



SOUTH FORK NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM (SOFO)

Dear SOFO Families *and* Friends,
Welcome to SOFO's June 5 Weekly Newsletter!

NATURE NEWS

HORSESHOE CRABS

Every May and June, horseshoe crabs emerge on our shoreline to mate and lay eggs in the sand. Pictured here is a male grasping onto the back of the female's shell with his specially adapted hook legs. The female will burrow slightly in the sand and lay up to 20,000 small greenish-gray eggs which the males will then fertilize. This mating ritual is heavily tied to the tidal and lunar cycles. Twice a month due to the alignment of the sun, moon and earth, we experience higher than usual high tides, called spring tides, during the full and new moon phases. The high tides will not reach as high during the half moon phases, leaving the eggs vulnerable to predation by migratory shorebirds. If the eggs survive this period, they will hatch just in time to be swept out to sea by the arriving spring tide. Venture out to your local beach at high tide during the full and new moon phases to witness this phenomenon.

SWAMP BEACON

A swamp beacon, also known as *Mitrula paludosa*, is a very small but



magnificent wonder. The role of this matchstick like fungus is that of a recycler. This species feeds on rotting leaves and stems, breaking them down into compounds neighboring aquatic vegetation. If you view these mushrooms near dusk, you will see that they resemble matchsticks lighting your evening hike through the bog. It takes a keen eye to find them due to their small size but they are well worth the look and very common in boggy areas.

CLAPPER RAIL

The secretive Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris*) is a common bird found in grassy, saltwater and brackish marshes. It can be seen and heard this time of year as the nesting season begins. Its kek...kek calls and grunting notes are noticeable in the marshes during the early morn-



ing hours. They are opportunistic feeders and are omnivorous, eating whatever is available including crabs, crustaceans, fish, eggs, and plant matter. Visit your nearest wetland and see if you can spot this elusive rail.

[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 JULIAN MCAULIFFE

MANTIS NYMPH (Possibly *Tenodera aridifolia*)

This recently hatched mantis nymph will need to molt/shed its skin six to nine times before it is a mature adult. It was one of up to 100 young that survived the winter in a hard foam egg case that was laid last fall in Vineyard Field behind the museum. Three species occur in our area: the Chinese Mantis, European Mantis and Carolina Mantis. They are ambush predators who wait among plants for any arthropod (an animal that has a hard exoskeleton with jointed legs such as insects, spiders, and millipedes) to wander within reach, including other mantids! For



SUBMITTED BY THE DOYLE-QUINN FAMILY

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE (*Poecile atricapilla*) YOUNG CHICKS

This Black-capped Chickadee family is living happily in a man-made bowl. Although these birds usually nest in old woodpecker holes, they can excavate their own holes in rotted birch or pine branches. Their nests require one of the smallest entrance holes at only 1 1/8 inches in diameter. These birds are helpful garden friends, as this family of chickadees could eat 1,000 caterpil-



SUBMITTED BY THE DOYLE-QUINN FAMILY

MANTIS SHRIMP (*Squilla Empusa*) MOLT

Mantis shrimps, or stomatopods, are marine crustaceans of the order Stomatopoda, and although they typically live in tropical waters, you might spot one burrowing in shallow waters in our area. Don't get too close: the Mantis Shrimp is an amazing predator using its second pair of legs to crush the shells of crabs, snails, and bivalves. It can spear a fish with the spines that line the scissor-like legs.

ZOOM ONLINE PROGRAMMING

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

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 4:00pm - Nature Storytime: A Bale of Turtles by Lee Clancey, Illustrated by Mary Rothermel

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17 4:00pm - Endangered Species: Knowing is Caring

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24 4:00pm - Backyard Herpetology: Reptiles and Amphibians of the South Fork

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 \[sofo.org/calendar/\]\(http://sofo.org/calendar/\) for more details.](#)

SATURDAY, June 6 11:00am - 12:00pm - "The Greatest Reptile & Amphibian Show" An Introduction to Reptiles *and* Amphibians

SATURDAY, June 13 11:00am - 12:00pm - Turtles, Tortoises, *and* More Turtles

SATURDAY, June 20 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 \[sofo.org/calendar/\]\(http://sofo.org/calendar/\) 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 soon as we can. Please watch for announcements on our social media pages [facebook.com/sofomuseum](https://www.facebook.com/sofomuseum) and [instagram.com/sofomuseum](https://www.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.