



SOUTH FORK NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM (SOFO)

Dear SOFO Families *and* Friends,
Welcome to SOFO's June 19 Weekly Newsletter!

NATURE NEWS

NORTHERN BLACK WIDOW

(Latrodectus variolus)

This Female Black widow was spotted in Northwest Woods this week. Although one of the most feared spiders due to their venom, these small spiders are only dangerous if bothered. In Spring when temperatures warm, they come out after wintering inside protected areas such as buildings or sheds. After breeding, they produce egg sacs with up to 1000 eggs inside. This large number of young is required since many eat each other. Male black widows are much smaller in size and lack the red hourglass that the females have on their undersides. Unlike the females, they do not produce venom. Black widows build very erratic looking webs and prefer dark areas in crevices like rock piles, walls, outdoor patio furniture, and other man-made areas. Black widows eat other arachnids, flies, mosquitoes, grasshoppers, beetles, caterpillar and other insects that are unfortunate enough to get caught in their web.

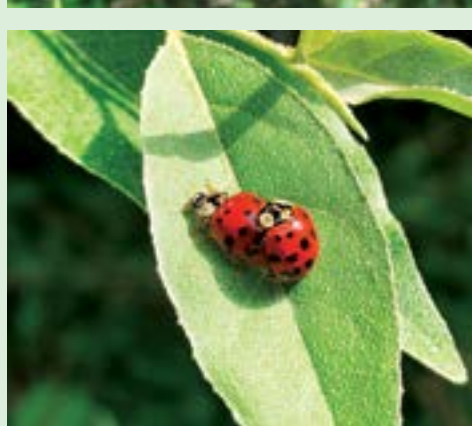
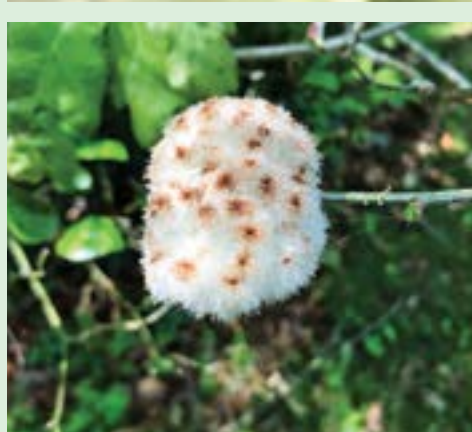


fences. Their impact on Long Island is not fully known yet, but it appears to be less severe than other areas that have native lizards. Italian wall lizards prey on small insects and are aggressive hunters. Some of their predators include feral cats and birds. .

WOOL SOWER GALL

(Callirhytis seminator)

The Wool Sower Gall is a "leaf gall" specific to white oak and only occurs in the spring. During the winter, a very small dark brown wasp lays its eggs which become protected by the gall tissues. The wasp also produces secretions that trigger the unusual plant growth. If pulled apart you can see the small structures which look like seeds, that house the gall wasp grubs. Gall wasps have alternation of generations. That means one generation develops in one type of gall while the next generation develops in a different type of gall. The wasps are harmless to people, and rarely ever cause a problem to the trees. Keep an eye out for these unusual galls for the next few weeks.



NORTHERN ITALIAN WALL LIZARD

(Podarcis siculus ssp. Campestris)

This little guy is the only lizard that can be found on Long Island. This one was discovered between two pieces of wood this week in the North Sea area. Introduced in the 1960s after being released from a pet shop, this lizard has spread its way all over Long Island. The winters on Long Island are much colder than its native habitat in Italy, so it is thought that it digs deep under the ground to prevent freezing during the colder months. During this time of the year, you can find them basking in the sun on many man-made structures like walls, buildings, and

ASIAN LADY BEETLE BREEDING

(Harmonia axyridis)

These two lady beetles are actually an invasive species. They are mating, which is common for a lot of insects this time of year, since temperatures are warming up. Originally from Asia, they have become widespread in

many areas throughout the world. They look very similar to our native ladybugs but are regarded as pests. While both ladybugs and lady beetles hunt garden pests, the two behave very differently. Ladybugs do not bite, eat harmful garden pests, do not congregate in large numbers, and do not seek shelter indoors when it gets cold. Asian lady beetles gather in large groups, and often will bite when they land on skin. They are often found inside homes in large numbers when overwintering. Next time you see what you think is a ladybug, look closely to make sure it is not the invasive Asian lady beetle. Some differences are: Ladybugs are typically a bit smaller, and do not have a white "M" near their head.

[JOIN / RENEW](#)

[DONATE](#)

SOFO is happy to announce that, in line with the issuance of the latest State Executive Order, we are now able to offer our outdoor nature walks for up to ten people, which includes our staff. Please note that we will at all times follow stringent six-foot distancing separation protocols required by the Department of Health for the safety of our participants and environmental educators. We will provide masks and gloves for all attendees. Please dress appropriately for tick protection. [Please check our website calendar for more details about upcoming nature walks.](#)

JOIN OUR BACKYARD WATCH CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECT

We are calling on all of our young environmentalists to observe and document nature awakening in your own backyards. We ask you to send us pictures of your findings with the date you discovered them, and your name and any notes you would like to include. We are happy to feature observations sent in by our fellow environmentalists with details about the nature sightings they shared with us. Please send your photographs and notes to info@sofo.org. Stay safe and be on the look out for Nature news in your backyard!



SUBMITTED BY KEA MYERS



SUBMITTED BY THE OAKES FAMILY



SUBMITTED BY THE OAKES FAMILY

EASTERN BOX TURTLE

(Terrapene carolina)

This Eastern Box Turtle female visited a family in East Hampton. Depending on the resources available, a box turtle's territory can be as small as a football field or as large as 10 square miles. Box turtles are omnivorous, eating a wide variety of plant and invertebrate animal life found in woods and meadows with nearby water sources. If you would like to help your local box turtles, they love to eat the worms and slugs found in and around compost piles and may make your backyard a regular stop in the spring once they find strawberry plants nearby.

LANCE-LEAVED VIOLET

(Viola lanceolata)

Watch where you place your feet if you are exploring the edge of a fresh water wetland. The Lance-leaved Violet, also known as the Bog White Violet, is only two to six inches tall. Loving to reside in damp meadows, shores, bogs, swamps, or other wet spots, it can be found blooming as early as April in the southern US to the end of June in the northern US.

SALT MARSH MOTH

(Estigmene acrea)

Despite its common name, the Salt Marsh Moth is found in many

different habitats across North America (other than in Alaska or Yukon). It is part of the Tiger Moth subfamily, many of which are boldly and beautifully marked. If this individual were to take flight, it would reveal bright orange abdomen segments and orange hindwings if it is a male, or white hindwings if a female. The hairy caterpillars feed on a large variety of deciduous trees and low plants. Caterpillars hatched in late summer or fall will spend the winter as a pupa inside a large cocoon emerging near the end of the next spring.

ZOOM ONLINE PROGRAMMING

There is no charge for these programs. [Please visit sofo.org/calendar/ for more details.](#)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24 11:00am - Backyard Herpetology: Turtles, Frogs and Snakes

...OH MY!!

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1 4:00pm - Virtual Tour of the East Hampton Nature Trail at

Duck Pond

WEDNESDAY, JULY 14 11:00am - Ticks on Parade

WEDNESDAY, JULY 22 4:00pm - SOFO Shark Research and Education Program:

Team Update

PLEASE JOIN US THIS JUNE FOR A SPECIAL FOUR-WEEK ZOOM PRESENTATION FEATURING ERIK THE REPTILE GUY and HIS REPTILE EDVENTURES

There is a nominal fee for these programs. [Please visit sofo.org/calendar/ for more details.](#)

SATURDAY, June 24 11:00am - 12:00pm - Frogs and Toads from Northeast America

and from around the World

SATURDAY, June 27 11:00am - 12:00pm - Snakes of the World

CHRIS PAPARO: FISH GUY

There is a nominal fee for these programs. [Please visit sofo.org/calendar/ for more details.](#)

TUESDAY, JULY 7, 7:00pm - From Plankton to Whales:

Why our local waters are worth protecting

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15 7:00pm - Long Island's White Shark Research

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 7:00pm - Exploring Long Island's Underwater Worlds

TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 7:00pm - Birding with the Fish Guy

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 7:00pm - Long Island's Tropical Drifters

OUR YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALISTS SOCIETY (YES!) NEWS

Our YES! Group meets bi-weekly via Zoom. Click here to see the latest projects and activities!

sofo.org/yes/

SOFO's SHARK RESEARCH and EDUCATION PROGRAM NEWS

The sharks are back! Click here to follow the latest developments and upcoming shark tagging expeditions.

sofo.org/sofos-shark-research-education-program/

We remain very appreciative of your support, and we look forward to welcoming you back to the Museum as we can. Please watch for announcements on our social media pages facebook.com/sofomuseum and instagram.com/sofomuseum, and feel free to email us at info@sofo.org so we can keep connecting as we all continue to explore our natural world and strive to raise environmental awareness by providing the inspiration and tools for all of us to become caring and responsible stewards of our planet.