



A NEWSLETTER

from the

CAPE ANN VERNAL POND TEAM

Winter/Spring 2008

Website: www.capeannvernalpond.org

Email: cavpt@yahoo.com

THE CAVPT IS A HOPELESSLY NON-PROFIT VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO VERNAL POND CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION SINCE 1990.

**The Cape Ann
Vernal Pond Team
Wants You....
To become a member!**

**See the inside of this newsletter
for information and application.**

**Wait 'til you see the neat car window
membership decal you get!**

CAVPT members designed and built a flight cage
at the request of Greg Mertz, DVM, Executive Director of the New

England Wildlife Center. NEWC is a wildlife rehabilitation facility, located in South Weymouth, MA, where orphaned and injured animals are cared for prior to release back into the wild. The flight cage is intended for small birds to get their wings during recovery. CAVPT members were happy to volunteer for this project. Greg Mertz and the NEWC staff have been very helpful to us over the years.

They were instrumental in helping us to move forward as a real live, grown-up, environmentally responsible, incorporated 501(c)(3) non-profit business.

Team members Nick Taormina, Colleen Anderson and Rick Roth with Greg Mertz (3rd from left) wait patiently for their Frank Lloyd Wright Architectural Excellence Award....



CALENDAR of Upcoming Stuff...
check out our website at
www.capeannvernalpond.org

DID YOU KNOW...

by Nathan Mineo

Did you know that spadefoot toad tadpoles (genus *Spea*) can change from omnivores to carnivores depending on their diet? Tadpoles hatch as omnivores and then start feeding. Those individuals that make a meal out of fairy shrimp become carnivores while those that do not remain omnivores and continue to feed mainly on detritus. The ingestion of fairy shrimp triggers a morphological change in the tadpoles: their body narrows, intestine shortens, and they develop enlarged jaw muscles and notched mouthparts. This amazing phenomenon is known as "developmental plasticity"—the process by which environmental factors change the course of an organism's development—and is being studied in *Spea* tadpoles by Dr. David Pfennig of UNC. For more information, visit Dr. Pfennig's lab page: www.bio.unc.edu/faculty/pfennig/Lab/Welcome.html



Frog by Curtis Sarkin....
a long time ago



DID YOU KNOW...

Nathan Mineo, who writes our 'Did You Know' column, also proudly serves as bag boy at our annual yard sale fundraiser.

Dude...nice work!



Kestrel Update

Kestrel Educational Adventures was founded by CAVPT members in an effort to introduce vernal pond ecology workshops to schools. Kestrel is now an independent, incorporated non-profit offering several types of workshops and maintains a close affiliation with CAVPT.

The 2007 season was another successful year for Kestrel. With the help of four instructors, Kestrel reached over 1000 students in 15 schools.

The curriculum guide, *Exploring Natural Connections*, by Executive Director Jessica Kagle, was published and has sold over 160 copies. Other new and exciting Kestrel accomplishments include:

- The creation of the very popular after school *Conservation Club*
- Kicked off a membership program with an open house
- Moved into a new office (shared with CAVPT)
- Received grants from TD BankNorth, Staples Foundation for Learning, New England Biolabs, The Fuller Foundation, The EnTrust Fund, and Ben and Jerry's Foundation.

For more information visit the newly updated website:
www.kestreleducation.org

Thank you to all CAVPT members and friends
who participated or helped out last year

*The list of people to thank is
too big to print all the names.*

We know who you are.

You know who you are.

And that's all that matters, really, isn't it?

Thank you.



This beautiful wood frog was photographed by Don Slater during a CAVPT nighttime field trip

Rare Species Habitat

While you're out enjoying yourself vernal ponding, or whatever outdoor activity you like to do, don't forget to keep your eyes peeled for rare species. You can help protect their habitat. Photographs, maps and forms can be sent to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program and they will determine the rare species habitat. Animals that came to the attention of Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team members in 2007 included Species of Special Concern: Eastern box turtle in Rockport (below left), Blue-spotted salamander in Middleton (below right) and four-toed salamander eggs in Gloucester.

For more information about state listed species, please visit:
www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/species_info/mesa_list/mesa_list.htm



Eastern box turtle

Photo by Jon Bevins



Moisture-loving buttonbush is a common sight in some Cape Ann vernal ponds. The sweet blossoms are favorites of butterflies and other insects. Photo by M. Flowers

Last Year We...

- Presented Vernal Ponds at:
Sawyer Free Children's Library
Lanesville Community Center
Cox Reservation on Earth Day
New England Wildlife Center
- Led our usual nighttime field trips
- Held our annual Yard Sale Fundraiser
- Had a wicked-scary pumpkin-carving session at the Red Barrel Pub in Essex
- Presented Snakes of Massachusetts and the World at:
Earthfest at Lynn Woods
Rockport Elementary School
Camp Spindrift
Riverfest, Sudbury, MA
Halibut Point State Park
Friends of Belle Isle Marsh, East Boston
Local Cable Channel 12, Cape Ann Report
- Participated in Salem Science Picnic at the Salem Willows
- Presented a certification workshop at Joppa Flats, Newburyport
- Presented Snake Exhibits at:
Brookwood School, Manchester
Toad Hall Bookstore, Rockport
Gloucester Cruiseport Grand Opening
Essex Elementary, Essex
Gloucester Sidewalk Bazaar
Joppa Flats Audubon, Newburyport
Great Park Pursuit, Hatch Shell, Boston



This Blue-spotted salamander was found by Rick while on a Hyla Ecological Services survey project. Photo by R. Roth

Field Trips

Rainy nights and flashlights

Every spring CAVPT members lead nighttime field trips to the ponds to see the amphibian-breeding activity. Check your flashlights, get new batteries and put your rain gear on the hook by the door. To avoid habitat destruction and critter disturbance, we limit the number of participants on each trip. We also ask that you leave your dog at home. Interested? Email us at cavpt@yahoo.com

If we value wildlife, we must protect vernal ponds.....

What a CAVPT Membership offers:

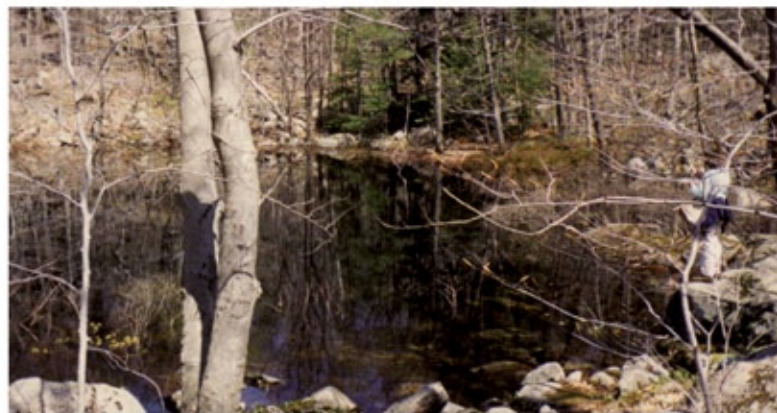
- A CAVPT car decal
- Discount on CAVPT products (t-shirts, hats, etc.)
- Subscription to our annual newsletter
- Email updates of vernal pond activities and events
- Guided field trips to local vernal ponds
- The satisfaction of knowing you are helping preserve these unique and vital habitats

Our programs & activities include:

- Vernal pond certification
- Exhibits & presentations
- Daytime & nighttime field trips
- Certification workshops
- Posters
- "Vernal Ponds" video
- Website: capeannvernalpond.org
- Scout patch program
- Snakes of Massachusetts & the World

Salamander linoleum cut by Isabel Natti

For school programs, including *Ponds in the Classroom*, contact our sister organization, Kestrel Educational Adventures: www.kestreleducation.org



The Funding for our programs is provided by:

- Corporate gifts
- Grants
- Sale of our merchandise
- Donations from community members like you

CAVPT thanks the following organizations and foundations for their generous support:

The EnTrust Fund • The Norcross Foundation • New England Herpetological Society • Sweetwater Trust • Toad Hall Bookstore
Gloucester Cultural Council • The Bellevue Fund

The Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team is a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to vernal pond conservation and education since 1990. Our focus is vernal ponds. The issue is the preservation of wildlife habitat, which is ultimately about the health of the planet.



Blue Flag is common in vernal ponds and it's wicked pretty

CAVPT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
Your contribution is tax deductible.

Support the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team Become a Member!

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

☐ Send me email updates about field trips and events

☐ Lifetime \$200

Annual Membership

☐ Individual \$20

☐ Family \$35

☐ Other Amount \$ _____

☐ Junior (under 16) \$10

Please find my enclosed check in the amount of:

\$ _____

Please detach this form and mail with your donation to:

Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team

P.O. Box 12, Rockport, MA 01966





Return Service Requested

Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team
P.O. Box 12
Rockport, MA 01966

The Need for Protection...

The temporary nature of vernal ponds often belies their importance. Countless plants and animals live in vernal ponds. Insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals visit to drink, feed, breed and nest. Some species, such as spotted salamanders, wood frogs and fairy shrimp are totally dependent on this habitat.



We saw this spotted salamander migrating to a vernal pond
in Gloucester on a CAVPT nighttime field trip
Photo by R. Roth

How to Protect...

The best way to protect a vernal pond is to own the property. The next best way to protect them is to certify ponds with the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program. Certification application reports include photographs, maps and field observation forms.

To learn more go to www.capeannvernalpond.org or check out the Vernal Pool Association's website at www.vernalpool.org