



A Quarterly Publication from the Division of Fish and Wildlife, RI Department of Environmental Management

Happy 75th Anniversary WSFR!

Today, more hunting, fishing, boating and wildlife-related recreational opportunities can be enjoyed more than ever before thanks to 75 years of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration programs (WSFR). These programs have made the difference between the survival and abundance of some species, and many fish and wildlife populations are at historically high levels today. WSFR also supports numerous places where you can go afield or on the water to enjoy your favorite outdoor activities.

WSFR is based on a "user pay/user benefit" principle, starting with the manufacturers and the excise taxes that are paid on certain hunting and fishing equipment items and also through fuels taxes. These taxes are collected by federal agencies including the Internal Revenue Service, Alcohol and



Photo: USFWS

Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) and even the Customs and Border Patrol and distributed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to state fish and wildlife agencies for on-the-ground conservation.

Wildlife Restoration funds can be used for reintroduction of declining species, wildlife population surveys, species research, hunter education, acquisition of wildlife habitat and the development of shoot-

ing ranges. Sport Fish Restoration funds can be used for fish research, reintroducing declining sport fish species, restoring aquatic habitat, aquatic education, constructing boat ramps and fishing piers and boating access.

Altogether, the partnerships between outdoor industry and federal and state agencies result in

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RI's Recreational Saltwater Fishing License by John Lake

In January 2010, Rhode Island enacted legislation establishing a new Recreational Saltwater License Program for the state. The fee was a major change for RI anglers who have never had to pay to fish in the ocean. It was a necessary step, however, in order to improve recreational data collection and fishing opportunities for Rhode Island.

One of the provisions of the 2006 reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act, the law that establishes management rules for U.S. fish stocks, was to establish a national registry program for all saltwater anglers. This registry serves as the keystone for the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) new data collection methodology, the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). In December 2008, NMFS established an option for States to develop their own state-based licensing pro-

Pole
Bait
Lures

LICENSE?

WE SELL RI SALTWATER FISHING LICENSES.



grams as an alternative, provided that the state programs meet federal criteria. States that chose not to implement a recreational licensing program would acquiesce to allowing NMFS to administer the federal registry in their state. The major drawback to not creating a RI state license program was that any revenue generated by fees associated with the federal registry would

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THE DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE MISSION STATEMENT:

Our mission is to ensure that the Freshwater, Marine and Wildlife resources of the State of Rhode Island will be conserved and managed for equitable and sustainable use.



Janet Coit, Director
Rhode Island Department of
Environmental Management

Larry Mouradjian,
Associate Director,
Bureau of Natural Resources

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Happy 75th Anniversary WSFR!

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Photo: USFWS



Photo: USFWS

more and better opportunities for hunters, recreational shooters, anglers and boaters to enjoy America's fish and wildlife resources and ultimately purchase products that start the cycle all over again!

In the early 1900s, when many fish and wildlife species were dwindling in numbers or disappearing entirely, the hunting and shooting industries stepped forward to help state fish and wildlife agencies counteract the crisis. Manufacturers supported the use of excise taxes on equipment and sought legislation to ensure federal funding would be directed to aid agencies in managing and conserving America's natural resources and providing hunting access.

On September 2, 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, now called the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act, which to this day fosters partnerships between federal and state fish and wildlife agencies, the sporting arms industry, conservation groups and sportsmen and women to benefit wildlife. Later, anglers and the fishing and boating industries established similar funding strategies through the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act) in 1950 and its Wallop-Breaux Boating Trust Fund amendment in 1984. Through this American System of Conservation Funding, more than \$12 billion dollars have been entrusted to agencies for fisheries and wildlife restoration and management; hunter, angler and boater access; as well as for hunter and boater safety education.

In 2012, we proudly observe 75 years of the WSFR program and the success of the partnerships that have made this program the single most successful conservation effort in U.S. history. The North Ameri-

can Model of Wildlife Conservation is the world's most successful system of policies and laws to restore and safeguard fish and wildlife and their habitats through sound science and active management. Hunting and angling are the cornerstones of the North American Model with sportsmen and women serving as the foremost funders of conservation. Through self-imposed excise taxes on hunting, shooting, archery and angling equipment, and a tax on boating fuels, these conservationists have generated more than \$45 billion for wildlife and habitat conservation since 1937.

Though sportsmen-funded conservation efforts have focused on wildlife that is legally hunted and fished, the emphasis of the management is on restoring and conserving habitats that benefit a wide range of fish and wildlife including non-hunted species as well as benefiting everyone who enjoys nature. Currently, there are no alternative, dedicated funding systems in place (beyond excise taxes and license fees) to help support fish and wildlife conservation. Without the most traditional outdoor users' contributions or new funding streams, America's conservation legacy could be in peril.

If you've ever purchased firearms or ammunition, bows, arrows, fishing lures, rods and reels, hunting or fishing licenses or fueled up your boat — you're part of the most successful effort to conserve fish and wildlife in America—the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration programs. The effort has resulted in millions of acres of habitat saved and near-miraculous population increases in several species of game and sport fish.

Join us in 2012 and celebrate 75 years of better hunting, fishing, boating and wildlife-related recreation through WSFR.

The Local Fur Auction *by Charles Brown*



Photo: RIDFW Archives

The local fur auction is an American tradition. In early spring, after the trapping seasons have ended throughout North America, local fur harvesters convene at game clubs, grange halls, rural fire stations or other locations to sell the raw furs they have taken during the open trapping season. Regional, independent fur buyers bid competitively on "lots" or groups of pelts sorted by species. Pelts make their way to large international auction houses where they are graded by various qualities and sold to manufacturers who process the raw furs into a variety of finished products. Much of the fur harvested today is shipped by trappers directly to international fur auction houses but many still prefer the tradition of attending the local sale, sharing stories with other trappers and receiving immediate payment for their furs.

Wild mammal furs have always been a valuable commodity in North America, bartered between Native Americans and later to supply an increasing demand from European traders for shipment back to Europe where fur resources had already been depleted. Trading posts were established at the mouths of or along major rivers specifically to acquire furs. The cities of New York and Montreal were first settled as fur trading posts. The pursuit of furbearers, particularly beaver, led to the exploration and settlement of much of the continent by Europeans and early settlers. Unregulated harvest and insatiable demand led to the dramatic decline of many furbearer species in North America during the early history of our country.

Today, the harvest of furbearers is highly regulated and as a result of effective protection and management many species are more abundant today than they have been for centuries. In Rhode Island, both fisher and beaver have returned after centuries-long absences. Their populations are secure enough now to allow regulated harvest by licensed Rhode Island trappers.

At local fur auctions, local trappers bring the raw or "green" pelts of various species that they have been harvested during the regulated season. A green pelt is one that has been removed from the animal and prepared by the trapper by drying and grooming the fur, removing excess fat and flesh and then placed on a

stretcher or board to dry. This will preserve the pelt for the short term and allow the fur buyer or grader to examine the pelt for condition, primeness, size, and other characteristics. Pelts are considered "prime" when the guardhairs are at their longest and when the underfur has reached its maximum thickness. Pelts that are well handled and prepared always bring better prices than those that are poorly handled. Pelts are handled in different ways depending on species, with some such as fox, coyote, and fisher dried with the fur side out, while some such as raccoon and muskrat with the fur side in allowing the fur buyer to examine the animal's molt condition by examining the condition of the animal's skin.

The local fur buyer has a firm place in rural tradition. Some people may remember the rural fur buyer visiting the house or farm to purchase muskrat, raccoon, and fox pelts from their father or grandfather, at a time when the sale of few pelts might have a significant impact on the family income. Fur buyers travel the region visiting local fur sales, usually hosted by the local trappers association and backyard fur sheds buying furs on speculation, hoping to make a profit in an unpredictable market place. In Rhode Island, anyone who purchases raw furs must have a Fur Buyers License.

At a local auction, each trapper is assigned a lot number, and each lot is sorted by species. Fur buyers examine the pelts and grade them by size, condition, and primeness. Each fur buyer prepares a bid for the total group of each species in each lot. This represents the average price he will pay for each pelt in the group. The bid is sealed and presented to the host of the auction, usually the president or other official of the trapper's association. After all the buyers have had an opportunity to examine all the lots, the auction host will read out loud the highest bid placed on each species group in each lot. The trapper can accept the bid or decide to "pull" his or her furs from the sale if they are unwilling to accept that price. If the bid is accepted, the trapper is paid on the spot for their furs.

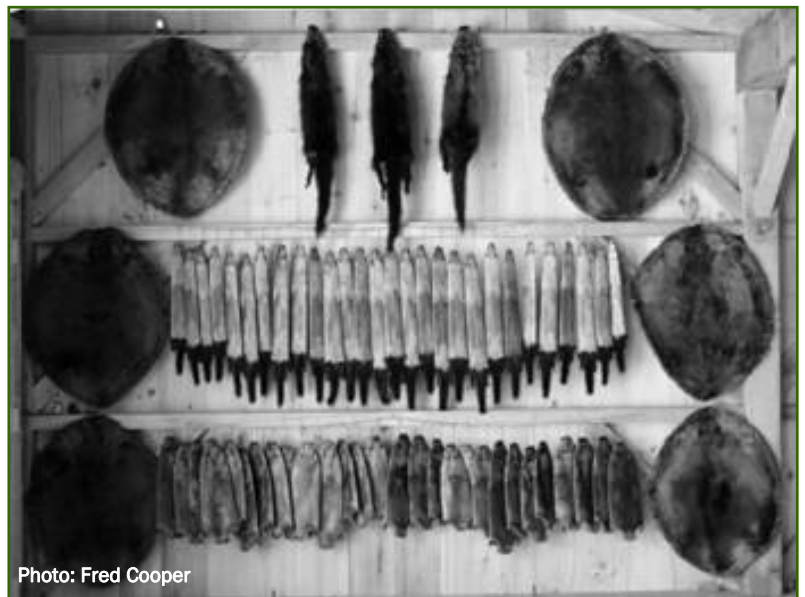


Photo: Fred Cooper

RI's Recreational Saltwater Fishing License by John Lake

go to the federal government and offer no benefit to RI.

DEM did not want to burden resident saltwater anglers with another fee associated with fishing, but at the same time did not want to lose out on a potential funding source. The decision was made to pursue a state run licensing program with the guidance of a Recreational Marine License Study Group made up of DEM staff and members of the RI Saltwater Anglers' Association. The group ultimately shaped what is now the statute which establishes the license program, including the fee structure. To minimize the financial impact on the fishing community, the group settled on a small fee for the license. The RI license fees, (\$7/year for residents, \$10/year for non-residents, and \$5 for a 7-day license), are designed to both cover the administrative costs of the license program and provide additional support to programs and activities that serve the needs and interests of saltwater recreational fishermen in RI.

RI's license program has been accepted by the NMFS and has been up and running since April 15, 2010. It requires anyone wishing to recreationally fish or spearfish in the marine waters of Rhode Island to possess either a RI state license, a state license from a reciprocal state, or a federal registration. RI residents over the age of 65, and active military personnel stationed in RI, are eligible to obtain RI state licenses at no cost. Exemptions are provided for the following categories: children under 16, anglers fishing on licensed party or charter boats, RI residents who are blind or permanently disabled, and RI residents who are on leave from active military duty. The RI saltwater recreational license is currently accepted by the following neighboring states: Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, and Maine. This list is sure to grow as RIDEM will accept any state's licenses that will accept ours.

The implementation of the licensing program was designed to maximize the ease and convenience of obtaining a license. DEM wanted to provide anglers access to licenses over the internet as well as at local vendors like tackle shops. In close coordination with the Division of Fish and Wildlife, a webpage was developed that allows people to obtain a license and use a credit card for all fee-based saltwater licenses. The webpage is accessed via the RIDEM website, www.saltwater.ri.gov, which serves as the focal point for the license program. Additionally, for those without access to the internet or a credit card, authorized vendors have been established for direct sales of the saltwater license. To date, there are sixteen authorized vendors that utilize the same web-based portal that the public uses for issuing licenses. To bolster participation in the vendor program, DEM has a program that will loan a computer and printer in exchange for becoming a vendor for 5 years.

The primary goal of using the saltwater license program to create a national registry is aimed at improving the quality and accuracy of marine recreational fishing data. This data will help to ensure that state recreational fishing regulations, flowing from regional fishery assessments and management programs, are more effective, fair, and based on sound sci-



Photo: A. Valliere

ence. RI recreational anglers stand to benefit directly from such improved assessments, as the Division is better able to target assessments and tailor state regulations in a way that more effectively addresses the needs and interests of Rhode Island's marine recreational fishing community. Additionally, the new license programs will provide the first full accounting of the scope the recreational saltwater fishing and spearfishing in RI, and will thereby help to more fully demonstrate anglers' and spearfishers' economic, conservation, and marine stewardship contributions.

Another benefit to the state is the revenue derived from the fees. Last year in 2011, a total of 38,224 RI Saltwater Recreational Fishing Licenses were issued via both internet and vendor sales. The funds will be utilized in a way that a) is consistent with the licensing statute, b) addresses the priority needs and interests of the recreational fishing community in Rhode Island; and c) maximizes opportunities and benefits by leveraging federal US Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration funds (WSFR). Using the recreational license funding to match the WSFR funding 25%/ 75% is a great way to stretch the value of the marine recreational license fees.

Providing boating and fishing access is paramount to the success of the license program. Building and maintaining recreational and boating access is a tangible result for the fishing public to see their license fees at work. The Galilee boat ramp has been identified as the first location for major improvements. This ramp is heavily utilized and in need of rehabilitation.

Recreational fishing season is right around the corner and RIDEM is looking forward to another good year for license sales. It should be our best year yet, and to help foster it along the way we are launching a multimedia advertisement campaign between Memorial Day and July 4th. So remember when you are going through your pre fishing checklist: Pole, *check*, Bait, *check*, Lures, *check*, LICENSE?

Catch a Golden Trout *by Kimberly Sullivan*



Photo: K. Sullivan

In Rhode Island? Yes, you have read correctly; you can catch a Golden Trout in Rhode Island at our 3rd Annual Free Fishing Event hosted by the RIDEM Division of Fish and Wildlife hatchery staff! This year the event will be held at Meadowbrook Pond in Wood River Junction, RI on Saturday, May 5, 2012 from 10 am to 4 pm.

Two years ago, the hatcheries, in association with the Division's Aquatic Resource Education program, decided to put together an event for Rhode Islanders to have a truly free fishing experience during the free fishing weekend (no license required to fish Rhode Island freshwaters). While the hatchery staff chose and stocked the pond with rainbow, brown and brook trout, the ARE program provided rods, tackle, bait and volunteer instruction to any man, woman and child who wanted to fish. In addition, the pond was stocked with Golden Trout, a sub-species of rainbow trout. For anyone who caught a Golden Trout, whether at the Free Fishing Event or two weeks thereafter, they would receive a Golden Trout Pin. Also, their name was entered into a free raffle for a rod and reel

combo. The first Hatchery Free Fishing Event at Silver Spring Lake, North Kingstown, was a huge success and has been incorporated into the Free Fishing Weekend since. This year, the Free Fishing Event will be held at Meadowbrook Pond and fishing equipment such as rods, tackle and bait will be available at two locations around the pond: Meadow Brook Fish Area and Nathaniel Lewis Fishing Area. Participants will be able to view the stocking truck firsthand, talk to the hatchery staff, and even stocking of Rainbow, Brown and Brook trout into Meadowbrook Pond. Additionally, at least 100 Golden Trout will be stocked into the pond for participants to try and catch. Hatchery staff and volunteers from Trout Unlimited will be on hand to help both children and adults how to fish. As in past years, a golden pin will be given to anyone who catches a Golden Trout that day and up to two weeks after (send photos to kimberly.sullivan@dem.ri.gov). This year, any person who attends the event will receive a raffle ticket and be eligible for a free rod and reel combo set to be given away at 4 pm

on the day of the event.

And don't forget...the while the Free Fishing Event is only Saturday, May 5, 2012, from 10 am to 4 pm, Free Fishing Weekend, where no license or trout stamp is required to fish any Rhode Island public freshwaters, is both Saturday, May 5, and Sunday, May 6!



The Local Fur Auction *by Charles Brown*

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The market value of any raw fur depends on many factors, starting with the quality of the pelt itself. Improper handling or damage will decrease value considerably. The world economy and currency exchange rates also are important factors. Most fur harvested in North America is shipped to Europe and Asia where major processing and manufacturing facilities are located and where there is large retail demand. China has become a major player in the fur market, where a large scale tannery and processing industry has been developed in recent years. Cold weather in Europe, or the latest fashion trend can drive demand for certain species or fur in general. Today, few trappers make significant income from their furs. To most trappers, the value of their furs is measured beyond just a dollar value. It includes value of the time spent outdoors, the recreational experience, and the tradition associated with trapping.



Photo: USFWS

Opening Day 2012!

Spring is here and that means opening day for trout fishing season is upon us! Over the past year hatchery staff from our three state-run trout hatcheries, have raised three different species of trout for our anglers to enjoy: Rainbow, Brown, and Brook trout. This year trout season opens at 6AM on Saturday, April 14, 2012.

To prepare for opening day, hatchery personnel have stocked trout in at least 110 Rhode Island public-accessible ponds, lakes and streams. By April 14, over 70,000 trout will be stocked. While the average weight of each fish is over one pound, don't be surprised to find a three pound breeder attached to your line. Did not get to make it out for Opening Day? Have no fear, while many fish are stocked for opening day, the stocking continues throughout the spring and again in fall and winter.

For more information on regulations and stocking locations please refer to the *2012 Rhode Island Freshwater Fisheries Abstract*, which is distributed where fishing licenses are sold. Fishing licenses and trout stamps can be purchased where bait and tackle is sold, at the DEM Office of Licensing, and online at www.dem.ri.gov. You must purchase a trout



Photo: K. Sullivan

stamp to keep trout. The daily creel limit for trout varies throughout the year, so please refer to the abstract for more information.

Opening day begins at 6:00 am on Saturday, April 14, 2011. So, get your gear and your license and go fish!

Water Word Search

Circle the 'water words' in the activity to the right. Look across, down and diagonally.

- Brush
- Bucket
- Faucet
- Leaks
- Reuse
- Showers
- Sinks
- Stream
- Toilets
- Water



Kid's Corner! Presented by the Aquatic Resource Education Program

Earth Day is April 22, 2012, and many communities are hosting events like town clean-ups and tree plantings. In celebration of Earth Day, below are a few activities to make you think about conserving our resources all year long. The following activities are adapted from '50 Ways to Go Green' courtesy of Positive Promotions, Inc.
www.positivepromotions.com

Saving Water

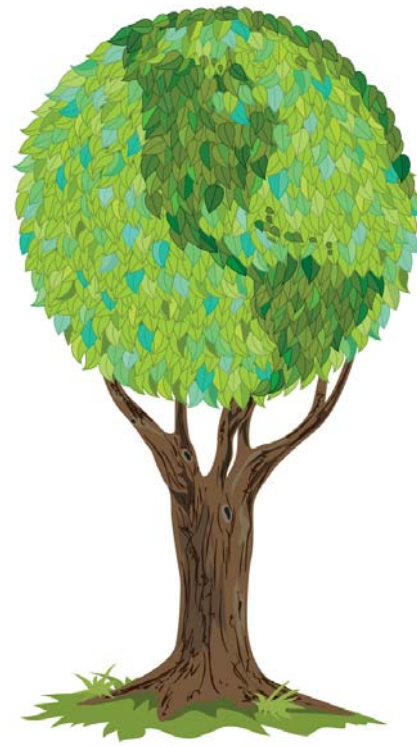
The same water we drink today is the same water that was on the Earth when the dinosaurs roamed millions of year ago! That means that the Earth naturally recycles its water supply and there is a definite need to take care of the water so as not to pollute it for future generations. However, in the US a single person can use up to 100 gallons of water a day! So, here are a few tips that you can use to conserve water:



1. Take short showers instead of baths.
2. Turn off the water when you brush your teeth.
3. Help your parents collect rainwater in a bucket to reuse on indoor and outdoor plants.
- 4 Wash your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of running water from the faucet. Then use the waster from the pan on your houseplants.
5. Water outdoor plants when the sun isn't out so the water doesn't evaporate right away.
6. Store water in the refrigerator instead of running the kitchen faucet until the water gets cold.
7. When running water from the faucet, do it in a pencil-thin stream.
8. Check for leaky faucets and toilets around your home.

Saving Paper

Trees help clean up the air. They also play a role in cooling our planet, as well as provide shade for us and homes for many animals. Take action to save trees. Because paper is made from trees, we can help by reducing, recycling, and reusing the paper we use. Besides taking paper to the recycling center, unscramble the bolded scrambled word for other ways to go green:



1. Use both sides of paper to **teirw** on and in your printer as well. _____
2. Use **gsra** instead of paper towels when cleaning. _____
3. Use reusable **tcloh** napkins instead of paper ones. _____
4. If you don't need a paper printout from your computer read what you need on the **eernsc**. _____
5. Eat on **ublaesre** plates, not paper plates. _____
6. Bring food to **sohlc** in reusable containers rather than paper bags. _____



7. Get your books from the **brryali** (and remember to return them on time!). _____
8. Save **csrpa** paper to draw on and take notes. _____

Wild Rhode Island Calendar April–June 2012

April 14 Opening Day for Freshwater Fishing.

April 18 Open House at Lafayette Hatchery for school vacation week, 10am to 2pm. For more information please contact Kimberly Sullivan at 401-539-7333 or kimberly.sullivan@dem.ri.gov.

April 21 and 22 Junior and Paraplegic Turkey Hunt. For more information please call 401-789-0281.

April 26 to May 22 Spring gobbler Season. For more information please call 401-789-0281.

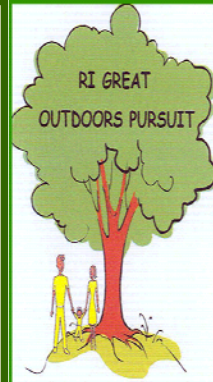
May 1, 7, 12 USFWS Cinder worm Fly-Fishing Program. Three free workshops designed to lean how to tie and use the conder worm fly. Then Fly-fish at Ninigret Pond and fish the cinder worm hatch. Preregistration required. For more info contact Janis_Nepshinsky@fws.gov or 401-364-9124.

May 5 and 6 Free Fishing Weekend.

May 5 Free Fishing Event at Meadowbrook Pond, 10am to 4pm. Public welcome, no pre-registration required. For more information please email kimberly.sullivan@den.ri.gov or call 401-539-7333.

May 19 Introduction to Freshwater Fly Fishing, 9am-3pm, presented by the Aquatic Resource Education Program. A 6-hour workshop to learn the basics of fly fishing including casting, fly tying, knot tying and fishing. Fee is \$35 per person. Space is limited and registration is required. For more information please call 401-539-7333 or send an email to kimberly.sullivan@dem.ri.gov.

May 20 Great Park Pursuit Kick-Off at Lincoln Woods. For more information and to register as a team visit www.riparks.com.



Play the Rhode Island Great Outdoors Pursuit!

Decipher clues, visit beautiful State parks and forests, join in fun activities, and win great prizes!



Don't miss out—sign up TODAY!

Visit www.riparks.com
or call (401) 222-2632



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The Office for Equal Opportunity, U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary, Washington, D. C. 20240*



Wild Rhode Island

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Great Swamp Field
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Attention! Fluorescent Orange Requirements

All users of State Management Areas are required to wear 200 square inches of solid daylight fluorescent orange (generally, a baseball hat) from the last Thursday in April to the last day in May.

TO:



Wild Rhode Island
is printed on 100% recycled paper