

WATERSHED

A Newsletter of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association

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Fall 2011

White Nose Syndrome and how Rhode Island Bats are Impacted *By Peter August*

The Wood-Pawcatuck watershed's most common bat, the little brown bat, hibernates in caves and mines in New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York, ground zero for White Nose Syndrome (WNS). The abundance of little brown bats has dropped significantly in RI the past few years. This has been shown by systematic surveys conducted by biologist Charles Brown at the RI Department of Environmental Management and informal surveys I have conducted at URI's W. Alton Jones campus. Anyone who enjoys watching bats work the summer skies has probably noticed a decrease in their abundance. What are the ecological impacts of such a dramatic decline in bats? This is not yet clear. What is certain, however, is it will take many decades, maybe a century for little brown bat populations to re-

cover from WNS. With only one pup born a year and a first year mortality in excess of 90%, it will take a long time for little brown bat populations to reach levels that we saw only a few years ago.

What is white-nose syndrome?

White-nose syndrome is a disease affecting hibernating bats. Named for the white fungus that appears on the muzzle and other body parts of hibernating bats, WNS is associated with extensive mortality of bats in eastern North America. First documented in New York in the winter of 2006-2007, WNS has spread rapidly across the eastern United States and Canada, and the fungus associated with WNS has been detected as far west as Oklahoma.

Bats with WNS exhibit uncharacteristic behavior during cold winter months, including flying outside in the day and clustering near the entrances of hibernacula. Bats have been found sick and dying in unprecedented numbers in and around caves and mines. WNS has killed more than 1 million bats in the Northeast and Canada. In some hibernacula, 90 to 100 percent of bats have died.



Little Brown Bats with white-nose syndrome.
Photo courtesy of Nancy Heaslip, NY DEC

Numerous laboratories and state and federal biologists are investigating the cause of the bat deaths. A newly discovered fungus, *Geomyces destructans*, is associated with WNS. Scientists are investigating the dynamics of fungal infection and transmission, and searching for a way to control it.

Continued on page 2

From the Executive Director

I want to thank you all for your generous support of WPWA's 2011 efforts and my warmest wishes for your upcoming holidays.

For most, Fall marks the time to finish outdoor projects, slow down, and move indoors. At WPWA we're no different. We are feverishly finishing our 2011 projects. The staff is working to finalize reports and close out our many 2011 educational and recreational programs along with the multitude of other member and public related services that we provide. I have been mired in the logistics of financial planning and reporting as well as buttoning up our capital projects.

The one disheartening facet of my job is that most of my time is not actually spent out in the watershed enjoying its beauty. In an effort to strike the balance between work and play this year I have employed modern technology to allow me to play and work at the same time. I have taken countless calls, emails and text messages from the comfort of my tree stand this hunting season. Thanks to technology I am writing to you while awaiting the passage of my quarry. For those of you who are challenged with a heavy work load and enjoy the outdoors I highly recommend this method of multitasking.

May you all have a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season and a prosperous 2012!



Continued from page one

What bats are being affected?

More than half of the 45 bat species living in the United States rely on hibernation for winter survival. Eleven cave-hibernating bats, including four endangered species and subspecies are already affected by or are potentially at risk from WNS.



*Little brown bat with WNS.
Photo by Ryan von Linden, NY DEC*

Where is it now? White-nose syndrome has continued to spread rapidly. At the end of the 2010-2011 hibernating season, bats with WNS were confirmed in 16 states northeastern US states and four Canadian provinces.

What is being done? The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leads an extensive network of state and federal agencies, tribes, organizations, institutions and individuals in working cooperatively to investigate the source, spread and cause of bat deaths associated with WNS and develop management strategies to minimize the impacts of WNS.

*Taken from US Fish and Wildlife Service
Fact Sheet, May 2011.*

For More Information Visit:
www.fws.gov/whitenosesyndrome

WPWA's Fall Series Photography 101 with TOM TETZNER

Taking what you love and sharing it with others is what Tom Tetzner had done with his knowledge of photography. Tom, who resides in Charlestown, RI, is a well-known wildlife photographer. He shares his skills and extensive knowledge of digital cameras by teaching classes at the Cross Mills Public Library, Chariho Technical School and at the Kettle Pond Wildlife Center. His classes are so popular that people sign up them for them months in advance and come back multiple times to hone their skills. As one recent student said "[I] really enjoyed your class and knowledge. You have a great teaching approach and are super with people. GREAT STUFF!!" And he does it for free.



Thomas J. Tetzner stands with a feeder full of Black Oil Sunflower seeds, just waiting to make some fine feathered friends very happy!

THANK YOU to Nancy Nadeau, Public Relations Coordinator at the Cross' Mills Public Library for a lovely tribute to Tom! For more information visit: www.crossmills.org



Winter Birding & Beyond!

WPWA 2012

WINTER & SPRING BIRDING WITH ROGER MASSE - begins on January 21 at 9:00 am
Come learn the basics of birding during this part indoor and part outdoor class at WPWA's campus on the Wood River. An informative lecture will be given by URI Ph. D. student, Roger Masse, which will prepare participants for the BIRDING WALKS, so please understand that registration will be limited to those who plan to attend other events in the series.



February 11, 9am to 11am

BIRDING WALK #1

A mid winter walk at a management area in the Watershed, TBA.

March 3 - 8am to 10am

BIRDING WALK #2

This late winter walk will take place at the Ninigret Wildlife Refuge.

March 24 - 8am to 10am

BIRDING WALK #3

An early spring walk at a management area in the Watershed, TBA.

April 14 - 8am to 10am

BIRDING WALK #4

A walk on the Carolina - South trail in the Carolina Management Area.

Please consider making a donation to WPWA for providing these events free of charge.

Preference for all Birding Walks will be given to persons who attend the January 21 Program.

Participants must have binoculars for all Birding Program Events. Field Guides optional.

Pre-registration is required for all WPWA events and is easy to do online at www.wpwa.org/events.php

FOR OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS SEE PAGE 6

WPWA History in the Making *by Dante Ionata*

Early next year, the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association website will be graced by a new feature, the History of the organization from its emergence in 1983 as a fledgling among Rhode Island's environmental organizations to our current maturity doing innovative and ground-breaking fish and wildlife habitat restoration work.

Our historian, Joseph W. Higgins, is going to tell the fascinating story of how Ed Wood received a grant from the National Park Service and how he and Linda then combined with Pete and Marnie Lacouture, Saul and Jennifer Saila, and Mitch and Betty Salomon to found the organization.

Joseph will recount how our pioneering work monitoring streams and ponds in the watershed eventually led to the establishment of Watershed Watch at the University of Rhode Island, a statewide system of volunteers who regularly check the water of lakes and streams around the state in order to serve as a first alert to new or additional sources of pollution.

He will describe how we evolved into one of the State's first Watershed Councils with new statutory enablement to speak for and defend the lands and waters of this beautiful watershed against activities,

proposed and existing, that could degrade our marvelous natural resources and the public's access to, and enjoyment, of them.

Our collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management to develop at our campus the first handicapped accessible canoe launching dock in the State will be part of the story.

And one of the many pieces of our history that Joseph will also tell is that of how WPWA led the way in Rhode Island to remove unused industrial revolution-era dams in order to restore historical anadromous fish runs that were destroyed by the construction of the dams in the 18th and 19th centuries.

A junior at the University of Rhode Island with a double major in journalism and writing, Joseph is from Hillsboro, New Jersey. Writing the WPWA history for its website was one of a number of possible projects offered for credit in the class Writing 304.

Joseph was attracted to the project because of the opportunity to conduct many interviews, valuable experience as he strives to become a print journalist. And his love of fishing, hiking and the outdoors only sharpened his interest in becoming WPWA historian.

WATERSHED KIDS CORNER This edition of **WPWA's Kid's Corner** features information about Hand Made Gift Giving!
Please spend a few minutes with your child to read the article together!
The two crafts presented can be found at: www.greenandcleanmom.org/ and www.funinthemaking.net/

Well, it's that time of year again - when many of us are busy thinking of ways to make the important people in our lives smile! Even if you don't celebrate any of the popular holidays throughout the year, you still have your own special reasons to
GIVE gifts to the people you **LOVE**.

Nowadays it's just too easy to walk into a store and buy something. If you really want to make the people on your list extra **HAPPY** try making them their gifts. You can be sure that they will appreciate the extra time that you spent on them.



They will know that their gift is one-of-a-kind and extra **SPECIAL**.



Just like **YOU!**

Here are a two hand made gifts that you could make at home with very little help from the grown ups in your life. **Make sure that you get permission first!**



EGG SHELL POT - There's nothing like seeing something green in the middle of winter to cheer you up! This gift would be especially good for someone you know who isn't a huge fan of winter, and will be longing for the crocuses and daffodils that announce spring's arrival.

What You Will Need:

- One uncooked egg with the top removed.
- A small amount of soil and two seeds. Some good choices are: Lavender, Peas, & Catnip.
- A little tray to rest the egg on. Be creative! You don't have to use a terracotta tray. You could use a number of small objects that could probably be found in the recycle bin.

First Have an adult help you prepare the eggshell - they will have to 1.) Cut off the top and remove the egg (save it for your breakfast the next morning!) And 2.) Drill a small hole through the base of the shell so that the water can drain out of the soil. **Second** Fill the shell with soil almost to the top - **WORK CAREFULLY** so that you don't break the delicate shell. **Third** Place one or two seeds into the soil, pushing them down about halfway. Then, place the egg on a small tray in a well lit area of the house and water the seed with about a teaspoon of water. Check the soil every day to make sure that the soil is damp but not too wet. Now you're ready to give your Egg Shell Pot away!

Consider this: *make a little card to go with the pot that includes instructions for it's new owner.

*tie a ribbon around the shell before you plant the seeds.

*give the shell a face and plant grass seeds so that it can get a 'hair cut' when the grass grows too long.

RECYCLED BIRD NESTER - Your feathered friends will tweet with joy when they fly by this nester that's full of materials they can use to build their nests. If you are having trouble thinking of the 'just right' gift for someone you know who loves birds but already has a few feeders - this could be it!

What You Will Need:

- Several twist ties
- A plastic berry basket
- A cardboard milk carton
- Scrap pieces of twine, yarn, and thread 2 - 4 inches long



First Have an adult help you cut two adjoining sides off of an old milk container to use for the roof. It should be about 4.5 to 5 inches long. **Second** Use a hole punch to make a few holes in the roof along the edges. Attach the roof to the sides of the berry basket by tying yarn through the holes of the roof and the basket and securing with a knot. You could use twist ties for this, too. **Third** Tie a long piece of yarn through and around the roof. This will be used to hang the nester from a tree branch. Finally, fill the basket with goodies that a nesting bird would love! Ta Da - **TIME TO GIVE!**



WATERSHED GREEN CORNER

The article on the left is brought to you by RI NEMO - Produced by URI Cooperative Extension for RI Stormwater Solutions, a project funded by the RI Department of Transportation, in partnership with the RI Department of Environmental Management and RI municipalities. This article has been formatted by WPWA to fit this space.



As Rhode Islanders saw in the aftermath of Hurricane Irene, leaves blown off trees clogged storm drains across the entire state. This led to treacherous driving conditions as huge puddles formed on roads and highways that made vehicles hydroplane, or simply sent blinding walls of water over cars coming from the opposite direction. Clogged drains can also result in overflow to sidewalks and other pedestrian areas, assuring a change of soggy shoes is necessary as soon as you reach home.

Those things can still happen in winter months, especially with fall's leftover leaves.

Raking up leaves on your property and disposing of them properly can help reduce storm drain clogging. Blowing leaves into the street, a new concept in landscaping care, certainly does not. Nor does raking them to the roadside and hoping the next gully washer takes care of them. It is up to you to help keep runoff and stormwater under control and avoid clogged drains that can endanger life and property. So, skip your trip to the gym today and get your cardio workout right in your own backyard!

For information on all things stormwater, go to:


www.ristormwatersolutions.org


Raking leaves is considered a moderate physical activity. It can help build upper-body strength, as well as core strength, which your back and stomach will thank you for. A 135 lb person could burn about 240 calories raking leaves for an hour. To make it easier on your




Thank You Don Bosquet for your cartoon donation!

body, consider these leaf-raking tips:

 **Wear Layers** - It may be cool when you begin, but soon after your body will warm right up. Peeling off a layer when needed will prevent your body from overheating.

 **Pay Attention to Posture** - be careful not to twist your spine while you rake, and keep your back naturally aligned.

 **Switch Sides** - Raking on only one side can cause injury so try ten minutes on one, and then ten minutes on the other side. This will help balance out the stress and strain to the lower back and to your arms and shoulders evenly on both sides.

Now, put down that leaf blower and pick up that rake! And hey, if raking's not your thing, consider stimulating the economy by calling a local 'Green' Yard Care Professional!

For more raking techniques, visit: www.aarp.org/health/



Giving Gifts That Give Back

December is a busy month for many people, and these days, a lot of that busy-ness centers on gift-giving. The Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association and R.I. Stormwater Solutions are working hard to reduce the effects of polluted stormwater runoff. So we thought this might be an appropriate time to provide a list of unusual but thoughtful gifts that can benefit us all!

For the person on your list who likes to garden, or for a new home owner, consider the gift of a **rain barrel**. Diverting rooftop runoff to a rain barrel not only reduces the amount of water that flows to the street, but it also can be used for irrigation. **It's estimated that a rain barrel can save 1,300 gallons of water during the summer season.**

For the motor head car enthusiast, try a **gift certificate** for an oil change at a local garage, or a nice clean and wax at the local car wash, **one that recycles its dirty water.** Keeping oil and

soapy water out of storm drains benefits us all.

For the dog lover, a gift of a **portable bag dispenser** (such as *Bags on Board*®) that attaches to a dog's leash will ensure that Fido's waste is kept off the sidewalks and out of local waters. Now, that's something we all can enjoy!



For the children on your list who enjoy feeding birds and waterfowl you could be their hero and buy them their very own binoculars for those trips to the pond. They will really enjoy getting a closer look at their feathered friends, and you can throw the stale bread into your compost instead. Feeding geese and ducks causes them to concentrate in higher numbers than they would if they had to rely solely on natural food supplies, and results in large quantities of their waste polluting our local waters.

For those who enjoy feeding birds and waterfowl, you could be their hero and buy them their very own binoculars for those trips to the pond. They will really enjoy getting a closer look at their feathered friends, and you can throw the stale bread into your compost instead. Feeding geese and ducks causes them to concentrate in higher numbers than they would if they had to rely solely on natural food supplies, and results in large quantities of their waste polluting our local waters.



THANK YOU, RI NEMO, FOR ANOTHER GREAT ARTICLE!

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

December 17 - 9:00 am
BROWNING MILL POND & TEFTH HILL TRAILS - Bring the whole family and join WPWA for a lovely walk on two gentle trails in the Arcadia Management Area.

Tuesdays in January - 6:30pm
TIE FLIES at WPWA
 Enjoy learning the art of fly tying with WPWA volunteers. All materials will be provided.
 \$10 member / \$15 non-member

January 28 & February 4 - 9am
BUILD YOUR OWN FLY ROD
 Only four spots are open for this once in a lifetime class! Every thing you need will be provided for this back-to-back Saturday class at WPWA.
 \$75 member / \$85 non-member

April 21 - 9am
EARTH DAY CLEANUP
 Help keep our watershed healthy and beautiful by joining WPWA to clean up a public river access area. Adopt one of the twenty five sites by emailing info@wpwa.org. Check www.wpwa.org soon for the list of sites and for more information. Trash bags, gloves and bottled water will be provided to all volunteers.

Pre-registration is required for all events!
It's easy at: www.wpwa.org



WPWA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



Name(s) _____ Phone & Email _____

Address _____

PLEASE SELECT YOUR LEVEL OF GIVING

- \$25 Individual
- \$40 Family
- \$50 Contributor
- \$100 Supporter / Corporate
- \$250 Sponsor
- \$500 Patron
- \$1000 Benefactor

In addition to my dues, I am enclosing an extra, tax deductible, contribution of \$ _____

Checks Made Payable To: WPWA OR Circle Credit Card Type: MC / Visa

CC # _____ Exp. _____ CSC # _____ Signature of Cardholder _____



Give a Gift that says YOU CARE about your WATERSHED!



Visit: www.wpwa.org/shop.php to view these items in full color.

Simply include your gift recipient's address and WPWA will ship it for the holidays.

Mail this completed form with your check or credit card information to WPWA.

Description	Price	Specs	Qty	Subtotal	
Carabiner Key Chain - Great for keeping keys together or using as a clip to keep important items close at hand. Laser engraving on both sides means the WPWA logo won't flake off! <i>Not For Climbing Use</i>	\$3.00	Select Color: Green Blue			
Reusable Sandwich Container - Put an end to using disposable baggies with this oversized sandwich container. The attached lid means no more searching for the right fit! Perfect for the back-to-schoolers in your home.	\$5.00	n/a			
Ball Cap - This washed twill cap is 100% cotton and has a velcro closure that tucks in on the backside, so no more hanging velcro strips! WPWA & the logo are beautifully embroidered on the front.	\$15.00	One Size Fits Most			
Green Tee - Show everyone that you support your favorite watershed organization with this 100% cotton, preshrunk short sleeve tee by Gildan. On the back is a list of our five favorite rivers in the watershed.	\$15.00	Select Size: S/M/L/XL/2XL			
Navy Polo - This classic, three-button polo is perfect for any occasion! It's a breathable blend of poly and cotton and will keep you looking good as you show your support with its high quality embroidered WPWA logo.	\$25.00	Select Size: S/M/L/XL/2XL			
Reusable Market Tote - Picking up a few groceries at the local farmer's market has never looked so good! This 100% cotton canvas bag's bottom is gusseted to ensure years of use and there is even a small zippered pocket to keep your keys and cash handy.	\$12.00	n/a			
Wood-Pawcatuck River Guide - A comprehensive fold-out map and guide to paddling the Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers.	\$5.00	n/a			
Walks in the Watershed - A pocket guide detailing 20 of the watershed's best loop hikes in southwestern RI and adjacent Connecticut.	\$5.00	n/a			
Earth Friendly Alternatives - A concise guide for anyone who wants to lessen the impacts of toxins and chemicals in and around the home.	\$7.00	n/a			
<p align="center">Shipping Rates on Order Totals</p> <p>Up to \$15: \$5 shipping Up to \$30: \$8 shipping Up to \$50: \$12 shipping</p> <p align="center">Orders over \$50 receive Free Shipping!</p>			Subtotal		
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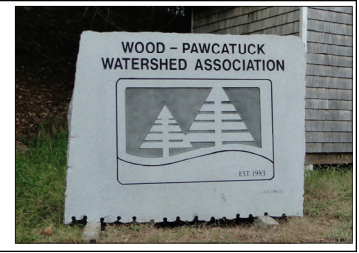
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