



AISLINN SARNACKI | BDN  
A guided nature walk organized by the Blue Hill Heritage Trust brings about 30 people to the banks of the Bagaduce River to find horseshoe crabs on Monday at the Maude E. Eugene Snow Natural Area in Brooksville.

Finicky fish  
no match for  
drift boat  
trip winner

Finding fish, Maine guide Dan Legere will tell you, can be pretty easy at this time of year, when the tell-tale rings of rising trout and salmon dapple the waters of the East Outlet of the Kennebec River.

Figuring out what those fish are actually feeding on? That can be a bit of a challenge.

Early Sunday morning, Legere, the owner of the Maine Guide Fly Shop in Greenville, warned John St. Onge of Cumberland and me that the day's fly-fishing trip might be a bit frustrating at times.

"There are so many different kinds of caddis [flies] on the water, it's hard to pinpoint what the fish are eating," Legere told us as we prepared to depart on the trip that St. Onge won in the BDN's annual "Win a Drift Boat Trip" contest.

St. Onge was the 14th winner of our annual contest. Although he hails from southern Maine, he'd fished the East Outlet before, and had hired Legere as his guide on one occasion.

As Legere would put it, St. Onge "knew the game."

And despite a veritable smorgasbord of fish food in the form of caddis flies with brown, tan and green bodies — fish pay attention to this kind of thing — it didn't take St. Onge and Legere long to get dialed in ... sort of.

Legere spent much of the first two hours offering new fly selections to St. Onge, in hopes of finding a fishy snack that several fish would find attractive.

"Just catch me another fish on that same fly," Legere said at one point, after St. Onge had caught and released a frisky young landlocked salmon. "The idea is to get a 'game' going on, so that you can use the same fly for awhile."

That really didn't happen.

Thankfully, St. Onge is a polished fly fisher, and seemed to read Legere's mind, casting to seams of water that his guide had yet to identify. And Legere's constant changes of the flies St. Onge was offering paid off.

"Just about the time I tell you where I want you to [cast], you put it right where I was going to tell you," Legere said with a chuckle after St. Onge dropped a dry fly in a perfect spot.

Legere has been guiding on the East Outlet for years — he owned the second drift boat in the state, he'll tell you — and throughout the day, he kept looking for clues that would help us figure out "the game."

At one point, while fishing weighted flies, St. Onge caught a stick. Legere quickly snagged it and began studying the soggy branch, hoping for signs of insect life.

See Holyoke, Page C8



JOHN HOLYOKE

Prehistoric hunt

Horseshoe crabs creep  
up the Bagaduce River

BY AISLINN SARNACKI  
BDN STAFF

Picking their way along the squishy banks of the Bagaduce River, a group of about 30 people searched the shallow, warm waters for a prehistoric creature. The horseshoe crab, with a round, spiny exoskeleton shaped like a horseshoe, has a clear lineage stretching back more than 400 million years, before the dinosaurs.

During high tide on June 20, the day of the summer solstice and the full moon, the Blue Hill Heritage Trust guided local residents to find these ancient creatures.

"This is a huge turnout," said BHHT outreach and development coordinator Chrissy Beardsley Allen during the event. "People are jazzed about horseshoe crabs."

The walk started at the trailhead of the Maude E. Eugene Snow Natural Area in Brooksville, where people of all ages followed BHHT board member and local naturalist Sarah O'Malley into the forest. After about 10 minutes of walking along an easy hiking trail, the group clambered down a slope to emerge onto the muddy, grassy banks of the Bagaduce River.

Then they began the search. Horseshoe crabs spend the majority of their time feeding in the deep sea, far from land,

but each spring, they swim ashore to spawn, typically at high tide and during the new and full moons. Farther south, on Chesapeake Bay, horseshoe crabs swarm sandy beaches by the thousands to spawn in late May and early June, but in Maine, the northern edge of their range, horseshoe crabs are less common.

"They come up the Bagaduce River looking for nice warm water," O'Malley said. "They look for soft sand, mud, and prefer salinity that's 20 parts per thousand ... that makes this a good spot for them."

In Maine, horseshoe crabs are also found breeding in places such as Damariscotta River Estuary and in Taunton Bay, which is the farthest location north that they've been documented breeding.

On June 20, the group spotted two horseshoe crabs near the muddy banks of the Bagaduce River. Linked together in the natural embrace of a mated pair, the two creatures were swimming slowly in the shallows.

During breeding season, males arrive at the shore first and await the females, according to the National Wildlife Federation's online Wildlife Library. When the females arrive, they release pheromones that attract the males. Once a male horseshoe crab finds a female, he latches onto her with his front claws and together, they



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Sarah O'Malley, a naturalist and board member of Blue Hill Heritage Trust, holds a live horseshoe crab while talking to a group of about 30 people about the creature on the banks of the Bagaduce River in Brooksville.

swim to shore. Near the high tide mark, the female digs a small nest to deposit her eggs, which the male fertilizes. The eggs hatch in about two weeks, and the offspring appear as miniature versions of the adult, though missing their tails.

Wading into the water,

O'Malley carefully picked up the female horseshoe crab by grasping the lip of its bowl-shaped body on both sides. The male, robbed of his mate, slowly swam to a nearby boulder and lingered there, as if waiting.

See Crabs, Page C8

Whitewater Nationals  
Regatta returns in July

BY JOHN HOLYOKE  
BDN STAFF

OLD TOWN — When event chairman Scott Phillips was gearing up for last year's Penobscot River Whitewater Nationals Regatta, he was impressed with the number of people who said they wanted to come race on stretches of the river that had become navigable after two dams were removed.

"It's been a long time since it's been over 100 competitors at the whitewater nationals," he said at the time.

The event left that milestone in the dust, with 162 individuals signing up to race. And with each paddler allowed to compete in several different classes, that meant a total of nearly 350 "starts" were registered.

Now Phillips and the race committee are getting ready for the second year of the ambitious event, which not

only serves as the official national whitewater championship of the American Canoe Association, but also will welcome paddlers of crafts that wouldn't typically be found at the ACA championship event.

"It started out as being the Whitewater Open Canoe National Championships, but as soon as we got the bid last year, we decided to have kayaks, and then there were standup paddleboards and wildwater boats," Phillips explained. "It just grew into all of these facets, so we call it a regatta. But it's sanctioned by the American Canoe Association, so it's still their national championship."

Phillips said that after last year's event, the ACA awarded the Penobscot Indian Nation — the official host — bids to host the event for the next two years. But that's not all.

"It went so well that they

See Regatta, Page C8

1-Minute Hike: Barred Island Preserve

**Difficulty:** Easy to moderate. About 1.5 miles of trails are located on the preserve — a main trail and a side trail that forms a loop. The trails travel through the shaded forest for the most part, over gradual hills and twisted tree roots. There is no trail on Barred Island, but you can walk around the island on the large granite slabs that surround it. Take care navigating the rocks, which become slippery closer to the water.



AISLINN SARNACKI

Watch the video  
bangordailynews.com

**How to get there:** The preserve parking area is located on Goose Cove Road in Deer Isle. To get there, cross onto Deer Isle from Little Deer Isle on Route 15. After crossing the causeway, continue on Route 15, heading south, for 4.1 miles, then turn right onto Main Street. Drive 0.5 mile on Main Street, which turns into Bridge Street. At a fork, turn left onto Sunset Road and drive 2.7 mile. Turn right onto Goose Cove Road. Drive 0.3 mile and veer left at the intersection, staying on Goose Cove Road. Drive 0.5 mile



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From the granite shore of Barred Island, which is preserved by The Nature Conservancy, hikers enjoy views of the nearby Deer Isle and other, smaller islands in Penobscot Bay. Barred Island can be walked to from Barred Island Preserve on Deer Isle by sand bar about 3.5 hours on either side of low tide.

and veer left at a fork, staying on Goose Cove Road and the parking area will be on your left in a few hundred feet.

**Information:** Located on the west side of Deer Isle, Barred Island Preserve features about 1.5 miles of nature trails that winds through a

whimsical boreal fog forest to a sandy beach on the coast. And if you time your visit right, you can then cross over a sandbar to explore the scenic, undeveloped Barred Island.

Owned by The Nature Conservancy, Barred Island Preserve is managed

See Hike, Page C2