



Clean Ocean Advocate

Celebrating 20 Years of Ocean Advocacy, 1984-2004

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September 2004 Highlights

- Sea Turtle Washes Ashore
- Toxins in Fish -- Revisited
- End of Summer Volunteer Opportunities

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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 www.CleanOceanAction.org
 Institute of Coastal Education
 Wildwood, NJ 609-729-9262



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STAY INVOLVED IN YOUR COALITION!
MAILING LIST RENEWAL FORM

- ➡ If you received a message on your address label, it's time to renew.
 - ➡ Your contribution will ensure that you receive this monthly newsletter, action alerts, and notices of events for one year.
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 Clean Ocean Action, PO Box 505, Highlands, NJ 07732

Contributions are tax deductible.

September 2004

- September 12, Sunday**
 - Beach Plum Festival, 9AM-3PM, Island Beach State Park. (Rain date - September 19)
- September 17, Friday**
 - Sunset at Sandy Hook, 6PM, Sea Gulls' Nest, Sandy Hook.
- September 18, Saturday**
 - Underwater Cleanup, 9AM, Belmar Marine Park, L Street ramp.
 - Many Mind Creek Estuary Day, 9AM-3:30PM, Beach at end of Avenue A, Atlantic Highlands. Kayak Challenge & Nature Tours. Call 732-291-3556 for details. (Rain date - September 19)
 - Festival of the Sea, 10AM-7PM, Point Pleasant Beach. (Rain date - September 19)
- September 30, Thursday**
 - Ocean Golf Classic, 1PM Shotgun Start, Rumson Country Club, Rumson. Call COA to register.
- SAVE THE DATE**
October 3, Sunday
 - Cattus Island Nature Festival, 8:30AM-3PM, Cattus Island County Park, Toms River.

COA PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS
 Featuring... Shark Research Institute

COA's newest Participating Organization, the Shark Research Institute (SRI), is an international non-governmental organization that sponsors and conducts research on sharks and promotes their conservation. As a crucial part of the marine ecosystem, sharks are affected by ocean pollution due to negative effects on their habitat.

Founded in 1991 at Princeton, SRI represents about 5,000 members throughout the world and has field offices in Canada, Galapagos Islands, Honduras, Mexico, South Africa, and Seychelles. Those involved in SRI include the scientific community, individuals and organizations concerned about the health of our marine ecosystem, and marine resource users, such as subsistence fishermen, sport divers, and the dive tourism industry.

Current SRI programs include visual and satellite tracking of sharks and behavioral and DNA studies, as well as environmental advocacy and public education. The Institute also lobbies internationally for shark protection, strives to stop the slaughter of 100 million sharks annually, and works to correct misconceptions about sharks.

To demystify sharks and dispel the images from "Jaws," SRI collects critical data about shark attacks using a database that contains more than 2,500 incidents involving divers, surfers, swimmers, and fishermen.

SRI also leads studies on whale sharks, the largest fish in the sea. To encourage individuals, schools, scouts, and organizations to become involved in SRI research, tagged whale sharks are offered for adoption.

Also, if you are a certified diver and want to be involved in observing shark and/or manta behavior and collecting and analyzing data, SRI offers research expeditions.

For information visit www.sharks.org, or call 609-921-3522. - Adapted from SRI website.



(L to R) COA's Kari Jermansen and Cindy Zipf, US Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Ann Rutan, Philippe Cousteau, SRI's Executive Director Marie Levine, and Blue Frontier's David Helvarg met to discuss ocean issues in Washington, DC, as part of the Blue Vision Conference in July.

SEA TURTLE WASHES ASHORE

500-Pound, 70 Year Old Leatherback Found Dead in Long Branch Cause of Death Unknown



On August 2, COA received a call from a concerned citizen about a large sea turtle found dead on a beach in Long Branch. COA's Education Coordinator Julie Hajdusek went to the scene to investigate. Scott Longfield, a volunteer of the Marine Mammal Stranding Center (MMS) in Brigantine, photographed and identified the turtle as a leatherback turtle,

the largest species of sea turtles and endangered. The male turtle measured 55 inches long, weighed about 500 pounds, and was estimated to be 70 years old.

It was initially thought that the turtle died from attempting to eat a plastic bag because a plastic-like substance was protruding from both ends of the turtle.

Upon close inspection of the photos, the director of MMS, Bob Schoelkopf, determined that the plastic-like substance was actually part of the turtle's internal anatomy, the mucous lining, which was decomposing -- not a plastic bag as was originally thought.

Plastic bags floating in the ocean are commonly mistaken by sea turtles for jellyfish, the staple of their diets, and are therefore very dangerous in the marine environment. Once ingested, plastic cannot be broken down by the turtle's digestive system. It can create a blockage in the digestive tract, often leading to the turtle's death from starvation or digestive complications.

This was the third sea turtle to wash up dead on New Jersey's beaches this year, which is about average for turtle wash-ups. The common causes of injury or death to sea turtles are ingestion of plastics, entanglement with commercial fishing gear, or impact by ships. Sea turtles can also become tangled in fishing nets, or inadvertently hooked on fishing lines. If they are held underwater by nets or fishing lines, they will drown. Often, entangled or hooked turtles are released by the fishermen that caught them, only to die later from their injuries.

The cause of this turtle's death is unknown as it was not studied post-mortem.

AN OCEAN OF PLASTICS...

- Large pieces of plastic are mistaken by larger marine animals for jellyfish or squid; small pieces look like fish eggs
- 80% of plastics in the ocean are blown or washed off the land
- Plastics do not biodegrade or break down; they remain in the sea for hundreds of years, breaking down in to smaller (more consumable) pieces
- Plastic bags, bottle tops, and polystyrene coffee cups are often found in the stomachs of dead sea lions, dolphins, and sea turtles
- Fulmars, a type of gull, have been found in the North Sea with an average of 30 pieces of plastic in their stomachs



Leatherback sea turtles:

- are the largest of sea turtles, weighing up to 1,200lbs, with a lifespan of 50+ years
- dive deeper than any other turtle; documented to dive over 4,000ft deep
- swim farther than any other turtle; documented to swim over 4,000 miles
- are an endangered species

CONTAMINATED SEDIMENTS

Kristen Milligan, Ph.D., 732-872-0111, Science@cleanoceanaction.org
For more information or to review comments,
visit Action Alerts at www.CleanOceanAction.org

HARS Proposal

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) issued a Public Notice (FP63-AKCA2-2004) proposing to place dredged material from the second construction contract area of the upper Arthur Kill Federal Navigation Channel in the Port of New York and New Jersey at the Historic Area Remediation Site (HARS). The proposal includes the placement of 804,000 cubic yards of Pleistocene red-brown clay dredged material and approximately 83,500 cubic yards of Pleistocene glacial till dredged material at HARS.

The red-brown clay has been determined by federal agencies to be HARS suitable. Also, the Pleistocene age glacial till is deep enough to have been isolated from sources of contaminants and has been adequately characterized as HARS suitable by previous testing in the vicinity. A joint Memorandum for the Record on August 26, 2003, between US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Region 2, and USACE New York District, entitled "Joint Federal Position on Testing of Glacial Till Dredged Materials from Selected Areas of New York – New Jersey Harbor," establishes this determination. As such, further project-specific testing of glacial till, including the till in this project, is not required. The public comment period ends **September 13**.

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Toxins in Fish - Revisited

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) released the final work plan, "Routine Monitoring Program for Toxics in Fish: Estuarine and Marine Waters," for using \$500,000 to monitor toxics in estuarine and marine fish. COA submitted comments to NJDEP on its draft plan in April (see May *Ocean Advocate*). Though still limited, this study will indeed help update and address public health consumption of certain fish and shellfish (American Eel, Blue Crab, White Perch, White Catfish, Striped Bass, Bluefish, and Lobster). Upon review by COA, NJDEP made slight improvements from the draft to the final work plan:

- Increasing the number of fish-eating birds (cormorants) to be tested for contaminants. This is important since it may provide information about the risks to wildlife that fish sustain.
- A subset of fish samples will be tested for polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), a flame retardant found in foam padding for furniture. Scientists and public health officials are becoming alarmed at the rising levels of PBDEs found in breast milk.
- Despite these slight improvements, funding for this research is still disappointing. This funding, when compared to the vast economic and ecosystem values that fish contribute to the state, is slim.
- This work plan is also still limited in terms of addressing the extent of contamination in fish populations and other ecological threats from contamination, as well as acknowledging and addressing the sources of contamination causing advisories.

The plan states that draft fish advisory results are expected by 2005. COA continues to argue for toxic assessments of marine life that measure toxics in fish tissues, including fillets, whole bodies, and internal organs, to assess ecological health. Clearly, additional funding is needed to increase sampling sites and species, and monitoring for non-routine contaminants.

For a copy of the NJDEP Final Work Plan, go to the Division of Science, Research and Technology's webpage at www.nj.gov/dep/dsr.

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OUTREACH

Kari Jermansen, 732-872-0111, Outreach@cleanoceanaction.org

End of Summer Volunteer Opportunities for a Clean Ocean

Volunteer for a few hours at one of the many end of summer festivals and events (see *list*). Each event and festival is fun and filled with activities for all ages! These are great opportunities for citizens, scouts, and college-bound students who care about a healthy ocean and want to volunteer for COA. Volunteers can clean up the Shark River from the bottom-up (divers and nondivers welcome), and festival volunteers will speak with citizens about ocean pollution issues, obtain citizen petition signatures, and sell COA T-shirts.



COASTAL WATER QUALITY ISSUES

Fast Track Opposition is on Track

The Save NJ Coalition continues to put pressure on the NJ Governor's Office and NJDEP about "Fast Track." Signed into law earlier this summer, fast track is under a 120-day clock.


At an August 24 press conference at the State House, the coalition announced a new website, www.savenj.net. The website answers citizens' questions on the components of the law, provides an opportunity to study potential effects of fast track on communities using an interactive map created by the GIS Center, and gives the user the ability to alert Save NJ to projects in progress that are of concern. The coalition also announced the hiring of former NJDEP Senior Policy Advisor Bill Wolfe to provide assistance to Save NJ. Wolfe will work to identify ways to limit the scope of fast track and fix the deficiencies through the implementing regulations.


The Save NJ Coalition, composed of more than 50 member organizations, has a multi-pronged mission. For more information, visit the new website, or call COA, a member of Save NJ.

To volunteer for the following events, contact Kari:

 **Beach Plum Festival**
Island Beach State Park
Sunday, September 12
8:30AM – 3PM
(Rain date – September 19)

 **Underwater Cleanup**
L Street Boat Ramp, Belmar
Saturday, September 18, 9AM
Weather permitting.
Hosted by Divers Two.
For details, call 732-776-7755,
or visit www.diverstwo.com

 **Festival of the Sea**
Point Pleasant Beach
Saturday, September 18
9AM – 7PM
(Rain date – September 19)

 **Cattus Island Nature Festival**
Cattus Island County Park
Toms River
Sunday, October 3
8:30AM – 3PM



Institute of Coastal Education
Pacific Avenue, Wildwood
Tony Totah, 609-729-9262,
Wildwood@cleanoceanaction.org

(What's Cool at Ice and Coastal Creature Feature will appear every other month. Please see last month's newsletter to guess the August Coastal Creature.)

What's Cool at ICE?

When the ocean water temperature warms up, tropical visitors to our shore can be observed. The Institute of Coastal Education (ICE) has a number of tropical fish that were caught during the summer at ICE-sponsored programs. Pinfish, gray snappers, and feather blennies are a few to be seen at ICE. These and many other species are pushed north as eggs and larvae fish by the mighty Gulf Stream current. They do quite well during the summer months in New Jersey's waters. Unfortunately, these tropical visitors die-off when the water turns cold. Visit ICE in Wildwood to see these tropical species.

CLEAN OCEAN ZONE

Kari Jermansen, 732-872-0111, Outreach@cleanoceanaction.org

An Update

The wave of support for the Clean Ocean Zone (COZ) continues to roll in. To date, **66** organizations in New York and New Jersey, **6** environmental commissions, and **19** municipalities in NJ have signed resolutions in support of the COZ. The campaign, a project of COA, continues to seek broad support to help move the campaign forward. In addition, thousands of citizens have signed petitions supporting the 10 points of the COZ.

To schedule a presentation about the COZ to your organization, obtain petitions to gather signatures from family, friends, or co-workers, or learn how you can get your coastal municipality to sign onto the COZ, contact COA. For information about the COZ and downloadable copies of COZ factsheets, resolutions, petitions, and a complete list of COZ supporters, visit www.cleanoceanzone.org.



C.O.A.S.T.

Kate Tatem & Julia Brodbeck, 732-872-0111, Coast@cleanoceanaction.org

2004 C.O.A.S.T. Wrap-Up

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, the 14th Annual COAST campaign educated thousands of citizens, collected nearly **1,900** petition signatures in support of the Clean Ocean Zone, and raised nearly **\$4,700**. Dozens of fabulous volunteers rose to the occasion and helped celebrate COA's 20th Anniversary by taking COAST to **26** different beach clubs, towns, and festivals throughout Monmouth and Ocean Counties. This summer, COAST expanded to include malls and coastal towns in south Jersey. These pioneer locations were North Wildwood, the Cumberland Mall, and Shore Mall. Special thanks to all the dedicated volunteers as well as COAST host towns, beach clubs, and malls. See you in summer 2005!

COA STAFF NEWS

Farewell to 2004 Summer Interns

COA thanks Julia Brodbeck, Lauren Koch, and Kate Tatem for their tremendous efforts as summer interns. Their work and smiling faces will be missed as they return to college to continue their studies in environmental programs. Each intern significantly contributed to COA's programs to improve and protect our marine environment. Best wishes!

EDUCATION

Julie Hajdusek, 732-872-0111, Education@cleanoceanaction.org
Tony Totah, 609-729-9262, Wildwood@cleanoceanaction.org

Students Can be Scientists for a Day

COA's 16th Annual Fall Student Summit will be held on October 7 & 8 at Island Beach State Park from 9:00AM – 1:30PM. Middle school (grades 5-8) students from Ocean, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland, Cape May and Atlantic Counties are invited to this free program for a day of science at the beach. Applications may be obtained from our website (under "Education Programs," click "Student Summit") or by calling our Sandy Hook office. Applications are due to COA by **September 10**.

Attention Teachers & Educators!

It is time to book your fall school programs. COA offers a wide variety of environmental educational programs for schools and groups. Learn about ocean pollution and what citizens can do to prevent it by scheduling our Beach Sweeps and Non-point Source Pollution programs. Take advantage of our new Coastal Enviroscope or have your students discover one of New Jersey's marine habitats with our habitat exploration programs. Other programs include: Critter Encounter, Shells by the Shore, World of Whales, and Solar Energy. For more information about our programs contact Julie or Tony.

