemsound.org/mis/MISCodium.pdf and www.mass.gov/dfwele/dmf/programsandprojects/hubline/eelgrass.htm

Chinese Mitten Crab--The Chinese Mitten Crab is on our "watch list." Native to East Asia, it is extremely destructive — consuming the plants, small fish, clams, worms, etc. which provide food for recreationally and commercially important fish and shellfish. **The Chinese Mitten Crab seems to be making its way up the East Coast. It has recently been found as nearby as the Hudson River.**

www.salemsound.org/mittencrab.htm



Here's what you can do to help:

Many marine invasive species are transported in ballast water of large ships. **However, there are lots of ways people inadvertently introduce species that become invasive.**

1. Are you a boater? Small animals cling to boat hulls and plants get tangled in propellers. A tiny piece of some aquatic plants is enough to start a thriving population in a new location! **Put any plant and animal material found in or on the boat in plastic bags and throw in the trash as far away from the water as possible.** Clean boat hulls, props, trailers, and anything that's been submerged.

2. Love to fish? Believe it or not, fishing bait can be another source of invaders. **While it may seem crazy, never throw unused bait or its packing materials into the water.** Put them in plastic bags and throw in the trash. Live worms from vending machines often come from Southeast Asia and can bring unwanted "hitch hikers."

3. Like to eat seafood? Seafood shells can harbor invasive parasites. Put all the waste from your shellfish in plastic bags and throw in the trash. **Make sure that live shellfish and shellfish remains are kept away from the water.**

4. Do you own an aquarium? Stores actually sell invasive plants for aquarium use. Be careful of the plants you buy for your home aquarium. Throw away unwanted plants or animals in plastic bags in the trash. **Never put them in the toilet or the storm drain!**

SSCW is a Recognized Leader on Marine Invasive Species (MIS)

Salem Sound Coastwatch has a Marine Introduced Species Resource Center on our website, and we have developed a series of laminated ID cards describing the 13 current and 7 potential invaders. We are the first organization in the US selected to participate in the **SETL Project** by the Netherlands based Antemoon Foundation. The SETL Project is an international effort to detect and quantify fouling marine organisms.

Volunteers play a critical role in SSCW's efforts to document invasive species. Volunteers from Endicott College, the Waring School in Beverly, Gloucester's Maritime Heritage Center, Salem State College, and community-based volunteers are monitoring salt marshes, docks, rocky shores and tidepools in our region. Let us know if you would like to volunteer.

Other News from SSCW:

SSCW is looking for volunteers to help with two major events:

1. The **Swim & Fin OceanFest will be held Saturday, July 19** at Forest River Park in Salem. It will include swimming and kayak races (new this year!), music, food, games and family fun. Volunteers are needed to help on every aspect of this event.

2. The **"Keeping the Earth S.A.F.E. and SOUND" Fundraising party will be held Friday, May 16** at the Hawthorne Hotel in Salem. The band "A Patch of Blue" will provide entertainment. Let us know if you are willing to work on this fun event, which may include a silent auction. If you are willing to help, call 978-741-7900 or email us at susany@salemsound.org.

Thanks to Phragwrites, a local company that makes pens from the stalks of Phragmites, for their first-ever donation to a non-profit working to manage invasive species. (www.phragwrites.com)

Finally, we are interested in hearing your feedback about our new newsletter format. Is it too long, or just right? Do you find it informative? Let us know. Call us 978-741-7900.

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