

2016 State of Wellfleet Harbor Conference Set for November 5

For Immediate Release

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Sharks, gray seals, horseshoe crabs, and snapping turtles will be among the topics of presentations at the 14th annual State of Wellfleet Harbor Conference on Saturday, November 5 from 8:30 AM–1:30 PM at the Wellfleet Elementary School. The conference is free and open to the public.

Among the scheduled presentations is an update on Cape Cod shark research, including the surprising discovery of white sharks in Wellfleet Harbor in 2015. Appropriately, perhaps, there also will be a presentation about New England's gray seal population and its role as a sentinel species for the health of coastal ecosystems. Also on the agenda— the latest research on *Vibrio*, a potentially dangerous and costly bacteria impacting the shellfish industry, a two-year telemetry study of horseshoe crab movements in Wellfleet Harbor, and a look at how snapping turtles use culverts in the Herring River to snack on river herring.

Conference moderator Ned Hitchcock says the conference is one of the highlights of the town's year. "Having been away from Wellfleet since April, I am look forward to catching up with all the latest and ongoing projects in and around the Harbor, such as the herring count, Derrick Alcott's Herring River turtle project, and the current *Vibrio* research, which is important to all of us who love scratching for and eating oysters!"

The conference will conclude with presentations on the mapping of seabed habitats of Wellfleet Harbor as well as plans for the restoration of the Mayo Creek salt marsh. Following the conference, from 2–4 PM, Bob Prescott, director of Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, will lead a free walk at Duck Harbor to discuss fall sea turtle strandings and look for cold-stunned turtles.

A second free field trip is scheduled for Sunday, November 6, from 10 AM–12 noon—a tour led by Center for Coastal Studies coastal geologist Mark Borrelli of erosion and scouring around Indian Neck and what may be in store for similar areas as a result of climate change. Those interested in attending these field trips may sign up on the day of the conference. Directions on where to meet will also be available at that time.

Sponsors of this year's State of Wellfleet Harbor Conference include Cape Cod Five Cents Savings Bank, Mid Cape Home Centers, the Town of Wellfleet, the Wellfleet Conservation Trust, Friends of the Herring River, and Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary.

Food donations are being made by Mac's Seafood, the Wellfleet Box Lunch, The Wicked Oyster, and PB Boulangerie.

For more information, visit www.massaudubon.org/wellfleet-harbor-conference.

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photo credit: Wellfleet Harbor, courtesy of Melanie McCue