



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

## Let's Go Fishing in RI! Carolina Trout Pond *by Christine Dudley*

### Carolina Trout Pond Richmond, RI

Carolina Trout Pond in Richmond, RI was developed by the state in the 1950s as part of the Carolina Management Area. The pond is four acres in size and is a wonderful area for family fishing.

#### **Particulars:**

Carolina Trout Pond has a large, gravel parking lot for up to 50 vehicles. Plenty of shore fishing sites are available; however, boats are prohibited. There are picnic tables available. It is stocked with trout in the spring for Opening Day of Trout Season. Portable toilets will be available for Opening Day through May 6th this year.

Other species found there are largemouth bass, chain pickerel, yellow perch, white perch, bluegill sunfish, pumpkin-seed sunfish. Use permits must be obtained from the Division for any fishing activities of six or more persons with a minimum of three weeks notice. Anglers are also reminded



Photo: K. Patenaude

of the ban on the use of foot gear with external felt soles or other porous material capable of absorbing liquid that is attached to the soles of wading foot gear in any freshwaters of the state.

This year Free Fishing Weekend will be held at the Carolina Trout Pond May 4th and 5th. Anglers can fish free without a Freshwater License and Trout Stamp for these two days. Golden rainbow trout will be stocked for this special event at the pond. Lucky anglers who catch one qualify for the coveted

golden trout pin.

#### **Directions:**

Take Route 138 west to Route 112 south, turn right onto Pine Hill Rd., and follow to the end. Then turn right onto Switch Rd. Look for a sign on the right for the Carolina Trout Pond Fishing Area. Then, follow the dirt road, bearing left to the fishing area parking lot.

### **Inside this issue:**

<b>Reduce catch and release mortality</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>SNE Woodcock Championship</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>K. Sullivan receives award</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Kids Corner</b>	<b>6 &amp; 7</b>
<b>Calendar</b>	<b>8</b>

## **Species Spotlight: Porcupines** *by Charles Brown*

Although immediately familiar to most people, it is unlikely that many Rhode Islanders have ever encountered a porcupine in our state. For those that have, it might have involved a trip to their veterinarian. While common in some parts of New England, the porcupine is a rare mammal in Rhode Island.

The North American porcupine, *Erethizon dorsatum*, is a heavy-bodied, short-legged rodent. Following the beaver, it is our second largest rodent, weighing between 10 and 20 pounds. Whether on the ground or in the trees, they are slow and deliberate in their movements. The common name is derived from a French name which could be translated into



Photo: USFWS

**Continued on page 2**

### **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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**Publisher:** Kimberly Sullivan,  
Principal Fisheries Biologist,  
ARE Coordinator

**Editor:** Veronica Masson,  
Federal Aid Coordinator

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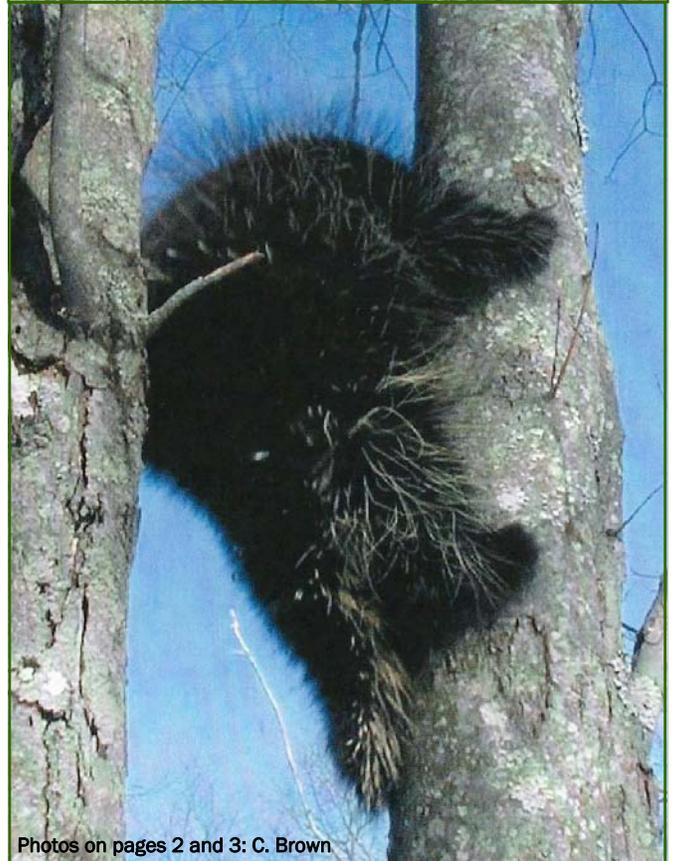
## Species Spotlight: Porcupines *by Charles Brown cont. from 1*

“spiny pig.” In the Northeast porcupines occur throughout northern New England, New York, and Pennsylvania. They occur throughout most of Canada, parts of the northern United States, in the west down through the Rocky Mountains and into the desert southwest. They can live in a wide variety of habitat types. In the northeast they are most frequently associated with mixed forests of deciduous trees and conifers.

Porcupines are generally black or brownish in color with some longer guard hairs often tipped with white. Porcupines have five different types of hair; a thick wooly under fur, long coarse guard hairs, stiff bristles on the underside of their tail which aid in climbing, whiskers (called vibrissae), and quills which are actually modified guard hairs. It is estimated that an adult porcupine may have as many as 30,000 quills. The quills cover most of the body except the muzzle, legs, and belly. The quills are hollow and vary in length, from about a half an inch up to about 5 inches. The longest quills are on the porcupines back. The tip of each quill has many small backward facing barbs. When wet the barbs swell, increasing their holding capacity. Unless disturbed, the quills lay flat against the body. Small muscles in the skin at the base of each quill allow

the porcupine to erect the quills. When threatened, a porcupine will try to get into a position either on the ground or in a tree, where the potential predator is faced with its backside. Porcupines cannot throw or shoot their quills but can use their tail to swat at a predator. The quills release from the porcupines skin when there is pressure applied to them, as in a predator attempting to bite them. New quills grow to replace those that are lost.

Porcupines are strict herbivores, feed-



Photos on pages 2 and 3: C. Brown

ing on the buds, twigs, leaves and bark of trees and other plants. They are also fond of nuts such as acorns and beechnuts when in season and eat fruits and berries as well. They are excellent climbers and most of their feeding takes place in the trees and at night. In our area, hemlock is an important winter food item. The ground below a preferred feeding tree may be covered with branches or “niptwigs” cut by the porcupine. In areas with high numbers of

## Species Spotlight: Porcupines *by Charles Brown*

porcupines tree damage, especially removal of bark can be significant. Porcupines can also cause significant damage to orchards or backyard fruit trees. They have a tendency not just to remove the apple or pear but to cut the entire branch. Many herbivores, including porcupines crave salt, which is often lacking from their diets. It is for this reason that porcupines are known for chewing tool handles or other items handled by people.



For most of the year porcupines lead a solitary lifestyle. Females have smaller home ranges than males, and will defend them from other females. Porcupines do not hibernate. During winter, several or more individuals may share a preferred winter den site. Winter dens can be amongst rock outcrops or ledges or in large hollow tree cavities. In Rhode Island, all den sites known to the author occur in crevices within rocky outcrops with stands of hemlocks and flowing water nearby. Well-used den sites are characterized by mounds of porcupine droppings at the entrance. Cold does not seem to bother them, as porcupines will sometimes be seen sitting in trees during the coldest weather and they do not make any attempt to line their dens with any leaves or other material.

Mating occurs in the fall, usually October or November. Males will seek out receptive females and as part of the courtship ritual will spray urine onto the female to induce her interest. At this time porcupines can also be very vocal, making a variety of grunts, barks, and screams. Once mating has occurred, the male goes his separate way and does not participate in raising the young. After an approximately 30 week gestation period, the female porcupine gives birth, usually to a single baby. The baby porcupine is born with quills, which for the first several hours remain soft. The female does not make any elaborate den or nest. She will leave her young in a sheltered hiding place, going off to feed

and returning occasionally. Young porcupines stay with their mother for about five months.

Porcupines have many natural enemies. Porcupine quills have been found in bobcats, coyotes, foxes, wolves, and bears, just to name a few. Given their defenses however, few predators are likely to attempt to take one, at least a second time. In order to be successful, the attacker must be able to get at the head of the porcupine or get it turned upside down to expose the belly, which is not protected by quills. Fishers are formidable predators of porcupines. A persistent fisher will repeatedly attack the head and face of the porcupine. With an abundance of other small mammals porcupines are probably not a significant prey species in our area. Humans pose the greatest threat, whether in the form of auto strikes or killing them in response to damage they have caused.

In Rhode Island, most recent records are from the northwest part of the state. There are recent confirmed records from Cumberland, Smithfield, Exeter, and Hopkinton as well. In "The Mammals of Rhode Island" by John Cronan and Albert Brooks, the authors mention several records between 1960 and 1963 in the towns of North Smithfield, Scituate, and Glocester. All known den locations seem to be associated with rocky areas that have stands of hemlock trees nearby. Given that porcupines generally occur in low densities and their limited distribution in the state they are probably one of our rarest mammal species.

## Keep Those Fish Alive! Reduce catch-and-release mortality by Kevin Smith



Photo: USFWS

Recreational freshwater and saltwater anglers in Rhode Island have the option of “catch and release” fishing if they: do not plan to consume the catch, have caught their limit, are fishing in a “catch and release only” freshwater fishing area, have caught a prohibited species or caught a fish of sub-legal size. In addition, freshwater trout fishermen must have a trout stamp if they plan to catch and keep trout. Mortality of released fish is a large concern, thus it is important for anglers to take care in how they catch, handle, and release fish to increase chances of survival. If an angler chooses not to keep their catch, there are several tips that may be followed to increase the chance that a fish will survive for others to catch, or in the case of wild fish, that they will reproduce for future generations.

**Circle Hooks...** Using circle hooks instead of typical “J” hooks can increase the chances of survival for released fish. Circle hooks are designed to hook a fish in the corner of the mouth and dramatically reduce the chance of “gut hooking.” “Gut hooking” refers to when a fish fully swallows the bait/lure, which results in the hook becoming embedded in the stomach or other sensitive internal tissues. The circle hook design allows the hook to slide along the fish’s inner mouth and then become embedded in the fish’s lip, reducing the potential for life threatening damage. Using a circle hook eliminates the need to set the hook, but when using a “J” hook, pay close attention and set the hook immediately to prevent the fish from swallowing the hook. When using “J” or other hooks, it is important to pay attention and set the hook immediately to prevent the fish from fully swallowing the hook.

**Modify Artificial Lures...** When using artificial lures, there are a variety of ways to reduce the risk of injury to both the fish and angler. For example, many artificial lures have multiple sets of treble hooks attached. These hooks can be dangerous when a hooked fish fights and thrashes to try to escape or remove the hooks. This thrashing of the fish can cause the other treble hooks to flail about and become embedded into the fish’s sides or sensitive areas, such as the eyes. These additional hooks can result in unnecessary damage, which can reduce the fish’s chances of survival. Furthermore, not only is the fish in danger, but the flailing treble hooks could also become embedded into clothing, skin, hair, or even a nearby angler and can be very difficult to remove. To reduce these risks, anglers can remove additional hooks or replace them with single hooks.

**Bend Hook Barbs Down...** The barbs found on many fishing hooks are designed to keep bait and caught fish on the hook. When engaged in catch-and-release fishing, it can be advantageous to either bend the hook barbs down with a pair of pliers or to file them off. While the barbs may help the fish stay hooked, they also can result in additional damage to the fish as they are removed. Also, accidents happen and if a hook gets embedded in a finger, removal of the hook will be much easier and less painful with the barbs bent down or absent.

**Reduce Fight Time...** Reducing the fight time is important when engaged in catch-and-release fishing. When hooked fish fight and try to escape, they experience a great deal of stress and undergo metabolic changes. If the fight is for an extended period of time, the metabolic changes can result in a very slow recovery or even death. Since using gear that is too light for the situation often increases fight time and the related stress on the fish, using the proper size gear for the targeted species can reduce fight time and help get the fish to the boat or shore as soon as possible.

**Hook Removal...** Hook removal is a very important aspect of releasing a healthy and lively fish. A variety of tools can be used to help reduce hook removal time as well as preventing additional injury to the fish. Hook removers, needle nose pliers, nail clippers, and wire cutters are all great tools to assist with this process. If the fish is “gut-hooked,” the best solution is to cut the line as close to the hook as possible. Do not try to remove the hook as this could damage the fish’s internal organs. Release the fish with the hook still inside as the hook will eventually corrode and naturally come out.

**Handling, Reviving, and Release...** Proper handling and releasing of fish can decrease the chance of unintentional mortality. Be sure to leave the fish in the water as long as possible, even when removing the hook. Wet hands or use a wet rag when handling fish, as this will protect the fish’s scales and protective mucous coating. If the fish must be removed from the water, make sure that the fish is properly supported. Do not lift fish by the gills or eyes, as this could cause a great deal of damage to these sensitive areas. When handling a larger fish, do not lift the fish by just the lips or mouth but make sure that the stomach area of the fish is supported. The use of nets to land fish can also help reduce the risk of injury, and only use gaffs if the intent is to keep the catch. When it is time to release the fish, gently place the fish back in to the water head-first in a swimming position. If the fish does not swim off right away, then revive it by gently pushing it back and forth in the water, allowing water to flow over the gills, to restore the fish’s oxygen levels. Continue to revive the fish until it is able to swim off on its own. Bear in mind that an injury or break in the skin of a fish will introduce bacteria, which may eventually kill the fish, even if it initially swims away.

Following these simple techniques and using proper gear can greatly minimize the occurrence of unintentional death and injury of released fish. Recreational anglers are stewards of the freshwater and marine environments and if they choose to return fish for conservation purposes, these practices will help to ensure that our fishery resources are available for future generations. Now, go catch those fish!

## Southern New England Woodcock Championship *by Karen Unsworth*

The dog stood motionless as the handler and judge approached; with nose and tail pointed high ... she was mesmerized by the scent of a bird and barely a quiver could be detected. The handler kicked through the brush and was soon rewarded with the whistle of Woodcock wings .... Bird Up! And so it went time after time at the 2013 Southern New England Woodcock Championship. This prestigious field trial event was held at the Arcadia Management Area on March 22<sup>nd</sup> thru 24<sup>th</sup> with 38 dogs competing for the title of "Champion." This trial is dependent on the presence of wild birds, either grouse or woodcock, so it is timed in conjunction with the spring migration. The timing was perfect this year with 114 woodcock pointed and/or seen over the three days of running. Participants from six states and one Canadian province brought their dogs to the line for this event and it is safe to say that no one was disappointed.

This trial is run on four different one hour courses within the management area in areas where birds are likely to be found. This type of competition is designed to test a bird dog's abilities which must include the ability to find and point birds but also includes stamina, speed, handling and style both running and pointing. Generally speaking, any pointing breed may enter but the vast majority of dogs seen in American Field trial events are English setters and English pointers. Many trials also hold "puppy" and "derby" stakes for younger dogs that have not yet completed their training and in fact this event included the accompanying Joel Collier Derby Classic.

The field trial format consists of two handlers bringing two dogs (called a brace) to the starting line and they then follow the dogs as they hunt for birds. There are also two judges watching the action as well as the "gallery" of participants who can follow behind. Dogs in a championship event must be steady to wing and shot meaning that they must not move after pointing a bird until the handler allows the dog to move. The dogs must also "honor" another dog's point meaning if they see the other dog pointing, they must stop immediately until their handler allows them to move, generally after a bird has been flushed. Aside from declaring the winners the judges are responsible for making sure the dogs don't make a mistake ... so if a dog establishes point and then chases the bird, you will get a nod and a "Thank you" from the judge meaning leash your dog, you are out of the competition. The judges are also responsible for declaring the winners, usually a Champion and Runner-up Champion. For those of you who enjoy watching a high caliber bird dog, this trial should definitely be on your calendar for next year.

Derby winner: Russ Ogilvie & Woodcock Haven Stella



Photo: J. Gregory

American Woodcock



Photo: J. Gregory

Championship winner: Richfield Silver Lining



Photo: Russ Ogilvie

## ARE Coordinator, Kim Sullivan Receives Award *by Christine Dudley*

Kimberly Sullivan, principal fisheries biologist and aquatic resource education (ARE) coordinator received the annual CRSA Education Award from the Connecticut River Salmon Association (CRSA).

Robert Jones, CRSA President, presented the award at its annual meeting on January 19, 2013, in West Hartford, CT.

The award recognizes Sullivan's pioneering efforts in the Rhode Island "Salmon in the Schools" program, with the first state teachers training program, January 10, 2004. Twenty teachers from 14 schools participated. This program has grown over the last nine years to 37 Rhode Island schools that have used the program as a multi-disciplinary, environmental education tool. Thousands of Rhode Island students have benefited from Kimberly's efforts.

The "Salmon in the Schools" program has assisted Rhode Island in meeting a federally funded ARE program requirement for aquatic education and has been highlighted by the USFWS hatchery program in their promotional efforts in Washington D.C.

We are very proud of Kimberly's enthusiasm, knowledge and leadership that she has brought to Rhode Island's "Salmon in the Classroom" program.



### WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE!!



Plants, animals and humans all need water, and, believe it or not, water is in EVERYTHING! It is in the earth, in the air and in us! Below is a list of places where water can be found; some may surprise you!



**DIRECTIONS:** Match the words from Column A to the missing in Column B.



#### Column A

- Creek    Animals
- Stream    People
- River    Snow
- Pond    Ice
- Ocean    Clouds
- Lake    Rain
- Plants



#### Column B

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| R _ I _     | S _ O _     |
| _ L _ N T _ | _ C _ _ N   |
| A _ I _ _ L | S _ R E _ _ |
| _           | _ _ V _ _   |
| _ _ O P L _ | L _ K _     |
| P _ _ D     | _ _ _ _     |
| _ L O _ _ S | C _ E _ K   |

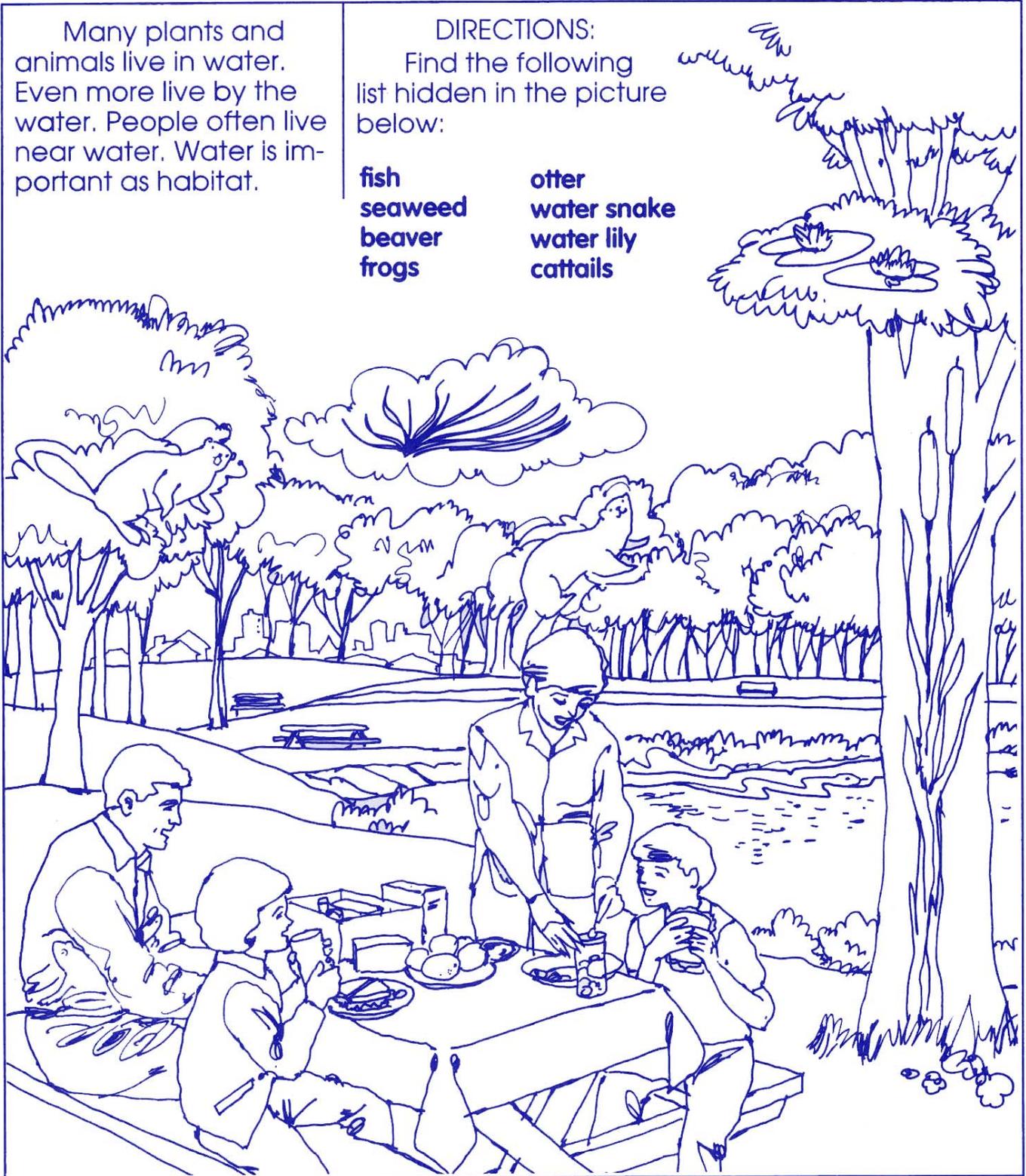
*Kid's Corner!* Presented by the Aquatic Resource Education Program

# Water Habitats

Many plants and animals live in water. Even more live by the water. People often live near water. Water is important as habitat.

**DIRECTIONS:**  
Find the following list hidden in the picture below:

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| <b>fish</b>    | <b>otter</b>       |
| <b>seaweed</b> | <b>water snake</b> |
| <b>beaver</b>  | <b>water lily</b>  |
| <b>frogs</b>   | <b>cattails</b>    |



## Calendar of Events April–June 2013

**April 25 through May 21—Spring Gobbler Season for Wild Turkey.** For more information see the 2012-2013 Rhode Island Hunting and Trapping Abstract at [www.dem.ri.gov](http://www.dem.ri.gov).

**May 4 & 5 - Free Fishing Week-end**

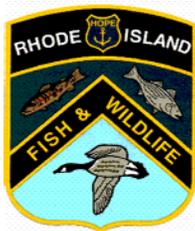
**May 4 - Free Fishing Event at Carolina Trout Pond, 10 to 2.** For more information, contact Kimberly Sullivan at 401-539-0037 or [kimberly.sullivan@dem.ri.gov](mailto:kimberly.sullivan@dem.ri.gov).

**May 18 - Introduction to Freshwater Fly Fishing, 9 to 3, Addieville East Farm.** Registration required. Contact Kimberly Sullivan for more information at 401-539-0037 or [kimberly.sullivan@dem.ri.gov](mailto:kimberly.sullivan@dem.ri.gov)

**May 19 - RIDEM Parks and Recreation's Great Outdoor Pursuit Kick-off at Lincoln Woods.**



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Great Swamp Field Headquarters  
277 Great Neck Road  
West Kingston, RI 02892  
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